

**U.S. 61
FROM THE MUSCATINE COUNTY LINE
TO TWO MILES SOUTH OF GRANDVIEW
LOUISA COUNTY, IOWA
NHS-61-3(48) - - 19-58**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
AND SECTION 4(F) *DE MINIMIS* IMPACT FINDING**

Submitted Pursuant to 42 USC 4332(2)(c)

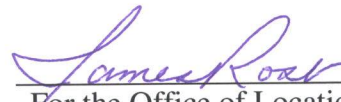
By The

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
And
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENT**

The signatures are considered acceptance of the general project location and concepts described in the environmental document unless otherwise specified by the approving officials. However, such approval does not commit to approve any future grant requests to fund the preferred alternative.



For the Iowa Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration



For the Office of Location and
Environment
Iowa Department of Transportation

10/19/11

Date of Approval for Public Availability

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PREFACE

The Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21) (23 CFR) mandated environmental streamlining in order to improve transportation project delivery without compromising environmental protection. In accordance with TEA-21, the environmental review process for this project has been documented as a Streamlined Environmental Assessment (EA). This document addresses only those resources or features that apply to the project. This allowed study and discussion of resources present in the study area, rather than expend effort on resources that were either not present or not impacted. Although not all resources are discussed in the EA, they were considered during the planning process and are documented in the Streamlined Resource Summary, shown in Appendix A.

The following table shows the resources considered during the environmental review for this project. The first column with a check means the resource is present in the project area. The second column with a check means the impact to the resource warrants more discussion in this document. The other listed resources have been reviewed and are included in the Streamlined Resource Summary.

Resources Considered

| SOCIOECONOMIC | | NATURAL ENVIRONMENT | |
|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Use | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wetlands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Cohesion | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Surface Waters and Water Quality |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Churches and Schools | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Wild and Scenic Rivers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Justice | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Floodplains |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife and Habitat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Joint Development | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Threatened and Endangered Species |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Parklands and Recreational Areas | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Woodlands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Farmlands |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Right-of-Way | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relocation Potential | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Construction and Emergency Routes | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | | |
| CULTURAL | | PHYSICAL | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historical Sites or Districts | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Archaeological Sites | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Cemeteries | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSATs) |
| | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy |
| | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contaminated and Regulated Materials Sites |
| | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual |
| | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | CONTROVERSY POTENTIAL: Low | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Section 4(f): A <i>de minimis</i> determination has been made for impacts to a historic farmstead (see page 15). | | |

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- B. Agency and Tribal Coordination
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1.0 Description of the Proposed Action

The Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) is proposing to construct improvements to an approximately 6-mile segment of U.S. 61 in Louisa County, Iowa. The proposed improvements consist of a four-lane rural section with controlled accesses and two new interchanges located near the current intersection of U.S. 61 and Iowa Highway 92 (IA 92) and at U.S. 61 and 170th Street.

1.1 Project Location

The proposed project is located in Northern Louisa County, Iowa, as shown in Figure 1. The project study area, illustrated in Figure 2, extends in an approximately half-mile wide corridor from the Muscatine/Louisa County line, at the existing U.S. 61 four-lane section, south to Turkey Run, approximately two miles south of the U.S. 61 and IA 92 intersection adjacent to Grandview.

Currently, U.S. 61 is a two-lane highway in the study area with at-grade intersections at IA 92 and several other Louisa County roadways. These intersections are two-way stop control. Current (2010) traffic volumes are 5,700 vehicles per day (vpd) north of IA 92, and 3,900 vpd south of IA 92. Also, residences, farms, and field entrances have direct access onto U.S. 61 in the project study area.

Because the cost of improving U.S. 61 through Louisa County would be substantial, improvements must be conducted in stages. Also, because of the complex social, economic, and natural environment issues that could potentially require extensive studies to determine U.S. 61's future location in relationship to the community of Wapello, immediately south of the study area, in 2009 the Iowa DOT determined that the U.S. 61 project in Louisa County would be divided into North and South Sections. The North section begins two miles south of Grandview and extends north to the existing four-lane roadway at the Muscatine County line. The South Section, which will include the Wapello area detailed study, begins north of IA 78 and extends to two miles south of Grandview. In 2010, Louisa County began conducting a concurrent study of a potential relocation of County Highway 99 and bridges at Wapello and Oakville, which requires coordination with the U.S. 61 study.

The proposed action described in this Streamlined EA is for the North Section of U.S. 61 in Louisa County.

The Iowa, Chicago, & Eastern Railroad crosses under U.S. 61 approximately 0.75 mile south of the Muscatine/Louisa County line in the northern part of the study area. The predominant land use in the corridor is agriculture. Watercourses in the study area include Indian Creek, Little Indian Creek, and Turkey Run.

Figure 1. Project Location

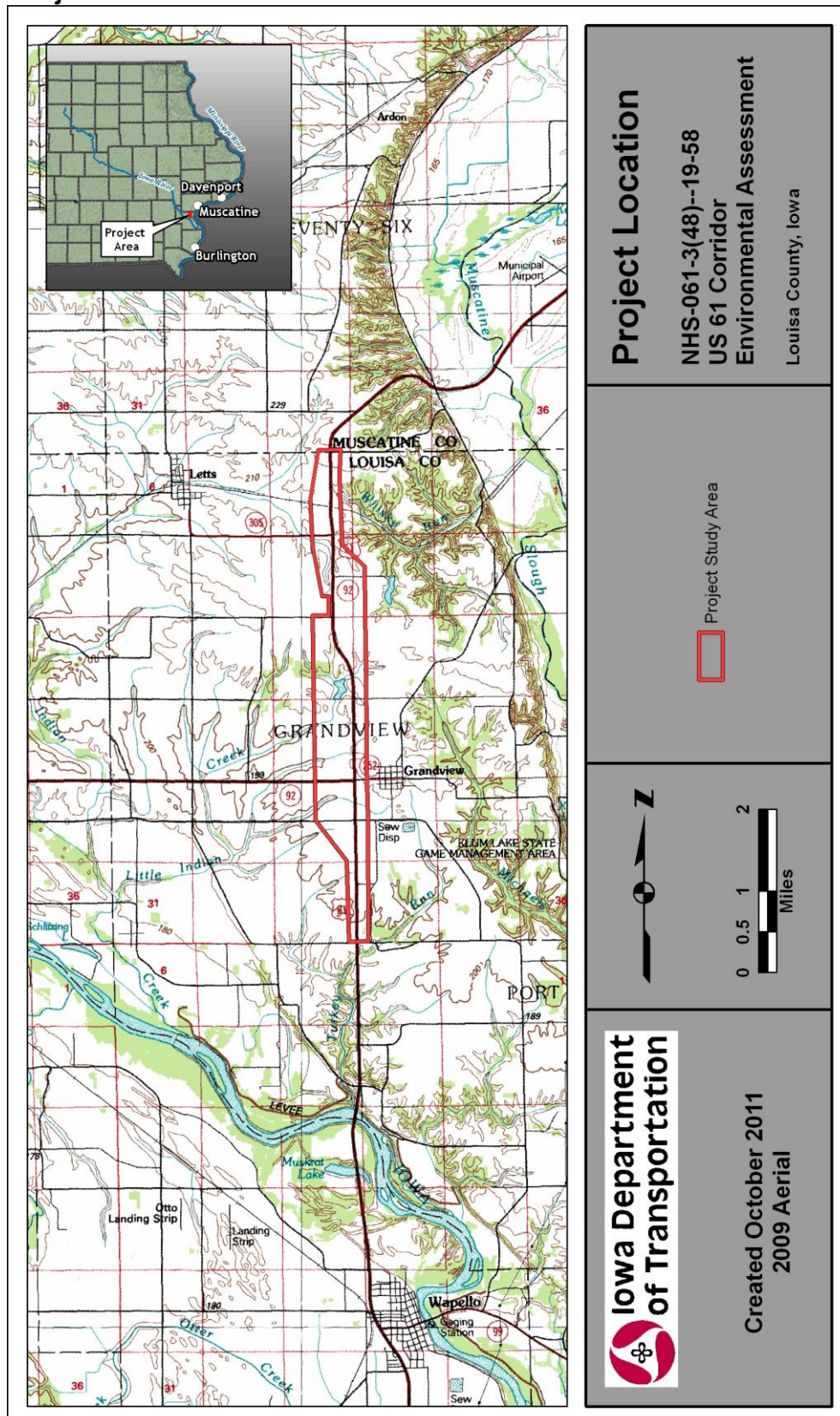
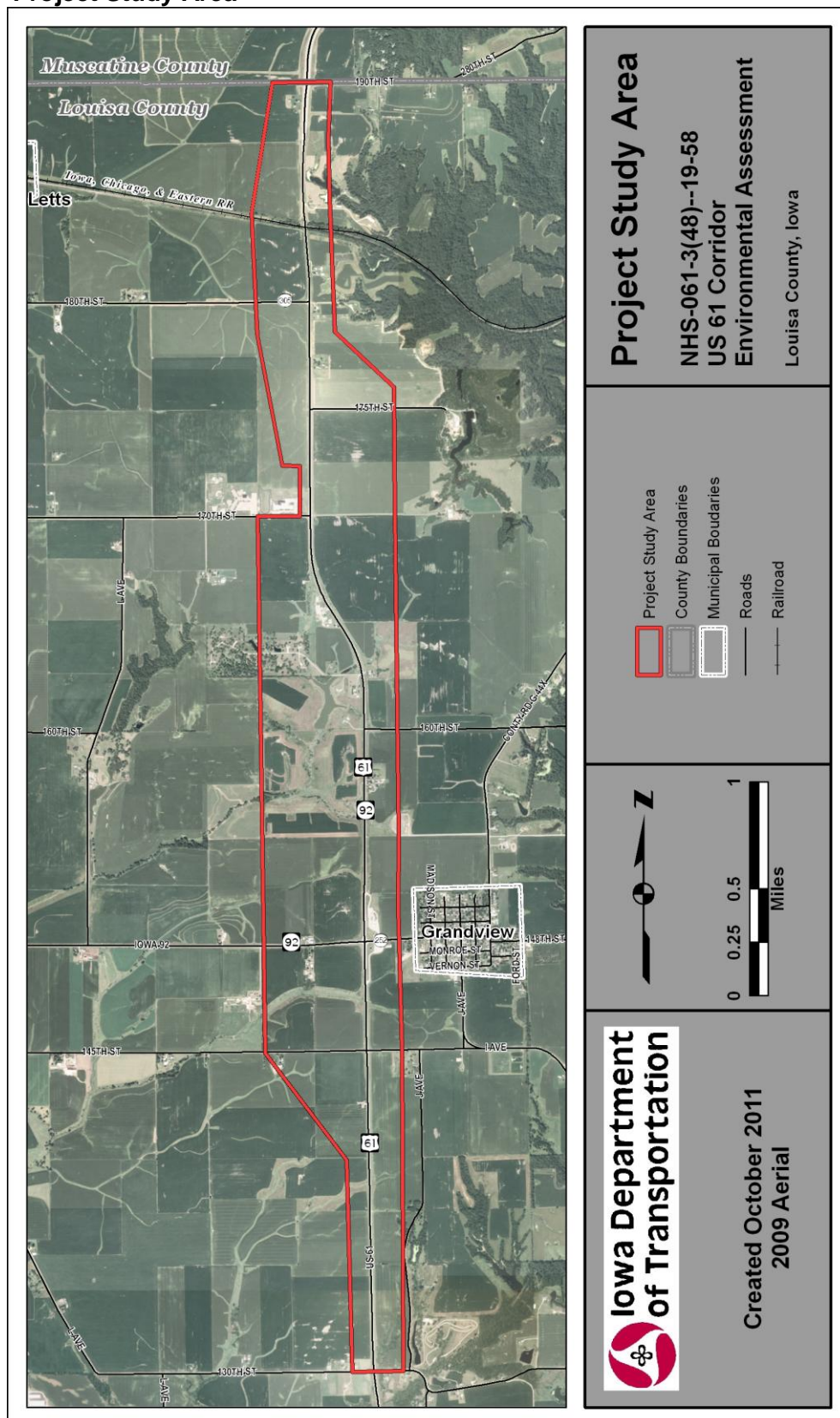


Figure 2. Project Study Area



2.0 Project History

Pre-location studies were conducted for the U. S. 61 Corridor from the Iowa/Missouri State line north to the Muscatine County line in 1987 and 1989. The Iowa DOT initiated a Planning Study in 1994 for U. S. 61 from IA 92 north to the Muscatine County line. The purpose of these studies was to identify deficiencies, consider needs, and explore potential improvements to the U.S. 61 Highway Corridor. Each of the project studies indicated the primary purpose for improvements is to improve roadway continuity between existing two-lane and four-lane divided sections.

The Iowa DOT's Transportation Commission identified U.S. 61 as part of the State's Commercial and Industrial Network (CIN) and approved the development of U.S. 61 as a four-lane highway. As part of the CIN, other segments of U.S. 61 in the State of Iowa have been developed as four-lane expressway or freeway facilities with posted speed limits of 65 mph in rural areas. Approximately 35 miles of U.S. 61 is constructed as a two-lane highway in Louisa County and adjacent Des Moines County, Iowa, with a posted speed of 55 mph in rural areas.

The U.S. 61 Corridor Coalition, a group of local government, business, and industry leaders with representatives of the communities along the U.S. 61 Corridor from Keokuk to Dubuque, formed in 2004 to promote U.S. 61 improvements to maintain four-lane travel continuity between U.S. 61 communities. The U.S. 61 Coalition's goal is to improve the mobility of regional traffic along U.S. 61 and to enhance trade and economic development opportunities, consistent with the CIN.

