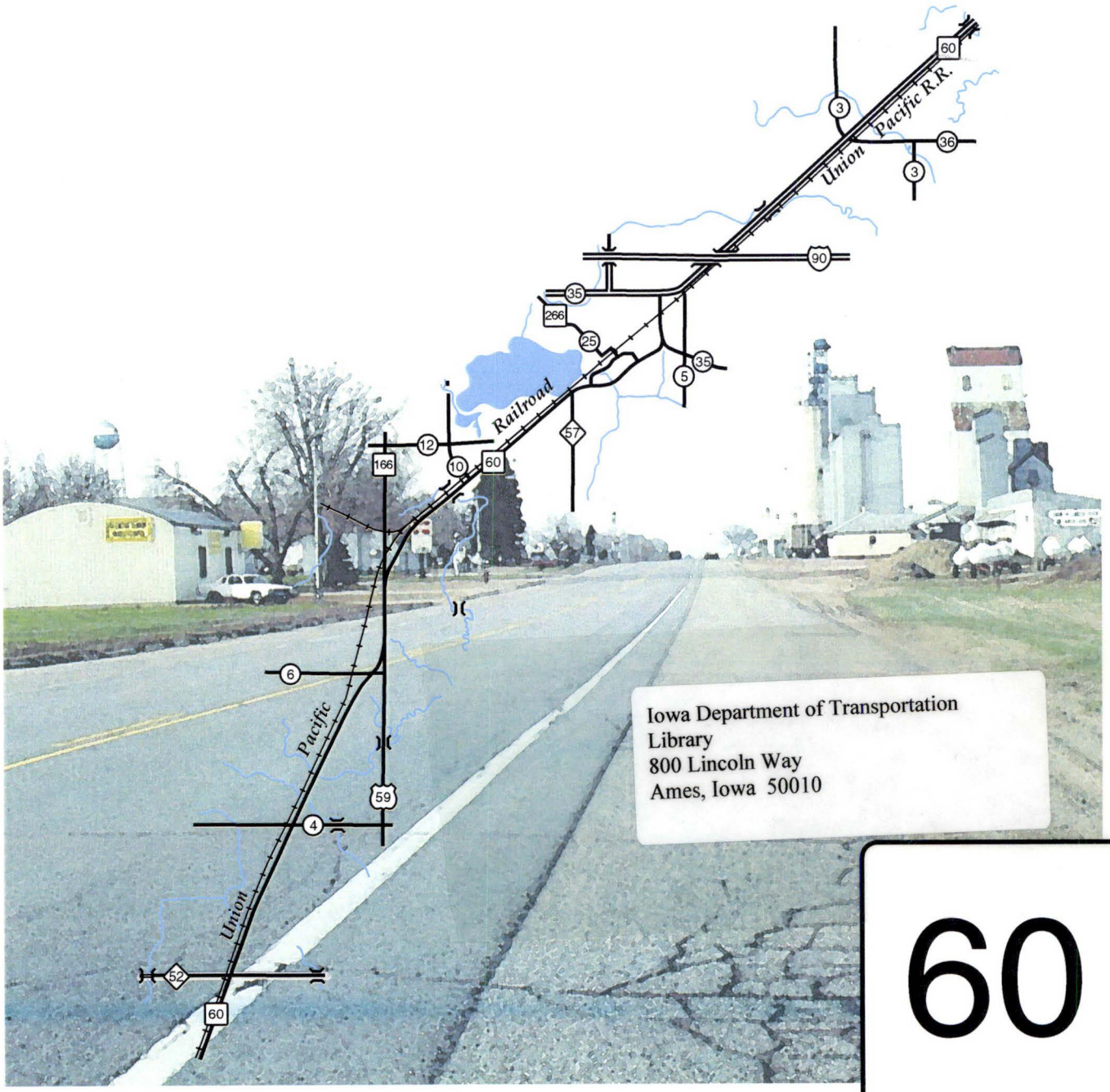

60

Highway 60 Reconstruction Project

Final Environmental Impact Statement

Minnesota Department of Transportation

Iowa Department of Transportation

November 2004

FHWA-MN-EIS-02-04-F

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT AND FINAL SECTION 4(F) EVALUATION for TRUNK HIGHWAY 60

State Project Number: S.P. 5305-51 and 5306-42

From approximately 1.8 miles south of the Minnesota-Iowa border (120th Street)
to Interstate 90 north of Worthington, Minnesota, 14.3 miles
County: Nobles, MN and Osceola, IA

Submitted Pursuant to 42 USC 4332 (2)(C), 49 USC 303, and Minn. Stat. Chap. 116D
By the U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
Minnesota Department of Transportation
and Iowa Department of Transportation
Cooperating Agencies:
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Natural Resource Conservation Service

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REVIEWED AND RECOMMENDED:

10/14/04
Date

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District Transportation Engineer, Mn/DOT District 7

APPROVED:

11/10/04
Date

Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration, Minnesota

10/20/04
Date

Director, Office of Environmental Services, Mn/DOT

10/18/04
Date

James Rost
Director, Office of Location and Environment, Iowa DOT

This document is available in alternative formats to individuals with disabilities by calling the Mn/DOT Project Manager at the phone number listed above, or to individuals who are hearing or speech impaired by calling the Minnesota Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529.

Notice to Reader

The Federal Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR 1500-1508) place heavy emphasis on reducing paperwork, avoiding unnecessary work, and producing documents that are useful to decision-makers and the public. With these objectives in mind, this Final EIS was prepared as a "Condensed Final EIS". This approach avoids repetition of material from the Draft EIS by incorporating, by reference, the Draft EIS. Thus, the Final EIS is a much shorter document than under the traditional approach; however, it does afford the reader a complete overview of the project and its impacts on the human environment.

The crux of this approach is to briefly reference and summarize information from the Draft EIS that has not changed, and to focus the Final EIS discussion on changes in the project's setting, impacts, technical analysis, and mitigation measures that have occurred since the Draft EIS was circulated. In addition, the condensed Final EIS identifies the preferred alternative, explains the basis for its selection, describes coordination efforts, includes agency and public comments, provides responses to these comments, and presents any findings or determinations required by law or regulation.

An additional copy of the Draft EIS is not being provided to those parties that received a copy of the Draft EIS when it was circulated in July 2002. Copies of the Draft EIS are available for review at facilities listed in this document or by special request to Mn/DOT District 7 in Mankato, Minnesota.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Appendices

List of Acronyms

ADT	Average Daily Traffic
BMPs	Best Management Practices
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FIS	Flood Insurance Study
IDNR	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Iowa DOT	Iowa Department of Transportation
LOS	Level of Service
MMUTCD	Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
MNDNR	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Mn/DOT	Minnesota Department of Transportation
MPCA	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
PAC	Project Advisory Committee
RODM	Routine Onsite Determination Method
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
SWCD	Soil and Water Conservation District
TIC	Travel Information Center
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
WCA	Wetland Conservation Act
WPA	Waterfowl Production Area
WSD	Watershed District

1.0 PROJECT SUMMARY

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The proposed reconstruction of Trunk Highway 60 is considered a Federal Class I Action because of the potential for significant impacts on the natural and physical environment. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a full disclosure document that discusses the environmental impacts of a proposed Class I action.

The Draft EIS, which was distributed in July 2002, is incorporated by reference herein and made a part of the Final EIS.

This Final EIS has been prepared in accordance with CEQ Regulation 40 CFR 1503.4 (C), Minnesota Environmental Quality Board MR 4410, and Minnesota Statutes 116D, which provide a methodology for preparing a "Condensed" Final EIS. This approach will focus on the preferred alternative, additional technical analysis completed since the Draft EIS, and mitigation commitments for potential impacts. Information from the Draft EIS that has not changed is briefly summarized, and the reader is referred to the Draft EIS.

1.2 MINNESOTA-IOWA AGREEMENT

Because the Highway 60 Reconstruction Project crosses the Minnesota-Iowa state line, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) and Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) have developed an agreement addressing the responsibilities for completing the EIS, how impacts will be discussed, and outlining the review process.

Iowa DOT is anticipated to complete reconstruction of Highway 60 as a four-lane roadway from LeMars to 120th Street in 2007. The location and timing of the remaining portion of Iowa Highway 60 was dependent on Mn/DOT's decision to bypass Bigelow. For this reason, Mn/DOT is responsible for the preliminary design and environmental review of improvements to Highway 60 from 120th Street in Osceola County, Iowa to I-90 in Nobles County, Minnesota.

The Draft and Final EISs prepared by Mn/DOT include impacts to the natural and physical environments of both Minnesota and Iowa. The documents will be reviewed by both states and signed by Mn/DOT, Iowa DOT, and Minnesota Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), as agreed upon by Mn/DOT, Iowa DOT, the Minnesota and Iowa FHWAs, and other state agencies, such as the Department of Natural Resources in both states and the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

1.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

Mn/DOT, in cooperation with Iowa DOT, proposes reconstruction of Highway 60 in Nobles County, Minnesota and Osceola County, Iowa (see

Figure 1). The project limits extend from approximately 1.8 miles south of the Minnesota-Iowa border (120th Street) north to Interstate 90 (I-90) north of the City of Worthington, Minnesota (see Figure 2). The total length of the project corridor is approximately 14.3 miles.

1.4 PURPOSE AND NEED OF THE HIGHWAY 60 RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

The purpose of this process is to identify an environmentally and socially sensitive alternative for a transportation system improvement consistent with meeting the identified needs presented below. Each of these needs is described further in Draft EIS Section 2.6 – Purpose and Need for Proposed Action.

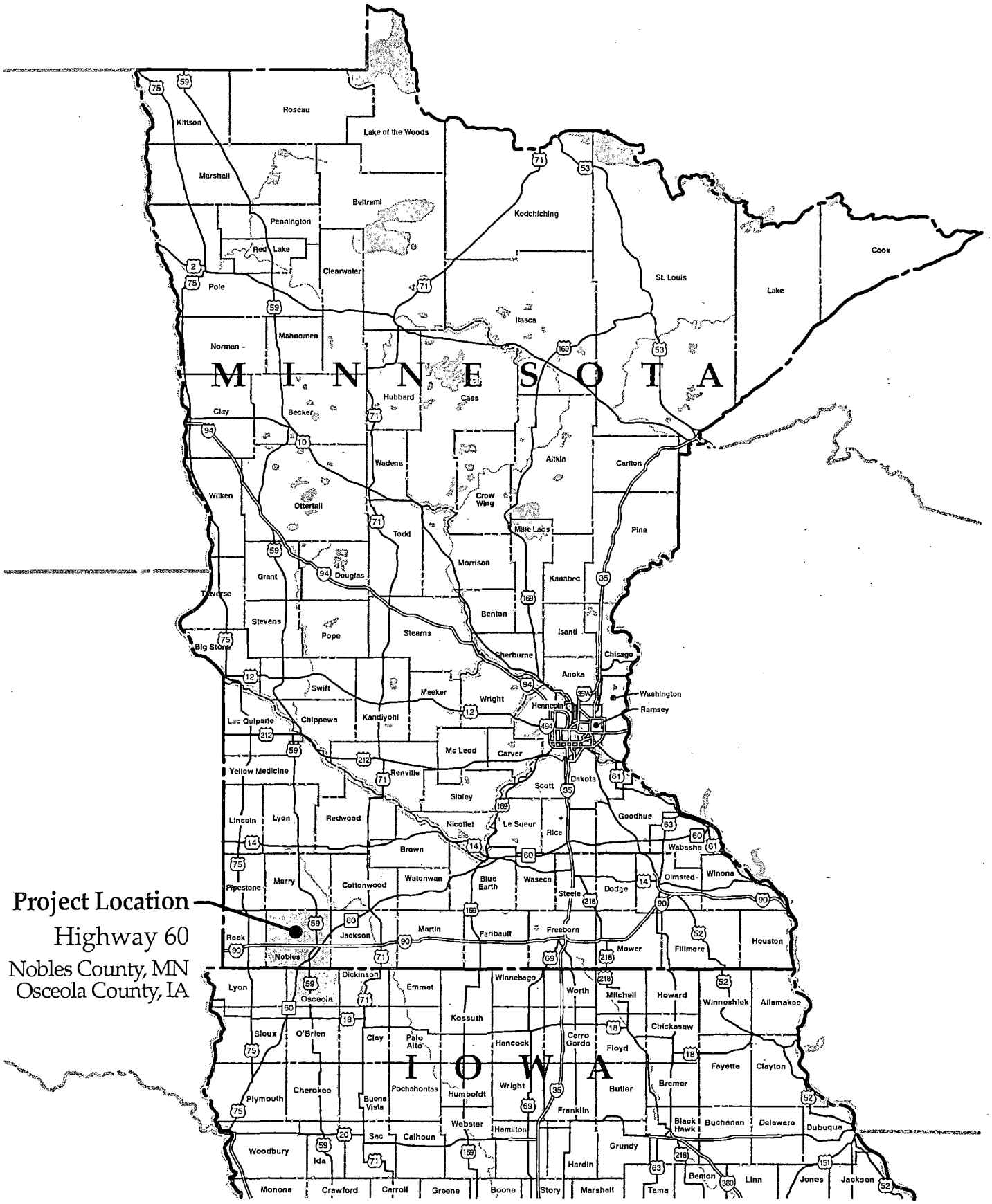
- Maintain System Continuity
- Address Physical Conditions
- Correct Design Deficiencies
- Address Truck and Farm Traffic
- Increase Capacity

1.5 ALTERNATIVES

The Highway 60 Draft EIS, approved in July 2002, considered six build alternatives and the No-Build Alternative. The alternative evaluation and screening process was based on an assessment of how each alternative addresses the purpose and need objectives of the project, as well as a corridor level assessment of potential social, economic, and environmental impacts. Following the Draft EIS comment period, a review of the public and agency comments was conducted. Based on the comments and supporting analysis in the Draft EIS, Alternative A1 – Existing Alignment with Bigelow Bypass was identified as the preferred alternative.

Alternative A1 was chosen for reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- Best addresses the primary purpose of the project overall, which is to maintain system continuity.
- Operational difficulties with the existing alignment through Bigelow, including the grain elevator and existing businesses.
- Resolution from the City of Bigelow supporting the Bigelow Bypass.
- Bigelow Bypass is consistent with the design of Highway 60 in Iowa, which is bypassing all communities.
- Worthington is a destination for the majority (85 percent) of traffic on Highway 60.



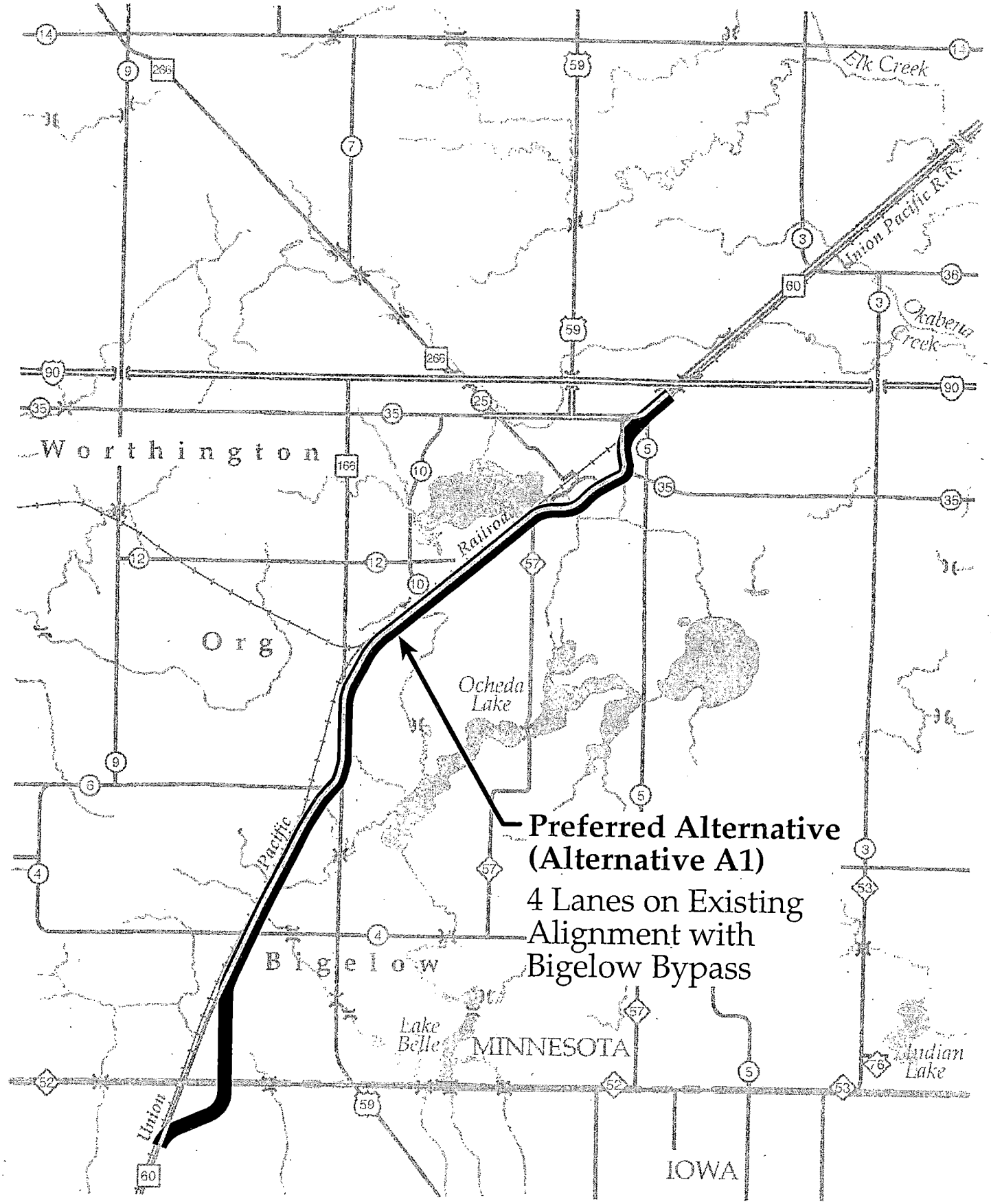
MINNESOTA 60

Highway 60
Final Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 1
State/County Location Map

North

February 2004



MINNESOTA 60

Highway 60
Final Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 2
Project Location Map

North

February 2004

- A Worthington bypass does not address safety and traffic flow concerns along the current roadway within Worthington.

- The additional distance on the Worthington bypass and I-90 (approximately 2.5 miles) would result in no timesavings for the through traveler and would introduce new operational difficulties.

- Fewer wetland impacts than existing alignment through Bigelow (Alternative A).

1.6 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

A summary of the potential beneficial and adverse environmental impacts associated with the preferred alternative is presented in Table 1 (on the following page).

Avoidance and minimization measures have been explored to the greatest extent possible without compromising the safety of the improvements. For additional information regarding the impacts shown in Table 1, the reader is referred to Section 4.0 of this document and of the Draft EIS.

1.7 PROJECT COST AND FUNDING SOURCE

Construction of the Highway 60 Reconstruction Project will be funded from both federal and state sources. It is anticipated that federal funds will be the primary source of construction funding (80 percent) with a 20 percent state match. The section of Highway 60 from 120th Street in Iowa to County Road 4 (3.6 miles) in Minnesota will be constructed as Phase 1 beginning in fiscal year 2008. Cost estimates for the preferred alternative are presented in Table 2. These cost estimates are based on a standard cost per mile of construction.

Table 2
Construction Cost Estimates (2004 $)

	Preferred Alternative Costs ($ millions)	Phase 1 Costs ($ millions)
Construction Cost	40.4	10.7
Right-of-way and Acquisition	11.1	0.9
Engineering	8.0	2.1
Total	**59.5**	**13.7**

Table 1
Summary of Impacts

Subject	Preferred Alternative Impacts	Proposed Mitigation
SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY IMPACTS	• Minimal impacts to community resources are anticipated • May have indirect effects to homes and businesses as a result of changes in access • Ability of school buses to make left turns may be affected	None proposed
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE	No disproportionately high or adverse effects to the minority and/or low-income populations in the project area will result from the preferred alternative	Residents of East Acres Trailer Park to be relocated
RIGHT-OF-WAY/RELOCATION		
Potential residential acquisitions	51	Relocated in accordance with the Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act
Potential commercial acquisitions	3	
Total potential acquisitions	54	
Additional right-of-way (urban), acres	59	Acquired in accordance with the Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act
Additional right-of-way (rural), acres	212	
SECTION 4(F)/6(F)	0.42 acres of WPA	Potential land exchange with USFWS
SECONDARY AND CUMULATIVE EFFECTS	• Overall cumulative effects are expected to be minimal • Potential secondary impacts include economic impacts of relocating existing businesses; potential for induced development; and short-term economic benefit of increased private sector income during construction	None proposed
FARMLAND		
Prime and Unique, acres	244.3	Acquired in accordance with the Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act
Total farmland, acres	262.5	
NOISE	Many residential locations will experience noise beyond existing levels, some exceeding Minnesota standards	Construction of a noise wall is proposed for the Morningside neighborhood
WETLANDS, ACRES	15.41	Replaced according to WCA and USACE regulations
FLOODPLAINS	Some fill placed in floodplain associated with Judicial Ditch No. 6	Temporary impacts from construction will be minimized through appropriate erosion control measures
SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE AND WATER QUALITY	• A lift station and improved storm sewer system would be required at the railroad underpass in Worthington • Potential impacts due to increase in impervious surface	• Proposed ponding locations are shown in Figures 3A-M ◦ BMPs to be determined during final design phase • Additional culvert capacity required to accommodate demand for drainage ◦ Drain tile systems will be maintained during and after construction
STATE/FEDERAL THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES	Four mesic prairie remnants located between existing Highway 60 and UP Railroad	Construction will be minimized on the west side of existing Highway 60 and prairie areas will be fenced prior to construction
ARCHITECTURAL/HISTORIC AND ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES	No effects to properties eligible for listing on NRHP: UPRR and Worthington Livestock Sale Company	None proposed
CONTAMINATED PROPERTIES	12 sites of concern identified	Each site will be evaluated prior to construction

1.8 PERMITS/APPROVALS/CONCURRENCE

It is anticipated that federal, state, and other local permits/approvals/ concurrence may be required for the proposed action. The following permits/approvals/concurrence will likely be required for construction of the proposed action:

- Adequacy Determination from Mn/DOT
- Record of Decision from FHWA
- Section 404 Permit from the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) – Minnesota and Iowa
- Section 401 Water Quality Certification from Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)
- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit from the MPCA and IDNR
- Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) from Mn/DOT
- Municipal approval from the City of Worthington and the City of Bigelow
- Public Waters Permit from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR)
- Permits from Heron Lake and/or Okabena-Ocheda Watershed Districts (WSDs)
- Order for minor impacts from ditch authorities

1.9 COORDINATION

Mn/DOT and Iowa DOT are committed to public and agency involvement/outreach at all levels in decision-making related to the Highway 60 Reconstruction Project. Mn/DOT and Iowa DOT have engaged community organizations; tribal communities; area property owners; business owners; residents; and local, county, regional, state, and federal agencies in the development of the project. See Draft EIS Section 8.0 – Coordination for a description of activities prior to July 2002.

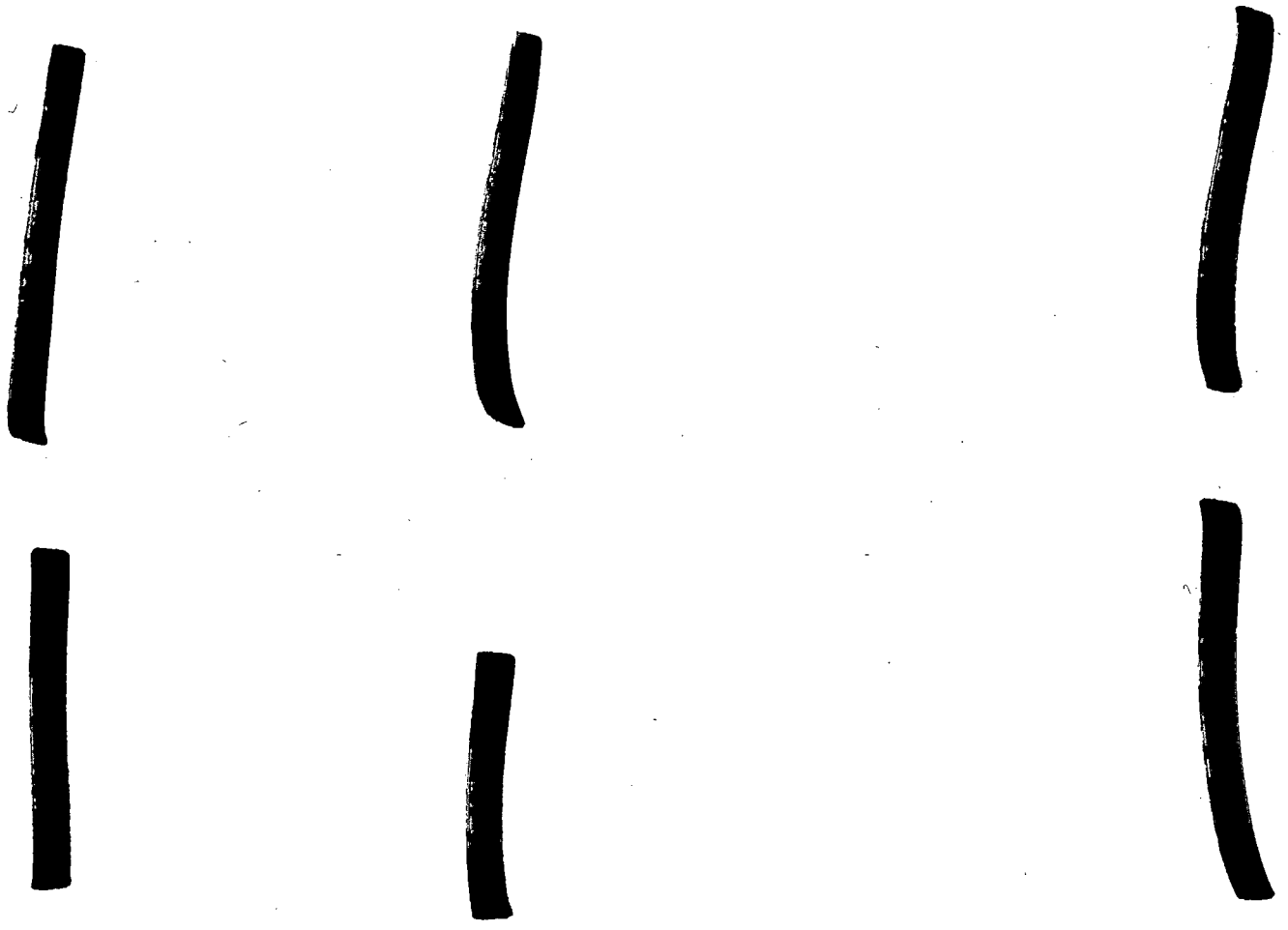
Since publication of the Draft EIS, public involvement activities have included:

- Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings
- Draft EIS public hearing
- Design workshops
- Open house meetings
- Newsletter
- Website

Informational and coordination meetings have also been held with representatives from local, state, and federal agencies with approval and/or permit authority to discuss appropriate analysis methodology for different resource areas.

1.10 SCHEDULE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Completion Date	Task/Activity
March 2000	Release of Scoping Document/Draft Scoping Decision Document for public comment; begin 30-day comment period
April 2000	Public Scoping Meeting
June 2000	Final Scoping Decision Document
August 2000	Federal Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS
October 2002	Distribute Draft EIS for agency/public comment; start of Draft EIS comment period
October 2002	Notice of Availability
November 2002	Public Hearing on Draft EIS
December 2002	Identification of Preferred Alternative by Mn/DOT, Iowa DOT, and FHWA
November 2004	Distribute Final EIS
December 2004-January 2005	Mn/DOT Adequacy Determination
January 2005	FHWA Record of Decision
Summer 2007	Construction of Phase 1



2.0 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION

2.1 DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Highway 60 project corridor is located in southwest Minnesota and northwest Iowa. The project corridor traverses diagonally through Nobles County (see Figure 1). The project limits extend from approximately 1.8 miles south (120th Street) of the Minnesota-Iowa border to I-90 north of Worthington, Minnesota (see Figure 2). The total length of the project corridor is approximately 14.3 miles. The proposed improvements will expand this segment of Highway 60 to four lanes, reduce the number of access points onto the highway, address drainage issues, provide turn lanes, and correct other existing design deficiencies.

2.2 RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENTAL UNITS

Mn/DOT is the Responsible Governmental Unit for the development of and the environmental documentation for the Highway 60 Reconstruction Project. Mn/DOT is managing the project with the FHWA as a Joint Lead Agency. The contact persons for the project are:

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2.3 MINNESOTA-IOWA AGREEMENT

Because the Highway 60 Reconstruction Project crosses the Minnesota-Iowa state line, Mn/DOT and Iowa DOT have developed an agreement addressing the responsibilities for completing the EIS and outlining the review process.

Iowa DOT is anticipated to complete reconstruction of Highway 60 as a four-lane roadway from LeMars to 120th Street in 2007. The location and timing of the remaining portion of Iowa Highway 60 was dependent on Mn/DOT's decision to bypass Bigelow. For this reason, Mn/DOT is responsible for the preliminary design and environmental review of improvements to Highway 60 from 120th Street in Osceola County, Iowa to I-90 in Nobles County, Minnesota.

The Draft and Final EISs prepared by Mn/DOT include impacts to the natural and physical environments of both Minnesota and Iowa. The documents will be reviewed by both states and signed by Mn/DOT, Iowa DOT, and Minnesota FHWA, as agreed upon by Mn/DOT, Iowa DOT, the Minnesota and Iowa FHWA divisions.

2.4 FUNDING AND SCHEDULE

2.4.1 Funding

It is anticipated that federal funds will be the primary source of construction funding (80 percent) with a 20 percent state match. The segment of Highway 60 from 120th Street to County Road 4 in Minnesota (3.6 miles) will be constructed as Phase 1. Currently, Phase 1 is scheduled for Fiscal Year 2008, but the remainder of the project is not in Mn/DOT's 10-year plan. The total cost for the preferred alternative is estimated to be $54.2 million.

State Project Number	Construction Date	Funding Program	Funding Source	Program Estimate[1]
MN: 5305-55 IA: NHSX-060-4(64)-3H-72	Phase 1: start Summer 2007	Major Construction	Federal (80%) and State (20%)	Phase 1: $13.7 million

[1]Cost estimates include right-of-way, relocation, and construction costs. Estimates are in 2004 dollars.

2.4.2 Schedule for Environmental Review

Completion Date	Task/Activity
March 2000	Release of Scoping Decision/Draft Scoping Decision Document for public comment; begin 30-day comment period
April 2000	Public Scoping Meeting
June 2000	Final Scoping Decision Document
August 2000	Federal Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS
October 2002	Distribute Draft EIS for agency/public comment; start of Draft EIS comment period
October 2002	Notice of Availability
November 2002	Public Hearing on Draft EIS
December 2002	Identification of Preferred Alternative by Mn/DOT, Iowa DOT, and FHWA
November 2004	Distribute Final EIS
December 2004- anuary 2005	Mn/DOT Adequacy Determination
January 2005	FHWA Record of Decision
Summer 2007	Construction of Phase 1

2.5 PURPOSE OF THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 requires that social, economic, and environmental considerations be included in the planning of projects that receive federal funding. The proposed reconstruction of Highway 60 is considered a Federal Class I Action because of its potential for

significant impacts to the natural and physical environment. The EIS is a full disclosure document that discusses the environmental impacts of a proposed Class I Action. This Final EIS will identify the preferred alternative, describe changes in anticipated impacts from the Draft EIS, and outline mitigation measures and commitments.

This Final EIS has been prepared as part of the federal NEPA process and state environmental review process to fulfill requirements of both 42 USC 4321 et. Seq. and Minnesota Rules Chapter 4410.2300.

2.6 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION

2.6.1 Objective

The purpose of this process is to identify an environmentally and socially sensitive preferred alternative for a transportation system improvement consistent with meeting the identified needs presented below.

2.6.2 Project Need

A detailed description of the project purpose and need objectives was presented in Draft EIS Section 2.6 – Purpose and Need for Proposed Action, which has been incorporated by reference into this Final EIS. The preferred alternative is consistent with meeting the identified needs presented below:

- Maintain System Continuity: Construction of the proposed improvements would complete the four-lane section of Highway 60 from Sioux City, Iowa to Windom, Minnesota, enhancing the continuity of roadway design and mobility.
- Address Physical Conditions: The pavement on Highway 60 is in relatively poor condition today, and the cost of maintaining the highway will continue to increase as more extensive work is required and prices rise over time.
- Correct Design Deficiencies: Highway 60 currently has several design deficiencies that heavily influence the quality of traffic flow and safety of the corridor. The proposed project would correct or improve these issues.
- Address Truck and Farm Traffic: Highway 60 currently experiences high volumes of truck and farm traffic. Due to some of the design deficiencies of the roadway, the high volume of truck traffic and presence of farm vehicles creates safety and performance issues.
- Increase Capacity: The segment of Highway 60 from County Road 35 to Highway 59 (Oxford Street) will experience increased congestion, is expected to operate at an unacceptable level, and peak hour traffic volumes will indicate the need for a signal by 2030.

3.0 ALTERNATIVES

3.1 PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The Highway 60 Draft EIS, dated July 2002, considered six build alternatives and the No-Build Alternative. The alternative evaluation and screening process was based on an assessment of how each alternative addresses the purpose and need objectives of the project, as well as a corridor level assessment of potential social, economic, and environmental impacts. Following the Draft EIS comment period, a review of the public and agency comments was conducted. Based on the comments and supporting analysis in the Draft EIS, Alternative A1–Existing Alignment with Bigelow Bypass was identified as the preferred alternative.

3.1.1 Reasons for Identifying the Preferred Alternative

Alternative A1 was chosen for reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- Best addresses the primary purpose of the project overall, which is to maintain system continuity.
- Operational difficulties with existing alignment through Bigelow, including the grain elevator and existing businesses.
- Resolution from the City of Bigelow supporting the Bigelow Bypass.
- Bigelow Bypass is consistent with the design of Highway 60 in Iowa, which is bypassing all communities.
- Worthington is a destination for the majority (85 percent) of traffic on Highway 60.
- A bypass does not address safety and traffic flow concerns along the current roadway within Worthington.
- The additional distance on the Worthington bypass and I-90 (approximately 2.5 miles) would result in no timesavings for the through traveler and would introduce new operational difficulties.
- Fewer wetland impacts than existing alignment through Bigelow (Alternative A).

3.1.2 Description of Preferred Alternative

The preferred alternative generally follows the existing highway alignment, widening to the east as a rural four-lane divided highway from approximately County Road 4 in Nobles County, Minnesota to Nobles Street in Worthington, Minnesota and as an urban four-lane divided highway from Nobles Street to I-90 north of Worthington (see Figures 3A-3M). South of County Road 4 to

120th Street in Osceola County, Iowa, the preferred alternative deviates from the existing alignment and bypasses the City of Bigelow to the east. The bypass generally follows the alignment of L44 in Iowa and lies just east of the Bigelow city limits. The rural four-lane design consists of two through lanes in each direction, with paved shoulders separated by a depressed grass median (see Figure 4 for typical section). The urban four-lane design consists of two through lanes in each direction separated by a concrete median, with curb and gutter on the inside shoulder and a ditch on the outside shoulder. Left and right turn lanes and short frontage roads will also be constructed at various locations along the corridor to provide access to/from public roadways, homes, and businesses.

Through the development of the preferred alternative, it was determined that reconstructing the highway entirely on the existing alignment through Worthington was not practicable due to impacts to social, economic, and environmental resources. Therefore, the roadway alignment has been shifted in the Lake Street area and the Oxford Street area as part of the preferred alternative since the publication of the Draft EIS.

