



3 0307 00062 9819

840147



2 copies

T.H. 60 FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT AND FINAL SECTION 4(F) EVALUATION

WORTHINGTON TO ST. JAMES
MINNESOTA

REGION 8

REGION 9

WINDOM

ST. JAMES

WORTHINGTON

TE
24
.M6
T53

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

**Trunk Highway 60
Worthington to St. James
In Nobles, Jackson, Cottonwood and Watonwan Counties, Minnesota**

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

AND FINAL SECTION 4(F) EVALUATION

Submitted pursuant to:

42 USC 4332(2)(c)
49 USC 1653(f)
EO 11990 (Wetlands)
and
Minnesota Statute 116D.01 et.seq.

Submitted by:

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
and
The State of Minnesota
Department of Transportation

Cooperating Agencies:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Minnesota Department of Natural
Resources

8/25/83
Date of Approval

F. C. Marshall
For Mn/DOT: Asst. Commissioner, Tech. Services Div.

DEC 5 1983
Date of Approval

/s/ Ennis V. Heathcock
For FHWA: Director, Office of Planning & Program Development

The following persons may be contacted for additional information concerning this document:

Mr. Thomas J. Fudaly
Area Engineer
Federal Highway Administration
Suite 490, Metro Square Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101
(612)725-5956

Mr. Marcus Flygare
TH 60 Project Manager
Minnesota Dept. of Transportation
501 South Victory Drive
Mankato, Minnesota 56001
(507)389-6351

ABSTRACT

This Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) documents the selection of a preferred alternative for proposed TH 60 improvements and commitments to mitigate anticipated adverse impacts. The preferred alternative is to construct on new alignment from near St. James to approximately one-half mile west of Mountain Lake and to reconstruct on existing alignment from Mountain Lake to Worthington. Construction will be staged over a period of years contingent on funding availability. Initial stages will provide two-lane reconstruction to modern highway standards. Subsequent stages will provide dualization to a four-lane expressway in rural sections. Also included in this FEIS are responses to comments received on the DEIS; wetlands, air quality, and Section 4(f) findings; and supplemental technical information.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
SUMMARY	
Purpose of the Final Environmental Impact Statement	i
Project Alternatives Considered	i
Preferred Alternative Decision	ii
Impact Mitigation Measures	ii
Wetlands Findings	iv
Conformance with State Air Quality Implementation Plan	iv
Section 4(f) Findings	iv
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE	
Description	1
Reasons for Selection	6
IMPACT MITIGATION MEASURES	
Relocation Impacts	11
Farm Impacts	12
Non-Farm Business Impacts	14
Community Impacts	14
Noise Impacts	15
Stream Modification Impacts	16
Wetland Impacts	16
Water Quality Impacts	18
Vegetation and Wildlife Impacts	18
Aesthetic and Visual Impacts	19
Construction Impacts	20
SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION	
Purpose and Need	27
Modal Interrelationships-Rail	27
Traffic Volumes	28
Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences	29
Historic and Cultural Resources	29
Natural Features	30
Prairie Remnants	30
Warren Lake Area Runoff	34
WETLANDS FINDINGS	
Alternatives	35
Measures to Minimize Harm	35
Coordination	36
Conclusion	36
CONFORMANCE WITH STATE AIR-QUALITY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	39

FINAL SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

Introduction	41
Carpenter Wildlife Management Area	45
Valleau Wildlife Management Unit	49

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

Introduction	59
Written Comments: Federal	62
Written Comments: State	72
Written Comments: Local/Regional	81
Written Comments: Organizations	85
Written Comments: Others	87
Public Hearing Comments	105

LIST OF TABLES

<u>No.</u>		<u>Page</u>
1	Present Traffic Volume Trends - TH 60 Corridor	29
2	Revisions to TH 60 Corridor Natural Features Listing	32
3	Prairie Remnants, Chicago and North Western Railroad Right of Way Adjoining Trunk Highway 60	33

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>No.</u>		<u>Page</u>
1	Preferred Alternative	3
2	Proposed Staging - Preferred Alignment Alternative	4
3	Special Mitigation Areas	13
4	Wetlands Impacts	37
5	Preferred Alternative	43
6	Carpenter Wildlife Management Area Setting	47
7	Proposed Roadway Relocations and 4(f) Involvement - Carpenter Wildlife Management Area	48
8	Valleau Wildlife Management Unit Setting	53
9	Proposed Roadway Improvements and 4(f) Involvement - Valleau Wildlife Management Unit	54

SUMMARY

SUMMARY

This Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has been prepared according to paragraph 1503.4 of the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for FEIS preparation.

PURPOSE OF THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The purpose of this FEIS for TH 60 is to: 1) document the selection of the preferred alternative; 2) list commitments to mitigation measures; 3) provide corrections and supplemental information to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS); 4) provide a wetlands finding; 5) document a State Air-Quality Implementation Plan conformance finding; 6) provide a final evaluation of impacts on Section 4(f) properties; and 7) provide responses to public hearing and DEIS comments.

Information previously provided in the DEIS has not been duplicated in this FEIS, and the DEIS can be referenced for additional information.

PROJECT ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The proposed action consists of constructing improvements to approximately 52 miles of TH 60 between St. James and Worthington, Minnesota.

Alternatives considered in the DEIS include (a) no-action, (b) reconstruction on the existing alignment, and (c) construction on new alignment in the northern portion of the corridor. Construction on new alignment was considered from near Windom to St. James (25 miles) or from near Mountain Lake to St. James (13 miles). Alignment and design variations were evaluated in the vicinity of the cities of Heron Lake, Windom, Bingham Lake, Mountain Lake and Butterfield. Traffic operations improvements were considered in the urban sections of TH 60 under existing alignment reconstruction.

Impacts were analyzed for both two-lane and four-lane construction. Due to funding and practical limitations, a prioritized schedule was developed in the DEIS process to provide initial two-lane reconstruction to modern highway standards; subsequent stages provide dualization to a four-lane expressway in rural sections. Alternative sequencing of dualization was evaluated for the sections south of Wilder. The two-lane impact evaluation also reflected the alternative of postponing or cancelling of the proposed dualization at a future date, should re-evaluation of need during the initial two-lane construction indicate that such dualization would no longer be warranted. The four-lane impact evaluation also included the alternative of initial four-lane dualization.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE DECISION

The Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) decided as a preferred alternative, to construct on new alignment from St. James to southwest of Mountain Lake and to reconstruct on existing alignment from Mountain Lake to Worthington. Initial stages will provide two-lane reconstruction to modern highway standards, beginning with the St. James to Butterfield section. Design of the initial two-lane construction will be fully compatible with future staged dualization to four-lanes and will include limited four-lane sections to accommodate channelization at major intersections in the bypasses of Butterfield and Mountain Lake. Traffic operations improvements will be provided along the existing four-lane urban section within Windom. Final determinations regarding (a) alignment and design variations at Butterfield, Mountain Lake and Heron Lake pending a design hearing and (b) the staging sequence for four-lane dualization south of Wilder have been deferred.

The improvement "build" alternatives were preferred over the "no-build" alternative based upon demonstrated transportation and economic needs of the area and strong support of the local and regional governments. Potential adverse environmental impacts can be reasonably mitigated and certain locations will experience a net positive environmental impact as a result of the proposed improvements.

The preferred location was selected based on a significant reduction of travel delays and community land use, cohesion, traffic noise and traffic safety conflicts without unreasonably increasing total cost or other adverse impacts compared to reconstruction completely on existing alignment. The alternative of continuing on new alignment to bypass Windom was not selected because the additional costs and impacts were found to significantly outweigh the additional travel benefits and community conflict reduction of bypassing.

The decision to construct a modern two-lane facility during initial stages of TH 60 improvement was based heavily on available funding. In view of such limitations, it best addresses immediate needs, will provide adequate traffic service under current traffic demands, and is fully compatible with the proposed future four-lane design.

IMPACT MITIGATION MEASURES

Several unavoidable adverse impacts are associated with the preferred alternative for improvement of TH 60. Means to mitigate these impacts will be incorporated in the design, construction and operation of TH 60. They include:

- 1) Relocation assistance and compensation will be provided to owners of displaced residences and businesses.

- 2) A reduced-median design will be used for four-lane construction and existing TH 60 rural sections will be obliterated and restored for agricultural use, where possible, to minimize impact on prime farmland. Restoration and return to farm use will also help to mitigate the impact on local tax base by returning the affected sections to the tax rolls.
- 3) Damage payments will be included in property acquisition settlements to help mitigate effects of severance and triangulation on farm operations. Impacted farm tile systems will be modified or restored as appropriate.
- 4) Noise impacts can be mitigated by the use of earthen berms and walls at certain locations, subject to input from the affected residents and communities and cost effectiveness evaluations.
- 5) Stream modification, wetland and water quality impacts will be mitigated by the use of special design guidelines and cross-sections; use of controlled fill procedures and selected deepening along the shorelines; reconstruction of fish and water control structures at Warren Lake; development or acquisition of additional wetland areas through borrow pit restoration, use of abandoned channel sections, and tradeoff or expanded right-of-way acquisition; development of an accidental spill control and cleanup program; and incorporation of erosion and other pollution control measures during construction.
- 6) Acquisition of replacement lands or other mitigation acceptable to MDNR and incorporation of special design features will offset loss of 6.7 acres from the Valteau Wildlife Management Area at the time of four-lane dualization.
- 7) Construction cautions and provision for salvage plans will be used to mitigate potential impact on prairie remnants.
- 8) Roadside habitat will be protected and enhanced by use of selected grass covers and controlled mowing of roadside ditches.
- 9) Special attention to landscaping details will help to minimize potential visual impacts at railroad overpasses and at Lommen Park in Windom.
- 10) Construction specifications will contain special provisions for erosion control, water pollution control, borrow pit treatment, disposal of unsuitable materials, protection of unrecorded archaeological remains, disruption to utilities and traffic, and construction noise mitigation.

WETLANDS FINDINGS

Construction of the preferred alternative will result in the alteration of seven wetland areas. Two-lane construction will alter a total of 5.4 acres of wetland; four-lane construction a total of 9.6 to 11.4 acres.

It was determined that there was no practicable alternative to the proposed construction of the preferred alternative for TH 60 to further reduce the amount of wetland takings. The proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands and to create or acquire new wetland areas where practicable.

CONFORMANCE WITH STATE AIR QUALITY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The proposed project is located in an area where the approved State Implementation Plan (SIP) to attain and maintain ambient air quality standards does not contain any transportation control measures. Therefore, the conformity procedures of 23 CFR 770 do not apply to this project. The project is not expected to result in the violation of air quality standards.

SECTION 4(f) FINDINGS

The preferred alternative for improvement of TH 60 will require use of land from two properties covered by Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act. They are: (1) the Carpenter Wildlife Management Area near Bingham Lake and (2) the Valleau Wildlife Management Area near Heron Lake. It is determined that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of land from these properties, and that the proposed action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the Section 4(f) property resulting from such use.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The following section of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) describes: (1) the preferred alternative for proposed TH 60 improvements, including related decisions deferred at this time; and (2) the reasons for selecting the preferred alternative.

DESCRIPTION

Location

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) evaluated in detail three location alternatives for the improvement of TH 60 from St. James to Worthington and a no-build alternative. The alternative preferred by the Minnesota Department of Transportation is to construct on new alignment from near St. James to approximately one-half mile southwest of Mountain Lake and to reconstruct on existing alignment from Mountain Lake to Worthington. A short section at the extreme northeast end of the 52-mile corridor near St. James will also be reconstructed on existing alignment, as shown in Figure 1.

Staging

Due to funding and practical limitations, the entire 52-mile improvement from St. James to Worthington cannot be constructed in a single, all inclusive construction effort. Therefore, construction will be staged over a period of years contingent on funding availability. Initial stages will provide two-lane reconstruction to modern highway standards. Subsequent stages will provide dualization to a four-lane expressway in rural sections. The initial two-lane design will be fully compatible with the future four-lane design.

Barring unforeseen delays or funding problems, construction of initial two-lane construction from St. James to Butterfield will begin in 1985. Construction west to Mountain Lake will follow immediately thereafter. Limited four-lane sections to accommodate channelization at major intersections in the bypasses around Butterfield and Mountain Lake will be constructed as part of the initial construction. Reconstruction of the remainder of TH 60 to Worthington will follow in logical segments as funding and other conditions permit. Figure 2 illustrates a preliminary time framework for completing the overall improvements that is consistent with reasonable current anticipation of funding availability. Priority was given to roadway sections most deficient in terms of roadway condition, traffic service, safety and community conflicts; and to providing a logical construction sequence.

Special Conditions

Through Windom, TH 60 will remain a four-lane urban section on existing alignment, but will be improved with the addition of traffic signals and other modifications. Traffic signals will be added at 6th and 16th Streets (a signal currently exists at 10th Street). The north

intersection with TH 71 will be improved and the median extended southerly to include the 16th Street intersection. The easterly frontage road will be realigned at 16th Street, to provide adequate separation from TH 60 to permit the signalized intersection to function satisfactorily. To eliminate severe flat angle conflicts at 12th Street, the frontage road connection to TH 60 will be closed.

From the TH 71 intersection eastward to the vicinity of Warren Lake, TH 60 will be reconstructed to provide a five-lane urban section with a continuous center lane for left turns to serve the numerous businesses and side roads in this section. On the long grade immediately southwest of Windom, a truck climbing lane will be added for westbound traffic during the initial two-lane upgrading.

At the west side of Bingham Lake, approximately one mile of TH 60 will be realigned slightly to the south to eliminate two substandard horizontal curves and poor profile conditions. County and township road crossroads will be realigned to provide improved intersections with TH 60. At the TH 86 intersection east of Wilder, TH 60 will also be realigned and four-lane channelization added during initial two-lane upgrading.

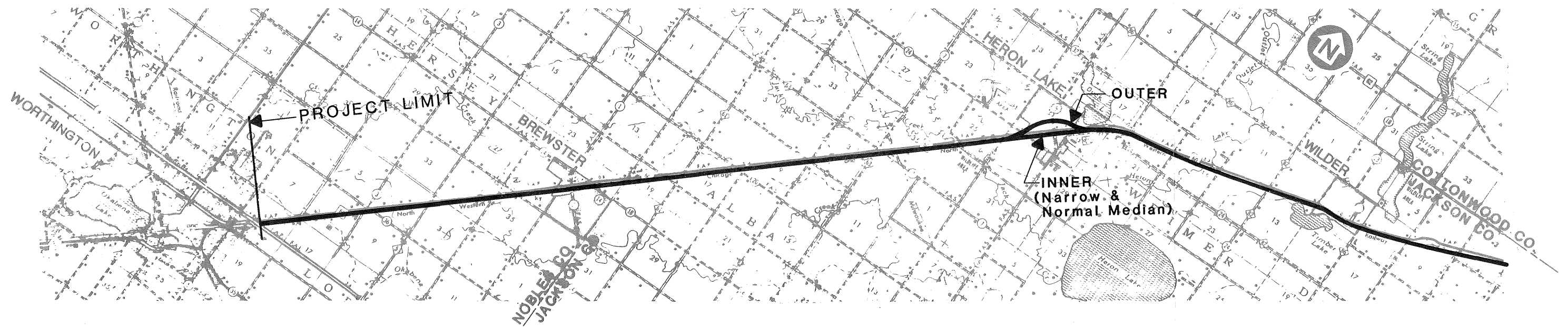
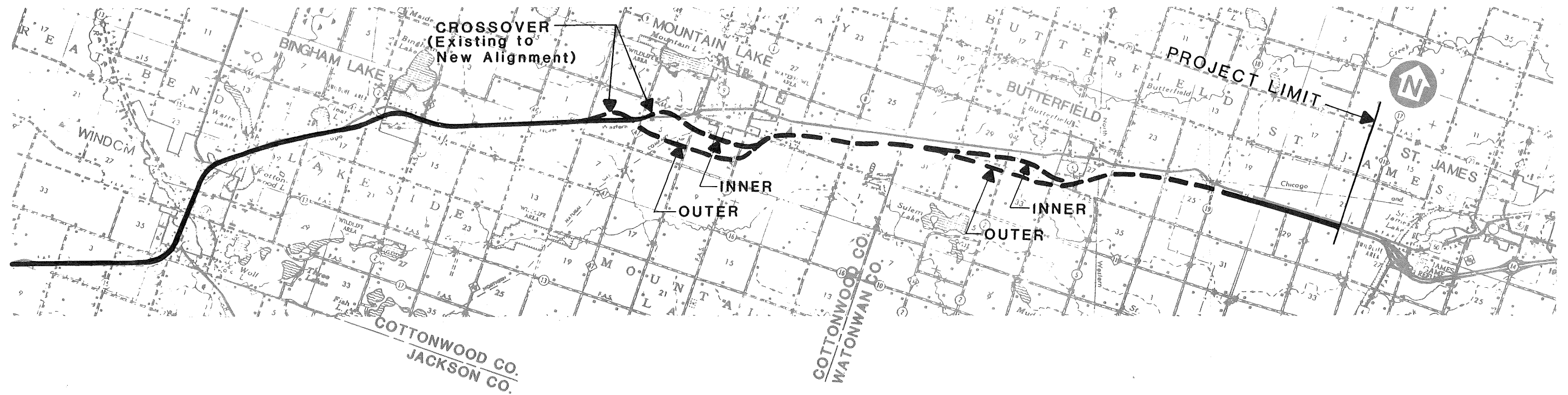
From Bingham Lake to Mountain Lake, the existing right-of-way is generally 125 feet wide and the centerline of roadway is only 50 feet from the railroad right-of-way line. Reconstruction to modern two-lane standards, therefore, will require an additional 25 feet of right-of-way and the centerline of the upgraded two-lane road will be 25 feet north of the existing roadway centerline.