3.0 Purpose and Need for Action

3.1 Purpose

The purpose of the proposed project is to upgrade and modernize the existing two-lane section of U.S. 61, between the current four-lane section at the Muscatine/Louisa county border and 130th Street, in Northern Louisa County, to provide a safer and more efficient element of Iowa's CIN.

3.2 Need

The need for the project is based on the following factors:

- Safety
- Lane Continuity
- Economic Development

Safety

Safety in the U.S. 61 study area corridor needs to be improved for regional travelers, local residents, school traffic, and businesses. Safety needs include the creation of improved vehicle passing opportunities, modifications to roadway intersections to reduce vehicle crashes, and revisions to local and regional roadway accessibility.

Approximately 20 percent of the current (2010) average daily traffic in the project corridor is comprised of heavy commercial vehicles, which is higher than the statewide average of approximately 15 percent. The 55 mph posted speed limit and two-lane roadway frequently create situations where multiple vehicles get caught behind a slower-moving truck and have very limited safe passing opportunities. Safe passing opportunities on this 6-mile stretch of U.S. 61 are limited due to the combination of the high percentage of heavy commercial vehicle traffic and the current intersection spacing. “No passing zone” signs are posted near state and local roadway intersections, six of which occur in a four mile segment north of IA 92. Three of these intersections, near the campus of Louisa-Muscatine Community Schools, are spaced approximately one-half mile apart.

Within the U.S. 61 study corridor, there are three intersections that stand out when reviewing the crash data. The U.S. 61 and IA 92 intersection, the only location in the corridor with intersecting state highways, has a higher-than-statewide average number of crashes. Between 2001 and 2009, there were 33 crashes recorded with one recorded fatality. The major cause of the recorded crashes during this period was failure to yield the right-of-way from the stop sign. Other notable recorded crash locations in the corridor include the U.S. 61 intersections with 160th Street and 170th Street. Table 1 summarizes noteworthy recorded crash statistics at these three intersections between 2001 and 2009.

Table 1. Recorded Crash Statistics, U.S. 61 Corridor, 2001-2009

| U.S. 61 Intersection | Number of Recorded Incidents | Number of Fatalities | Major Causes of Crashes |
|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|
| IA 92 | 33 | 1 | Failure to Yield Right-of-Way (Stop Sign) |
| 160 th Street | 10 | 0 | Sideswipe, Rear End |
| 170 th Street | 5 | 0 | Rear End |

Lane Continuity

There is a need to improve lane continuity on U.S. 61 between the four-lane divided sections and the existing two-lane section in the project study area. Currently, the slow moving truck traffic, combined with the limited passing opportunities within the study area, do not support efficient travel or movement of goods, as specified in the CIN.

U.S. 61 enters Iowa near Keokuk and travels north for 196 miles where it crosses the Mississippi River into Wisconsin. Of the 196 miles, only 38 miles exist as a two-lane highway, six miles of which are in the study area (see Figure 2). Upgrading and modernizing this section of U.S. 61 would help in creating a continuous four-lane highway, as envisioned by the Iowa Legislature and the Transportation Commission in designating U.S. 61 as an element of the CIN.

Economic Development

As part of the CIN’s core mission to support Iowa’s economic vitality, travel on U.S. 61 needs to be more convenient, safe, and efficient in order to better connect Iowa with regional, national, and international markets. There is a need to provide long distance continuity on U.S. 61 to

“enhance opportunities for the development and diversification of the state’s economy.” Decreased travel time and improved accessibility along U.S. 61 is needed to safely deliver employees, commuters, tourists, and commercial vehicle operators between places of employment and trade. One of the U.S. 61 Coalition’s goals is to promote new U.S. 61 infrastructure to attract economic growth. Businesses and agricultural interests depend on an efficient highway system with connections to rail and barge facilities at the Mississippi River’s intermodal terminals to meet their shipping needs. Expanding U.S. 61 from two to four lanes is therefore consistent with the goals of the CIN and U.S. 61 Coalition to make U.S. 61 more reliable and decreasing transportation related costs through fewer stops, higher speeds, and improved safety.

4.0 Alternatives

This section will discuss the alternatives investigated to address the project’s purpose and need. A range of alternatives was developed that included slight variations to the road’s alignment. The No Build Alternative, the alternatives considered but dismissed, and the Proposed Alternative are discussed below.

4.1 No Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative would be the continuation of the highway system as it exists. It would not address the safety needs, increasing traffic volumes and outdated geometrics of the roadway within the project corridor. This alternative would not satisfy the Project Purpose and Need requirements. However, it is carried forward to serve as a baseline for comparison with the Build Alternatives.

4.2 Alternatives Considered But Dismissed

In addition to the No Build alternative, nine build alternatives were considered, eight of which were eventually dismissed. Each dismissed alternative is briefly described below and illustrated on Figure 3.

Alternative 1

From 130th Street to 145th Street and from 170th Street to the northern and southern project termini, two new travel lanes would be constructed along the west side of existing U.S. 61. Between 145th Street and 170th Street, the proposed alignment would shift and four new lanes would be constructed approximately 1,000 feet to the west of the existing roadway. An interchange would be constructed at the U.S. 61/IA 92 intersection and IA 92 would go over U.S. 61.

Alternative 1 was dismissed because it would have substantial impacts to the residential development called Rays Timber Association west of U.S. 61 and NE of 160th Street and to a recently installed geothermal field at Louisa-Muscatine Schools near 170th Street. Alternative 1 would have greater impacts to wetlands, streams, and woodlands, and would affect more homes than the Build Alternative. Alternative 1 could also adversely affect a large pond west of U.S. 61.

Alternative 2

This alternative is the same as Alternative 1 except that proposed U.S. 61 would go over IA 92.

Alternative 2 was dismissed because it would have the same impacts as Alternative 2.

Alternative 4

From 130th Street to 160th Street two new lanes would be constructed along the east side of existing U.S. 61. Between 160th and 170th Streets the new roadway would be relocated east of existing U.S. 61. North of 170th Street the alignment would cross over the existing roadway and two new lanes would be constructed west of existing U.S. 61. The curves south of 170th Street would be removed. An interchange would be constructed at the U.S. 61/IA 92 intersection and U.S. 61 would go over IA 92.

Alternative 4 was dismissed because it would have direct impacts to two historic properties, the Veterans' Memorial, and two active businesses at the junction of U.S. 61 and IA 92. It would require more frontage road to be constructed and maintained for out-of-the-way travel which the public voiced their displeasure at during the July 2010 public information meeting. Alternative 4 would have greater impacts to wetlands and regulated materials sites than the build alternative.

Alternative 5

From 130th Street to south of County Road G-44X two new lanes would be constructed along the west side of existing U.S. 61. The alignment would then shift 159 feet to the east of the existing roadway and continue as four new lanes along the east side to north of 170th Street. This would allow existing U.S. 61 to be used as a frontage road between IA 92 and 170th Street. From 170th Street to the end of the project two new lanes would be constructed along the west side of existing U.S. 61. An interchange would be constructed at the U.S. 61/IA 92 intersection and U.S. 61 would go over IA 92.

Alternative 5 was dismissed because it would have impacts to two historic properties, the Veterans' Memorial, two active businesses, would require frontage road construction, and have the greatest wetland impact of any alternative.

Alternative 6

From 130th Street to south of County Road G-44X two new lanes would be constructed along the west side of existing U.S. 61. The alignment would then shift 159 feet to the east of the existing roadway and continue as four new lanes along the east side to north of 160th Street. North of 160th Street, the alignment would shift farther to the east to eliminate the curves and tie into the existing roadway north of 170th Street. This would allow existing U.S. 61 to be used as a frontage road between IA 92 and 170th Street. From 170th Street to the end of the project two new lanes would be constructed along the west side of existing U.S. 61. An interchange would be constructed at the U.S. 61/IA 92 intersection and U.S. 61 would go over IA 92.

Alternative 6 was dismissed because it would have impacts to two historic properties, the Veterans' Memorial, two active businesses, would require frontage road construction, and would have substantial impacts to wetlands, streams, and regulated material sites.

Alternative 7

This alternative is a variation of Alternative 6 with the alignment shift starting approximately one-half mile north of 130th Street.

Alternative 7 was dismissed because it would have impacts to two historic properties, the Veterans' Memorial, two active businesses, would require frontage road construction and would have substantial impacts to wetlands, streams, and regulated material sites.

Alternative 8

This alternative is a variation of Alternative 7 with four new lanes being constructed east of and parallel to the existing roadway between 160th and 170th streets.

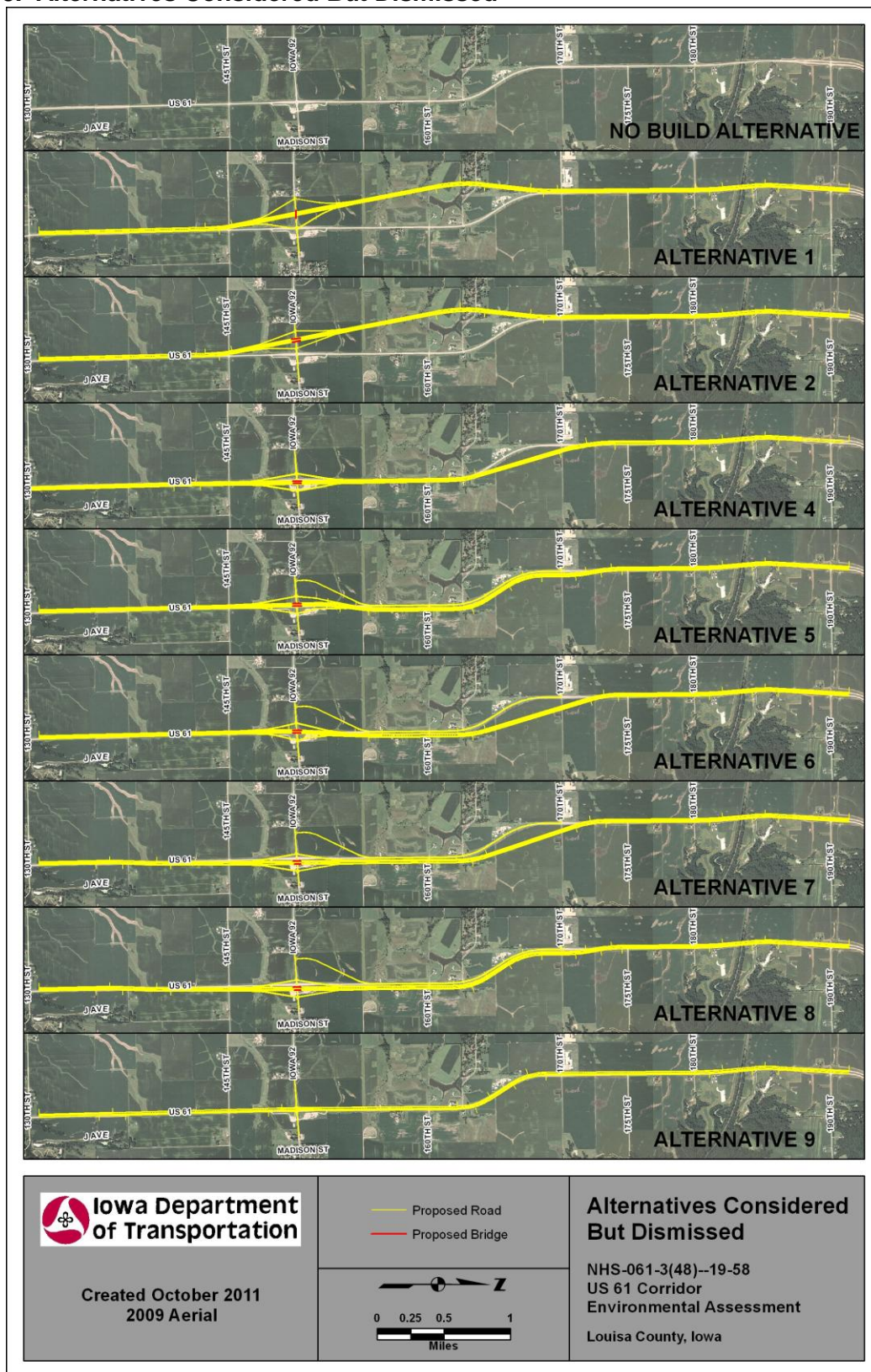
Alternative 8 was dismissed because it would have impacts to two historic properties, the Veterans' Memorial, two active businesses, would require frontage road construction and would have substantial impacts to wetlands and regulated material sites. It would have the most stream impact of any alternative.

Alternative 9

In this alternative, throughout the majority of the project length, two new lanes would be constructed along the west side of existing U.S. 61. Between 160th and 170th streets, through the curved section, two new lanes would be added to the east of the existing roadway. This alternative also includes right turn lanes, offset left turn lanes, and acceleration lanes on U.S. 61. An at-grade intersection would be maintained at the U.S. 61/IA 92 junction.

Alternative 9 was dismissed because it would have direct impacts to one historic property, one potential archeological site, a trucking business west of U.S. 61 between 160th and 170th Streets, and also to a recently installed geothermal field at Louisa-Muscatine Schools near 170th Street. This alternative would also leave an at-grade intersection at U.S. 61 and IA 92, which would not address the high crash area for this corridor. Alternative 9 would have greater impacts to wetlands and woodlands than the Build Alternative.

Figure 3. Alternatives Considered But Dismissed



4.3 Proposed Alternative

The Proposed Alternative is Alternative 3 and is shown in Figure 4. From 130th Street north to 160th Street four new lanes would be constructed approximately 650 to 700 feet west of the existing highway. Between 160th and 170th Streets the new roadway would be relocated east of existing U.S. 61. From 170th Street to the end of the project two new lanes would be constructed along the west side of existing U.S. 61. An interchange would be constructed at the U.S. 61/IA 92 intersection and U.S. 61 would go over IA 92. An interchange would also be constructed at the U.S. 61/170th Street intersection with U.S. 61 going over 170th Street.

