

## **Mahaska Oskaloosa Driving Economic Success (MODES) Planning Study**

**Proposed recipient:**

Mahaska County

**Recipient address:**

2074 Old Highway 163 Oskaloosa, Iowa 52577

**Requested amount:**

\$850,000

**Explanation of request:**

The City of Oskaloosa, with the support of Mahaska County, seek Community Project Funding from Congress to help fund the public-private project, dubbed Mahaska/Oskaloosa Driving Economic Success (MODES) Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL) study and a streamlined Environmental Assessment (EA) for a new roadway that will provide improved regional and local access in rural east central Iowa. The City, County, and Mahaska Chamber share the common goal of evaluating one or more roadway options to the southeast and northeast of the City of Oskaloosa to collectively and collaboratively plan a new roadway corridor while uncovering any environmental or archaeological hurdles to the project.

Achieving the common goals is a resultant of three highways converging within Oskaloosa. US Highway 63 (US 63), Iowa Highway 92 (IA 92), and Iowa Highway 23 (IA 23). All provide access for agricultural and manufacturing freight from both local and regional businesses. All three highways have multiple stops and degrading infrastructure within the MODES project area which leads to poor travel times and higher emissions.

The work supported by this appropriation will be used to provide a clear path forward for the public and private partnership to continue planning and advocating for further investment in construction of the roadway infrastructure. The MODES project will leverage the US 63 Corridor Location Study, which was completed in 2013. The study identified and prioritized various improvements to US 63 and established that a more direct highway would boost connectivity through Iowa between Columbia, Missouri, and the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, thereby reducing traffic demand on Interstate 35. This portion of US 63 was added to the Commercial and Industrial Network (CIN) and the National Highway System in 2012. The study recognized that current freight trips are diverted from US 63 to alternate routes due to the road's poor condition and longer travel times resulting from low-speed limits and signals in the core of Oskaloosa. The MODES project was identified in the US 63 Study as a potential improvement and is included in the City of Oskaloosa's comprehensive plan.