Bigelow Bypass

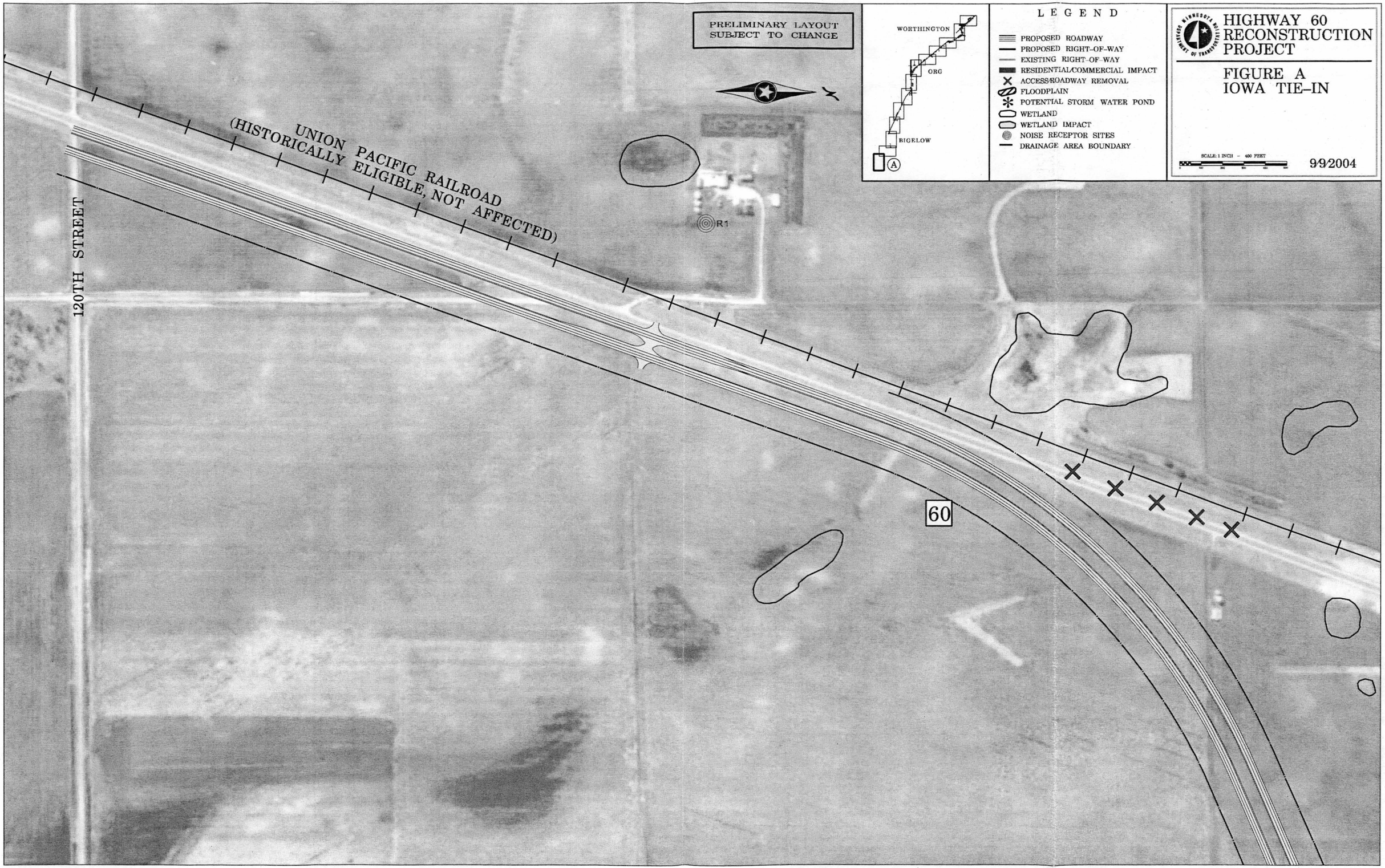
The Draft EIS did not include the acquisition of the home in Iowa located just south of the Minnesota-Iowa border and east of the Bigelow Bypass. Upon identification of the bypass as the preferred alternative, it was determined the residence would be acquired for right-of-way needs.

The Draft EIS also showed a connection from the bypass to existing Highway 60 south of Bigelow. This connection has been removed for safety and maintenance reasons, and all traffic will access Bigelow via County Road 52 (Stateline Road).

Lake Street Area

Starting at County Road 57, for approximately 4,200 feet, the alignment has been shifted to the south approximately 550 feet in order to avoid impacting the existing businesses south of Highway 60 and to provide better access to the businesses north of the highway (see Figure 3K). The existing roadway will remain as a local frontage road with access to Highway 60 at Lake Street.

As a result of balancing overall impacts to social, economic, and environmental resources with the needs of the highway, it was concluded that this realignment was the most prudent option for this area.


PRELIMINARY LAYOUT
SUBJECT TO CHANGE
WORTHINGTON
ORG
BIGELOW
A
LEGEND
PROPOSED ROADWAY
PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY
EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY
RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL IMPACT
ACCESS/ROADWAY REMOVAL
FLOODPLAIN
POTENTIAL STORM WATER POND
WETLAND
WETLAND IMPACT
NOISE RECEPTOR SITES
DRAINAGE AREA BOUNDARY
HIGHWAY 60
RECONSTRUCTION
PROJECT
FIGURE A
IOWA TIE-IN
SCALE: 1 INCH = 400 FEET
9/9/2004
UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD
(HISTORICALLY ELIGIBLE, NOT AFFECTED)
120TH STREET
R1
60

MINNESOTA
NOBLES
COUNTY

MINNESOTA STATE LINE

60

IOWA
OSCEOLA
COUNTY

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD
(HISTORICALLY ELIGIBLE, NOT AFFECTED)

1 res. impact

1 comm. impact

45° R.

45° R.

45° R.

45° R.

1 res. impact

52

L44

PRELIMINARY LAYOUT
SUBJECT TO CHANGE

N

WORTHINGTON

ORG

BIGELOW

B

LEGEND

- PROPOSED ROADWAY
- PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY
- EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY
- RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL IMPACT
- ACCESS/ROADWAY REMOVAL
- FLOODPLAIN
- POTENTIAL STORM WATER POND
- WETLAND
- WETLAND IMPACT
- NOISE RECEPTOR SITES
- DRAINAGE AREA BOUNDARY

HIGHWAY 60 RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

FIGURE B
IOWA/MINNESOTA BORDER

SCALE: 1 INCH = 400 FEET

9/2004

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD
(HISTORICALLY ELIGIBLE, NOT AFFECTED)

BIGELOW

60

R4

R5

R3

R2

52

330TH STREET

PRELIMINARY LAYOUT
SUBJECT TO CHANGE

WORTHINGTON

ORG

BIGELOW

LEGEND

- PROPOSED ROADWAY
- PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY
- EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY
- RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL IMPACT
- ACCESS/ROADWAY REMOVAL
- FLOODPLAIN
- POTENTIAL STORM WATER POND
- WETLAND
- WETLAND IMPACT
- NOISE RECEPTOR SITES
- DRAINAGE AREA BOUNDARY

HIGHWAY 60 RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

FIGURE C
BIGELOW

SCALE: 1 INCH = 400 FEET

0 200 400 800

9/2004

GENERAL AREA
OF MESIC PRAIRIE
REMNANTS

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD
(HISTORICALLY ELIGIBLE, NOT AFFECTED)

4

60

WTLD 4
TYPE 2
0.2 ACRES

GENERAL
AREA OF
MESIC
PRAIRIE
REMNANTS

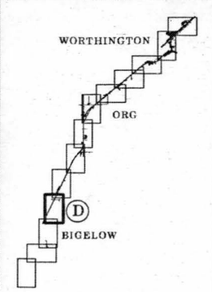
WTLD 3
TYPE 2
0.00 ACRES

WTLD 5
TYPE 2
0.32 ACRES

WTLD 2
TYPE 2
0.03 ACRES

WTLD 1
TYPE 2
0.11 ACRES

PRELIMINARY LAYOUT
SUBJECT TO CHANGE



LEGEND

- PROPOSED ROADWAY
- PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY
- EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY
- RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL IMPACT
- ACCESS/ROADWAY REMOVAL
- FLOODPLAIN
- POTENTIAL STORM WATER POND
- WETLAND
- WETLAND IMPACT
- NOISE RECEPTOR SITES
- DRAINAGE AREA BOUNDARY

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

HIGHWAY 60 RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

FIGURE D

SCALE: 1 INCH = 400 FEET

10/19/2004

PRELIMINARY LAYOUT
SUBJECT TO CHANGE

GENERAL AREA OF MESIC PRAIRIE REMNANTS

WTLD 5
TYPE 2
0.32 ACRES

WTLD 8
TYPE 3
0.18 ACRES

WTLD 9
TYPE 3
0.04 ACRES

WTLD 7
TYPE 3
0.1 ACRES

WTLD 6
TYPE 3
0.08 ACRES

WTLD 10
TYPE 3
0.44 ACRES

WTLD 12
TYPE 3
0.04 ACRES

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD
(HISTORICALLY ELIGIBLE, NOT AFFECTED)

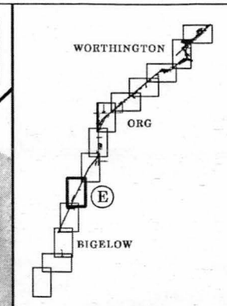
60

WTLD 11
TYPE 3
0.06 ACRES

R6

GENERAL AREA OF MESIC PRAIRIE REMNANTS

WTLD 13
TYPE 2
0.02 ACRES



LEGEND

- PROPOSED ROADWAY
- PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY
- EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY
- RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL IMPACT
- ACCESS/ROADWAY REMOVAL
- FLOODPLAIN
- POTENTIAL STORM WATER POND
- WETLAND
- WETLAND IMPACT
- NOISE RECEPTOR SITES
- DRAINAGE AREA BOUNDARY

HIGHWAY 60 RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

FIGURE E

SCALE: 1 INCH = 400 FEET

10/19/2004

PRELIMINARY LAYOUT
SUBJECT TO CHANGE

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD
(HISTORICALLY ELIGIBLE, NOT AFFECTED)

60

WTLD 15
TYPE 2
0.11 ACRES

WTLD 14
TYPE 1
0.02 ACRES

6

WTLD 16
TYPE 1
0.01 ACRES

R7

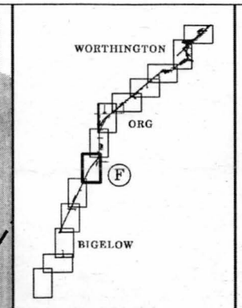
WTLD 18
TYPE 2
1.03 ACRES

59

HWY. 59

300TH STREET

WTLD 17
TYPE 3
0.16 ACRES



LEGEND

- PROPOSED ROADWAY
- PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY
- EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY
- RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL IMPACT
- ACCESS/ROADWAY REMOVAL
- FLOODPLAIN
- POTENTIAL STORM WATER POND
- WETLAND
- WETLAND IMPACT
- NOISE RECEPTOR SITES
- DRAINAGE AREA BOUNDARY

HIGHWAY 60 RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

FIGURE F

SCALE: 1 INCH = 400 FEET

9/9/2004

PRELIMINARY LAYOUT
SUBJECT TO CHANGE

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD
(HISTORICALLY ELIGIBLE, NOT AFFECTED)

WORTHINGTON

ORG

G

BIGELOW

LEGEND

- PROPOSED ROADWAY
- PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY
- EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY
- RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL IMPACT
- ACCESS/ROADWAY REMOVAL
- FLOODPLAIN
- POTENTIAL STORM WATER POND
- WETLAND
- WETLAND IMPACT
- NOISE RECEPTOR SITES
- DRAINAGE AREA BOUNDARY

HIGHWAY 60 RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

FIGURE G

SCALE: 1 INCH = 400 FEET

9/9/2004

WTLD 18
TYPE 2
1.03 ACRES

R8

WTLD 20
TYPE 2
1.02 ACRES

WTLD 21
TYPE 2
0.60 ACRES

WTLD 22
TYPE 1
0.01 ACRES

WTLD 17
TYPE 3
0.16 ACRES

60 / 59

WTLD 19
TYPE 3
3.28 ACRES

*

TRAVEL INFORMATION
CENTER

WTLD 23
TYPE 1
0.11 ACRES

R9

PRELIMINARY LAYOUT
SUBJECT TO CHANGE

166

GENERAL AREA
OF MESIC
PRAIRIE
REMNANTS

ORG

R10

R9

MINNESOTA
SOUTHERN RAILWAY

280TH STREET

60 / 59

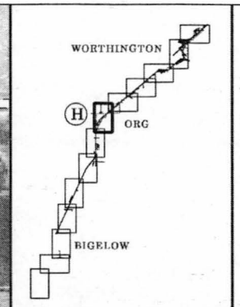
WTLD 25
TYPE 1
0.11 ACRES

WTLD 26
TYPE 3
0.36 ACRES

WTLD 24
TYPE 1
0.56 ACRES

R11

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD
(HISTORICALLY ELIGIBLE,
NOT AFFECTED)



LEGEND

- PROPOSED ROADWAY
- PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY
- EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY
- RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL IMPACT
- ACCESS/ROADWAY REMOVAL
- FLOODPLAIN
- POTENTIAL STORM WATER POND
- WETLAND
- WETLAND IMPACT
- NOISE RECEPTOR SITES
- DRAINAGE AREA BOUNDARY

HIGHWAY 60 RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

FIGURE H
ORG

SCALE: 1 INCH = 400 FEET

9/9/2004

DYKE'S AUTO SALVAGE

WORTHINGTON AG PARTS

WTLD 32
TYPE 3
0.74 ACRES

WTLD 31
TYPE 3
1.75 ACRES

10

WTLD 30
TYPE 3
0.15 ACRES

WTLD 29
TYPE 6
0.59 ACRES

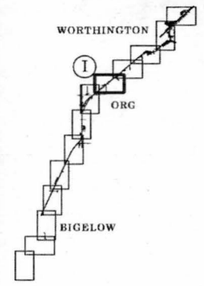
WTLD 28
TYPE 3
0.37 ACRES

WTLD 27
TYPE 2
0.32 ACRES

60 / 59

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD
(HISTORICALLY ELIGIBLE,
NOT AFFECTED)

PRELIMINARY LAYOUT
SUBJECT TO CHANGE



LEGEND

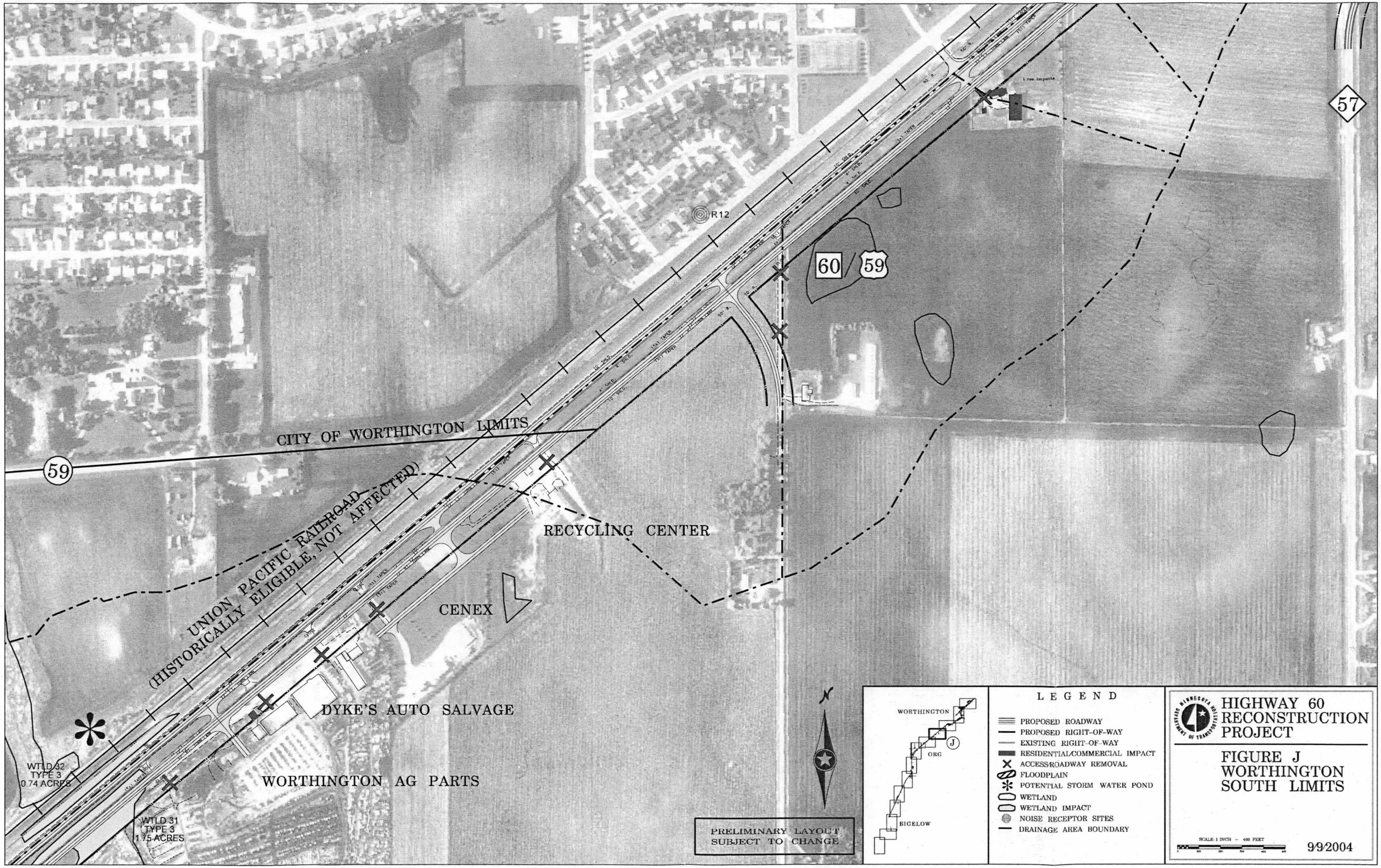
- PROPOSED ROADWAY
- PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY
- EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY
- RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL IMPACT
- ACCESS/ROADWAY REMOVAL
- FLOODPLAIN
- POTENTIAL STORM WATER POND
- WETLAND
- WETLAND IMPACT
- NOISE RECEPTOR SITES
- DRAINAGE AREA BOUNDARY

HIGHWAY 60 RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

FIGURE I

SCALE: 1 INCH = 400 FEET

9/9/2004


CITY OF WORTHINGTON LIMITS
59
57
60 / 59
R12
UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD
(HISTORICALLY ELIGIBLE, NOT AFFECTED)
RECYCLING CENTER
CENEX
DYKE'S AUTO SALVAGE
WORTHINGTON AG PARTS
WTLD 32
TYPE 3
0.74 ACRES
WTLD 31
TYPE 3
1.75 ACRES
PRELIMINARY LAYOUT
SUBJECT TO CHANGE
WORTHINGTON
ORG
BIGELOW
J
LEGEND
PROPOSED ROADWAY
PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY
EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY
RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL IMPACT
ACCESS/ROADWAY REMOVAL
FLOODPLAIN
POTENTIAL STORM WATER POND
WETLAND
WETLAND IMPACT
NOISE RECEPTOR SITES
DRAINAGE AREA BOUNDARY
MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY 60
RECONSTRUCTION
PROJECT
FIGURE J
WORTHINGTON
SOUTH LIMITS
SCALE: 1 INCH = 400 FEET
9/9/2004

OKABENA LAKE

JUDICIAL DITCH NO. 6

WTLD 36
TYPE 3
0.89 ACRES

WTLD 35
TYPE 3
0.28 ACRES

1 comm. impact

R15

R14

LAKE STREET

WTLD 34
TYPE 3
0.44 ACRES

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD
(HISTORICALLY ELIGIBLE, NOT AFFECTED)

WTLD 33
TYPE 3
0.07 ACRES

2 res. impacts

FLOWER LANE

R13

60 / 59

57

1 res. impacts

PRELIMINARY LAYOUT
SUBJECT TO CHANGE

WORTHINGTON

K

ORG

BIGELOW

LEGEND

- PROPOSED ROADWAY
- PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY
- EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY
- RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL IMPACT
- ACCESS/ROADWAY REMOVAL
- FLOODPLAIN
- POTENTIAL STORM WATER POND
- WETLAND
- WETLAND IMPACT
- NOISE RECEPTOR SITES
- DRAINAGE AREA BOUNDARY

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

HIGHWAY 60 RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

FIGURE K
WORTHINGTON

SCALE: 1 INCH = 400 FEET

9/9/2004

PRELIMINARY LAYOUT
SUBJECT TO CHANGE

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD
(HISTORICALLY ELIGIBLE, NOT AFFECTED)

WORTHINGTON
BIGELOW
ORG

LEGEND

- PROPOSED ROADWAY
- PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY
- EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY
- RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL IMPACT
- ACCESS/ROADWAY REMOVAL
- FLOODPLAIN
- POTENTIAL STORM WATER POND
- WETLAND
- WETLAND IMPACT
- NOISE RECEPTOR SITES
- DRAINAGE AREA BOUNDARY

HIGHWAY 60 RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

FIGURE L
WORTHINGTON

SCALE: 1 INCH = 400 FEET

10/19/2004

R16

WTLD 38
TYPE 2
0.79 ACRES

60 / 59

25

R17B

R17

R23

WORTHINGTON
LIVESTOCK
SALE COMPANY
(HISTORICALLY
ELIGIBLE, NOT
AFFECTED)

MORNINGSIDE
NEIGHBORHOOD

R18

POSSIBLE NOISE WALL

WTLD 41
TYPE 3
0.15 ACRES

WTLD 40
TYPE 3
0.03 ACRES

35

60 / 59

WATERFOWL
PRODUCTION
AREA

R19

R20

R21

LINDQUIST
TAX SERVICE

UNOWNED

WORTHINGTON
TRUCK AND
TRAILER

NEW
VISION
COOP

EXISTING
MN/DOT
STORM-
WATER
POND

OXFORD STREET

59

EAST
ACRES
TRAILER
PARK

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD
(HISTORICALLY ELIGIBLE)

90

TRAILER
PARK

SWIFT&
COMPANY

ARMOUR ROAD

R22

WTLD 42
TYPE 3
0.67 ACRES

WTLD 43
TYPE 3
0.10 ACRES

1 res. impact

60

EAST
ACRES
TRAILER
PARK

59

EXISTING
MNDOT
STORM-
WATER
POND

5

33

PRELIMINARY LAYOUT
SUBJECT TO CHANGE

N

WORTHINGTON

ORG

BIGELOW

LEGEND

- PROPOSED ROADWAY
- PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY
- EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY
- RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL IMPACT
- ACCESS/ROADWAY REMOVAL
- FLOODPLAIN
- POTENTIAL STORM WATER POND
- WETLAND
- WETLAND IMPACT
- NOISE RECEPTOR SITES
- DRAINAGE AREA BOUNDARY

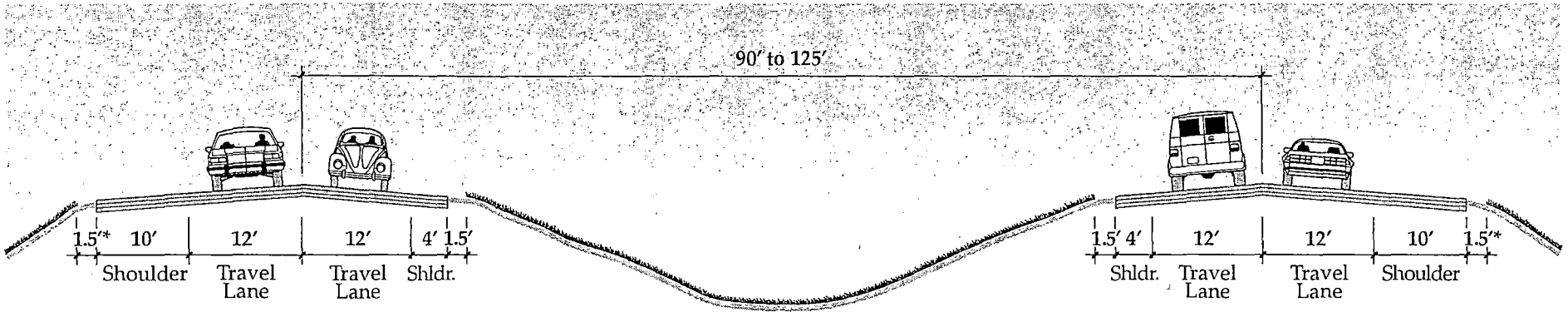
MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

HIGHWAY 60 RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

FIGURE M
I-90
INTERCHANGE

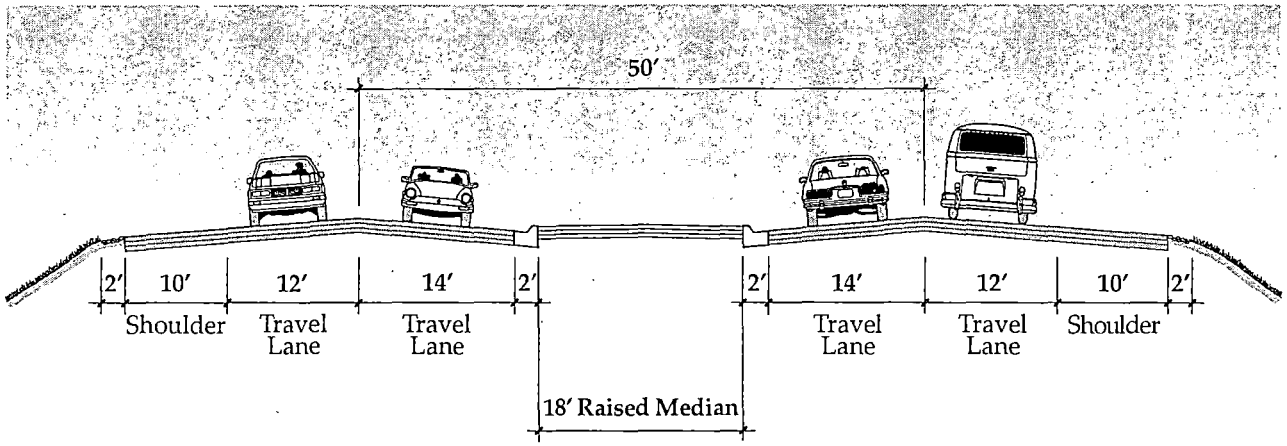
SCALE: 1 INCH = 400 FEET

9/9/2004



Proposed Rural Section

*1.5′ not included in Iowa portion



Proposed Urban Section

MINNESOTA 60

Highway 60 Reconstruction Project
Final Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 4
Preferred Alternative
Typical Sections

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

September 2004

Morningside Area

The Draft EIS showed access to the Morningside neighborhood at Nobles Street and from CSAH 35 via a new connection to Circle Drive. Since publication of the Draft EIS, coordination with the City of Worthington has occurred to determine local connections to improve internal circulation. As a result, a connection will be made from Douglas Avenue to East Avenue (see Figure 3L). Additional connections will be considered, and a meeting with Morningside residents will be held closer to the time of construction.

Oxford Street Area

Just south of Oxford Street, the alignment has been shifted to the southeast toward the existing trailer park (see Figure 3L). The alignment shift will result in the acquisition of the trailer park, including all 32 trailers, and relocation of the residents. This impact is discussed further in the Environmental Justice section of this document. This modification was made for reasons including the following:

- Access to 1st Avenue and downtown Worthington is improved
- New bridge at 1st Avenue and frontage road are not required, reducing cost
- Provides a more direct route to New Vision Co-op; easier for trucks and farm vehicles to access
- Residents of the trailer park would have been isolated in the triangle created by the roads and railroad tracks under the preferred alternative as shown in the Draft EIS.

As a result of balancing overall impacts to social, economic, and environmental resources with the needs of the highway, it was concluded that this realignment was the most prudent option for this area.

3.2 TRAFFIC ANALYSIS

The traffic analysis was updated for the preferred alternative and is presented below. See Draft EIS Section 3.4 – Traffic Analysis for background information.

3.2.1 Existing and Forecast Traffic Volumes

Average daily traffic (ADT) volumes were obtained from Mn/DOT and the Highway 60 Travel Study. The most recent Mn/DOT ADT data is from 2002 and is shown in Figure 5. Forecast traffic volumes for 2030 are shown in Figure 6. The greatest increase in traffic is expected to occur on the segment of Highway 60 from County Road 35 to Highway 59 (Oxford Street), where volumes are forecast to nearly double by 2030.

3.2.2 Existing and 2030 Traffic Operations Analysis

Table 3 shows the results of the p.m. peak hour level of service (LOS) analysis for selected intersections under existing traffic conditions and for

2030 traffic conditions under the No-Build and preferred alternatives (see Figures 3K-3M). For rural locations in Minnesota, LOS C is generally considered the limit of acceptable traffic operations for intersections.

Table 3
Existing and Forecast Intersection Level of Service

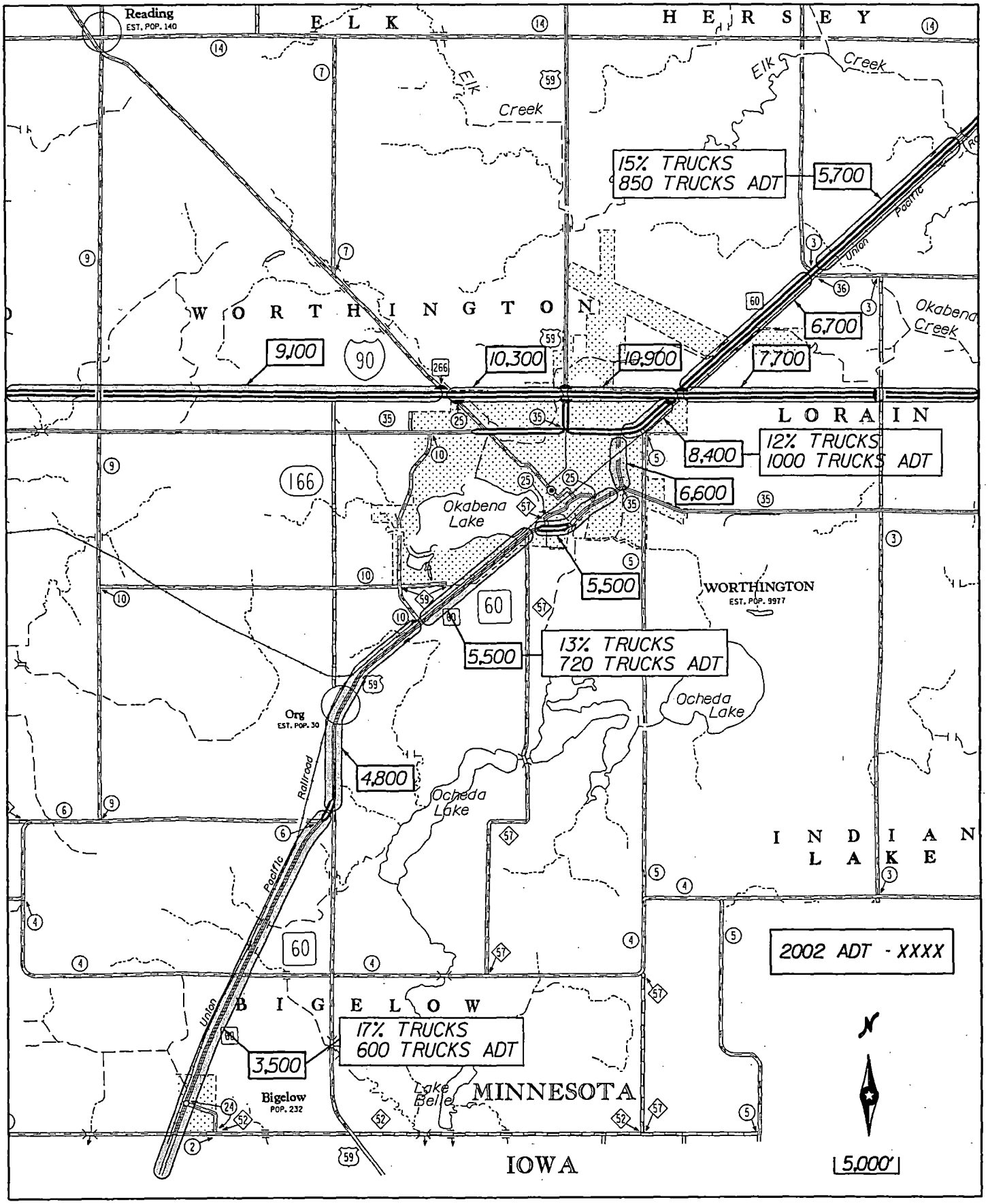
Intersection	Level of Service		
	Existing (1999)	No-Build Alternative (2030)	Preferred Alternative (2030)
Highway 60 and South Lake Street	A	A	A
Highway 60 and Highway 59 (Oxford Street) (Existing)	A	F	A
Highway 60 and Highway 59 (New)	N/A	N/A	D
Highway 60 and Armour Road	B	D	D
Highway 60 and North I-90 Ramp	A	A	A
Highway 60 and South I-90 Ramp	A	B	B

The results displayed in Table 3 are only for the overall intersections. It is possible for certain movements, usually the minor street movements, to be operating at a poor LOS, while the intersection as a whole is operating at an acceptable LOS. For example, the Highway 60/Armour Road intersection is operating at LOS B for the overall intersection for existing traffic conditions, while the westbound approach (Swift plant entrance) is operating at LOS E and the eastbound approach (truck plaza entrance) is operating at LOS C. This implies that, although the Highway 60 approaches are operating satisfactorily, traffic from the Swift plant and truck plaza is having difficulty getting onto Highway 60 under existing conditions during the p.m. peak hour.

For the intersections where the overall intersection or approaches are operating at an unacceptable LOS, the installation of a traffic signal improves the LOS to B or better.

3.2.3 Signal Warrant Analysis

The intersections examined in this study are currently unsignalized. The LOS analysis suggests that traffic signals may be a way of mitigating existing or future traffic problems. Therefore, an analysis was completed to determine if signals are warranted at any intersections under existing or 2030 traffic conditions.



