City of Dyersville

BUILD Capital Grant:
Project Description

Rural Dyersville, Iowa, seeks $25,000,000 in Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant funds to implement the Enhancing Multimodal Connections in Dyersville Project. This generational investment in rural Iowa will enhance the quality of life, improve resiliency, and increase safety by building connections for vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, and emergency response personnel. This project involves three distinct components, including bridges that cross the North Fork Maquoketa River and Bear Creek; an overpass that eliminates an at-grade Canadian National (CN) Railway crossing; and miles of wide, accessible trails that connect neighborhoods and parks with commercial hubs. Each component is described in**Figure 1**.

The project is the culmination of more than 12 years of research, public involvement, and planning, and its components are the foundational elements necessary for the City of Dyersville (City) to provide consistent, reliable, and accessible, multimodal connections and access to services and opportunities. Dyersville, a rural midwestern city of roughly 4,500 people, sits in the heart of northeast Iowa along U.S. Highway 20 (US-20). The City is steeped in history and heritage and is most famous as home to the iconic “Field of Dreams” movie site. The City’s blend of natural beauty, cultural attractions, and small-town charm make it a baseball tourist mecca, hosting more than 275,000 visitors a year. Dyersville’s natural topography includes the convergence of two waterways: Bear Creek and the North Fork Maquoketa River. These waterways overtop routinely and create an isolating natural barrier. Flash flooding is a continual concern, and the City has spent decades trying to manage the flooding impact on the community.

The City requested assistance from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to evaluate flood reduction alternatives. The 2004 “Initial Assessment Report for Flood Damage Reduction” (CWIS No. 179046) recommended Dyersville pursue raising roads, constructing larger drainage structures, implementing a flood-warning system, developing a watershed management plan, encouraging citizens to move out of the floodplain, and using floodplain areas for recreational amenities. Since this report, the City has invested in implementing all these suggestions as flood frequency and severity have continued to increase.

The City’s planning efforts have grown beyond flood mitigation and include a hazard mitigation plan (2011), visioning and transportation plans (2011, 2012), regional and local comprehensive plans (2013, 2018), a housing study (2017), a watershed vision plan (2021), a Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities study (2024), and numerous smaller traffic, structural, environmental, economic development, and tourism studies and reports. These plans have identified the critical connectivity components included in this application as top priorities. In addition, these efforts revealed opportunities to support community growth and development. The 2018 Comprehensive Plan was the catalyst for the City’s investment in the preliminary design of critical road and bridge projects and the preservation of necessary right-of-way.

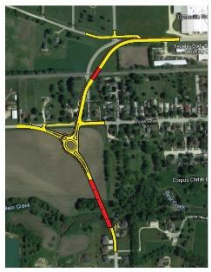
The improvements constructed as a part of this project will build resilient, sustainable infrastructure that supports all residents and the additional 275,000 tourists that visit each year. The completed trail network will also connect to the 30-mile regional Heritage Trail. Roadway and pedestrian facility improvements will support tourism related to the “Field of Dreams” movie site. The City is partnering with a non-profit group, currently implementing $55 million of improvements, including a new professional baseball park to be completed by 2026, which will increase tourism traffic even more. Dyersville Events Inc. baseball officials sponsoring the project noted in a statement that in 2024, 367 baseball teams representing 23 states came to play in tournaments in the Dyersville area, a 240 percent increase over the previous year.[1]

Figure 1. Enhancing Multimodal Connections in Dyersville Project Components Map

[1] Telegraph Herald, Dyersville receives $12.5 million grant for permanent Field of Dreams stadium | Breaking | telegraphherald.com, accessed January 10, 2025

1 North-South Connection

The North-South Connection provides a grade-separated crossing of the CN Railway on the north edge of town, connecting low-income residents to the north with community amenities south of the railroad tracks.



2 East-West Connection

The East-West Connection provides an essential connection for emergency services and helps to connect senior residents on the west to amenities on the east as well as students from the residential areas on the east to Dyersville Elementary School on the west.

3 Community Trail Connection

A 6-foot-wide paved path along the east side of 7th St SW combined with painted bike lanes completes the trail network. Marked crosswalks and MUTCD-compliant signage for bike and pedestrian areas will raise awareness of the presence of vulnerable roadway users, including seniors and children.

Detailed Scope of Work

The Enhancing Multimodal Connections in Dyersville Project involves three components, detailed in**Figure 1**. Completed construction of all components is anticipated by the end of 2028 if funding is awarded.

Existing Transportation Challenges

The CN Railway line creates multiple railroad conflict locations. The nearest grade-separated crossing is 5 miles west of Dyersville. When the railroad blocks primary routes, emergency medical services (EMS) do not have direct secondary routes in the community. Floods and railroad closures force extended detours. Dyersville has experienced six major flood events since 2000, isolating residential neighborhoods and vastly extending EMS response times. Lack of bicycle and pedestrian facilities and connections limit safe multimodal transportation options. Currently, funding to support the implementation of this project is not sufficient.

Proposed Project Component Solutions

Component 1 — North-South Connection (7th Street SW to 1st Avenue W, Beltline Overpass)

The new North-South Connection is the first critical flood-resilience project corridor. The corridor would include the following:

- A new bridge, road, and trail over Bear Creek that aligns with the existing 7th Street SW in the form of 518-foot-long, multispan, prestressed concrete beam (PPCB) bridge, which also includes realignment of Bear Creek for conformance with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requirements for floodway conveyance, clearance of the paddle trail, and no-rise criteria.
- A new urban roadway and trail overpass that eliminates an at-grade crossing of Beltline Road and the CN Railway. This includes a 32-foot-wide roadway with 10-foot-wide multiuse trail with 1-foot shoulders and a 110-foot-long, single-span, steel girder bridge over the CN Railway.
- New roundabout to raise and realign the intersection of 7th Street SW, 1st Avenue W, and Beltline Road while also reducing vehicle conflict points and crash risk.