Right-of-Way

Right-of-way acquisition will be confined to that necessary for two-lane construction, except in those limited areas where four lanes are to be built initially. This will help reduce the impacts on farmland and will avoid taking farmland out of production and reducing the tax base prior to actual four-lane construction. Mn/DOT will encourage local authorities to adopt appropriate building setbacks and, where appropriate, will acquire access right to preserve adjacent lands for eventual four-lane dualization, as described on DEIS pages 39-41. Existing right-of-way no longer needed for highway purposes will, where appropriate, be returned to farmland use as described on page 12 of this FEIS.

Deferred Decisions

Yet to be resolved is the determination of specific detailed alignments for the preferred new alignment bypasses of Butterfield and Mountain Lake. Alternative alignment variations designated on Figure 1 as "inner" and "outer" remain under consideration. A final determination will be made as part of the detailed design hearing process currently scheduled for this winter (1983-84).



LEGEND

— EXISTING ALIGNMENT
 --- NEW ALIGNMENT

INNER } Indicates Location-Design
 OUTER } Variations Remaining
 Under Consideration

miles 0 1/2 1 2 3
 feet 0 5000 10000 15000

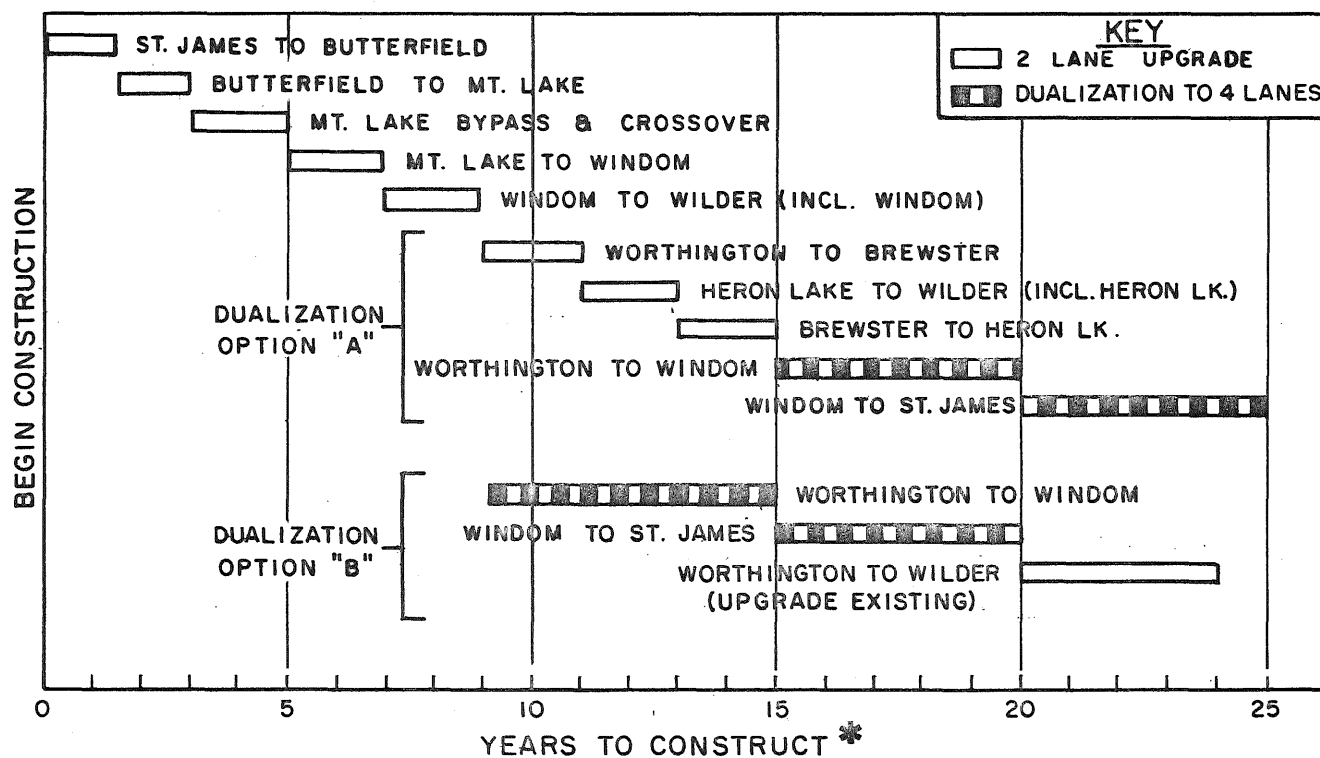


Minnesota Dept. of Transportation
 Edwards and Kelcey, Inc.

PREFERRED
 ALTERNATIVE



FIGURE 1



PROPOSED STAGING - PREFERRED ALIGNMENT ALTERNATIVE

*

Staging schedule is based on an assumed funding level of \$5.0 million/year (1980 dollars) for T.H.60. The schedule will be revised according to the actual available funding for T.H.60.

FIGURE 2

Final determinations regarding (a) alignment/design variations at Heron Lake and (b) the staging sequence for four-lane dualization south of Wilder have also been deferred, since construction is not anticipated to occur in these locations for some years. Deferral of these decisions does not affect the basic preferred alternative decision described above that is required to implement the first construction stages.

At Heron Lake, three location/design variations remain under consideration. Two of these follow the existing, or "inner", alignment as shown on Figure 1. The other follows an "outer" realignment which passes to the north of the presently developed lands adjoining the TH 60-CSAH 9 intersection. This alignment joins the existing alignment near CSAH 24 on the southwest and near Duck Lake on the northeast. A four-lane, 75-foot median, channelized intersection with CSAH 9 is incorporated in the design of the two-lane, as well as the ultimate four-lane improvement on the outer alignment.

On the inner alignment, the variations include a four-lane channelization with (1) a narrow raised median, and (2) a typical rural (75-foot median) section. A two-lane channelization with a narrow median is considered as a first stage of the future four-lane typical median design. Two four-lane design alternatives also remain under consideration at the Duck Lake area adjoining the city of Heron Lake: (1) the typical rural median, and (2) a narrow median which would reduce encroachment on the Duck Lake wetlands.

Two options remain under consideration for completing the dualization to a four-lane expressway in the Worthington to Wilder portion of the corridor, as illustrated in Figure 2:

OPTION A - Complete all sections of the two-lane upgrade first, dualizing in the final stages;

OPTION B - Dualize using the existing roadway "as-is" for one-way eastbound traffic, improving the existing roadway as the final stage (this option is not practicable from Wilder to St. James).

Reevaluation

Both U.S. Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) environmental impact statement regulations provide for the evaluation of large, multi-year staged construction projects such as the proposed TH 60 improvements on a "tiering" approach, the initial EIS (draft and final) covering the overall project alternatives and impacts as a whole. During the detailed design phase for each individual stage, these regulations require a reevaluation of the initial EIS findings. A supplemental impact statement(s) will be prepared if such reevaluation reveals any significant changes in the proposed action, the affected environment, the anticipated impacts or the proposed mitigation measures.

REASONS FOR SELECTION

Mn/DOT's selection of the preferred alternative for TH 60 was based on a detailed review of the Draft EIS, public hearing testimony, and written and verbal position statements received in response to the Draft EIS circulation. The positions of local governing bodies weighed heavily in the decision.

Build Versus No-Build

The need to improve TH 60 to modern highway standards from St. James to Worthington has been clearly demonstrated and was strongly supported by virtually all those commenting on the project.

Over 30 percent of the 52-mile study section of TH 60 currently operates below normal rural trunk highway traffic service level design standards (Service Level "B"). Without significant roadway improvement, over 80 percent of the route will operate below such standards under projected future demand. Even with future "constrained" tripmaking, over 60 percent would operate below level "B" conditions.

The build alternatives will provide desirable operating conditions over all or most of the route. They are also needed to eliminate or significantly reduce such existing deficiencies and hazardous conditions as:

- o substandard lane widths, shoulders, shoulder slopes and ditches;
- o numerous "no passing" zones;
- o hazardous intersections, driveway entrances and railroad crossings;
- o old and deteriorating pavement;
- o local land use, traffic and pedestrian conflicts and through-traffic delay.

TH 60 is a vital link in the flow of grain, livestock and poultry products from farm to market. The physical obsolescence of TH 60 has long been recognized as an impediment to the efficient movement of agricultural goods within and from the region. Without improvement, increased deterioration and reduced travel speeds would further add to transportation costs for farm products and detract from the region's ability to attract further investment in agricultural and industrial development.

Potential adverse environmental impacts from the build alternatives will, for the most part, be reasonably mitigated by measures described on pages 11 to 25 of this FEIS. Furthermore, at some locations certain build alternatives will have a net positive environmental impact (e.g., reduction of noise and community cohesion impacts in Mountain Lake and Butterfield).

Location

Three basic location options were considered for the proposed improvement of TH 60:

- 1) Existing Alignment;
- 2) Existing Alignment from Worthington to southwest of Windom, New Alignment from southwest of Windom to St. James;
- 3) Existing Alignment from Worthington to southwest of Mountain Lake, New Alignment from southwest of Mountain Lake to St. James.

The latter option was selected because it:

- 1) Eliminates significant adverse community land use, cohesion, traffic noise, traffic safety and traffic circulation conflicts in Butterfield and Mountain Lake. For example the number of sensitive receptors exceeding State Noise Standards would be reduced by approximately 70 to 80 receptors, over half the total expected to exceed State Daytime Standards and over one-quarter the total expected to exceed State Nighttime Standards for the entire 52-mile section on existing alignment. Included are residences, schools, churches and a hospital which adjoin existing TH 60.
- 2) Does not require significantly greater net farmland taking than the existing alignment alternative in view of proposed farmland reclamation of abandoned segments of existing TH 60. Net farmland taking for the initial two-lane facility improvement would be approximately 120-150 acres, compared to 85-95 acres for the existing alignment alternative.
- 3) Substantially reduces through traffic delays compared to the existing alignment alternative. A savings of over 55,000 vehicle hours per year for through traffic is anticipated under projected traffic conditions.
- 4) Will cost only about 8-9% more for the 52-mile project (\$6-7 million for two-lane upgrade, \$8-10 million overall for completed four-lane facility) than the existing alignment alternative.
- 5) Will not significantly differ from the existing alignment alternative with regard to other identifiable impacts.

As noted in the preceding section, a decision on the specific alignment ("inner" versus "outer") in the vicinity of Butterfield and Mountain Lake has been deferred pending detailed consideration during the final design hearing process currently scheduled for winter 1983-84. However, the overall costs and impacts of these new alignment variations do not differ significantly from one another in comparison to their differences from the existing alignment alternative and thus do not affect the decision preferring the new versus existing alignment.

Strong consideration was also given to the alternative of continuing on new alignment from Mountain Lake to southwest of Windom, bypassing Windom. The alternative would further reduce urban travel delays for through traffic (by an estimated 31,000 vehicle hours per year under projected traffic conditions), permit a continuous rural expressway design for the entire corridor upon completion of future four-lane dualization, aid the development of a planned industrial area in southeast Windom, and reduce community-through traffic conflicts in Windom.

However, this alternative was not selected because the additional costs and impacts were determined to significantly outweigh the benefits, as follows:

- 1) The total cost would be \$15-23 million more than the preferred alternative cost for the initial two-lane improvement phase, \$11-20 million more overall for a completed four-lane project. (Note: the new alignment portion adjoining Windom would be constructed to four lanes during the initial development phase.)
- 2) Community-through traffic conflicts are not as severe as in Mountain Lake and Butterfield since adjoining land uses in Windom are primarily commercial and industrial. Thus, for example, the additional reduction in receptors exceeding noise standards is not nearly as significant.
- 3) The Windom City Council supports keeping TH 60 on its present route through Windom.
- 4) Existing TH 60 in Windom is already a four-lane roadway with no parking and, with additional traffic signals and other operational improvements, will continue to adequately handle traffic for the foreseeable future.
- 5) The existing bridge near the south edge of Windom over the Des Moines River is a fully adequate four-lane structure built in 1971.
- 6) U.S. 71 and TH 62 would continue to pass through Windom.
- 7) Net farmland taking (after obliteration of existing TH 60, where possible, and reclamation for such area for farming) would be nearly double that of the preferred alternative.

Staging

The decision to construct a modern two-lane facility during initial stages of TH 60 improvement was based heavily on available funding. In view of funding limitations, it best addresses the immediate need for

the elimination of: existing substandard lane widths, shoulders, shoulder slopes and ditches; vertical profile deficiencies; hazardous intersections; and old and deteriorating pavement -- particularly in the portion of the corridor from St. James to Wilder.

The decision also recognizes that:

- 1) The initial two-lane construction is fully compatible with the proposed future four-lane design.
- 2) Limited four-lane sections will be constructed at major intersections leading to Mountain Lake and Butterfield, thus ensuring adequate capacity and compatibility with the future four-lane design.
- 3) Building setback regulations will be encouraged and purchase of access controls will be used at selected locations to "preserve" adjoining lands for future four-lane dualization.
- 4) The two-lane upgrade will provide adequate traffic service under current traffic demands.
- 5) In the southwestern portion of the corridor where existing roadway geometrics and pavement deficiencies are not as critical, but current and projected traffic volumes are higher, the option of accelerating the dualization process by adding westbound lanes while using the existing roadway "as-is" for one-way eastbound traffic during initial construction remains under consideration. This decision can be deferred until the initial two-lane upgrade from St. James to Wilder is completed, at which time priorities can be reassessed in view of then prevailing conditions.

IMPACT MITIGATION MEASURES

IMPACT MITIGATION MEASURES

A number of adverse environmental effects are associated with the preferred alternative for TH 60. Mitigation measures proposed to reduce these impacts are described below.

RELOCATION IMPACTS

Residential Displacements

The total number of residential displacements required for the preferred alternative ranges from 2 to 9 residences for initial two-lane construction; 8 to 17 residences overall for four-lane construction (DEIS Table 23, page 70). No residential displacement is required for the first two development stages of the preferred alternative. Third stage development would require the taking of one residential property if the inner alignment variation is selected for the bypass of Mountain Lake. Most residential displacements would occur in the later stages of project development. Overall, the relocation impacts are considered relatively minor for a highway improvement project 52 miles in length.

Properties which are acquired will be compensated at market value, and owners have the option of obtaining independent appraisals. Relocation assistance and compensation will be provided through the Mn/DOT Mankato District Relocation Office. Mn/DOT relocation personnel will assist the persons displaced as long as necessary to reestablish them in homes. Relocation benefits will include replacement-housing differential, moving costs, closing costs, interest differential, and appraisers fees, if any. The Relocation Office will ensure that all persons will be relocated into decent, safe, and sanitary housing within their financial means, without regard to race, color, or national origin.

