



PROJECT READINESS

Environmental Risk Review

This project is positioned to begin construction in a timely manner (Q1 of 2025). This is based upon the proposed project schedule and the risk and mitigation strategies for the Project.

Project Schedule

Cass County began the initial preliminary engineering process for the Project in 2023 when it was added to Cass County’s 2024–2028 CIP. Environmental studies are currently being completed and a Categorical Exclusion would be anticipated if Federal funding is attached to the project. The Categorical Exclusion would be completed in Q4 of 2024. Preliminary design will be completed end of Q2 2024, environmental and Right-of-Way (ROW) will be completed by the end of 2024. The project will be bid in the Q1 of 2025. Cass County anticipates a two-year construction period with grading and bridge work occurring in 2025, and then bituminous surfacing and in town work through Buffalo in 2026. The overall timeline results in substantial completion of the project in Q4 of 2026.

Project Schedule

	2024				2025				2026			
	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q
Preliminary Engineering	█											
Environmental	█	█										
Right of Way			█									
Final Design				█								
Bid					█							
Construction – Year 1					█	█						
Construction – Year 2									█	█		

Required Approvals

Right-of-Way Acquisition Plans. Acquisition of right-of-way and temporary construction easements for the Project are anticipated to be completed in Q4 of 2024 following initiation of the Final Plans and environmental clearance.



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NEPA Status. A NEPA process will be initiated in accordance with FHWA guidelines and the North Dakota Department of Transportation Environmental and Transportation Service (ETS) Division. Initial analysis during the pre-planning phase indicates a high probability for a recommendation for a Categorical Exclusion (CE). The NEPA CatEx for the Project is anticipated to be completed at the end of 2024.

Environmental Studies.

Environmental investigations are underway for the Project and should be completed during the summer and early fall of 2024. All environmental reports can be found at:

www.casscountynd.gov/raisegrant.

A Wetland Delineation Report is set to be completed in Q2 of 2024. The report will assist with determining the wetland impacts associated with the proposed reconstruction project and any permitting that would need to be acquired in the survey area.

A Hydraulic Design Report was prepared and submitted in the fall of 2023 for the replacement of the existing bridge 3.5 miles east of Tower City. The Hydraulic Design Report summarizes the hydraulic findings and recommendations related to the size of the new bridge. Recommendations of this report will be included in the project design phase ensuring hydraulic improvements meet local, state and Federal requirements.

A Level III Cultural Resource Inventory will be prepared and submitted to the United States Corp of Engineers (USACE) and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) over the next several months for the most sensitive areas along the corridor, with a Class I proposed for the balance of the study area. It will be reviewed for SHPO concurrence.

Required Permits. A Section 404 Permit and Section 401 Certification also will be needed.

State and Local Approvals. The Project is not yet programmed in the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP), however upon project award, the project will be placed in the 2024–2027 STIP. Though outside of the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Planning Organization (Metro COG) planning area, coordination has and will continue to occur with Metro COG’s transportation planning program given the projects regional significance. The NDDOT Fargo District staff have also concurred with the project concept, providing a letter of support for the project concepts. Further coordination between Cass County, Metro COG and the NDDOT will occur as the project moves into project development and preliminary engineering.

Both of the project segments: 1) Cass 10 – Tower City to Buffalo and 2) Cass 10 through Buffalo are currently identified as programmed short range project investments in Cass County’s 2024-2028 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The full CIP is listed on the project website. The Cass County CIP is considered a fiscally constrained demonstration of Cass County Highway Department projects. As part of the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Planning Area, Cass County’s CIP follows programming guidance which matches 23 CFR Part 450 regarding fiscal constraint of its transportation plan and CIP.



Federal Transportation Requirements Affecting State and Local Planning

The Project currently aligns with goals and objectives in the following federally required planning/programming and maintenance processes:

- Metro COG 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)
- Metro COG Freight Plan
- NDDOT Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
- Statewide Freight Management Plan
- Statewide Asset Management Plan

Public Involvement

Because this Project has not yet been fully designed/developed, additional formal public engagement will be completed throughout 2024, this includes a potential solicitation of views (SOV) letter to meet NEPA requirements. There is, however, a formal public engagement plan that has been developed and approved which will be implemented at such a time as the County has funding available to move forward with Project into construction. This element is outlined in the Partnership and Collaboration element of this request. The identification of the Project was developed from county wide outreach as part of the development of the annual CIP. This includes open meetings of the Cass County Road Advisory Committee, Cass County Commission, frequent interaction through the Cass County Township Officers Association and direct communications with local communities including with the residents, businesses, and local officials in the communities of Tower City and Buffalo. Once a contract for construction has been let, an informational meeting is planned in the project area to discuss staging of the project.

Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies

The overall level of risk to the Project costs and schedule are considered low. The Project is currently being managed by Cass County Highway Department staff who will lead road design and liaison with contractors. Minimal challenges have been identified and Cass County feels confident these can be mitigated through final design and permitting.

Costs are based on prior experience and project planning including preliminary engineering, design, ROW, and NEPA. If actual construction costs exceed the RAISE grant funding, Cass County will dedicate additional county and state funding to cover overruns. Bidding will take place in Quarter 1 of 2025 to allow the contractor extra time to order materials and mitigate the risk of late or inaccessible materials.

The Project is located in an area previously disturbed by road and utilities and it is unlikely a major environmental issue will arise. If an environmentally sensitive area is identified, it will be avoided or mitigated depending on the oversight agency's request.



2024 HIGHWAY 10 Roadway Improvement Project

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SUMMARY PROJECT RISKS		
RISK	STATUS	RISK LEVEL
Technical Feasibility	Additional work is considered low risk in that it is routine grading, surfacing and overlay work.	Low
Schedule	The County is planning for a two-year construction process to reduce risk and take advantage of alternative construction methods.	Low
Environmental Review	CatEx is likely. Pre-planning conducted as part of the 2023–2027 CIP analysis has not identified any environmental or cultural resource issues that would be a barrier to project completion.	Low
Reviews and Permits	Permitting has not yet been completed but needed permits have been identified and there are no anticipated issues that would delay permitting.	Low
Public Engagement	A public involvement plan has been identified and the community most impacted by the Project is aware of the need and are supportive. Public engagement will continue throughout the Project.	Low
Local Approvals	The Project will be identified in both the NDDOT STIP and Metro COG TIP. No significant issues have been identified. A letter of support for the grant has been received from the NDDOT Fargo-District and Metro COG.	Low
Budget	The budget is current and has been calculated based on known variables for supplies, time, and labor and inflated by 3 percent per year to address anticipated year-of-construction actual costs. All construction estimates include 15 percent contingency. A plan is in place for any cost overruns associated with the Project, and the County has identified contingency funding sources through programmed local and state revenues.	Low
Contract Administration	Contract and grant administration will be completed by Cass County staff who are experienced in administering federal transportation grants.	Low

Technical Capacity Assessment

Cass County has a track record of successful project development and construction on County Highways. Cass County designs and constructs between \$15 to \$20M in roadway projects each year. Typically, about 10–15 percent of utilized funding resources are managed with Federal aid passed through NDDOT. The Project will comply with all Federal requirements including Buy America provisions, ADA regulations, Civil Rights requirements Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations.