

Date: April 21, 2023

Wendall Meyer
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
380 Jackson Street, Suite 500
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-2904

In reply refer to:

De Minimis Determination Notice of Intent Request for City of New Ulm Recreational Trail
S.P. 0804-119 (TH US 14)

At the Junction of US 14 and North Highland Avenue on the west edge of New Ulm, Minnesota
Brown County

Attn: William Lohr

MnDOT is requesting that FHWA issue a notice of intent to make a determination that the impact of the above reference project on the New Ulm Recreational Trail would be de minimis. This letter documents the collaboration with the City of New Ulm to address the intersection's operational and safety aspects and how it fits into both the recreational and transportation systems.

Information supporting this request is presented below.

1. General Project Information

SP:	0804-119
Federal Project No.:	TBD
Route:	US TH 14
From /To:	Junction of US TH 14 and North Highland Avenue
Description of Proposed Improvement:	Installation of a Roundabout

2. Project Manager

Name: Mathew Thibert, P.E., PMP
Title: Principal Engineer – Project Manager
Address: 2151 Bassett Drive, Mankato MN 56001
Phone: (507) 381-0393
Email: mathew.thibert@state.mn.us

3. Description of the Section 4(f) Property.

Name: City of New Ulm Recreational Trail – Circle Trail
Total Size: 13 miles
Location: The City of New Ulm has a Circle Trail that encompasses a minimum 40 block long by 10 block wide portion of the town. It includes the use of city streets in some portions as well as portions that are paved designated trail.
MnDOT will be affecting 450 feet of that trail at the Junction of North Highland Avenue and US TH 14 where the trail is situated north and south along Highland Avenue and crosses US 14 between the existing frontage roads.

Section 4(f) Property Owner/Manager: Joseph Stadheim, City of New Ulm Engineer
Official(s) with Jurisdiction (OWJ): City of New Ulm, 100 North Broadway, New Ulm, MN 56073
Type of Section 4(f) Property: Recreational Trail (paved portion)
Function of or Available Activities on the Property: Trail around the City of New Ulm, recreational / transportation for pedestrians, bicyclists.

Description and Location of Existing and Planned Facilities:
This segment currently crosses US 14 along North Highland Avenue between the frontage roads. The trail will be aligned with other roundabout pedestrian and bicyclist crossings to maintain the linkages and provide user safety.

Access: Currently accessible from sidewalks in the area and the trail as well as frontage roads. Access will stay the same. Users are pedestrians and bicyclists.

Other Features or Attributes Important to the Section 4(f) resource:
The trail goes around the original platted area of New Ulm. It connects several parks together, especially in the downtown area along German Street. There have been no recent advertisements that this trail is used for any fundraising event, special activities, etc.

4. Impacts to the Section 4(f) Property.

Amount of land impacted (acres): 0.10 acres (450 feet long by 10 feet wide)
Permanent R/W Acquisition/Easements: Already within highway / frontage road right-of-way so no direct purchase is needed, but there is not a Limited Use Permit associated with this trail crossing.
Temporary Easements: Temporary orders to work on adjacent transportation legs.
Functions/Activities Affected: Temporary closure of the trail while the roundabout is built.
Facilities Affected: Intersection will be closed while the roundabout is constructed.
Access Affected: Crossing US TH 14 at this site will be closed during construction.
Other Features or Attributes Affected: No parks or other recreational facilities will be affected.

5. Considerations in consultation with the OWJ.

Impact avoidance: No practicable avoidance of disruption of this 450-foot section of the trail is available as it is associated with the North Highland Avenue crossing. The current trail goes through the intersection along Highland Avenue. Since the intersection will be converted to a roundabout – that straight section will be realigned to be configured to the roundabout’s sidewalk legs. Therefore, the

trail will be detoured to the local sidewalk routes that go around this intersection.

Planning to minimize harm:

While the 450-ft section currently goes straight through the intersection having the trail connected to the local sidewalk system will allow for better connections to residential areas and the commercial areas on the west side of New Ulm.

Mitigation:

Connect the trail with with frontage roads, residential and other sidewalks in the area to increase the safety of the pedestrians and other trail users. This includes using a pedestrian / bicyclist detour on the existing sidewalk system.

Enhancement:

Maintain signs and provide improved connection to bicycle users traveling along the shoulder of US TH 14.