Non-Farm Business Displacements

All non-farm business displacements for the preferred alternative occur along existing alignment sections. The number of displacements ranges from 6 to 12 businesses for the two-lane construction; 9 to 14 businesses overall for four-lane construction (DEIS Table 24, page 72). The range reflects the design/locations variations remaining under construction in the Heron Lake area.

No business displacements are required in the first three stages of the preferred alternative. Acquisition of business property will not occur for some years; however, when it does, relocation assistance and compensation will be provided through the Mn/DOT Mankato District Relocation Office. As project plans for the later stages are developed, Mn/DOT will consult with owners in developing relocation plans and, if desired, to help obtain resources or utilize relocation services and financing or tax incentives offered through local, State or Federal agencies.

FARM IMPACTS

Farmland Acquisition

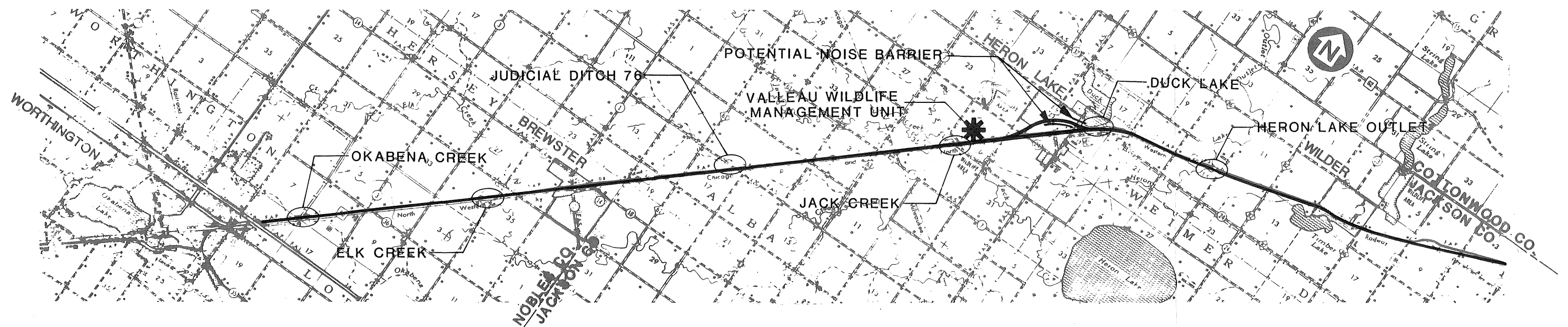
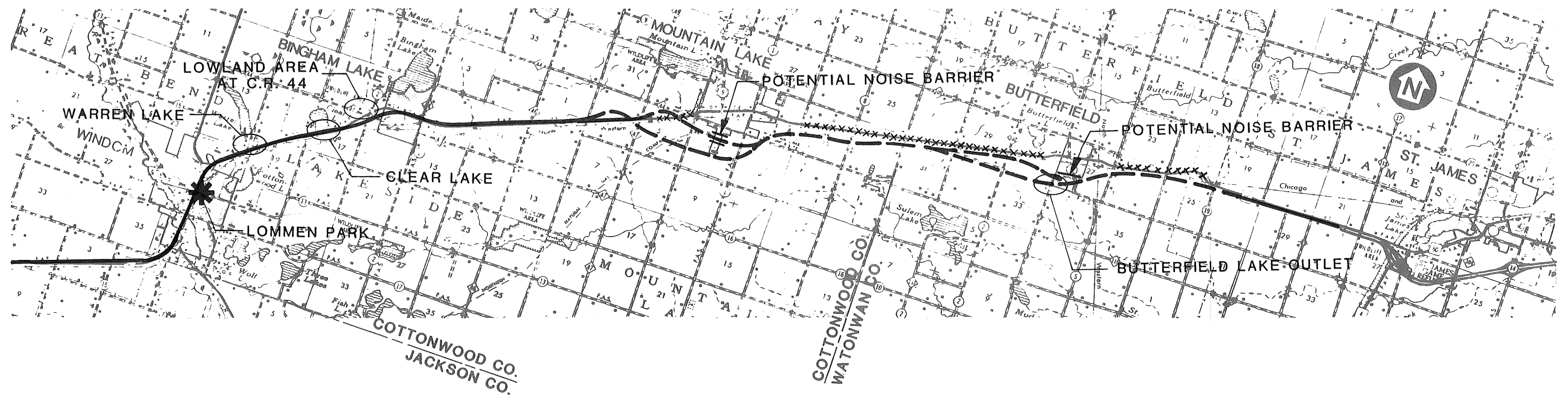
Farmland acquisition required for the preferred alternative ranges from 292-333 acres for two-lane construction to 644-691 acres for four-lane construction depending on specific bypass alignments. To help mitigate the impact of prime farmland acquisition, Mn/DOT has accepted a reduced median right-of-way standard for four-lane construction, as described on pages 23-26 of the DEIS. The reduced median decreases land acquisition needs by nearly 600 acres, significantly reducing impact on prime farmland. Obliteration and restoration of existing TH 60 rural sections for farmland use, where possible, will provide an additional mitigative measure. Locations of the sections expected to be returned to farmland use are shown on Figure 3 and in greater detail on the maps in Appendix A of the DEIS. Restoration will return approximately 140-150 acres to agricultural use, depending on the final location of the railroad cross-over from new to existing alignment west of Mountain Lake. This restoration will reduce prime cropland loss to a net of approximately 120-150 acres for two-lane acquisition and 430-480 acres for four-lane acquisition, reducing net takings by approximately 55% and 25%, respectively.

To restore the right-of-way for cropland use, Mn/DOT will regrade the affected areas and scarify the soil to remove compaction. Soil borings indicate that the existing roadway base is primarily topsoil suitable for cropland use if regraded. Existing pavement will be removed and, where practicable, reused in the new roadway construction. Where necessary, connections to relocated drainage ditches will be provided for existing drainage systems in adjoining fields. Installation of additional tile drainage facilities in the restoration areas, when necessary, would be the responsibility of the new owners. However, the cost for such facilities would be reflected by reduced property acquisition or transfer cost for the new owners.

Severances and Triangulation

The preferred alternative will sever approximately 180-280 acres from main farmsteads and create approximately 10 additional frontage miles of triangulation. Severance occurs when a formerly contiguous property is divided into two or more sections. Triangulation occurs when the new property line creates angular crop row ends, which decrease the efficiency of farming operations. The majority of impacted property is located in the vicinity of Mountain Lake and Butterfield. Damage payments will be included in the property acquisition settlements to help mitigate the impact on the affected owners.

Additional mitigative options may be initiated by affected landowners. The exchange of several parcels is possible where two or more adjacent landowners each suffer separation of a small parcel, small meaning too small to farm efficiently. The exchange of properties which puts a small inefficiently farmable piece with a larger more efficiently farmable parcel will substantially mitigate severance and triangulation effects.



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---|-------------------------|
|  | WETLAND STREAM MITIGATION |  | RESTORATION TO FARMLAND |
|  | POTENTIAL NOISE BARRIER |  | OTHER |

miles 0 1/2 1 2 3
feet 0 5000 10000 15000



Minnesota Dept. of Transportation
Edwards and Kelcey, Inc.

SPECIAL
MITIGATION AREAS



FIGURE 3

Another option, should there be no possible exchange, is to sell the severed and triangulated parcel to an adjacent landowner. In most cases, there will be only one or two potential buyers, creating an effectively depressed price. This is a damage factor Mn/DOT considers when arriving at damage amounts payable to landowners.

A third option is the specialized use of a severed and triangulated parcel. An example is the use of the parcel for hay production with no new crop farming. Generally this option is not as desirable and is anticipated only where the other options are not available or appropriate.

Tile Impacts

Construction of the preferred alternatives will require some modification or reconstruction of existing farm drainage tile systems. Affected drainage systems will be modified or restored by Mn/DOT to operating effectiveness equivalent to pre-construction conditions.

NON-FARM BUSINESS IMPACTS

"Bypass" Effects

Prior bypass experience indicates that certain businesses catering largely to the needs of transient motorists -- service stations, restaurants and a motel -- in the bypassed business areas of Mountain Lake and Butterfield will likely be adversely affected if they remain along the old route. While no specific mitigation is proposed by Mn/DOT, past experience has shown that such businesses can often adjust by reorienting their merchandise and services to local trade. Also, the improved shopping convenience and environment for local shoppers in the existing business area and potential new gas station and restaurant facilities near the proposed new alignment intersections, particularly at Mountain Lake, can likely be expected to avoid a net business loss to the communities.

COMMUNITY IMPACTS

Neighborhoods

The inner alignment variation for the preferred alternative at Mountain Lake will separate six residences of a relatively new, low-density suburban-type development from the remainder of town. If the inner location is selected during the final design process, a new service road will be constructed to maintain access to this area.

Parks

Lommen Park, a highway wayside in Windom, would be altered by the traffic operations improvements of the preferred alternative. The park would be altered by closing access between the adjoining service road and TH 60 at 13th Street -- the northern limit of the existing park. The alteration itself should help to mitigate any adverse effects by increasing the park size. The park will retain its current picnic and drinking well facilities.

Tax Base and Property Values

Acquisition of buildings and property for the construction of the preferred alternative will reduce the tax base of the TH 60 corridor.

Market accessibility is necessary to maintain property value and thus tax revenues. The direct loss of tax base from property acquisition can be expected to be at least partially, if not totally, offset by an increase in the value of remaining property stemming from increased accessibility. Also the restoration of portions of existing TH 60 to farmland use will help to mitigate the impact by returning these areas to the tax rolls.

NOISE IMPACTS

The preferred alternative will significantly reduce noise levels along the bypassed sections of existing TH 60 in Butterfield and Mountain Lake. The number of receptors exceeding FHWA design noise levels will be reduced from 49 to zero; exceeding State standards from 131 daytime and 93 nighttime to zero. However, several residences at the outer edges of these communities adjoining the proposed new alignment will be subject to new noise impacts.

Based upon a preliminary analysis of noise levels, areas along the "inner" location variations at Butterfield and Mountain Lake have been identified for potential noise mitigation, as shown on Figure 3. At the south edge of Butterfield 11 residences with noise levels exceeding State nighttime standards could be protected by earthen berms along the north side of the roadway. At Mountain Lake, combination berm and wall barriers between the new roadway and proposed adjoining frontage roads on both north and south sides would protect six residences from exceeding State daytime and nighttime standards, including one where FHWA design noise levels would also be exceeded.

At Heron Lake, combination berm-wall barriers could be used along portions of each side of the "outer" alignment variation, as shown on Figure 3. The barriers could protect up to 23 residences from exceeding State standards and help mitigate increases over present levels.

Actual construction of earthen berms and or noise walls to provide noise attenuation will be further evaluated in future design stages of the project. Decisions to implement noise barriers will be based on resident input and cost-effectiveness evaluations. Final location and design of noise attenuation barriers, if any, will be described in Final Noise Reports prepared during the final design process for each proposed construction stage.

Where abatement is not prudent or is not desired by affected communities, a variance from State noise standards will be requested from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Variances will also be requested for the scattered individual receptors in rural areas and receptors along the existing alignment in Windom where abatement is not practicable.

Also, Mn/DOT has furnished all cities, counties and regional development commissions in Minnesota with copies of "The Audible Landscape", a Federal Highway Administration handbook that provides guidance for local land use planning, plan layout, and building design for compatible development near traffic noise.

STREAM MODIFICATION IMPACTS

All construction at stream crossings will be carried out in conformance with joint FHWA and Mn/DOT design guidelines for shoulders, side slopes and clear zones to minimize stream encroachment (Mn/DOT Technical Memorandum 79-18-RD-2 or equivalent). Precautionary measures to avoid pollution of the streams from construction activities are described on pages 20-21 of this FEIS.

No significant encroachment on the base floodplain is anticipated. All anticipated work in the floodplain complies with Executive Order 11988, as documented in the Draft EIS and the "Hydraulic/Hydrology" section of Appendix D, "TH 60 Engineering Studies Report".

In those areas where stream relocation is necessary, special design treatments will be considered in the detailed design process. For example, the old channel may be left unfilled or dredged and otherwise expanded. Such areas have the potential to develop into valuable wetlands. Judicial Ditch No. 76 and Jack Creek are potential ideal areas for such treatment; Okabena Creek and Butterfield Lake Outlet also have limited potential. See Figure 3. Development of these design features will be coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), in conformance with provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.

Preliminary analysis (DEIS Table 37, page 111) indicates that reconstructed stream crossings at Elk Creek, Jack Creek, Duck Lake and Heron Lake Outlet will require individual Section 404 permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The remainder of the 15 new or reconstructed crossings in the 52 mile corridor will likely be authorized under the "nationwide" permit provisions, since they affect only a small headwaters drainage area or involve only minor fills. Twelve of the crossings affect State Protected Waters and will therefore require MDNR Highway Construction permits. Detailed mitigation measures will be developed and specified as part of the permit process during final roadway design.

WETLAND IMPACTS

All construction in affected wetlands areas will be carried out in conformance with joint FHWA and Mn/DOT design guidelines for shoulders, side slopes and clear zones to minimize wetland encroachments along new or reconstructed trunk highways (Mn/DOT Technical Memorandum 79-18-RD-2 or equivalent). Precautionary measures to avoid pollution of wetlands areas from construction activities are discussed on pages 20-21 of this FEIS.

Near the lakes that are subject to encroachment -- Warren, Clear, and Duck Lakes -- it is critical to maintain a gradual slope from the road shoulder into the water in order to create a shallow shelf or littoral zone. In so doing, the aquatic vegetation will better be able to reestablish itself and the potential for invertebrate, fish and wildlife habitat would be maximized. Filling in or near the water will be done in a controlled fashion to prevent localized slope failures from occurring. Although fill placement will occur over an extended period, the net impact will minimize lake sedimentation.

The deepening of selected seasonally flooded areas of Duck Lake could help make this area a more valuable wetland resource. The locations where such a practice could most reasonably be applied is at both the southeastern and southwestern shores of the lake. In these spots, existing Type 1 wetland could be altered to create a more "permanent" Type 2 or 3 wetland fringe to the lake. As indicated above, however, it remains important that a relatively gradual slope be maintained from the road shoulder into the water. Simply dredging a deep-water perimeter around the lake will not, in itself, promote invertebrate, fish and wildlife habitat to the fullest extent.

At Warren Lake, construction of new control structures (or a combined structure) at the culvert connection to Cottonwood Lake will be necessary. Construction will be timed during October or May, or special provisions made to control water levels in Warren Lake during construction, so as not to result in the loss of walleye production. Culvert reconstruction during the initial two-lane upgrade will be designed to accommodate future dualization so as to avoid a second disruption. Also at Warren Lake, a highway runoff diversion system to protect the walleye rearing activity in the lake appears to be feasible but not prudent due to high cost. Such a system is described on page 34; acceptable mitigation measures will be worked out with MDNR and USFWS.

Borrow pits generally fill with water and can be utilized to provide additional wetlands area. Where practicable, borrow areas will be designed and located specifically to create a marsh habitat; flat side slopes (6:1), shallow areas and lining with organic spoil material will be included to promote the establishment of marsh vegetation.

Additional mitigative measures may be incorporated to enhance the natural environment and to minimize harm to present wetlands, found to be practicable during the detailed roadway design process for the affected roadway sections. Low meadows, such as adjoin existing TH 60 at County Road 44 in the short realignment section near Bingham Lake may be dredged or impounded to create a pond or deepwater marsh and thus a more diverse habitat than at present. Such areas would be acquired as expanded right-of-way for water ponding to facilitate drainage. Ditch blocks, used in conjunction with the four-lane options, would serve to hold runoff water and provide some waterfowl habitat.

Detailed mitigation plans will be developed by Mn/DOT in consultation with MDNR and USFWS as detailed designs are developed for each of the staged construction sections.

