

DATE: November 14, 2022

TO: City/County Engineers, RDCs, MPOs, Townships, MnDOT Districts

FROM: Amy L. Johnson  
Program Manager, Rail Grade Crossing Safety  
[Amy.l.johnson@state.mn.us](mailto:Amy.l.johnson@state.mn.us)  
651/366-3709

SUBJECT: Grade Crossing Safety Program – Section 130 Funding

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the new funding bill, changes the Federal share for projects funded under the Section 130 program for certain project types. The Railroad Safety and Coordination Unit will continue to focus their efforts in improving safety at railroad crossings in the following three categories. See each category for funding changes.

Three categories of projects will be funded through this effort:

- Closures/Consolidations of Railroad crossings
  - Closures and consolidations continue to be MnDOT's top funding priority.
- Railroad crossing safety projects (passive locations) at high-risk locations
  - MnDOT has hired consultants to perform traffic counts at over 800 locations throughout the state. This data will be provided to MnDOT in the fall of 2022. Once we receive this data, we will review those crossings with high risks and reach out to the local road authorities for their input.
- Antiquated Equipment replacement projects (active locations)
  - Active locations currently have signal systems in place. A solicitation is sent to the railroads, requesting their top candidates for replacement. Crossing equipment becomes difficult to maintain due to obsolescence and from a safety standpoint, it's imperative to keep crossing equipment in good working order.

### **Closures/Consolidations of Railroad Crossings**

In order for a project to be eligible for the Closure/Consolidation category, it must meet the criteria laid out in Minnesota Rule 8830.2740 <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules?id=8830.2740> and be ready to construct in the year of funding available. IIJA, the new funding bill, increases the amount of state incentive payment at grade closures from \$7,500 to \$100,000.

Eligible projects will be scored on the following criteria:

- Number of crossings closed
- Risk/Cost factor = {(Risk Factors/cost)} \*1,000,000
- Deficient Geometry

## Railroad Crossing Safety Projects at high Risk Locations

The locations of concern are identified using the following risk factors: roadway AADT, number of trains per day, volume cross product (# vehicles x # trains), train speed, skew, distance to nearby intersection, distance to nearest crossing, clearing sight distance, approaching sight distance.

When the AADT (average annual daily traffic) numbers become available in the fall of 2022, our unit will determine whether they're eligible to be programmed for state fiscal year 2026.

The Railroad Safety and Coordination Unit will be able to implement 100 percent funding beginning in state fiscal year 2024 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024) for these project types.

## Antiquated Equipment Replacement Projects

Active signal systems have a shelf-life of 20-25 years. There are over 300 at-grade crossings with systems older than 25 years that have been identified; therefore, MnDOT is focusing most of their efforts on replacing antiquated equipment for state fiscal year 2026. **MnDOT will still require the Class 1 railroads to participate a minimum of 10 percent for these project types.**

The road authority and RR will then be contacted and a diagnostic field review at the crossing will be scheduled with the Project Manager. Projects typically range between \$200,000 and \$375,000. Additional improvements may be required at the crossing (I.E. widening of the road, crossing surface extensions, sidewalk/pathway modifications, etc) that raise the cost above the typical range. These improvements would be identified and discussed during the diagnostic review. The road authority is responsible for these improvements, if necessary.

The following information may be requested prior the diagnostic review:

- 1) An evaluation of whether the crossing and/or adjacent crossings can be closed or consolidated (costs associated with closing and consolidating crossings are eligible for funding)
- 2) Plans for any future road work
- 3) Information and traffic projections for any development

Please share this information with your smaller local agencies and submit all requests by to [amy.l.johnson@state.mn.us](mailto:amy.l.johnson@state.mn.us) or the address above. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

cc: District State Aid Engineers, MnDOT