MINNESOTA 60

Highway 60
Final Environmental
Impact Statement

Figure 5
2002 AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC (ADT)

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

FEBRUARY
2004

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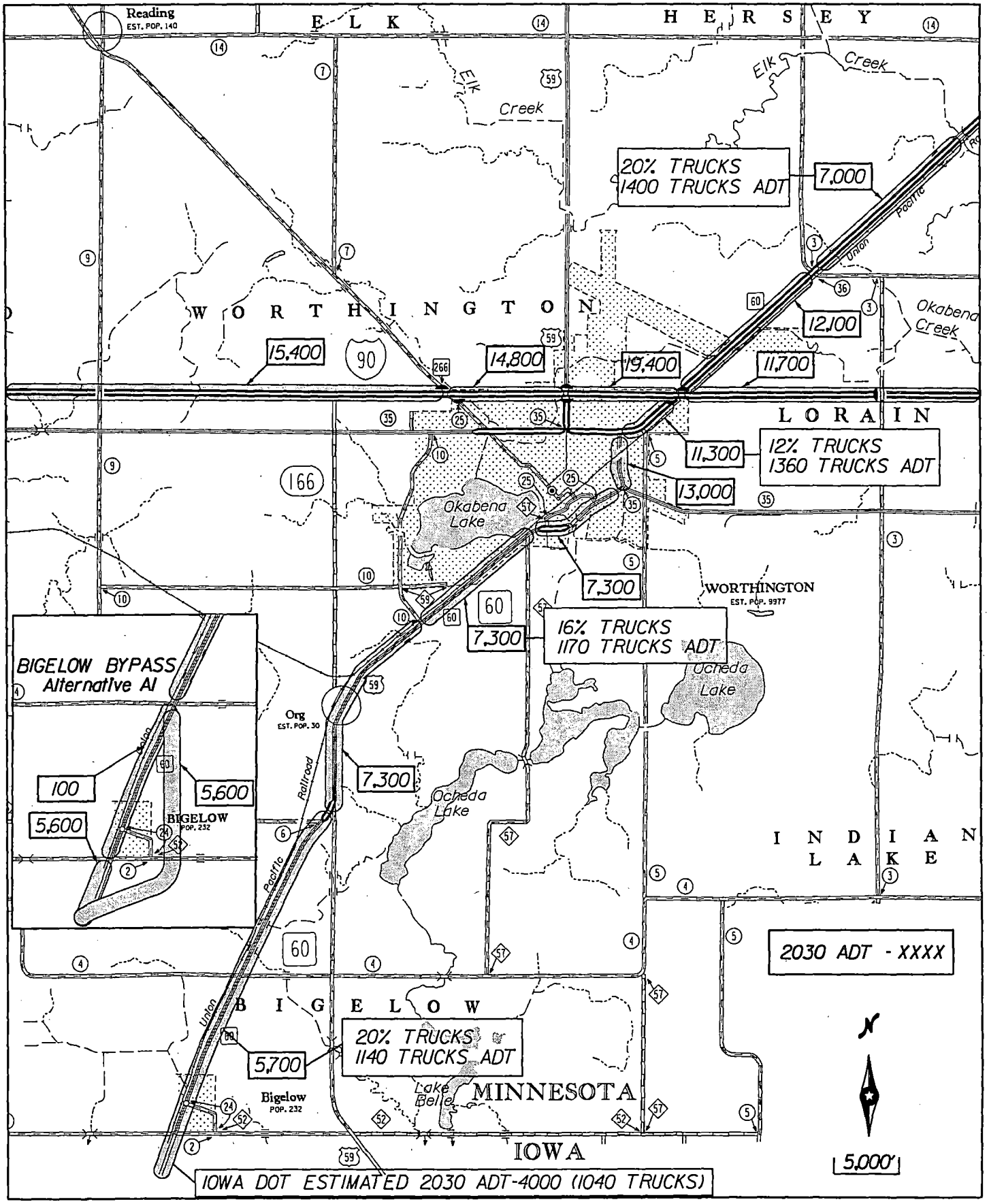


MINNESOTA 60

Highway 60
Final Environmental
Impact Statement

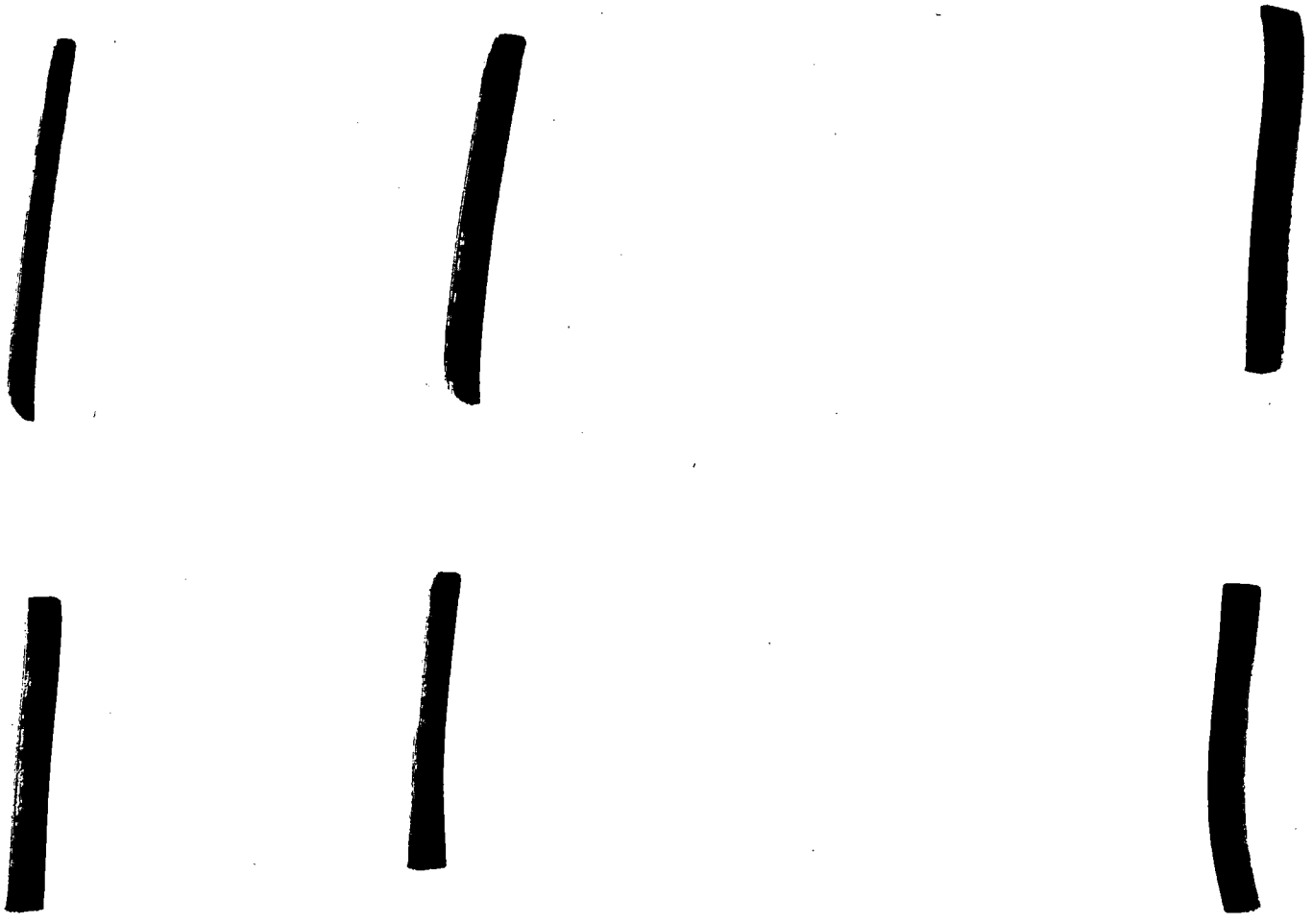
Figure 6
2030 AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC FORECAST
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

FEBRUARY
2004

The initial review was performed using the p.m. peak hour traffic volumes at the selected intersections for existing and 2030 traffic conditions. Based on this preliminary analysis, the peak hour signal warrant (Signal Warrant 3 in the Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MMUTCD)) is met at the Highway 60/Armour Road intersection for existing traffic conditions, and the Highway 60 intersections at Highway 59 (Oxford Street), Armour Road, and the south I-90 ramp potentially meet the peak hour signal warrant for 2030 traffic conditions.

At the Armour Road intersection, the peak hour signal warrant is met for existing p.m. peak hour traffic volumes. A more thorough engineering investigation by Mn/DOT District 7, which included hourly approach counts, indicated that, of the eight MMUTCD signal warrants, only the peak hour signal warrant is met and that a traffic signal is not needed at this intersection at this time.

For the three intersections that meet the peak hour signal warrant for 2030 traffic conditions, these intersections will be monitored periodically to determine if signal warrants are met. If signal warrants are met at any of these intersections, then a more thorough engineering analysis will be conducted to determine if a traffic signal is the best solution to the problems at the intersection.



4.0 SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The purpose of this section is to present the anticipated impacts of the preferred alternative on the social, economic, and natural environments, as they differ from the information presented in the Draft EIS. For impacts that have not changed, the information is summarized here, and the reader will be referred to the Draft EIS.

4.1 SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY IMPACTS

4.1.1 Land Use

As discussed in Draft EIS Section 4.1.1 – Land Use, the preferred alternative will have some impact on land use in the project area. Right-of-way acquisition will impact 51 homes and 3 commercial properties along the corridor and will also convert 278 acres of farmland and wetland to highway uses. There is also the potential for the improved four-lane highway to attract additional development to the area. It is assumed this development would occur within the City of Worthington.

Mitigation

Controlling the potential land use impacts of the proposed improvements will be accomplished primarily through local government zoning authority and through highway access management. The preferred alternative will be constructed to limit access to Highway 60 to the extent practical and according to Mn/DOT Access Management Guidelines. Discussions with local units of government will continue to outline future land use and transportation planning efforts throughout the design and construction of the project.

4.1.2 Social and Community Environment

Information regarding population, housing, and community resources is available in Draft EIS Section 4.1.2 – Social and Community Environment. The preferred alternative is anticipated to have minimal impacts on community resources. Some indirect effects to homes and businesses may result from changes in access. The Worthington community has expressed concern regarding the ability of school buses to safely access Highway 60, specifically the ability of buses to make left turns onto Highway 60 as a result of the preferred alternative since they will have to cross additional lanes of traffic, and the median will not be wide enough in the urban section to provide a refuge. Based on the traffic analysis completed for this project, the forecast future traffic volumes are such that school buses should be able to find adequate gaps in traffic for left turns with only a short wait. If necessary, school buses could be rerouted to minimize left turns.

Mitigation

None proposed.

4.1.3 Environmental Justice

The Draft EIS included an evaluation of the entire project corridor for environmental justice issues and concluded there would be no disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority populations or low-income populations as a result of the proposed alternatives (see Draft EIS Section 4.1.3 – Environmental Justice). Upon selection of the preferred alternative, the alignment was shifted farther southeast at the Oxford Street/Highway 60 intersection to improve operations and lessen impacts to other local streets (see Figures 3L and 3M). This alignment shift will impact the East Acres Trailer Park currently located in the southeast quadrant of this intersection. Specific reasons for the alignment shift included the following:

- Access to 1st Avenue and downtown Worthington is improved
- New bridge at 1st Avenue and frontage road are not required, reducing cost
- Provides a more direct route to New Vision Co-op; easier for trucks and farm vehicles to access
- Residents of the trailer park would have been isolated in the triangle created by the roads and railroad tracks under the preferred alternative as shown in the Draft EIS

The following analysis was conducted to evaluate potential environmental justice impacts to this area. For the remainder of the project corridor, the previous determination from the Draft EIS still stands.

Project Area Demographics

Demographic statistics from the 2000 Census were compiled at the block level for population data and the block group level for income data. The block group extends beyond the boundaries of the area being analyzed, but more refined data was not available. The data is summarized in Table 4 and City of Worthington data is included for comparison.

Table 4
Demographics of the East Acres Trailer Park Area

	Trailer Park Area		City of Worthington	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Population by Race				
Total Population	115	100.0	11,283	100.0
White	34	30.0	8,667	86.5
Black or African American	1	0.9	215	1.1
American Indian and Alaska Native	0	0.0	55	0.3
Asian	0	0.0	797	4.0
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0	0.0	15	0.1
Some other race	74	64.3	1,296	6.6
Two or more races	6	5.2	238	1.4
Hispanic or Latino[1]	111	96.5	2,176	11.2
Income Data[2]				
Number of Households (HH)	359	N/A	4,332	N/A
1999 Median Household Income	$38,897	N/A	$36,250	N/A
Percent of HH Below Poverty Level	N/A	24	N/A	13

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2000)

[1] Hispanic or Latino are ethnicities and considered separate from race. For example, a person can be both white and Hispanic.

[2] Compiled at block group level for trailer park area

Public Involvement/Outreach

From the beginning of the project, Mn/DOT has been committed to public involvement efforts aimed at reaching all individuals and groups located within, or having an interest in, the project area. These efforts have included the following:

Project Advisory Committee (PAC)

The PAC was formed to establish a communication link with the affected communities, organizations, and agencies (see Section 8.1 – Project Advisory Committee of this Final EIS for a list of participants). Representatives from the Latino and Laotian communities were invited to participate on the PAC. The PAC is an advisory committee, and their input has been an important influence on the direction of the project. To date, the PAC has met eight times.

Public Meetings/Hearing

The public hearing for the Draft EIS was held on September 19, 2002 to present information and obtain public input and comments on the document. Spanish-speaking and Laotian-speaking interpreters were available at the hearing.

A series of design workshops were held December 4-5, 2002. The purpose of the workshops was to gather local input regarding the design of the proposed four-lane expansion of Highway 60. The corridor was divided into five

segments in order to meet with local property owners and stakeholders in small groups along the route so the design of the new highway meets the specific transportation needs and serves the communities of that area. One of these meetings was held at the Prairie Lakes Center, 1.5 miles from the trailer park, to specifically discuss the Oxford-Swift area of the project.

An open house was held in Spanish on August 4, 2004 for the residents of the East Acres Trailer Park as a conclusion to the environmental justice process. These residents will be impacted by the project and the purpose of the meeting was to inform them of the project and relocation process.

A general open house was also held August 4, 2004 to present the preferred alternative for the entire corridor, where Spanish interpreters were available.

Project Mailings

Informational newsletters were prepared with the intent of providing project-related information to the public. To date, two newsletters have been distributed to property owners and business owners in the project area. An additional newsletter is planned at the conclusion of the Final EIS process.

Residents of the East Acres Trailer Park received numerous mailings, written in Spanish, throughout the project including:

- A postcard inviting them to attend the design workshops held in December 2002.
- A letter in November 2003 informing them of the survey to be conducted (as described below) and thanking them for their participation.
- A letter and handout inviting them to attend the open house in August 2004 and summarizing the project, its impacts, and the relocation process.

City of Worthington Coordination

Meetings with the City Council have been held throughout the project development process to better understand the corridor's needs, keep them informed of the project, and obtain input regarding project alternatives and potential impacts.

A meeting was held in February 2003 with the Worthington Safety Committee to discuss the need for and timing of a traffic signal at Armour Road.

A meeting was held in October 2003 with Mn/DOT, the City of Worthington, the Worthington Housing Authority, and the owner of the East Acres Trailer Park. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the project alternatives and timeline, the property owner's plans for the trailer park, potential City involvement, and the possibility of government housing assistance for relocating the residents.

Resident Survey

A survey of the residents of the East Acres Trailer Park was conducted in November-December 2003. The purpose of the survey was to obtain the perspective of the trailer park residents regarding the impacts of the alternatives, the importance of the trailer park location, and replacement housing needs. The survey is discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Environmental Justice Determination

In addition to the information provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, direct contacts were made with local government offices to assist in determining if there are any readily identifiable minorities and low-income populations living in close geographic proximity to the project area. Contacts included the City of Worthington Community Development Department and the Nobles County Family Services Department.

Based on the information obtained in interviews and from the demographic statistics, it is reasonable to assume the project area contains an identifiable minority population and/or low-income population at the East Acres Trailer Park (see Figure 7).

Though not all the individuals within this area are minority and/or low-income, for purposes of this analysis, it has been assumed that any potential impacts to this area would affect concentrations of minority and/or low-income populations.

Impact Assessment

Upon identification of this minority population, it was determined that further information regarding the nature of the trailer park was needed to evaluate the potential impacts of the preferred alternative and to determine appropriate mitigation measures.

A survey of the East Acres residents was conducted in November-December 2003 in order to obtain the perspective of the residents regarding the project, as well as the characteristics of the trailer park. The individual survey questions were developed to understand specific aspects of the nature of the trailer park and its residents based on the observations and ideas of others in the community. These aspects included the following:

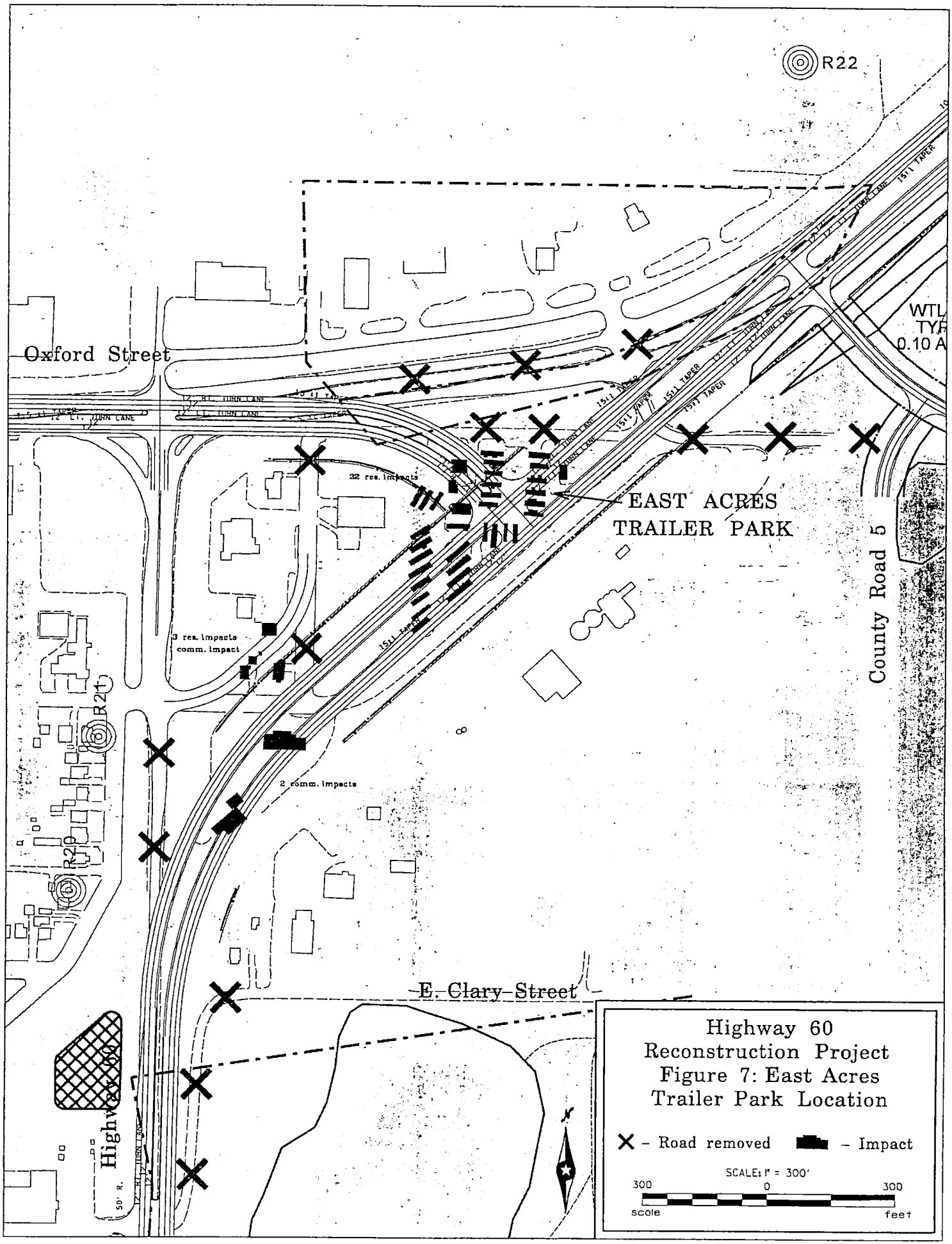
- Basic replacement housing needs (Questions 1, 3, 8 in Table 5)
- Transience of population (Question 2)
- Employment at nearby Swift plant and need/desire to walk to work and to other locations (Questions 4-6)
- Function of trailer park as a small, close community and its importance (Question 7)

- Preferred alternative creates a better situation for residents than the original alternative as shown in the Draft EIS (Question 9)

Given the largely Hispanic population of the trailer park, the survey was provided and conducted in both Spanish and English. The surveys were administered in person through a hired local interpreter, able to speak English and Spanish, who went door-to-door in the trailer park on four separate occasions at varying times of day. Of the 32 households in the trailer park, 17 participated in the survey, 5 declined to participate, 8 could not be contacted, and 2 trailers appeared to be vacant. The results of the surveys are summarized in Table 5 below.

Table 5
East Acres Trailer Court Survey Results Summary

1. Do you own or rent the trailer you live in?					
Own: 9	Rent: 8				
2. How long do you plan to live there/do you have any plans to relocate?					
Stay: 15	Move: 2				
3. What size home do you and your family need (# bedrooms specifically)?					
1 bdrm: 1	2 bdrm: 4	3 bdrm: 11	4 bdrm: 1		
4. How far away do you work?					
In Wgtn: 11	Windom: 3	IA: 1	Other: 2		
5. Do you drive to work?					
Yes: 14	Ride w/ friend: 2	N/A:1			
6. Are there other facilities, services, etc. located nearby that you use regularly?					
Yes, but drive: 16	N/A:1				
7. How important is living in a Latino community to you?					
Important: 2	Not important: 14	N/A: 1			
8. Would you be willing to live in a different type of housing?					
Apt or home: 2	Single family home: 5	Apt: 2	Trailer: 1	Not apt: 3	No pref: 6
9. Compare the impacts you would feel from the No-Build alternative, the original alternative, and the preferred alternative.					
No pref: 9	Avoid trailers: 2	No comment: 6			
10. Other comments on the project					
Go around the trailers					
Some people are fine here, help the needy people					
Fine to go around					
Prefer not to move					
Can trailer be moved?					
Let us know with time, keep your end of the bargain					


R22
Oxford Street
EAST ACRES
TRAILER PARK
County Road 5
32 res. impacts
3 res. impacts
comm. impact
2 comm. impacts
R21
R20
E. Clary Street
Highway 60
Highway 60
Reconstruction Project
Figure 7: East Acres
Trailer Park Location
X - Road removed
- Impact
SCALE: 1" = 300'
300
0
300
scale
feet

The survey results indicate the East Acres Trailer Park does not function as a unique community, and its proximity to work and community facilities is not particularly important to the residents. The residents did not have strong opinions regarding the project alternatives and seem to be willing to relocate to other various types of housing. The demographics of the City of Worthington also demonstrate the existing Latino population is well distributed throughout the community. All of these statements suggest that the standard right-of-way and relocation process will adequately provide for the needs of the trailer park residents.

As described in the Right-of-Way and Relocation section of this document and the Draft EIS, the acquisition of the residences owned or rented by the East Acres residents will be mitigated through the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, and 49 CFR Part 24. As required by these regulations, Mn/DOT will provide relocation assistance to the East Acres residents including reimbursement of eligible moving costs and replacement housing costs. A booklet describing the relocation process will be provided in Spanish to the trailer park residents at the upcoming open houses. A relocation representative will also meet with each relocatee individually closer to the time of acquisition.

Consistent with the Environmental Justice Executive Order, the assessment of potential environmental justice impacts, both adverse and beneficial, provides the basis for the determination of whether the preferred alternative would result in adverse impacts being disproportionately borne by minority and/or low-income populations.

Given that the East Acres Trailer Park residents will be relocated throughout the community and surrounding area, the original assessment of impacts as presented in the Draft EIS remains valid.

Environmental Justice Findings

The impact assessment presented in the Draft EIS concludes that the preferred alternative will result in a mix of adverse and beneficial impacts on the entire project area, including the relocated residents of the East Acres Trailer Park and any other minority and low-income populations. Furthermore, it is reasonable to assume that a portion of the potential adverse impacts associated with the preferred alternative have been minimized through the proposed mitigation measures.

Given the information presented in this assessment, the following can be concluded:

- All population groups will experience a mix of beneficial and adverse impacts from the preferred alternative.
- Many of the adverse impacts have been minimized through various mitigation measures.

- The remaining adverse impacts are dispersed uniformly across the corridor and do not create a disproportionate impact on the identified environmental justice population.

4.1.4 Right-of-Way and Relocation

The amount of right-of-way to be acquired for the preferred alternative was determined by subtracting the existing right-of-way from the required right-of-way with the following assumptions:

- 300-foot width for four-lane rural section from 120th Street in Iowa to Nobles Street in Worthington
- 250-foot width for four-lane urban section from Nobles Street to I-90
- The full right-of-way corridor will be required for locations where no right-of-way currently exists.

The preferred alternative will require approximately 59 acres of additional urban right-of-way and 212 acres of additional rural right-of-way to accommodate the proposed improvements. Of the 212 rural acres, 44.2 acres are in Iowa. These are preliminary estimates of the right-of-way required for the project and will be refined when profiles and construction limits have been completed.

Field Access

Field access will be allowed off of the Bigelow bypass in order to maintain farming operations on the remaining parcel in keeping with Iowa DOT policy. The exact location of the access will be determined during the final design of the project.

Relocation

The acquisition of property is one of the most obvious impacts associated with highway construction. The identification of potential relocations was completed by overlaying the preferred alternative alignment onto aerial photographs. The same right-of-way corridor widths as above were used, and only properties where the required right-of-way impacted the building itself were included. Depending on the location of individual homes, additional acquisitions may be considered if requested by the property owner.

The preferred alternative will require acquisition of 4 businesses and 50 residences, including 32 trailer homes. The alignment of the preferred alternative may be adjusted further in the final design phase to reduce these impacts.

The Bigelow Bypass will require the acquisition of one residence in Iowa. See Section 3.1 – Preferred Alternative of this document for further discussion of the Bigelow Bypass.

The shift of the highway alignment near Lake Street will require the acquisition of a barn located south of existing Highway 60. This acquisition was included as a business impact for the purposes of this Final EIS. The barn will likely be relocated elsewhere on the parcel, and its acquisition is not anticipated to impact the farm's viability.

In order to more fully understand the impacts of acquiring the other three businesses, further information was collected. Construction of the Bigelow Bypass on the east side of Bigelow will impact Russell Drainage (see Figure 3C). Russell Drainage employs approximately 10 people to install underground drain tiling and storm sewer. The business's main office is located in downtown Bigelow on existing Highway 60 and will not be impacted by the project. The buildings that will be impacted are used for equipment storage and their acquisition will not affect the business's viability. Current land uses indicate there is adequate land in the area available for relocation of the storage facilities.

Worthington Truck & Trailer, located east of existing Highway 60 and south of 1st Avenue, will be acquired to realign the Highway 60/Oxford Street intersection (see Figure 3L). The business sells parts for trucks and trailers and employs less than 10 people. It is likely that the business will relocate in the area, and currently, there are sufficient vacant commercial spaces available.

The Draft EIS identified the building just south of Worthington Truck and Trailer as a separate business to be acquired by the project (see Figure 3L). Upon further investigation, it was determined that this building is used by Worthington Truck & Trailer for storage, but the business does not own it. The southern parcel was originally a platted extension of 1st Avenue, but the street was never constructed, and the parcel was eventually vacated. City of Worthington staff has been unable to determine when the building was constructed on the parcel and by whom. The parcel and its building are not on the County tax rolls, and the ownership is unknown. Given this information, this parcel is no longer included as a commercial acquisition for the project. Mn/DOT will complete the appropriate legal process to obtain ownership of this parcel at the time of right-of-way acquisition.

It has also been determined since the Draft EIS that a home that will be acquired by the project and located east of existing Highway 60 and south of Oxford Street contains both a residence and a business. Lindquist Tax Service operates on the lower level of the home, and the residence is located on the upper level. Therefore, this property is included as both a residential acquisition and a commercial acquisition in this Final EIS. The residence will be relocated within the City of Worthington, and the business may continue to be run out of the new home or located in an available commercial space.

Mitigation

The design phase of the preferred alternative will focus efforts to minimize residential and business relocation impacts to the extent possible. Mitigation for property acquisition will be provided under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, and 49 CFR Part 24. The needs of each relocatee will be assessed on a case-by-case basis closer to the time of acquisition. See Draft EIS Section 4.1.4 – Right-of-Way and Relocation for further information.

Mn/DOT District 7's Right-of-Way staff conducted an analysis of the residential real estate market in Worthington in order to gain a preliminary understanding of the market's ability to absorb the residential relocations associated with construction of the preferred alternative. The research indicated approximately 67 listings ranging in price from $33,000 to over $200,000 in the fall of 2003. This would seem to indicate that the housing market could support the relocation of the families living in standard residential homes in Worthington. The rural homes are also anticipated to be replaced by existing homes available in the rural area or in Bigelow.

4.1.5 Economic Environment

The construction of the preferred alternative will impact the economy of the project area by converting agricultural land to highway uses, and relocating or acquiring residences and businesses. The improved highway may also attract new development that would compensate for such losses. See Draft EIS Section 4.1.5 – Economic Environment for further discussion.

Minor indirect impacts to existing businesses may occur as a result of construction activities including delays and detours.

Mitigation

No mitigation measures are proposed.

4.1.6 Parks and Public Recreational Areas

Parks and public recreational areas are listed and discussed in Draft EIS Section 4.1.6 – Parks and Public Recreational Areas. Upon completion of further design work, it was determined that the preferred alternative will have some impact on the Worthington Waterfowl Production Area (WPA). See Section 4.1.7 below for further discussion. Approximately 0.42 acres of the WPA property will need to be acquired for right-of-way purposes.

The reconstruction of Highway 60 will impact snowmobilers by requiring them to cross a four-lane highway rather than the existing two lanes. However, the median will provide a refuge and allow snowmobiles to cross one direction of traffic at a time.

Rest Areas

There are two rest areas currently within the project limits. The Class IV rest area on existing Highway 60 at the Minnesota-Iowa state line, located at the Minnesota welcome sign, will be closed as a result of the Bigelow bypass. The welcome sign will be relocated at the state line along the Bigelow bypass.

The Travel Information Center (TIC) located south of Org on existing Highway 60 will experience minimal impacts as a result of the proposed improvements. A portion of the TIC property will be required to widen the roadway; however, this property is already owned by Mn/DOT. The TIC building will not be impacted, and access will be maintained at the current location.

Mitigation

No mitigation measures are proposed for impacts to snowmobilers or rest areas.

4.1.7 Section 4(f)/6(f)

A Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation was completed in February 2003 for impacts to the WPA and is available for review at the Mn/DOT District 7 office in Mankato. Approximately 0.42 acres of the WPA property will be acquired for right-of-way purposes. The Final Section 4(f) Evaluation is included as Appendix A in this Final EIS.

There are no Section 6(f) properties within the project area.

Mitigation

See Final Section 4(f) Evaluation in Appendix A.

4.1.8 Pedestrian and Bicycle Movements

Regular pedestrian and bicycle movements in the project area are limited to those associated with the Swift plant located east of Highway 60 between I-90 and Armour Road. Residents from the nearby neighborhoods and trailer courts are occasionally seen walking to and from the Swift plant along and/or crossing Highway 60. Children on bicycles are also sometimes seen crossing Highway 60, many from the Morningside neighborhood.

Widening Highway 60 through Worthington under the preferred alternative will require pedestrians and bicyclists to cross a four-lane highway; however, the median will provide a refuge and allow them to cross one direction of traffic at a time.

Mitigation

Based on discussions with the City of Worthington and crash data from 1996 to 2000, pedestrian and bicycle movements in the vicinity of Highway 60 have not been determined to be a major problem. A signal at the Armour Road intersection is the only possibility to provide some improvement for pedestrians at the Swift plant; however, the traffic analysis shows the

intersection will continue to function reasonably well for some time and, therefore, a signal will not be installed until the signal warrants are met. A pedestrian/bicycle overpass and underpass were discussed for the Morningside neighborhood. An underpass was determined not to be feasible due to the high level of groundwater in that area. An overpass is required to be 22 feet high with a maximum grade of 8 percent. Achieving this would require further property acquisition in the Morningside neighborhood. In addition, anecdotal evidence from other Mn/DOT experiences with pedestrian/bicycle overpasses indicates that the overpass would not be used if crossing the highway at-grade is at all feasible, which would be the case with this project. Therefore, no mitigation measures are proposed.

4.1.9 Transit Services

The preferred alternative will potentially have a positive impact on the quality of transit service along the corridor and beyond as a result of improved traffic operations. Short-term adverse impacts to transit services may result from construction activities including minor detours or construction delays. See Draft EIS Section 4.1.9 – Transit Services for a description of transit options available in the project area.

Mitigation

No mitigation measures are proposed.

4.1.10 Utilities

Construction of the preferred alternative will require the relocation and disruption in service of some local and regional utility services. Coordination and cooperation with the utility service providers will occur during the design phase of the project. See Draft EIS Section 4.1.10 – Utilities for a description of utilities located in the project area.

Mitigation

No mitigation measures are proposed.

4.1.11 Railroads

The preferred alternative involves the replacement of the UP Railroad bridge #5466 in Worthington to accommodate a four-lane roadway. The new bridge will be about 250 feet long and will be raised approximately 1 foot from its existing height. The replacement of the bridge will require a temporary shoofly track allowing for railroad operations to continue during construction. Based on preliminary discussions with the UP Railroad, the shoofly track will be located on the west side of the mainline track, using part of the existing side track. Property from the New Vision Coop will be temporarily impacted by construction of the shoofly track, but no adverse impacts to business operations are anticipated.

Mitigation

No mitigation measures are proposed.

4.1.12 Secondary and Cumulative Effects

See Draft EIS Section 4.1.12 for a complete discussion of Secondary and Cumulative Effects. Potential secondary effects resulting from the preferred alternative include:

- Impact on local economy of relocating existing businesses
- Short-term economic benefit of increased private sector income during construction

Other projects in the area that may contribute to cumulative effects include the future soybean plant in Brewster, the expansion of PM Beef Group in Windom, and the reconstruction of Highway 60 in Iowa. Cumulative effects may include increased traffic; increased amounts of impervious surfaces, which increases and accelerates the amount of runoff from a site introducing nutrients and sediment into lakes, streams, and wetlands affecting water quality; and induced development that could create further impacts to wetlands, vegetation, and farmland in the project area.

Mitigation

In the context of the existing regulatory framework and the mitigation activities for project impacts, the overall secondary and cumulative effects are expected to be minimal. Some potential secondary and cumulative effects may be avoided and/or minimized through land use controls and roadway access restrictions. Further avoidance and minimization of cumulative effects can be identified during the permitting and approval processes of individual projects.

4.2 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

4.2.1 Farmland

An extensive study of the potential effects of the proposed improvements to farmland in the project area was completed for the Draft EIS (see Draft EIS Section 4.2.1). Based on the alignment of the preferred alternative, farmland impacts have been recalculated and are presented in Table 6 below. Of the total acres acquired, approximately 60.0 acres are in Iowa.

As discussed with the local Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) offices, a Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form (AD 1006) has been submitted for the preferred alternative (see Appendix B).

Table 6
Summary of Farmland Impacts

Impact	Number
Acres Acquired	262.5
Prime Acres Acquired	244.3
Farms Severed	8
Farms Triangulated	14
Triangulated Prime Farmland (acres lost)	39.4
Farms Isolated	3
Structure Relocations	6
Farmstead/Homes Displaced	5

Notes:
[1] The number of acres acquired includes farmland at the locations of the proposed storm water ponds.
[2] Structure relocations and displaced farmsteads/homes have been included in the number of relocations stated in the Right-of-Way and Relocation section of this document (see Section 4.1).

Mitigation

By choosing Alternative A1, which stays on the existing alignment for the majority of the corridor, as the preferred alternative, farmland impacts were minimized. The impacts presented in the table above are based on revised right-of-way limits and may change as the roadway profile and construction limits are developed.

4.2.2 Noise

With the selection of the preferred alternative, a more detailed analysis of noise impacts was completed. The objective of this analysis was to further quantify the impacts of the preferred alternative using a more detailed model that considers specific alignment, locations of receptors, and topography of the area. The results of this modeling were then used to determine the cost reasonableness and feasibility of using noise walls to provide mitigation for the project's impacts on sensitive receptors.

Noise Standards

Minnesota standards for noise in a residential area are L_{10} of 65 dBA and L_{50} of 60 dBA for daytime hours (7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.) and L_{10} of 55 dBA and L_{50} of 50 dBA for nighttime hours (10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.). The descriptor L_{10} means the sound level that is exceeded for 10 percent of the time for a one-hour period. L_{50} means the sound level that is exceeded 50 percent of the time for a one-hour period.

Federal noise abatement criteria require mitigation to be considered for residential and recreational areas at an L_{10} of 70 dBA. For further information regarding Minnesota and federal noise regulations, see Draft EIS Section 4.2 – Noise and the Preliminary and Final Noise Analysis reports available at the Mn/DOT District 7 office in Mankato, Minnesota.

Noise Analysis

Existing noise levels along Highway 60 were monitored at five locations in November 2001. Table 20 in the Draft EIS shows the measured noise levels at those locations. The purpose of the monitoring is to establish base case conditions along Highway 60 and to assist in calibrating the noise prediction model.

Post development traffic noise levels were predicted using the MINNOISE computer model. The MINNOISE model is a Mn/DOT modified version of the FHWA's Optima/Stamina model. It is used to predict noise levels from highway projects and to assist with the development of noise barriers.

Forecast traffic volumes prepared as part of the EIS were used in the noise analysis. Traffic was assumed to be evenly split between northbound and southbound and to include 2 percent medium trucks for all road segments. The percentage of heavy trucks was assumed to be between 12 and 20 percent (see Final Noise Analysis report for further details).

Travel speeds for the existing and the preferred alternative assumed 50 mph north of Oxford Street, 40 mph from Oxford Street to CR 35, and a combination of 40 to 55 mph zones from CR 35 to CR 57. From CR 57 to the Iowa border, the assumed travel speed is 55 mph for the existing scenario and 65 mph for the preferred alternative.

Modeled Noise Assessment

The probable noise impacts of the preferred alternative have been analyzed and documented in the Final Noise Analysis report, dated November 2003. The findings of the report are summarized below. The complete report is available for review at the Mn/DOT District 7 office in Mankato, Minnesota.

A total of 24 noise receptor sites were evaluated along the preferred alternative (see Figures 3A-3M). Both daytime and nighttime peak hour traffic conditions (worst case) were modeled. Noise walls were also modeled in selected locations that were considered potential candidates for noise mitigation based on higher concentrations/density of development.

