

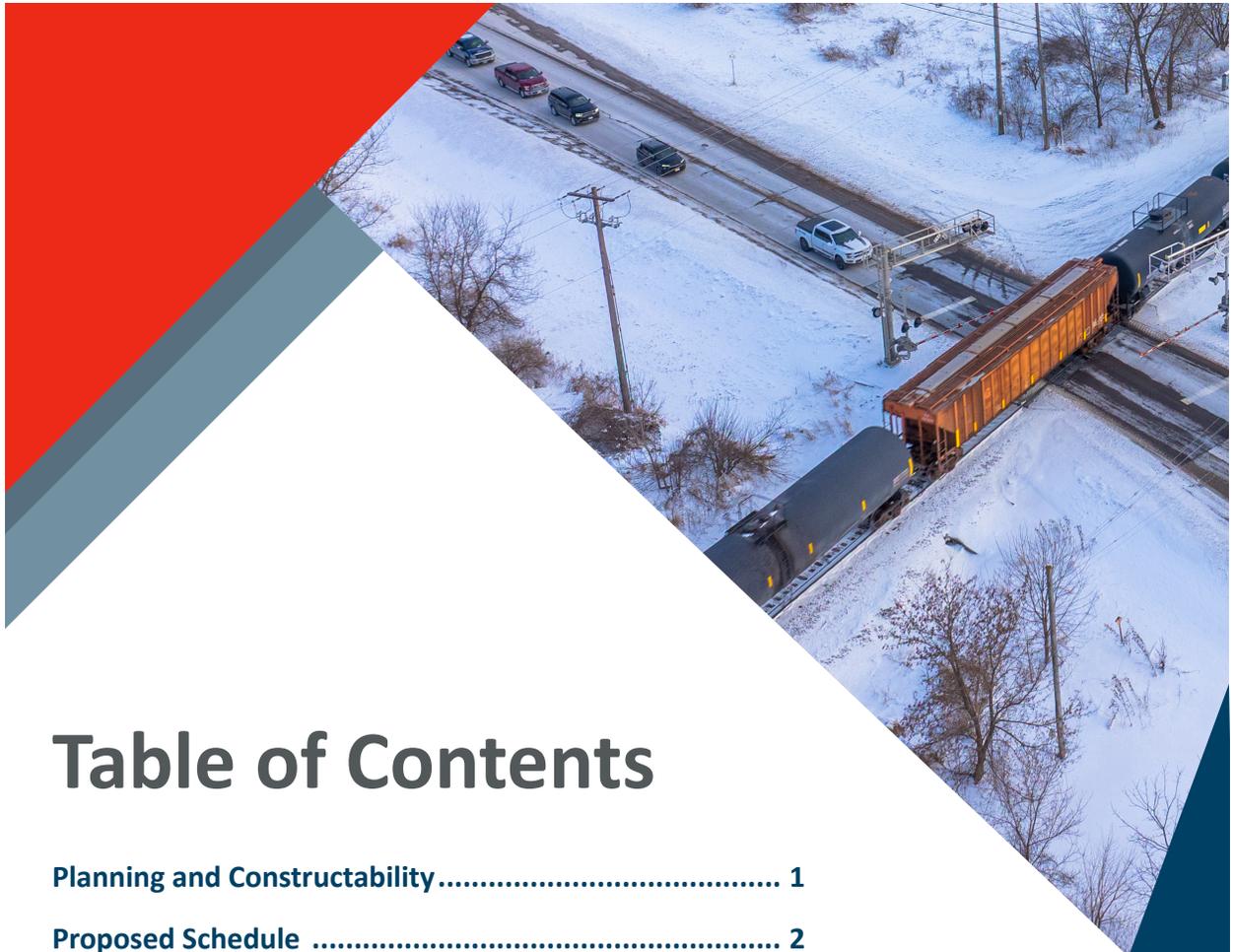
# County K Grade Crossing Elimination Project Project Readiness

FY 2026 BUILD GRANT PROGRAM

Submitted by  
Waukesha County, WI



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# Table of Contents

- Planning and Constructability ..... 1**
- Proposed Schedule ..... 2**
- NEPA and Permitting ..... 3**
- Project Support ..... 3**
- Risk and Mitigation..... 4**
- Applicant Capacity Review..... 5**



## PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTABILITY

The project is listed in the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) with [TIP #014-25-131](#). The project is not yet in the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), but with the accompanying WisDOT Letter of Support found in the application, the County anticipates STIP inclusion in September 2026 following the [STIP amendment process](#), after the project is awarded funding from the BUILD or STP-M programs.

