

Minatare – US-385

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NEBRASKA

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Agenda

Minatare - US-385
NH-26-1(172); C.N. 51521

- Purpose and Need for the Project
- Project Overview and Scope of Work
- Project History
- Design Features
- Public Involvement
- Schedule and Cost
- Commission Recommendation of the following:
 - Approval of the **Project Location** and **Design**
 - Approval of the use of **Access Control** on the project

Project Purpose

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- The purpose of the proposed project is to develop an improved transportation corridor connecting the junction of US-385 and L-62A, with the city of Minatare.
- The improved corridor is intended to address the following transportation related purposes:
 - To provide an improved highway on a congressionally designated National Highway System (NHS) High Priority Corridor that increases the efficiency and safety of travel
 - To fulfill federal legislative intent of ISTEA, TEA-21, SAFETEA-LU, and MAP-21
 - To fulfill state legislative intent of the Build Nebraska Act and the Transportation Innovation Act
 - To address roadway and operational challenges of the existing facility

Project Need

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This project is needed because:

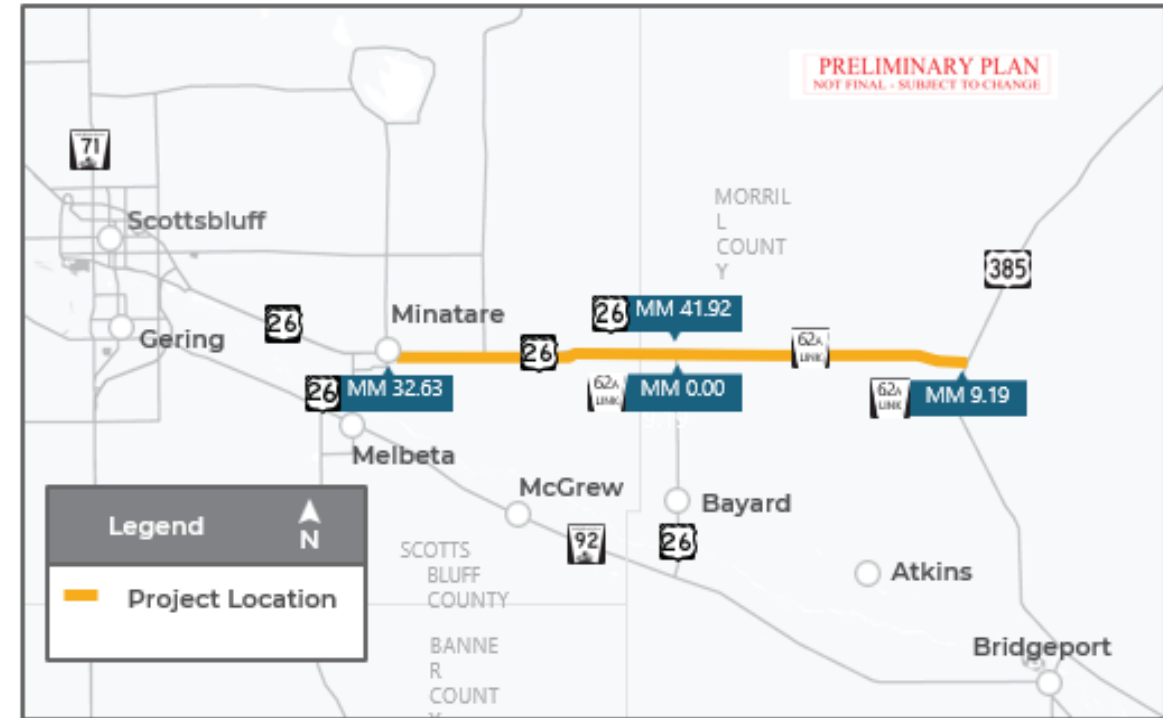
- Congress has designated this corridor for completion
- Federal and State government legislative actions have provided ongoing funding and intent to construct it
- There are numerous roadway and operational challenges with the existing facility that reduce its efficiency and safety