6. Coordination with Responsible Official with Jurisdiction (OWJ) Over the Section 4(f) Property:

List all consultation activities with the OWJ:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Agency/Organization, Personnel, and their Position</i>	<i>Discussion description</i>	<i>Conclusions</i>
<i>Fall 2019 to Spring 2020</i>	<i>Shauna McIntire, Grad Engineer with MnDOT in conjunction with City of New Ulm</i>	<i>Intersection Control Evaluation data collection and Draft Evaluation document</i>	<i>Analysis of the intersection for safety needs.</i>
<i>Summer / Winter 2020</i>	<i>MnDOT (Shauna McIntire) with City of New Ulm and Traffic Consultant.</i>	<i>Preparation of Final Intersection Control Evaluation and Draft Categorical Exclusion as project was not yet funded</i>	<i>Analysis showed that a roundabout would be a good fit over signals or other alternative intersection configurations.</i>
<i>Spring 2021 to Spring 2023</i>	<i>MnDOT (Mat Thibert) with City of New Ulm</i>	<i>Project development and coordination</i>	<i>Coordination of project elements</i> <i>Researched for existence of LUP, none found</i>

Date	Agency/Organization, Personnel, and their Position	Discussion description	Conclusions
<i>March 8, 2023</i>	<i>MnDOT, Mathew Thibert, Project Manager with Joseph Stadheim, City of New Ulm Engineer</i>	<i>Question on classification of trail</i>	<i>City informed MnDOT the trail is named the New Ulm Recreational Trail and would be classified as a recreational use.</i>
<i>April 10 and April 11, 2023</i>	<i>Joe Stadheim (City of New Ulm Engineer) and Mathew Thibert (MnDOT Project Manager)</i>	<i>Outlined project expectations, detour expectations, and appreciation of continued coordination</i>	<i>City concurred that the actions to be taken at this intersection met expectations, and that the detour would be acceptable.</i>

See attachments of project process at the end of this document.

If after consideration of the information presented in this letter, FHWA intends make a de minimis determination, conditioned upon consideration of any comments received during the required 14-day public comment period, please indicate by signature below. MnDOT will transmit a copy of this signed letter to the OWJ as notice of FHWA’s intent to make a de minimis finding.

The de minimis process, including correspondence related to FHWA’s intent to make a de minimis determination, comments received on the notice of FHWA’s intent to make a de minimis determination, FHWA’s final de minimis determination, and the OWJ’s final concurrence will be reported in the Categorical Exclusion document.

Sincerely,

Mathew Thibert, P.E., PMP
 MnDOT Project Manager
 District 7 Mankato / Windom
 2151 Bassett Drive, Mankato, MN 56001

FHWA Intent to Make a De Minimis Determination conditioned on results of public notice and comment period:

FHWA Engineer _____ **Date** _____

Maps for de minimis determination begin here:



Figure 1-Map of SP 0804-119 – City of New Ulm Recreational Trail Crossing - Existing Condition

