Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2026 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2026-542

Proposal Title: Anoka Rum River Dam Reconstruction and Modification Project

Project Manager Information

Name: Ben Nelson

Organization: City of Anoka

Office Telephone: (763) 576-2785

Email: bnelson@ci.anoka.mn.us

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Project includes pre-design/design for reconstruction and improvements to the Anoka Rum River Dam; restoring fish passage, recreation, pedestrian bridge, and safety near the confluence with the Mississippi River.

ENRTF Funds Requested: $4,575,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2029

LCCMR Funding Category: Water (B)

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

Region(s): Metro

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Region(s): Metro

When will the work impact occur?

In the Future

Narrative

Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.

The Anoka Rum River Dam in historic downtown Anoka has existed since the early 1850s. It is located next to Anoka City Hall, about ¾ mile upstream of the confluence of the Mississippi and Rum Rivers.

The original timber dams powered sawmills, woodworking plants, and copper shops along the east bank of the Rum River. In 1891, the Rum River recreational pool was created by placing log timbers and flashboards on the dam to raise water levels. In the 1930s, the City of Anoka was granted flowage rights, purchased the dam, and became its sole owner. In 1969, the City replaced the aging timber structure with the current dam, which now supports a six-mile recreational pool upstream.

However, critical safety risks, outdated infrastructure, lack of fish passage, and restricted vessel access make modernization essential. The flashboard system is antiquated, manually operated, and does not provide flood control. In response, the City is pursuing comprehensive improvements to enhance safety, restore ecological connectivity, and expand public access by connecting the upper Rum River to the Mississippi River.

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? Introduce us to the work you are seeking funding to do. You will be asked to expand on this proposed solution in Activities & Milestones.

In 2024, a project team evaluated dam improvement strategies and completed a feasibility study to enhance safety, restore aquatic habitats, and expand recreation. The study identified viable solutions, including removing fish passage barriers by incorporating a fish passage and lock feature, with additional benefits guiding the selection of a preferred alternative.

This project will reconnect the upper Rum River to the Mississippi River, creating new recreational opportunities and benefiting communities across Anoka and Hennepin Counties. The navigational lock and fish passage will support native fish migration from Mille Lacs to the Mississippi River, restoring natural stream processes and improving riparian and floodplain habitats. The selected alternative will minimize stream disturbance, enhance worker safety, reduce long-term maintenance costs, and limit recreational disruptions caused by fluctuating water conditions.

Upgrades will allow Anoka to actively manage water levels for flood control, mitigate environmental impacts, and provide recreational access above the dam through a lock feature. Additionally, a new river recreation feature below the dam will introduce activities like river surfing.

This application advances key next steps in engineering, including pre-design and design, ensuring a thorough evaluation of improvements while maintaining environmental and recreational integrity.

What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?

The Anoka Rum River Dam Reconstruction and Modification Project will restore fish passage, reconnecting native species to vital habitats and enhancing aquatic biodiversity. The project retains the upstream pool, preserving water levels for ecological stability and recreational use. By mitigating safety risks, including outdated infrastructure and hazardous maintenance procedures, it protects public resources while improving resilience. Additionally, expanded recreational opportunities—such as safe boating access, whitewater features, and improved connectivity to the Mississippi River—will increase public interaction with natural resources while supporting conservation efforts. These enhancements ensure the long-term sustainability, accessibility, and ecological integrity of the Rum River system.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Pre-Design Elements

Activity Budget: $1,987,500

Activity Description:
The pre-design phase of the Rum River Dam Improvement Project will focus on regulatory outreach, stakeholder engagement, and preliminary design development. Meetings with regulators will identify necessary environmental field studies and establish a strategic communications plan to ensure effective stakeholder involvement.

A phased project approach will be developed to align with available funding, as discussed with the Senate Capital Investment Committee in October 2024. A detailed survey will capture dam dimensions, topography, bathymetry, property boundaries, and utilities to establish an accurate baseline for future work.

Environmental documentation will include geotechnical investigations, sediment analysis, and regulatory compliance requirements. These studies will support project phasing, cost management, and long-term sustainability.
Public engagement efforts will be prioritized to keep community members and stakeholders informed. A Pre-Design Report will summarize findings, shaping the next phase of engineering and construction .

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Strategic Communication: Regulatory and Stakeholder Outreach; Strategic Communication Plan Developed	December 31, 2026
Survey or Delineation Work: Topographic survey; Environmental studies; Geotechnical investigation; Sediment analysis	April 30, 2027
B3 Tracking, Dept. of Administration Pre-Design Review, SHPO Consultation	April 30, 2027

Activity 2: Design Elements

Activity Budget: $2,587,500

Activity Description:
The design phase will advance the project through final engineering, geotechnical analysis, and public engagement. Engineers will refine project plans, ensuring regulatory compliance, structural integrity, and environmental sustainability.
A geotechnical investigation will assess soil and foundation conditions to guide construction methods. Findings will support risk mitigation, cost management, and long-term stability of the dam improvements.
Public engagement will continue to be a key priority, with meetings and outreach efforts ensuring stakeholder input is incorporated into the final design. Transparent communication will address community concerns, project benefits, and expected timelines.
By the end of this phase, the project will have completed construction-ready designs, final regulatory approvals, and a clear implementation strategy, setting the stage for the permitting and construction process.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Approval of Draft and Final Plans	December 31, 2027
Permitting and Other Agency Review	December 31, 2027
Advertisement for Bids	December 31, 2027

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this work be funded?