Project Overview

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- Located on US Highway 26 (US-26) and Nebraska Link 62A (L-62A) in Scotts Bluff and Morrill counties; 18.5 miles in length.
- Expands the existing two-lane highway to a four-lane facility using the 2+2 configuration.
- Access Control will be acquired
- Alignment Alternatives & Preliminary Design are completed
- Public Involvement
- Final Environmental Assessment (EA) Approved
- Final decision of Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)



Scope of Work

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The improvements will:

- Reconstruct US-26, on alignment, to a 4-lane divided roadway with a raised median from Main Street in Minatare to just east of the corporate limits of Minatare.
- Widen US-26 and L-62A, east of Minatare, from an existing 2-lane roadway to a 4-lane divided roadway with a depressed median using the 2+2 strategy of constructing new lanes on the north side of the US-26/L-62A corridor and milling and resurfacing the existing lanes.
- Use the existing bridge over Ninemile Creek in place and construct a new bridge to the north with the new lanes on US-26.



Scope of Work

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Additional improvements will include:

- Building, extending or replacing drainage structures.
- Improving intersections.
- Modifying accesses.
- Removing and replacing guardrail.



Project History

- **1991:** Congress identified the full extent of the Heartland Expressway as a High Priority Corridor from Denver, through Scottsbluff, to Rapid City.
- **1993:** Heartland Expressway Economic and Engineering Feasibility Study (NDOT and SDDOT) recommended feasibility and routing of the corridor between Scottsbluff and Rapid City.

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Project History

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- **2000:** Final EA and FONSI approved for a four-lane divided highway on US-26/L-62A from Scottsbluff to US-385.
- **2011:** Build Nebraska Act (LB 84) passed a ¼ percent sales tax for the Nebraska Expressway System, federally designated High Priority Corridors, and preservation of the existing system.
- **2014:** Heartland Expressway Corridor Development and Management Plan re-evaluated and updated the entire corridor for economic benefits and environmental impacts.

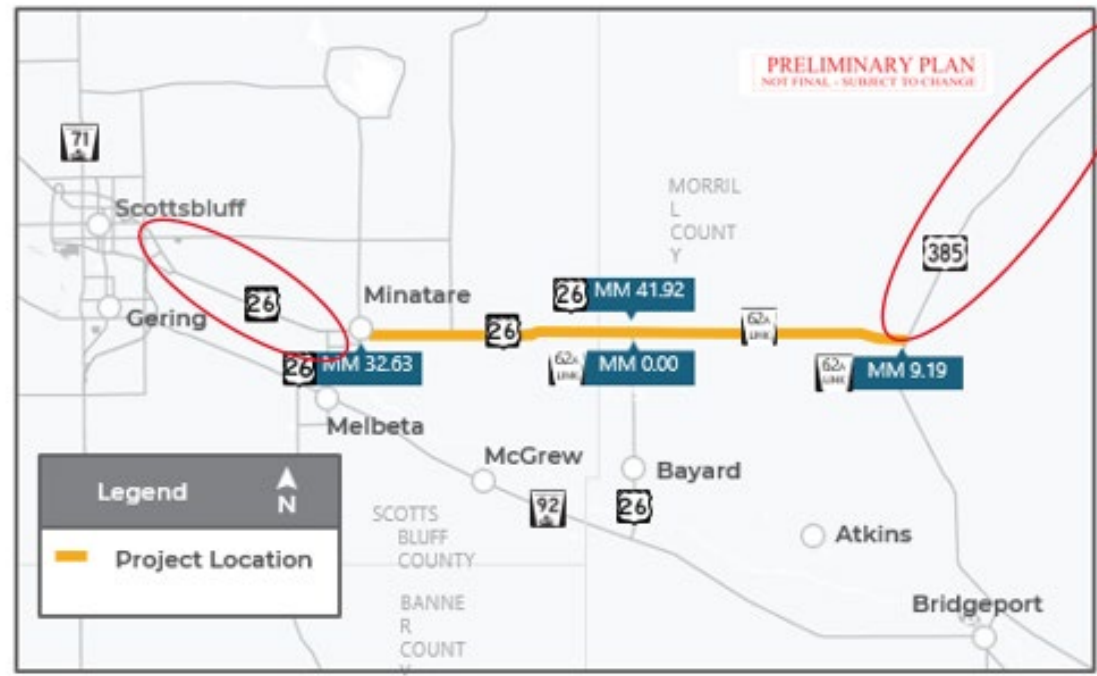


Project History

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- **2016:** The NDOT StEEP process selected US-26/L-62A from Minatare to US-385 as a 4-lane divided highway expansion project. Fills a gap in the Heartland Expressway.
 - US-26 Scottsbluff to Minatare 4-lane facility constructed in 2019
 - US-385 from L-62A North to Alliance 4-lane facility was constructed between 2016-2022