The interchange at the U.S. 61/IA 92 intersection is the highest crash area in the study corridor and the proposed grade-separated structure would enhance traffic safety at this location.

The interchange at U.S. 61/170th Street was instituted to address public comments. The interchange would be located just east of the Louisa-Muscatine Schools at U.S. 61 and 170th Street with U.S. 61 going over 170th Street. While the existing intersection does not have a high crash rate, two additional lanes of traffic combined with three schools (elementary, middle and high) at one location increases the chance of crashes, especially involving children. The proposed interchange would reduce the potential for crashes at this location. The interchange at 170th Street that was added to the Build Alternative was not added to Alternatives 1, 2, and 4 through 9, since these alternatives had been screened out based on their merits following alternatives screening and public input.

Iowa DOT has recommended Alternative 3 as the preferred alternative. This alternative is preferred because it meets the purpose of and need for the proposed action while minimizing overall impacts. Alternative 3 will undergo additional design and be carried through the Environmental Assessment as the Build Alternative.

Final selection of an alternative will not occur until Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Iowa DOT evaluate all comments received as a result of public and agency review of this EA and the public hearing on this document. Following public and agency review of this EA, FHWA and Iowa DOT will determine if an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required. If an EIS is required, then a preferred alternative will be selected through that process.

If an EIS is not required, the selected alternative will be identified with a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) document for this EA.

Proposed Alternative

NHS-061-3(48)--19-58

US 61 Corridor

Environmental Assessment

Louisa County, Iowa

Legend:

- Proposed Alternative
- Roads
- Railroad
- County Boundaries
- Municipal Boundaries

Scale: 0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

North Arrow

Iowa Department of Transportation

Created October 2011
2009 Aerial

5.0 Environmental Analysis

This section will describe the existing socioeconomic, cultural, and physical environments in the project corridor that would be affected by the Proposed Alternative. The resources with a check in the second column in the Resources Considered table in the preface to this document, are discussed below.

5.1 Socioeconomic Impacts

5.1.1 Land Use

The proposed project is located in a rural, unincorporated area of Louisa County. The communities of Grandview and Letts are near the project area. Grandview is located approximately 0.25 mile east of the U.S. 61/IA 92 intersection. Letts is located approximately 1.25 miles west of U.S. 61 and does not have direct access to U.S. 61. Agricultural land uses, including row crops and pasturelands, are predominant in the project area, primarily west of U.S. 61. East of U.S. 61, naturally wooded areas in the Muscatine Slough lie between Burlington Road, “I” Avenue (Whiskey Hollow Road), and U.S. 61. The draws found in the Muscatine Slough drain to the Mississippi River. Farmsteads dot the landscape, several with direct access to U.S. 61, and one rural subdivision located along Buttercup Lane contains seven residential properties. Highway-oriented commercial land uses are present at the intersection of U.S. 61/IA 92. A veteran’s memorial is located in the northeast quadrant of the U.S. 61/IA 92 intersection adjacent to a vacated commercial building in the same location. The Louisa-Muscatine school campus is located north of 170th Street, immediately west of U.S. 61. One railroad, the Iowa Chicago & Eastern Railroad bisects the project area north of IA 92. One of the most unique land use features is a newer drive-in movie theater located northwest of Grandview and east of the existing U.S. 61 highway right-of-way. The Proposed Alternative would remove approximately 273 acres of farmland and replace it with public roadway right-of-way and thus a constructed rather than agricultural land use form. More information about farmland impacts is discussed in Section 5.3.3.

Louisa County has not adopted a Comprehensive Plan and therefore the consistency of the project with a local long-range planning document cannot be determined. The County does, however, provide for land use control through zoning and subdivision regulation. Any changes in land use that may result from the project will be controlled by development review and local access permitting processes established by Louisa County and/or the Iowa DOT. The Proposed Alternative would include an interchange at U.S. 61 and IA 92, and thus is expected to generate new urban land use interest and commercial reinvestment in the interchange quadrants, particularly on the northeast and southeast sides adjacent to Grandview.

The Proposed Alternative would also include an interchange at U.S. 61 and 170th Street. This interchange is expected to serve primarily local access for the Louisa-Muscatine School District, area residents, and a trucking business west of the existing U.S. 61 alignment. County-permitted zoning amendments from agricultural to urban land uses will ultimately dictate allowable land use changes near this proposed interchange. Any changes that may occur are expected to be minor and isolated given the proximity of the proposed U.S. 61 and IA 92 interchange and its

more prominent and desirable access to the adjacent community of Grandview and more desirable higher traffic volumes afforded by the intersection of a State route and U.S. highway.

The No Build Alternative will not change land uses along the corridor. Reinvestment in vacant commercial properties could be expected to occur without the Proposed Alternative such that the existing and future land use footprints would remain close to the same.

5.1.2 Right-of-Way & Relocation Potential

Preliminary estimates indicate that construction of the Proposed Alternative would require a total of approximately 392 acres of right-of-way (ROW), including existing ROW, and would displace two residences. The affected residences are shown on Figure 5.

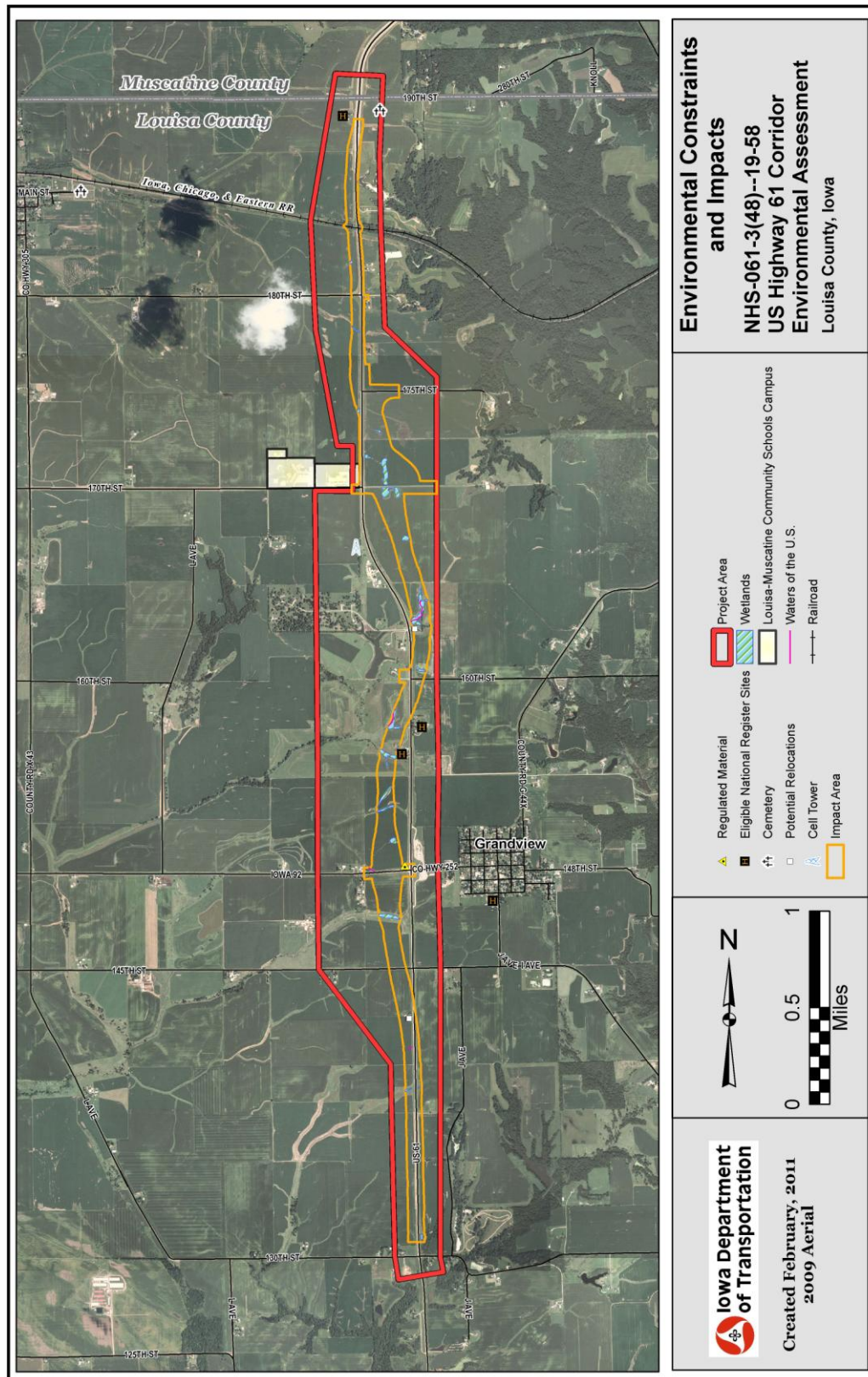
The Iowa DOT offers a relocation assistance program to property owners that are partially or totally displaced by a state highway project. The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, (Uniform Act) ensures uniform and equitable treatment of all persons displaced from their residences, businesses, or farmsteads as a result of a federally funded project. This includes just compensation for the acquired properties (42 USC 4601 et seq., as amended, 1989).

Also, it is FHWA's policy that persons displaced from their property receive uniform and equitable treatment and do not disproportionately bear the impacts of a project that is intended to benefit a larger group of people (U.S. Department of Transportation – Federal Highway Administration and Iowa Department of Transportation, 1999). FHWA has programs and policies that enforce the Uniform Act, such as an early acquisition program to assist individuals who meet certain hardship criteria and policies to ensure comparable (equal or better) housing for residential relocations.

Individuals displaced from their residences, whether owners or tenants, are eligible for relocation assistance advisory services and moving payments. ROW would be acquired in accordance with the Uniform Act and would follow FHWA's policy when working with displaced individuals. Relocation assistance agents would be available to explain all potential options. Replacement housing payments and reimbursement for certain expenses incurred during the purchase of replacement housing are determined upon review of each relocation and the eligibility of the displaced individual. The goal is to find equal housing for all who are relocated.

The No Build Alternative would not require acquisition of any ROW or the relocation of any residences or businesses.

Figure 5. Environmental Constraints and Impacts



5.2 Cultural Impacts

5.2.1 Historical Sites or Districts

A Phase I architectural resource survey of the project study area was conducted in May 2010. Properties were evaluated to determine their eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). As part of this survey, eight previously recorded properties and the encompassing Northern Grandview Township Historic District were reevaluated. Of these, three individual properties are eligible for the NRHP, the Philip Wagner farm, the Joseph W. Dodder farm, and the Beik farm. The survey reported that the majority of barns in the Northern Grandview Township Historic District had been removed and recommended that the District was no longer eligible for the NRHP because of the loss of integrity due to the barn removals. The architectural resource survey also identified eight previously unrecorded properties. Of these eight, one, the Werner farmstead, was recommended eligible for the NRHP. The State Historical Society of Iowa (SHPO) concurred with the eligibility of the four farms for listing on the NRHP (Iowa DOT, September 1, 2010). Appendix B, Agency and Tribal Coordination, includes a copy of the SHPO concurrence letter.

Table 2. NRHP Eligible and State Protected Properties

| Property Name | Kind of Property | Identification Number | Criterion Eligible Under |
|---|------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Previously Recorded Evaluated Properties</i> | | | |
| Philip Wagner Farm | Farmstead | 58-00089 | A, C |
| Joseph W. Dodder Farm | Farmstead | 58-00194 | A, C |
| Beik Farm | Farmstead | 58-00202 | A, C |
| <i>Newly Recorded Evaluated Properties</i> | | | |
| Werner Farmstead | Farmstead | 58-0629 | A, C |
| <i>Properties Protected Under State Law</i> | | | |
| Wagner Cemetery | Pioneer Cemetery | 58-00099 | |

The Proposed Alternative would avoid all of the historic properties except for one. Approximately 1.3 acres of land would be needed for roadway ROW from the Dodder farm, but none of the structures that make the farm eligible for the NRHP would be affected. On August 18, 2011, SHPO concurred that conversion of 1.3 acres of land from the Dodder farm would have no adverse effect on the features that make the farm eligible for listing on the NRHP (Appendix B).

Significant historic sites that are eligible for listing on the NRHP are protected under Section 4(f). Therefore, the Dodder farm is considered to be a Section 4(f) property and acquisition of land from the Dodder farm would result in a Section 4(f) use. However, the proposed project is being designed to ensure that construction activities do not impact the historic structures on the farm. Consequently, the structures that qualify the property for protection under Section 4(f) would not be affected. Since the impacts to the Dodder farm would be minimal and would not adversely impact the features that qualify the property for protection under Section 4(f), the FHWA proposes to make a *de minimis* determination for the impact to the Dodder farm.

No historic properties would be impacted as a result of the No Build Alternative.

5.2.2 Archaeological Sites

A Phase I archeological investigation was conducted in the U.S. 61 project study area. A total of 29 sites were investigated and 27 of them were determined not to be eligible for the NRHP. The remaining two sites, 13LA685 and 13LA686, have been identified as potential pioneer cemetery locations. These two potential cemeteries were not observed during the survey but they were documented in research and interviews. The SHPO concurred with the findings of the archeological study on August 23, 2010.

One marked cemetery, the Wagner Cemetery, is also located in the project study area. This site was not investigated for eligibility for listing on the NRHP, however, it is platted and protected by Iowa State Law (Chapters 516 and 716.5, Iowa Code).

The Proposed Alternative would avoid the Wagner Cemetery and the two pioneer cemeteries.

No archeological properties would be impacted as a result of the No Build Alternative.

