



705 SECOND STREET NORTH  
PRINCETON, MINNESOTA 55371  
E-MAIL: [city@princetonmn.org](mailto:city@princetonmn.org)  
[www.princetonmn.org](http://www.princetonmn.org)

October 12, 2023

Robert Clarksen  
Minnesota Highway Freight Program Manager  
MnDOT Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations  
395 John Ireland Blvd, Saint Paul, MN 55155  
[Robert.clarksen@state.mn.us](mailto:Robert.clarksen@state.mn.us)

RE: Sherburne County, 2023 Minnesota Highway Freight Program

Dear Mr. Clarksen:

On behalf of the City of Princeton, I write in support of Sherburne County's application for funding through the Minnesota Highway Freight Program. If awarded, funding would support the US Highway 169/County Road 4 Rural Safety and Mobility Interchange Project, which would remove the last remaining traffic signal, at one of Minnesota's most dangerous intersections, on a 75-mile stretch of US Highway 169 between Elk River and Onamia. Highway 169 is essential for providing rural access to job centers in the Twin Cities and improving travel for vacation-bound travelers to northern Minnesota tourism destinations.

U.S. Highway 169 is a vital north-south arterial route that moves freight, employees, and services from central Minnesota to the Twin Cities metropolitan area and into southern Minnesota. Currently, US Highway 169 in the City of Zimmerman is an outdated four-lane divided highway with at-grade roadway and driveway intersections and limited frontage road systems. Today, the project area serves 50,000 vehicles per day and due to insufficient infrastructure, backups exceeding one mile are observed during peak travel times. Such poor mobility on the US Highway and intersecting county road result in a crash rate five times the state average and a serious crash rate six times the state average.

Funding from the Minnesota Highway Freight Program would improve a critical junction in Minnesota's transportation network by installing a hybrid diamond interchange at U.S. Highway 169 and County Road 4 in Zimmerman, Minnesota. It would also be used to consolidate and upgrade 18 local roadway access and 26 private access points on US-169, including a new multimodal pedestrian and bicycle trail facility connection on CR 4. These improvements would result in a 99% decrease in serious conflicts and a 98% decrease in vehicle delays. This project would help rural communities accommodate long-term growth through 2045 projections while preserving all existing adjacent businesses.

Construction of the US Highway 169 and CR 4 project will greatly benefit the traveling public by improving safety and reducing congestion for vacation-bound travelers while improving travel reliability for movement of goods, employees, services and emergency response.

The Princeton City Council encourages you to give this Sherburne County's application for funding through the Minnesota Highway Freight Program heavy consideration. If you have any questions, please contact City Administrator Michele McPherson at [mmcpherson@princetonmn.org](mailto:mmcpherson@princetonmn.org).

Sincerely,  
Thom Walker  
Mayor of Princeton

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