### **Consistency with Other Plans**

The project is not only included in the SEWRPC TIP but is also featured and in alignment with multiple planning documents dating back to 2009. The project is highlighted and is consistent with the following comprehensive planning documents:

- [Waukesha County Five Year Capital Plan 2026-2030](#) (2025): Project Included
- [SEWRPC Vision 2050: A Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan](#) (2024): Project Included
- [Village of Sussex 2040 Comprehensive Plan](#) (2018): Project Included
- [Waukesha County Comprehensive Development Plan](#) (2009): Chapter 8, Goal 7
- [Wisconsin Highway-Railway Grade Crossing Safety Action Plan](#) (2022): Goal 1

### **Freight Plans**

The project aligns with the goals and objectives set in the Wisconsin State Freight Plan (SFP) and the National Freight Strategic Plan (NFSP).

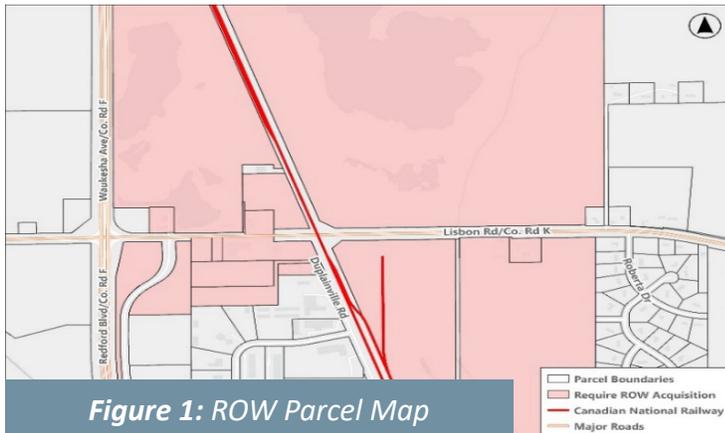
- [Wisconsin State Freight Plan](#) (2023): Chapter 7, Goal 6: Address Rail Crossing Safety, Implementation Strategy: Identify potential rail crossing safety improvement such as signals, gates, grade separations, or closing crossings
- [National Freight Strategic Plan](#) (2020): Chapter 6, Goal Safety, Implementation Strategy: Reduce conflicts between passenger and freight traffic

### **Construction Techniques and Phasing**

The project will be bid as a traditional design-bid-build project. Waukesha County and its partners have the expertise and resources to deliver this project. Details on technical capacity are on page 5.

### **Property Acquisition and Right-of-Way (ROW)**

The project requires Right-of-Way (ROW) acquisition, as documented in the Railroad Grade Separation Technical Analysis found on the [project website](#). It is estimated that 17 parcels (12 property owners) will require the acquisition of ROW to accommodate the proposed improvement, with the ROW acquisition cost projected at \$8.73 million. The acquisition process is scheduled to begin in July 2028, and be completed by July 2030. Figure 1 illustrates the parcels requiring ROW acquisition. No special permits or approvals are required. The project involves three relocations: one vacant commercial property, one residential, and one institutional property. Since the institutional property is County-owned, relocating the Waukesha County Maintenance Facility should pose minimal schedule risk.



**Figure 1: ROW Parcel Map**

**17**



parcels (12 owners) will be required to accommodate improvements

**\$8.73M**



projected in ROW cost

**PROPOSED SCHEDULE**

BUILD funds will support design engineering, ROW acquisition, utility relocation, and construction. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance will finish by July 2028, with final designs by May 2030. Utility relocations will run from July 2030 to March 2031. Construction funds will be obligated by August 2030, ahead of the deadline. Construction is set for March 2031 to November 2032, well before the September 2035 fund expenditure deadline. Public engagement will continue throughout utility relocation and construction.