5.3 Natural Environment Impacts

This section characterizes the natural resources in the Study Area and addresses potential impacts of the No Build Alternative and the Build Alternative. The resources discussed are wetlands, surface waters and water quality, farmlands, and woodland.

5.3.1 Wetlands

In October 2009 and in June 2011 field review was conducted to delineate the wetlands located within the project study area. National Wetland Inventory (NWI) data were collected prior to the site visit and confirmed or denied based on observed on-ground conditions. Waters of the U.S., including wetlands, waterways, lakes, natural ponds, and impoundments, are regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which requires a permit to authorize the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. (33 USC 1251 et seq.). Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, requires Federal agencies, including FHWA, to implement “no net loss” measures for wetlands (42 Federal Register (FR) 26951). These no net loss measures include a phased approach to wetland impact avoidance, then minimization of impacts if wetlands cannot be avoided, and finally mitigation to compensate for the impacts.

The wetland delineation identified 22 wetlands that are partially or wholly located within the project area. The total area of wetlands is approximately 23.83 acres, as described in Table 3.

Table 3. Potential Impacts to Wetlands

| Wetland Number | Wetland Type | Wetland Size (acres) | Wetland Impact (acres) |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Palustrine Emergent (PEM) | 5.72 | 0.01 |
| 2 | Palustrine Emergent (PEM) | 0.11 | 0.11 |
| 3 | Palustrine Emergent (PEM) | 1.62 | 0.17 |
| 4 | Palustrine Emergent (PEM) | 0.17 | 0.17 |
| 5 | Palustrine Emergent (PEM) | 0.17 | 0.17 |
| 6 | Palustrine Emergent (PEM) | 0.30 | 0.28 |
| 7 | Palustrine Emergent (PEM) | 1.92 | 1.92 |
| 8 | Palustrine Emergent (PEM) | 1.94 | 0.54 |
| 9 | Palustrine Emergent (PEM) | 2.76 | 2.76 |
| 10 | Palustrine Emergent (PEM) | 0.33 | 0.33 |
| 11 | Palustrine Emergent (PEM) | 0.10 | 0.10 |
| 12 | Palustrine Emergent (PEM) | 1.50 | 1.26 |
| 13 | Palustrine Emergent (PEM) | 0.11 | 0.11 |
| 14 | Palustrine Emergent (PEM) | 1.38 | 1.02 |
| 15 | Palustrine Emergent (PEM) | 0.12 | 0.12 |
| 16 | Palustrine Emergent (PEM) | 0.80 | 0.80 |
| 17 | Palustrine Emergent (PEM) | 0.52 | 0.52 |
| 18 | Palustrine Emergent (PEM) | 0.53 | 0.53 |
| 19 | Palustrine Emergent (PEM) | 3.48 | 1.18 |
| 20 | Palustrine Emergent (PEM) | 0.17 | 0.17 |
| 21 | Palustrine Emergent (PEM) | 0.05 | 0.05 |
| 22 | Palustrine Emergent (PEM) | 0.03 | 0.13 |
| Total: | | 23.83 | 12.45 |

The Build Alternative would impact approximately 12.45 acres of wetlands (Figure 5). All proposed impacts would be to emergent wetlands primarily associated with grassed waterways within drainage areas of agricultural fields.

The Build Alternative was evaluated on the latest preliminary design, including a buffer and wetland delineation boundaries, with the understanding that adjustments can be made later in the process to minimize wetland impacts. The current potential impact area boundary includes a buffer for flexibility in completing the final design. Consequently, the area of wetlands impacted would be less than indicated in Table 3. During final design, potential minimization of wetland impacts under the Build Alternative would be evaluated and the design would be altered to minimize wetland impacts where practical. The USACE Section 404 permit application would include the detailed final design as well as efforts to minimize impacts on wetlands and other waters of the U.S. Where wetland impacts cannot be avoided, mitigation would occur at ratios determined by the USACE.

The No Build Alternative would not involve construction of the Project and therefore would not affect wetlands.

5.3.2 Surface Waters and Water Quality

In October 2009 a field review was conducted to validate the locations of streams and other Waters of the U.S. in the project study area. The field review indicated that approximately 19,200 linear feet of rivers and streams known as Turkey Run, Little Indian Creek, and an unnamed stream are within the project study area. The Proposed Alternative would impact approximately 1,564.4 linear feet of waterways as indicated on Figure 5.

The contractor would be required to implement Iowa DOT's Construction Manual to minimize temporary impacts on water quality during construction. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) administers the Federal National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program and issues general permits for stormwater discharges from construction activities. The purpose of the program is to improve water quality by reducing or eliminating contaminants in stormwater. The NPDES program requires preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for construction sites of more than 1 acre.

The specific sediment, erosion control, and spill prevention measures would be developed during the detailed design phase and would be included in the plans and specifications. The SWPPP would address requirements specified by Iowa DOT in its Construction Manual, which are often implemented to meet measures anticipated by Iowa DNR. Although it is not possible to speculate on specific details of the SWPPP at this stage in the design process, the SWPPP is likely to include installation of silt fences, buffer strips, or other features to be used in various combinations as well as the stipulation that drums of petroleum products be placed in secondary containment to prevent leakage onto ground surfaces. A standard construction best management practice (BMP) is revegetation and stabilization of roadside ditches to provide opportunities for the runoff from the impermeable area to infiltrate, to reduce the runoff velocities, and to minimize increases in sedimentation. Iowa DOT would require the contractor to comply with measures specified in the SWPPP.

The Build Alternative would impact approximately 1,564.4 linear feet of streams. The proposed stream impacts would be largely associated with impacts to emergent wetlands, as the streams run through or near many of the wetlands described in Section 5.3.1. Given the extent of potential stream impacts, an individual Iowa DNR Section 401 Water Quality Certification (Section 401 permit) would be required.

The No Build Alternative would not involve construction of the Project and therefore would not affect surface waters or water quality.

5.3.3 Farmlands

The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) of 1981 (7 CFR 658) is intended to minimize the extent to which federal activities, such as highway projects, contribute to the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of agricultural land to nonagricultural uses.

The project study area is primarily agricultural land used for growing corn and soybeans. There are approximately 10,285 acres of farmland, including prime farmland and farmland of statewide

importance, in the study area. The proposed project would convert approximately 273 acres of farmland to highway ROW. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form for Corridor Type Projects (NRCS-CPA-106) was completed for the project study area to assess the effects of the conversion on farming and farm-related services in the area. This assessment considers the effects of the conversion of farmland as a result of a project on existing and future land use, the amount of existing farmable land in a county, the creation of economically non-farmable parcels, impacts on other on-farm investments, and effects on local farm services. The assessment assigns points to each criterion, for a total possible score of 260 points. Sites receiving a total score of less than 160 points need not be given further consideration for protection. The project received a score of 162 out of the possible 260 points (see Appendix C).

The proposed project would not create any non-farmable land as a result of diagonal severance. Changes in access to properties may occur, but access to all of the parcels would be maintained from public roads.

The No Build Alternative would not require acquisition of ROW and therefore would not affect farmland.

5.3.4 Woodland

Woodlands are defined as areas consisting of 3 acres or greater of forested land having at least 200 trees (3-inch diameter at breast height or greater) per acre, or an area of 0.5 acre but less than 3 acres of at least 200 trees (3-inch diameter at breast height or greater) per acre that is connected to a larger tract of forested land or a total of more than 3 acres (not including treed fencerows and trees along property lines). Approximately 20.7 acres of woodlands are located at two sites in the project study area. The larger area of woodland exists on the north end of the project study area east of existing U.S. 61 in the vicinity of where the Iowa, Chicago, and Eastern Railroad crosses U.S. 61. A smaller area of woodland exists in the south end of the project study area where 130th Street crosses U.S. 61.

The Proposed Alternative would impact approximately 0.4 acres of woodlands. The Iowa DOT standard for woodland impacts is one acre or more. Although trees would be impacted by the project, this is not considered to be a woodland impact.

Clearing of trees would be minimized. In accordance with Iowa DOT policy, woodland removed would be replaced by plantings as close as possible to the initial site; or by acquisition of an equal amount of woodland in the general vicinity for public ownership and preservation; or by other mitigation deemed to be comparable to the woodland removed, including, but not limited to, the improvement, development, or preservation of woodland under public ownership.

The No Build Alternative would not impact any woodland.

5.4 Physical Impacts

5.4.1 Noise

Noise monitoring was conducted on September 16, 2010 at seven locations along the existing U.S. 61 corridor. Table 4 describes the locations and the current levels of noise experienced at each location. This information is used to determine the noise levels that are currently being experienced at various locations throughout the corridor and used to verify the predicted noise results are reasonable.

Table 4. Noise Monitoring Results

| Location | Approximate Distance from U.S. 61 Roadway (Feet) | Existing Noise Levels (dBA) |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| All Veterans Memorial | 200 | 63 |
| Grandview Drive-In | 1,000+ | 54 |
| Ray Timber Subdivision | 1,000+ | 51 |
| Wagner Cemetery | 1,000+ | 56 |
| Louisa-Muscatine High School (12 PM) | 200 | 63 |
| Louisa-Muscatine High School (3 PM) | 200 | 62 |
| Farm Access on IA 92 | 50 | 63 |

The FHWA Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5 was used to predict the traffic noise that would occur under existing conditions, the No Build Alternative and the Proposed Alternative. The noise model for existing conditions uses 2010 traffic volumes and the existing two-lane roadway alignment and intersections with IA 92 and 170th Street. The noise model for the No Build Alternative uses 2036 forecasted traffic and the existing two-lane roadway alignment and intersections with IA 92 and 170th Street. The noise model for the Proposed Alternative uses 2036 forecasted traffic, the proposed four-lane roadway, and two interchanges at IA 92 and 170th Street. Table 5 describes predicted noise levels at each of the sensitive noise receivers shown in Figure 6. The predicted noise only includes noise generated from traffic and does not include background or ambient noise occurring in the area such as noise from wind.

Table 5. Predicted Noise Levels

| Receiver ID | Distance from Receiver to Existing U.S. 61 (Feet) | Existing Conditions 2010 Traffic (dBA) | No Build Alternative 2036 Traffic (dBA) | Proposed Alternative 2036 Traffic (dBA) | Difference Between Existing & No Build (dBA) | Difference Between Existing & Proposed (dBA) |
|------------------------|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| 1 | 1,020 | 44 | 45 | 48 | 1 | 4 |
| 2 | 200 | 58 | 60 | 61 | 3 | 3 |
| 3 | 1,690 | 40 | 42 | 44 | 2 | 4 |
| 4 | 150 | 61 | 62 | 64 | 1 | 3 |
| 5 | 160 | 60 | 61 | 63 | 1 | 3 |
| 6 | 190 | 59 | 60 | 63 | 1 | 4 |

| Receiver ID | Distance from Receiver to Existing U.S. 61 (Feet) | Existing Conditions 2010 Traffic (dBA) | No Build Alternative 2036 Traffic (dBA) | Proposed Alternative 2036 Traffic (dBA) | Difference Between Existing & No Build (dBA) | Difference Between Existing & Proposed (dBA) |
|-------------|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| 7 | 1,080 | 44 | 45 | 48 | 1 | 4 |
| 8 | 150 | 61 | 62 | 65 | 1 | 4 |
| 9 | 3,330 | 37 | 39 | 41 | 2 | 4 |
| 10 | 1,520 | 43 | 45 | 43 | 2 | 0 |
| 11 | 360 | 49 | 51 | 48 | 2 | -1 |
| 12 | 3,210 | 37 | 39 | 43 | 2 | 6 |
| 13 | 2,680 | 38 | 40 | 40 | 2 | 2 |
| 14 | 2,370 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 1 | 2 |
| 15 | 140 | 60 | 62 | 49 | 2 | -11 |
| 16 | 80 | 64 | 66 | 51 | 2 | -13 |
| 17 | 1,070 | 44 | 46 | 45 | 2 | 1 |
| 18 | 1,310 | 42 | 44 | 44 | 2 | 2 |
| 19 | 1,910 | 40 | 42 | 42 | 2 | 2 |
| 20 | 2,400 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 1 | 2 |
| 21 | 2,630 | 38 | 40 | 41 | 2 | 3 |
| 22 | 3,080 | 37 | 39 | 40 | 2 | 3 |
| 23 | 3,350 | 39 | 41 | 42 | 2 | 3 |
| 24 | 1,270 | 43 | 45 | 45 | 2 | 2 |
| 25 | 670 | 48 | 50 | 48 | 2 | 0 |
| 26 | 600 | 49 | 51 | 50 | 2 | 1 |
| 27 | 210 | 57 | 59 | 53 | 2 | -4 |
| 28 | 470 | 51 | 53 | 52 | 2 | 1 |
| 29 | 80 | 64 | 66 | 58 | 2 | -6 |
| 30 | 50 | 67 | 68 | 57 | 1 | -10 |
| 31 | 1,550 | 56 | 56 | 50 | 0 | -6 |
| 32 | 1,910 | 55 | 56 | 47 | 1 | -8 |
| 33 | 1,340 | 51 | 51 | 53 | 0 | 2 |
| 34 | 2,080 | 38 | 40 | 43 | 2 | 5 |
| 35 | 1,140 | 42 | 43 | 45 | 1 | 3 |
| 36 | 110 | 61 | 63 | 75 | 1 | 14 |
| 37 | 680 | 45 | 46 | 44 | 1 | -1 |
| 38 | 1,200 | 39 | 41 | 40 | 2 | 1 |
| 39 | 1,510 | 38 | 39 | 39 | 1 | 1 |
| 40 | 650 | 45 | 46 | 41 | 2 | -4 |
| 41 | 360 | 50 | 52 | 43 | 2 | -7 |
| 42 | 260 | 54 | 55 | 48 | 1 | -6 |
| 43 | 760 | 44 | 46 | 43 | 2 | -1 |

| Receiver ID | Distance from Receiver to Existing U.S. 61 (Feet) | Existing Conditions 2010 Traffic (dBA) | No Build Alternative 2036 Traffic (dBA) | Proposed Alternative 2036 Traffic (dBA) | Difference Between Existing & No Build (dBA) | Difference Between Existing & Proposed (dBA) |
|--------------------|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| 44 | 1,560 | 37 | 39 | 39 | 2 | 2 |
| 45 | 1,860 | 35 | 37 | 37 | 2 | 2 |
| 46 | 1,300 | 37 | 39 | 38 | 2 | 1 |
| 47 | 970 | 39 | 40 | 39 | 1 | 0 |
| 48 | 150 | 61 | 63 | 62 | 2 | 1 |

According to the FHWA Highway Traffic Noise: Analysis and Abatement Guidance, noise impacts occur when predicted or future traffic noise levels approach or exceed the noise abatement criteria (NAC) for the land use or activity category of the area. The Iowa DOT noise policy defines approach as noise levels that are within 1 dBA of the NAC. The NAC for this corridor is category C, 67 dBA, since the land use is mostly agricultural with homes, schools, and a cemetery in the corridor. Any noise level approaching or exceeding the 67 dBA is considered to interfere with speech communication. Noise levels that change by 10 dBA are perceived by the average human ear as have been either reduced by half or being twice as loud. The average human ear is unable to perceive a change in noise levels that are 3 dBA or less.