In combination, these corridor elements do the following:

- Create a reliable linkage between the southwest and north side neighborhoods and adjacent industrial area, even during flood events
- Establish a secondary north-south route that supports emergency service access in case of accidents or train blockage of US-52
- Provide access to areas of Dyersville that have historically been completely cut off from emergency services and other vital access during flood events
- Create the first, and only, grade-separated railroad crossing within 5 miles of Dyersville
- Connect Dyersville's trail system to the 30-mile-long regional Heritage Trail

Project development of Component 1 is approximately 20 percent complete, including the establishment of the bridge type, size, and location. Active coordination with DNR related to the floodplain accommodations are progressing. It is anticipated that coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency on a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) will need to be conducted as well.

Component 2 — East-West Connection (13th Ave SE to 12th Ave SW)

The new East-West Connection is a second critical flood-resilience project identified during planning work and will create a reliable multimodal link and critical EMS connection among the southwest neighborhoods, hospitals, fire, and police. Preliminary design is complete, and the right-of-way is owned by the City.

This new corridor connects 13th Avenue SE and 12th Avenue SW over the North Fork Maquoketa River and includes the following:

- 511-foot-long, multispan, PPCB primary bridge and 232-foot-long PPCB secondary bridge to meet the conveyance requirement and no-rise criteria established by Iowa DNR and the height requirements for the established paddle trail. The new roadway elevation is currently

modeled to provide access for emergency services up to the 100-year flood elevation to provide additional local system redundancy during flooding events.
- 34-foot-wide roadway with a protected 10-foot-wide multiuse trail with 1-foot shoulders.
- Roadway lighting.
- New urban curb and gutter roadway section with storm sewer and subdrains.

Environmental field studies have been completed, and the Categorical Exclusion documentation is currently underway, with overall project development progressed to 30 percent complete for Component 2. Concurrence on methodology has also been received from DNR for the hydraulic modeling for conformance to requirements for floodway conveyance, clearance of the paddle trail, and no-rise criteria and is ready to advance to the CLOMR process.

Component 3 — Community Trail Connections (multiple locations)

This project fills major gaps in the City's existing bicycle and pedestrian network. Planning efforts have consistently identified the need for a cohesive multimodal network. In 2018, 52 percent of the Dyersville community identified "improving and increasing active transportation" as a planning priority (2018 Comprehensive Plan). The biggest gaps in the trail network are addressed in this project. The addition of wayfinding signage will encourage these alternate travel methods and allow for accessible, easy-to-navigate transportation options in the City.

An additional 2.5 miles of trails, wide sidewalks, and buffered bike lanes will be added at key areas to complete both north-south and east-west connections across town and include crosswalks, accessible ramps, and some pedestrian signals. This additional 2.5 miles of dedicated path will build out the transportation network, unlocking unrestricted access to an additional 30 miles of regional trails. These areas, outlined in **Figure 1**, include the following:

- 13th Avenue SE between 6th Street SE and the east end of the new East-West Connection. Pedestrian traffic control signals at the US-52 intersection will include Americans with Disabilities-compliant ramps.
- Dyersville Park Trail, a new segment from the west end of the East-West Connection bridge along the river, terminating at Candy Cane Park and the existing trail network.
- 12th Avenue SW from the west end of the East-West Connection.
- 7th Street SW, including bike lanes painted between 12th Avenue SW and the south end of the proposed bridge over Bear Creek and sidewalks to fill gaps between 9th Avenue SW and the south end of the Bear Creek bridge.
- Beltline Segment, a new trail along Beltline Road connecting to 2nd Street NE.

The development of Component 3 is 10 percent complete. Cost has been estimated off conceptual plans. PCE is anticipated for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) decisions.

Project History and Community Engagement

The City has invested heavily in the development of the project components since 2018. In that time, the City has developed conceptual and preliminary design for the project components, conducted public involvement, and initiated NEPA review. Additionally, Dyersville has organized public engagement efforts through presentations and public discussion at public meetings and hearings and interviews with key residential organizations. In addition to traditional input methods, the City contracted with a professional public involvement consultant to conduct demographic analysis and targeted outreach to senior populations and service providers to understand travel patterns and unique challenges to inform the project design. The Demographic Profile and Transportation Access Impacts Report is included as Appendix C.

Project Location and Census Geography

The project is in Dyersville, Iowa, a rural city located in eastern Delaware County and Western Dubuque County, which have a combined population of 116,228. The project has components in both counties. A project location KMZ file is included as a project file attachment.

While many rural communities are shrinking, Dyersville's population grew by 10 percent from 2010 to 2020 (from 4,000 to 4,500 citizens), and nearly 20 percent of the city's population is over the age of 65.

The project location is primarily located in Census Tract 105, with a small portion in Census Tract 9501. This is not an area of persistent poverty, as designated by the U.S. Department of Transportation. While Dyersville is not an area of persistent poverty, there are pockets of the community where poverty is present. The northwest corner has consistently had around 11 percent of households living below the poverty level in the past 12 months. Providing access to community resources, emergency services, housing and job options, schools, recreational activities, and regional trails will allow Dyersville to grow in a manner that supports all groups in the community.