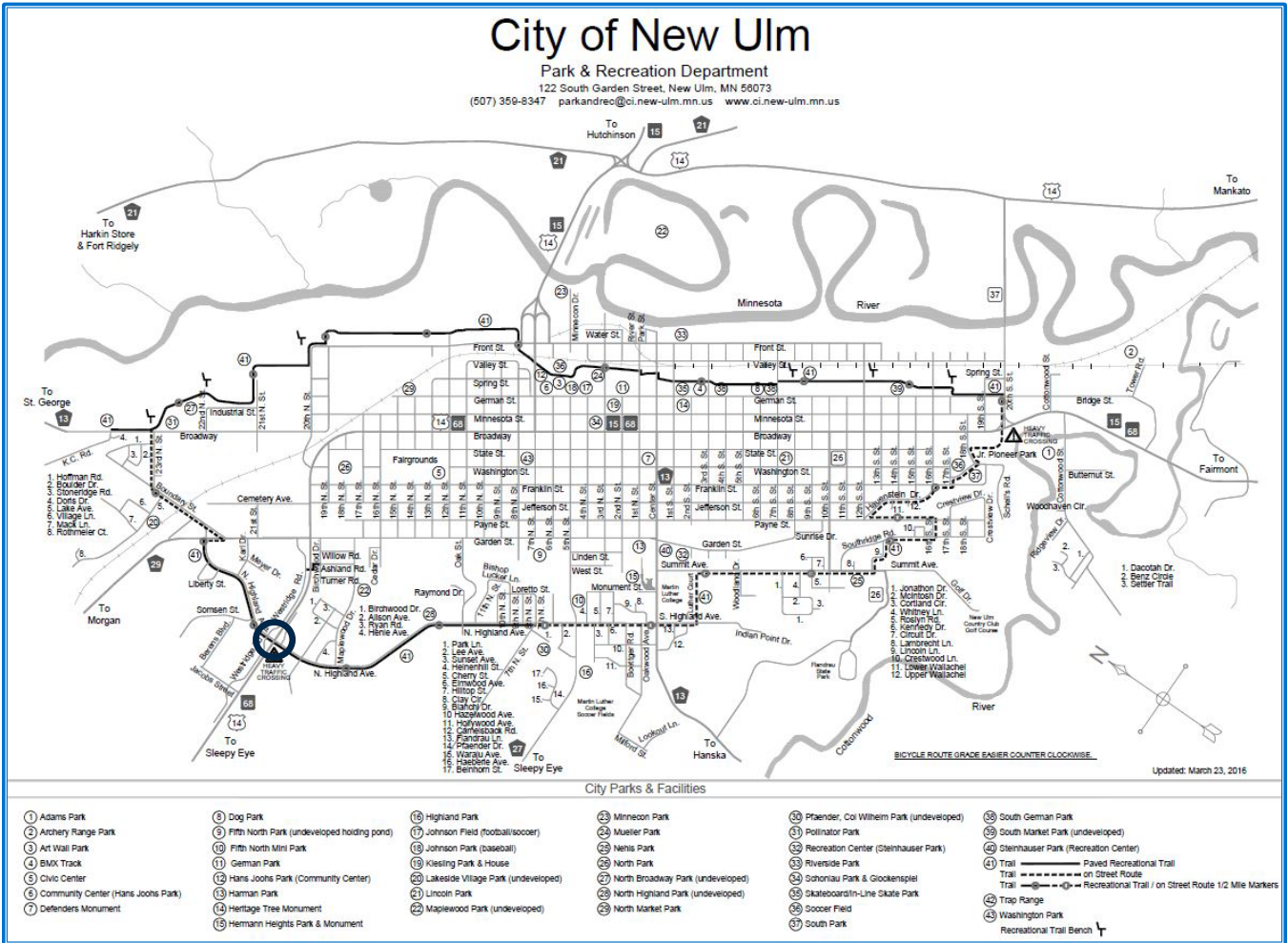


Figure 2 - City of New Ulm Map of Facilities and Recreation – the combination of heavy black line and dashed lines show the extent of the trail. Circled area where impact occurs.