The predicted noise levels for the existing conditions indicate that sensitive noise receiver 30 is already experiencing noise levels around 67 dBA. This is considered to be valid since some of the locations of the noise monitoring experienced noise levels around 63-62 dBA at a distance from about 50 feet to 200 feet.

The No Build Alternative includes 2036 forecasted traffic using the existing two-lane roadway and intersections with IA 92 and 170th Street. Sensitive noise receivers 16, 29, and 30 are predicted to experience noise at or above 66 dBA. All of the noise receivers under the No Build Alternative were predicted to increase by approximately 0-3 dBA, a change that the average human ear would not be able to perceive.

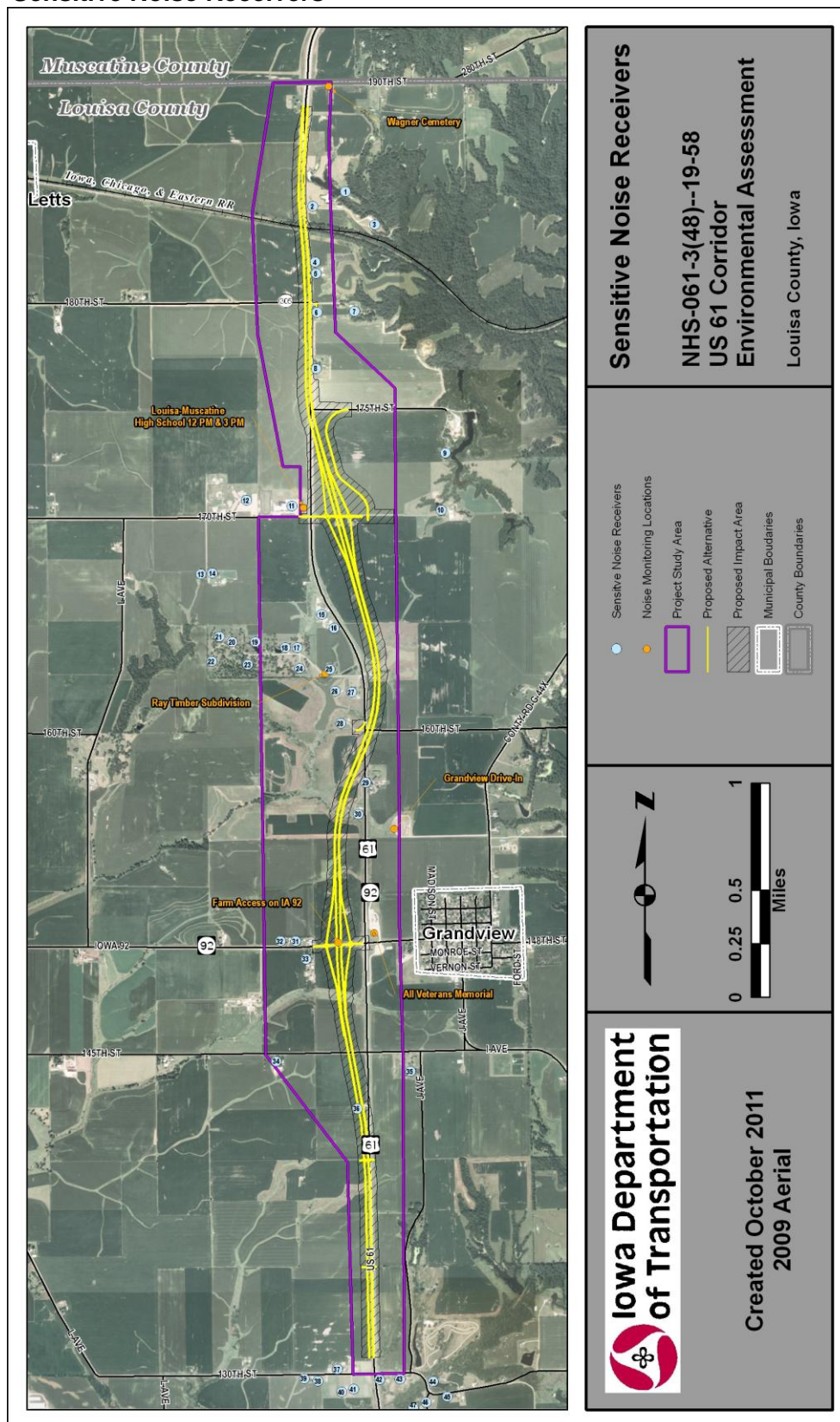
The Proposed Alternative includes 2036 forecasted traffic using the proposed four-lane roadway and interchanges at IA 92 and 170th Street. Of the 48 receivers, three are predicted to experience no change, 32 are predicted to experience an increase in noise, and 13 are predicted to experience a decrease in noise.

Of the noise receivers predicted to increase, 23 are predicted to increase between 1 and 3 dBA; eight are predicted to increase between 4 and 6 dBA; and one is predicted to be above 10 dBA which the human ear perceives as a doubling of the noise experience over the existing conditions. Sensitive noise receiver 36 is predicted to experience noise at 75 dBA, a 14 dBA increase over existing conditions that would be perceived as a doubling of noise. However, the property is proposed to be acquired and converted to roadway right-of-way with the construction of the Proposed Alternative.

Of the noise receivers predicted to decrease, three are predicted to decrease between 1 and 3 dBA; 7 are predicted to decrease between 4-8 dBA; and three are predicted to decrease by 10 or more dBA. Sensitive noise receivers 15, 16, and 30 are predicted to experience a reduction in noise between 10 dBA and 14 dBA, a change that the average human ear would perceive to be about half as loud as the existing conditions.

In summary, noise is predicted to increase in some areas and predicted to decrease in some areas compared with the existing conditions. There are eight sensitive noise receivers that would experience a slight increase in noise, none of which are over the FHWA's NAC criteria level. There is one sensitive noise receiver that would experience a doubling of noise over the NAC criteria level, but is proposed for acquisition. The other 40 noise receivers in the corridor would experience a decrease in noise which is considered to be a beneficial impact.

Figure 6. Sensitive Noise Receivers



5.4.2 Contaminated and Regulated Materials Sites

A preliminary review to identify potentially contaminated sites within the project study area was conducted in April 2010. The review included public records and a windshield survey. The windshield study was conducted on April 22, 2010. The results of the study found 11 potential recognized environmental conditions (REC) sites. Table 6 describes these potential RECs.

Table 6. Potential Recognized Environmental Conditions (REC)

| Location | Type | Description |
|---|---|--|
| US 61/IA 92 Intersection NE Quadrant | Underground storage tank | Grandview County Café ID # 198606335 |
| US 61/IA 92 Intersection SE Quadrant | Underground storage tank | Petro & More ID # 199016934 |
| On IA 92 west of US 61/IA 92 Intersection | Underground storage tank | Johnston Farms ID # 198912769 |
| Farmstead west of US 61 on 130 th Street | 100 gallon fuel tank with no secondary containment | 14104 130 th Street |
| Farmstead west side of US 61 south of 145 th Street | 200 gallon fuel tank with no secondary containment | 14251 Highway 61 |
| Louisa Muscatine Campus Shop & Campus | 2- 500 gallon fuel pump tanks 1-500 gallon fuel tank Large pile of construction debris | |
| NE Quadrant of US 61/IA 92 intersection | 200-exposed used tires Numerous gas tanks 12-unmarked 55 gallon barrels | Grandview Service Shop |
| West side of US 61, north of US 61/IA 92 intersection | Several charred vehicles, appliances, and barn | |
| NW quadrant of US 61 and IA 92 intersection | Historic service station from 1930's | Derived from 1930's aerial photography. |

The Proposed Alternative would impact one REC located in the northwest quadrant of the intersection of U.S. 61 and IA 92. Historical aerial photographs from the 1930's indicate that a service station was located in this quadrant. The service station likely handled gasoline, waste oil, and other potential contaminants.

Based on the review of regulated materials sites within and near the preliminary impact area for the Proposed Alternative, no significant impacts on the sites or on the project are expected to occur.

The No Build Alternative would not impact any of the RECs.

5.4.3 Visual

The view that a person sees from their vehicle as they are driving down U.S. 61 is landscape of agricultural fields and farmsteads. This view is not anticipated to change as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Alternative.

The view that a resident in the area currently sees is a two lane rural highway with intersections and driveways connecting to the highway in addition to the agricultural fields and farmsteads. The widening from two lanes to a four lane divided roadway would be a visual change along the length of the corridor. The implementation of interchanges would be a visual change in the areas where U.S. 61 intersects with IA 92 and 170th Street.

The residents living along IA 92 west of the existing intersection with U.S. 61 would see an interchange adjacent to their properties as this interchange is proposed to be located west of the existing U.S. 61 and IA 92 intersection. The proposed on/off ramps would be located approximately 30 feet from these resident's current driveways. Currently these driveways are approximately 130 feet from the intersection of U.S. 61 and IA 92.

The residents living along 170th Street would also see an interchange adjacent to their properties. In this situation, the interchange would be located east of the existing intersection of U.S. 61 and 170th Street. The proposed on/off ramps would be located approximately 70 feet east for the property located on west side of U.S. 61, whereas the existing intersection is approximately 20 feet from this property. On the east side of U.S. 61, the proposed on/off ramps would be approximately 250 feet west of the residence, whereas the existing intersection of U.S. 61 and 170th Street is approximately 350 feet from the residence.

No visual impacts would occur under the No Build Alternative. The roadway would remain unchanged from its current alignment.

5.4.4 Utilities

Utilities in the project study area include a natural gas pipeline, a buried fiber optic line, and overhead power lines in various locations along U.S. 61 in the project corridor.

The National Pipeline Mapping System indicates an active natural gas pipeline extending from the northwest edge of Grandview, Iowa, crossing U.S. 61 approximately 1,000 feet north of the U.S. 61/IA 92 intersection. The pipeline runs parallel to U.S. 61 on the west side approximately 2,000 feet north and then angles diagonally to the northwest towards Letts, Iowa.

The Mutual Telephone Company indicated that a fiber optic line is buried immediately south of the intersection of U.S. 61 and IA 92. The line runs from Grandview, then west through the project area south of the intersection, and then west along the south side of the IA 92 right-of-way out of the project study area.

Overhead power lines are present in various locations and lower voltage lines serve users throughout the corridor. A high voltage MidAmerican energy transmission line runs

perpendicular to the project study area. The 345 kilovolt transmission line runs east to west from the MidAmerican Louisa generating station, across the project study area approximately 1,300 feet north of the U.S. 61 / 170th Street intersection, to a substation in Washington County. Two poles for the line are within the existing U.S. 61 ROW on the east side of the pavement. Medium voltage three phase distribution feeder overhead lines are present on the west side of U.S. 61 from Buttercup Lane north to 180th Street where the lines cross over to the east side of U.S. 61 and continue north out of the project study area.

The Proposed Alternative would cross the buried natural gas pipeline and impact the overhead power lines. These utilities would need to be relocated. The extent of utility relocations would be determined based on more detailed design.

As detailed design plans are developed for the Build Alternative, construction activities would be coordinated with the public utilities to avoid potential conflicts and to minimize planned interruptions of service.

The No Build Alternative would not impact the natural gas pipeline, fiber optic line, or any overhead power lines.

5.5 Cumulative

Cumulative impacts are those that result from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions, combined with the potential impacts of the proposed improvements. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor, but collectively substantial impacts taking place over a period of time. A cumulative impact assessment looks at the collective effects imposed by individual land use plans and projects in the same vicinity of the proposed project.

5.5.1 Past Actions

All of U.S. 61 was considered a primary route for development as a four-lane highway in 1998. U.S. 61 is a four lane roadway from I-280 in Davenport, Iowa to the Muscatine/Louisa County line. The Iowa DOT has been upgrading this portion of U.S. 61 since about 1994. The remaining portions of the U.S. 61 corridor will be upgraded to four-lanes as funding becomes available.

5.5.2 Present Actions

Louisa County is currently constructing a three mile segment of the Great River Road, X-61 which was the last segment of the Great River Road along the Mississippi River to be connected and paved. This project is expected to be complete in fall 2011.