**Table 1: Project Schedule**

Milestone	Start Date	End Date
Preliminary Engineering Design	October 2024	July 2028
Public Involvement Process	April 2025	November 2032
Railroad Coordination/Agreement	May 2025	January 2030
Project Listed in TIP	January 2026	February 2026
BUILD Grant Award Notification	N/A	June 2026
Finalization of BUILD Grant Agreement	June 2026	December 2026
Design Contract RFQ and NTP	July 2026	December 2026
Project Listed in STIP	February 2026	September 2026
NEPA	January 2027	July 2028
Environmental Permitting Process	January 2027	August 2030
Final Design	July 2028	May 2030
ROW Acquisition	July 2028	July 2030
Utility Relocations	July 2030	March 2031
Construction Letting and Award	November 2030	December 2030
Construction	March 2031	November 2032
BUILD Project Closeout	December 2032	January 2033

## NEPA AND PERMITTING

### ***NEPA Class of Action, Status, and Milestones***

The County K Study – [Environmental Scan](#) (ES), included a comprehensive evaluation of both social and environmental impacts across the broader County K corridor. The April 2025 ES considered a wide range of factors, including potential effects on agricultural land, demographic trends, historic and archeological resources, and park properties subject to Section 4(f) and 6(f) protections. The ES addressed potential impacts to wetlands, surface water, floodplains, wildlife, and threatened and endangered species. Additional areas of focus included noise, hazardous materials and storm water management, ensuring a thorough understanding of the corridor’s environmental and community context.

In the area surrounding the grade separation, several potential impacts have been identified. Agricultural land near the County F and Quarry Corners Parkway intersections may be affected, and the nature of the work will require coordination for archaeological resources. There is a possibility of wetland impacts, particularly where an unnamed stream crosses the roadway east of the CN crossing. The presence of several threatened and endangered species will necessitate standard mitigation measures. Additionally, the completed ES, including the Phase 1 Hazardous Materials assessment, identified one property that may need a Phase 2 evaluation.

The NEPA process will begin in January 2027 and finish by July 2028, with an Environmental Assessment (EA) expected. Based on the ES and agency coordination, significant impacts are not anticipated, and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is likely. The project team will work closely with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and internal experts to ensure efficient environmental review and permitting. The project team has completed early environmental scans and DNR coordination to help scope the level of environmental risk. By completing the early planning process, including the environmental scan, existing conditions traffic and safety report, preliminary design, agency coordination, and robust public involvement, the county has positioned the project for a streamlined and efficient NEPA delivery.

### ***Coordination with DOT***

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will serve as the federal lead agency. Waukesha County plans to leverage the [Cooperative Agreement](#) between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and WisDOT, as noted in the Innovation Merit Criteria. This agreement sets clear procedures to balance environmental stewardship with infrastructure needs, enabling the DNR and DOT to achieve coordinated planning, streamlined reviews, and greater efficiency.

## PROJECT SUPPORT

### ***Public and Agency Involvement Process***

The County has led a robust public engagement program for the project, following U.S. DOT’s best practices to gather input and feedback on access, service opportunities, and proposed improvements. Table 5 in the Partnership and Collaboration section in the Merit Criteria outlines

the diverse engagement activities conducted by the County, including multiple public involvement meetings (PIM), an up-to-date [public website](#), online and mail outreach, and the establishment of a Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC). During NEPA, design, and construction of the project, the County will continue efforts to provide the public with updates on utility relocations and construction activities.

### **Public and Agency Involvement Results**

The PIM and SAC meeting materials are posted on the [project website](#). Table 5 in the Partnership and Collaboration Merit Criteria details the engagement results. Residents' top concerns focused on safety and traffic delays, particularly at the CN Railroad crossing, Maple Avenue, and Lannon Road, as well as the heavy truck traffic along the corridor. The public demonstrated strong support for the project, particularly for grade separating the County K and CN Railroad crossing. This is evidenced by numerous public comments and Letters of Support submitted for the BUILD Grant, reflecting the community's desire for improved safety and mobility. Additionally, there is clear public backing for expanding County K from two lanes to four lanes, as shown by widespread support for the SEWRPC VISION 2050 plan amendment

### **RISKS AND MITIGATION**

Potential risks and mitigation strategies are detailed below. The project management plan includes regular status meetings, risk tracking, scheduling, accountability matrices, and project controls. Project updates will be shared publicly on the Waukesha County Department of Public Works [project website](#).