WATER QUALITY IMPACTS

Appropriate construction control practices will be used to minimize potential water quality impacts from erosion and chemical pollutants during construction, as described on pages 20-21.

Until less harmful roadway de-icers are readily and economically available, limiting the amount of salt applied to the highways will be the most effective means of minimizing the impacts of de-icing salts on streams, lakes and wetlands. Mn/DOT has instituted a program under which it has attempted to cutback on the amount of salt used on highways in the State without sacrificing the safety of motorists. In keeping with this program, the Mn/DOT will apply salt on TH 60 at the minimum amount that safety will allow.

Accidental spills of hazardous liquids are always a possibility along any major highway. Should such an event occur, it is important that a preconceived control and clean up procedure to avoid or minimize contamination of water resources be carried out as quickly as possible. Mn/DOT has recently developed such a plan for the Arrowhead Bridge at Duluth, Minnesota. As this project moves forward into design, a similar plan applicable to TH 60 will be formulated. Measures to protect water quality and walleye rearing activity in Warren Lake have been investigated as discussed on page 34.

VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE IMPACTS

Valleau Wildlife Management Unit

The Valleau Wildlife Management Unit south of Heron Lake is one of the most important natural areas along the TH 60 improvement corridor. Four-lane dualization will encroach into the unit, since the existing roadway bisects the area.

Suitable replacement lands in excess of the 6.7 acres to be acquired for highway use exist adjacent to the unit. In addition, new bridges at Jack Creek and a culvert location near the center of the unit can be built long enough to provide wildlife trails under the highway to improve wildlife movement between the north and south tracts. The flattened slopes of the improved highway can be planted with suitable grasses to furnish additional wildlife habitat within the highway right-of-way with screen type plantings to reduce the visual intrusion of the roadway.

Since four-lane dualization in this area is not anticipated for many years under the proposed staging program, action to acquire replacement lands and develop detailed design features are not appropriate at this time. However, Mn/DOT and FHWA will work with MDNR and USFWS at the appropriate time to refine and implement features providing the acceptable types of mitigation, and will acquire replacement lands of at least equal fair market value and reasonable equivalent wildlife value.

Prairie Remnants

Prairie remnants along the Chicago and Northwestern railroad right-of-way adjoining TH 60 are of significant interest to the MDNR for maintenance as a long term seed source, as discussed on pages 31-34. Since most of the prairie remnant occurs on railroad property, it should not be affected by the proposed TH 60 improvements. However, special care will be taken that construction equipment does not encroach upon the railroad property beyond required construction limits. Such cautions will be written into the special provisions of the construction specifications. Construction easements onto railroad property, where necessary for joint drainage provisions, will be identified during final design to allow for appropriate salvage mitigation provisions as discussed below.

Some spreading of the prairie grasses onto the existing highway right-of-way has occurred in various locations. The extent to which (1) regrading of the ditches and backslopes to upgrade the existing roadway section, (2) regrading of abandoned sections of TH 60 for farmland reclamation, and (3) construction at the crossover from new to existing alignment will affect such locations cannot be determined until detailed design plans are prepared for each construction phase. As such plans are developed, Mn/DOT will provide MDNR with information identifying the construction limits so that Mn/DOT and MDNR can determine if salvage is desirable and practical. Salvage would consist of a cessation of mowing and controlled burning to locate high quality sites followed by harvesting the seed or sod as appropriate.

Roadside Habitat

A patchwork mixture of brome grass and alfalfa with switch grass -- a prairie species -- will be planted for roadside cover where practicable, as recommended by MDNR and Mn/DOT wildlife biologists. Switchgrass provides needed winter cover while brome/alfalfa serve the needs of nesting birds. In areas where heavy salt use is anticipated, shoulders and medians will be planted with salt tolerant species such as fescue, wheat grass, wild rye and reed canary grass.

Mn/DOT maintenance policy discourages full-width mowing in rural areas until after July 31 in order to avoid disturbance of nesting cover for wildlife. Farmers harvesting the right-of-way for hay are also encouraged to wait until after July 31. Exceptions are spot mowing for noxious weeds and mowing adjacent to homes, businesses and similar developed uses.

AESTHETIC AND VISUAL IMPACTS

Railroad overpasses are proposed at the CNW branchline south of Butterfield and for the CNW mainline west of Mountain Lake. The highway will be elevated over 20 feet above the general level of terrain. Special landscaping treatments will be considered during the design of these sections to soften the visual impact of the high embankments.

CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

General

Precautionary measures will be used during the construction of this project to prevent air and water pollution. Controls over contractor's construction operations will be provided by Mn/DOT's "Standard Specifications for Highway Construction" and other related regulations in effect at the time of construction. Also, all applicable regulations of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and others relating to the prevention and abatement of pollution shall be complied with during hauling and construction operations. The Minnesota Department of Transportation's construction specifications require the contractor to become familiar with local conditions and National, State and local regulations before starting construction.

Additional controls relating to the prevention of air and water pollution will be included in the contract. These specifications and special provisions include, but are not limited to the following mitigation measures.

Erosion Control

The supervising field engineer will have the authority to limit the surface area of erodible earth material exposed by clearing and grubbing, excavation, borrow and fill operations and to direct the contractor to provide immediate permanent or temporary control measures to prevent contamination of adjacent streams and other water courses, lakes, ponds, and areas of water impoundment. Cut slopes will be seeded and mulched as the excavation proceeds to the extent considered desirable and practicable.

The contractor will be required to incorporate all permanent erosion control features into the project at the earliest practicable time. Temporary pollution control measures will be used to correct conditions that develop during construction that were not foreseen during the design stage; that are needed prior to installation of permanent erosion control features; or that are needed temporarily to control erosion that develops during normal construction practices, but are not associated with the permanent control features on the project. Some examples of temporary control devices are mulches, slope drains, dikes, sediment basins, and turf establishment. Temporary grasses will be quick growing species suitable to the area, that will provide temporary cover but will not later compete with the grasses sown for permanent cover.

Where erosion is likely to be a problem, clearing and grubbing operations will be so scheduled and performed that grading operations and permanent erosion control features can follow immediately thereafter if the project conditions permit; otherwise, temporary erosion control measures may be required between successive construction stages.

The engineer will limit the area of excavation, borrow and embankment operations in progress commensurate with the contractor's capability and progress in keeping the finish grading, mulching, seeding and other such permanent erosion control measures current in accordance with the accepted schedules. Should seasonal limitations make such coordination unrealistic, temporary erosion control measures will be taken immediately to the extent feasible and justified. For example, if river bridging work is stopped for the winter, the exposed cuts or fills for approaches will be riprapped to protect against erosion during spring runoff and resulting high water.

The engineer may increase or decrease the amount of surface area of erodible earth material that may be exposed at one time by clearing and grubbing, excavation, borrow and embankment operations, as determined by his analysis of project conditions. For example, two separate areas could be opened simultaneously if two fleets of equipment were available.

MPCA Agency rule APC-6 requires that avoidable amounts of particulate matter be prevented from becoming airborne. In addition to the above measures to minimize exposed surfaces, the contractor will be required to utilize such measures as job site maintenance; haul road maintenance; watering of exposed areas undergoing grading, earth moving or site preparation; cessation of operations during periods of high winds; and covering of or applying dust suppressants to truck loads to prevent the escape of materials.

Water Pollution

Fording of live streams with hauling equipment will not be permitted. Temporary bridging will be used if and where stream crossings are necessary. Waterways will be cleared as soon as possible after construction.

During construction, potentially harmful materials such as gasoline and oil will be kept in confined areas out of the floodplain to prevent any spillage from entering the water bodies.

Water containing sediment from aggregate wash operations will be treated to the extent that the final sediment content will meet the specified effluent standards that the MPCA has set. Wash water or wastes from concrete mixing operations will not be allowed to enter live streams. All necessary permits will be obtained and complied with.

Borrow Pit Treatment

Much of the proposed roadway is on fill, and sites outside the construction limits will be required as a source of fill material. Mn/DOT may identify potential borrow pit sites for the contractor at such time as construction plans are developed for each of the staged construction sections in the 52-mile corridor. Topsoil and clays will be utilized for fill provided they are not used for placement in water. The relatively high groundwater level in the area indicates that borrow sites

may require dewatering, and could produce siltation problems at the discharge point. Additional soils investigations will insure that borrow pits would not be located in areas of silty soils; this should minimize potential harm. The high groundwater table also dictates a relatively shallow borrow pit configuration; care in shaping will enhance the potential use as a wetlands area.

As soon as borrow is completed in a given area, these sites will be left neat and in as near a natural condition as possible. Restoration will include cleaning, shaping, replacement of topsoil, and establishment of vegetative cover on all areas disturbed by construction operations.

Disposal of Unsuitable Materials

Near Warren Lake, Clear Lake and Butterfield Lake Outlet, areas with unstable soils or peat will first have to be excavated down to stable materials. The excavated peat and organic soil will be used as slope-dressing wherever needed along the overall project route. To keep this material from reentering the water bodies, the excavated material would normally be removed from the floodplain area. However, if subsequent testing of the dredged material shows it to be relatively free of pollutants, these materials may be used to create a 10- to 15-foot shallow shelf or littoral zone; this would enhance the productivity of the affected lake or wetland. The concurrence of MDNR, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service will be obtained before the dredged material is reused in this manner.

An additional mitigation measure use for peat/muck soils is as bottom dressing for reclaimed borrow pits. The relatively sterile mineral soil exposed in borrow excavation is unsuitable for marsh plant production, resulting in a slow rate of revegetation. By lining the pits with organic material, a fertile substrate will be provided for plant growth.

Historic Artifacts

The State Historical Society and State Historical Preservation Officer's review of the project corridor has revealed no known sites of historic and cultural significance. However, as requested, the Trunk Highway Archaeologist will be notified prior to construction in the Duck Lake vicinity to permit monitoring of soil stripping operations.

Also, if any construction operations uncover unrecorded archaeological remains, construction specifications require that the contractor restrict or suspend operations in the immediate area of the discovery until the State Historical Society can study the discovery, determine its value, and develop a method of preserving it, if deemed appropriate.

Disruptions to Utilities

Mn/DOT will notify utility companies and municipalities in which properties (pole lines, conduits, gas lines, water mains, sewers, etc.) must be relocated to complete the project; this notice will specify final utility locations. The contractor will give notice to the

utilities at least 48 hours before commencing operations affecting those properties. The contractor will also take all precautions, including use of special equipment and hand labor, to prevent damage to the facilities.

Disruptions to Traffic

Construction work will cause some disruptions to local traffic patterns. Since the project is relatively lengthy (Worthington to St. James, about 52 miles), the actual construction will be done under several separate contracts. Construction will be scheduled in such a manner that alternate routes around construction areas can be developed. Vehicular access to adjacent properties will be maintained during construction.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation's "Standard Specifications for Highway Construction" requires contractors to conduct their operations in a way that will cause the least obstruction to traffic. Contractors are also required to provide for the safety of the general public as well as residents abutting the highway. When necessary, contractors will provide temporary facilities to serve pedestrian travel over or through obstructions at public walkways. Open excavations will be fenced off and posted with warning signs.

Contractors are required to give the chiefs of the local fire and police departments sufficient notice to arrange for routing of emergency vehicles before it becomes necessary to blockade a street. They must also keep them informed as to the status and removal of street blockades affecting emergency travel. Access to fire hydrants will not be obstructed without the approval of the local fire chief.

Tentative detour routes for sections to be reconstructed on existing alignment have been selected. They were selected to minimize detour length, maximize use of existing paved trunk highways and county roads, and to avoid routing traffic through developed areas. Where county roadways are used, the roadway pavements will be upgraded or rehabilitated before and/or after use, as appropriate, to accommodate the increased traffic volumes and loads, and to repair any resultant damages. With the exception of a possible alternate detour route following Cottonwood CSAH 13, all the routes are through rural areas, thereby minimizing potential noise and other traffic related impacts. Details of all detours will be coordinated with county and local officials prior to final designation and use.

Reconstruction Segment: St. James to railroad overpass east of Butterfield

Detour Route: TH 4 south to Watonwan CSAH 10, CSAH 10 west to Watonwan CSAH 2, CSAH 2 north to TH 60. Detour has been used successfully in past when railroad overpass was closed for repairs.

NOTE: Extension of detour west via Watonwan CSAH 10-Cottonwood CSAH 16 to Cottonwood CSAH 1, then north on CSAH 1 to TH 60 could also be used if

existing TH 60 is obliterated for reuse of materials at the same time the new alignment is constructed. Specific construction staging details in this area to be developed during final design.

Reconstruction Segment: Mountain Lake to Bingham Lake

Detour Route: Cottonwood CR 44 west to Cottonwood CSAH 2, CSAH 2 south to TH 60

Reconstruction Segment: Bingham Lake to Windom

Detour Route: Cottonwood CR 44 west to TH 71, TH 71 south to TH 60

NOTE: If full Mountain Lake to Windom segment is under construction at one time, consideration may also be given to use of an alternate detour using Cottonwood CSAH 1 south to Cottonwood CSAH 13, CSAH 13 west to TH 60 in Windom.

Reconstruction Segment: Windom to Wilder

Detour Route: TH 62 west to CSAH Cottonwood CSAH 18, CSAH 18 - Jackson CSAH 13 south to TH 60 or via Cottonwood CSAH 18 and township road west of Wilder.

Reconstruction Segment: Wilder to Heron Lake

Detour Route: Jackson CSAH 13 or township road - Cottonwood 18 north to TH 62 as above, TH 62 west to Cottonwood CSAH 5, CSAH 5 - Jackson CSAH 9 south to TH 60

NOTE: Use of TH 62 and CSAH's 5 and 9 from Windom to Heron Lake (without connection at Wilder) could also be used for either of above segments separately or if they are constructed simultaneously.

Reconstruction Segment: Heron Lake to Brewster

Detour Route: Jackson CSAH 24 - Nobles CSAH 16 west to Nobles CSAH 1, CSAH south to TH 60

Reconstruction Segment: Brewster to Worthington

Detour Route: Nobles CSAH 1 and 14 west to TH 59, TH 59 south to TH 60

Construction Noise

The impact of construction noise may, as appropriate, be minimized by restricting the hours of construction activity, constructing temporary barriers and by careful attention to see that all equipment is properly muffled. Ordinances regarding working hours -- or types of construction that can be performed during certain hours -- sometimes vary among counties or cities. Contractors will be required to comply with these regulations.

Truck traffic serving the construction will generally approach the sites over the most direct route. In most instances, this will be over rural roads with a minimum of noise receptors. As a general rule, construction trucks will be prohibited from operating through built up residential areas. Adequate alternate routes are available to make this enforceable.

Normal TH 60 truck traffic during construction will be routed over the same detours as the other traffic. As described above, detour routes are available and proposed which generally avoid built up areas, thereby avoiding significant noise impacts.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

This section of the FEIS updates and supplements material contained in the DEIS. These modifications and additions are provided in response to comments received during the DEIS review period and to report further studies conducted since completion of that document.

PURPOSE AND NEED

Modal Interrelationships - Rail

(This section has been included to update DEIS information on rail facilities and service in the TH 60 corridor.)

DEIS information on the Chicago and North Western (CNW) mainline, which parallels TH 60, and on the status of rail branchlines in the TH 60 corridor were based primarily on information in the 1979 State Rail Plan.

Train frequency on the mainline remains at approximately two trains per day in each direction. One regularly scheduled through service train of 100-150 cars operates daily in each direction. Extra grain or local trains of 20-75 cars also operate approximately once daily in each direction.

The CNW mainline track condition rating from Worthington to Butterfield has been dropped from Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Class 4 (60 mph maximum) to Class 3 (40 mph maximum). The rating had dropped to Class 2 (25 mph maximum), but has since been upgraded to Class 3 through a program of rail, tie and ballast replacement. An exception occurs in the immediate vicinity of Butterfield where slow orders of 10 mph remain in force. Efforts are underway to upgrade this section. Through the remainder of the corridor, operations are conducted at 30 to 40 mph. The State Track Inspector indicates that current operations are conducted at 30 mph, although 40 mph would be allowable under the standards. Future plans of CNW are to upgrade the entire corridor to 49 mph operation.