This project will fill the gap by connecting the 4-lane facilities



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- **2021:** FHWA/NDOT determined that enough changes had occurred since the approval of original EA, that a new EA was needed. Early agency coordination began.
- **2022:** Public provided an opportunity to comment and view alternatives for the project in September.
- **2024:** Public Hearing was conducted regarding the Draft Environmental Assessment and preferred alternative in November.



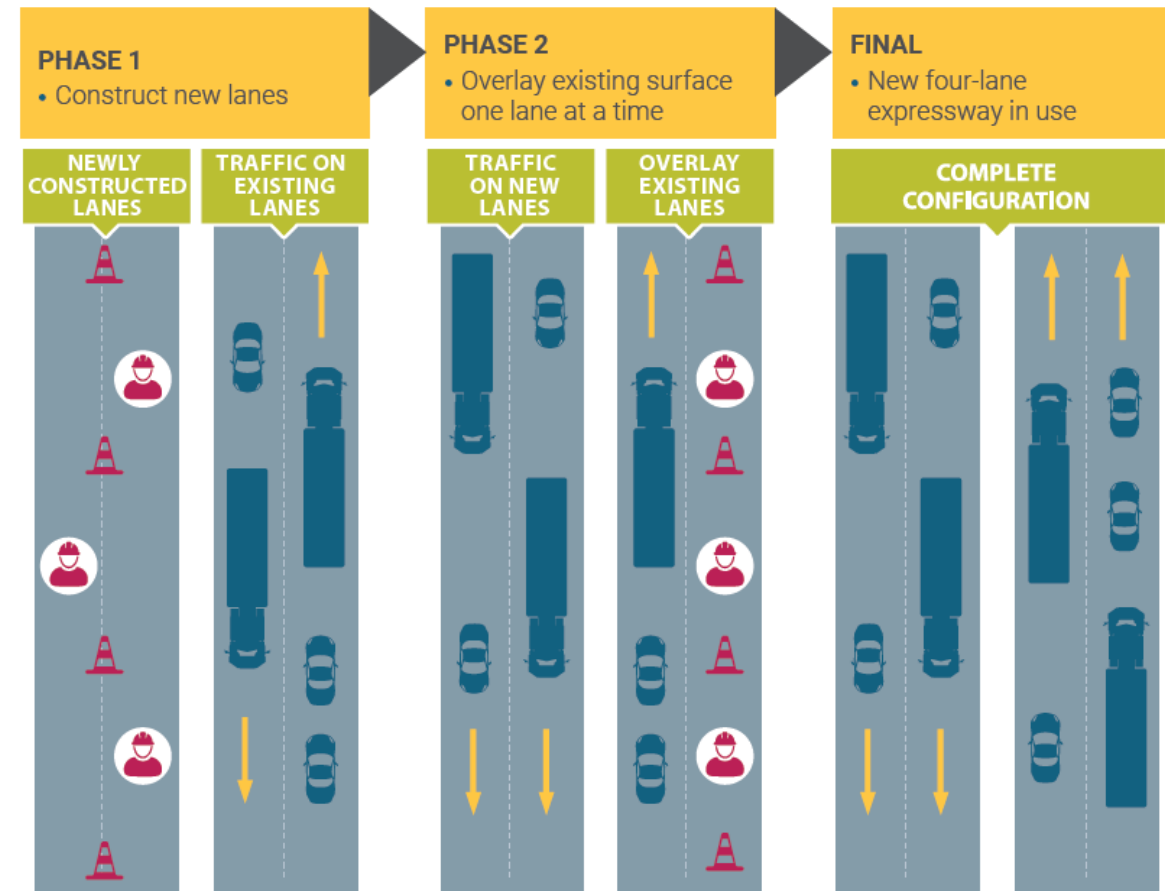
Design Features

2 + 2 Approach

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The 2+2 construction concept will construct two new lanes north of the existing two lanes to create a four-lane corridor. This approach will:

