



US Highway (US) 14/County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 44 Interchange Project

Addressing Critical Safety, Equity, and Mobility Challenges
in Rochester, MN Regional Center

PROJECT READINESS

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



Project Name:

US Highway (US) 14/County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 44 Interchange Project

Project Type:

Rural Capital Project – Road, Road/Rail Crossing

Total Project Cost:

\$60.54 million

2023 RAISE Funds Requested:

\$42.1 million

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Supporting Information can be found at:

<https://www.srfconsulting.com/raise-us14-olmsted/>



US Highway (US) 14/County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 44 Interchange Project

Submitted by Olmsted County

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

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PROJECT READINESS

ENVIRONMENTAL RISK ASSESSMENT

Olmsted County has been a champion of the US Highway (US) 14/County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 44 Interchange Project – Addressing Critical Safety, Equity, and Mobility Challenges in Rochester, MN Regional Center (herein known as the Project) over the last 15 years. Project planning activities including public engagement, traffic analysis, environmental documentation, and preliminary design have been ongoing since 2006 and are expected to be completed by Fall 2023. The Project has steadily maintained all major milestones per the detailed Project schedule linked [here](#).

Project Schedule

The Project schedule identifying major milestones and timelines is noted in Figure 1 below. Olmsted County 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 Project is currently in the preliminary engineering design phase. The Project is progressing through conceptual evaluation based on which a design layout will be produced for the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) review and approval by June 2023. The current construction cost estimates are based on 15 percent engineering design. Public engagement for this phase of project development was initiated in June 2022 and so far two public open houses and several stakeholder meetings have been conducted, in addition to ongoing engagement via social media and [project website](#).

All property and right-of-way (ROW) acquisition will be completed in accordance with 49 CFR Part 24 and other Federal regulations by Fall 2024. Olmsted County has an experienced ROW acquisition staff who have been actively involved in the project development process. The County anticipates construction will begin Fall 2024 and be completed by Fall 2026.



Figure 1 Project Schedule

Required Approvals

Olmsted County has closely coordinated with federal, state, and local partners throughout the ongoing preliminary design phase of the Project. As a result of this coordination, the Project has achieved or is expected to achieve all approvals necessary to begin construction in Fall 2024.

Environmental Permits and Reviews

The proposed project area was included in a corridor study that was initiated in 2006 and included a pre-NEPA planning phase followed by the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA)/Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW), completed in January 2009. For the purpose of

this project, the environmental documentation will be revisited and would progress through a Federal Categorical Exclusion (CATEX) process. An updated Purpose and Need document has been completed and is currently under MnDOT review. The wetland delineation will be completed by Summer 2023.

Right-of-Way Acquisition Plans

Based on the 2009 EA report, anticipated right-of-way needed for the CSAH 44 corridor through the US 14 interchange area was preserved through the Official Mapping process. Official Maps under Minnesota law are

a land use regulatory tool that permits public entities to adopt and record, as a public record, an Official Map for the purpose of identifying anticipated right-of-way needed for future public projects. Official Maps convey no land rights to the public, and do not initiate the purchase of right-of-way; however, with an Official Map on record, land use and road authorities are afforded an opportunity to work with landowners to ensure no new structures are erected in the mapped area. The CSAH 44 Official Map has been successful in achieving this, as no development has occurred in the mapped area identifying land needed for the interchange improvements.

The County understands the positive regional implications of the Project and the public benefit it produces. The vision for the Project focuses on utilizing the existing 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). Once the final geometric configuration is determined, right-of-way acquisition will proceed, and this process is not expected to present risk to complete the project. The Project will maintain access to business and residents throughout the construction phase and will minimally disrupt communities, thereby maintaining community cohesion.

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. 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)
Public Water Work Permit	DNR	To be acquired
Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) Permit	DNR	To be acquired
County Ditch Orders	Olmsted County	To be acquired
National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit	MnPCA	To be acquired

Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Olmsted County has worked closely with MnDOT and other local partners to ensure that early collaboration and proactive mitigation measures will minimize risk and manage impacts, if any. The County continues to maintain the relationships and is confident in the successful implementation of the Project.

To minimize traffic impacts during construction, the CSAH 44 alignment will be shifted 300 feet to the west to allow most grading, paving, and structure construction to occur “off-line”, thus only requiring periodic short term lane closures. A project-specific transportation management plan (TMP) will be designed and implemented to maintain acceptable levels of safety, accessibility, and mobility. Noise originating from construction and traffic is another potential risk to existing residences, employment centers, schools, and healthcare facilities. The County/MnDOT will identify noise sensitive locations within the adjacent community and will employ proper mitigation measures. Mitigation approaches include performing construction activities at the appropriate time of day, adhering to local noise control requirements, utilizing the FHWA Roadway Construction Noise Model to predict noise levels during various stages of construction, and restricting equipment to locations where noise will be reduced.

Another potential risk includes stormwater runoff due to increased impervious surfaces resulting from the Project. Without proper mitigation measures, stormwater runoff can contaminate existing watersheds and erode existing support embankments and wetland barriers. Infiltration, filtration, and other Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be implemented to mitigate the impact of stormwater runoff. Other added protections for nearby wetlands will be implemented including substantial plantings of native species to buffer these sensitive waterways.

TECHNICAL CAPACITY

Olmsted County is the lead agency on all planning and project development activities related to the Project. It has delivered several federally funded projects and understands the requirements and procedures to manage a federal grant. The County is meeting the planned schedule deadlines, has already completed traffic analysis, and is currently pursuing preliminary design engineering including environmental documentation. The preliminary design and cost estimate is expected to be approved by Summer 2023. Environmental review is currently underway and will be completed by Fall 2023. The final design engineering, right-of-way acquisition to procure the needed highway right-of-way, and securing all necessary state and local permitting will start by Fall 2023 and be completed by Summer 2024. The County has experienced right-of-way staff that have meticulously worked on projects with similar scopes. This will expedite right-of-way acquisition and significantly reduce overall project risks.

Olmsted County is prepared to deliver the Project in accordance with the project schedule. Minimal project delivery risks exist for the following reasons:

- The design and environmental engineering work done to-date lowers uncertainty around scope, impact, and cost.

The County anticipates having preliminary engineering and environmental documentation completed by late Summer 2023, which allows the right-of-way acquisition processes to be completed by Summer 2024.

- The Project is noncontroversial and supported by project partners. The County has maintained ongoing coordination with MnDOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), City of Rochester, and Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments (ROCOG). It has also collaborated with other local agencies impacted by the Project.
- All of the required right-of-way for the Trunk Highway portions of the Project has already been preserved. All permanent right-of-way required for the interchange and the local connections of the Project will be acquired as the Project design progresses.

Olmsted County, as a recipient of federal financial assistance, will comply with all applicable Federal requirements including but not limited to Buy America provisions, ADA regulations, Civil Rights requirements, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS), Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR), and related statutes and regulations. The County's Strategy, Budget, and Performance information can be found [here](#).

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

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

<https://www.srfconsulting.com/raise-us14-olmsted/>