Model Results

Noise levels were modeled for conditions in 2030 under the No-Build Alternative and preferred alternative. Table 7 presents the results of the noise analysis for both daytime and nighttime hours.

Iowa Segment

The FHWA noise criteria (70 dBA) apply to the portion of the project in Iowa; however, the Minnesota standards, which are more strict, were used for consistency with the rest of the corridor. The model indicated the one receptor located in the Iowa portion of the project did not exceed the daytime standard of 65 dBA under both the No-Build Alternative and the preferred alternative.

The nighttime noise standard of 55 dBA was shown to be exceeded in the existing, No-Build, and preferred alternative conditions.

Bigelow Segment

Modeling for the receptors in the Bigelow section of the project indicates daytime standards will be exceeded in one location under the preferred alternative. Nighttime standards will be exceeded in one location under the No-Build Alternative and two locations under the preferred alternative. The increase in noise is expected to be substantial (> 5 dBA) at these two locations.

Rural Segment

In the rural section of the Highway 60 Reconstruction Project, two of the six receptors were modeled as exceeding daytime standards under all conditions and one additional receptor as exceeding under the preferred alternative. Nighttime standards will be exceeded by all receptors under both the No-Build and preferred alternatives; however, five of the six receptors are in exceedance under existing conditions. The increase in noise is anticipated to be noticeable (> 3 dBA) at two receptors.

Worthington Segment

Of the 13 receptors in the Worthington segment of the project, daytime standards were modeled as exceeded at one location under existing conditions, three locations under the No-Build Alternative, and four locations under the preferred alternative. Nighttime standards were modeled as exceeded at 11 receptors under existing conditions, 12 receptors under the No-Build Alternative, and 11 receptors under the preferred alternative. The increase in noise is anticipated to be noticeable (> 3 dBA) at three locations and substantial (> 5 dBA) at two locations.

Mitigation

For Mn/DOT to consider the erection of a noise wall, one of the following factors must exist:

- The noise levels in a neighborhood are presently in excess of the State's Noise Standards.
- The predicted noise levels in a neighborhood are expected to be in excess of the State's Noise Standards for the design year of the project. Mn/DOT usually considers the design year to be 20 years after the start of construction.
- The noise levels in a neighborhood are predicted to be "substantially" above current noise levels in the project design year. "Substantial" is defined as 5 dBA or greater.

Table 7
Modeled Noise Analysis

		Daytime								Nighttime							
		Existing		2030 No-Build		2030 Preferred Alternative		Preferred Alternative vs. Existing		Existing		2030 No-Build		2030 Preferred Alternative		Preferred Alternative vs. Existing	
Segment	Receptor	L_{10}	L_{50}	L_{10}	L_{50}	L_{10}	L_{50}	L_{10}	L_{50}	L_{10}	L_{50}	L_{10}	L_{50}	L_{10}	L_{50}	L_{10}	L_{50}
Iowa	R1	58.7	53.7	59.5	54.7	60.3	55.4	1.6	1.7	55.1	48.5	56.0	49.6	56.7	50.1	1.6	1.6
Bigelow Bypass	R2	45.7	42.9	46.5	43.9	67.0	60.0	***21.3***	17.1	42.4	38.5	43.2	39.5	62.9	54.4	***20.5***	15.9
	R3	47.0	44.1	47.8	45.0	60.2	55.3	***13.2***	11.2	43.7	39.5	44.5	40.6	56.6	50.1	***12.9***	10.6
	R4	63.2	56.9	64.1	58.1	50.2	47.2	-13	-9.7	59.4	51.5	60.3	52.7	46.9	42.6	-12.5	-8.9
	R5	54.2	50.0	55.0	51.1	53.1	49.6	-1.1	-0.4	50.8	45.1	51.6	46.2	49.7	44.8	-1.1	-0.3
Rural	R6	62.2	56.4	63.0	57.4	64.7	57.8	2.5	1.4	58.4	51.0	59.3	52.1	60.6	52.1	2.2	1.1
	R7	60.9	55.3	61.7	56.5	62.3	56.9	1.4	1.6	57.2	50.1	58.1	51.3	58.5	51.5	1.3	1.4
	R8	67.8	62.2	69.7	64.7	69.7	64.0	1.9	1.8	64.1	56.9	66.1	59.5	65.9	58.6	1.8	1.7
	R9	58.5	54.2	60.3	56.6	62.0	57.6	**3.5**	3.4	55.0	49.2	56.9	51.8	58.5	52.6	**3.5**	3.4
	R10	66.2	58.9	68.4	61.9	68.5	61.8	2.3	2.9	62.1	53.3	64.4	56.4	64.6	56.3	2.5	3.0
	R11	62.0	55.7	64.0	58.6	66.8	60.6	**4.8**	4.9	58.1	50.2	60.3	53.3	63.0	55.2	**4.9**	5.0
Worthington	R12*	62.3	55.7	65.0	59.2	64.6	59.0	2.3	3.3	59.2	51.2	61.2	53.9	60.9	53.7	1.7	2.5
	R13	61.5	54.9	64.4	58.8	63.5	58.0	2.0	3.1	58.8	50.9	60.6	53.4	59.9	52.7	1.1	1.8
	R14	58.4	52.7	61.2	56.4	68.3	61.0	***9.9***	8.3	55.9	48.9	57.7	51.3	64.2	55.4	***8.3***	6.5
	R15	60.2	53.8	63.1	57.6	66.5	60.1	***6.3***	6.3	57.5	49.9	59.4	52.4	62.7	54.7	***5.2***	4.8
	R16	54.7	49.5	57.5	53.3	57.1	52.9	2.4	3.4	52.3	45.9	54.1	48.3	53.7	48.0	1.4	2.1
	R17*	61.9	54.7	65.0	59.0	66.4	59.7	**4.5**	5.0	59.2	50.9	61.2	53.6	62.5	54.3	**3.3**	3.4
	R17B	61.8	54.7	65.0	59.0	66.3	59.7	**4.5**	5.0	59.2	50.9	61.2	53.6	62.4	54.3	**3.2**	3.4
	R18*	60.3	53.6	63.3	57.7	64.3	58.3	**4.0**	4.7	57.6	49.7	59.6	52.3	60.6	52.9	**3.0**	3.2
	R19	57.7	52.8	59.5	55.5	58.1	54.2	0.4	1.4	54.1	47.7	56.1	50.6	54.7	49.3	0.6	1.6
	R20	64.9	58.2	66.9	61.2	62.8	57.7	-2.1	-0.5	60.9	52.7	63.2	55.9	59.2	52.5	-1.7	-0.2
	R21	67.8	60.4	69.9	63.5	60.7	56.0	-7.1	-4.4	63.7	54.8	66.0	58	57.1	50.8	-6.6	-4.0
	R22	61.5	56.1	62.6	57.8	62.4	57.5	0.9	1.4	57.8	50.9	59.1	52.8	58.9	52.4	1.1	1.5
	R23*	62.6	55.3	65.8	59.6	65.0	58.8	2.4	3.5	60.0	51.5	61.9	54.1	61.2	53.5	1.2	2.0

Exceeds Minnesota standards
0.0 > 3 dBA increase (noticeable)
0.0 > 5 dBA increase (substantial)
* Selected location for noise wall feasibility analysis

- The predicted noise level approaches or exceeds FHWA and/or Mn/DOT noise standards. Approaching is defined as the predicted level being within 1 decibel from the limit.

If one of the above conditions is met, noise walls are considered for construction based on the following factors:

- Noise Wall Feasibility
- Cost Reasonableness
- Community Support

In order for a noise wall to be constructed by Mn/DOT, it must be able to be constructed at a "reasonable" cost. "Reasonable" cost is currently defined by Mn/DOT as $3,250/dBA reduction/residence. This is determined by dividing the total cost of a wall (currently estimated at $15 per square foot) by the total decibel reduction for houses that are predicted to receive at least a 5 decibel reduction.

A detailed analysis of the effect of 10-foot and 20-foot noise walls was completed at three locations along the project. The locations of the potential walls are shown in Figures 2 and 3 in Appendix C. The table in Appendix C shows the effectiveness of 10-foot and 20-foot noise walls under the preferred alternative in selected locations in detail. Additional receptors were modeled at these sites in order to more specifically determine the noise impacts in the area and calculate the feasibility of the noise wall.

The cost reasonableness of each noise wall was determined. The results are summarized in the following table:

Table 8
Noise Wall Analysis Summary

Wall	Location	Wall Length	10-foot Wall Cost	20-foot Wall Cost
1	Southeast of Lake Okabena	2,125 feet	N/A**	$7,005/dBA
2	Morningside Neighborhood, East of Highway 60	1,485 feet	$44,550/dBA	$2,930/dBA
3	Morningside Neighborhood, West of Highway 60	4,190 feet	N/A**	$4,530/dBA

**These noise wall locations did not produce 5 dBA reduction at any receptor location.

Wall 2, if 20 feet high, meets the Mn/DOT cost-reasonableness requirement of $3,250/dBA reduction/residence. See Figure 3L for the location of Wall 2.

Before including this proposed noise wall in the final design of the project, meetings will be held with City of Worthington staff and City Council, as well as the public, to determine whether the wall is wanted by the community. Because improvements in Worthington are not currently in Mn/DOT's 10-year plan, these meetings will not be held until the project is imminent.

For areas where noise walls are not feasible, other mitigation options could be considered by local units of government. These options include:

- Buffering via Zoning Ordinance: Roadway rights-of-way and building setback requirements can be used within zoning ordinances to increase the distance of development from the highway. This would help prevent future impacts; however, existing development would not be benefited unless redevelopment occurred.

- Acoustical site planning: Site planning can be used for the arrangement of buildings to shield more sensitive land uses from noise impacts. Residences can also be oriented away from the noise source. Acoustical construction techniques include:

  - Installing triple pane windows

  - Designing floor layouts to place bedrooms away from exterior walls facing the highway

  - Reconstructing buildings to eliminate windows or other openings and incorporating increased wall thickness

Mn/DOT will work with local government jurisdictions to provide guidance for future construction near the preferred alternative for Highway 60, if requested.

4.2.3 Wetlands

Minnesota

A preliminary analysis of wetlands and potential impacts was conducted for the Draft EIS (see Draft EIS Section 4.2.3 – Wetlands). The Draft EIS incorrectly stated that the Bigelow bypass (Alternatives A1, B1, C1) had an additional 3.3 acres of impacts to wetland than the existing alignment through Bigelow (Alternatives A, B, C). The numbers should be switched to show that the existing alignment has the additional 3.3 acres of wetland impact. The table in Appendix D shows the correct wetland impacts for the Draft EIS.

Since the completion of the Draft EIS, a jurisdictional delineation has been completed following the methodology of the Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual, 1987. The Routine Onsite Determination Method (RODM) was used for the delineation as most of the areas are small and do not require multiple transects. Field notes, samples, and photographs were taken at representative locations in each basin and transferred to RODM data sheets. The results of the analysis are summarized below, and the delineation methodology, process, and detailed results are described further in the TH 60 wetlands memorandum, which is available for review at the Mn/DOT District 7 office in Mankato, Minnesota.

A total of 43 wetland areas were identified and mapped (see Figures 3A-3M). A majority of the wetlands are located within the existing Highway 60 right-

of-way and are either supported by road runoff or related to regional drainage ditches. Very few isolated wetlands remain as most have been drained, filled, or cropped. Agricultural activity has degraded or impacted a majority of the wetlands in the project corridor either directly or indirectly. Wetlands connected through regional drainage ditches have been mapped as separate basins since they are only connected through culverts under both existing Highway 60 and the railroad. Functionally, these basins are one wetland, but have been divided as impacts and wetland type may vary.

Most of the areas were found to be very similar to each other in terms of composition, type, function, and value. Five general wetland classifications were found in the project area. Each type is briefly described below.

Type 1 – Seasonally Flooded Basins

Soil is covered with water or is waterlogged during variable seasonal periods, but usually is well drained during much of the growing season.

Type 2 – Inland Fresh Meadows

Soil is usually without standing water during most of the growing season, but is waterlogged within at least a few inches of the surface.

Type 3 – Inland Shallow Fresh Marshes

Soil is usually waterlogged during the growing season and is often covered with as much as 6 inches of water. Vegetation is dominated by cattail (*Typha* spp.).

Type 6 – Shrub Swamps

Soil is usually waterlogged during the growing season and is often covered with as much as 6 inches of water. Vegetation is dominated by shrubs.

Wet Ditch – Multiple Types

Throughout the project area are many wet ditches either created or modified from existing wetland to facilitate conveyance of water. These ditches are often saturated, but have water levels that vary significantly depending on precipitation or the water levels in the receiving bodies (usually larger, regional drainage ditches). Vegetation in these basins is almost exclusively cattails (*Typha* spp.) or reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) depending on duration of inundation. This designation also includes portions of the channels dominated by open, flowing water. In the project area, a majority of the wet ditches are Type 3, although a few Type 2 ditches are present.

Wetland Impacts

All wetlands within 200 feet of the east side and 100 feet of the west side of the preferred alternative were delineated. Once the wetland boundaries were determined, road design software (Microstation) was used to overlay the preferred alternative alignment on the delineated wetlands. Wetland acreage that was within the proposed right-of-way for the preferred alternative was

considered impacted. As the roadway profile and construction limits are developed, the actual acres of wetland impacted may change.

Of the 43 wetlands that were delineated, 36 will be impacted by this project (see Figures 3A-3M). Total impacts are 15.41 acres and vary by wetland type as shown in Table 9. Of the total impacts, 6.22 acres are wetlands within or associated with the regional drainage ditches or with ditches in the right-of-way.

Table 9
Summary of Wetland Impacts by Wetland Type

Wetland Type	Number of Basins Delineated	Total Impacts (acres)
Isolated and Unditched Basins		
Type 1 Basin	2	0.12
Type 2 Wet Meadow	6	3.76
Type 3 Shallow Marsh	5	5.63
Subtotal	**13**	**9.51**
Wet Ditch and Associated Wetlands		
Type 1 Basin	4	0.70
Type 2 Wet Meadow	7	0.79
Type 3 Shallow Marsh	18	4.56
Type 6 Scrub-shrub	1	0.59
Subtotal	**30**	**6.64**
Total	**43**	**16.15**

The analysis completed as part of the Draft EIS indicated 33.5 acres of wetland impact under Alternative A1, more than twice the 15.4 acres shown in this Final EIS. The reasons for this substantial reduction include the following:

- Wetland impacts in the Draft EIS were based on NWI mapping with field verification. More accurate delineations of wetland boundaries have been completed for the Final EIS.
- The Draft EIS included a conservative estimate of the right-of-way required for each alternative in order to represent a "worst case" scenario. The right-of-way limits for the preferred alternative have been refined in the Final EIS, and the alignment has been shifted in several places.
- Field verification of wetlands for the Draft EIS was completed during a particularly wet period that may have resulted in an over estimation of wetlands along the corridor.

Wetland Jurisdiction

The jurisdiction of all wetlands will be determined during the permitting process in cooperation with the Minnesota WCA and the U.S. Army Corps of

Engineers according to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Several of the waterways are also as listed Public Waters by the MNDNR (see Appendix E). These specific waterways include the following:

- Okabena Lake
- Ocheda Lake
- Judicial Ditch No. 10
- Otter Creek
- Wetlands 6, 7, 11, 12, 27, 28, and possibly 31

While most of the wetlands in the project area are natural, several of the basins and waterways appear to be created. This is most noticeable in many of the isolated ditches located between existing Highway 60 and the railroad. This issue will need to be addressed during the permitting process. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the regulatory agencies, including the USACE, to determine which areas are under their jurisdiction and what permitting requirements will be enforced.

Sequencing

Wetland impact sequencing includes three steps: impact avoidance, impact minimization, and impact compensation/mitigation. Each wetland was evaluated individually for opportunities to avoid or minimize impacts.

Wetland impacts were avoided where possible, especially where the proposed alignment diverges from the existing Highway 60 alignment. Reasons for not avoiding impacts to a specific wetland included one or more of the following:

- Need to provide safe roadway geometrics
- Alignment cannot be shifted to the west because of railroad tracks
- Wetland is partially or entirely within existing right-of-way
- Shifting the alignment would isolate the wetland in the median
- Shifting the alignment would create impacts to other wetlands or to other social, environmental or natural resources

If wetland avoidance was not possible, the next step in the sequencing process, minimization, was considered. Several minimization measures were considered in the layout and design of the Highway 60 Reconstruction Project including:

- Use of the existing Highway 60 alignment wherever possible. By using the existing alignment, only the new width of the roadway causes impacts to wetlands.
- Reduction of centerline spacing between the northbound and southbound travel lanes. A reduction in median width would reduce the footprint of the roadway. The standard spacing between roadway centerlines is 90 feet,

with 125 feet at major intersections to accommodate large truck traffic. A reduction in spacing near intersections is not appropriate because the median provides a refuge for crossing and left turning vehicles.

- Increase in ditch slope. Increasing the slope of the ditch adjacent to the outside lanes would reduce the footprint of the roadway. The typical rural cross section calls for 1:6 (vertical:horizontal) slopes. Thus, either a 1:5 or 1:4 slope with additional unpaved shoulder width are acceptable strategies to minimize wetland impacts. Steeper slopes are not acceptable because of the hazard presented to drivers running off the road or hitting guard rail. Also, the slope near culverts will be gentle so as to cover the culvert.

- Reduction in the elevation of the road profile. Lowering the road profile would reduce the footprint of the roadway. This strategy has limited application because the roadway should be at least 5 feet above the water level to prevent water damage to the roadbed, and in some areas, the roadway should be at least 4 feet above the adjacent ground to allow snow to blow off the road to decrease the hazard posed by drifting snow. Also, there must be sufficient cover over culverts.

- Construction of bridges. Bridging over wetlands is applicable only where there are exceptional wetlands because of the cost of bridging and the reduction in safety. There are no such wetlands impacted by this project, so construction of bridges is not an appropriate minimization strategy.

In order to minimize water quality impacts to wetlands, water quality treatment Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be designed and implemented (see Water Quality section of this Final EIS).

In general, the minimization strategies listed above are not applicable where there are small wetlands not close to one another. Creating relatively long areas of reduced roadway safety to further minimize wetland impacts is not practicable. Table 10 describes avoidance and minimization considerations for each wetland.

Based on the information included in Table 10, there are no practicable alternatives to the proposed action, and the proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands in accordance with Executive Order 11990.

Mitigation

Current wetland regulations for this area require replacement of permanent wetland impacts at a ratio of 2 acres for each acre impacted. Assuming that all impacts from this project are required to be replaced, a total of 30.82 acres will need to be created. Wetland replacement is most often done through the creation of new wetland, creation of permanent upland buffer, restoration of previously impacted wetland, replacement of native vegetation in existing wetlands, and creation of storm water treatment ponds (under WCA). There

are numerous areas that would be suitable for wetland creation or restoration, including the creation of two-cell surface water treatment ponds, if property can be acquired. The purchase or use of pre-existing bank credits may also be an option. The specific method(s) for mitigating impacts to wetlands will be determined during the final design phase of the project.

A meeting was held in February 2004 with the Nobles Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to discuss potential wetland replacement sites. Two sites have been identified:

- Okabena Lake restoration site south of existing Highway 60 near CR 57
- Floodplain associated with Judicial Ditch No. 6 south of the Morningside neighborhood

These sites will be further evaluated, and discussions with SWCD, USACE, and MNDNR will continue.

Iowa

Since publication of the Draft EIS, the Iowa DOT has completed a field delineation of wetlands in the Iowa portion of the project area. It was determined the preferred alternative will not impact any wetlands in Iowa, and no further analysis or mitigation measures are necessary.

4.2.4 Floodplains

Project Description

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Study (FIS) and associated floodway maps for the City of Worthington, Minnesota have been used for this analysis.

Highway 60 in Worthington currently crosses Judicial Ditch No. 6. The preferred alternative proposes to widen the existing alignment to a four-lane divided highway.

This project will encroach on the following floodplain:

Floodplain	Type of Encroachment	Length
Judicial Ditch No. 6	Transverse	200 feet

Impact Analysis

1. There is no substantial potential for interruption of a transportation facility, since the roadway elevations are higher than the 100-year floodplain elevation. The 100-year flood elevation at Judicial Ditch No. 6 is 1569.68 feet.

Table 10
Avoidance and Minimization by Wetland

Wetland No.	Type	Cowardin Classification	Acres Impacted	Avoidance	Minimization		
					Reduce Median	Steepen Inslope	Lower Profile
1	2	PEMBd	0.11	SF, CSAH 4 realigned to eliminate skew at intersection	I	I	I
2	2	PEMBd	0.03	RR, FL, WL	I, M	I, M	I, M
3	2	PEMBd	0.00	SF, FL	Done	Done	Done
4	2	PEMBd	0.20	SF, FL	Done	Done	Done
5	2	PEMBd	0.32	SF, FL	Done	Done	Done
6	3	PEMC	0.08	LD	I, M	I, C, M	I, C, M
7	3	PEMC	0.10	WL, RR, SF, FL	I, M	I, C, M	I, C, M
8	3	PEMC	0.18	SF, FL	Done	Done	Done
9	3	PEMC	0.04	SF, FL	Done	Done	Done
10	3	PEMCd	0.44	WL, FL, RR	I	Maybe	I, S
11	3	PEMCd	0.06	LD	I, M	C, M	C, S, M
12	3	PEMCd	0.04	WL, FL, RS, RR	I, M	I, C, M	I, C, S, M
13	2	PEMBd	0.02	RR, FL	M	M	M
14	1	PEMA	0.02	FL, LD	M	C, M	C, M
15	2	PEMB	0.11	RR, FL	I, M	C, M	C, M
16	1	PEMA	0.01	FL, RS, SF, alignment cannot be shifted west because CSAH 6 goes under the railroad tracks so there needs to be enough length to bring it up to the elevation of Highway 60	I, M	I, M	I, M
17	3	PEMC	0.16	WL, RS, A	I	Will do	I
18	2	PEMB	1.03	WL, RS, BS, A	I	Maybe	I
19	3	PEMC	3.28	WL, RS, A	I	Will do	I
20	2	PEMB	1.02	WL, BS, A	I	Will do	I
21	2	PEMB	0.60	WL, BS, SF, A	I	I	I
22	1	PEMA	0.01	WL, BS, SF, FL, A	I	I	I
23	1	PEMA	0.11	WL, BS, RS, SF, FL, A	I	I	I
24	1	PEMA	0.56	RR, RS	I	I	I
25	1	PEMA	0.11	RR, RS	I, M	I, M	I, M
26	3	PEMCd	0.36	RR, RS	I	I	I
27	2	PEMBd	0.32	RR, WL, closing the township road eliminates impacts that would otherwise be necessary to remove the skew at the intersection.	Done	C	C
28	3	PEMCd	0.87	RR, WL	Done	C	C
29	6	PSS1B	0.59	RR, WL	Done	I	I
30	3	PEMCd	0.15	RR, WL	Done	I	I
31	3	PEMC	1.75	RR, WL	I	I	I
32	3	PEMCd	0.74	RR, WL	I	I	I
33	3	PEMCd	0.07	RS	I, M	I, M	I, M
34	3	PEMC	0.44	RS	I	I	I
35	3	PEMCd	0.28	LD	I	C	C
36	3	PEMCd	0.89	WL, RS, B	Done	I	I
38	2	PEMB	0.79	WL, RS, B	Done	I	I
40	3	PEMCd	0.03	BS, CR, B	I	I	I
41	3	PEMCd	0.15	BS, WL, CR, B	I	I	I
42	3	PEMCd	0.67	RS, BS, SF, alignment of CSAH 33 needed to remove skew at intersection	I	I	I
43	3	PEMCd	0.10	RS, BS, SF, realignment of CSAH 33 needed to remove skew at intersection	I	I	I

Avoidance:

SF Need to provide safe roadway geometrics.

RR Alignment cannot be shifted toward the side the railroad tracks are on.

LD Linear ditch impact that cannot be avoided.

WL Shifting the alignment would create impacts to adjacent wetlands.

FL Shifting the alignment would create disproportionately large impacts to farmland.

RS Shifting the alignment would create residential impacts.

BS Shifting the alignment would create business or public facility impacts.

CR Shifting the alignment may create cultural resource impacts to the historically eligible livestock sales barn.

A Shifting the alignment to avoid any given wetland in this area causes impacts to other wetlands, a residence, and/or the Travel Information Center. Avoiding the area by shifting west up against the railroad tracks would result in large impacts to Wetlands 21 and 22 and would create an unsafe intersection with CSAH 6 as it goes beneath the railroad tracks and needs to be brought up to the elevation of Highway 60. Shifting the alignment to the east of the Travel Information Center would use much more farmland as the deviation from the existing alignment would need to begin well south of CSAH 6. Such an alignment would sever many fields, cross several drainage ditches, diminish the visibility of the Travel Information Center, fail to take advantage of existing infrastructure, cost a great deal more money, and possibly impact one or more residences.

B Bypassing this whole area to the east was considered, but rejected. It would result in large farmland impacts, create traffic operations difficulties, and fail to take advantage of existing resources.

Minimization:

I Intersection nearby requires full width median, gentle slopes, and need to match profiles with intersection road.

M Further minimization is not practicable because it would reduce safety.

C Culvert clear zone determines ditch slope and requires sufficient cover over the culvert.

S Snow concerns may require elevated profile.

2. There are no substantial impacts on natural and beneficial floodplain values. Any impacts to the floodplain because of hydraulic losses resulting from an increase in the culvert lengths will be compensated for by resizing the culverts. Any temporary impacts due to construction will be minimized through appropriate erosion control measures including seeding, sodding, biorolls, and silt fencing. The proposed box culverts will not increase velocities in the ditch. Therefore, fish movements should not be affected. No threatened or endangered plants or animals have been identified in the floodplains.
3. There will be no increase in the risk of flooding as a result of this project. Headwater and tailwater elevations at the box culverts will not be substantially increased since the proposed structure will be sized to compensate for hydraulic losses resulting from the increased length of the box culvert.
4. The project will not involve any incompatible floodplain development, changing access, or development adjacent to the floodplain.
5. The encroachment to these areas is transverse. Avoidance of the floodplain is not possible. Minimization of impacts can be achieved by maximizing side slopes in the floodplain areas to minimize the limits of fill.
6. A ditch hearing with Nobles County will need to be requested to obtain an order for a minor alteration. A MNDNR permit will not be required; however, the proposed changes will be coordinated with the MNDNR, USCOE, City of Worthington, and the Okabena-Ocheda WSD.
7. Based on the above analysis, there are no substantial impacts to the floodplain.
8. A public hearing with the County Board will be held when design of the modifications is complete, and notices will mention the non-substantial encroachment and the public availability of the floodplain analysis.
9. A portion of the floodplain south of the Morningside neighborhood is being considered for a wetland replacement site. This could result in beneficial impacts to the floodplain. The site will be further evaluated to determine the feasibility of wetland replacement, as well as the resulting effects on the floodplain.

Summary

Based on the above floodplain assessment, no substantial floodplain impacts are expected.

4.2.5 Surface Water Drainage

For a description of the lakes, rivers, creeks, and watershed areas in the project area, see Draft EIS Section 4.2.5 – Surface Water Drainage. Since the Draft EIS, further analysis of Judicial Ditch No. 6 has been conducted and is summarized below. The analysis is described in detail in the Judicial Ditch

No. 6 Floodplain Analysis Technical Memorandum, available at the Mn/DOT District 7 office in Mankato, Minnesota.

Judicial Ditch No. 6 has experienced a number of flooding problems from the Lake Okabena outlet to the Highway 60 culvert. The Lake Okabena outlet structure cannot properly control the lake level, and as a result, there has been some flooding from high lake levels.

Mn/DOT will coordinate with the City of Worthington, Nobles County, and the MNDNR to complete a more comprehensive study of the Lake Okabena outlet and the area from the lake outlet to Highway 60 along Judicial Ditch No. 6 in order to determine the causes of the flooding and potential solutions. The study will take into consideration potential solutions to the flooding problems along Judicial Ditch No. 6 and increased discharges as a result of any Lake Okabena outlet structure improvements.

The preferred alternative may affect some portion of the drainage system. Several new culverts and ditches will need to be constructed for the Bigelow Bypass and more than half of the existing culverts will need some type of extension or replacement to accommodate the wider roadway.

In general, the preferred alternative will have minimal impacts on the actual watershed areas and their boundaries. Storm water ponds will be used to maintain pre-development flow rates where economically feasible; however, some areas may experience higher peak flows at culvert crossings as a result of an increase in impervious surface. If necessary, permits will be obtained from the Heron Lake and Okabena-Ocheda WSDs.

Mitigation

Increased capacity for the culverts could be achieved by larger or multiple culverts, increased grade on culverts, and/or more hydraulically efficient inlets. Any culvert improvements will need to consider stream slope, erosion potential, upstream and downstream conditions, and watercourse capacity.

The final design of the preferred alternative is anticipated to include BMPs such as detention ponds, vegetated drainage swales that outlet into wetlands or treatment ponds, biorolls, bioengineering, and curbs and catch basins in any urban design segments.

4.2.6 Water Quality

An elevated level of highway runoff and associated contaminants from sediments, nutrients, heavy metals, oil, grease, and deicing chemicals will result from the preferred alternative. However, impacts from erosion and sedimentation will be addressed both during and after construction according to the conditions of a NPDES permit.

The water quality of Judicial Ditch No. 6 and Judicial Ditch No. 10 could be impacted as a result of the additional impervious surface and the chemicals associated with this type of runoff.

MNDNR protected waters in the project area include Okabena Lake, Ocheda Lake, Otter Creek, Judicial Ditch No. 10, and an unnamed creek (see Appendix E). Several wetlands are also protected waters including Basins 6, 7, 11, 12, 27, 28, and possibly 31 (see Figures 3E and 3I).

The project involves the Heron Lake WSD and Okabena-Ocheda WSD. There are no WSDs in the Iowa portion of the project at this time.

Mitigation

Since this project disturbs one or more acres of land area, NPDES permits will be obtained from the MPCA and IDNR to ensure that potential damage from erosion and sedimentation will not impact water quality adversely. Permits from applicable WSDs will also be obtained.

BMPs, such as sodding, seeding, erosion control mat, biorolls, bioengineering, rock ditch checks, etc. will be used on all disturbed areas of the project to reduce sediment and pollutant loading to surface waters. Additional BMPs may be required by the MPCA and the applicable WSDs.

Ponding will likely take place on partial parcels of land that become isolated because of limited access and size. Storm water ponds will be strategically placed in order to capture substantial amounts of the roadway runoff for treatment. Since Highway 60 is a rural roadway section in most places, it is not feasible or economical to capture and treat all of the storm water from the roadway. Proposed ponding sites are shown on Figures 3A-3M. Note that pond sites are preliminary, and specific locations and sizes will be determined during the final design phase of the project. See the Preliminary Proposed Stormwater Ponds Technical Memorandum available at the Mn/DOT District 7 office in Mankato, Minnesota for further information.

4.2.7 Geology/Groundwater/Aquifers

Impacts to aquifers from construction of the preferred alternative will be negligible due to the confining layers of loam to clay loam overlying the aquifers. Potential minor impacts could occur near areas where streams or other surface waters, such as wetlands, may have connections to surficial sand and gravel aquifers. It is also anticipated that the preferred alternative will require the abandonment of private wells and impact agricultural drain tile systems as a result of right-of-way acquisitions and relocations. For further information, see Draft EIS Section 4.2.7 – Geology/Groundwater/Aquifers.

Mitigation

The abandonment of any wells will be conducted in accordance with Minnesota Department of Health requirements. Drain tile systems will be maintained during and after construction.

4.2.8 Wild and Scenic Rivers

There are no wild and scenic rivers in the project area.

Mitigation

No mitigation measures are proposed.

4.2.9 State/Federal Threatened & Endangered Species

There are four occurrences of mesic prairie remnants located between the existing Highway 60 and UP Railroad alignments north of the City of Bigelow (see Figures 3A and 3B). For more information, see Draft EIS Section 4.2.9 – Threatened and Endangered Species. See Appendix F for the Mn/DOT letter regarding federal threatened and endangered species.

The prairie bush clover is listed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as potentially occurring in Osceola County, Iowa; however, no occurrences of the species are known in the immediate project area. An Iowa DOT field botanist has studied the project area for plant communities, including prairie bush clover, and determined no suitable habitat exists in the area due to cultivation and other farming practices.

The preferred alternative is not anticipated to impact the mesic prairie remnants located along the west side of existing Highway 60 as right-of-way acquisition, and construction activities will be limited to the east side of the existing roadway away from the prairie areas to the extent possible.

Mitigation

Construction and construction activities that will take place in the prairie areas under the preferred alternative will be minimized on the west side of Highway 60 to avoid impacts to the prairie communities. The prairie remnant areas will also be fenced during construction, contractors informed of the sensitive nature of the area, and any disturbed areas will be revegetated with native species. Coordination with the MNDNR is ongoing to determine further avoidance, minimization, and mitigation solutions as necessary. Boundaries of the prairie areas will be delineated during the final design phase of the project.

4.2.10 Fish & Wildlife

The preferred alternative will impact wetlands and the WPA, likely impacting the associated wildlife habitats.

Mitigation

Impacts to wetlands and the WPA will be mitigated as described in Section 4.2.3 and Appendix A of this Final EIS, respectively.

4.2.11 Vegetation

The impact of the preferred alternative on unique vegetation is minor. It is not anticipated that the prairie remnants or the upland prairie will be impacted by the preferred alternative. Impacts to farmland and wetlands are discussed in Sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.3, respectively.

Mitigation

Impacts to vegetation may be minimized or avoided further in the final design phase of the preferred alternative. Right-of-way acquisition and construction activities in the prairie areas will be limited to the east side of existing Highway 60 to the extent possible in order to avoid impacts to the prairie remnants in both Minnesota and Iowa.

4.2.12 Air Quality

The project is not located in an area where conformity requirements apply, and the scope of the project does not indicate that air quality impacts will be expected. Therefore, no further air quality analysis is necessary.

Mitigation

No mitigation measures are proposed.

4.2.13 Energy

Overall, direct operational energy savings for the preferred alternative are expected to offset the initial indirect energy requirements, generally resulting in long-term net energy savings when averaged over the design life of the project. See Draft EIS Section 4.2.13 – Energy for further information.

Mitigation

No mitigation measures are proposed.

4.2.14 Visual Quality

The construction of the preferred alternative will create impacts to visual quality. The Bigelow Bypass will introduce a highway to a previously agricultural area. The entrance marker at the Minnesota-Iowa border will also need to be moved. In Worthington, the project provides the opportunity to enhance visual quality along the existing corridor.

Mitigation

A design guide will be prepared for the City of Worthington during the final design of the project in order to provide consistent aesthetic design along the corridor.

4.2.15 Architectural and Archaeological Resources

See Draft EIS Section 4.2 – Architectural and Archaeological Resources for a discussion of the Phase I and Phase II evaluations completed for this project. The evaluations found that the Worthington Livestock Sale Company sale barn complex (see Figure 3L) and the St. Paul & Sioux City Railroad (now the UP Railroad, see Figures 3A-3M) are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

The preferred alternative is not anticipated to impact either the Worthington Livestock Sale Company barn complex or the St. Paul & Sioux City Railroad (UPRR), or other historic architectural or archeological properties. The

Minnesota and Iowa SHPOs have concurred with these findings (see Appendix G).

Mitigation

The proposed alternatives will not affect any architecturally notable properties. If historical or archeological sites are identified during subsequent stages of the project, the SHPO will be contacted and further study completed.

4.2.16 Contaminated Properties

The presence of potentially contaminated properties (defined as properties where soil and/or groundwater is impacted with pollutants, contaminants, or hazardous wastes) is a concern in the development of highway projects because of potential liabilities associated with ownership of such properties, potential cleanup costs, and safety concerns associated with construction personnel encountering unexpected wastes or contaminated soil or groundwater. Contaminated materials encountered during highway construction projects must be properly handled and treated in accordance with state and federal regulations. Improper handling of contaminated materials can worsen their impact on the environment. Contaminated materials also cause adverse impacts to highway projects by increasing construction costs and causing construction delays, which also can increase project costs.

