

Business Item

Transportation Committee



Committee Meeting Date: November 13, 2023

For the Metropolitan Council: December 13, 2023

Business Item: 2023-247

Metro Freeway Project Approval: Highway 212 and Carver County State Aid Highway 51

District(s), Member(s): District 4, Deb Barber
Policy/Legal Reference: MS. 473.166
Staff Prepared/Presented: Bethany Brandt-Sargent, Senior Planner, 651-602-1725
Steve Peterson, Senior Manager of Highway Planning and TAB/TAC Process
Division/Department: Metropolitan Transportation Services

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council approve a request by Carver County to construct a grade separated interchange at Highway 212 and County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 51, right-turn lanes, and auxiliary lanes for acceleration, as part of a larger corridor expansion project along Highway 212, subject to further review and approval by the Metropolitan Council if there are any significant changes in the design of the proposed project.

Background

To ensure that proposed highway projects are consistent with regional policies and plans, state law requires Council approval of controlled access highway projects. This request covers the construction of an interchange along with turn lanes and auxiliary lanes at Highway 212 and CSAH 51.

This interchange is part of a larger Highway 212 investment plan which includes widening the corridor from two lanes to four lanes between the City of Glencoe and the Twin Cities and the interchange. This project has received federal funding, including \$15 million through the Minnesota Highway Freight Program (2017), \$3.5 million through Regional Solicitation (2020), and \$10 million through the USDOT's INFRA discretionary grant program.

Carver County completed an Environmental Assessment Worksheet for the proposed project has been approved and a Findings of Fact and Conclusions was issued in October 2023.

Rationale

Minnesota state law (MS. 473.166) requires that the Council approve any controlled access highway in the metropolitan area before construction or right-of-way acquisition begins. This project is included in the current 2040 Transportation Policy Plan and the region's 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program. It is consistent with regional policy, and most directly advances the Transportation Policy Plan goals of Safety and Security, Access to Destinations, and Competitive Economy. The Highway 212 and CSAH 51 interchanged was approved by the joint Metropolitan Council/ Minnesota Department of Transportation Interchange Review Committee, pursuant to Appendix F of the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan.

Thrive Lens Analysis

This project supports a competitive economy by providing safe and reliable freight movements. Highway 212 has been designated by the MnDOT as a critical Rural Freight Corridor. Improvements at this location are essential for the more than 65 freight generators along Highway 212 in Minnesota and for generators in South Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana. The project supports a safer transportation system by eliminating conflict points along Highway 212, which has experienced one fatal crash since 2015 along with five additional crashes. This interchange project is expected to reduce crashes 29 to 42 percent.