Louisa County is currently working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on upgrading levees in the Oakville and Wapello, Iowa areas along the Iowa River. Flooding from 2008 damaged these levees and plans are being completed to reconstruct and strengthen these levee systems.

Louisa County is currently working with the U.S. Economic Development Administration and the Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission to replace the X-99 Bridge over the Iowa River in Oakville, Iowa. This bridge has reached its design and operation life and is in need of replacement. The environmental clearance for this project was received in June 2010. Design is currently underway with construction anticipated to begin in the summer of 2012.

5.5.3 Future Actions

The Iowa DOT is interested in continuing to four-lane U.S. 61 south to Burlington when funding becomes available. This would create a four-lane connection between the Quad Cities and Burlington and could include bypasses of communities such as Wapello, Iowa.

Louisa County anticipates replacing the X-99 Bridge over the Iowa River in Wapello, Iowa as the existing bridge has reached its design and operation life.

5.5.4 Summary of Cumulative Impacts

It is possible that some development may occur as a result of the Proposed Alternative being constructed in Louisa County. Development would likely occur closer to urban areas and the interchanges rather than in the more rural areas of the corridor. Currently, there are no known proposed developments along the proposed project corridor.

The roadway improvements underway and planned to occur in Louisa County are a beneficial impact when added to the Proposed Alternative for the movement of goods and services through the State of Iowa and between the communities in southeast Iowa. Economic development in this area of the state would be considered a beneficial impact as a result of the cumulative effects of the proposed planned projects in the area.

5.6 Streamlined Resource Summary

Resources not discussed in the body of the EA are located in the Streamlined Resource Summary, Appendix A. The summary includes information about the resources, the method used to evaluate them, and when the evaluation was completed. Table 7 summarizes the impacts to resources discussed in this document.

Table 7. Summary of Impacts

| Resource | No Build Alternative | Proposed Alternative |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Land Use | No Impact | Beneficial Impact |
| Right-of-Way Acquisition | No Impact | 392 acres |
| Historic Sites or Districts | No Impact | No Adverse Effect |
| Wetland Impacts | No Impact | 12.45 acres |
| Surface Water Impacts | No Impact | 1,564 linear feet |
| Farmland Impacts | No Impact | 273 acres |
| Woodland | No Impact | 0.4 acres |

| Resource | No Build Alternative | Proposed Alternative |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| Noise Impacts (Number of Receptors) | No Impact | 1 |
| Contaminated and Regulated Material Sites | No Impact | 1 |
| Visual | No Impact | Minor Impact |
| Utilities | No Impact | Adverse Impact |

6.0 Disposition

This Streamlined EA concludes that the proposed project is necessary for safe and efficient travel within the project corridor and that the proposed project meets the purpose and need. The project would have no significant adverse social, economic, or environmental impacts of a level that would warrant an environmental impact statement. Alternative selection will occur following completion of the public review period and public hearing.

Unless significant impacts are identified as a result of public review or at the public hearing, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be prepared for this proposed action as a basis for federal-aid corridor location approval.

The following permits may be required for the project:

- Department of Army Permit from U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Rock Island District (Section 404 Wetland Permit)
- Section 401 Water Quality Certification from Iowa DNR (Section 401 Water Quality Permit)
- Iowa DNR National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit No. 2 for Storm Water Discharge Associated with Construction Activities (NPDES Storm Water Permit)

The proposed project is included in the 2010-2014 TIP with \$3 million for right-of-way acquisition in 2014. The remainder of the U. S. 61 Corridor in Louisa County is not currently included in the 2010-2014 TIP; however, it may be considered during the preparation of future transportation programs.

7.0 Comments and Coordination

7.1 Agency and Tribal Coordination

Appropriate federal, state, regional, county, and local agencies were contacted by letter on November 12, 2009 as a part of the early coordination process. This process requested agency comments concerning this proposed project. Table 8 lists the agencies that were contacted and the response date, if applicable. Written responses to the early coordination request are provided in Appendix B.

Table 8. Agencies Contacted During Early Agency Coordination

| Agency Type | Agency | Date of Response |
|--------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Federal | Federal Emergency Management Agency | None |
| Federal | Federal Railroad Administration | None |
| Federal | Natural Resource Conservation Service | 11/20/09, 11/30/09 |
| Federal | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers | 11/25/09 |
| Federal | U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development | None |
| Federal | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service | None |
| Federal | U.S. Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance | None |
| Federal | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency | 12/08/09 |
| State | Iowa Department of Economic Development | None |
| State | Iowa Department of Natural Resources | 12/7/09, 12/8/09 |
| State | Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship | 11/16/09 |
| State | Office of the State Archaeologist | 12/10/09 |
| Regional | Southeast Iowa Planning Commission | 11/17/09 |
| County | Louisa County Board of Supervisors | None |
| County | Louisa County Conservation Board | None |
| County | Louisa County Historical Society / Historical Preservation Commission | None |
| County | Louisa County Engineer / Department of Roads | 11/23/09 |
| County | Louisa County Soil and Water Conservation District | None |
| County | Muscatine County Soil and Water Conservation District | None |
| Local | City of Grandview | None |
| Local | City of Wapello | None |
| Local | City of Letts | None |

The comments received from federal, state, regional, county, and local agencies are summarized as follows:

- The U.S. 61 Environmental Assessment is of interest to the Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission (SEIRPC) from many perspectives including economic development, regional development, regional freight transportation, transportation safety, and workplace availability. The SEIRPC has identified the importance of improving U.S. 61 to four lanes between Burlington, Iowa and Muscatine County in its Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and Long Range Transportation Plan.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said the project may impact waters of the United States including wetlands and may require a Department of Army 404 authorization. Additional information, including a wetland delineation, will be required to determine the need for, and what form of Section 404 authorization will be needed to cover the project.

- The Natural Resources Conservation Service said they would require as Farmland Conversion Impact Rating for the conversion of agricultural land outside of existing right-of-way.
- Iowa DNR said there are no site-specific records of rare species or significant natural communities in the project area.
- Any Project construction activity that disturbs more than 1 acre may require a stormwater discharge permit from Iowa DNR. Reasonable precautions should be taken to prevent the transport of visible emissions of fugitive dust into adjacent properties.
- No projects funded by the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund in Louisa County or Grandview would be affected by the project.
- No environmentally regulated facilities were identified in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agencies' NEPAssist database that would interfere with the project.
- The Iowa State Historic Preservation Office said that previous archeological survey had been completed in the area 20 years ago and that it may be worth updating. The previous work identified several archeological resources and any additional right-of-way not previously archeologically investigated within the project area should be investigated.

As part of the Early Coordination process, Iowa DOT also notified the Tribes of initiation of the U.S. 61 project and solicited their feedback. The Tribes contacted are listed in Table 9. Responses received are in Appendix B.

Table 9. Tribal Coordination and Responses

| Tribe | Response | Date of Response |
|---|--|-------------------------|
| Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa | None received. | |
| Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska | None received. | |
| Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma | None received. | |
| Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska | None received. | |
| Otoe-Missouria Tribe | None received. | |
| Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska | Letter response received; no objections to the project if cleared through the Iowa SHPO. | 8/10/10 |
| Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma | None received. | |

7.2 NEPA/404 Merge Coordination

FHWA and Iowa DOT coordinated with resource agencies using the Iowa DOT concurrence point process. The process incorporates planning, design, agency coordination, and public involvement elements, and it integrates compliance with NEPA and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The transportation agencies request agency concurrence regarding four points in the NEPA process: Concurrence Point 1, Purpose and Need; Concurrence Point 2, Alternatives to be

Analyzed; Concurrence Point 3, Alternatives to be Carried Forward; and Concurrence Point 4, Preferred Alternative.

Concurrence Points 1 and 2 were addressed through correspondence with the USACE, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the Iowa DNR Resources. On September 27, 2010, the agencies were provided information on the project purpose and need and alternatives to be analyzed, including figures depicting the study area, descriptions and figures of the alternatives, and information on resources in the study area and estimates of each alternative's potential impact to the resources.

The USACE, Iowa DNR, and EPA, concurred with the project's purpose and need and alternatives to be analyzed via email correspondence between September 27, 2010 and November 22, 2010. The FWS did not respond to the concurrence request.

On March 21, 2011, the agencies were provided information on the alternatives to be carried forward. All agencies concurred with the alternatives to be carried forward via email correspondence between March 21, 2011 and April 14, 2011.

7.3 Public Involvement

Two public meetings have been held to date. The first public information meeting was held on October 15, 2009 at the Louisa-Muscatine Elementary School located at 14506 170th Street in Letts, Iowa. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the initiation of environmental and field studies for the U.S. 61 corridor in Louisa County from IA 78 north to the existing four-lane roadway south of the Muscatine County line. The meeting was held from 5:00 to 7:00 PM and was attended by 58 people. Advertisement of the meeting and the meeting information was provided in both English and Spanish. Comments received indicated that the public were concerned with impacts to historic properties along the roadway, right-of-way needs and property impacts, and access to the proposed roadway.

The second public meeting was held on July 15, 2010 at the Louisa-Muscatine Elementary School. The purpose of the meeting was to inform the public of the proposed reconstruction of U.S. 61 from 130th Street north to the existing four-lane section south of the Louisa/Muscatine County line. The meeting was held from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. and was attended by 98 people. Nine different build alternatives were presented. Advertisement of the meeting and the meeting information was provided in both English and Spanish. Comments received indicated that the public were concerned with impacts to historic properties along the roadway, right-of-way needs and property impacts, and access to the proposed roadway. The Iowa DOT summarized written comments received and prepared responses to comments in September 2010.

8.0 References

HR Green, Inc., *US 61/IA 92 Reconstruction and Interchange Windshield Survey Results*, Memorandum from HR Green to Iowa DOT Office of Location and Environment, April 26, 2010.

HR Green, Inc., *US 61/IA 92 Traffic Noise Model Results*, Memorandum from HR Green to Iowa DOT Office of Location and Environment. September 21, 2011.

Iowa Department of Transportation, *Crash Detail Report for US 61 Corridor at IA 92*, Crash Mapping Analysis Tool 3.6, June 14 2001.

Iowa Department of Transportation, *Endangered Species – Determination of No Effect*, Memo from Office of Location and Environment to Office of Design, Louisa County NHS-061-3(48)—19-58, 09-58-061-030, August 17, 2010.

Iowa Department of Transportation, *W0 Preliminary Wetlands Review*, Memo from Office of Location and Environment to Office of Design, Louisa County NHS-061-3(48)—19-58, 09-58-061-030, June 7, 2010.

The Louis Berger Group, Inc. August 2010. Phase I Archaeological Investigation for the Reconstruction of U.S. Highway 61, Near Letts and Grandview, Louisa County, Iowa.

The Louis Berger Group, Inc. August 2010. Architectural Resource Survey for the Reconstruction of U.S. Highway 61 Near Letts and Grandview, Louisa County, Iowa.

U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, *Highway Traffic Noise: Analysis and Abatement Guidance*, June 2010, Revised January 2011.

APPENDIX A

STREAMLINED RESOURCE SUMMARY

SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS SECTION:

| | |
|--|--|
| Community Cohesion | |
| Evaluation: | The rural community living along the existing roadway is divided by the U.S. 61 corridor. No changes to community cohesion would occur if the proposed project is constructed. |
| Method of Evaluation: | Review of proposed alternatives. |
| Completed by and Date: | Consultant, 1/19/11 |
| Environmental Justice | |
| Evaluation: | Resource is not in the study area. |
| Method of Evaluation: | Review of current census information: http://epamap14.epa.gov/ejmap/ejmap.aspx?wherestr=grandview%2C%20ia |
| Completed by and Date: | Consultant, 1/9/11 |
| Economic | |
| Evaluation: | There is a potential for a short term boost to the local economy during the construction of the proposed project. This impact is considered temporary and no other changes are anticipated to occur as a result of the proposed project. |
| Method of Evaluation: | Review of project study area. |
| Completed by and Date: | Consultant, 1/19/11 |
| Joint Development | |
| Evaluation: | Joint development is not proposed as part of this project. |
| Method of Evaluation: | Review of project study area. |
| Completed by and Date: | Consultant, 1/19/11 |
| Parklands and Recreational Areas | |
| Evaluation: | There are no parklands or recreational areas directly affected by the proposed alternative. |
| Method of Evaluation: | Review of local, county, and state maps. |
| Completed by and Date: | Consultant, 1/19/11 |
| Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities | |
| Evaluation: | No bicycle and pedestrian facilities are included in the proposed project. |
| Method of Evaluation: | Review of proposed roadway design typical section. |
| Completed by and Date: | Consultant, 1/19/11 |

SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS SECTION:

| Construction and Emergency Routes | |
|--|--|
| Evaluation: | The proposed project would include the construction of two additional lanes to existing U.S. 61. The construction would be staged so traffic would be maintained in both the north and south directions. While temporary pavement might be used during construction to accommodate staging of traffic, the proposed project would not include detour routes or other routes that could cause disruption to emergency services. Therefore no change is expected to emergency routes through the project study area. |
| Method of Evaluation: | Review of proposed alternatives and project study area. |
| Completed by and Date: | Consultant, 1/19/11 |

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IMPACTS SECTION:

| Wild and Scenic Rivers | |
|--|--|
| Evaluation: | Resource is not in the study area. |
| Method of Evaluation: | Review of http://www.rivers.gov/wildriverslist.html . |
| Completed by and Date: | Consultant, 1/19/11 |
| Floodplains | |
| Evaluation: | No floodplains are present in the project study area. |
| Method of Evaluation: | Desk top study and field review. |
| Completed by and Date: | Consultant, 9/10/10 |
| Wildlife and Habitat | |
| Evaluation: | The land within the project study area is currently used for row crops and highway right-of-way and is not suitable wildlife habitat. |
| Method of Evaluation: | Field review of project study area. |
| Completed by and Date: | Iowa DOT, 1/17/10 |
| Threatened and Endangered Species | |
| Evaluation: | No suitable habitat for threatened and endangered species is present within the project study area. See Dec. 7, 2009 letter from Iowa DNR in Appendix B. |
| Method of Evaluation: | Field review of project study area and coordination with Iowa DNR |
| Completed by and Date: | Iowa DOT, 8/17/10 |