Local access between relocated TH 60 and the portions of Butterfield and Mountain Lake north of the CNW mainline will be provided via existing and new at-grade crossings. Evaluation of the anticipated railroad operating conditions and discussions with CNW officials indicate that the convenience and safety of such access should not be significantly altered for either the general public or emergency vehicles. Crossing protection will be provided at major crossings. Alternative crossing locations within and at either end of each town will be available.

With the exception of three segments, all of the branchlines listed in DEIS Table 7, "Railroad Branchline Status - TH 60 Corridor" are now officially abandoned. The "1981-1982 Minnesota State Rail Plan" lists

each of the three remaining segments as candidate projects for rehabilitation under the Minnesota Rail Service Improvement Program. The Plan also provides an update of the 1979 financial feasibility analysis for each line and an estimated cost and starting date for rehabilitation, as follows:

<u>Railroad & Line</u>	<u>Financial Feasibility</u>	<u>Estimated Cost & Starting Date for Rehabilitation</u>	
		(\$Million-1981 Dollars)	
CNW Butterfield to Sanborn	Not financially viable based on local traffic; increased grain shipping potential requires further analysis	\$2.7	(1984-87)
CNW Butterfield to Welcome	Identified as viable by operator based on operational functions	\$2.4	(1985-90)
CNW Org/Agate to SD Border	Viable based on local traffic	\$4.7	(1985-90)

(Source: "1981-1982 Minnesota State Rail Plan", Mn/DOT)

Traffic Volumes

(This section has been added to update the description of "present" traffic demands based on completed 1980 traffic counts and traffic counts taken during 1982.)

Estimated "present" traffic volume levels presented in the DEIS were based on an examination of trends from 1970 to 1978 records of Average Daily Traffic (ADT), plus preliminary count data from 1979-1980, as discussed in pages 33-42 of DEIS Appendix D. Since then, completed and seasonally adjusted annual ADT traffic count data for both 1980 and 1982 have become available. The data is summarized in Table 1.

The data reflects the economic downturn over the past 2-3 years, particularly the effect on local traffic within the urban areas. Rural volumes continue to remain near pre-1980 levels, with some increase registered in the northern portion of the corridor from Windom to St. James. Also noticeable is that despite the apparent initial downturn, the comparison of 1982 to 1980 volumes tends to reflect an establishment of the trend toward gradually increasing volumes in the corridor as a whole.

TABLE 1

PRESENT TRAFFIC VOLUME TRENDSTH 60 CORRIDOR

vehicles per day

Section	DEIS "Present Volume"	1980 ADT**	1982 ADT**
Rural:			
Worthington to Brewster	4,200 - 4,500	3,800 - 4,000	4,000 - 4,400
Brewster to Heron Lake	3,400 - 3,600	3,000 - 3,200	3,100 - 3,400
Heron Lake to Wilder	3,300 - 3,600	3,000 - 3,100	2,900 - 3,000
Wilder to Windom	4,400 - 4,600	3,900 - 4,200	4,000 - 4,400
Windom to Mt. Lake	3,600 - 4,000	3,500 - 3,800	3,900 - 4,300
Mt. Lake to Butterfield	3,200 - 3,300	3,200 - 3,300	3,500 - 3,600
Butterfield to St. James	2,800 - 3,000	2,900 - 3,000	3,300 - 3,500
Urban:			
Heron Lake	3,500 - 4,400	3,200 - 3,900	3,300 - 3,500
Windom	6,500 - 11,300	4,500 - 9,900	5,000 - 9,800
Mt. Lake	4,100 - 7,700	4,400 - 5,400	4,200 - 5,700
Butterfield	3,500 - 4,800	3,000 - 4,000	3,300 - 4,000

*Estimate based on 1970-1978 annual Average Daily Traffic (ADT) records plus preliminary count data for 1979-1980. See DEIS Appendix D, pages 33-42.

**Based on completed, seasonally adjusted counts for 1980 and 1982.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCESHistoric and Cultural Resources

(This section has been added to provide supplemental information in response to comments by the State Historic Preservation Officer.)

Documentation from the State Historic Preservation Officer in the Draft EIS concerning the identification of significant historic and cultural resources requested further intensive testing at Duck Lake Site #2 (southwest end of Duck Lake) to identify the nature, condition and significance of archaeological deposits and the potential impacts or salvage needs associated with the proposed TH 60 construction alternatives. Mn/DOT subsequently requested the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) to complete the necessary additional testing as part of the MHS Trunk Highway Archaeological Survey Program.

The testing was completed during August 1982, as documented in the following correspondence from the Minnesota Historical Society (page 30). The site was found to have little research potential and to not



FOUNDED IN 1849

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

600 Cedar Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101 • 612/293-6131

DEPARTMENT Minnesota Historical Society
Trunk Highway Archaeology

STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office Memorandum

18 October 1982

TO : Robert Clouse ✓

DATE : October 7, 1982

FROM : Leslie Peterson

PHONE : 726-1171

SUBJECT: 1703, 3204-26, 5306-23, 8308 (T.H. 60)
From the Jct. 1-90 at Worthington to West Jct. T.H. 4
near St. James/Nobles, Jackson, Cottonwood and Watonwan Counties
MHS Reference File Number: C-995

Mr. C.P. Kachelmyer
Preliminary Design Engineer
Department of Transportation
Room 612H - Transportation Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Mr. Kachelmyer:

RE: 1703, 3204-26, 5306-23, 8308 (T.H. 60)
From the Jct. 1-90 at Worthington to West Jct. T.H. 4
near St. James/Nobles, Jackson, Cottonwood and Watonwan Counties

MHS Referral File Number: C-995

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above project. It has been reviewed pursuant to responsibilities given the State Historic Preservation Officer by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Procedures of the National Advisory Council of Historic Preservation (36CFR800).

We concur with the findings and conclusions of the MnDOT Trunk Highway Archaeologist (see attached). It is our opinion that the site does not meet the criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. However, there may be some scattered data remaining below the plow zone; to guard against the possibility of disturbing any potentially significant data we recommend that the Trunk Highway Archaeologist be present to monitor the soil stripping operation during the project's construction. This procedure would conform to the requirements of Chapter 138 of Minnesota Statutes.

In summary, this review reveals the location of no known sites of historic, architectural, cultural, archaeological, or engineering significance which are on or eligible for inclusion on the National Register, and therefore, none which may be affected by your proposal.

Again, thank you for your participation in this important effort to preserve Minnesota's heritage.

Sincerely,

Russell W. Fridley

Russell W. Fridley
State Historic Preservation Officer

Encl.

As recommended to your office in the last correspondence on this project 9 December 1981, the Duck Lake Site #2 (21 JK 13) was the last area of potential concern within the limits of this 600-mile long widening and relocation project which has been under study since 1971.

During August, 1982, staff of the Trunk Highway Survey conducted additional test excavation at site 21 JK 13 to supplement the data gathered in 1981. A 1x1 test #1 excavated in 1981 yielded only 10 stone waste flakes - 7 from within the 30 cm plow zone and 3 from below that level. The two 1x1s excavated in 1982 also were sparse but contained slightly more diagnostic materials including 1 point tip, 2 bifacial tool fragments, 20 waste flakes, 13 pot sherds (5 shell tempered-Blue Earth? and 8 CWP). Although these data do suggest a bit better cultural context with possible Oneota and Woodland components, most of the materials were recovered within the remnant plow zone. The five sherds and ten waste flakes found below the visible base of the plow zone are also in questionable context. Several of these artifacts were noted in the field as having been recovered from the many rodent burrows extending to the 80 cm base of the limits. The presence of modern debris, including sheet metal, wire and coal fragments, to the base of the units suggests active transport of all materials within the burrows. On the basis of the sparsity of cultural materials at the site and their apparent concentration within the disturbed plow zone, I would recommend that the site be determined ineligible for nomination to the National Register and defined as having little research potential.

I would recommend, however, that I be informed of construction schedules and be allowed to monitor stripping of the site area to insure that no scattered artifact concentrations or features remain intact beneath the plow zone.

Therefore, except for that minor request I feel that there are no other data of concern within the entire project area and that a final statement can be issued.

meet the criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. However, a recommendation was made to notify the Trunk Highway Archaeologist prior to construction in the affected area to permit monitoring of soil stripping operations and thus insure that no scattered artifact concentrations or features remain intact below the plow zone. This provision has been added to the project mitigation measures described on page 22 of this FEIS.

With the completion of the additional Duck Lake site review, the State Historic Preservation Officer has concluded that the proposed construction corridor contains "...no known sites of historic, architectural, cultural, archaeological, or engineering significance which are on or eligible for inclusion on the National Register, and therefore, none which may be affected by your Mn/DOT's proposal".

Natural Features

(This section has been included to incorporate additions and revisions with regard to corridor natural features in accordance with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Department of Interior comments.)

Table 12 in DEIS Appendix I listed all the wetlands and other critical areas along the proposed corridor, referenced to accompanying aerial photos of the corridor. The reference numbering system used was based on the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) 1979 "Preliminary Designation of Public Waters and Wetlands". Lakes, streams and rivers were listed with a "p" designation; wetlands with a "w" designation. Based on its revised "Protected Waters" listing, MDNR attached a list of revisions to DEIS Table 12 with its June 18, 1982 comments on the DEIS (see page 76). These revisions are listed in Table 2. In addition, it should be noted that the Des Moines River from its source through Windom to Petersburg near the Iowa border has been listed in the Nationwide Inventory of Rivers which are likely to qualify for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers system.

These revisions do not significantly affect the assessment of impacts contained in the Environmental Consequences section of the DEIS.

Prairie Remnants

(This section has been included to incorporate supplemental information on prairie remnants in response to comments by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.)

The existence of a limited amount of prairie remnant in the TH 60 corridor was acknowledged in the DEIS and described on pages 62-63 of DEIS Appendix I, "TH 60 Natural Resources Report". The descriptions were based on limited observations by Mr. Earl Kopischke, MDNR Area Wildlife Manager in Madelia. Since the DEIS preparation, a more comprehensive listing of prairie remnant occurring along the Chicago and

TABLE 2

REVISIONS TO TH 60 CORRIDOR NATURALFEATURES LISTING

(Table 12, DEIS Appendix I, pp. 56 to 60
and Accompanying Aerial Photograph Maps)

<u>Location No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Change</u>
3A,p	North side of existing TH 60 1/2 mile S.W. of Butterfield at Butterfield Lake	"w" designation changed to "p"
5,p	Butterfield Creek Tributary, approximately 2 miles S.W. of Butterfield	description as wetland deleted
6,p	Regehr State Wildlife Management Area	"p" designation added
7A	Former wetland 4 3/4 miles S.W. of Butterfield on north side of TH 60. Drained for agricultural use.	"w" designation deleted, not on protected waters inventory
10	Tributary to Judicial Ditch No. 1, 1 mile east of Bingham Lake	"p" designation deleted, shown as "judicial ditch" on protected waters inventory
28C,w	Proposed acquisition by USFWS to the southeast of Federal Waterfowl Production Area; northeast of Wilder	description corrected to read "northeast" of Wilder.

North Western (CNW) railroad right-of-way adjoining existing TH 60 has been compiled by Mr. Ed Brekke-Kramer, MDNR Resources Management Specialist. The listing (see Table 3) was compiled by field observation on November 2, 1982. Each site was classified as to importance, as follows:

A1 is the best quality and can be used as a seed source for the widest variety of species. It would be excellent for sodding.

A2 has many prairie species, but may be weedy or invaded by bluegrass or brome sod. It may have been damaged by mowing or herbicide use. It is good for seed collecting and would be suitable in part for sodding and good for plugging (digging individual plants or clumps).

A3 is heavily invaded by weeds or domestic sod, severely damaged by herbicide use or mowing. It has limited use for seed collecting and plugging.

TABLE 3

PRAIRIE REMNANTS - CHICAGO AND
NORTH WESTERN RAILROAD RIGHT OF WAY
ADJOINING TRUNK HIGHWAY 60

<u>Location</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Notes</u>
I90 to bridge #5577	A2	(Mowed to Poles)
Allied Mills to Noble Co. #3 and #36	A2	(Backside Mowed)
Nobles #36 to twp. road	A2	With Brome, (Backside bet- ter, front mowed repeatedly to poles)
Bridge 5576 to bridge 5575	A2	(Backside Only)
Bridge 5575 to twp. road	A2-	(Mowing History)
	A3	(Backside may be A2)
Twp. road to Jackson Co. #61	A2-	Front
	A1	
	A2	Back
Jackson Co. #61 to #20	A2	(Backside, SW 1/2)
#20 to twp. road	A2-	(Backside, SW end, and Unmowed Strip)
	A3	
Jackson Co. #63 to Miloma	A2	
Miloma to Jack Creek	A2	
Jackson Co. #24 to Heron Lk.	A3	
Heron Lake to twp. road	A2	With Brome
Twp. road to bridge 5569	A2?	With Bluegrass
Twp. road to Heron Lk. outlet	A2	(Back), Some A2-A1 (Front)
Bridge 5568 to Wilder	A3	
Wilder to MN #86	A2?	(Back)
#86 to twp. road	A3	
Twp. rd. to Jackson Co. #15	A2-	(Back)
	A3	
Jackson Co. #15 to Windom	A3	
Windom to twp. road	A2	
Twp. road to twp. road	A2-	(Isolated spots & NE end)
	A1	
Bingham Lk. to Mt. Lake	A2-	(Mowing History)
	A1	(Backside variously en- croached
Mt. Lake to GTA	A2-	
	A3	
GTA to Watonwan Co. line	A2?	(Mowing History)
Wat. Co. line to Butterfield	A3	
Twp. road E. of Butterfield to overpass	A2- A1	

Source: Mr. Ed Brekke-Kramer, MDNR Resource Management Specialist,
MN/DOT

Note: "Back" or "Backside" refers to side of railroad property away
from existing TH 60.

The majority of the remnants were cautiously classed as A2. A prescribed burn of these areas would provide an opportunity to locate the highest quality areas. There may be more A1 remnant, but identification was difficult in November and without recent fire. Some mowed areas have good strands of prairie grasses but few forbs. These areas would be excellent seed sources if mowing was stopped and fire introduced to stimulate seed production.

The MDNR Division of Parks and Recreation interest is for long term maintenance as prairie for a long term seed source. Nearly all state parks in MDNR Region IV have prairie restoration projects in progress or planned. Prairie remnants outside the parks provide quantities of seed and species that are unavailable in the parks.

Since most of the prairie remnant occurs on railroad property, it should not be affected by the proposed TH 60 improvements. However, some spreading of the prairie grasses onto the existing highway right-of-way has occurred in various locations. The extent to which (1) regrading of the ditches and backslopes to upgrade the existing roadway section, (2) regrading of abandoned sections of TH 60 for farmland reclamation, and (3) construction at the crossover from new to existing alignment will affect such locations cannot be determined until detailed design plans are prepared for each construction phase. As such plans are developed, Mn/DOT will provide MDNR with information identifying the construction limits so that Mn/DOT and MDNR can determine if salvage is desirable and practical. Salvage would consist of a cessation of mowing and controlled burning to locate high quality sites followed by harvesting the seed or sod as appropriate.

Warren Lake Area Runoff

(This section has been included to describe findings of supplemental studies concerning highway runoff in the Warren Lake area in response to comments by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.)

Preliminary studies indicate that diversion of highway runoff past South Warren Lake to protect the walleye rearing activity in the lake is feasible but not prudent due to high cost. The proposed solution would consist of an intake and containment levees built in the roadway ditch just upstream of South Warren Lake to intercept the roadway runoff. The intercepted runoff would be piped by gravity about 2,600 feet to the Warren Lake outlet stream below the outlet dam. The preliminary studies indicate that construction costs would vary from \$200,000 to \$700,000 depending upon the quantity of runoff it is found desirable to divert. Mn/DOT will work with MDNR and USFWS to arrive at acceptable mitigation.

The hydrologic effects of the diversion on Warren Lake and its outlet tributary to the Des Moines River will be very small, but measurable. To optimize the diversion system, it will be necessary to investigate the watershed hydrology in more detail to determine the flushing time and quantity of runoff diversion required to remove high concentrations of roadway chemicals from the runoff. Detailed investigations will be performed and designs prepared during the final design phase.

