

Mobility Enhancements for Regional Growth & Equity (MERGE) Project

Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Opportunity (MPDG) Grant Application May 2024

MERGE Project Highlights:

- To date, the project has received multiple “Highly Recommended” and “Medium-High” ratings from previous RAISE and MPDG pursuits.
- The 35th & 47th Avenue crossings in the project are used heavily by students and families walking, rolling, and biking.
- The 35th & 47th Avenue interchanges would realize immediate safety benefits by reducing approximately 40% of the crashes through the elimination of signals at the at-grade section.
- Given the asset lives of major elements of the project, approximately \$6M in discounted residual value benefits will be delivered.
- The 2050 population forecast for the state is 7.48M, with 6.3M along the Front Range (Greeley’s region), or 85% of the total population.
- The project will increase travel time reliability for freight movement through the City of Greeley.
- Construction will result in the creation of 1,000 job years.
- A reduction of 40% of air pollutants is expected as a result of the project.
- GHG emission reductions will result in a benefit of \$6,957,000 for a 7% discount rate over 20-years.
- School bus service is not provided within 3 miles of high schools or 2 miles of middle schools in the district, making walkability and the public transit heavily used by students.
- The entire micro-transit fleet will be 100% powered through solar arrays located at the mobility hub.
- The project is expected to have an Individual Categorical Exclusion (ICE).

Project Requirements

According to the Program Statutory Requirements, the MERGE project will meet all the requirements mentioned in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. Below is a list of each requirement and how this project will fulfill each.

23 U.S.C. 117 Infra	49 U.S.C. 6701 Mega	23 U.S.C. 173 Rural	MERGE Project Response
1) The project will generate national, or regional economic, mobility, or safety benefits	(1) The project is likely to generate national or regional economic, mobility, safety benefits	(1) The project will generate regional economic, mobility, or safety benefits	Sustained growth and economic development along the corridor have increased the need to enhance multimodal safety, eliminate barriers to jobs, reduce recurring congestion, and improve regional mobility. The MERGE project is vital to the realization of these important outcomes for the City and will bring about a continuity of free flow travel conditions along this key mobility corridor. The successful implementation of the project will result in faster travel times throughout the entire corridor; a decrease in recurring and non-recurring congestion; and improved safety conditions resulting in a reduction in crashes, property damage, injuries, and potential fatalities.
2) The project will be cost effective	(3) The project will be cost effective	(2) The project will be cost effective	The analysis of the Mobility Hub and 35th Avenue and 47th Avenue proposed interchanges indicates the build alternative has a benefit-cost analysis ratio (BCA) significantly greater than 1.0, meaning each are economically beneficial projects. On an individual basis, the BCA values are 4.53, 3.85, and 3.34 for the 35th Ave, 47th Ave, and the mobility hub, respectively. The benefits of the MERGE project are estimated to be higher than the costs associated with the construction of the project.