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) provides information on potentially contaminated properties. These properties are identified through review of historic land use records and air photos, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), MPCA, and county/city records, as well as current property condition. Sites of potential concern identified by the Phase I ESA can be categorized into three risk areas: high, medium, and low environmental risk. In general, high environmental risk sites are properties that have a documented release of petroleum or other chemicals or other strong evidence of contamination, such as soil staining or storage of large volumes of petroleum or other chemicals. High risk sites include sites enrolled in the MPCA Voluntary Investigation and Cleanup Program and Leaking Underground Storage Tank Program. Medium environmental risk sites are properties where relatively small volumes of petroleum or other chemicals are stored, but no evidence of undocumented spills or releases is noted. Medium risk sites also include properties with documented releases that have been "closed" or declared "inactive" (no further cleanup action deemed necessary) by the MPCA. "Closed" or "inactive" sites are considered medium risks because residual soil or groundwater contamination may exist. Low environmental risk sites include properties where small volumes of chemicals or hazardous materials are/have been used or stored.

A Phase I ESA in general conformance with the American Society for Testing and Materials standard was completed for the project area in March 2003. A copy of the Phase I report is available for review at the Mn/DOT District 7 office.

Impacts

The Phase I ESA identified 44 known or potentially contaminated properties in the study area: 11 high environmental risk sites, 29 medium risk sites, and 4 low risk sites. Of these sites, 12 have been identified as being of concern for the project based on two criteria: a) they are either high or medium environmental risk sites, and b) they are in close proximity to the proposed project limits. These 12 sites are identified and their locations are shown on Figure 8.

A contaminated property with the potential to incur excessive cleanup costs and/or expose the purchaser to unacceptable environmental liability may need to be avoided if possible. Based on the proposed project design, none of the properties shown in Figure 8 have a potential for excessive cleanup costs and/or environmental liability.

Mitigation

Prior to construction activities, properties shown in Figure 8 will be evaluated for their potential to be impacted by construction and/or acquired as right-of-way. Any properties with a potential to be impacted by the project will be investigated (through detailed review of MPCA project files, and collection and laboratory analysis of soil and groundwater samples; if necessary) to determine the extent and magnitude of contaminated soil or groundwater in the areas of concern. The results of the investigation will be used to determine if the project can avoid or minimize impacts to the properties. If necessary, a plan will be developed for properly handling and treating contaminated soil and/or groundwater encountered during construction.

In addition, coordination and consultation with the MPCA Voluntary Investigation and Cleanup Unit, the Voluntary Petroleum Investigation and Cleanup Unit, the Leaking Underground Storage Tank Program, and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture Voluntary Investigation and Cleanup Unit will take place as appropriate to obtain assurances that contaminated site cleanup work and/or contaminated site acquisition will not result in long-term environmental liability for the contamination, and to obtain contaminated soil and/or groundwater handling and cleanup plan approvals.

4.3 CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

All applicable precautions will be taken to limit impacts connected with highway and bridge construction activities. Major environmental effects associated with construction include traffic congestion, noise, air quality, water quality, soil erosion, traffic detours, economic/business impacts, borrow and excess materials, utility disruption, and earthborne vibrations.

4.3.1 Traffic Congestion

It is expected construction of the project will be in stages with each portion taking 2 to 3 years to complete. Construction of the proposed action is likely to cause traffic delays and make it more difficult to access development

adjacent to the highway during construction. This may result in added congestion within the project area while construction is being completed. A construction staging plan will be developed during the final design phase of the project that will further assess potential traffic congestion problems associated with construction. The staging plan will attempt to address the need for property access, while minimizing the total length of construction time.

Short-term adverse impacts to transit services may also result from construction activities.

4.3.2 Noise

Noise will be generated by construction equipment used in the construction of the highway improvements. Noise levels due to construction activities in the project area will vary depending on the types of equipment used, the location of the equipment, and the operating mode. During a typical work cycle, construction equipment may be idling, preparing to perform tasks, or operating under a full load. Equipment may be congregated in a specific location or spread out over a larger area. Some construction could potentially occur in close proximity to existing noise-sensitive land uses. Adverse impacts resulting from construction noise are expected to be localized and temporary. All construction equipment will be properly equipped to minimize potential construction noise impacts. In addition, noise due to construction will be controlled by limiting operations to daytime hours and in accordance with local ordinances.

4.3.3 Air Quality

The project is not located in an area where conformity requirements apply, and the scope of the project does not indicate air quality impacts would be expected. Therefore, no further air quality analysis is necessary.

4.3.4 Water Quality and Soil Erosion

The potential for soil erosion impacts on water quality are greatest at the time a project requires removal of vegetation and topsoil for clearing, grubbing, and grading activities. Areas adjacent to lakes, streams, and wetlands have the highest potential for adverse impacts. Erosion control measures, as suggested by the MPCA's "Protecting Water Quality in Urban Areas, Best Management Practices for Dealing with Storm Water Runoff from Urban, Suburban, and Developing Areas of Minnesota (March 2000)" and in conformance with Mn/DOT standard specifications, will be considered to minimize potential soil erosion impacts from construction activities. These practices may include, but are not limited to, the following: sedimentation basins, silt control devices (silt fences, hay bales), slope drains, and rapid revegetation of exposed construction areas. A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be developed as part of the final design plans of the preferred alternative in accordance with NPDES requirements.

Site ID	Site Address/Location	Reason for Concern
4	1700 Hwy 60 N., Worthington	Commercial business. Fuel Oil spill reported at site.
14	1310 Spring Ave., Worthington	Garage. Possible vehicle maintenance activities at site. No release reported at site.
16	2022 Dover St., Worthington	Commercial business. Vehicle equipment storage at site. No release reported at site.
21	109/123 Kragness Ave., Worthington	Former gas station. Petroleum underground storage tank release (closed) reported at site.
23	2008 Circle Dr., Worthington	Former auto body shop. No release reported at site.
34	525 Hwy 59/60 S., Worthington	Active gas station. Petroleum underground storage tank release reported at site.
35	810 Hwy 59/60 S., Worthington	Body shop. No release reported at site.
36	640 Hwy 59/60 S., Worthington	Commercial business. Scrap metal on site. No release reported at site.
40	27418 Hwy 59/60 S., Worthington	Auto salvage business. No release reported at site. Approx. Location.
41	27170 Hwy 59/60 S., Worthington	Ag equipment salvage business. No release reported at site. Approx. Location.
42	South side of TH 59/60 just north of Crailshelm Rd., Worthington	Former dump site. Approx. Location.
44	N.W. quadrant of intersection of Co. Rd. 52 and Co.Rd. L44, Bigelow	Commercial business. Vehicle storage and vehicle maintenance on site. No release reported at site.

2000 0 2000 4000 6000 Feet

N W E S

LEGEND

MUNICIPALITIES
COUNTY
PREFERRED TH60 ALIGNMENT
POTENTIAL CONTAMINATED PROPERTIES
WETLANDS SURVEYED

ROAD
INTERSTATE
US HIGHWAY
STATE HIGHWAY
COUNTY HIGHWAY
COUNTY ROAD
CITY STREET
TOWNSHIP ROAD
RAILROAD

POTENTIAL CONTAMINATED PROPERTY LOCATIONS

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT HIGHWAY 60**

02/09/04
Date

8
Figure Number

4.3.5 Traffic Detours

A construction staging plan will be completed during the final design stage of the project, which will identify potential detours. This plan will attempt to minimize disruptions to traffic patterns while maximizing directness of detoured routes, which will minimize short-term impacts on emergency services (police, fire, rescue) and transit services throughout the project area.

4.3.6 Economic/Business Impacts

The proposed project is expected to generate both direct construction jobs and indirect jobs to support construction related activities. The exact number of jobs cannot be determined at this time. Existing businesses within the project area may experience negative short-term impacts during construction. As part of the construction staging plan, efforts will be made to ensure that traffic movements and access to businesses are maintained.

4.3.7 Borrow or Excess Material

Selection of borrow material that may be required for the construction of the proposed improvements will be the responsibility of the construction contractor, and possible sites will be identified in the contract special provisions. Any new borrow sites would be subject to environmental reviews under Minnesota Rule Chapter 4410.4300, Subp. 12 and may require an archeological survey of the site. Archeological reviews of these areas are conducted by the Cultural Resources Unit at Mn/DOT. The disposal of excess material will be conducted in accordance with Mn/DOT specifications and according to a project disposal plan that will be in accordance with WCA requirements.

4.3.8 Utility Disruption

Construction activities may result in temporary impacts to local utilities. Coordination and cooperation with the local service providers will be established and maintained throughout the final design phase of the project.

4.3.9 Earthborne Vibrations

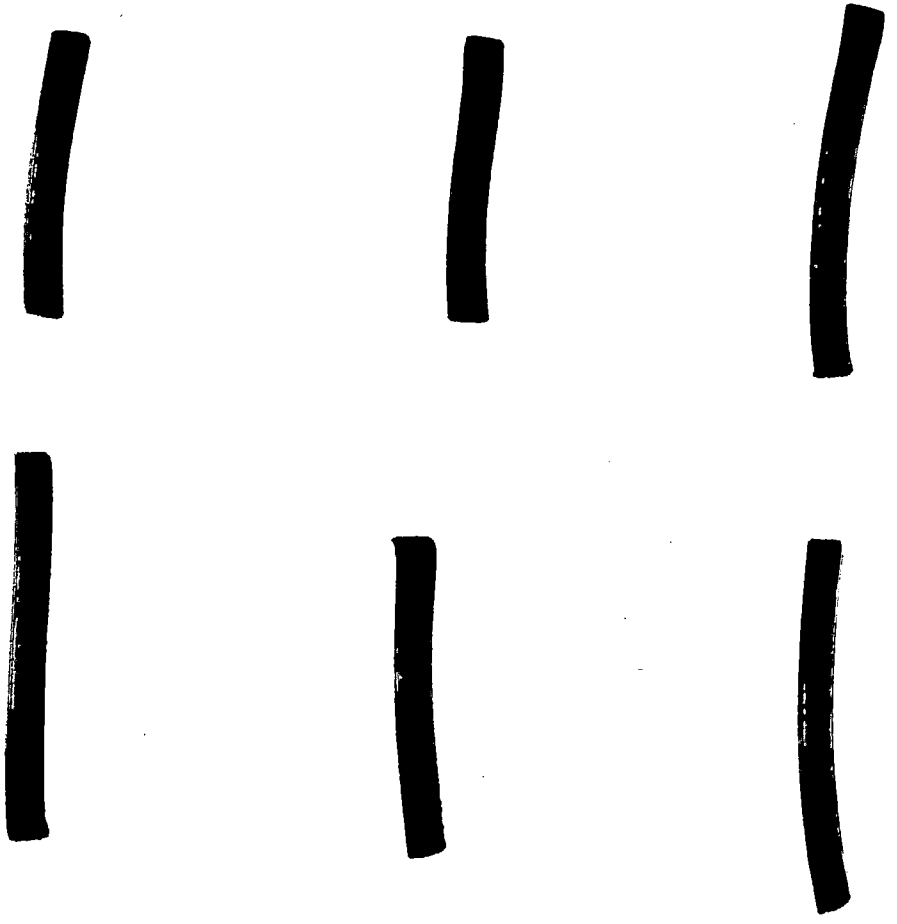
Earthborne vibrations are defined in the Mn/DOT Highway Project Development Process Manual as impacts that are caused by:

- Blasting
- Pile driving or heavy construction activities (e.g., pavement breaking, vibratory compacting) within 500 feet of buildings
- Structures (frail or historic) with high susceptibility to vibration damage
- Operations susceptible to vibrations (e.g., surgery in hospitals, lithography, computer use)

Potential for earthborne vibration impacts have been considered, but due to the nature of the planned work and affected environment, no substantial impacts are anticipated.

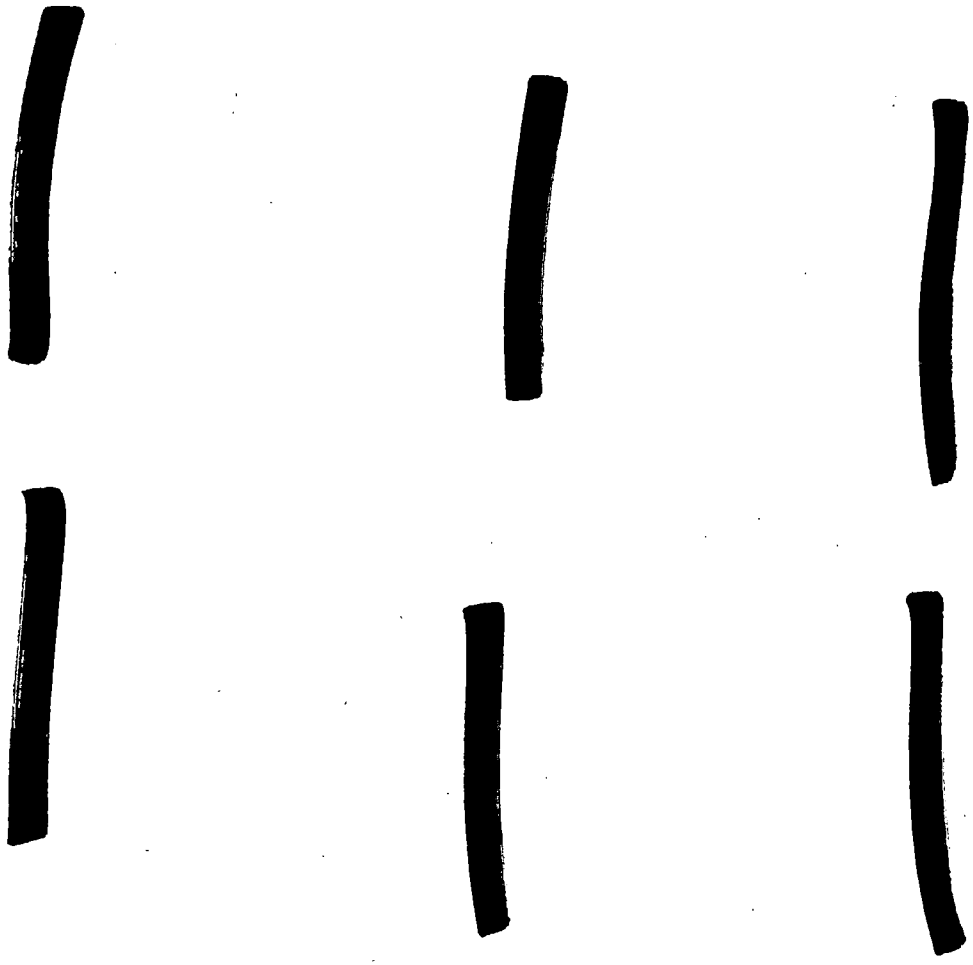
5.0 PERMITS/APPROVALS/CONCURRENCE

- Adequacy Determination from Mn/DOT
- Record of Decision from FHWA
- Section 404 Permit from the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) – Minnesota and Iowa
- Section 401 Water Quality Certification from Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)
- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit from the MPCA and IDNR
- Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) Replacement Plan approval from Mn/DOT Office of Environmental Services
- Municipal approval from the City of Worthington and the City of Bigelow
- Protected Waters Permit from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR)
- Permits from Heron Lake and/or Okabena-Ocheda WSDs
- Order for minor impacts from ditch authorities



6.0 PREPARERS

Agency/Organization and Name	Final Environmental Impact Statement Responsibility
Federal Highway Administration	
Cheryl Martin	Review of Final EIS; assure compliance with federal regulations
Minnesota Department of Transportation – District 7	
Peter Harff	Project Engineer
Larry Filter	Project Manager
Giles Abbe	Preparation of preferred alternative layout
Pete Jenkins	Right-of-way
Minnesota Department of Transportation – Central Office	
Craig Johnson	Historical and Cultural Resources; assure compliance with Section 106 regulations
Jackie Sluss	Historical and Cultural Resources; assure compliance with Section 106 regulations
Elizabeth Abel	Historical and Cultural Resources; assure compliance with Section 106 regulations
Greg Busacker	Water quality, natural resources
Jason Alcott	Water quality, natural resources
Gerry Larson	Review Final EIS; assure compliance with Mn/DOT procedures
Nancy Radle	Contaminated properties
Iowa Department of Transportation	
Richard Michaelis	District 3 Engineer
James Rost	Director, Office of Location and Environment
Russell Sinram	Document Manager, Office of Location and Environment
Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc.	
Mark Benson	Consultant Project Manager
Jennifer Andrews	Coordination
George Calebaugh	Traffic Analysis and Forecasting
Matt Engstrom	Microstation, Cost Estimate
Deric Deuschle	Wetlands
Jeremy Walgrave	Floodplains, Water Quality, Surface Drainage
Ron Leaf	Farmlands
Steve Hack	GIS, Graphics
Tammy Orf	Word Processing
Candis Nord-Sheptak	Graphics
Other Subconsultants	
SBP Associates Steve Platisha	Noise Monitoring and Modeling
AGC Developments Inc. Al Perez	Noise Monitoring and Modeling



7.0 LIST OF AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND PERSONS TO WHOM COPIES OF THE FINAL EIS ARE SENT

7.1 FEDERAL AGENCIES

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- U.S. Department of Interior
- Federal Railroad Administration
- Federal Emergency Management Agency

7.2 STATE AGENCIES

7.2.1 Minnesota

- Environmental Quality Board
- Board of Water & Soil Resources
- Department of Commerce
- State Historic Preservation Office
- Department of Natural Resources
- Legislative Reference Library
- Environmental Conservation Library
- Department of Health
- Department of Agriculture
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

7.2.2 Iowa

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Department of Natural Resources
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Economic Development

7.3 REGIONAL AGENCIES

- Minnesota Regional Development Commission
- Northwest Iowa Planning and Development Commission

7.4 LOCAL AGENCIES

7.4.1 Minnesota

- City of Worthington
- City of Bigelow
- Nobles County
- Worthington Township

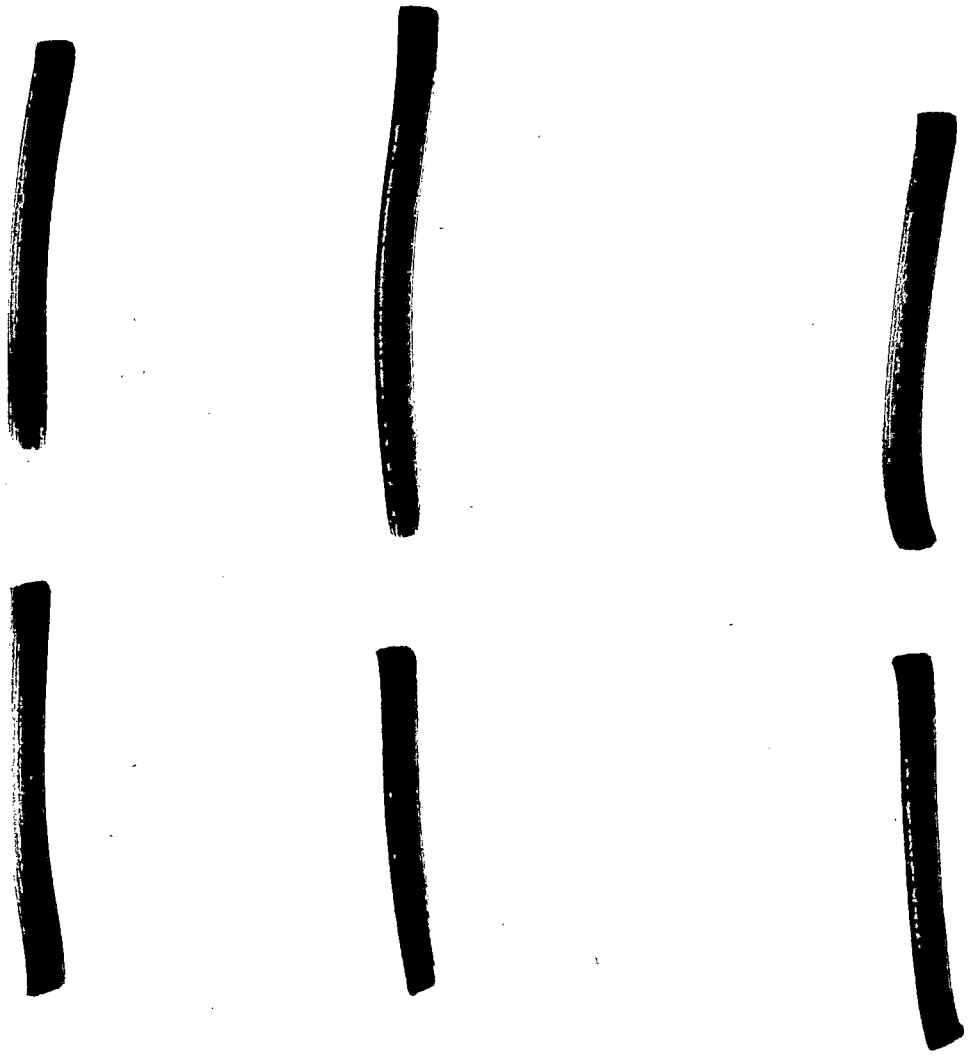
- Bigelow Township
- Lorain Township
- Worthington Area Chamber of Commerce
- Nobles County Library
- Nobles Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)

7.4.2 Iowa

- Sibley Public Library
- Osceola County Board of Supervisors
- Osceola County Conservation Commission

7.5 OTHER

- All commentors on the Draft EIS



8.0 COORDINATION

Mn/DOT is committed to public involvement/outreach at all levels in decision-making related to the Highway 60 Reconstruction Project. Mn/DOT has engaged community organizations; area property owners; business owners; residents; and local, county, regional, and state agencies in the development of the project. See Draft EIS Section 8.0 – Coordination for a description of activities that took place prior to its publication. Since the Draft EIS, public involvement efforts have included the activities described below.

8.1 PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC)

The PAC was formed to establish a communication link with the affected communities, organizations, and agencies. The PAC is an advisory committee, and their input has been an important influence on the direction of the project. To date, the PAC has met eight times. Participants on the PAC include the following:

- Nobles County
- Bigelow Township
- Lorain Township
- City of Worthington
- Worthington City Council
- Worthington Area Chamber
- Mn/DOT District 7
- Iowa DOT
- DNR Region 4
- Nobles County SWCD
- Regional Development Commission
- Worthington Travel Information Center
- Prins Trucking
- Worthington Daily Globe
- Residents/ Property Owners
- Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc.

8.2 PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

Prior to the Draft EIS, open houses were held on July 12, 2001 and April 18, 2002 to provide preliminary information to the public.

The public hearing for the Draft EIS was held on September 19, 2002 to present information and obtain public input and comments on the document. Spanish and Laotian interpreters were available at the hearing.

A series of design workshops were held December 4-5, 2002. The purpose of the workshops was to gather local input into the design of the newly proposed four-lane expansion of Highway 60. The corridor was divided into five segments in order to meet with local property owners and stakeholders in small groups along the route so that the design of the new highway meets the specific transportation needs and serves the communities of that area.

An open house was held on August 4, 2004 in Spanish for the residents of the East Acres Trailer Park as a conclusion to the environmental justice process. These residents will be impacted by the project and the purpose of the meeting was to further inform them of the project and proposed mitigation measures

(see the Environmental Justice section of this document for more information).

A general open house was also held August 4, 2004 to present the preferred alternative for the entire corridor, where Spanish interpreters were available.

8.3 PROJECT MAILINGS

Informational newsletters were prepared with the intent of providing project-related information to the public. To date, two newsletters have been distributed to property owners and business owners in the project area.

A letter was sent to residents along the corridor inviting them to attend the August 2004 open house.

Residents of the East Acres Trailer Park received numerous mailings, written in Spanish, throughout the project including:

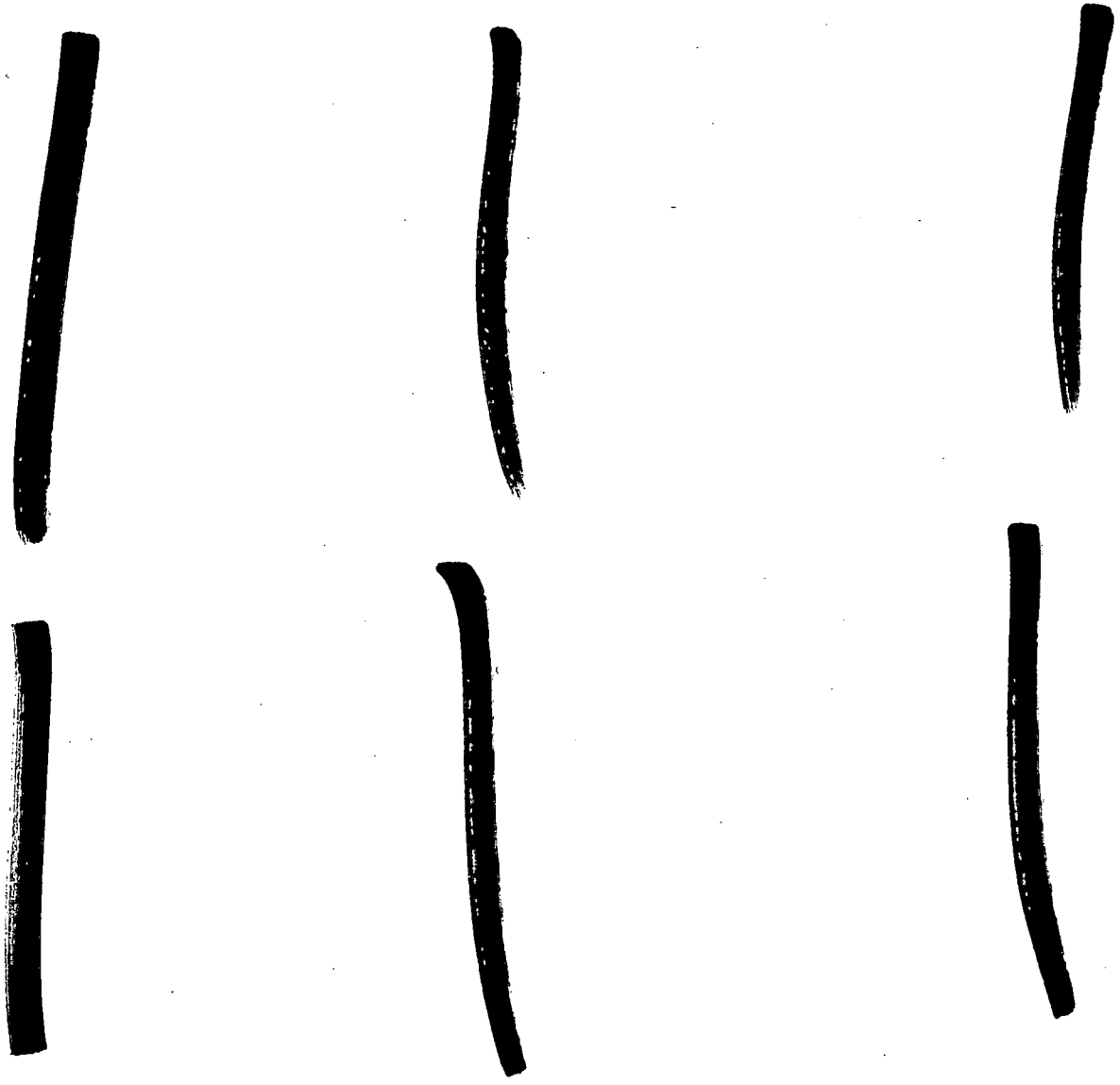
- A postcard inviting them to attend the design workshops held in December 2002.
- A letter in November 2003 informing them of the survey to be conducted (as described below) and thanking them for their participation.
- A letter and handout inviting them to attend the open house in August 2004 and summarizing the project, its impacts, and the relocation process.

8.4 RESIDENT SURVEY

A survey of the residents of the East Acres Trailer Park was conducted in November-December 2003. The purpose of the survey was to obtain the perspective of the trailer park residents regarding the impacts of the alternatives, the importance of the trailer park location, and replacement housing needs. The survey is discussed in more detail in the Environmental Justice section of this document.

8.5 PROJECT WEB PAGE

An informational project web page has been established on the World Wide Web at (http://projects.dot.state.mn.us/seh/060/). The site provides an additional means of distributing information and gathering input with an e-mail reply feature. The site is periodically updated to reflect project updates, planning/design changes, and to address new issues.



9.0 RESPONSE TO COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT EIS

The following section provides a response to public and agency comments received during the comment period for the Draft EIS. Public comments have been summarized by topic.

9.1 OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT AND GUIDELINES FOR RESPONDING TO COMMENTS

The Draft EIS for the Highway 60 project was distributed in July 2002 to agencies and organizations on the official distribution list, as well as additional agencies/organizations that had either requested a copy of the document, and/or that could be affected by the proposed project. The comment period for the Draft EIS officially closed on October 14, 2002.

A public hearing to receive comments on the proposed project and Draft EIS was held as follows:

Thursday, September 19, 2002, 5:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Prairie Elementary School
1700 1st Avenue SW
Worthington, MN 56187

At the public hearing, attendees were invited to provide comments through one of two ways: oral statements to a court reporter and written comments.

- Written Statements: Attendees were invited to submit written comments on cards provided at the open house or in letter form. Comments could also be submitted via e-mail.
- Oral Statements: Statements were recorded by a certified court reporter during the public hearing.

A total of 70 comments and 10 oral testimonies were received from private citizens, business representatives, interest groups, agencies, and other government entities during the comment period. All written and oral comments were published as part of the Public Hearing Record for the Draft EIS.

Consistent with state and federal environmental review rules, substantive comments are responded to in this Final EIS. Written responses have been provided for comments pertaining to analysis conducted for and documented in the Draft EIS. Specifically, responses have been prepared for statements noting incorrect or unclear information or content requirements. Comments agreeing with the Draft EIS/project information, general opinions, statements of fact, or statements of preference were not formally responded to. Oral testimony and written citizen comments are summarized and responded to in Section 9.2 below. Copies of all government, agency, and organized interest group letters are included and responded to in Section 9.3 of this Final EIS.

9.2 SUMMARY AND RESPONSE TO ORAL TESTIMONY AND WRITTEN CITIZEN COMMENTS

Right-of-Way Acquisition (15 Comments)

Comment(s):

1. Comments regarding property acquisition included concern over the right-of-way process, property values, property owners supporting acquisition, property owners against acquisition, and general concern regarding the acquisition of residences and businesses.

Response(s):

1. Where possible, the preferred alternative has been modified to reduce right-of-way impacts. The properties that have been identified for acquisition are either directly impacted by the reconstructed roadway or are parcels where reasonable access cannot be maintained. Right-of-way acquisition will be conducted in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, and 49 CFR part 24. See Final EIS Section 4.1.4 – Right-of-Way and Relocation. Persons interested in obtaining additional information can contact the Mn/DOT District 7 Land Management Supervisor at (507) 389-6863.

Noise (3 Comments)

Comment(s):

1. Several commentors stated there is an existing noise problem along the Highway 60 corridor and the project may further increase the problem.

Response(s):

1. The noise analysis indicated that noise levels at certain areas adjacent to the Highway 60 corridor currently exceed federal and state noise standards and would continue to exceed these standards under the Build and No-Build Alternatives. Further noise analysis, including noise abatement feasibility, has been performed for the preferred alternative. See Final EIS Section 4.2.2 – Noise.

Roadway Design/Traffic & Safety (17 Comments)

Comment(s):

1. One commentor was concerned about the design of the frontage roads.

2. One commentor suggested rerouting Highway 60 to the east of Worthington.

3. Three commentors requested that old Highway 60 through Bigelow be closed after the construction of the Bigelow Bypass for maintenance reasons.

4. One commentor questioned the assumptions made in calculating traffic projections, specifically the use of traffic counts taken in April rather than in summer months when volumes may be higher.

5. Several commentors expressed concern over future traffic volumes, especially truck and farm traffic, and the resulting safety issues.

6. Several commentors expressed concern over the condition of the existing roadway and design deficiencies including lack of turn lanes and sight distance at skewed intersections.

Response(s):

1. Frontage road design will be consistent with standards for local roads and the anticipated use of the road.

2. Prior to publication of the Draft EIS, several alternatives that bypassed the City of Worthington to the east were analyzed. All of these alternatives were dismissed for various reasons including cost, environmental impacts, and operational issues. See the Highway 60 Scoping Document published in March 2000 and the Scoping Decision Document published in June 2000 for more information.

3. Nobles County, Minnesota will work with Osceola County, Iowa to provide maintenance for old Highway 60 through Bigelow.

4. The use of historic trends to forecast future travel demand is the widely accepted method for non-metropolitan areas. In addition, the preferred alternative includes reconstruction of the highway to four lanes, which has the capacity to carry traffic volumes much greater than the projected ADT for 2030 at an acceptable LOS, including any increase in volumes during the summer months.

5.&6. The purpose for the Highway 60 reconstruction project includes addressing the safety issues, congestion, and design deficiencies that characterize the Highway 60 corridor. The proposed improvements will better serve the current and forecast traffic volumes and improve safety by reducing the number of direct access points onto the highway, improving roadway geometrics, and adding roadway capacity. See Final EIS Section 2.6 – Purpose and Need for Proposed Action.

Maintain Access/Access for Future Businesses (4 Comments)

Comment(s):

1. Four commentors were concerned about access to existing and planned development as a result of the reconstructed roadway.

Response(s):

1. The proposed project includes the implementation of access management controls that will enhance mobility along the roadway

and improve overall traffic operations including reducing crashes. The divided four-lane highway will still provide access to all existing properties, but in several instances, only frontage roads and right-in/right-out access will be provided. The planning and design phase of the preferred alternative strove for full access intersections at regular intervals. The targeted full access spacing in the rural area of the corridor was 1-mile, while in the urban section the target spacing was ¼-mile.

Community, Fiscal, and Aesthetic Impacts (6 Comments)

Comment(s):

1. Several commentors were concerned about the impact of a bypass of Bigelow and/or Worthington on local businesses.

2. One commentor was concerned with the costs to the City of Bigelow associated with relocating infrastructure/utilities.

Response(s):

1. *The preferred alternative will bypass the City of Bigelow, whose businesses are not highly dependent on drive-by traffic. Through Worthington, Highway 60 will remain on its existing alignment.*

2. *The preferred alternative will bypass the City of Bigelow, minimizing the need to relocate infrastructure and utilities.*

Natural Resources Impacts (7 Comments)

Comment(s):

1. Several commentors were concerned about the impacts of the project on natural resources, including wetlands, farmland, and trees.

Response(s):

1. *The preferred alternative will be designed to minimize the impacts to natural resources while maintaining the functionality of the highway. Extensive analysis has been performed to document the potential impacts of the project on these resources. This analysis and any commitments for mitigating impacts are included in the respective issue area sections of this Final EIS.*

Additional Traffic Signals (2 Comments)

Comment(s):

1. Two commentors requested additional traffic signals be installed along the project corridor.

Response(s):

1. *Traffic signal warrants have been established nationally to provide criteria that can be used to define the relative need for and appropriateness of traffic signal control. Table 7 in the Draft EIS*

shows the results of the signal warrant analysis performed for the Highway 60 corridor. It is recommended that traffic signals not be installed unless one or more of the signal warrants are met and the satisfaction of a warrant or warrants is not in itself justification for a traffic signal. Information should be obtained by means of engineering studies and compared with the requirements set forth in the warrants. The preferred alternative has been designed in a manner to minimize the installation of signals by planning for interchanges at some of the intersections where signal warrants are met. Depending on future traffic conditions, additional signals may or may not be warranted on Highway 60.

Morningside Neighborhood (6 Comments)

Comment(s):

1. Several commentors expressed concern regarding pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle safety of crossing Highway 60 as four lanes.

2. Several commentors suggested that constructing Highway 60 as four lanes would isolate or divide the Morningside neighborhood from the rest of Worthington.

3. Several commentors expressed concern about access to and within the Morningside neighborhood if Highway 60 were reconstructed as four lanes.

Response(s):

1. *The four-lane divided highway will provide a refuge for pedestrians and bicyclists in the median, allowing them to cross one direction of traffic at a time.*

2. *The Morningside neighborhood is already somewhat divided from the rest of the community by the existing highway. The four-lane facility will improve traffic flow and safety for the neighborhood residents through the installation of the turn lanes and further separation of vehicles from the residences.*

3. *Access to the Morningside neighborhood will be provided at Nobles Street and from CSAH 35 at a new connection with Circle Drive. Mn/DOT and the City of Worthington have discussed possible connections to improve internal circulation. As a result, Douglas Avenue and East Avenue will be connected as part of the project. Additional connections will be considered, and a meeting will be held with the residents closer to the time of construction.*

9.3 AGENCY COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

Copies of written comments received from governmental agencies and organized special interest groups are provided on the following pages with "footnote" responses in the margin.