WETLANDS FINDINGS

WETLANDS FINDINGS

Implementation of the preferred alternative for TH 60 improvements will alter seven wetland areas, as shown on Figure 4. The extent of alteration is shown for both proposed initial two-lane construction and ultimate four-lane dualization. The Minnesota Department of Transportation prepared the Draft EIS in accordance with Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands) and U.S. Department of Transportation Order 5660.1A (Preservation of the Nation's Wetlands). The Draft EIS and its Appendix I, "TH 60 Natural Resources Report" contain a description of these resources and anticipated impacts of the various alternatives considered for TH 60 improvements, including the preferred alternative.

ALTERNATIVES

The other alternatives were not considered practicable for the following reasons:

- 1) While the "no-build" alternative would avoid wetland alteration, it will not satisfy the significant existing and future transportation needs and objectives in the corridor.
- 2) Reconstruction following the existing alignment for the entire corridor would require the same alterations as the preferred alternative, plus additional wetlands alteration in the Butterfield area. Bypassing Mountain Lake and Butterfield also provides significant traffic service benefits and reduction of existing community land use, cohesion, traffic noise and traffic safety conflicts.
- 3) Construction on new alignment bypassing Windom would avoid wetlands alteration in the Warren Lake, Clear Lake and CR 44 areas, but would create other wetlands alterations in the Cottonwood Lake vicinity. Also, the additional costs and potential adverse impacts to continue on new alignment bypassing Windom significantly outweigh benefits to the extent that such action is not considered practicable.

MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM

All practicable measures to minimize harm to the affected wetlands are being pursued in the planning and design for the subject roadway sections. These measures, which are discussed on pages 16-17 and 20-22 of this FEIS include:

- 1) construction in conformance with joint FHWA - Mn/DOT guidelines for shoulders, side slopes and clear zones to minimize wetlands encroachments;
- 2) potential use of a special narrow median section adjoining Duck Lake;

- 3) use of controlled filling procedures and selected deepening at the lake shore areas subject to encroachment to protect and enhance habitat;
- 4) reconstruction of fish and water control structures at Warren Lake;
- 5) restoration of borrow pits to provide suitable habitat;
- 6) potential acquisition of expanded right-of-way to create additional habitat;
- 7) incorporation of erosion control measures during construction;
- 8) other construction control measures to avoid pollution or destruction of wetlands areas.

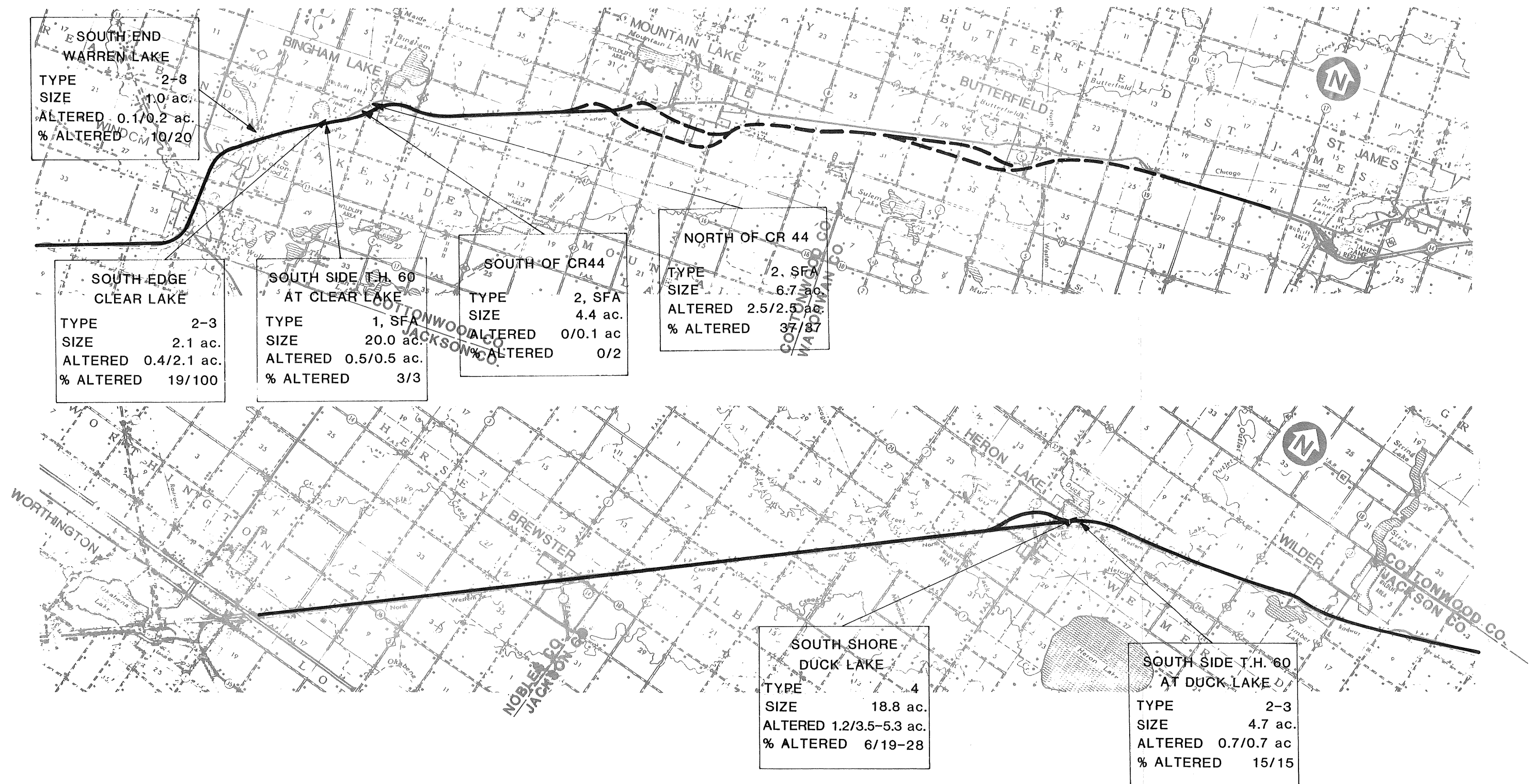
COORDINATION

The impact of TH 60 improvements upon wetlands and means to mitigate such impacts has been, and will continue to be coordinated with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), as described elsewhere throughout this FEIS.

Construction at Duck Lake will require a Corps Section 404 individual permit; construction at Warren and Clear Lake will be covered by Section 404 nationwide permit. MDNR permits for construction in protected waters will be required at each of these sites. Construction at the wetlands adjoining CR 44 will not require either federal or state permits.

CONCLUSION

Based upon the above consideration, it is determined that there is no practicable alternative to the proposed new construction in wetlands and that the proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands which may result from such use.



LEGEND

TYPE — U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
 CIRCULAR NO. 39 CLASSIFICATION
 SFA — SEASONALLY FLOODED AGRICULTURAL LAND
 ALTERED — BY 2 LANE CONST./ BY 4 LANE CONST.

— EXISTING ALIGNMENT
 - - - NEW ALIGNMENT

miles 0 1/2 1 2 3
 feet 0 5000 10000 15000

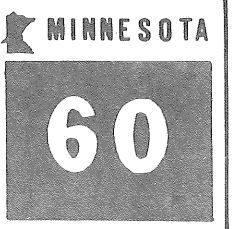


Minnesota Dept. of Transportation
 Edwards and Kelcey, Inc.

WETLANDS IMPACTS

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

FIGURE 4



**CONFORMANCE WITH
STATE AIR-QUALITY
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

CONFORMANCE WITH STATE AIR QUALITY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The proposed project will not result in the violation of air quality standards. It is located in an area where the approved State Implementation Plan (SIP) to attain and maintain ambient air quality standards does not contain any transportation control measures. Therefore, the conformity procedures of 23 CFR 770 do not apply to this project. Construction activities will conform to State and Federal air quality regulations.

A Memorandum of Understanding with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) specifies that (1) prior consultation with the MPCA is considered as accomplished for highway sections outside of metropolitan areas; (2) an air quality analysis demonstrating consistency with the approved SIP is considered as accomplished for highway proposals outside metropolitan areas where the annual average daily traffic is not expected to exceed 20,000 vehicles per day within ten years following construction. The proposed project meets these criteria. It will not require an indirect source permit from MPCA.

FINAL SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

FINAL SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

INTRODUCTION

A "4(f)" involvement occurs when a project requires use of land from a historic site or publicly owned park, recreation area or wildlife refuge of national, state or local significance. Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act requires special consideration for actions that require "use" of land from such properties. The proposed TH 60 project would require use of land from two such properties, as described in the following sections.

Project Description

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) proposes the improvement of a 52-mile section of Trunk Highway (TH) 60 between Worthington and St. James in southwestern Minnesota. Proposed construction would be staged over a period of years, contingent on funding availability. Initial stages would provide two-lane reconstruction to modern highway standards. Subsequent stages would provide dualization to a four-lane expressway in rural sections.

The preferred alternative is to construct on new alignment from near St. James to approximately one-half mile west of Mountain Lake and to reconstruct on existing alignment from west of Mountain Lake to Worthington. A short section at the extreme northeast end of the 52 mile corridor near St. James will also be reconstructed on existing alignment, as shown on Figure 5.

Additional traffic signals and other traffic operational improvements will be provided in the Windom urban section, where a four-lane undivided roadway currently exists. The preferred alternative provides for limited four-lane initial construction to accommodate channelization at major intersections in the bypasses of Butterfield and Mountain Lake. Alternative alignment variations in the new alignment sections bypassing Butterfield and Mountain Lake remain under consideration. They are designated as "inner" and "outer" variations on Figure 5. A final determination will be made as part of the detailed design hearing process currently scheduled for summer 1983.

Final determinations regarding (a) alignment/design variations at Heron Lake and (b) the staging sequence for four-lane dualization south of Wilder (i.e., reconstruction of the existing roadway first followed by dualization versus dualization first followed by reconstruction) have also been deferred, since construction is not anticipated to occur in these locations for many years. Deferral of these decisions does not affect the basic preferred alternative decision described above that is required to implement the first construction stages.

Other alternatives considered include (1) no-action, (2) reconstruction on the existing alignment through the entire corridor, and (3) additional construction on new alignment from west of Mountain Lake to

west of Windom, bypassing Windom. The two-lane impact evaluations also reflect the alternative of postponing or cancelling of the proposed dualization at a future date, should re-evaluation of need during the initial two-lane construction indicate that such dualization would no longer be warranted.

The preferred alternative was selected because it:

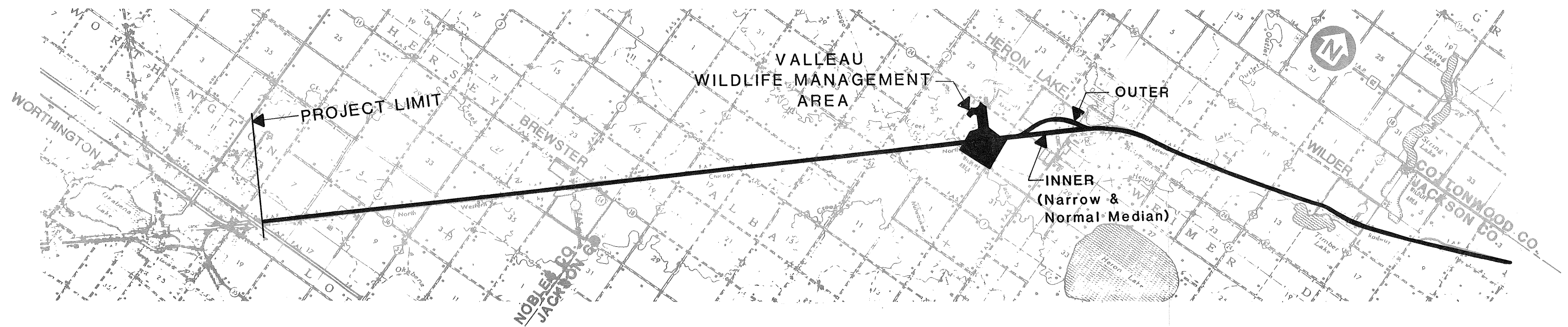
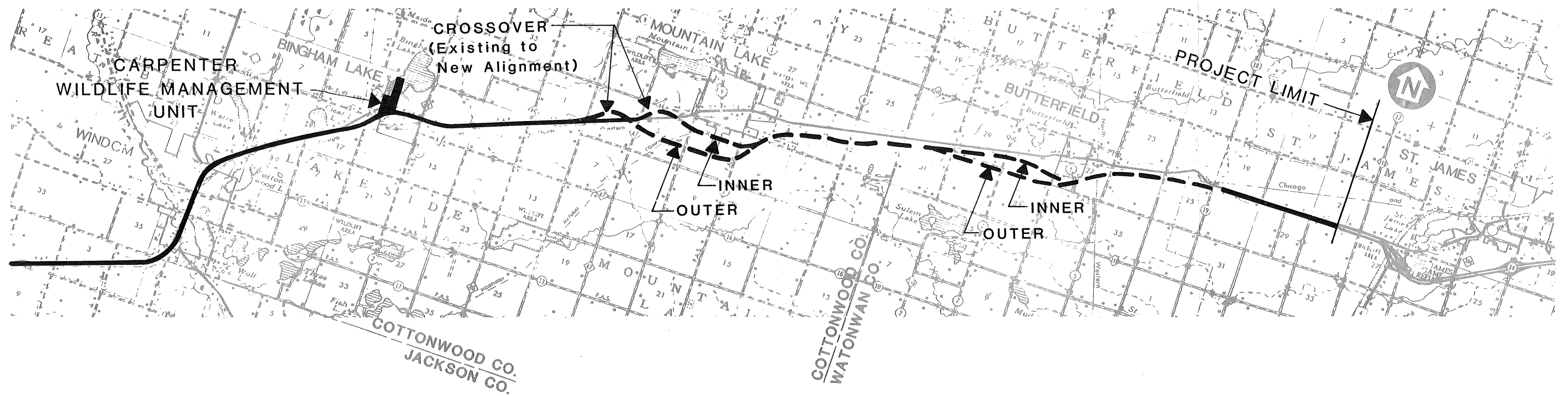
- 1) best addresses immediate upgrading needs in view of funding limitations;
- 2) provides flexibility for, and compatibility with, construction of an ultimate four-lane expressway as conditions permit;
- 3) eliminates significant adverse community land use, cohesion, traffic noise, traffic safety and traffic circulation conflicts and impacts in Butterfield and Mountain Lake;
- 4) does not require significantly greater net farmland taking than the all existing alignment alternative in view of proposed farmland reclamation of abandoned segments of existing TH 60;
- 5) substantially reduces through traffic delays compared to the all existing alignment alternative;
- 6) costs only about 8 percent more than the all existing alignment alternative.

Additional costs and impacts to continue on new alignment to bypass Windom were determined to significantly outweigh the benefits of such action.

Figure 5 shows the location of the two affected 4(f) properties. The properties are (1) Carpenter Wildlife Management Area at Bingham Lake and (2) Valleau Wildlife Management Unit southwest of Heron Lake. A third property -- Lommen Park in Windom -- was discussed as potentially subject to 4(f) determination in the draft "Impacts on Section 4(f) Properties" section contained in the DEIS. Lommen Park has subsequently been determined to be a highway wayside wholly within highway right-of-way and operated as a highway appurtenance and thus is not subject to Section 4(f) determination.

Project Need

Both immediate improvement and protection of the future traffic service, safety and physical integrity of TH 60 are vital to southwestern Minnesota's agricultural based economic health, the mobility of its residents and its desire to attract industrial development. A program of immediate two-lane improvement of high priority sections, coupled with planning for ultimate conversion to a four-lane expressway is necessary if the present and future transportation needs of southwestern Minnesota are to be met. Significant existing deficiencies, which are aggravated by the heavy truck use TH 60 accommodates as a major grain and livestock shipping corridor, include:



LEGEND

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| — EXISTING ALIGNMENT | } Indicates Location-Design Variations Remaining Under Consideration |
| - - - NEW ALIGNMENT | |
| | INNER |
| | OUTER |

miles 0 1/2 1 2 3
feet 0 5000 10000 15000



Minnesota Dept. of Transportation
Edwards and Kelcey, Inc.

