

Final Notice and Public Explanation of a Proposed Activity in a Wetland

To: All interested Agencies, Groups and Individuals

This is to give notice that the City of Buffalo, Minnesota, as Responsible Entity under 24 CFR Part 58 has conducted an evaluation as required by Executive Order 11990, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 in Subpart C, Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Wetlands Protection. The proposed activity, "Ryan's Way Improvements," is funded under the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Project Funding (CPF: B-23-CP-MN-0864). The approximately 6.6-acre project area includes or crosses through parcels 103202021703, 103500292325, 103500292326, 103500292309, 103249000020, 103500292406, 103500292315, 103500292404, 103500292405, and 103500292401 in the City of Buffalo, Wright County, Minnesota (Figure 1).

The proposed project involves the extension of Ryan's Way from its current terminus south of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 35 (Willems Way) to 1st Street NE, the construction of sidewalk, new stormwater retention ponds, as well as curb and gutter and subsurface utility improvements along the project corridor. The project will improve safety, accessibility, and mobility for all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit operations, by completing the only gap in the existing north-south backage road system along the east side of Highway 55 within the City of Buffalo, Wright County, Minnesota.

A wetland delineation for the project site and surrounding area was completed in August 2023 and based on updated project limits, it is determined that approximately 2.00 acres of wetlands may be impacted by the proposed project. The wetlands are identified as a combination of palustrine emergent persistent seasonally saturated (PEM1B) wetland, palustrine emergent persistent seasonally flooded (PEM1C) wetland, and palustrine forested broad-leaved deciduous temporarily flooded (PFO1A) wetland. The wetlands provide stormwater storage and sediment retention. There is limited wildlife habitat present.

The City of Buffalo, Minnesota, as Responsible Entity under 24 CFR Part 58, has considered the following alternatives and mitigation measures to minimize adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial functions and intrinsic values of the existing wetland:

- **No-Action Alternative:** Under the No-Action alternative, vehicles traveling on Highway 55 would continue to be required to make a U-turn and cross two lanes of traffic to access businesses on the east side of Highway 55, and the Highway 55 intersections at 1st Street NE and at County Road 35 would continue to be two of the top 10 highest-crash intersections in Wright County. Additionally, the gap in the middle of the existing north-south backage road system currently in place along the east side of Highway 55 would be maintained, restricting access to businesses in the area for vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians.
- **Mitigation Measures:** Wetland impacts will be mitigated by purchasing federally approved wetland bank credits at a 2:1 ratio. The credits will come from within the Bank Service Area.

The City of Buffalo has reevaluated alternatives to building in the wetland and has determined that it has no practicable alternative to wetland development. Environmental files documenting compliance with Executive Order 11990, are available for public inspection, review, and copying, upon request, at the times and location delineated in the last paragraph of this notice for receipt of comments.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in wetlands and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comments regarding wetlands can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks and impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in a wetland, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by the City of Buffalo at the following address on or before **February 19, 2025**: City of Buffalo, 212 Central Avenue, Buffalo, MN 55313 and 763-682-1181, Attention: Beth Opheim, Compliance Coordinator. A full description of the project may also be reviewed from 8:00am to 4:30pm at 212 Central Avenue, Buffalo, MN 55313 and <https://www.ci.buffalo.mn.us/>. Comments may also be submitted via email to: beth.opheim@ci.buffalo.mn.us.

Date of Notice: **February 11, 2025**