COMMENT LETTER A – USEPA

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

OCT 2 2 2002

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:

B-19J

Mr. Alan Steger
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
Galtier Plaza
380 Jackson Street, Suite 500
St. Paul, MN 55101-2904

Re: **Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Highway 60 Reconstruction Project, Nobles County, MN and Osceola County, IA, EIS No. 020349**

Dear Mr. Steger:

Consistent with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has reviewed the referenced project document dated July, 2002.

According to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) submitted, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) in cooperation with the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT), proposes reconstruction Highway 60 in Nobles County, Minnesota and Osceola County, Iowa. The project limits extend from approximately 1.8 miles south of the Minnesota-Iowa border north to Interstate 90 north of the City of Worthington. The total length of the project corridor is approximately 14.3 miles. The DEIS presents seven alternatives, three base alternatives, each with a sub-alternative and the no-build alternative as follows:

Alternative A- Existing Alignment: Reconstruct four lanes on existing alignment.

Alternative A1- Existing Alignment with Bigelow Bypass: Construct four-lane easterly bypass of Bigelow, MN and reconstruct four lanes on existing alignment north of Bigelow.

Alternative B- Worthington Bypass: Reconstruct four lanes on existing alignment to Org, MN and construct four-lane westerly bypass of Worthington, MN.

Alternative B1- Worthington Bypass with Bigelow Bypass: Construct four-lane easterly bypass of Bigelow, MN, reconstruct four lanes on existing alignment to Org, MN, and construct four-lane westerly bypass of Worthington, MN.

Alternative C- Two lane Worthington split: Reconstruct four lanes on existing alignment to Org, MN, construct two-lane westerly bypass of Worthington, MN and reconstruct two lanes on

existing alignment through Worthington, MN.

Alternative C1- Two lane Worthington split with Bigelow bypass: Construct four lane easterly bypass of Bigelow, MN, reconstruct four lanes on existing alignment to Org, MN, construct two lane westerly bypass of Worthington, MN, and reconstruct two lanes on existing alignment through Worthington, MN.

Alternative D- No Build:- Two lanes on existing alignment with minor reconstruction including general maintenance, turn lane improvements, shoulder widening, and spot safety improvements.

We conducted a review of the DEIS and offer comments in the following areas: purpose and need, water quality impacts, natural resource impacts, and historic and cultural resources. Since the DEIS did not identify a preferred alternative, our Agency has assigned a separate rating to each alternative listed in the DEIS. Based on our review of each alternative contained in the DEIS for its adequacy of information and potential environmental impacts, **U.S. EPA has assigned each separate build alternative a rating of EC-2 (Environmental Concerns - Insufficient Information).** This means our review has identified environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. **We rate the "No Build" alternative as "Lack of Objections" (LO).** Furthermore, as detailed in this letter, U.S. EPA believes that additional information, data, analyses and discussion should be included in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). Therefore, **we have assigned to the DEIS a rating of EC-2, based on our review and rating of the individual alternatives.**

Purpose and Need: The purpose and need for the subject project is not adequately identified nor supported in the DEIS. As a specific example, according to the DEIS, the focus of the project's purpose and need is to enhance system continuity along Highway 60, which is defined in the DEIS as the compatibility of level of service (LOS), traffic flow, and/or roadway design. However, there is a minimal difference in the LOS reported in table 3 (p.38) between the existing Highway 60 configuration in the year 1998 and the "No Build" alternative (alternative D) for the future year 2030. According to the DEIS, the "No Build" alternative in the year 2030 would provide an acceptable LOS C for all roadway segments or intersections in rural locations in Minnesota. There are also no specifics regarding roadway deficiencies along Highway 60. Finally, the DEIS does not indicate how each of the alternatives would individually, or relative to one another, serve to fulfill any stated project purpose and need. Based on the information presented in the DEIS and the Traffic Report for TH 60 EIS (SEH No. A-MNDOT0105.00) **we believe the "No Build" alternative, including traffic signal improvements outlined in the traffic report, is a viable option to maintain an acceptable LOS.**

A1

A2

A3

Water Quality Impacts:

Wetlands: According to the DEIS, all of the proposed build alternatives will impact wetlands in the project area. Table 22 (p. 117) indicates that total wetland acreage impacts under the build alternatives range from a minimum of 30.4 acres under Alternative B to a maximum of 39.5 acres under Alternative C1. The U.S. EPA considers wetlands to be an important environmental resource and recommends that the project sponsor coordinate with the U.S. Army

A4

RESPONSE

A1 Level of Service (LOS) is only part of system continuity, as presented in the Draft EIS. System continuity also includes roadway design, which is especially applicable for this project since Highway 60 will be four lanes from Le Mars, Iowa to Windom, Minnesota, with the exception of this 12-mile section. Furthermore, while the No-Build Alternative would continue to function at LOS C for the rural segment of Highway 60, it would not address the urban portion through the City of Worthington where multiple intersections are anticipated to operate at unacceptable levels (see Final EIS Section 3.2). The No-Build Alternative would also not address the other needs stated for the project including correcting design deficiencies and increasing capacity.

A2 The design deficiencies listed in Draft EIS Section 2.6 – Purpose and Need for Proposed Action characterize the entire length of the project corridor; therefore, specific locations were not identified.

A3 Prior to inclusion in the Draft EIS, all alternatives were determined to meet the Purpose and Need for the project at an acceptable level. The alternatives were then evaluated individually and relative to one another based on social, economic, and environmental impacts.

Corps of Engineers (Corps) to determine the jurisdictional status of wetlands in the project area and to begin coordination on any necessary mitigation strategies which should be included in the Final Environmental Impact Study (FEIS). We also recommend that the sponsor include a detailed wetland delineation in the FEIS for the Preferred Alternative. **A4 cont.**

Surface Water Quality: According to the DEIS, each of the proposed alternatives may affect some portion of the drainage system. Several new culverts and drainage ditches would need to be constructed for the Bigelow and Worthington bypasses. Also, nearly all of the existing culverts would need some type of extension or replacement to accommodate wider roadways and many of the existing culverts would need to be replaced to handle increased capacity. The U.S. EPA recommends that specific information be included in the FEIS which indicates the required flow capacity required to meet local drainage requirements based on the calculated increase in impervious surface area. If shown to be necessary, the size, design and siting locations should be included in the FEIS for any necessary storm water detention ponds or other mitigation strategies such as vegetated drainage swales. **A5**

Natural Resource Impacts:

Prime and Unique Farmland: According to the Farmland Special Study, dated July 2002 prepared as part of the Highway 60 Draft EIS, "...approximately 96 to 99 percent of the farmland in the study area is classified as prime farmland." According to the study, prime farmland acreage losses range from a minimum of 143 acres for Alternative A, to a maximum of 320 acres for Alternative B1. The EPA recommends that Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Form AD-1006, "Farmland Conversion Impact Rating" be completed for property in Minnesota which will be impacted under each alternative. The total points assigned under each alternative's rating can help determine the relative level of impacts among alternatives. **A6**

Land Use Planning: According to the Social, Economic, and Land Use Special Study, dated July 2002 prepared as part of the Highway 60 Draft EIS, "...the decrease in agriculturally productive land under all build alternatives and the potential for induced development associated with the Worthington bypass are inconsistent with the Nobles County Community Based Plan's land use goals." U.S. EPA believes land use planning is important when considering the use of bypasses in some of the alternatives, since it may provide avenues for secondary growth along the corridor. As such, the EPA would like to see coordination with the planning offices of Nobles County and Washington City to assure that consistency and/or compliance with city or county land use plans is a criteria in the decision making process to determine a preferred alternative. **A7**

Historic and Cultural Resources: According to the DEIS, none of the build alternatives are anticipated to impact historic architectural or archeological properties. The DEIS also states that the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has concurred with these findings but concurrence by the Minnesota SHPO is currently pending. The U.S. EPA encourages the project sponsor to complete the coordination process with the Minnesota SHPO and, if necessary, complete the consultation process with the Minnesota SHPO if it is determined that any affected properties or sites are in the project area for the preferred alternative. **A8**

RESPONSE

A4 Jurisdictional delineations have been completed following the methodology of the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual, 1987, and Final EIS Section 4.2.3 includes wetland types and a discussion of sequencing (avoidance, minimization, mitigation). Given the timeframe for this project, coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding mitigation strategies will occur closer to the time of permitting.

A5 Final EIS Section 4.2.5 includes drainage analysis for the preferred alternative and potential ponding locations are shown on Figures 3A-3M. Given the timeframe of this project, the details of the drainage system will be completed closer to construction and prior to applying for an NPDES permit.

A6 In accordance with previous consultation with local NRCS offices, an AD1006 form was submitted for the preferred alternative. Copies of the completed forms are included in Appendix B.

A7 Coordination with city and county elected and administrative officials has continued throughout the selection of the preferred alternative and Final EIS processes. The City of Worthington submitted a letter during the Draft EIS comment period in support of Alternatives A or A1 (see Comment Letter D).

We appreciate the opportunity to review the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Highway 60 Reconstruction Project. Any questions regarding this letter can be directed to Mr. Don Kathan of my staff, at (312) 886-0448. You may also contact him at kathan.donald@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Kenneth A. Westlake
Chief, Environmental Planning and Evaluation Branch
Office of Strategic Environmental Analysis

cc:
Mr. Peter Harff
Mn/DOT District 7
501 South Victory Drive
P.O. Box 4039
Mankato, MN 56002-4039

Mr. Richard Michaelis
IDOT
P.O. Box 987
Sioux City, IA 51102-0987

RESPONSE

A8 The Minnesota SHPO has concurred that no historic or archaeological properties will be impacted by the project. See Final EIS Section 4.2.15.

COMMENT LETTER B – DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, D.C. 20240

ER-02/836

NOV 14 2002

Mr. Alan R. Steger
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
Galtier Plaza
380 Jackson Street, Suite 500
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear Mr. Steger:

The U.S. Department of the Interior (Department) has reviewed the proposed highway improvements for Trunk Highway 60 (TH-60), Minnesota-Iowa border (120th Street) to I-90 north of Worthington, Nobles County, Minnesota and Osceola County, Iowa. The project is described in detail in the July 2002 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) (FHWA-MN-EIS-02-04-D). The draft EIS provides analysis of the no-build alternative and three basic build alternatives, each with a sub-alternative that adds the Bigelow Bypass. No preferred alternative was identified in the draft EIS. The Department offers the following comments and recommendations for your consideration.

SECTION 4(f) COMMENTS

Because there is no preferred alternative, the Department will provide comments on all alternatives equally. The draft EIS does not evaluate any properties eligible for consideration under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act (49 U.S.C. 303)(see section 4.1.7, pages 91 and 92). Properties that may be eligible may include the Worthington Waterfowl Production Area (discussed below), the Lakeshore and Olson Park Trails and all public parks. The Department notes that these properties are merely mentioned in this draft EIS but they are not identified by their location or proximity to the project boundaries, nor is there a map that clearly demonstrates these properties would or would not be directly affected by the project. With that basic information missing from the draft EIS, the Department cannot concur there are no reasonable and feasible alternatives to the proposed action. **B1**

In addition, we note that section 4.2.15 (pages 136 through 138) identify at least two properties that have been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places that may be affected by one of the alternatives. The draft EIS does not provide any indication of where these properties might be located in regard to the project, and there is no indication of **B2**

RESPONSE

B1 A Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation was completed for impacts to the Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) in Worthington in February 2003. The Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation was submitted to the Department of the Interior for comments, and the document is available for review at the Mn/DOT District 7 Office in Mankato. This analysis determined that approximately 0.42 acres of the 36.9 acre site would need to be acquired for right-of-way purposes. The Final Section 4(f) Evaluation, including the response from the Department of the Interior, can be found in Appendix A of this Final EIS. The Lakeshore and Olson Park trails and public parks will not be impacted by the preferred alternative since all of these resources are located west of existing Highway 60 (see Figure 8B in the Draft EIS) and the new lanes will be constructed on the east side of the existing roadway.

proposed planning, other than on a large scale, in order to avoid these properties. The draft EIS reports that the State Historic Preservation Officer has concurred with determinations of eligibility but there is nothing in the document to substantiate this. Again there is insufficient information in the document.

B2 cont.

Worthington Waterfowl Production Area

Section 4.2.10 (pages 128 & 129) provides a brief discussion of the Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) Worthington Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) which is located on the northeast edge of the City of Worthington and east of existing TH-60. The draft EIS identifies the WPA as a specially protected resource under Section 4(f)/6(f) but indicates that all the proposed alternatives avoid the WPA. It is the Department's understanding from the FWS that the WPA is immediately adjacent to the existing highway. However, the draft EIS does not provide a figure for build alternatives (A, A1, C, and C1) in this area with sufficient detail to show the relationship between a new four-lane TH-60 and the WPA. In addition, even if the improvement of TH-60 to a four-lane highway in this area would not result in direct encroachment on the WPA, it could result in proximity impacts. An increase in noise levels would impair use of the WPA for its intended purposes. This should be discussed in the EIS. Section 4.2.2 discusses potential noise impacts of the proposed project but restricts the discussion to residential properties, providing no specific mention of the WPA as a potential sensitive receptor.

B3

The FWS should be provided a detailed figure showing the probable design of the build alternatives in this area and an analysis of potential proximity impacts. This would be used to seek concurrence from the FWS on a determination of project impacts to the WPA. We recommend this coordination be completed before the final EIS is released to allow for the circulation of a Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation if one is determined to be required.

It is also unclear, from the figures provided in the draft EIS, whether build alternatives in the area would involve the installation of new culverts near the WPA, and how this might impact local hydrology and the associated wetlands. This issue should be also explored in further detail with the FWS if there is any potential that new culverts or roadside ditches could adversely impact the WPA wetlands. The above issues should be coordinated with the FWS Windom Wetland Management District and Twin Cities, Minnesota, Field Office.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT COMMENTS

Wetlands

All build alternatives will have approximately the same acreage of impacted wetlands (30 to 40 acres). The draft EIS indicates wetland types and exact areas of impact will be delineated in the final EIS. However, improving the highway along the existing alignment is likely to have the least overall adverse impacts to wetlands because wetlands associated with this alternative are likely to be roadside ditches and/or previously degraded sites. The FWS is interested in mitigation efforts and will be involved with the Corps Clean Water Act permitting process. In addition, the FWS would like to be part of the technical evaluation panel for mitigation selection, as described under section 4.2.3 (Wetlands), page 118, under Mitigation.

RESPONSE

B2 The two properties that have been determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the Union Pacific Railroad and the Worthington Livestock Sale Company, are shown on Figures 3A-3D in the Draft EIS. Reconstruction of the frontage road in front of the Sale Company may require acquisition of a small amount of property for right-of-way purposes. However, acquisition of this property will not impact the integrity of the historic site. Impacts to the railroad will be avoided by the preferred alternative since it is located west of the existing Highway 60, and the roadway will be widened to the east, except for the bridge in Worthington where the railroad goes over the highway. The bridge is in poor condition and will be replaced to allow for the four-lane highway to pass underneath (see Final EIS Section 4.2.15). The Minnesota SHPO has concurred that neither of these properties will be adversely impacted by the proposed project. The Minnesota SHPO letter and all further correspondence are located in Appendix E of this Final EIS. No historic or archeological properties are anticipated to be impacted in the Iowa portion of the project, and the Iowa SHPO has concurred with this finding (see Appendix D of the Draft EIS).

COMMENT LETTER B – DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

Section 4.2.3 fails to make any mention of Executive Order 11990. On page 117, the draft EIS indicates jurisdictional wetlands delineation will be conducted once the preferred alternative is selected for the final EIS. Such delineation may be necessary for other regulatory purposes, and the acreage of wetlands potentially impacted by the project but determined to be outside the jurisdiction of Corps and/or State regulations may end up being relatively small. However, in accord with the Executive order, compensatory mitigation should be provided to fully offset all unavoidable wetland impacts because of the use of Federal funds. Section 4.2.3 in the final EIS should be revised accordingly. B4

Prairie Habitats

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has identified areas of quality prairie habitat within the project corridor, parallel to the railroad right-of-ways. Special efforts should be made to avoid impacts to these areas, and if unavoidable, to minimize impacts wherever possible. Any work that must be conducted in or adjacent to these areas should be done with strict adherence to the best management practices previously provided to MnDOT by the DNR. In addition, the contractor and/or MnDOT should be required to notify the DNR when construction activities occur in or near these areas so a biologist can be on site to provide technical assistance. B5

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT COMMENTS

Section 4.2.9 (page 127) of the draft EIS indicates that Dr. Greg Busacker of the MnDOT and Jay Hatch of the University of Minnesota were consulted regarding the Topeka shiner habitat and potential for impacts. However, there is no indication in the draft EIS, that the FWS was contacted. Considering the recent reworking of the "Topeka shiner and in-stream activities" guidelines and the proposal for critical habitat designation under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), it is essential the MnDOT coordinate with the FWS to ensure that no formal consultation, as described in the ESA, is required. B6

Prairie bush clover, *Lespedeza leptostachya*, a federally threatened species found in dry/mesic prairies, is listed by the FWS as potentially occurring in Osceola County, Iowa. There is no mention of this fact in the draft EIS. This oversight should be corrected in the final EIS. B7

SUMMARY COMMENTS

Because there is no identified preferred alternative and there is missing information in the document, as pointed out above, the Department cannot issue an opinion whether there are no feasible or prudent alternatives to the proposed action. In addition, we cannot determine that all planning necessary to minimize harm to potential, Section 4(f) eligible properties has been done. We will expect all missing information to be addressed in the final evaluation document, and expect the MnDOT to provide the Department sufficient time to review the final submission.

The Department has a continuing interest in working with the MnDOT and the Federal Highway Administration to ensure that project impacts to resources of concern to the Department are adequately addressed. For matters related to Section 4(f), please contact the Regional

RESPONSE

B3 A Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation was completed for impacts to the Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) in Worthington in February 2003, and the document is available for review at the Mn/DOT District 7 Office in Mankato. The document discusses impacts related to property acquisition, noise, and water quality. Coordination with the FWS has occurred and will continue through the final design phase of this project. The Final Section 4(f) Evaluation can be found in Appendix A of this Final EIS.

B4 Under Executive Order 11990, all wetland impacts, regardless of other federal and state regulations, will require mitigation. Mitigation commitments are discussed in Section 4.2.3 of this Final EIS.

B5 As stated in the Draft EIS, construction and construction activities that would take place in the area of the prairie areas would be restricted to the east side of existing Highway 60 away from the railroad to the extent possible to avoid impacts to the prairie communities. Coordination with the MNDNR will continue throughout the project. See Section 4.2.9 of this Final EIS.

COMMENT LETTER B – DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

Environmental Coordinator, National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office, 1709 Jackson Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102, telephone (402) 221-7286. For FWS concerns noted above, please coordinate with the Field Supervisor, Twin Cities Field Office, FWS, 4101 East 80th Street, Bloomington, MN 55425-1665, telephone: (612) 725-3548; and the District Manager, Windom Waterfowl Management District, Route 1, Box 273A, Windom, MN 56101-9663, Telephone: (507) 831-2220.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely,

for Willie R. Taylor
Director, Office of Environmental
Policy and Compliance

cc:
Mr. Peter Harff
Minnesota Department of Transportation
501 South Victory Drive
Post Office Box 4039
Mankato, Minnesota 56002-4039

RESPONSE

B6 The FWS, along with the Mn/DOT and University of Minnesota biologists, was a part of the work group that was established in 1996/97 to formulate a coordination process for this species in the southwest area of Minnesota. No impacts to Topeka Shiners are anticipated as a result of this project. See letter in Appendix E.

B7 While the prairie bush clover is listed by the FWS as potentially occurring in Osceola County, Iowa, no occurrences of the species are known in the immediate project area. An Iowa DOT field botanist has studied the project area for plant communities, including prairie bush clover, and determined that no suitable habitat exists in the area due to cultivation and other farming practices (see Final EIS Section 4.2.9).

COMMENT LETTER C – USDA-NRCS (IOWA)

United States Department of Agriculture

NRCS
Natural Resources Conservation Service
210 Walnut Street
693 Federal Building
Des Moines, IA 50309-2180

September 3, 2002

Ref: FHWA-MN-EIS-02-04-D

Mr. Peter Harff
Mn/DOT District 7
501 South Victory Drive
Post Office Box 4039
Mankato, Minnesota 56002-4039

Dear Mr. Harff:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the above-referenced project in Osceola County, Iowa. The significant resource concerns for this area have been addressed to our satisfaction. For site-specific information, I encourage you to contact our local NRCS office in Sibley, Iowa. The contact person and address is Charles H. Peacock, District Conservationist, 1672 Highway 60 Boulevard, Post Office Box 155, Sibley, Iowa 51249-7501, (712) 754-2111.

Sincerely,

Leroy Brown

Leroy Brown
State Conservationist

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RESPONSE

No response required.

COMMENT LETTER D – USDA-NRCS (MARSHALL, MN)

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
1401 Peterson Street
Marshall, Minnesota 56258
507/537-0541

SUBJECT: Highway 60 Reconstruction Project
DATE: 9/13/2002

TO: Peter Harff

Dear Sir: I have reviewed the proposal for Highway 60 reconstruction in Nobles County MN. Your draft ESI looks good and our office has no comments at this time. A farmland conversion impact rating determination will be required when the route is finalized. We will assist you at that time in filling out that form.

Joe Kristoff
Soil Specialist

Cc:

RESPONSE

No response required.

COMMENT LETTER E – USDA-NRCS (ST. PAUL, MN)

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
375 Jackson Street, Suite 600
St. Paul, MN 55101-1854
Phone: (612) 602-7900
Fax: (612) 602-7914

November 21, 2002

File Code: 190-15-13

IN REPLY
REFER TO: Environmental review for FHWA-MN-EIS-02-04-D. TH 60 in Nobles County.

Mr. Peter Harff
Mn/DOT District 7
501 S. Victory Drive
PO Box 4039
Mankato, MN 56002-4039

Dear Mr. Harff:

1. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has reviewed the above referenced project. The project sponsors are not USDA program benefit recipients, thus the wetland conservation provisions of the 1985 Food Security act, as amended are not applicable. It should be noted, however, that actions by a non-USDA participant third party (project sponsor) which impact agricultural wetlands owned or operated by USDA participants, may jeopardize the owner/operators USDA eligibility. If such impacts are anticipated, the owner/operator should contact the county Farm Service Agency (FSA) office to consider an application for a third party exemption.

2. As you have already identified in the DRAFT EIS, the following agencies may have federal or state wetlands, cultural resources, water quality or threatened and endangered species jurisdiction in the proposed project, and should be consulted.

   - Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE)
   - US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
   - Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) - Minnesota Wetlands Conservation Act
   - Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)
   - Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)
   - State Historic Preservation Officer/State Archaeologist (SHPO)

3. If as a result of your proposal you are affecting agricultural lands, and if any federal monies are involved, it is a requirement that a Farmland Policy Protection Act (FPPA) site assessment be appropriately filed. Because of the location and type of activity proposed, this project this project may impact agricultural lands. PFFA site assessments are conducted by local NRCS personnel who review the project for possible effects on unique, prime or statewide important farmland. As indicated in the DRAFT EIS, once the final alternative has been selected, refer the specific FPPA request to Joseph Kristoff, Area Soils Specialist at (507) 537-0541 or joseph.kristoff@mn.usda.gov. **E1**

Sincerely,

PAUL FLYNN
State Resource Conservationist

The Natural Resources Conservation Service works hand-in-hand with the American people to conserve natural resources on private lands.

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RESPONSE

E1 In accordance with the Farmland Protection Policy Act, the Farmland Conversion Form (AD1006) was completed and submitted to the local NRCS office.

COMMENT LETTER F – USCOE-ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT

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

REPLY TO ATTENTION OF

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

October 1, 2002

Mr. Peter Harff
Minnesota Department of Transportation
District 7
501 South Victory Drive
P.O. Box 4039
Mankato, MN 56002-4039

Dear Mr. Harff:

I received your letter dated August 26, 2002, with the enclosed Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed reconstruction of Highway 60 in Nobles County, Minnesota and Osceola County, Iowa. Rock Island District staff reviewed the information you provided and have the following comments.

a. Based on the information included in the EIS, this project is outside Rock Island District's civil works boundaries. If you haven't already done so, please request comments from our St. Paul District office at 190 Fifth Street East, St. Paul, MN 55101-1638. **F1**

b. This office regulates discharges of dredged and fill materials into wetlands and other waters of the United States within Iowa (under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act). In Minnesota, St. Paul District regulates those same Section 404 waters. Since the Highway 60 project appears to impact waters of the United States in both states, Section 404 authorization is required from both Districts. Please submit complete applications for Section 404 authorization to the Districts as early as possible. The applications should include final wetland delineations, details of impacts to wetlands and other waters of the United States, and types and relative functions of any wetlands to be impacted. **F2**

Should you have any questions concerning this letter or permitting requirements within the Rock Island District, please write me or telephone me at 309/794-5379.

Sincerely,

Neal Johnson
Project Manager
Regulatory Branch

RESPONSE

F1 The St. Paul District received a copy of the Draft EIS, but did not provide any comments on the document or the project.

F2 Applications for Section 404 authorization will be completed closer to construction of the proposed improvements and will include all appropriate information.

Copies Furnished:

Mr. James Rost
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, Iowa 50010

Mr. Robert Whiting
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District
190 Fifth Street East
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1638

COMMENT LETTER G – MINNESOTA POLLUTION CONTROL AGENCY

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

October 2, 2002

Mr. Peter Harff, Project Manager
Mn/DOT District 7
501 South Victory Drive
P. O. Box 4039
Mankato, MN 56002-4039

RE: Trunk Highway 60
State Projects 5305-51 and 5306-42
Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

Dear Mr. Harff:

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has completed its review of the above-referenced document. The proposed project includes the reconstruction of approximately 14.3 miles of Highway 60 as a four-lane roadway from I-90 to 120th Street in Osceola County, Iowa. Relative to those areas where the MPCA has regulatory responsibility, we have the following comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

Pedestrian and bicycle modes: Choose a safe and efficient solution for pedestrian and bicycle traffic across TH 60 at the Swift Premium plant in Worthington. G1

Material recycling/disposal: The chosen alternative will specify the project site planned for highway reconstruction. Will the material removed be recycled, or demolished? If the material is not reused, where will it be disposed? G2

Noise: It is stated that the chosen alternative will include noise impact mitigation if a noise impact is identified, and is feasible and reasonable. However, if an impact is identified and no feasible or reasonable mitigation is available or suitable, a Noise Exemption from the MPCA would be required per Minn Stat. sec. 116.07 subd. 2a(2). MnDOT is urged to contact staff of the noise program in advance if a condition of noncompliance is expected to occur. G3

Stormwater: As noted in the DEIS, the chosen alternative will require a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Construction from the MPCA. The DEIS states that Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be used for both temporary and permanent erosion and stormwater control measures. Stormwater detention systems will be built to conform to the general permit requirements, preventing any "bounce" of water in wetlands. Ponds may have to be larger than the MPCA normally requires - watersheds may dictate this. Your contact for the General Stormwater Permit is Mark Jacobs at (507) 537-7132. G4

Water Quality: Water sources and waterways must be protected from incidents involving eroded sediments and spills. The project alternatives are located within two watershed districts (WSD). The Heron Lake WSD is within the Mississippi River Basin and the Okabena-Ocheda WSD is within the Missouri River Basin. Sensitive areas such as waterway crossings, or waters close to lakes and ponds will need to have the highest level of erosion protection and emergency preparedness such as passive containment structures. Temporary and permanent sediment and erosion control measures must provide protection. Changes in hydrology and water quality will be caused by a number of factors: a nearly 50% increase in impervious area; removal/reduction of tree and shrub canopy and roots; removal or compaction of moisture absorbing soils; and an increase in shallow rooted grass cover. As stated, contaminants associated with highway runoff G5

520 Lafayette Rd. N.; St. Paul, MN 55155-4194; (651) 296-6300 (Voice); (651) 282-5332 (TTY)
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RESPONSE

G1 Based on discussions with the Swift plant and crash data, pedestrian safety at this crossing does not appear to be a major issue, and no improvements are proposed. See Final EIS Section 4.1.8.

G2 The degree to which the inplace materials will be recycled has not yet been determined. Disposal of excess materials and debris from this project, such as bituminous, concrete, etc., will be done in accordance with Mn/DOT Standard Specifications for Construction, 2104.3C and Minnesota Rule 7035.2825. In particular, excess materials and debris will not be placed in wetlands, floodplains, or other sensitive areas.

G3 Noise impact mitigation analysis has been completed and is discussed in Section 4.2.2 of this Final EIS. Where noncompliance conditions are expected to occur, Mn/DOT will work with the MPCA to obtain a Noise Exemption prior to construction.

G4 Storm water detention systems will be designed to meet the requirements of the NPDES permit, as well as the watershed districts and any other applicable agencies.

such as nutrients/sediments, deicing and anti-icing compounds, grease and oil, heavy metals and other materials will be the target of water quality efforts. Rainfall events will increase the pollutant loading and strain the ability of the existing watersheds to capture and retain pollutants resulting in additional degradation. The project sediment and erosion control plan must address in detail how sediment will be prevented from discharging. Applying BMPs in the design and application of the runoff control system typically compensates for the increase in pollutant loading. Mitigation of these impacts can be accomplished with proper design if they are not underestimated. If water quality violations are caused by this project, enforcement action may be taken by the MPCA. Please work with the local watershed authorities when planning for mitigation.

G5, cont

Wetlands: The DEIS notes the project will require a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification. If wetlands are affected by the chosen alternative, you will need to make a self-determination of water quality compliance. Again, if water quality violations are caused by this project, enforcement action may be taken by the MPCA.

Disclaimer: This comment letter does not constitute approval by the MPCA of any or all elements of the project for the purpose of pending permit action by the MPCA. We have attempted to identify and consult with interested program staff and attempted to identify the MPCA permits that may be required. However, additional comments or requests for information may be required in the future to address specific issues related to the development of the MPCA permit(s). Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the project proposer to secure any required permits and to comply with any requisite permit conditions.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this Draft EIS. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact me at (651) 296-7823.

Sincerely,

Jim Seaberg
Transportation Planning & Environment
Regional Environmental Management
Metro District

JS:smd

cc: Tom Balcom, DNR
Judy Mader, SW/REM

RESPONSE

G5 A detailed erosion control plan will be developed during the final design stage of the project and will be adhered to during construction. The design of the erosion control plan will allow Mn/DOT maintenance staff to contain a spill and will meet all permit requirements.

COMMENT LETTER H – MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-4010

November 5, 2002

Peter Harff
MDOT District 7 – Mankato/Windom
501 South Victory Drive
P.O. Box 4039
Mankato, MN 56002

RE: TH 60 Reconstruction Project (S.P. 53-05-51 &5306-42), Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Nobles County

Dear Mr. Harff:

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has completed our review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the above-referenced project located along 14 miles of TH 60 between I-90 and the Iowa Border in Nobles County. We offer the following comments:

The Minnesota Natural Heritage has reviewed the document to determine if previously identified rare plant or animal species or other significant natural features are included in the document. Fig 3B and 3C are missing a known prairie remnant located in the Northwest ¼ of Section 4, T101N R40W. This remnant is also missing in the table on pp 5-10. The chosen alternative should specify that all native prairie remnants along the project shall be fenced off with orange safety netting to prevent driving or parking of vehicles and storage of construction or borrow materials. **H1**

Except for alternative D (no build alternative), all alternatives would have substantial impacts to wetlands ranging from 29.4 to 39.3 acres. Farmed wetlands do fall under the jurisdiction of the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) and should be included in the wetland analysis. The crossings of Public Watercourses should be identified as points where a DNR Public Waters Work Permit may be required. **H2**

We have no further comments or concerns at this time. If you have questions regarding this letter, please e-mail me at peter.leete@dnr.state.mn.us or call at (651) 297-4313.

Sincerely,

Peter Leete
Interregional Corridors Transportation Team
Office of Management and Budget Services

C: Don Nelson, South Region (region 4)
ERDB file 20000785

Attachments

RESPONSE

H1 The known prairie remnant has been added to Figure 3H in the Final EIS. Fencing the prairie remnant areas during construction is included as another avoidance measure, along with restricting construction activities away from the railroad and revegetating disturbed areas with native species. See Final EIS Section 4.2.9.

H2 A jurisdictional delineation has been completed for this project, and all wetlands potentially impacted by the preferred alternative, including farmed wetlands, are presented in the Wetland section of this document. The DNR Public Waters Permit is included in the list of potential permits/approvals in Section 5.0 of the Draft EIS.

COMMENT LETTER I – IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Iowa Department of Transportation

HIGHWAY DIVISION – DISTRICT #3 OFFICE
2800 GORDON DRIVE, P.O. BOX 987 712-276-1451
SIOUX CITY, IA 51102-0987 FAX: 712-276-2822

October 15, 2002

REF: Osceola County
IA60
Bigelow Area

Mark Benson
SEH
3535 Vadnais Center Drive
St. Paul, Minnesota 55110

Dear Mr. Benson:

The Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) participated in the September 19, 2002, public hearing and offers the following input as part of the proposed Highway 60 Reconstruction Project from 120th St., in Osceola County, Iowa, north to I-90 in Worthington, Minnesota.

Iowa DOT supports an east bypass of Bigelow at the Iowa/Minnesota State Line. Iowa is designing a four-lane facility for IA60 from Le Mars north to near the Minnesota State Line. The design concept being implemented in Iowa involves providing a free-flow facility with bypasses of all eight (8) communities within the corridor segment. Upon completion, it is not intended to have any reduced speed limit postings or traffic signals along the entire mainline throughout the corridor. Iowa DOT is desirous that Minnesota DOT perpetuate a very similar TH60 design from the State line north to I-90.

Iowa views the IA60 corridor improvement as a major transportation investment to accommodate economic growth and provide a high-type facility that promotes the movement of goods and commerce with unimpeded interstate traffic movements. It is forecast that this corridor will continue to experience steady growth in truck traffic as part of the corridor traffic mix.

RESPONSE

No response required.

The two (2) States have been coordinating the Highway 60 corridor improvement for several years. Upon completion, this will provide a direct route between Sioux City and Minneapolis. Iowa remains committed to completion of the entire corridor.

Thanks for the opportunity to provide input on this project and for continuance of State cooperation in the development of a major transportation facility improvement.

Sincerely,

Richard D. Michaelis
District Engineer

RDM:kh
cc: Jon Huseby, District Engineer
MN DOT, Mankato, MN

Peter Harff, Project Engineer
MN DOT, Mankato, MN

File

COMMENT LETTER J – IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Fields of Opportunities

STATE OF IOWA

THOMAS J. VILSACK, GOVERNOR
SALLY J. PEDERSON, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
JEFFREY R. VONK, DIRECTOR

October 2, 2002

Peter Harff
Mn/DOT District 7
PO Box 4039
Mankato, MN 56002-4039

Re: AIR QUALITY PROGRAM COMMENTS
Draft Environmental Impact Statement
FHWA-MN-EIS-02-04-D
Trunk Highway 60 in Nobles County, MN and Osceola County, Iowa
Minn.Proj. NH 060
S.P. 5305-51 and 5306-42 (TH 60)

Dear Mr. Harff:

I am writing in response to the recent correspondence that was received concerning the above referenced project. These comments are only applicable to the department's Air Quality Program. The draft EIS is being routed to other program areas in the department and they will be providing comments separately.

The area is in attainment for all criteria pollutants as mandated in the Clean Air Act of 1990. Current requirements would not impede construction. At this time the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) does not have any proposed criteria pollutant requirements to prevent construction, however, we are unable to predict future EPA requirements.

There are several existing air quality regulations in Iowa that may relate to the project I will bring to your attention.