This project received state and local funding, with more anticipated as design elements are further developed. The project was awarded a $500,000 grant for the completed feasibility study, which determined the total cost range of $25,900,000 to $55,480,000. To address future costs, the City submitted a $5,600.000 request to MMB in 2024. There are also two bills totaling $21,950,000 that have been introduced during the 2025 legislative session: $10,000,000: HF1651 for the pedestrian bridge; $11,950,000 HF0746 for dam improvements. Additional State and Federal funding will be pursued.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Ben Nelson

Job Title: Assistant City Engineer

Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.

The Project Manager, who also serves as an assistant city engineer, has extensive experience leading public improvement projects of various sizes, including those supported by federal and state grants. With a strong history of collaboration with agency partners and the community, the manager most recently, for this project was the authorized represented for the $500,000 grant received from state bonding in 2023. In 2022, the project manager oversaw Minnesota's largest city-led transportation initiative, the $83 million U.S. Highway 10/169 Improvement Project. This project alleviated severe congestion and high crash rates, enhanced highway and community connections, and eliminated traffic signals and unsafe crossings. New interchanges were constructed, creating a safer and more efficient corridor for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The project was financed by $34 million in federal funds and $44 million in state funds, with 65% coming from earmarks and competitive wins.

Organization: City of Anoka

Organization Description:

The Public Services Department is responsible for the city's infrastructure which includes reconstructing and maintaining streets, treating the city's water supply, and maintaining the sewer system. Public Services maintains a fleet of construction equipment, trucks and city vehicles. The department employs 29 full-time employees and numerous seasonal employees that work within the following divisions. The engineering division provides support services to guide the design, management, maintenance and construction of the City's infrastructure including engineering design, construction supervision and project management for the various street, sidewalk, water main, sanitary sewer and storm sewer infrastructure projects that the City undertakes each year.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	**-**
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Service Contract	Engineering and contractor fees for Design activity. Based on the results of the pre-design report, project design elements will be completed under a single or multiple contracts.				9		$2,587,500
TBD	Service Contract	Engineering and contractor fees for Pre-Design activity. The tasks to be completed under single or multiple contracts would support the milestone of a pre-design report.				7		$1,987,500
							Sub Total	**$4,575,000**
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	**-**
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	**-**
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	**-**
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	**-**
Travel Outside Minnesota								

							Sub Total	**-**
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	**-**
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	**-**
							Grand Total	**$4,575,000**

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
Cash	$5.6M request for the 2025 Capital Budget General Obligation Bonding to MN Management and Budget	Engineering and final design development for all elements of the project	Pending	$1,525,000
			State Sub Total	**$1,525,000**
Non-State				
			Non State Sub Total	**-**
			Funds Total	**$1,525,000**

Total Project Cost: $6,100,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: f1bc48db-2c1.pdf

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Rum River Dam Concept –Looking downstream from west side of the Rum River. The fish passage and recreational features are in the foreground on west bank, with the upgraded navigational channel on the background, along east bank. Runners, walkers, and spectators cross the river on the raised trail feature....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report	0f51245d-1ba.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Authorization Letter	83e6a0a4-87a.pdf
RESOLUTION RES-2025-023	faa27b94-ac6.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

Capital Project Questionnaire, Budget Supplements, Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
Capital Project Questionnaire	ccdd941c-ab6.pdf
Budget Addendum Form	ddf3a298-3cb.pdf
Legislative Handout and Future Renderings	70b99096-dbd.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

Do you understand that travel expenses are only approved if they follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?

N/A

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, sale of products and assets, or revenue generation?

No

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

N/A

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No

Does your project include the pre-design, design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other fixed capital asset costing $10,000 or more or large-scale stream or wetland restoration?

Yes

Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services (as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7 as "the provision of care, treatment, education, training, instruction, or recreation to children")?

No

Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this proposal:

Lisa LaCasse, City of Anoka; Marcus Bush, HDR; Anna Stritecky, HDR

Do you understand that a named service contract does not constitute a funder-designated subrecipient or approval of a sole-source contract? In other words, a service contract entity is only approved if it has been selected according to the contracting rules identified in state law and policy for organizations that receive ENRTF funds through direct appropriations, or in the DNR's reimbursement manual for non-state organizations. These rules may include competitive bidding and prevailing wage requirements

Yes, I understand