PREFERRED
ALTERNATIVE

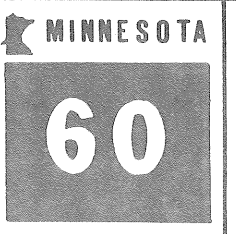


FIGURE 5

- 1) substandard lane widths, shoulders, shoulder slopes and ditches;
- 2) numerous "no passing" zones;
- 3) hazardous intersections, driveway entrances and railroad crossings;
- 4) old and deteriorating pavement.

Reduced traffic service and safety together with land use and environmental conflicts in the urban communities of Mountain Lake, Butterfield, Windom and Heron Lake also dictated the need to consider new alignments bypassing these communities in selecting the location for the needed improvements.

As noted above, the overall evaluation of costs, benefits and impacts resulted in the selection of a preferred location bypassing Mountain Lake and Butterfield, while retaining the current alignment through Windom. At Heron Lake, a short "bypass" section remains under consideration. Since construction in the Heron Lake vicinity is not anticipated for many years, the location decision for this short section has been deferred at this time.

Current Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes on TH 60 range from approximately 3,000 vehicles/day outside Butterfield to over 11,000 vehicles/day in Windom. Rural demands are heaviest to the north of Worthington and south of Windom, averaging approximately 4,500 vehicles/day. Traffic has increased throughout the corridor in the past 20 years, with overall increases varying from 20 percent near the northern end to 80 percent in the southern end. Design traffic forecasts indicate continued growth in TH 60 traffic. Projected rural demands range from 5,300 to 7,500 vehicles/day; urban demands from 5,000 to over 13,000.

Over 30 percent of the 52-mile study section of TH 60 currently operates below desirable rural traffic service level conditions under design hour traffic demands. Without significant roadway improvement, over 80 percent of the route will operate below desirable levels.

A modern two-lane facility with standard design features will permit level "B" or better operation over virtually the entire route, except for urban speed reduced sections in Windom and possibly Heron Lake. Ultimate four-lane expressway construction would allow free flow operation at the 55 mph speed limit, except in the urban speed reduced sections. Urban traffic operational improvements will be required to maintain satisfactory urban traffic service in Windom.

TH 169-60 is an expressway for the approximate 100-mile distance southwest from the Twin Cities through Mankato to St. James. Construction to four-lane expressway standards of the remaining 52-mile segment to Interstate 90 at Worthington would provide system design continuity. Dualization would also reduce both the number and severity

of accidents, particularly as traffic volumes exceed approximately 5,000 vehicles per day. Under projected traffic conditions, the accident rate on the expressway sections would likely be approximately 30 to 40 percent lower than for comparable sections of an improved two-lane facility. The significant truck traffic, projected traffic increases, improved safety and systems considerations substantiate the need to plan for future dualization of TH 60 to a four-lane expressway.

CARPENTER WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Character and Uses

The Carpenter area is 58.1 acres in size and lies between TH 60, CSAH 2 and the southwest shore of Bingham Lake about 1/2 mile northwest of the city of Bingham Lake, as shown in Figures 6 and 7. Several other Wildlife Management Areas are located in a four- to eight-mile radius of the Carpenter unit, but there are none directly related in the immediate vicinity.

The Carpenter area is a wetland and natural vegetation area providing native plant and animal habitat enhanced by a managed rearing pond for Northern Pike. It also contains a very small remnant of natural prairie.

This facility provides pedestrian access to Bingham Lake for fishing. Hunting and nature study are also available. Available game are pheasants and Hungarian partridge.

Attendance and Access

Due to limited cover for game, the area is only lightly used by hunters in season. There is also some muskrat trapping in the area.

Access is directly available from TH 60 and CSAH 2. A primitive road exists from CSAH 2 to Bingham Lake but vehicles are prohibited.

Development

There are no existing or planned facilities at this site other than small fringe parking areas.

Ownership and Title

The property is owned and managed by the State of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). Title is subject to existing road and power line easements and continuance of tile field drains.

The original 41 acres of this area were purchased with Federal Pittman-Robertson Funding for wildlife management activities with stipulations requiring mitigation or replacement for alterations to the property. LAWCON funds have been used for management activities, but not for purchase.

Proposed Use

Minor relocations of TH 60 and CSAH 2 in this section (which otherwise is proposed to follow the existing alignment) are necessary to eliminate substandard horizontal curves and vertical profile on TH 60 and hazardous, closely-spaced multiple intersections with CSAH 2, CR 44 and a township road. These conditions occur as a leftover from a former CNW railroad branch line crossing of TH 60. The rail line was recently abandoned, creating the opportunity to eliminate the substandard conditions.

As shown in Figure 7, 0.4 acre of partially wooded management area land will be required for the proposed CSAH 2 relocation, but 2.4 acres of present TH 60 and CSAH 2 will revert to management area use, creating a net increase of approximately two acres.

Alternatives to Use of 4(f) Lands

The new alignment alternative bypassing Windom would avoid the area. However, the additional cost (\$16 to 23 Million) and potential adverse impacts to continue on new alignment bypassing Windom significantly outweigh benefits to the extent that such action would not be prudent.

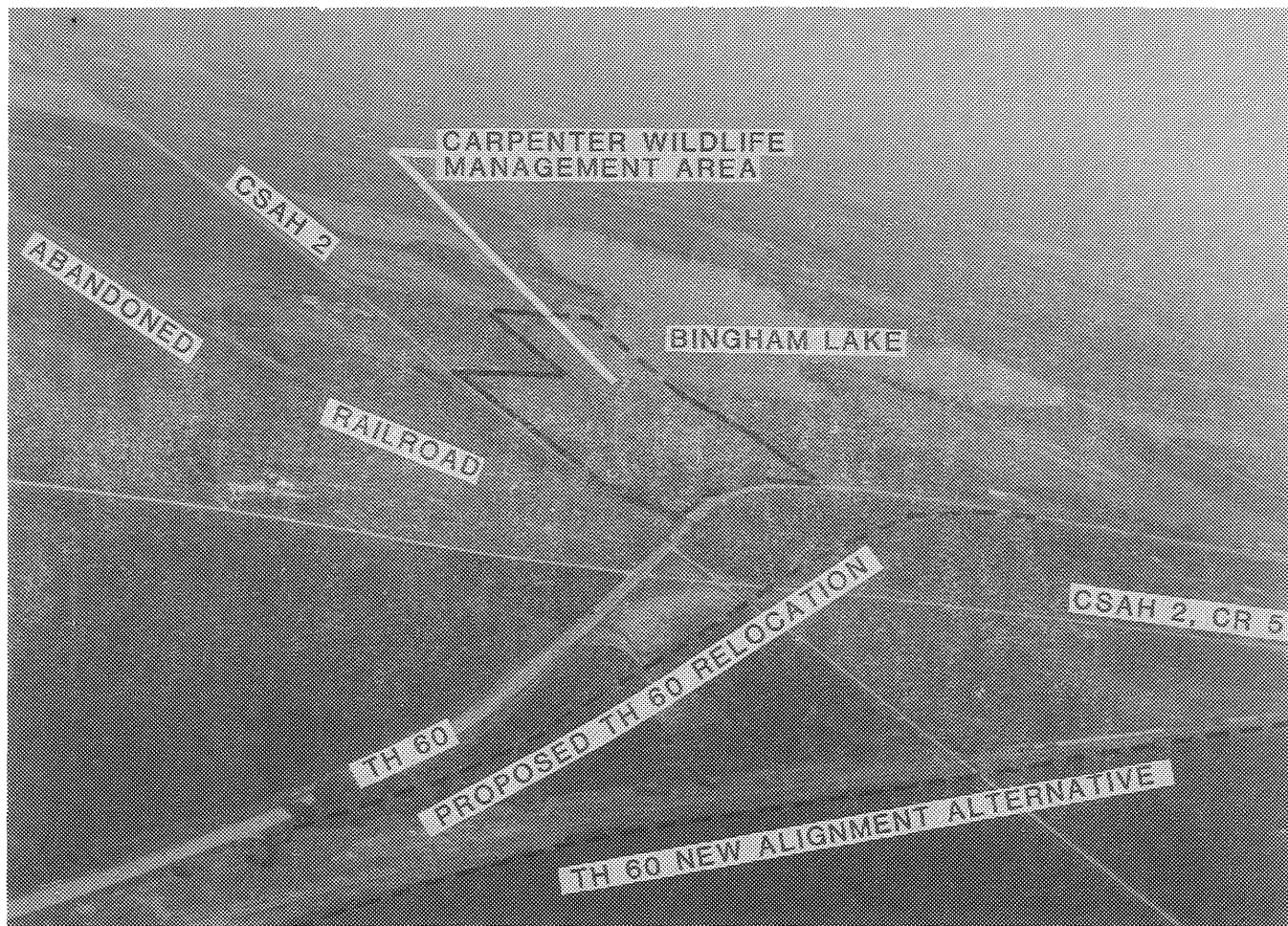
Reconstruction on existing alignment without the proposed minor relocation to eliminate the substandard horizontal curves and hazardous intersections could also avoid the "use" of 4(f) land, at least during initial two-lane reconstruction. However, retention of hazardous substandard conditions in an otherwise substantially improved roadway would not be prudent, particularly considering that the proposed action will have a net positive impact on the 4(f) property. Without the proposed relocation, implementation of anticipated future dualization to four lanes would also be made substantially more difficult, or require taking of 4(f) land, since dualization would occur to the north of the existing roadway in the remainder of this section.

Impacts

No facilities or access will be affected other than extending the primitive road to meet the relocated CSAH 2. The old TH 60 and CSAH 2 would be removed and the area regraded and planted. Noise, visual and air pollution impacts from TH 60 will be slightly reduced, and the size of the area slightly increased, resulting in a net positive impact.

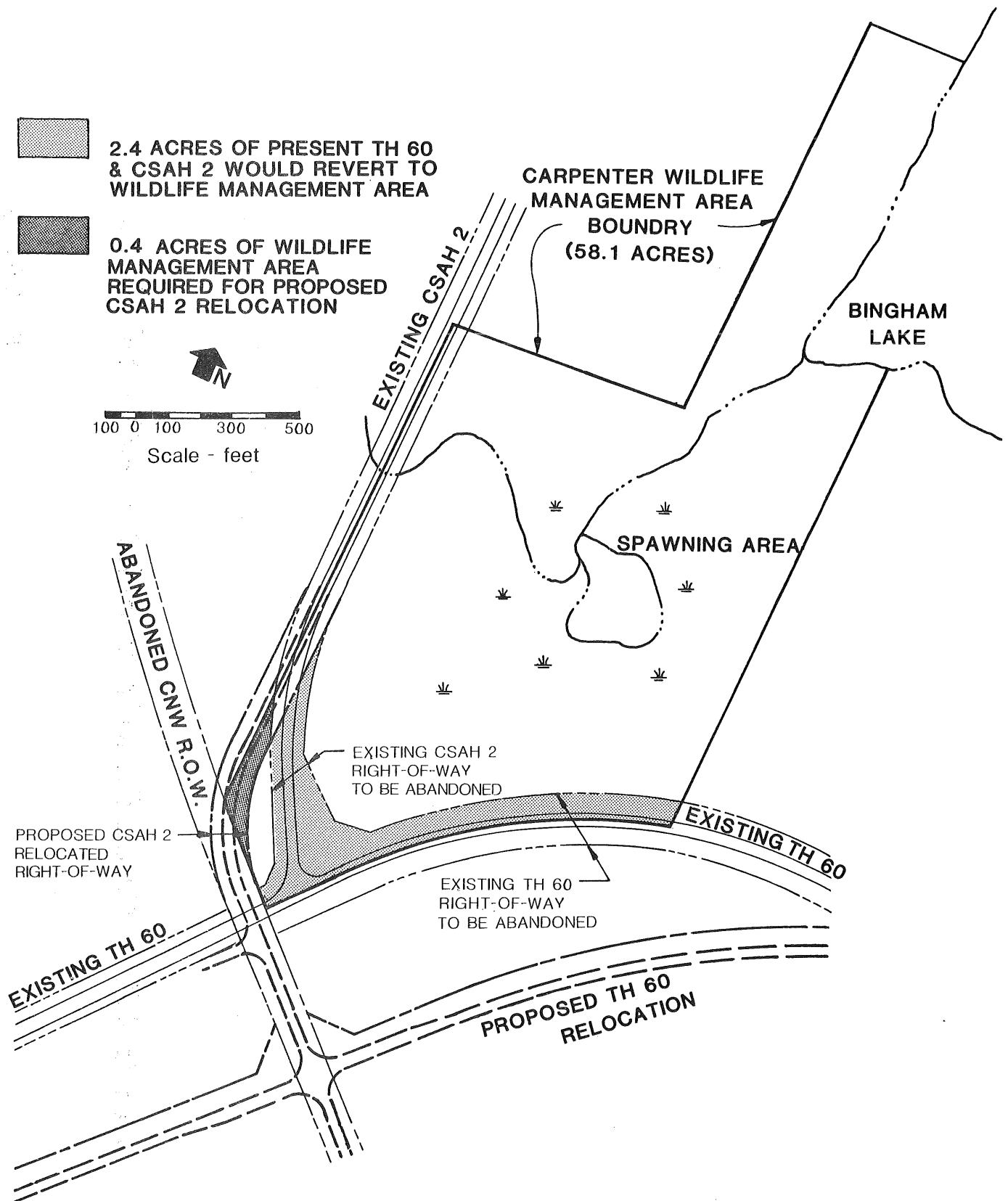
Mitigation Measures

The proposed action itself serves as a mitigative measure, since the preferred alternative will slightly enlarge the usable area -- the 0.4 acre taking more than offset by the 2.4 acres reverting to 4(f) use. It will also improve the human environment by relocating the trunk highway to a greater distance from the area.



CARPENTER WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA SETTING

FIGURE 6



**PROPOSED ROADWAY RELOCATIONS
AND 4(f) INVOLVEMENT – CARPENTER
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA**

Coordination

The U.S. Department of Interior - Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) served as cooperating agencies in the preparation of the DEIS, including the draft "Impacts on Section 4(f) Properties" statement. Representatives of these agencies participated in the scoping process, assisted with field inventories, and helped identify environmental impacts and mitigative measures, as documented in the DEIS and its supporting Technical Appendices. Included was a meeting with Mn/DOT representatives on July 18, 1980 to discuss impacts of the proposal on the Carpenter Wildlife Management Area. No adverse concerns were expressed.

The U.S. Department of Interior also submitted comments on the draft Section 4(f) statement as part of its response to the DEIS (see page 50). The Department concluded that "Should the Federal Highway Administration determine that reconstruction of TH-60 on the existing alignment is necessary and sufficient to meet regional transportation needs, we would concur that there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the proposed direct use of the Carpenter Wildlife Area (2- or 4-lane options)... and that the proposed measures to minimize harm...would satisfy the second proviso of Section 4(f), provided firm commitments for their implementation are included in the final statement." Such findings and commitments are included in this final statement.

MDNR's formal comments on the draft 4(f) statement (see page 51) also conclude that impacts on the Carpenter Wildlife Management Area would be "...minimal or possibly even beneficial".

Copies of the draft 4(f) statement were provided to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for review and comment. No comment was received.

Conclusion

Based upon the above considerations, it is determined that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of land from the Carpenter Wildlife Management Area, and that the proposed action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the Section 4(f) property resulting from such use.

VALLEAU WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT UNIT

Character and Uses

The Valleau Wildlife Management Unit is a 335-acre wetland and natural vegetation area providing native plant and animal habitat including a wintering area for deer. The Unit is divided into two roughly equal tracts by TH 60 and the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad as shown in Figure 9. Figure 9 also shows the wetland areas and vegetative cover included in the Unit. Tract 2, which is primarily the portion which would be altered by the TH 60 improvements, is shown in the aerial photo, Figure 8.



