



HIGHWAY 210 BRAINERD, MINNESOTA

Equity, Safety, and Multimodal Connectivity Project

2023 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Program

PROJECT READINESS

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Project Name: Highway 210 Brainerd, Minnesota – Equity, Safety, and Multimodal Connectivity Project

Project Type: Rural Capital Project – Road, Repair/Rehabilitation

Total Eligible Project Cost: \$54.9M

2023 RAISE Funds Requested: \$24.98M

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Supporting Information can be found at:

<https://www.srfconsulting.com/mndot-raise-mn210-brainerd/>



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PROJECT READINESS

ENVIRONMENTAL RISK ASSESSMENT

Highway 210 Brainerd, Minnesota – Equity, Safety, and Multimodal Connectivity Project (herein known as the Project) was initiated in 2019 and has steadily maintained all major milestones as per the Project schedule. Project planning activities including public engagement, traffic analysis, environmental documentation, and preliminary design have been ongoing since 2020 and are either complete or expected to be completed by late 2023. The detailed project schedule can be found [here](#).

Schedule

Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) guarantees that all necessary activities will be completed to allow FY 23 RAISE funds to be obligated sufficiently in advance of the statutory deadline (September 30, 2027). The non-federal match, other federal funds, and Project Development funds allocated to the Project are already programmed in Minnesota Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) as [Project No. 1805-80](#), as of Fall 2022. The Project is in the preliminary engineering design phase. The Project layout is currently under MnDOT review and is expected to be approved by March 2023. The current construction cost estimates are based on 30 percent engineering design. Public engagement for the Project was initiated in November 2020 and is planned to occur until the beginning of construction in February 2026. There have been several engagement events conducted so far, including outreach and input from disadvantaged communities in census tract 9512 which is designated as an Area of Persistent Poverty (APP). All property and right-of-way (ROW) acquisition will be completed in accordance with 49 CFR Part 24 and other Federal regulations by December 2024. MnDOT has an experienced ROW acquisition staff who have been actively

involved in the project development process. MnDOT anticipates construction will begin February 2026 and be completed by September 2027. Figure 1 shows the [Project schedule](#).

Required Approvals

MnDOT has closely coordinated with federal, state, and local partners throughout the preliminary design phase of the Project. As a result of this coordination, the Project is expected to achieve all approvals necessary to begin construction in February 2026.

Environmental Permits and Reviews

The environmental assessment is currently progressing through a Federal Categorical Exclusion (CATEX) process. The Purpose and Need was prepared in Spring 2021 and will be included in the Categorical Exclusion. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was completed in May 2021 and a Phase II assessment scheduled for Summer 2023. The Phase I ESA identified no high-risk sites. Level II (field) Wetland Delineation was also completed in Fall 2022. The draft CATEX report is currently under agency review.

Right-of-Way Acquisition Plans

The vision for the Project focused on utilizing the existing 80-foot right of way, owned by MnDOT, to serve the various users of the corridor (pedestrians, bicyclists, business owners, residents, visitors, and vehicular traffic including oversized truck loads). MnDOT may acquire smaller partial permanent or temporary easements prior to construction. The Project will maintain access to business and residents throughout the construction phase and will minimally disrupt communities, thereby, maintaining community cohesion.



Figure 1 Project Schedule

State and Local Approvals

There is a broad base of state and local support for the project, as shown by the [Letters of Support](#) submitted for this application. The Project is included in the State of Minnesota’s approved [2023 - 2026 STIP](#) as of Fall 2022 as Project No. 1805-80. All required State and Local approvals will be obtained prior to construction per Table 1.

Table 1 Required Approvals

Permits/Approvals	Agency	Action Required (Status)
COE Section 404 Permit	MnPCA	To be acquired
Section 401 Water Quality Certification	MnPCA	To be acquired
Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) Permit	DNR	To be acquired
National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit	MnPCA	To be acquired

Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies

MnDOT has completed an extensive risk assessment for the Project to be able to anticipate and mitigate risks to the Project’s schedule and cost. The risk assessment includes identifying the probability the risk occurs, identifying the impact of the risk, and calculating a severity that combines the probability and impact. Based on the risks identified, mitigation methods have also been identified. In addition, the contingency costs identified as a part of the total project cost estimate will be sufficient to cover the identified risks and associated cost overruns, if any. With the proactive approach taken, MnDOT does not anticipate any of the identified risks to significantly alter the schedule or costs. The results of the completed risk assessment can be found [here](#).

TECHNICAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

MnDOT is prepared to deliver the Project in accordance with the project schedule. Additional analysis of project readiness factors is provided below, but in summary, MnDOT assesses minimal project delivery risks for the following reasons:

- **MnDOT is substantially through the Project’s preliminary engineering phase.** Design and environmental work done to-date lowers uncertainty around scope, impact, and cost. A final draft of the Project layout has been prepared and is expected to be approved by MnDOT by March 2023. The environmental documentation is 90 percent complete. The CATEX documentation is expected to be approved by November 2023.
- **Project limits are established.** The Project footprint is substantially within MnDOT right of way and negotiations with impacted landowners are have initiated with early notification letters being sent out currently.
- **A detailed cost estimate has been prepared based on final Project layout** which accounts for appropriate contingency and inflation levels and lowers the uncertainty in Project costs.
- **The Project is noncontroversial and supported by Project partners.** MnDOT has maintained ongoing coordination with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Crow Wing County, the City of Brainerd, the City of Baxter, and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR). MnDOT has been collaborating with local agencies and the community to develop a project that meets the needs of all involved partners, including the underserved community in Brainerd.
- **MnDOT has secured funding sufficient to cover 55 percent of project costs** and has allocated approximately \$30 million to the project in [Minnesota 2023-2026 STIP](#).

MnDOT has successfully delivered several large-scale projects completed through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process. The selected alternative will be advanced to begin construction in February 2026 and will conform to all current USDOT, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and MnDOT standards for roadway design and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant pedestrian infrastructure. [Preliminary design layout and typical sections](#) are currently under MnDOT review for the Project, which demonstrate the Project can be designed effectively to meet the needs of the corridor and surrounding communities and can advance to construction well within the USDOT's obligation deadline.

MnDOT has extensive experience with procuring and developing transportation improvement projects using federally awarded funds. In the last ten years, MnDOT and its partners have procured 12 federal grants used to increase efficiency and safety on the MnDOT system. Additionally, MnDOT, as a recipient of federal financial assistance, complies with [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#), 49 CFR Part 21 (Department of Transportation Regulations for the Implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964), [Buy America provisions](#), ADA regulations, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS), and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR), and related statutes and regulations.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

All supporting documents and the RAISE grant application narrative are available to view at the following webpage:

<https://www.srfconsulting.com/mndot-raise-mn210-brainerd/>