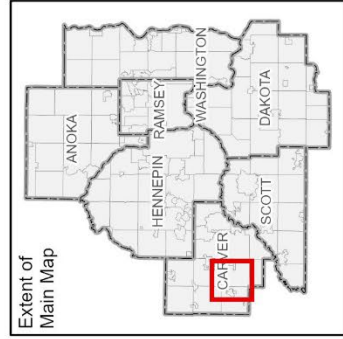
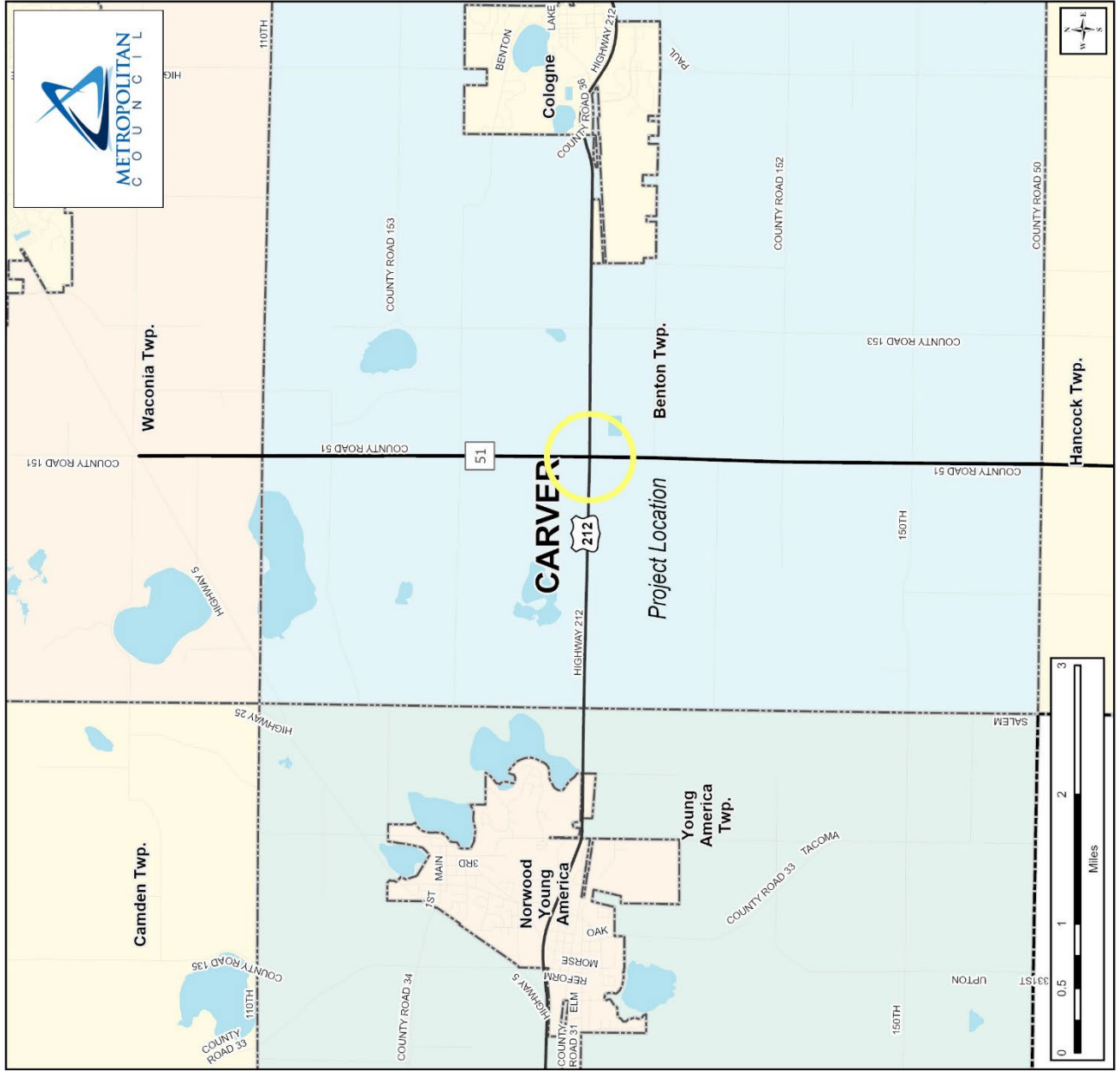
Funding

The full project has an estimated cost of \$71 million, with the interchange project around \$5.1 million. This project is fully funded with local, county, state, and federal funds, including \$3.5 million of federal funds awarded through the Regional Solicitation in 2020.



Project Location Highway 212 and CSAH 51 Interchange

- Highways**
- Interstate Highways
 - State, US Highways and County Roads
 - ▭ County Boundaries
 - ▭ City and Township Boundaries
 - ▭ Lakes and Rivers