PHYSICAL IMPACTS SECTION:

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Air Quality | |
| Evaluation: | Resource is in the area but will not be impacted. |
| Method of Evaluation: | Review of project study area. |
| Completed by and Date: | Consultant, 1/19/11 |
| MSATs | |
| Evaluation: | <p>This project will not result in any meaningful changes in traffic volumes, vehicle mix, location of the existing facility, or any other factor that would cause an increase in emissions impacts relative to the no-build alternative. As such, FHWA has determined that this project will generate minimal air quality impacts for Clean Air Act criteria pollutants and has not been linked with any special MSAT concerns. Consequently, this effort is exempt from analysis for MSATs.</p> <p>Moreover, EPA regulations for vehicle engines and fuels will cause overall MSATs to decline significantly over the next 20 years. Even after accounting for a 64 percent increase in VMT, FHWA predicts MSATs will decline in the range of 57 percent to 87 percent, from 2000 to 2020, based on regulations now in effect. This will both reduce the background level of MSATs as well as the possibility of even minor MSAT emissions from this project.</p> |
| Method of Evaluation: | FHWA Interim Guidance on Air Toxic Analysis in NEPA Documents, February 3, 2006 |
| Completed by and Date: | Consultant, 1/19/11 |
| Energy | |
| Evaluation: | Resource is in the area but will not be impacted. |
| Method of Evaluation: | Review of project study area. |
| Completed by and Date: | Consultant, 1/19/11 |

APPENDIX B

AGENCY AND TRIBAL COORDINATION



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND LAND STEWARDSHIP

Bill Northey, Secretary of Agriculture

RECEIVED

NOV 19 2009

OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT

November 16, 2009

Iowa Department of Transportation
Angela L. Poole
NEPA Document Manager
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

Dear Ms. Poole

SUBJECT: U.S. 61 Corridor, Louisa and Muscatine County Line

This letter is to acknowledge receipt of your correspondence relative to your U.S. 61 from the Muscatine/Louisa County line to two miles south of Grandview, Iowa for the Iowa Department of Transportation.

We have not given this proposal thorough review, but do acknowledge having received materials and being given the opportunity to provide information and mapping regarding resources that might be affected within the corridor. This acknowledgment is not an indication of approval on our part.

We respectfully suggest that a copy of your proposal be mailed to:

Muscatine SWCD
3500 Oakview Dr., Ste A
Muscatine, IA 52761

Louisa SWCD
260 Mulberry St., Ste 2
Wapello, IA 52653

We appreciate the consideration you have given us in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chuck Gipp". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chuck Gipp, Director
Division of Soil Conservation
PH: 515-281-5851

CRG:klf



200 Front Street, Suite 400
Burlington, Iowa 52601

Tel: 319.753.5107
Fax: 319.754.4763
Website: www.seirpc.com

RECEIVED
NOV 25 2009
OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT

November 17, 2009

Angela Poole, NEPA Document Manager
Iowa DOT
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

RE: NHS-0613(48)—19-58 US 61 Corridor Environmental Assessment, Louisa County, IA, Muscatine/Louisa Co Line to two miles south of Grandview, IA

Dear Ms. Poole:

The Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission's (SEIRPC) areas of expertise include primarily grant writing, administration, planning processes, regional development and program management.

The US 61 EA in Muscatine and Louisa County is of interest to SEIRPC from many perspectives, including: economic development, regional development, regional freight transportation, transportation safety and workforce availability.

SEIRPC has identified in its Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) the importance of improving US 61 to four lanes between Burlington, IA and Muscatine County.

The four-lane improvement to US 61 is welcomed, and SEIRPC looks forward to assisting Iowa DOT in its implementation.

Please let me know if you have questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Brian Tapp
Executive Director





REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
CLOCK TOWER BUILDING - P.O. BOX 2004
ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS 61204-2004

<http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil>

November 25, 2009

RECEIVED

SUBJECT: CEMVR-OD-P-2009-1504

NOV 30 2009

Ms. Angela L. Poole
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, Iowa 50010

OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT

Dear Ms. Poole:

Our office reviewed your letter dated November 12, 2009, concerning the proposed improvement to U.S. Highway 61 from the Muscatine/Louisa County line to 2 miles south of Grandview, Iowa.

It appears your project may impact waters of the United States (including wetlands), and may require Department of the Army (DA) Section 404 authorization. Additional information will be required before we can determine the need for, and what form of Section 404 authorization will be needed to cover the project. Please submit a complete application for DA authorization as early as possible. Your complete application must include a wetland delineation and a discussion of all impacts to the nation's waters.

Should you have any questions, please contact our Regulatory Branch by letter, or telephone me at 309/794-5367.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Hayes
Project Manager
Regulatory Branch

LOUISA COUNTY

ROAD DEPARTMENT

LARRY ROEHL, COUNTY ENGINEER

8313 K. AVENUE, WAPELLO, IOWA 52653

PH: 319-523-5271

FAX: 319-523-5272

E-MAIL: locoe@louisacomm.net

RECEIVED

November 23, 2009

NOV 30 2009

OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT

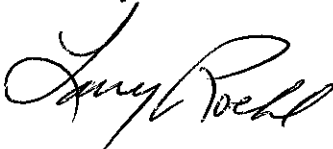
Angele Poole
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

Re: NHS-061-3(48)—19-58, U.S. 61 Corridor Environmental Assessment

Dear Ms. Poole:

Thank you for inviting our comments on the impact of the proposed project on Louisa County. This Department and the County Board of Supervisors are in support of the proposed improvements from the Muscatine/ Louisa County line to two miles south of Grandview. We believe that this road construction will improve transportation through the County by improving a link between two major roadways. We anticipate an intersection design between State Highways 61 and 92 that will improve safety for the County citizens. We support this project as a link that will promote further improvements in the State Highway system between Muscatine and Burlington that will provide long term economic benefits to the County.

Sincerely,



Larry Roehl, PE



Frank Jamison, Chairman
Board of Supervisors



Natural Resources Conservation Service
210 Walnut Street, Room 693
Des Moines, IA 50309-2180

November 20, 2009

Ms. Angela Poole
NEPA Document Manager
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

Dear Ms. Poole:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed improvements along US Highway 61 in Louisa and Muscatine Counties, Iowa. The Natural Resources Conservation Service has no concerns or comments at this time.

If applicable, please take into account the loss of prime farmland associated with this undertaking and please ensure that any wetlands will not be impacted through activities such as filling, clearing woody vegetation, or increasing drainage. See enclosed Form AD-1066, "Farmland Conversion Impact Rating".

If we can be of any further assistance, feel free to contact me at 515-323-2223, or by email at john.myers@ia.usda.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Myers", is written over the printed name and title.

John Myers
State Resource Conservationist

Enclosure

cc: Drew DeLang, District Conservationist, NRCS, Wapello, IA
Paul Viner, District Conservationist, NRCS, Davenport, IA

RECEIVED

DEC 01 2009

OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT

U.S. Department of Agriculture

FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency) | Date Of Land Evaluation Request |
| Name Of Project | Federal Agency Involved |
| Proposed Land Use | County And State |

| | |
|---|--|
| PART II (To be completed by NRCS) | Date Request Received By NRCS |
| Does the site contain prime, unique, statewide or local important farmland? (If no, the FPPA does not apply -- do not complete additional parts of this form). | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Acres Irrigated | Average Farm Size |
| Major Crop(s) | Farmable Land In Govt. Jurisdiction Acres: % |
| Name Of Land Evaluation System Used | Name Of Local Site Assessment System |
| | Amount Of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: % |
| | Date Land Evaluation Returned By NRCS |

| | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency) | Alternative Site Rating | | | |
| | Site A | Site B | Site C | Site D |
| A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly | | | | |
| B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly | | | | |
| C. Total Acres In Site | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| PART IV (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information | | | | |
| A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland | | | | |
| B. Total Acres Statewide And Local Important Farmland | | | | |
| C. Percentage Of Farmland In County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted | | | | |
| D. Percentage Of Farmland In Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value | | | | |

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| PART V (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Criterion Relative Value Of Farmland To Be Converted (Scale of 0 to 100 Points) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|--|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | |
|---|----------------|---|---|---|---|
| PART VI (To be completed by Federal Agency) Site Assessment Criteria (These criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5(b)) | Maximum Points | | | | |
| 1. Area In Nonurban Use | | | | | |
| 2. Perimeter In Nonurban Use | | | | | |
| 3. Percent Of Site Being Farmed | | | | | |
| 4. Protection Provided By State And Local Government | | | | | |
| 5. Distance From Urban Builtup Area | | | | | |
| 6. Distance To Urban Support Services | | | | | |
| 7. Size Of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average | | | | | |
| 8. Creation Of Nonfarmable Farmland | | | | | |
| 9. Availability Of Farm Support Services | | | | | |
| 10. On-Farm Investments | | | | | |
| 11. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services | | | | | |
| 12. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use | | | | | |
| TOTAL SITE ASSESSMENT POINTS | 160 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | | |
|---|-----|---|---|---|---|
| PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency) | | | | | |
| Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V) | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Site Assessment (From Part VI above or a local site assessment) | 160 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines) | 260 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|---|
| Site Selected: | Date Of Selection | Was A Local Site Assessment Used? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Reason For Selection: | | |

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service
21792 – 490th St
Chariton, IA 50049
Ph: 641-774-2512
Fax: 641-774-2700
Email: julie.mcmichael@ia.usda.gov

November 30th, 2009

Iowa Department of Transportation
Angela L. Poole, NEPA Document Manager
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

Re: NRCS Response to NHS-061-3(48)—19-58, U.S. 61 Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA), Louisa County, Iowa for just north of Muscatine/Louisa County Line to tow miles south of Grandview, Iowa Comments Request

Dear Ms. Poole,

The NRCS would be in charge of doing a Farmland Protection Policy Act – Impact Statement for the project you detailed in your letter to Ms. Shiloh Bradley. This is to minimize the extent to which federal programs contribute to the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses.

Once your project gets under way, you will need to send me a map of the area including the number of acres outside of the existing right-of-way that you are planning on converting for each possible site in the scope of your project. I have enclosed a form that I use to do the Farmland Impact Statement. If it is more convenient for you, you can send maps and correspondence through email. My email address is julie.mcmichael@ia.usda.gov. Please let me know if you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julie McMichael".

Julie McMichael
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Area Resource Soil Scientist

Enclosures:
FPPA Form AD-1006

RECEIVED

DEC 01 2009

OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT

U.S. Department of Agriculture

FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency) | Date Of Land Evaluation Request |
| Name Of Project | Federal Agency Involved |
| Proposed Land Use | County And State |

| | |
|---|--|
| PART II (To be completed by NRCS) | Date Request Received By NRCS |
| Does the site contain prime, unique, statewide or local important farmland? (If no, the FPPA does not apply -- do not complete additional parts of this form). | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Acres Irrigated | Average Farm Size |
| Major Crop(s) | Farmable Land In Govt. Jurisdiction Acres: % |
| Name Of Land Evaluation System Used | Name Of Local Site Assessment System |
| | Amount Of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: % |
| | Date Land Evaluation Returned By NRCS |

| | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency) | Alternative Site Rating | | | |
| | Site A | Site B | Site C | Site D |
| A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly | | | | |
| B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly | | | | |
| C. Total Acres In Site | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| PART IV (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information | | | | |
| A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland | | | | |
| B. Total Acres Statewide And Local Important Farmland | | | | |
| C. Percentage Of Farmland In County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted | | | | |
| D. Percentage Of Farmland In Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value | | | | |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| PART V (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Criterion Relative Value Of Farmland To Be Converted (Scale of 0 to 100 Points) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|--|---|---|---|

| | | | | | |
|---|----------------|---|---|---|---|
| PART VI (To be completed by Federal Agency) Site Assessment Criteria (These criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5(b)) | Maximum Points | | | | |
| 1. Area In Nonurban Use | | | | | |
| 2. Perimeter In Nonurban Use | | | | | |
| 3. Percent Of Site Being Farmed | | | | | |
| 4. Protection Provided By State And Local Government | | | | | |
| 5. Distance From Urban Builtup Area | | | | | |
| 6. Distance To Urban Support Services | | | | | |
| 7. Size Of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average | | | | | |
| 8. Creation Of Nonfarmable Farmland | | | | | |
| 9. Availability Of Farm Support Services | | | | | |
| 10. On-Farm Investments | | | | | |
| 11. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services | | | | | |
| 12. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use | | | | | |
| TOTAL SITE ASSESSMENT POINTS | 160 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | | |
|---|-----|---|---|---|---|
| PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency) | | | | | |
| Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V) | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Site Assessment (From Part VI above or a local site assessment) | 160 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines) | 260 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|---|
| Site Selected: | Date Of Selection | Was A Local Site Assessment Used? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Reason For Selection: | | |



STATE OF IOWA

CHESTER J. CULVER, GOVERNOR
PATTY JUDGE, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
RICHARD A. LEOPOLD, DIRECTOR

RECEIVED

December 7, 2009

DEC 11 2009

Angela Poole
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT

RE: Environmental Review for Natural Resources
NHS-061-3(48)—19-58
US 61 Corridor Environmental Assessment
Muscatine County
Section 33, Township 76N, Range 3W
Louisa County
Sections 4, 9, 10, 15, 16, 21, 22, 27, 28, 33, 34, Township 75N, Range 3W
Sections 3, 4, Township 74N, Range 3W

Dear Ms. Poole:

Thank you for inviting Department comment on the impact of this project. The Department has searched for records of rare species and significant natural communities in the project area and found no site-specific records that would be impacted by this project. However, these records and data are not the result of thorough field surveys. If listed species or rare communities are found during the planning or construction phases, additional studies and/or mitigation may be required.

