



TO: DMATS Technical & Policy Boards

FROM: Chandra Ravada, Interim Executive Director,
ECIA

DATE: February 11, 2024

SUBJECT: Request for Reprogramming and Allocation of Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Funding

INTRODUCTION

This memorandum outlines the City of Dubuque's request to reprogram and allocate Dubuque Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (DMATS) Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funding. Specifically, the request pertains to the East-West Corridor project, the Cedar Cross Road project, and fiscal years 2028 and 2029 STBG funding from DMATS to the City of Dubuque RAISE project (14th Street/16th Street/Sycamore Street/Elm Street) and Northwest Arterial/U.S. 20 Intersection Improvements.

BACKGROUND

The City of Dubuque previously identified the East-West Corridor and Cedar Cross Road projects as top transportation priorities. The city submitted applications for Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funding to the Dubuque Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (DMATS). In Fiscal Year (FFY) 2020, the city secured \$7.9 million (\$1.6 million for preliminary design/environmental review, \$6.3 million for construction) for the East-West Corridor improvements, with an additional \$3.2 million earmarked for Cedar Cross Road in FFY 2027. The East-West Corridor Improvements Project is part of the FFY 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

In 2023, DMATS identified two pressing issues. Firstly, the impending increase in train traffic due to the merger of the Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern railroads. The merger is projected to triple the number of trains passing daily through the metro area from 9 to 18 by 2027. This surge in train activity will lead to significant delays at rail crossings and will hinder the efficient movement of people and goods, significantly impacting vulnerable neighborhoods and key employment centers. The City of Dubuque secured \$2.28 million in U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Rebuilding America's Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) planning funds to address these challenges through the design and engineering of a railroad overpass, complete street enhancements, and new shared-use paths in economically distressed areas.

The city is currently in the process of applying for a RAISE grant for the construction of the 14th Street overpass and related improvements. The project cost is estimated at \$ \$54,780,000 (not including property acquisition), and the application deadline is set for the end of February 2024. The city can receive a maximum of \$25 million from the RAISE grant. The city will need to seek other funding sources and phase some project elements.

Secondly, the Northwest Arterial and U.S. Highway 20 intersection has become a critical bottleneck, handling 44,000 vehicles, including 2,500 trucks daily. Safety concerns were underscored by 168 crashes recorded from 2019 to 2023. Responding to the escalating traffic issues, the City of Dubuque collaborated with the Iowa DOT in the spring of 2021 to conduct a study of the intersection. The new location study recommended a four-lane arterial alternative, estimated to cost \$17.5 million in 2022 dollars. The Iowa DOT District 6 office submitted the project to headquarters for consideration in the State Fiscal Year 2025-2030 Five-Year Program, with an expectation that one-third of the cost, \$5.5 million, will be contributed by local agencies.

DISCUSSION

The City of Dubuque is continuing to work on the Cedar Cross Road Project and the preliminary design/environmental review of the East-West Corridor Improvements and strategically planning the construction of the project in multiple phases, utilizing federal, state, and local funds.

However, recognizing the urgency of the RAISE Grant Project and the Northwest Arterial and US Highway 20 Intersection Project, the city recommends redirecting Dubuque Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (DMATS) Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funding to address these pressing concerns.

The specific requests from the City of Dubuque to DMATS are as follows:

- Reprogram \$6.37 million from the East-West Corridor Improvements to the RAISE Grant Project.
- Program \$3.28 million from the Cedar Cross Road project to the RAISE Grant Project.
- Program \$1.59 million of Fiscal Year 2028 DMATS STBG funding to the RAISE Grant Project.
- Program \$2.4 million of Fiscal Year 2029 DMATS STBG funding to the Northwest Arterial and U.S. Highway 20 Intersection Project.

The City of Dubuque has the following local funds programmed for East-West Corridor Improvements and the RAISE grant.

- The city programmed \$1,065,920 in city funds (\$663,926 sales tax 30%, \$367,384 in RUTF, and \$34,610 in downtown TIF funding) to support the East-West Corridor improvements.
- The city of reprogramming \$1,121,693 budgeted in 30% sales tax money for Cedar Cross Road reprogrammed to the RAISE grant project.
- Based on Canadien Pacific's past comments, the city anticipates Canadien Pacific contributing \$ 1,000,000 to the 14th Street Overpass project.

RECOMMENDATION

The DMATS staff agrees with the City of Dubuque's request, recognizing that this reallocation of funds will effectively address immediate needs within the DMATS region and will leverage tens of millions of dollars of state and federal transportation investments.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN

The DMATS staff respectfully requests the DMATS Boards to concur with the City of Dubuque's proposed reallocation and take necessary action to implement the recommended changes.