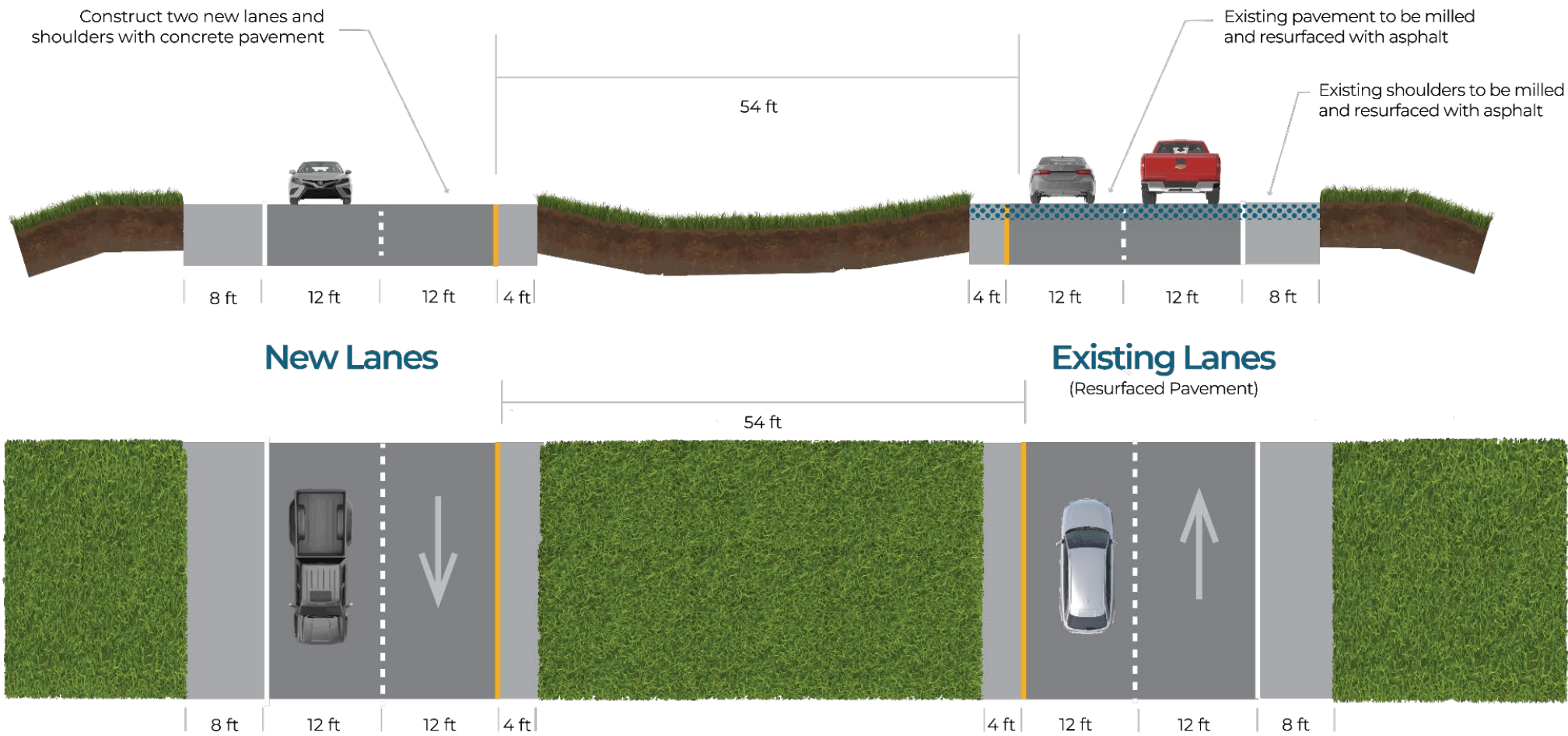
- Minimize traffic disruption.
- Maximize the use of the existing roadway.