- **Railroad Coordination:** The project requires close coordination with the Canadian National (CN) railroad, supported by regular design meetings, project scheduling tools, and reporting to drive early decisions. The County will also use WisDOT's established coordination procedures to facilitate effective railroad collaboration.
- **Environmental Uncertainties:** The project team will draw on strong ties with the Wisconsin DNR and internal experts to ensure efficient environmental coordination, permitting and mitigation. Early environmental scans and DNR coordination have already helped define project risks.
- **Property Relocations:** The project will require two full and one partial property relocations. A specialized consultant will assist with relocation management, and a Real Estate Acquisition Management Plan will guide timely, federally compliant acquisitions.
- **Land Acquisition and Utility Relocation:** The project schedule follows WisDOT's 24x7 best practice, allowing 24 months for land acquisition and 7 months for utility relocations before construction notice to proceed. The team will use strong decision-making, experienced management and rigorous controls to maintain schedule flexibility and meet 24x7 goals.
- **Cost Overruns:** Project estimates account for a 3% annual inflation rate. Construction costs are based on 20% design completion and include a 5% contingency to buffer against potential cost increases.

## APPLICANT CAPACITY REVIEW

### *Roles and Responsibilities*

**Allison Bussler** serves as the Waukesha County Department of Public Works (DPW) Director. Allison will provide executive-level leadership and accountability to ensure all project work is completed according to County policy, state law, and federal regulations and consistent with the BUILD Grant funding agreement. **Brett Wallace, PE**, Engineering Services Manager, will serve as the County K project manager, overseeing scope, schedule, budget, quality, risks, public involvement and agency coordination, drawing on over 34 years of transportation engineering experience, including extensive work with federally funded projects.

### *Federal Funding*

The Waukesha County DPW has a long history of successfully delivering federally funded transportation projects, including both traditional and non-traditional projects. The County has delivered projects in cooperation with WisDOT and FHWA in the [STP](#), [HSIP](#), [LBP](#), [CMAQ](#), and [CRP](#). This is evidenced by the County's successful management and administration of the \$90 million (\$57million is STP funding) CTH O (Moorland Road) Corridor Reconstruction Project and the \$31 million CTH M (North Avenue) Project, securing \$16 million in STP funding for the latter.

### *Federal Regulations*

Waukesha County DPW has experience and technical knowledge relating to federal regulations, including federal contract and procurement requirements, Buy America, ADA, Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Act, Davis Bacon Act, MUTCD, AASHTO Design Manual, Public Right-of-Way

Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG), as well as WisDOT's 2025 Construction Standard Specifications and Construction and Materials Manual.

### *Project Planning*

The project is already incorporated into the SEWRPC TIP and is anticipated to be included in the STIP in September 2026. The County frequently incorporates projects to the TIP/STIP through the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) planning process.

### *Project Delivery*

The County has completed several railroad at-grade crossing elimination projects. These projects demonstrate the technical capabilities of the County to work with Class I Railroads and replace outdated and poor performing at-grade crossings with new grade separated highway bridges. Grade crossing eliminations were completed at the following locations:

- CTH YY (Pilgrim Road) over the UP Railroad in the Village of Menomonee Falls
- CTH ES (Fox Street) over the Canadian National Railroad in the Village of Mukwonago
- CTH C (Lakeland Drive) over the Canadian Pacific Railroad in the Village of Nashotah

As a recipient of STP/HSIP/CMAQ/CRP funding, the County has consistently delivered projects successfully, maintaining a commendable standing with no outstanding deficiencies. The County is equipped with the technical expertise and resources necessary to oversee the project, providing quality control across all project phases, and ensuring the public remains well-informed about the project's goals and progress.