- Demolition of any buildings will trigger the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAPS) for asbestos. Regulations apply before renovation and demolition projects begin. Before renovation or demolition, a thorough asbestos inspection is required. Thorough inspection means all suspect asbestos containing materials require sampling and laboratory analysis or are assumed to contain asbestos and handled in accordance with the regulation. All facility demolitions require submission of a two-page demolition notification form to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), even if no asbestos is found. Upon postdate of submitted forms, ten working days must pass before any disturbance of asbestos containing material takes place. Before demolition or renovation occurs, asbestos-containing materials must be removed. If you need more information, the Department's Asbestos Program Coordinator is Marion Burnside, (515) 281-8443. **J1**

- The department has regulations over open burning. These regulations are contained in 567 Iowa Administrative Code rule 23.3. This citation can be found in the enclosed rule packet. **J2**

- The department has regulations on fugitive dust. These regulations are contained in 567 Iowa Administrative Code paragraph 23.3(2)"c" which is also in the enclosed materials. **J3**

7900 Hickman Road, Suite 1 / Urbandale, Iowa 50322 — Report Smoking Vehicles 1-866-TAILPIPE
515-242-5100 FAX 515-242-5094 http://www.iowacleanair.com/

RESPONSE

J1 The Iowa DOT has standard procedures to address the requirements of the asbestos NESHAP program. This includes using certified inspectors to check for asbestos and licensed asbestos contractors to remove any identified asbestos materials (under service agreement contract). The Iowa DOT's standard specification 2538.02 is meant to cover the Iowa DNR's NESHAP notification requirements, with notification being made at least two weeks in advance. However, this procedure will not be necessary for this particular project since there are no commercial or residential acquisitions in Iowa under the preferred alternative; and therefore, there are no building demolitions anticipated in Iowa as part of this project.

J2 The Iowa DOT does not allow open burning except as provided in the Iowa DNR regulations. For example, burning of clearing and grubbing waste is allowed provided it is performed in accordance with the Iowa DNR regulation (standard specification 2101.02). Although demolitions will not be necessary for this project in Iowa, demolition of buildings by burning and the burning of demolition waste are prohibited under standard specification 2538.01.

- Sources of air emissions are required to be covered by an air quality construction permit. An example of a possible emission source from the construction activities that would need a permit include a portable asphalt, rock crushing or concrete plant. The regulations that cover the permitting requirements are found in Chapter 22.

J4

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me at (515) 281-7212 or via e-mail at monica.wnuk@dnr.state.ia.us.

Sincerely,

Monica M. Wnuk

Monica Wnuk
Program Development Section

Enclosure: Chapters 22 and 23 (IAC)

RESPONSE

J3 Construction of this project will adhere to the Iowa DOT provisions for the handling of fugitive dust as stated in standard specification 1107.07.

J4 The permitting of a contractor's equipment (portable asphalt, rock crushing or concrete plant) is the contractor's responsibility, and the requirement for a contractor to abide by all applicable safety, health, pollution and sanitation laws is included in standard specification 1107.07.

COMMENT LETTER K – IOWA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Department of Economic Development
IOWA
SMART IDEA™

September 16, 2002

Mr. Peter Harff
Minnesota Department of Transportation
Transportation District 7, PO Box 4039
501 S. Victory Drive
Mankato, MN 56002-4039

RE: IA030906-105

Dear Mr. Harff:

The Iowa State Clearinghouse has performed the required review of your grant application for the Highway 60 Reconstruction Project, Environmental Impact funding in accordance with the Iowa Intergovernmental Review System.

The review:
- did not generate any comments from those who examined the file.
- found no serious environmental problems which may result from the project or program.
- indicated that the proposal conforms to pertinent planning to this area.
- did not show that the proposal would result in duplicating any existing activity or project.

The Clearinghouse is pleased to recommend that the application be approved for funding. A copy of this letter must be sent to the federal agency as evidence that the review has been performed.

Sincerely,

Steven R. McCann

Steven McCann
Federal Funds Coordinator
515/242-4719
SRM:rao

Thomas J. Vilsack, Governor | Sally J. Pederson, Lieutenant Governor | C.J. Niles, Director
200 East Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50309 | Phone: 515.242.4700 | Fax: 515.242.4809 | www.iowasmartidea.com

RESPONSE

No response required.

COMMENT LETTER L – CITY OF WORTHINGTON, MINNESOTA

OFFICE
OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF
WORTHINGTON

ROBERT J. DEMUTH

September 24, 2002

Peter Harff, Mn/DOT Project Manager
Mn/DOT District 7
501 South Victory Drive
Mankato, MN 56002-4039

Re: Highway 60 Reconstruction Project, Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Mr. Harff:

This letter is submitted to provide comments of the Mayor and City Council regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), dated July 2002, for the Highway 60 Reconstruction Project.

At its September 23, 2002 meeting, the Worthington City Council did vote to recommend the "Existing Alignment" as the preferred alternative for the Highway 60 Reconstruction project. This vote was made in reference to the alternatives impacting the immediate Worthington area and did not include discussion of a preference between Alternative A or A1. It is requested that an excerpt of minutes be allowed to be forwarded and included as an attachment to these comments following their approval by the Council at its October 14, 2002 meeting.

Although Council did vote in preference of the Existing Alignment, there remain concerns as to the severance of local traffic routes and the isolation of portions of the community which will result from the access closures represented on Figure 3D in the DEIS and detailed in the preliminary layout electronically forwarded to the City on August 29, 2002. The potential impacts of such access closures and/or from the manner in which they are implemented includes promotion of blight, decreased performance in emergency response, and an increase in necessary maintenance operations. Specific closure issues that are identified at this time include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following: L1

- The need to establish a four leg intersection at C.S.A.H. 35 and T.H. 59/60 to provide additional access to Kragness Avenue and East Avenue. L2

303 Ninth Street * P.O. Box 279 * Worthington, MN 56187 * 507-372-8600 * Fax No. 507-372-8630

Printed on recycled paper

RESPONSE

L1 The purpose of closing accesses is to improve safety and mobility on the highway. In business areas, restricting access also has the benefit of improving internal traffic flow and gives an orderly appearance. Mn/DOT has worked with the City to identify accesses that should remain open.

L2 A four-legged intersection at CSAH 35 and Highway 60 is included in the preliminary design. See Figure 3L in this Final EIS.

COMMENT LETTER L – CITY OF WORTHINGTON, MINNESOTA

- The need to maintain continuity in the street/highway system serving the area southeast of T.H. 59/60 between Nobles Street and C.S.A.H. 35. | L3

- The need to maintain the 1st Avenue corridor without additional impacts to residential properties through continued inclusion of the new 1st Avenue bridge as depicted in Figure 3D or other equivalent means. | L4

- Minimization of the creation of dead end streets. Proper termination of any dead end streets created. | L5

The Mayor and Council do request adequate opportunity to communicate with design staff as layout and plan development continues to further discuss these and other access issues. Council seeks to be assured that all means to minimize access closures and their impacts are fully explored and implemented as warranted.

It is also desired to comment on the importance of all T.H. 60 corridor improvements and the pursuit of funding opportunities. It is anticipated that a constructive relationship between the City and the Department will aid in timely project development to ensure maximum opportunity to capture available funding.

For the Mayor and Council

Robert J. Demuth, Mayor

RESPONSE

L3 Access from Highway 60 to the Morningside neighborhood will be provided at Nobles Street and from CSAH 35 at Nobles Street and a new connection with Circle Drive. Mn/DOT and the City of Worthington have discussed connecting Douglas Avenue to Nobles Street and keeping the Douglas Avenue intersection with East Avenue (if space allows).

L4 Access to 1st Avenue will be maintained. After consultation with the City, Mn/DOT decided to shift the Highway 60 alignment farther east. This will allow the existing Highway 60 alignment to be modified to connect 1st Avenue with Oxford Street. A 1st Avenue bridge will not be constructed.

L5 Mn/DOT has met with the City to discuss minimizing dead-end streets. It was agreed that dead-ends at the ends of Morningside Avenue will be acceptable. Mn/DOT will explore constructing a cul-de-sac on Charles Avenue. Douglas Avenue and East Avenue will be connected to improve internal circulation, and additional connections will be considered closer to the time of construction.

COMMENT LETTER M – RDC

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION — Form R-3

PROJECT NUMBER #2003-12	

PROJECT APPLICANT
MN Department of Transportation and
Iowa Department of Transportation

ADDRESS OF APPLICANT

MN/DOT District 7, % Peter Harff
501 South Victory Drive, PO Box 4039
Mankato, MN 56002-4039

Iowa Dept of Transportation
% Richard Michaelis
PO Box 987
Sioux City, IA 51102-0987

PROJECT TITLE Highway 60 Reconstruction Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement	PROJECT COST N.A.

DATE PROJECT NOTIFICATION RECEIVED BY

August 22, 2002

DATE FINAL REVIEW SENT TO APPLICANT

October 11, 2002

CONSULTATION BETWEEN THE SRDC, APPLICANT, AND AFFECTED GOVERNMENT UNITS AND AGENCIES

WAS, (WAS NOT) (circle one) REQUIRED.

DATE OF CONSULTATION _____ PLACE CONSULTATION HELD _____

COMMENTS:

FINAL REVIEW COMMENTS:

The Board of Directors of the Southwest Regional Development Commission, on October 10, 2002, reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Highway 60 Reconstruction Project (staff analysis of the project attached). The SRDC Board found this project consistent with regional goals and policies.

This Form is in compliance with Executive Order 12372

COMMENT LETTER M – RDC

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

PROJECT REVIEW AGENDA ANALYSIS FORM

AGENDA ITEM: 4 MEETING DATE: October 10, 2002

SUBJECT: Highway 60 Reconstruction Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

BOARD ACTION __X__ STATUS OR SCHEDULED REPORT ___ INFORMATION ___

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

Description: the proposed reconstruction of TH60 from Iowa to Worthington is considered a Federal Class I Action because of the potential for significant impacts on the natural and physical environment. A draft EIS discusses all reasonable alternatives to the proposed action and summarizes the results.

Because the proposed project crosses the MN/IA state line, the MNDOT & IDOT are working together. IDOT anticipates complete reconstruction of Highway 60 as a four-lane from LeMars to 120th Street in 2006. The location and timing is dependent on the MNDOT process and decision to bypass or remain on the existing alignment at Bigelow. SRDC staff has participated in both the Technical Advisory Committee and the Project Advisory Committee for this project; the SRDC did submit comment before the EIS began in relation to the potential of an impact on Environmental Justice; and the SRDC has advocated for the improvement / 4-lane of Highway 60 for more than 15 years.

The draft EIS addressed all required areas for the proposed project.

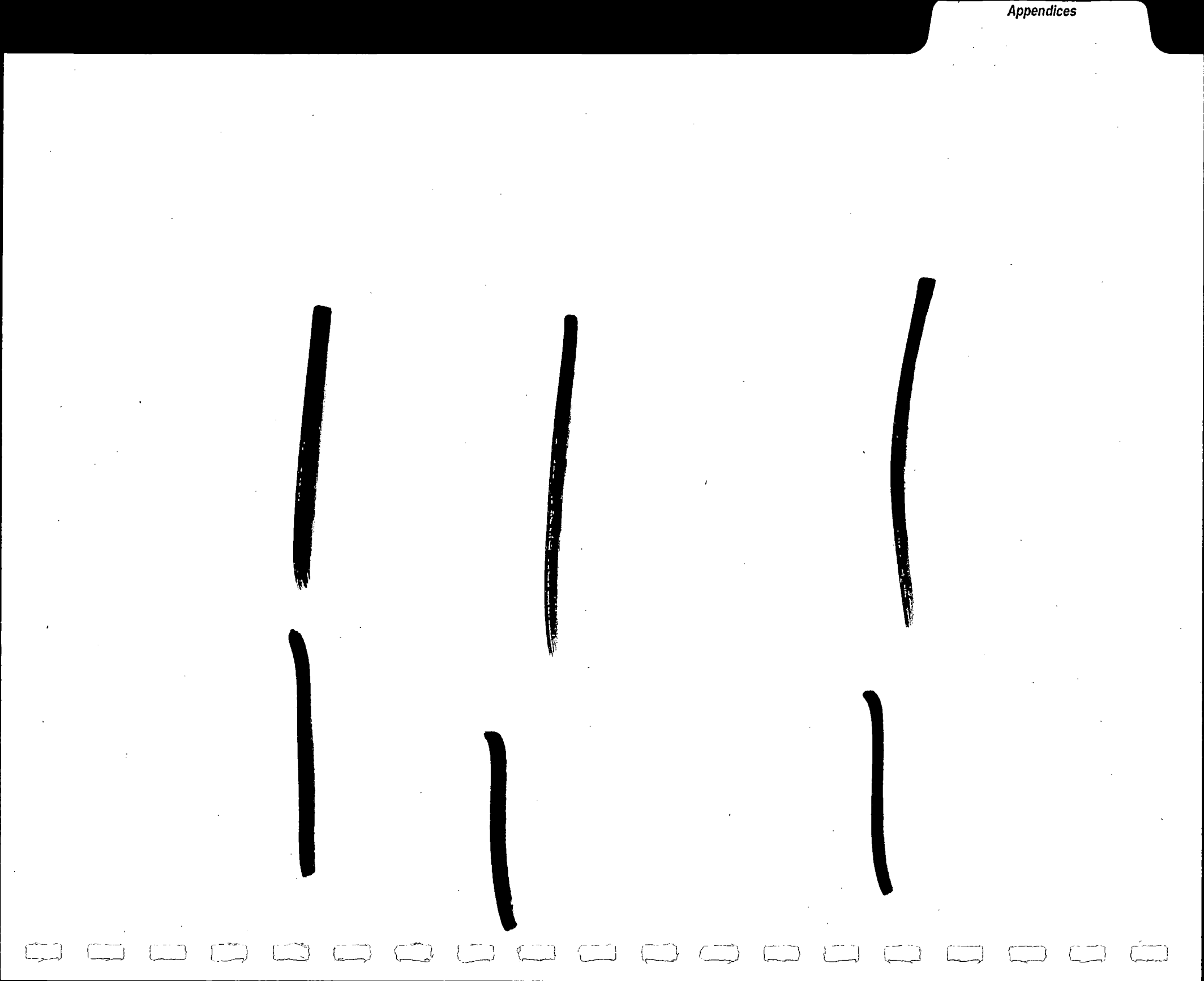
The proposed project is consistent with the goals & policies of the Regional Development Commission.

Staff Comments: The one area of concern staff has is in relation to the projected Average Daily Traffic. The TH60 corridor is experiencing growth of industries beyond the limits of the proposed project. Staff believes that this industry growth will have an impact on overall ADT and specifically on Heavy Commercial ADT through the project limits. M1

Review time: 1 hour

RESPONSE

M1 The use of historic trends to forecast future travel demand is the widely accepted method for non-metropolitan areas. In addition, the preferred alternative for the corridor includes reconstruction of the highway to four lanes, which has the capacity to carry traffic volumes much greater than the projected ADT for 2030 at an acceptable level of service, including heavy commercial traffic.



Appendix A

Final Section 4(f) Evaluation

FINAL SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

Highway 60 Reconstruction Project

Between I-90 in Nobles County, Minnesota
and 120th Street in Osceola County, Iowa

Prepared for:
Minnesota Department of Transportation – District 7

State Project Nos. 5305-51 and 5306-42

June 2004

Table of Contents

List of Figures

1.0 SECTION 4(F) EVALUATION

The Section 4(f) legislation as established under the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 USC 303, 23 USC 138) provides protection for publicly owned parks, recreation areas, public and privately owned historic sites, and wildlife and/or waterfowl refuges from conversion to a transportation use. The FHWA may not approve the use of land from a significant publicly owned park, recreation area or wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or any significant historic site unless a determination is made that:

- There is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of land from the property; and
- The action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from such use (23 CFR 771.135).

Additional protection is provided for outdoor recreational lands under the Section 6(f) legislation (16 USC 4602-8(f) (30)) where Land and Water Conservation (LAWCON) funds were used for the planning, acquisition, or development of the property. These properties may be converted to highway use, but only if replacement land of the same fair market value and equal usefulness is made available.

The purpose of this Final Section 4(f) Evaluation is to document the information ultimately required by the Secretary of Transportation to make a decision regarding the use of properties protected by Section 4(f) and/or Section 6(f) legislation proposed for acquisition.

This document describes all identified and potential Section 4(f) and/or 6(f) properties that may be acquired or partially acquired for the proposed Trunk Highway 60 reconstruction, potential impacts on those properties, coordination with the administering agency, and possible mitigation measures to minimize impacts.

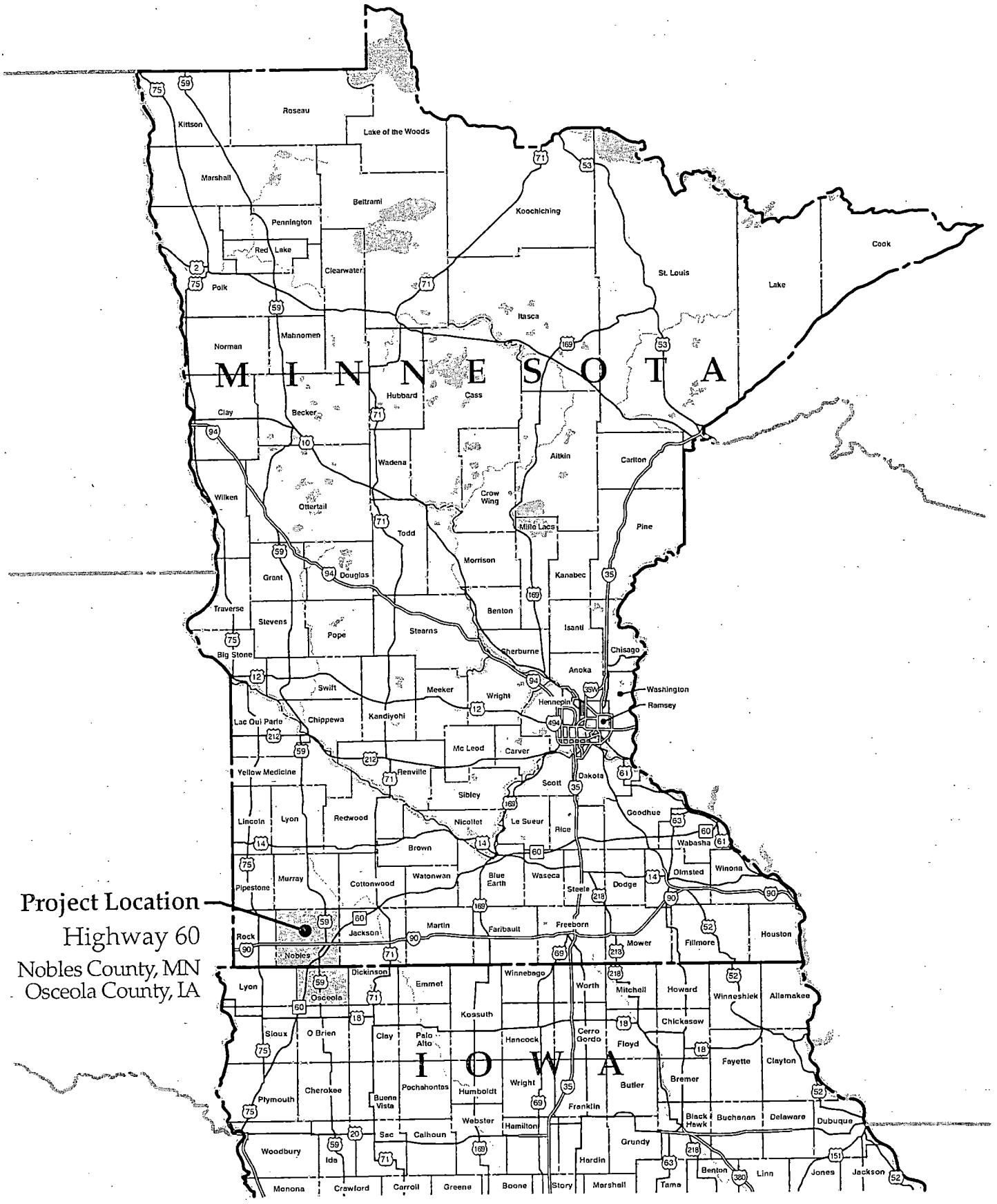
The Section 4(f) process requires that any impacts from use of a park, recreation area, historic site, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge for highway purposes be evaluated along with the proposed highway construction/reconstruction activity. An inventory of properties of these types was completed based on a review of the design concept drawings and the right-of-way acquisition requirements.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND NEED FOR PROJECT

The proposed project involves reconstruction of approximately 14.3 miles of Highway 60 from 1.8 miles south of the Minnesota-Iowa border (120th Street) to the interchange of Highway 60 and Interstate 90 in Worthington, Minnesota (see Figures 1 and 2). The preferred alternative for the project will reconstruct the highway to four lanes, bypassing the City of Bigelow to the east, then continuing on the existing alignment through Worthington (see Figure 2). Included in the proposed improvements is the reconstruction of the Highway 60/Highway 59 (Oxford Street) intersection in Worthington to make Highway 60 the through movement, reconstruction of the Union Pacific (UP) Railroad bridge to accommodate the expanded roadway and correct drainage problems, and the construction of frontage roads to maintain access for existing businesses and residences.

The primary purpose for the Highway 60 reconstruction project is to maintain system continuity. Currently, Highway 60 in Minnesota is predominantly four lanes between Worthington and Windom. The Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) is currently in the planning process for reconstructing Highway 60 as a four-lane roadway from Le Mars to 120th Street in Osceola County, Iowa near the Minnesota-Iowa border. The reconstruction of Highway 60 from Worthington to 120th Street as a four-lane roadway would complete the four-lane section from Le Mars, Iowa to Windom, Minnesota, enhancing the continuity of roadway design and mobility.

The project also provides the opportunity to address the deteriorating physical condition of the pavement on Highway 60, correct design deficiencies, such as limited sight distance and absence of turn lanes, address the movement of trucks and farm vehicles on the highway, and increase roadway capacity in Worthington to accommodate future traffic volumes.



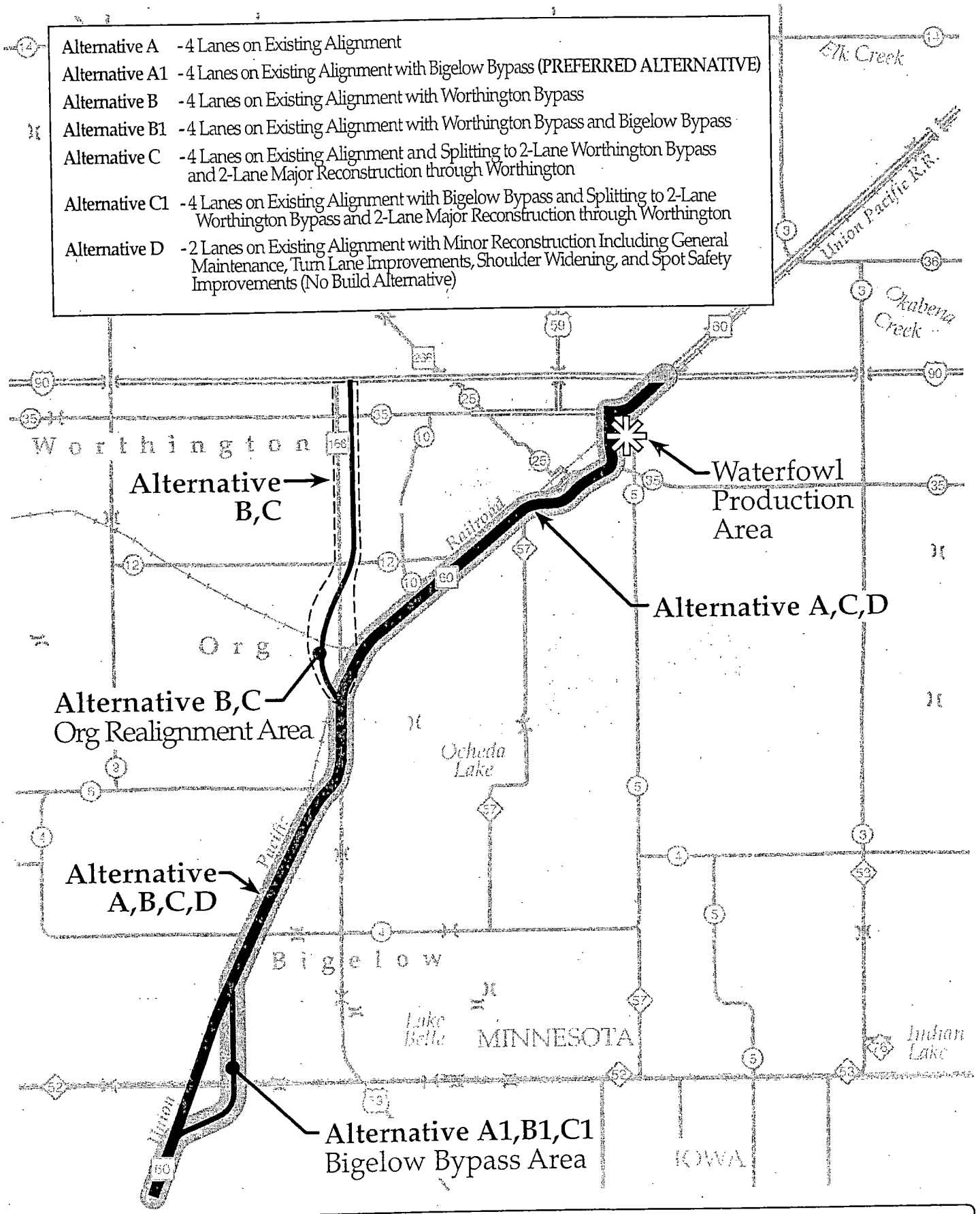
MINNESOTA 60

Highway 60
Final Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 1
State/County Location Map

North

February 2004



MINNESOTA 60

Highway 60
Final Section 4(f) Evaluation

Figure 2
Project Location Map

North

February 2004

3.0 SECTION 4(F) PROPERTY

3.1 WATERFOWL PRODUCTION AREA

Description of Waterfowl Production Area

The Worthington Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) is located in the City of Worthington between Oxford Street and CSAH 35 and east of Highway 60 (see Figure 3). The size of the WPA is approximately 36.9 acres and is owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The Windom Wetland Management District is responsible for managing WPAs in the region, including Worthington.

The Worthington WPA was established in 1995 as a result of several organizations and local members of the Worthington community interested in forming a partnership with the USFWS to preserve and restore wetland and tall grass prairie habitat for waterfowl, other migratory birds and resident wildlife, and specifically to develop and use this site to promote environmental education and interpretation. Many of the partners in the project contributed time and/or money to restore and develop the area for wildlife and community benefits. The WPA is used extensively by local school groups, agencies, clubs, and community residents to teach about the human relationship to the environment and the long-term benefits this relationship has for wildlife and for people. Hunting is prohibited on the property due to its location within the City of Worthington. Facilities include a parking area, nature trail, observation blind, observation dock, and waterfowl nesting structures.

Access to the WPA is provided by East Clary Street via either Highway 60 or County Road 5. There are no similarly used lands in the vicinity.

No LAWCON funds have been used in the development of the Worthington WPA; therefore, the requirements of Section 6(f) do not apply. No other clauses exist regarding ownership.

Impacts to Waterfowl Production Area

The Highway 60 Reconstruction Project included a variety of alternatives as presented in the Draft EIS. These alternatives included the following (see Figure 2):

- Alternative A – Existing Alignment: Reconstruct Highway 60 as four lanes on existing alignment.
- Alternative B – Worthington Bypass: Reconstruct four lanes on existing alignment to Org and construct four-lane westerly bypass of Worthington.
- Alternative C – Two-Lane Worthington Split: Reconstruct four lanes on existing alignment to Org, construct two-lane westerly bypass of

Worthington, and reconstruct two lanes on existing alignment through Worthington.

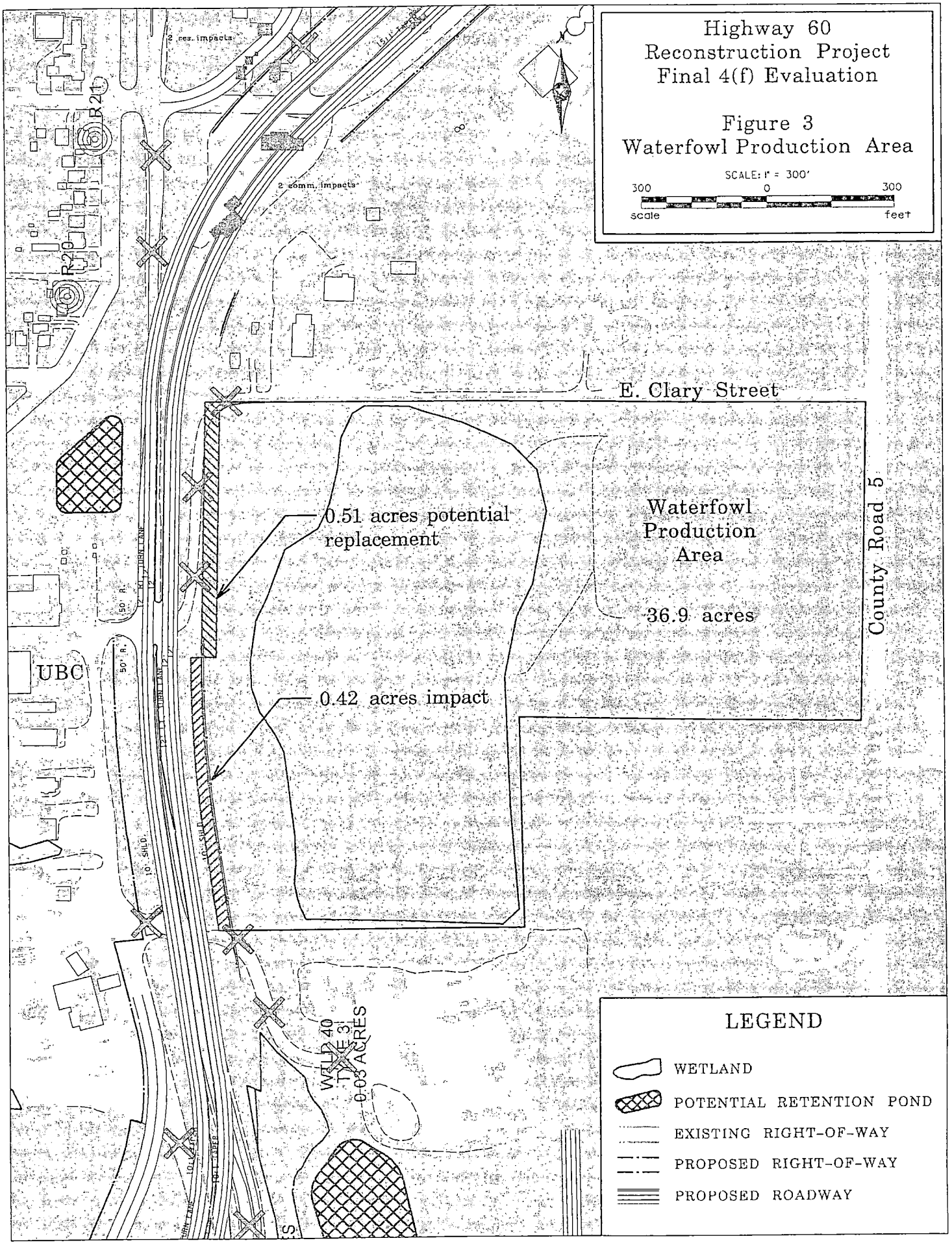
- Alternative D – No-Build: Two lanes on existing alignment with minor reconstruction including general maintenance, turn lane improvements, shoulder widening, and spot safety improvements.

All alternatives included a subalternative (noted by a 1 in the Draft EIS) that bypasses the City of Bigelow near the Minnesota-Iowa border.

Impacts to the Worthington WPA would be avoided if Alternatives B, C, or D were chosen as the alignment for the reconstruction of Highway 60. However, the Existing Alignment (Alternative A1) was selected as the preferred alternative at the conclusion of the Draft EIS process. Reasons for choosing this alternative include the following:

- Best addresses the primary purpose of the project, which is to maintain system continuity.
- Worthington is a destination for the majority (85 percent) of traffic on Highway 60.
- A bypass does not address safety and traffic flow concerns along the current roadway within Worthington.
- The additional distance on the bypass and I-90 (approximately 2.5 miles) would result in no time savings for the through traveler and would introduce new operational difficulties.

The WPA will be affected by the reconstruction of Highway 60 through Worthington under the preferred alternative. The proposed improvements will impact approximately 0.42 acres of the WPA property for highway right-of-way (see Figure 3). The area impacted includes restored native prairie and several trees planted along the west boundary of the WPA that are intended to act as a visual barrier to the highway. None of the facilities associated with the WPA or the use of those facilities by humans or wildlife will be directly impacted by the proposed project. Access to East Clary Street via Highway 60 will be closed upon completion of the proposed project, but the County Road 5 route will remain.


Highway 60
Reconstruction Project
Final 4(f) Evaluation
Figure 3
Waterfowl Production Area
SCALE: 1" = 300'
300
0
300
scale
feet
E. Clary Street
County Road 5
0.51 acres potential replacement
0.42 acres impact
Waterfowl Production Area
36.9 acres
UBC
2 res. impacts
2 comm. impacts
WELL 40
TYPE 3
0.03 ACRES
LEGEND
WETLAND
POTENTIAL RETENTION POND
EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY
PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY
PROPOSED ROADWAY

Noise impacts to the WPA are anticipated to be minor. The WPA is currently adjacent to Highway 60 and is being used by wildlife despite existing noise levels. Noise levels were monitored at various locations along the corridor for the Final EIS. One of the receptor sites just north of the WPA (R20, see Figure 3) is approximately the same distance from the existing Highway 60 alignment as the closest western edge of the wetland associated with the WPA is from the highway under the preferred alternative. Based on the noise analysis at this receptor site, the increase in noise levels at the western edge of the WPA's wetland is expected to be approximately 2 dBA, which is barely perceptible to humans.

The WPA area will not be impacted by storm water from the highway. The storm water will flow to designated storm water ponds or drainage systems in order to prevent storm water runoff from entering the WPA.

Waterfowl Production Area Avoidance Alternatives

Alternatives B, C, and D would avoid impacts to the WPA. These alternatives were determined not to be prudent for the reasons stated in the previous section, and given the needs of the highway, balanced with total adverse impacts to all social, economic, and environmental resources.

Under the preferred alternative alignment, one option was considered that would avoid impacts to the Worthington WPA. This option shifted the highway to the west to avoid encroachment onto the WPA property. This option was determined not to be feasible and prudent because the transition between reversing curves would not meet design standards, resulting in potential safety problems.

Based on this analysis, there are no feasible and prudent alternatives that would avoid impacts to the WPA.

Measures to Minimize Harm to Waterfowl Production Area

The proposed reconstruction project includes the following measures to minimize harm to the Worthington WPA:

- The four-lane highway through Worthington, including the area adjacent to the WPA, will be constructed with a narrow median that will have curb and gutter on the inside and a ditch on the outside, requiring less total right-of-way.

- Potential curb and gutter on both sides of the highway (see discussion below).

- The installation of improved drainage systems and construction of storm water ponds will improve the water quality of the WPA.

- Replanting of trees and shrubs to create a visual barrier to the highway.

- Potential land exchange with the USFWS (see discussion in Section 3.1.5).

Installation of curb and gutter on both sides of the highway increases initial construction costs by approximately $50,000, as well as future maintenance costs, but reduces the encroachment onto the WPA property by approximately 8 feet. This option has been analyzed further, and it was determined not to be prudent given the long-term maintenance costs.

Installation of a Jersey barrier was analyzed as part of this Final Section 4(f) Evaluation, and this option was determined not to be prudent. The left turn lane at Kragness Avenue requires the roadway to be wider at that location, resulting in no right-of-way savings from a Jersey barrier. A Jersey barrier would also limit sight distance at that intersection, which may create safety issues.

Based on the above discussion, the proposed action includes all possible measures to minimize harm to the WPA.

The preferred alternative is a feasible and prudent alternative with the least harm to the Section 4(f) resource after considering mitigation to the WPA.

Waterfowl Production Area Coordination

Several conversations with USFWS staff in the Windom Wetland Management District office have taken place during the preparation of this document to obtain information and input regarding potential impacts to the Worthington WPA and possible mitigation measures. Discussion included the possibility of completing a land exchange between Mn/DOT and USFWS. Upon completion of the proposed project, Mn/DOT would own approximately 0.51 acres of right-of-way that would no longer be needed. This parcel would be exchanged for the 0.42 acres required by Mn/DOT for new highway right-of-way, resulting in a net gain of approximately 0.09 acres for USFWS and the WPA. The area would be restored to native prairie grasses, and additional trees/shrubs would be planted to continue the visual barrier to Highway 60. The USFWS has agreed with the measures to minimize harm to the WPA, as noted in their letter dated May 1, 2003 included as Attachment A of this document. Given the timeframe for this project, but with the understanding that the right-of-way and land exchange process could take a year to complete, coordination with the USFWS will continue when construction is forthcoming.

Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation Comments

Comments were received from the Windom Wetland Management District office of USFWS and the Department of the Interior. Both letters are included

as attachments to this document and substantive comments have been responded to in the margins.

Conclusion

Based upon the above considerations, there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of land from the WPA, and the proposed action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the WPA resulting from such use.

w:\ko\mndot\010500\reports&specs\r\4f\final 4f.doc

Attachment A

Comment Letters

United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, D.C. 20240

JUL 23 2003

ER 03/509

Mr. Alan R. Steger
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
Galtier Plaza, Box 75
175 Fifth Street East, Suite 500
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101- 2901

Dear Mr. Steger:

As requested in a letter from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) dated June 4, 2003, the U.S. Department of the Interior (Department) has reviewed the Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation for **TH-60 Reconstruction**, south of the Minnesota-Iowa border (Osceola County, Iowa) to I-90 north of Worthington, Nobles County, Minnesota. The project is described in detail in the July 2002 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) (FHWA-MN-EIS-02-04-D). The DEIS provides analysis of the No-Build Alternative and three basic build alternatives, each with a sub-alternative that adds the Bigelow bypass. No preferred alternative was identified in the DEIS.

The Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation indicates that Alternative A1 has been selected as the preferred alternative based on the fact that this alternative best addresses the primary purpose for the project, as well as meeting the other project purposes. Alternative A1 involves reconstructing TH-60 in the Worthington, Minnesota, area as a four-lane highway on existing alignment, resulting in potential direct impacts of approximately 0.43 acres to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) Worthington Waterfowl Production Area (WPA). The Department offers the following comments and recommendations for your consideration.

The Department concurs on the selection of Alternative A1 as the preferred alternative for the project. The Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation indicates that it is not feasible to shift the Alternative A1 alignment further to the west to completely avoid the WPA but that the four-lane highway will be constructed with a narrow median to minimize the impact and that further analysis will be done on the option of installing curb and gutter on both sides of the highway to reduce the encroachment of the highway on the WPA by an additional 8 feet. The Final

1

RESPONSE

1 Upon further analysis, it was determined that installing curb and gutter on both sides of the highway was not prudent given the long-term maintenance costs.

Evaluation should also include a discussion of the feasibility of using a Jersey-type concrete barrier in the median if its use would allow for a further reduction in the width of the highway in the area of the WPA. 2

The Draft Evaluation also includes a discussion of measures to offset any unavoidable impacts to the WPA. These measures include a potential land exchange with the FWS and replanting of trees and shrubs along the west edge of the WPA to create a visual barrier to the highway. The FWS is willing to consider a request for the use of land from the Worthington WPA and has been in discussion with the FHWA. A better estimate of the extent of impacts to the WPA can be made once a final design has been determined for TH-60, enabling the FWS and FHWA to complete negotiations concerning measures needed to offset these impacts. The FWS cannot proceed with any final authorization for use of land from the WPA until (1) the Department has reviewed and commented on the Final Section 4(f) Evaluation, (2) the FHWA has approved the use of the land for transportation purposes in accordance with the two provisos of Section 4(f) and provided a copy of the approved Section 4(f) determination to the FWS, (3) the FWS has made a determination that the proposed use of the land is "compatible" with the purposes for which the WPA was acquired and is being managed, and (4) the FWS has completed its NEPA process for the land transaction. 3

The Department has a continuing interest in working with the Federal Highway Administration to ensure that project impacts to resources of concern to the Department are adequately addressed. Please continue to coordinate with the District Manager for the FWS's Windom Waterfowl Management District, Route 1, Box 273A, Windom, Minnesota 56101-9663, Telephone: (507) 831-2220.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely,

for Willie R. Taylor
Director, Office of Environmental
Policy and Compliance

RESPONSE

2 Installation of a Jersey barrier was analyzed as part of this Final Section 4(f) Evaluation, and this option was determined not to be prudent. The left turn lane at Kragness Avenue requires the roadway to be wider at that location, resulting in no right-of-way savings from a Jersey barrier. A Jersey barrier would also limit sight distance at that intersection, which may create safety issues.

3 Given the timeframe of this project, further activities will take place closer to construction of the project. Adequate time will be allowed for the right-of-way and permitting processes.

United States Department of the Interior

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Windom Wetland Management District
49663 County Road #17
Windom, Minnesota 56101-3026

IN REPLY REFER TO

May 01, 2003

Jennifer Ulmer
Transportation Planner (SEH-St.Paul)
3535 Vadnais Center Drive
St. Paul, MN 55110-5196

Dear Jennifer:

Please keep in mind that the following comments on the Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation (Highway 60 Reconstruction Project) are only comments and until the site is surveyed and more information is received, the Right-of-Way permit process will not be initiated. Our comments on this proposal are only preliminary comments and in no way grant approval or authorization of the project.

3.1 Waterfowl Production Area

3.1.1 Description of Waterfowl Production Area

The purchase and development of this site showed a tremendous partnership effort between the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Worthington community. The property was purchased to preserve and restore wetland and tall grass prairie habitat for waterfowl, other migratory birds and resident wildlife and specifically to promote environmental education and interpretation.

3.1.2 Impacts to Waterfowl Production Area

From the information you provided, the proposed highway project does not appear to impact any wetlands on the WPA. Also, the project does not appear to directly impact any of the facilities associated with the WPA or the use of those facilities. The project does impact a portion (0.44acres) of the WPA's restored native prairie (seeded) and several trees planted along the west boundary that were intended to act as a visual barrier to the highway. We agree that the noise impacts to the WPA are anticipated to be minor, but these impacts could be reduced by planting trees/shrubs along the west boundary. We do not have a strong understanding on how storm water currently impacts the WPA, but improvements to the drainage system to prevent storm water and contaminants from entering the WPA would be recommended. Access to the WPA will remain from the County Road 5 parking area location and does not appear to be impacted.

3.1.4 Measures to Minimize Harm to Waterfowl Production Area

We agree with the measures to minimize harm to the Waterfowl Production Area. The proposed actions include constructing the highway as an urban section along the WPA with a narrow median that will have curb and gutter on the inside and a ditch on the outside, requiring less total right-of-way or potentially with curb and gutter on both sides of the highway, installation of an

improved drainage system, a visual barrier consisting of trees and shrubs (species to be determined by the Fish and Wildlife Service) planted along the highway to obstruct the sight of the highway and a potential land exchange. The visual barrier could also act to reduce the minor impacts of the anticipated increase in noise caused by vehicle traffic. We also agree that the excess right-of-way which is proposed to be returned or given back to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in a land exchange, should be restored to native prairie grasses and forbs (species to be determined by the Fish and Wildlife Service) and additional trees/shrubs planted to continue the visual barrier.

General Comments:

Your proposal implies that you would need to acquire 0.44 acres of new right-of-way on the WPA and would be able to return or give back 0.47 acres of excess right-of-way along the WPA. This would result in a small gain of 0.03 acres or at a minimum no loss of land for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Because this proposal seems to have minor impacts on the WPA and includes measures to improve the area it could be supported by the Windom Wetland Management District(WMD). However, because this is a proposal and not scheduled to take place any time in the near future, these comments are only intended to provide you with planning options for this project. 1

Again, in order for us to make a decision or grant approval for your proposed project, we need to determine exactly what is going to be impacted on the Worthington WPA. Once the site is surveyed and marked, we can make an examination of the WPA, figure out what will be affected by the project, make decisions on the course of action to be taken on this project and follow through on our Right-of-Way permitting process or the possibility of a land exchange as discussed. 2

I have included an information sheet on the ROW application procedures. Please keep in mind that the ROW process requires 6-9 months and a land exchange could take up to one year. If you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact me. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Steven W. Kallin

Steven W. Kallin
Wetland Manager

Attachment

RESPONSE

1 Upon refinement of the preferred alternative, it was estimated that 0.42 acres of the WPA property would be required for right-of-way purposes. Under the proposed land exchange, 0.51 acres of Mn/DOT property would be exchanged for this 0.42 acres, resulting in a small gain of 0.9 acres for the USFWS.

2 Given the timeframe of this project, further activities, including surveying and permitting, will take place closer to construction. Adequate time will be allowed to complete the right-of-way and land exchange processes.

Appendix B

AD 1006 Forms

U.S. Department of Agriculture

FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING

PART I *(To be completed by Federal Agency)*	Date Of Land Evaluation Request 12/16/03
Name Of Project Highway 60 Reconstruction	Federal Agency Involved FHWA
Proposed Land Use Highway	County And State Nobles County, MN
PART II *(To be completed by NRCS)*	Date Request Received By NRCS 12/17/03

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	No	Acres Irrigated	Average Farm Size
	☒	☐	—	284

Major Crop(s)	Farmable Land In Govt. Jurisdiction	Amount Of Farmland As Defined in FPPA
Corn / Soybeans	Acres: 420,297 % 92.2	Acres: 415958 % 91.2
Name Of Land Evaluation System Used: Nobles LE	Name Of Local Site Assessment System: —	Date Land Evaluation Returned By NRCS: 01/14/04

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	201.9			
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly	—			
C. Total Acres In Site	~~0.0~~ 201.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
PART IV *(To be completed by NRCS)* Land Evaluation Information				
A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland	184.9			
B. Total Acres Statewide And Local Important Farmland	13			
C. Percentage Of Farmland In County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted	.04			
D. Percentage Of Farmland In Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value	75.1			
PART V *(To be completed by NRCS)* Land Evaluation Criterion Relative Value Of Farmland To Be Converted *(Scale of 0 to 100 Points)*	0 94	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 ☐ No ☐

Reason For Selection:

(See Instructions on reverse side)

Form AD-1006 (10-83)

This form was electronically produced by National Production Services Staff

U.S. Department of Agriculture

FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING

PART I *(To be completed by Federal Agency)*	Date Of Land Evaluation Request 12/16/03
Name Of Project Highway 60 Reconstruction	Federal Agency Involved FHWA
Proposed Land Use Highway	County And State Osceola County, Iowa
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 ☑	No ☐	Acres Irrigated 895	Average Farm Size 332

Major Crop(s) Corn, Soybeans	Farmable Land In Govt. Jurisdiction Acres: 252,690 % 99	Amount Of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: 229,800 % 90
Name Of Land Evaluation System Used Osceola County	Name Of Local Site Assessment System None - FPPA	Date Land Evaluation Returned By NRCS 1/30/04

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	60.6			
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly				
C. Total Acres In Site	60.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
PART IV *(To be completed by NRCS)* Land Evaluation Information				
A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland	59.4			
B. Total Acres Statewide And Local Important Farmland	0.0			
C. Percentage Of Farmland In County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted	0.0			
D. Percentage Of Farmland In Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value	36.8			
PART V *(To be completed by NRCS)* Land Evaluation Criterion Relative Value Of Farmland To Be Converted *(Scale of 0 to 100 Points)*	72	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	72	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	72	0	0	0

Site Selected:	Date Of Selection	Was A Local Site Assessment Used? Yes ☐ No ☐

Reason For Selection:

(See Instructions on reverse side)

Form AD-1006 (10-83)

This form was electronically produced by National Production Services Staff

Appendix C

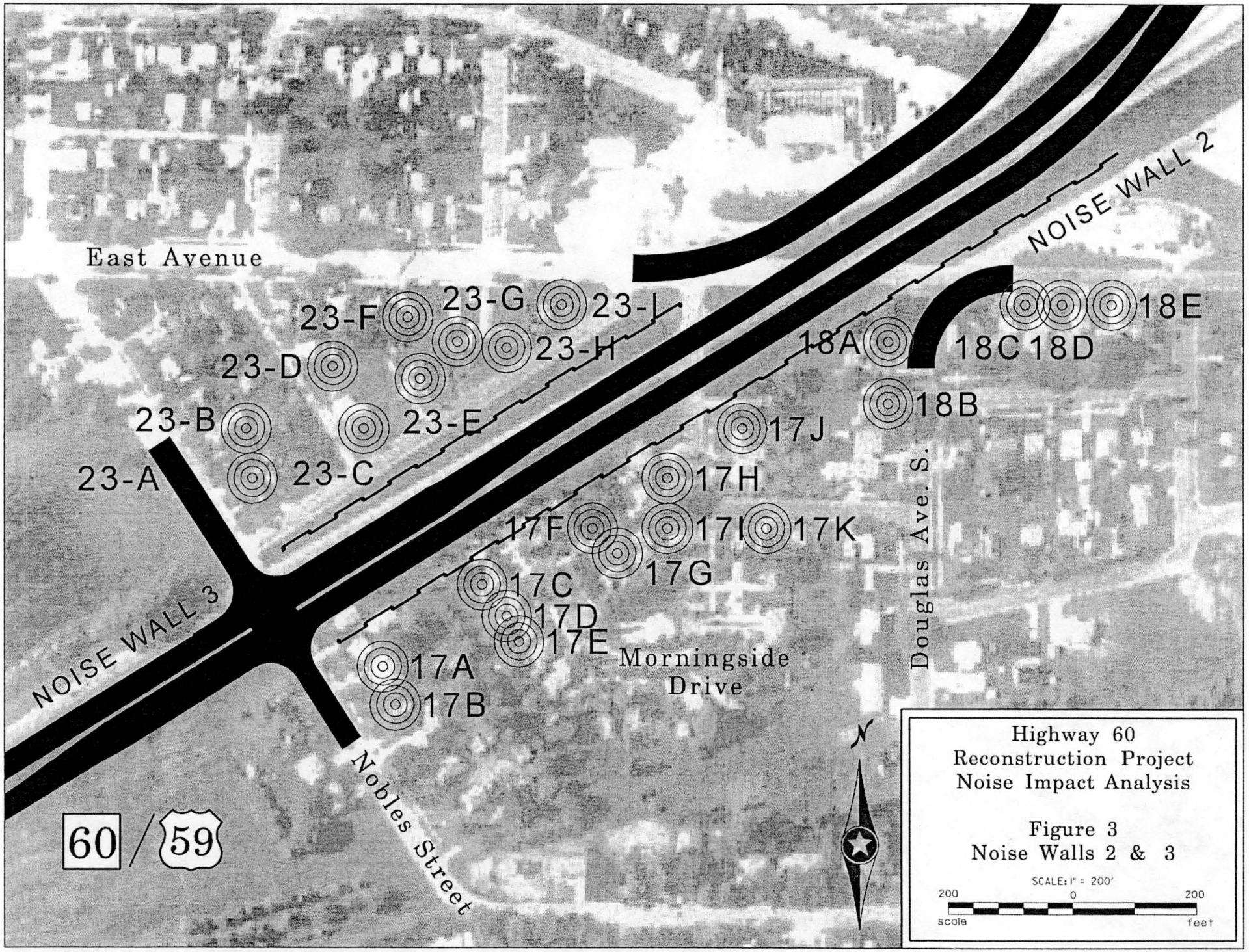
Noise Wall Effectiveness Table

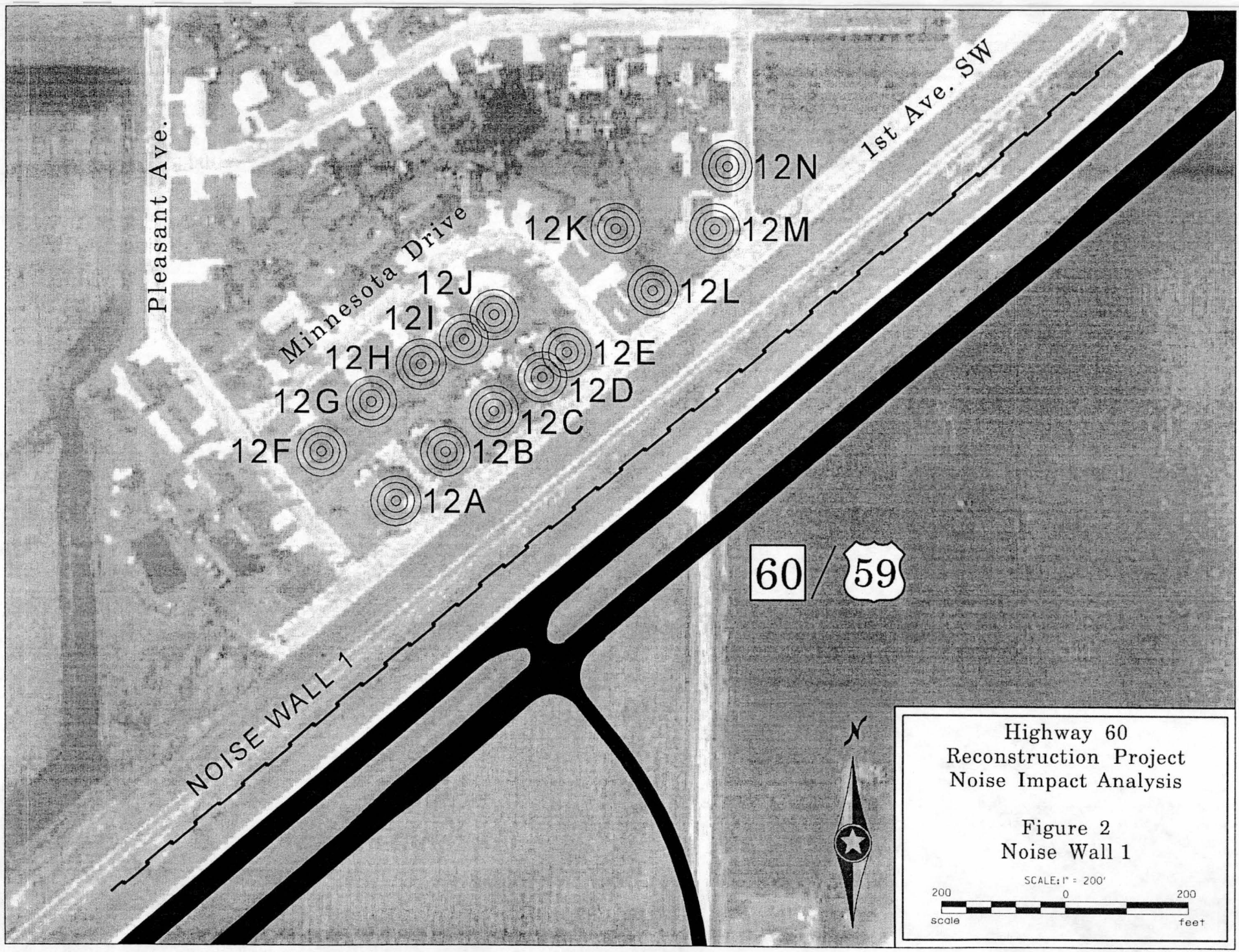
Appendix C
Noise Wall Effectiveness

Location	Receptor	Daytime (L_{10})					Nighttime (L_{10})				
		Existing	10 Foot Wall Noise Levels	Decrease With 10 Foot Walls	20 Foot Wall Noise Levels	Decrease With 20 Foot Walls	Existing	10 Foot Wall Noise Levels	Decrease With 10 Foot Walls	20 Foot Wall Noise Levels	Decrease With 20 Foot Walls
Southeast of Lake Okabena	12A	64.6	62.8	1.8	57.3	7.3	60.9	59.1	1.8	53.9	7.0
	12B	64.1	62.4	1.7	57.1	7.0	60.5	58.8	1.7	53.7	6.8
	12C	64.0	62.3	1.7	56.9	7.1	60.3	58.7	1.6	53.5	6.8
	12D	64.1	62.3	1.8	56.9	7.2	60.4	58.7	1.7	53.5	6.9
	12E	63.9	62.2	1.7	56.8	7.1	60.2	58.6	1.6	53.5	6.7
	12F	62.0	60.9	1.1	56.2	5.8	58.4	57.3	1.1	52.9	5.5
	12G	61.6	60.7	0.9	55.9	5.7	58.1	57.1	1.0	52.6	5.5
	12H	61.6	60.6	1.0	55.8	5.8	58.0	57.1	0.9	52.5	5.5
	12I	61.7	60.7	1.0	55.9	5.8	58.1	57.1	1.0	52.5	5.6
	12J	61.6	60.6	1.0	55.8	5.8	58.1	57.1	1.0	52.5	5.6
	12K	61.8	60.7	1.1	55.9	5.9	58.3	57.2	1.1	52.6	5.7
	12L	64.1	62.3	1.8	56.9	7.2	60.4	58.6	1.8	53.5	6.9
	12M	63.8	62.0	1.8	56.8	7.0	60.1	58.4	1.7	53.4	6.7
	12N	62.4	61.1	1.3	56.3	6.1	58.8	57.6	1.2	53.0	5.8

Location	Receptor	Daytime (L_{10})					Nighttime (L_{10})				
		Existing	10 Foot Wall Noise Levels	Decrease With 10 Foot Walls	20 Foot Wall Noise Levels	Decrease With 20 Foot Walls	Existing	10 Foot Wall Noise Levels	Decrease With 10 Foot Walls	20 Foot Wall Noise Levels	Decrease With 20 Foot Walls
Morningside Neighborhood East of Highway 60	17A	66.3	63.7	2.6	61.7	4.6	62.4	59.9	2.5	57.7	4.7
	17B	63.9	62.5	1.4	61.0	2.9	60.2	58.8	1.4	57.1	3.1
	17C	67.6	62.8	4.8	56.0	11.6	63.6	59.0	4.6	52.6	11
	17D	64.8	61.8	3.0	56.4	8.4	61.0	58.1	2.9	53.1	7.9
	17E	63.3	61.0	2.3	56.4	6.9	59.6	57.4	2.2	53.0	6.6
	17F	66.7	62.7	4.0	55.8	10.9	62.8	58.9	3.9	52.3	10.5
	17G	64.4	61.6	2.8	55.4	9.0	60.7	57.9	2.8	52.0	8.7
	17H	67.0	62.8	4.2	55.7	11.3	63.0	59.0	4.0	52.2	10.8
	17I	64.2	61.4	2.8	55.2	9.0	60.4	57.7	2.7	51.8	8.6
	17J	67.2	62.9	4.3	55.7	11.5	63.3	59.1	4.2	52.2	11.1
	17K	61.7	59.9	1.8	54.1	7.6	58.1	56.3	1.8	50.8	7.3
	18A	66.9	62.8	4.1	55.5	11.4	62.9	59.0	3.9	52.0	10.9
	18B	63.5	61.0	2.5	54.6	8.9	59.8	57.4	2.4	51.3	8.5
	18C	63.8	61.2	2.6	54.8	9.0	60.1	57.5	2.6	51.4	8.7
	18D	62.7	60.6	2.1	56.1	6.6	59.1	57.0	2.1	52.6	6.5
	18E	61.5	60.0	1.5	57.0	4.5	57.9	56.4	1.5	53.4	4.5
Morningside Neighborhood West of Highway 60	23-A	64.3	63.0	1.3	61.5	2.8	60.6	59.2	1.4	57.6	3.0
	23-B	62.2	61.0	1.2	59.3	2.9	58.6	57.4	1.2	55.6	3.0
	23-C	65.3	62.1	3.2	57.3	8.0	61.5	58.4	3.1	53.9	7.6
	23-D	61.8	60.2	1.6	56.8	5.0	58.2	56.6	1.6	53.4	4.8
	23-E	64.5	61.7	2.8	56.4	8.1	60.7	58.0	2.7	53.1	7.6
	23-F	61.7	60.0	1.7	56.0	5.7	58.1	56.4	1.7	52.7	5.4
	23-G	63.8	61.3	2.5	56.4	7.4	60.1	57.6	2.5	53.0	7.1
	23-H	65.7	62.2	3.5	56.7	9.0	61.8	58.5	3.3	53.3	8.5
	23-I	65.2	62.2	3.0	58.1	7.1	61.4	58.5	2.9	54.5	6.9

 = >5 dBA decrease


East Avenue
NOISE WALL 2
NOISE WALL 3
Douglas Ave. S.
Morningside Drive
Nobles Street
60 / 59
23-A
23-B
23-C
23-D
23-E
23-F
23-G
23-H
23-I
17A
17B
17C
17D
17E
17F
17G
17H
17I
17J
17K
18A
18B
18C
18D
18E
Highway 60
Reconstruction Project
Noise Impact Analysis
Figure 3
Noise Walls 2 & 3
SCALE: 1" = 200'
200
0
200
scale
feet


Pleasant Ave.
Minnesota Drive
1st Ave. SW
12N
12K
12M
12J
12L
12I
12H
12E
12G
12D
12C
12F
12B
12A
60 / 59
NOISE WALL 1
N
Highway 60
Reconstruction Project
Noise Impact Analysis
Figure 2
Noise Wall 1
SCALE: 1" = 200'
200
0
200
scale
feet

Appendix D

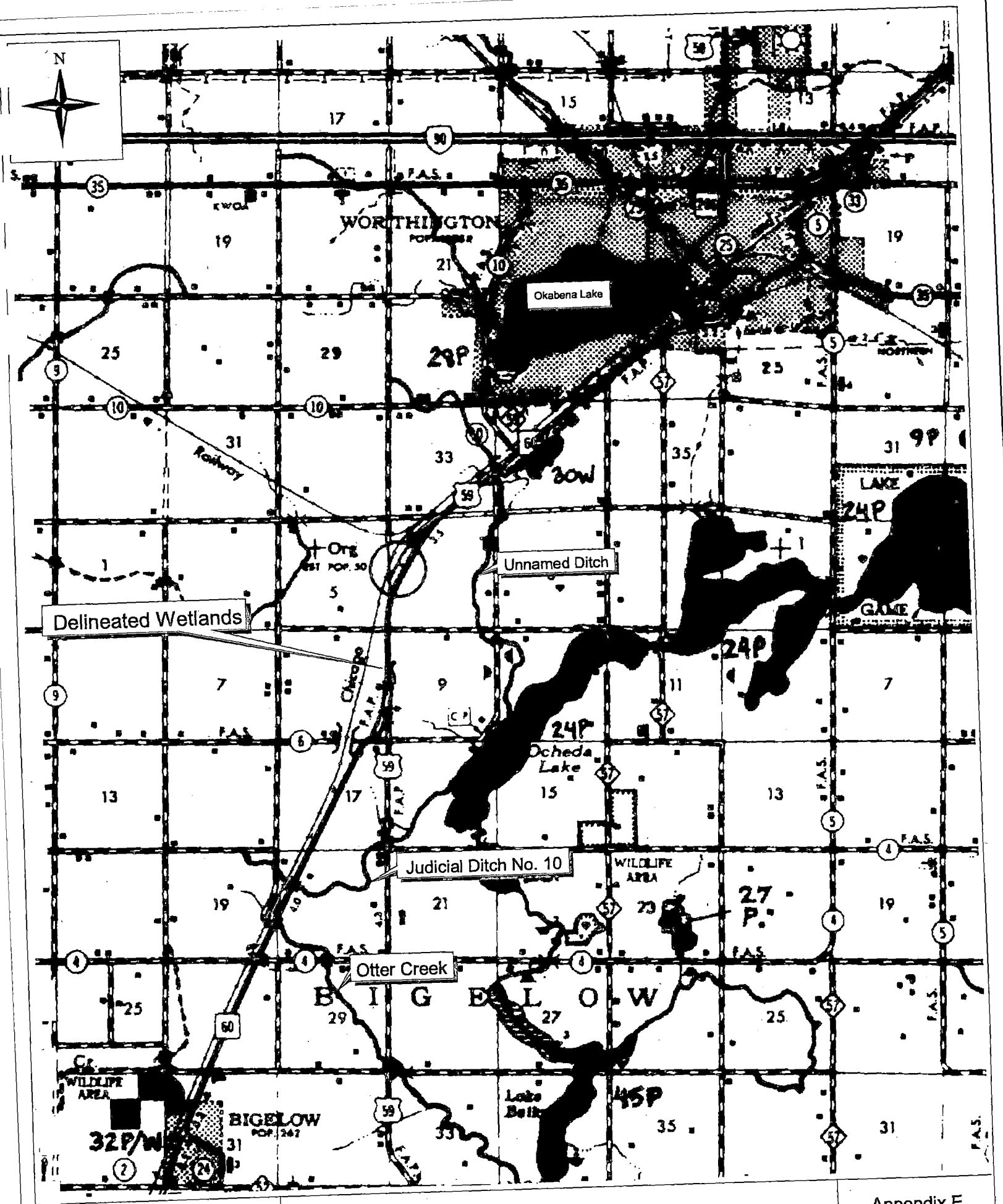
Draft EIS Wetland Impacts

Draft EIS Wetland Impacts

	Acres
Alternative A	36.8
Alternative A1	33.5
Alternative B	32.7
Alternative B1	29.4
Alternative C	39.3
Alternative C1	36.0
Alternative D	0

Appendix E

Protected Waters and Wetlands Inventory Map



Highway 60 Reconstruction Project	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Protected Waters and Wetlands Inventory Map	Appendix E 2/6/04

Appendix F

Mn/DOT Threatened and Endangered Species Letter

Minnesota Department of Transportation

Office of Environmental Services
395 John Ireland Boulevard, MS 620
St. Paul, MN 55155-1899

Fax: 651/ 284-3754
Phone: 651/ 284-3750

June 22, 2004

Peter Harff, P.E.
Minnesota Department of Transportation District 7
501 South Victory Drive
P.O. Box 4039
Mankato, MN 56001

RE: Federal Threatened and Endangered Species
S.P. 5305-51 & 5306-42 TH 60 from Iowa State Line to Worthington, Nobles County – Major reconstruction of TH 60 and upgrade from 2-lanes to 4-lanes.

Dear Mr. Harff:

As you have requested I have reviewed the effects the above referenced project will have upon Federal Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Species. According to the County Distribution of Minnesota's Federally-Listed Threatened, Endangered, Proposed and Candidate Species list maintained by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Nobles County is within the distribution range of the Topeka shiner and its critical habitat. The Topeka shiner is a federal T&E species.

If a Federal agency authorizes, funds, or carries out a proposed action, the responsible Federal agency, or its delegated agent, is required to evaluate whether the proposed action "may affect" listed species. If it is determined that the action "may affect" a listed species, then the responsible Federal agency shall request Section 7 consultation with the USFWS. If the consultation shows "no effect" on the listed species, further consultation is not necessary.

According to the information provided by the Natural Heritage Database (updated 7-1-03) maintained by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, there are no known occurrences of Federal T&E Species or their critical habitat within the project area. There is an old report of Topeka shiners in nearby Lake Okabena, but no recent records. Dr. Jay Hatch, University of Minnesota, surveyed Lake Okabena at 6-10 stations within the last five years and found no Topeka shiners. They also surveyed Judicial ditch No. 6, which is the outfall from Lake Okabena, and found no Topeka shiners there or in the drainage leading to Lake Ocheda. The habitat in Judicial ditch No. 6 is very shallow, the ditch bottom is 8-10 feet wide, and the main source of water when the lake is not draining is a waste water treatment plant. The ditch provides very poor habitat for fish.

The proposed project involves the reconstruction of TH 60 as a rural four-lane divided highway from just south of the Iowa State Line, bypassing the City of Bigelow to Nobles Street in Worthington, and as an urban four-lane divided highway from Nobles Street to I-90 north of Worthington. New stream crossings will be constructed over Judicial ditch No. 6. Therefore, due to the lack of Topeka shiners and/or their critical habitat in Judicial ditch No. 6, we have determined that the project will have no effect on Federal T&E Species or their critical habitat at this time. Due to the future nature of the project, the project manager must re-contact the USFWS before the field season that construction is planned, to determine if the project has been modified or, if new information has become available which would indicate that listed species may be affected.

This review was completed for Federally Listed T&E Species only. For information on State Listed T&E Species, contact the Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Sincerely,

Greg P. Busacker, Ph.D.
Natural Resource Specialist

cc: Gerry Larson ✓ Jason Alcott Laurie Fairchild FWS
R. Novak, D7 ✓

Appendix G

Mn/DOT Cultural Resources and Minnesota SHPO Letters

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

June 21, 2004

Ms. Jackie Sluss
Cultural Resource Unit
MN Dept. of Transportation
Transportation Building, MS 620
395 John Ireland Boulevard
St. Paul, MN 55155-1899

Re: S.P. 5305-51 & 5306-42
T.H. 60 from 1.8 miles south of the Minnesota-Iowa border to I-90 north of Worthington
Nobles County
SHPO Number: 2002-2922

Dear Ms. Sluss:

Thank you for your recent submittal regarding the effect of the above referenced project on two properties that meet National Register criteria.

We concur with your determination that the project will not adversely affect historic resources, including the St. Paul & Sioux City Railroad and the Worthington Livestock Sales Company Building.

Contact us at 651-296-5462 with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Britta L. Bloomberg
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Minnesota Department of Transportation

Transportation Building
395 John Ireland Boulevard
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155-1899

May 18, 2004

Mr. Dennis Gimmestad
State Historic Preservation Office
Minnesota Historical Society
345 Kellogg Blvd. W.
St. Paul, MN 55101-1906

re: SP 5305-51 TH 60 / Worthington to Iowa Border, Nobles County

Dear Mr. Gimmestad,

We have reviewed the above-referenced undertaking pursuant to our FHWA-delegated responsibilities for compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (36 CFR 800).

A copy of the report *Phase I and II Cultural Resources Investigation, Trunk Highway 60 from the Iowa Border to Worthington, Nobles County* by Rivercrest and Associates was sent to you on June 5th, 2002. The report recommends that two properties surveyed, the St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad (NO-BGT-002, NO-WOT-004, and NO-LOR-001) and the Worthington Livestock Sales Company (NO-WOC-113) meet criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Your letter of July 3, 2002 concurs with those findings.

Since that time, Mn/DOT District 7 has selected alternative A (4-lane on existing) with the Bigelow bypass option as the preferred route (see figure 1, Rivercrest and figure 2 excerpted from July 2002 DEIS). Both the St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad and the Worthington Livestock Sales Company are located along the preferred alternative. The Worthington bypass (alternatives C and C1) west of Worthington along existing TH 169 was not selected for several reasons. The majority (85%) of the traffic on TH 60 is bound for Worthington, therefore a bypass would not address safety and traffic flow concerns on the current roadway in Worthington. Also, the additional distance traveled on the Worthington bypass and the jog along I-90 would not result in a time savings for the through traveler and would introduce new operational difficulties. In addition, there was not a clear preference for one route over the other from residents. A public hearing for the DEIS was on held September 19, 2002 and an additional six design workshops (open houses) were held on Dec. 4-5, 2002. There were also several other public meetings.

Changes to crossings on the eligible rail line are proposed in each of the alternatives so there is no appreciable difference in impacts to the rail line between alternatives. Enclosed you will find several 8x10 figures (figures A-M) illustrating the plans for each section of highway. Figures A-M identify each rail crossing being affected. To summarize: four crossings (figures A, C, D, H) will be replaced within 100' of the existing crossing, a thousand feet of railroad grade will be re-graded to accommodate a 1' rise in the elevation of the road (figure L), and one crossing (figure M) will be closed and replaced with a new crossing 500 feet northeast of the existing. None of the proposed work will alter the rail alignment and no additional crossings will be constructed. All but one crossing (figure M) will be built very close to the existing location. Therefore, it is the opinion of this office that there will be no adverse effect to the St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad property or its ability to convey significance as of one of the first land grant

rail routes (1869) or its significance to the initial settlement of the area or the role it played in the establishment of rail-based commercial centers that served the historic agricultural economy.

Figures L, L-2, and Figure 18 of the Rivercrest report illustrate the relationship of the project to the Worthington Livestock Sales Company. The existing rural profile gravel frontage road is about 37 feet wide. The new frontage/access road will be an urban profile with curb and gutter and paved 40' curb to curb. Access will not be changed and both entries from the frontage road to the buildings will be left open. The only change to the existing alignment is north of the complex where it curves more sharply to the northwest. As the green line indicates (figure L-2), the curb and gutter will be located within the boundaries of the existing road and about 20 feet from the pens. The edge of the right-of-way will be about 12' from the existing pens. Although the other alternatives (C and C1) would have bypassed this property, it is the opinion of this office that the proposed plan will have no adverse effect to the qualities of the Worthington Livestock Sales Company that make it eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A. In summary, it is the conclusion of this office that the project, as proposed, will have no adverse effects to properties listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

We are providing you with this determination pursuant to the responsibilities given the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) by the regulations at 36 CFR 800. If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact me at (651) 296-3065.

Sincerely,

Jackie Sluss

Jackie Sluss, Historian

encs.

cc:

Joe Hudak, Mn/DOT CRU
Mn/DOT CO File
Mn/DOT CRU Project File
Jennifer Andrews, SEH
Peter Harff, D-7