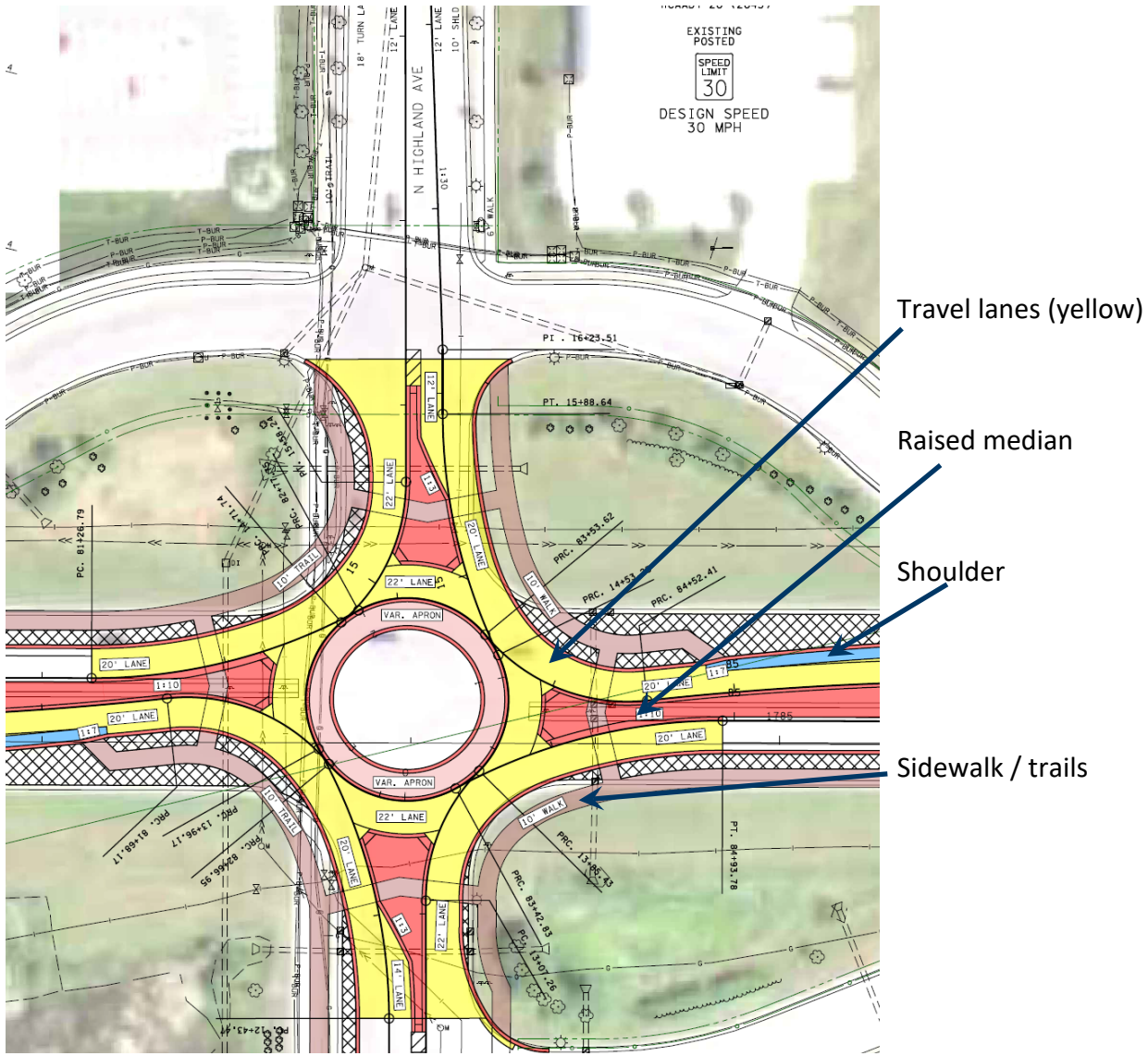


Figure 3 – Proposed Roundabout Configuration

From: [Joe Stadheim](#)
To: [Thibert, Mathew \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: RE: [External]SP 0804-119 (14) - N Highland Avenue Roundabout - New Ulm Recreational Trail Impacts
Date: Tuesday, April 11, 2023 8:06:14 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

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Mr. Thibert, the City of New Ulm is in concurrence with the project plans and proposed detour route for pedestrian traffic as part of the New Ulm Recreational Trail closure for the completion of this project. We are excited to work with MnDOT on this project and thank you for the coordination to date on the project development.

Sincerely,

Joe Stadheim
City Engineer
City of New Ulm
O: 507-233-2118

From: Thibert, Mathew (DOT) <Mathew.Thibert@state.mn.us>
Sent: Monday, April 10, 2023 3:04 PM
To: Joe Stadheim <joes@newulmmn.gov>
Subject: [External]SP 0804-119 (14) - N Highland Avenue Roundabout - New Ulm Recreational Trail Impacts

Good Afternoon Mr. Stadheim,

Per our coordination to date on the reconstruction of the intersection of TH 14 and N Highland Avenue in New Ulm, the following is a summary of the project's impact on the New Ulm Recreational Trail that crosses TH 14 at this intersection:

- Intersection will be reconstructed as a single lane roundabout (currently 4 lane configuration with turn lanes) with trail/sidewalk accommodations on both the east and west sides of N Highland Avenue crossing TH 14.
 - The current condition only has a crossing on the west side of N Highland Avenue which is the side of the trail.
 - Narrowing TH 14 down to a single lane in each direction, rather than crossing 6 lanes of traffic (4 thru lanes and 2 turn lanes) trail users will now only be crossing 2 lanes of traffic.
 - The crossings will follow the curvature of the roundabout with refuge at the midpoint of the crossings at the splitter island.
- The intersection will be constructed with bicycle slip ramps on TH 14.
- Due to the nature of the project, there will be no crossing accommodations for bicycles and

pedestrians at the intersection while it is being reconstructed.

- All users will be directed to follow the pedestrian and bicycle detour route we discussed that utilizes the underpass approximately 0.36 miles east of the intersection being reconstructed.
- The trail crossing at N Highland Avenue will be closed for the duration of the project.

We appreciate your continued coordination on this project. Please reach out with any questions, or if there is anything I missed in the summary of our coordination to date in the bulleted points above.

Thank you,

Mathew Thibert, P.E., PMP

Project Manager

MnDOT District 7

mathew.thibert@state.mn.us

Cell: (507) 381-0393