This letter is a record of review for protected species, rare natural communities, state lands and waters in the project area, including review by personnel representing state parks, preserves, recreation areas, fisheries and wildlife but does not include comment from the Environmental Services Division of this Department. This letter does not constitute a permit. Other permits may be required from the Department or other state or federal agencies before work begins on this project.

Any construction activity that bares the soil of an area greater than or equal to one acre including clearing, grading or excavation may require a storm water discharge permit from the Department. Construction activities may include the temporary or permanent storage of dredge material. For more information regarding this matter, please contact Ruth Rosdail at (515) 281-6782.

The Department administers regulations that pertain to fugitive dust IAW Iowa Administrative Code 567-23.3(2)"c." All persons shall take reasonable precautions to prevent the discharge of visible emissions of fugitive dusts beyond the lot line of property during construction, alteration, repairing or demolishing of buildings, bridges or other vertical structures or haul roads. All questions regarding fugitive dust regulations should be directed to Jim McGraw at (515) 242-5167.

If you have questions about this letter or require further information, please contact me at (515) 281-8967.

Sincerely,

Inga Foster
Environmental Specialist
Conservation and Recreation Division

FILE COPY: Inga Foster

Tracking Number: 4259



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 7
901 NORTH 5TH STREET
KANSAS CITY, KANSAS 66101

DEC 08 2009

RECEIVED

DEC 11 2009

OFFICE OF LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT

Angela Poole
NEPA Document Manager
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

Dear Ms. Poole:

This letter responds to your correspondence, dated November 12, 2009, concerning the impending preparation of an environmental assessment regarding proposed improvements to and construction of an interchange within a six mile segment of US 61 in Louisa County, Iowa.

In evaluating this action, I referred to EPA Region 7's NEPAssist database for spatial relationships of environmentally regulated facilities and remediation sites. Though no issues were found that should interfere with the planned project, EPA would like to note that there is one NPDES facility, City of Grandview STP, located near the project area. The attached map shows the results of this inquiry.

Thank you for involving the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) during the consideration of environmental impacts either to or from this project. EPA would like to ask that we please be kept informed of future documents, in particular the EA, pertaining to this project.

If you have any other questions, you can contact me at 913-551-7565, or via email at tucker.amber@epa.gov or you may contact Joe Cothorn, NEPA Team Leader at 913-551-7148 or via email at cothorn.joe@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Amber Tucker
NEPA Reviewer
Environmental Services Division

Enclosure



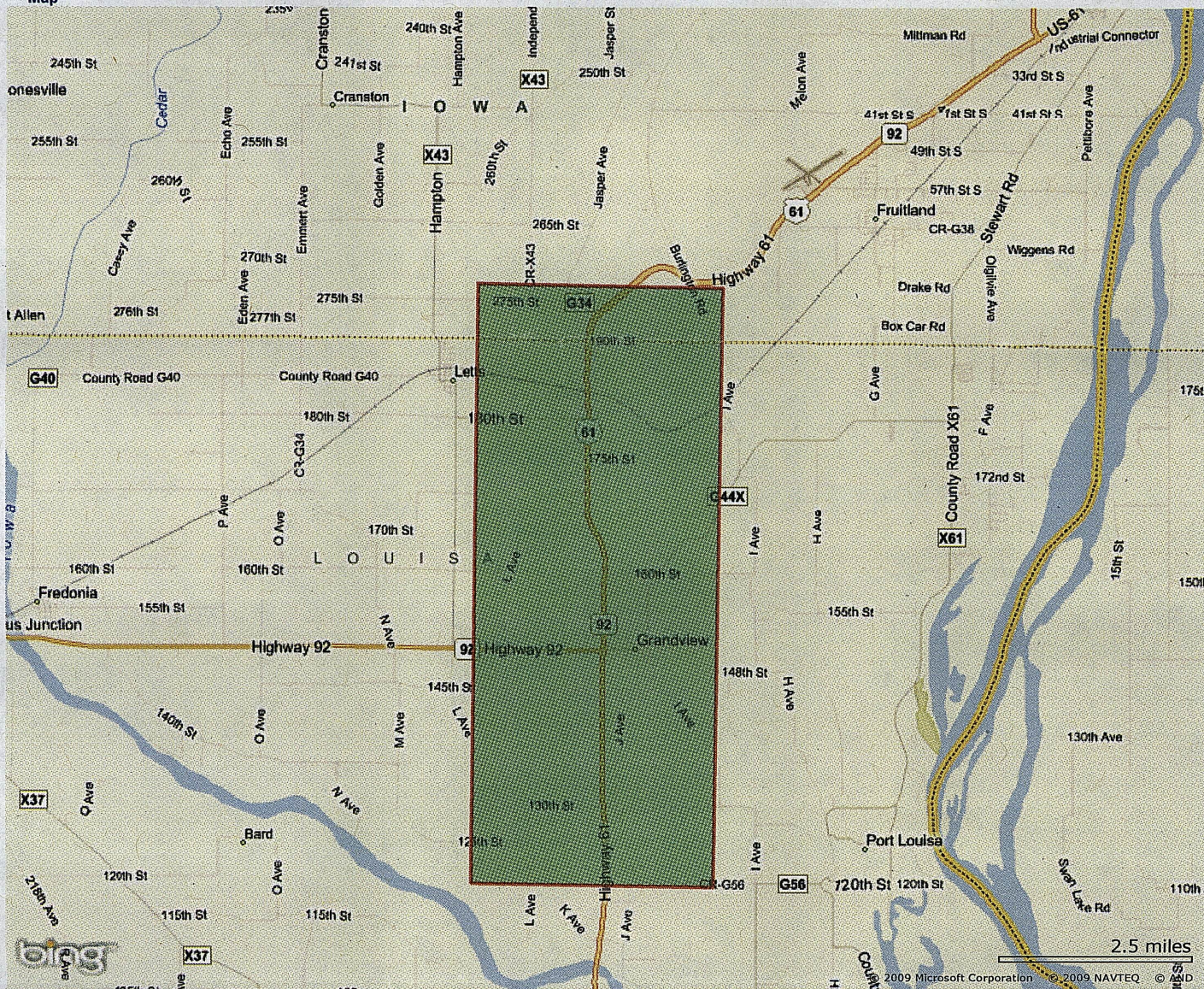


NEPAssist

You are here: [EPA Home](#) [NEPAssist Home](#)

<http://r7arcims.r7comp.epa.gov/NEPAVEtools/NepaCall/analysis.aspx>
Last updated on Friday, December 4th, 2009.

Map



Area of digitized polygon

24.75 sq mi

R7 Layers

| | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Within 1000 meters of an impaired stream? | no |
| Within 1000 meters of an airport? | no |
| Within an EJ COOCURRENCE (Minority/Poverty/Both) blockgroup? | no |
| Within 500 meters of a National Historic Place? | no |
| Within 500 meters of a National Heritage T/E Hexagon? | no |
| Within 500 meters of an AIRS/AFS site? | no |
| Within 500 meters of a CERCLIS site? | no |
| Within 500 meters of a RCRA facility? | no |
| Within 500 meters of a LQG RCRA facility? | no |
| Within 500 meters of a PCS (NPDES) Major facility? | no |
| Within 500 meters of a PCS facility? | yes → city of Grandview STP |
| Within 500 meters of a SWDIS facility? | no |

Environmental Justice Analysis

Download XML



STATE OF IOWA

CHESTER J. CULVER, GOVERNOR
PATTY JUDGE, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
RICHARD A. LEOPOLD, DIRECTOR

RECEIVED

DEC 11 2009

OFFICE OF LAND AND ENVIRONMENT

December 8, 2009

Angela L. Poole
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

RE: NHS-061-3(48)—19-58, U.S. 61 Corridor EA, Louisa County, Iowa
Early Coordination Letter

Dear Ms. Poole,

Thank you for the early coordination letter on the corridor improvements to U.S. Highway 61 in Louisa County, Iowa.

After review of the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) projects for the County and City's located in the county, I have found no projects that would be affected by the project.

Therefore, it appears that the U.S. Highway 61 improvement has no effect on the LWCF program.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 515-281-3013, or by email at kathleen.moench@dnr.state.ia.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathleen Moench".

Kathleen Moench
LWCF Federal Aid Coordinator



OFFICE OF THE
STATE ARCHAEOLOGIST

700 Clinton Street Building
Iowa City, Iowa 52242
319-384-0732 Fax 319-384-0768
osa@uiowa.edu
www.uiowa.edu/~osa

December 10, 2009

Angela L. Poole
Iowa Department of Transportation
NEPA Document Manager

sent via e-mail to:angela.poole@dot.iowa.gov

Re: OSA comments—EA for US 61 from just north of the Muscatine/Louisa county line to two miles south of Grandview, Iowa

Dear Angela:

Thank you for requesting my agency's comments regarding the above referenced project. This part of the state is well known for substantial and well preserved archaeological sites, including burial mounds. Our records indicate that some professional archaeological investigation has occurred within the general project area delineated on the map you provided to me. However, this investigation was spatially restricted and completed almost 20 years ago. While conducted to professional standards of the day it may well be worth updating; Iowa DOT should consult with the State Historic Preservation Office about the particulars of this issue. In any case, several archaeological resources were discovered by this work and any additional right-of-way not previously archaeologically investigated but now associated with the undertaking deserves careful consideration prior to ground-disturbing activities by the Iowa DOT or its contractors in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as promulgated.

Sincerely,

John F. Doershuk
State Archaeologist
john-doershuk@uiowa.edu

APPENDIX C

FARMLAND PROTECTION FORM

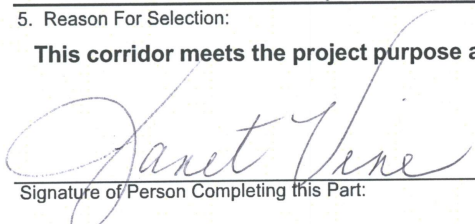
**FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING
FOR CORRIDOR TYPE PROJECTS**

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency) | | 3. Date of Land Evaluation Request 9/22/11 | 4. Sheet 1 of 1 |
| 1. Name of Project US 61 | | 5. Federal Agency Involved Federal Highway Administration | |
| 2. Type of Project Addition of 2 lanes and 2 interchanges | | 6. County and State Louisa County, Iowa | |
| PART II (To be completed by NRCS) | | 1. Date Request Received by NRCS 9/22/11 | 2. Person Completing Form Julie McMichael |
| 3. Does the corridor contain prime, unique statewide or local important farmland? (If no, the FPPA does not apply - Do not complete additional parts of this form). YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | | 4. Acres Irrigated Average Farm Size 0.0 333 | |
| 5. Major Crop(s) Corn | 6. Farmable Land in Government Jurisdiction Acres: 225,279 % 84 | 7. Amount of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: 225,279 % 84 | |
| 8. Name Of Land Evaluation System Used None | 9. Name of Local Site Assessment System None | 10. Date Land Evaluation Returned by NRCS 9/26/11 | |

| PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency) | | Alternative Corridor For Segment <u>US 61</u> | | | |
|--|---|--|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| | | Corridor A | Corridor B | Corridor C | Corridor D |
| A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly | | 272.9 | | | |
| B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly, Or To Receive Services | | 0 | | | |
| C. Total Acres In Corridor | | 391.6 | | | |
| PART IV (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information | | | | | |
| A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland | | 343.5 | | | |
| B. Total Acres Statewide And Local Important Farmland | | 47.7 | | | |
| C. Percentage Of Farmland in County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted | | 0.1468 | | | |
| D. Percentage Of Farmland in Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value | | 10 | | | |
| PART V (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information Criterion Relative value of Farmland to Be Serviced or Converted (Scale of 0 - 100 Points) | | 95 | | | |
| PART VI (To be completed by Federal Agency) Corridor Assessment Criteria (These criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5(c)) | | Maximum Points | | | |
| 1. Area in Nonurban Use | 15 | 0 | | | |
| 2. Perimeter in Nonurban Use | 10 | 0 | | | |
| 3. Percent Of Corridor Being Farmed | 20 | 20 | | | |
| 4. Protection Provided By State And Local Government | 20 | 20 | | | |
| 5. Size of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average | 10 | 10 | | | |
| 6. Creation Of Nonfarmable Farmland | 25 | 7 | | | |
| 7. Availability Of Farm Support Services | 5 | 0 | | | |
| 8. On-Farm Investments | 20 | 10 | | | |
| 9. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services | 25 | 0 | | | |
| 10. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use | 10 | 0 | | | |
| TOTAL CORRIDOR ASSESSMENT POINTS | | 160 | 67 | | |
| PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency) | | | | | |
| Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V) | | 100 | 95 | | |
| Total Corridor Assessment (From Part VI above or a local site assessment) | | 160 | 67 | | |
| TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines) | | 260 | 162 | | |
| 1. Corridor Selected: Corridor A | 2. Total Acres of Farmlands to be Converted by Project: 272.9 | 3. Date Of Selection: 9/22/11 | 4. Was A Local Site Assessment Used? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |

5. Reason For Selection:

This corridor meets the project purpose and need and minimizes the impacts to agricultural land.


Signature of Person Completing this Part:

DATE
9/22/11

NOTE: Complete a form for each segment with more than one Alternate Corridor