Design Features

Typical Section (2+2)

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Design Features

Traffic Accommodations

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- The project would be constructed under traffic.
- Temporary surfacing may be required.
- Closures at the junction with county roads may be needed.
- Access to adjacent properties would be maintained but may be limited at times.



Design Features

Access Control

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- Access control is the regulation of public access locations abutting the highway facility.
- This concept provides:
 - Safer environment
 - Increases efficiency of movement
 - Reduces accidents by minimizing conflict points

Access Control Criteria

- Relocate and consolidate existing access
- Establish appropriate spacing
- Full access at County Road intersections
- Between County Road intersections
 - Approx. 1000 ft and no more than 3 per mile
 - Encourage RT-In / RT Out to reduce frontage roads at field entrances
 - Option for public access from County Road vs. highway

Public Involvement

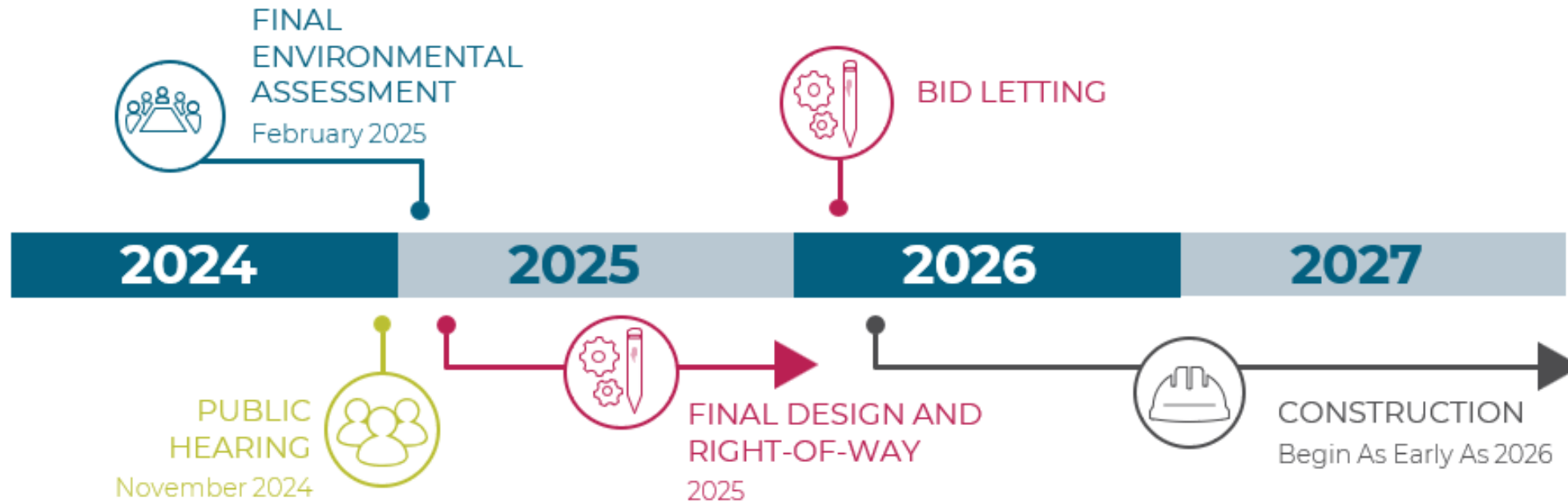
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- September 8, 2022 -Public Information Meetings, ~103 attended, 53 written comments were received
 - Included Stakeholder meeting with City of Minatare, Morrill & Scottsbluff Co, & 4 irrigation districts; Minatare, Famers, Pathfinder, & Nine-Mile
- November 21, 2024 - Public Hearing, ~98 attended, 15 written comments were received
 - Included Stakeholder meetings with 20 property owners (representing 10 properties)
- Public Hearing Public Comments
 - In Support
 - Questions and concerns from property owners along the project
 - Speeds & Peds crossing at Minatare



Anticipated Schedule & Cost

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ESTIMATED COST: \$94.7 MILLION*

*Funding comes from federal and state sources.

Requested Recommendation

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Commission Recommendation of the following:

- Approval of the project location and design
- Approval of the use of access control on the project





Questions?

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