

Hwy 52 Southbound Improvement Project

(Cannon Falls to Zumbrota)



Frequently Asked Questions

Safety

Why are safety improvements to the Highway 52 corridor a major consideration?

- The need for safety improvements has been identified in major transportation planning studies:
 - Crash rate is 2.3 times higher than similar intersections statewide (Highway 52 / Highway 57 / County Road 8).
 - Reduced Conflict Intersections (RCIs) are proven to improve safety.
 - HR Green 2012 study identified a number of interchange, intersection, and roadway improvements that will improve safety. This is the next step.

How will the RCI lanes affect agricultural equipment and semis?

- We will be looking at the data and researching the needs of the intersections, as well as talking with farmers and others involved in agriculture along the corridor.

Will MnDOT study these intersections at 7 or 8 am? Traffic can vary a lot based on time and season (such as during harvest).

- Yes, we have collected traffic data at varying times, and will continue to do so.

The crash rates are getting worse. Why are we waiting until 2021?

- That is sufficient time to plan a more comprehensive approach and when the funding is available. If there is an unexpected need that arises, it will be reassessed.

Snow drifts can block visibility and make driving difficult and dangerous. What will the project do to help with snow drifts?

- Snow drift fencing will be looked at as part of the project.

What is the typical speed on this section of Highway 52?

- 73 mph

Will the speed limit change?

- No.

Funding Considerations

What is the funding source?

- Almost all state and some county. We continue to work with our partners in Goodhue County as the plan details become more defined.

Why no federal funding?

- The state legislature has provided the funding. There was no federal program. We have an opportunity to use one-time additional funding that was approved by the legislature.

How are state funds for road construction distributed?

- The money is distributed based on a formula that looks at miles and traffic demands.

Design

What is the purpose of the project?

- The primary purpose of the project is to address the pavement condition, while the secondary purpose is to improve safety and manage access.

What will the project involve?

- The project will reconstruct southbound Highway 52 between Cannon Falls and Zumbrota. It will replace bridges in Zumbrota at Highway 52, Highway 60 (west), and Highway 60 (east). There may be intersection improvements at Highway 57/County

Road 8 in Hader. Prior to the special funding, MnDOT only had funding for a blacktop overlay. With the special funding, it allows for a reconstruction of the southbound lanes, which is a long-term fix. Regular motorists on Highway 52 may have noticed the ridges that develop in the wheel lanes. That's the original road bed from the 1920s. The reconstruction will remove this issue.

How do you decide if a full interchange is constructed at an intersection like Hader?

- Many factors are considered and weighed. These include environmental impacts, the amount of land that is needed, and the amount of crash reduction we can anticipate from that type of facility. Cost is always part of the determination but it is not a sole determinant. We also look at long-range mobility needs, such as the needs for the agricultural equipment that needs to cross there.

What about the northbound lanes? Are they in the same condition as the southbound?

- Highway 52 northbound is not in the same condition. The northbound lanes were constructed later than the original southbound lanes.

At the bridge at Highway 60 West at Zumbrota, will there still be ramps there?

- Yes, we are basically putting the bridge back in kind. It may be a little wider than what is there today, possibly with some sidewalk facilities.

Are there going to be frontage road constructions?

- Generally, no, except for the County Road 14 extension, which was a follow up project from the Cannon Falls interchange project. There may be some short segments of frontage road where access consolidation is feasible.

Will acceleration lanes be added?

- Median (left-hand) acceleration lanes are not being considered at this point, as they do not address the risk of dangerous broadside crashes. There may be spot locations where right-hand acceleration lanes are warranted based on access and profile changes.

Schedule

When will construction start?

- We are in the preliminary design phase. Construction is anticipated to start in spring 2021 and will likely continue until late 2023.

When was Highway 52 originally built?

- In the 1920s.

What is the timeline to transition to full freeway vision?

- A freeway, by design, means limited access points. This process will take a significant amount of time, likely decades. At this point, there is no new funding, but MnDOT has worked with its partners in the past to achieve portions of this vision that Dakota, Goodhue and Olmsted counties have endorsed with their Highway 52 Freeway Partnership.

Are there other projects scheduled for construction north of Cannon Falls?

- Yes, there is a project for the Highway 52 segment just north of Cannon Falls, which is a MnDOT metro region project. Additional projects are scheduled in the future and MnDOT will coordinate communication to ensure that motorists are connected to updates as the projects near.