<p>3) The project will contribute to 1 or more of the national goals described under Section 150</p>	<p>No statutory requirement</p>	<p>(3) The project will contribute to 1 or more of the national goals described under Section 150</p>	<p>The MERGE project will meet the Section 150 goals. These goals include safety, infrastructure condition, congestion reduction, system reliability, freight movement and economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and reduced project delivery delays. Safety goals will be met through the project by installing the two new interchanges will create better traffic flow. The center loading regional transit center will create separation between regular vehicles and buses that are making stops. Safety goals will also be achieved through this project by providing a safer trail system along US Highway 34. Additionally, safety will be improved through creating a safer underpass for non-vehicular traffic to use to cross US Highway 34. The improvements to the infrastructure condition will be seen through improved traffic flow as well as providing more opportunities for non-motorized vehicles to get around, which will slow down the deterioration of the roadway. As mentioned with the first two goals, traffic flow will be improved through this project which will allow for less idle time and less congestion on US Highway 34 and on the side streets. These outcomes will meet the congestion reduction and system reliability goals identified in Section 150. MERGE has been developed through extensive planning over the recent years as well as environmental studies being conducted to conclude there is no change in the existing land use as well as completing several NEPA environmental processes, many of which also include public involvement. By completing these tasks, this project has already further advanced both the environmental sustainability and reduced project delivery delays goals.</p>
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<p>4) The project is based on the results of preliminary engineering</p>	<p>No statutory requirement</p>	<p>(4) The project is based on the results of preliminary engineering</p>	<p>A <u>PEL</u> was completed in 2019 by CDOT and followed by an <u>Interchange Selection Report (ISR)</u> in 2021 for the 35th and 47th interchanges. Thirty percent plans have been completed for the interchange work and it is anticipated that the environmental analysis will be expected to arrive at a Finding of No Significant Impact leading to the required level of documentation anticipated to be an Individual Categorical Exclusion (ICE). An additional desktop review was performed as part of this grant application specifically over the project limits. The results of the review are on the project website and support the ICE.</p>
<p>5) With respect to related non-federal financial commitments, 1 or more stable and dependable sources of funding and financing are available to construct, maintain, and operate the project, and contingency amounts are available to cover unanticipated cost increases</p>	<p>(3) With respect to non-federal financial commitments, 1 or more stable and dependable sources are available to construct, operate, and maintain the project, and to cover cost increases</p>	<p>No statutory requirement</p>	<p>The City of Greeley will be utilizing multiple funding sources to see this project through completion. The City of Greeley has a committed a budget of \$31.5 Million which will allow for them to provide a significant financial contribution through local funds. Additional funding will be through TIFIA, CDOT, and NFRMPO. The city is and will continue to seek additional partnerships to serve as additional contingency or to offset the City’s share or as that enables the City to divert much needed resources to other maintenance needs. The City of Greeley also has a Public Works department that work with the Colorado Department of Transportation through design/construction and to ensure proper maintenance will occur through the entire life of the project.</p>

<p>6) The project cannot be easily and efficiently completed without other Federal funding or financing available to the project sponsor</p>	<p>4) The project is in significant need of Federal funding</p>	<p>No statutory requirement</p>	<p>If MPDG funds are not secured for the City of Greeley, this will put a large financial commitment back on the taxpayers. The city will work to seek other grant funding opportunities and or design alternatives to lessen the burden, however the project goals can be only achieved with the proposed design and when all elements are completed together. Areas of the project may be reduced in scope to cut back on costs; however, while each piece is independent to the other, it does not allow for a significant cost reduction which will lead to increased costs over time and increased delays and difficulties to the residents and regional traffic usage US 34 daily. This MPDG grant will be key to ensure the project can be built and constructed properly to provide the highest return on investment for all involved. The project serves as a vital component to meet the GHG reduction goals of the State of Colorado and the grant will allow the project partners to accelerate the desired outcomes.</p>
<p>7) The project is reasonably expected to begin not later than 18 months after the date of obligation of funds for the project</p>	<p>No statutory requirement</p>	<p>(5) The project is reasonably expected to begin not later than 18 months after the date of obligation of funds for the project</p>	<p>As shown in Figure 12: Project Schedule, the MERGE project will meet the statutory obligation date as shown in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. As can be seen in the application, the environmental, ROW risks are low. Some project elements are already at a 30% design level. The project will be delivered using the Alternative Project Delivery processes as allowed by CDOT policies. The grant application provides the project budget and anticipated expenditures, each financial year. The City of Greeley is, therefore, confident that the project construction can begin prior to the September 30, 2026 obligation date in the NOFO.</p>
<p>No statutory requirement</p>	<p>(5) The applicant have, or will have, sufficient legal, financial, and technical capacity to carry out the project.</p>	<p>No statutory requirement</p>	<p>The City of Greeley is a robust organization with the capacity of full time employees to ensure the project has the sufficient legal, financial, and technical capacity to carry out the project according to all of the requirements set forth.</p>

No statutory requirement	(6) The applicant includes a plan for the collection and analysis of data to identify the impacts of the project and accuracy of forecasts included in the application.	No statutory requirement	Appendix F included with this application submittal includes the Mega Project Data Collection Plan that the City of Greeley will use for the MERGE project.
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