10/17/2023

Figure 1: Project Location

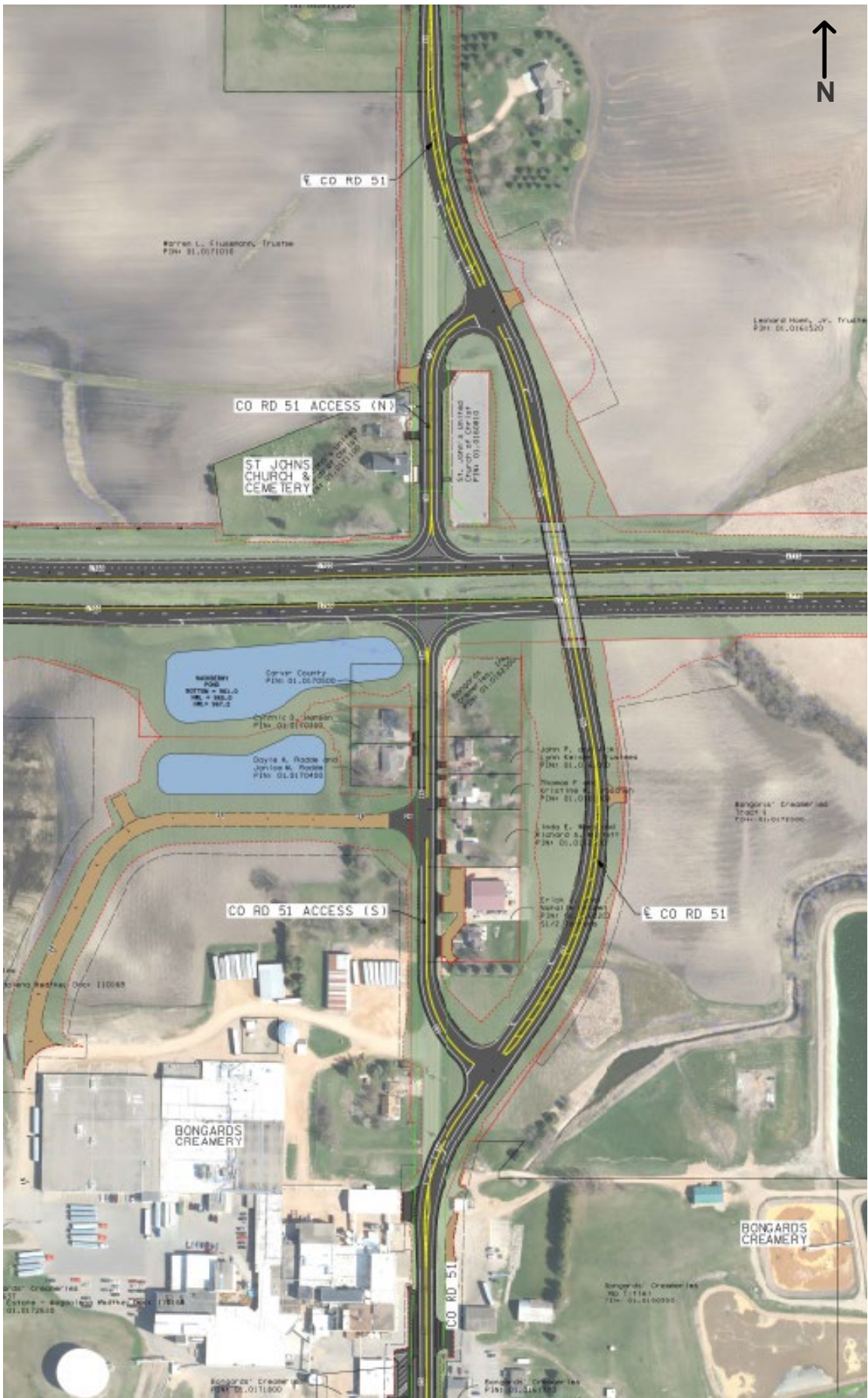


Figure 2: Project Layout



**Carver County
Public Works**

11360 Highway 212, Suite 1
Cologne, MN55322

Carver County Public Works No. 178826

October 20, 2023

Bethany Brandt-Sargent, AICP, PTP
Senior Planner
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
390 Robert St. N.
St. Paul, MN 55101

SUBJECT: TH 212/CSAH 51 Interchange Safety Project Controlled Access Approval Request

Dear Ms. Brandt-Sargent:

Carver County and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) are requesting controlled access approval from the Metropolitan Council in accordance with Minnesota Statute 473.166 for the construction of a new interchange access on Trunk Highway (TH) 212 at County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 51 in Benton Township. The purpose of the project is to address critical safety and access management improvements needed along TH 212. The planned improvements will eliminate freight inefficiencies, reduce rural highway fatalities, and strengthen rural access to economic opportunities in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. The project is consistent with the following 2040 Transportation Policy Plan goals and strategies: A – Transportation System Stewardship, Strategy A1; B – Safety and Security, Strategy B1, B3, and B6; C – Access to Destinations, Strategy C1 and C10; D – Competitive Economy, Strategy D1 and D3; E – Healthy and Equitable Communities, Strategy E3; and F – Leveraging Transportation Investments to Guide Land Use, Strategy F5 and F7.

A state Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) was prepared for the project. The EAW was approved by MnDOT on June 21, 2023. The Findings of Fact and Conclusion and negative declaration order, concluding the state environmental review process, was approved by MnDOT on October 19, 2023. The environmental review documents and other project information are available at <https://www.carvercountymn.gov/departments/public-works/projects-studies/highway-212-project-benton-township>.

Please contact me at dmielke@co.carver.mn.us or at 952-466-5222 if you have any questions regarding the project.

Sincerely,
CARVER COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS

Darin Mielke PE
Deputy County Engineer

cc: Diane Langenbach, MnDOT Metro District
Ryan Wilson, MnDOT Metro District
Dan Erickson, MnDOT Metro State Aid
Lyndon Robjent, Carver County

CARVER COUNTY