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

ER 82/807

JUN 25 1982

Mr. William R. Lake
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
490 Metro Square Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear Mr. Lake:

This is in response to the request for the Department of the Interior's comments on the draft environmental/Section 4(f) statement for TH-60 (Worthington to St. James), Nobles, Jackson, Cottonwood, and Watonwan Counties, Minnesota.

SECTION 4(f) STATEMENT COMMENTS

Should the Federal Highway Administration determine that reconstruction of TH-60 on the existing alignment is necessary and sufficient to meet regional transportation needs, we would concur that there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the proposed direct use of the Carpenter Wildlife Management Area (2- or 4-lane options) and the Valleau Wildlife Management Unit (4-lane option only), and the proposed constructive use (increased air/noise pollution and reduced ease of access) of Lommen Park.

We also concur that the proposed measures to minimize harm listed on pages 139-140 and 143 would satisfy the second proviso of Section 4(f), provided firm commitments for their implementation are included in the final statement. With regard to Lommen Park, we agree that the opportunities for mitigation are limited but recommend that full consideration be given to the provision of additional landscaping to reduce as much as possible the aesthetic effects of increased traffic on the park. We also note that if a bypass alternative is selected a transfer of ownership of Lommen Park from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MN-DOT) to the local jurisdiction may be required — if such is necessary, we recommend that the final statement include assurances that the property will continue to be available for public park and recreation use.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT COMMENTS

Under the new alignment alternatives, a new TH-60 bridge would be built over the Des Moines River south of Windom. The final environmental statement should note that the Des Moines River from Petersburg to Windom Dam, from Windom Dam to Talbot Lake Dam, from Talbot Lake Dam to Lake Shetek Dam, and from that dam to the river's source, has been listed in the Nationwide Inventory of Rivers which are likely to qualify for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Mr. William R. Lake

2

We are concerned that the construction of a new bridge over the river in connection with the TH-60 project could have adverse impact on the qualities of this stretch of the Des Moines River which prompted its inclusion in the inventory. Although the measures described on page 127 of the draft statement should, to a large degree, mitigate the impact the project might have on the aesthetic and scenic qualities of the river, we nevertheless recommend that additional coordination on this matter be undertaken with the Regional Director, National Park Service, in Omaha, and the results of that contact reported in the final statement if a new alignment alternative is selected.

FISH AND WILDLIFE COORDINATION ACT COMMENTS

The draft statement accurately describes the need for Corps of Engineers Section 404 permits for project implementation, and adequately addresses the potential impacts to fish and wildlife resources from the various alternatives. Pursuant to the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) informs us that it would not object to the issuance of permits for any of the alternatives, providing adequate measures to minimize harm are included in final project plans. The FWS would be pleased to work with you, the MN-DOT, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the Corps, in development of a detailed mitigation plan for the project. In order to avoid delays during permit processing, we recommend that such a plan be developed prior to and included in the final environmental statement.

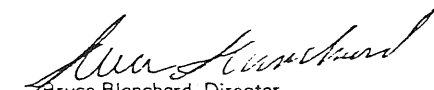
SUMMARY COMMENTS

The Department of the Interior has no objection to Section 4(f) approval of this project, providing firm commitments to implement the measures to minimize harm discussed above are included in the final statement.

Since we have a continuing interest in this project, we would be willing to provide technical assistance in further project development. For matters concerning parks and recreation, cultural resources, and Wild and Scenic Rivers, please contact the Regional Director, National Park Service, 1709 Jackson Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102-2571 (phone: FTS 864-3431; comm. 402-221-3431). For matters concerning fish and wildlife resources, and consultation under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, please contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 538 Federal Building and U.S. Court House, 316 North Robert Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101 (phone: FTS 725-7641; comm. 612-725-7641).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely,


Bruce Blanchard, Director
Environmental Project Review

cc: Mr. Richard P. Braun, Director
Minnesota Department of Transportation
John Ireland Boulevard
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155



STATE OF
MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
CENTENNIAL OFFICE BUILDING • ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA • 55155

DNR INFORMATION
(612) 296-6157

File No. _____

June 18, 1982

District Engineer
Mankato District Office
Minnesota Department of Transportation
501 Victory Drive
Mankato, Minnesota 56001

RE: 330 S.P. 5306, 3204, 1703, 8308, T.H. 60 from Worthington to St. James

Dear Sir:

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has reviewed the Draft EIS and 4(f) statement for the above-referenced project and offers the following comments for your consideration.

We do not see any major problems with the project as proposed. The alternative utilizing the present alignment from Worthington to Windom and a new alignment from Windom to St. James is preferred by DNR because it has the least impact on wetlands. This alignment would avoid any impacts to the Carpenter Wildlife Management Area, although the impacts on the Area of the existing alignment alternative appear minimal or possibly even beneficial.

The mitigation proposed for potential impacts to the Valleeau Wildlife Management Area appears to be adequate, but needs refinement and this should be coordinated with DNR wildlife personnel in our New Ulm Regional Office. Replacement lands should be of equal or greater wildlife value.

For other wetlands impacted by the project, the mitigation measures proposed, such as wetland restoration and properly designed borrow pit construction, appear to adequately compensate for potential impacts. Replacement wetlands should be of equal or greater value. Further refinement of the mitigation plan should be coordinated with DNR at the appropriate time.

The roadside vegetation management proposals are generally good, although we would like to see mowing delayed until August 1 instead of mid-July.

District Engineer
June 18, 1982
Page 2

The DNR Division of Waters has reviewed the list of protected waters which will be affected by the project. A memo on this subject is attached for your information.

If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Ken Wald of my staff at 296-4790.

Sincerely,

Thomas W. Balcom
Environmental Review Coordinator

TB:pje
2093D

attachment

cc: Ron Harnack
Jon Parker
Maynard Nelson

The main recreation activity on the Unit is hunting, but the area is also used for nature study in general and in particular by biology classes from Heron Lake High School. The species hunted are upland game, waterfowl and deer. Due to the current high price for furs the area is also under heavy trapping pressure.

This Unit is one of the most important natural areas along the TH 60 corridor. Together with the Crosse Wildlife Management Unit which it abuts to the north, the two units provide 401 acres of protected natural area in the Jack Creek watershed which empties into Heron Lake about 3 miles downstream. These two units function as satellites of the Heron Lake waterfowl area. The State owns 9 acres on South Heron Lake and two Jackson County parks are located on the lakes. The county parks provide picnic facilities and boat access.

Attendance and Access

The Unit is bordered on all sides by public roads which provide ready access into the area on foot. Parking areas are provided at various locations around the perimeter, but vehicle access into the area is prohibited.

The area is used moderately for hunting and is otherwise lightly used.

Development

No facilities exist to accommodate recreation activity other than the parking areas and none are planned.

Ownership and Title

The Valteau Unit is owned by the State of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). The title to the property is subject to existing roadway and powerline easements.

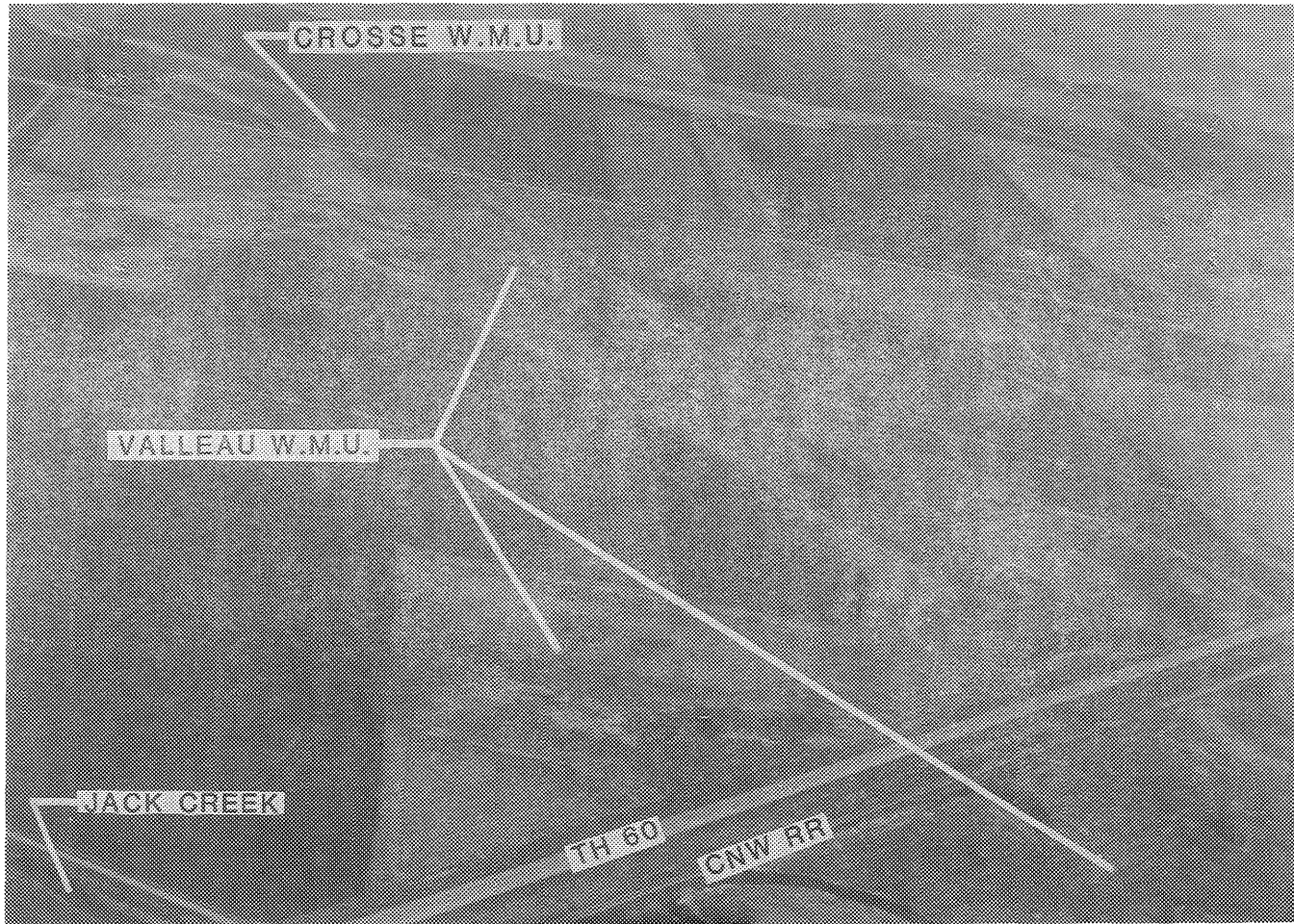
No federal funds were used in the acquisition of the area.

Proposed Highway Use

Two-lane improvement will require a three to four feet roadway raise with the fill slopes flattened. The resulting highway slopes will occupy the entire right-of-way, whereas at present a small strip of natural area remains outside the highway slopes within the highway right-of-way. However, no additional right-of-way will be required, thus avoiding Section 4(f) involvement. Dualization to four lanes will require acquisition of a 75-foot-wide strip to accommodate the additional roadway and fill. A total of 6.7 acres of Section 4(f) property will need to be acquired, as shown on Figure 9.

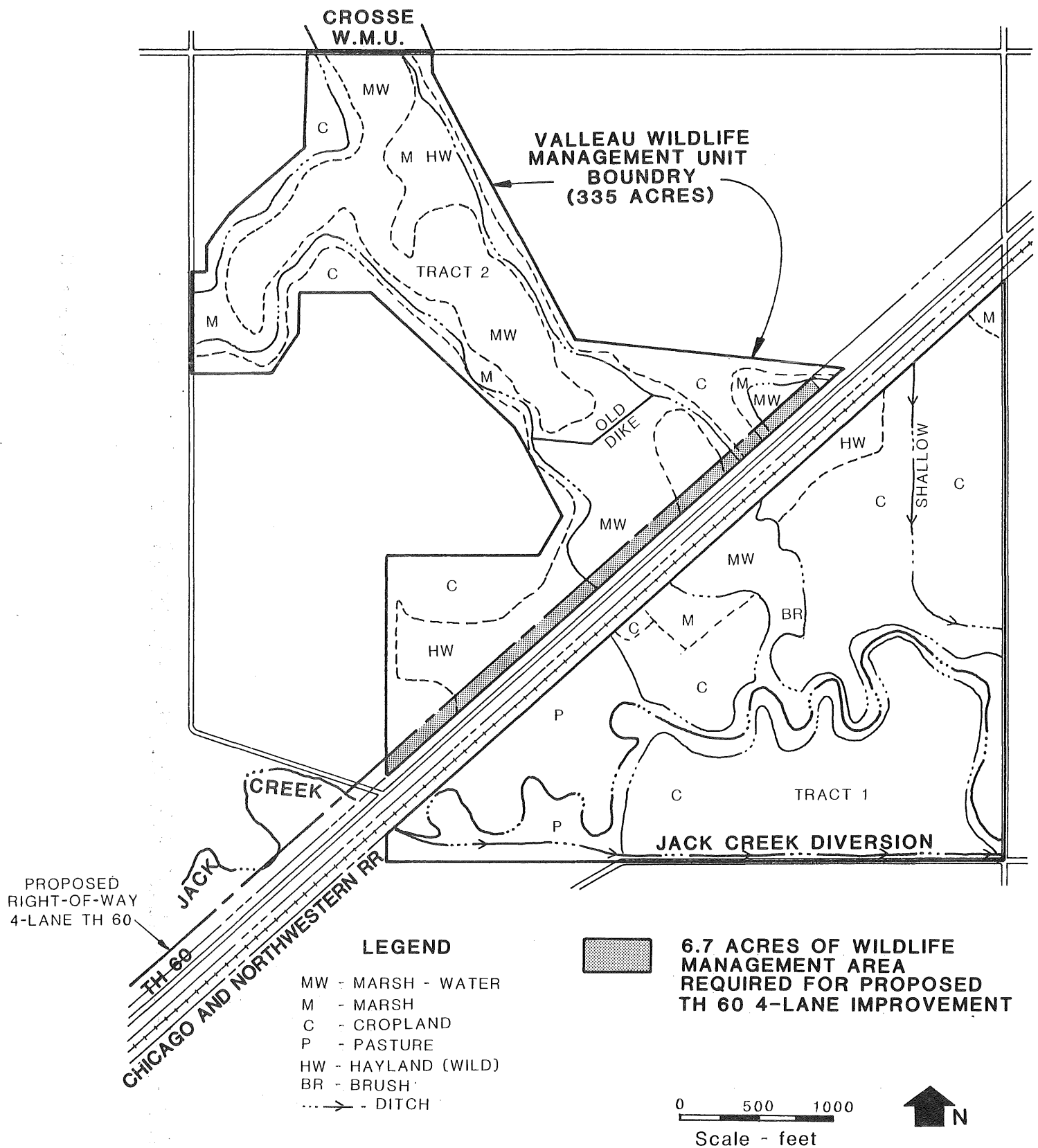
Alternative to Use of 4(f) Land

Alternatives considered include: (1) routing TH 60 around Valteau and adjoining Crosse Wildlife Management Unit to the north, (2) routing TH



VALLEAU WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT UNIT SETTING

FIGURE 8



PROPOSED ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS AND 4(f) INVOLVEMENT - VALLEAU WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT UNIT

60 around Valleau to the south, (3) a narrow- or no-median four-lane design through Valleau, and (4) retention of only two lanes (no-action or initial two-lane reconstruction only) through Valleau.

The alternative alignment to the north would be nearly a mile longer, cost approximately \$2 million more, require an additional 75 to 90 acres of land acquisition (mostly prime farmland) and create additional farmland triangulation impacts along one to two miles of property frontage. The alternative alignment to the south would be over one-half mile longer, require two additional railroad overpasses, cost approximately \$2 million more, require an additional 70 acres of land acquisition (mostly prime farmland), and create an additional three miles of farmland triangulation impact.

Although providing slightly more wetland, the narrow- or no-median design would reduce the net amount of vegetative cover, increase roadway runoff, and remove the potential median refuge for animals moving across the road. Motorist safety would be significantly reduced. The no-action alternative differs little from initial two-lane reconstruction in its effect on the area. It preserves a slight amount of existing wetland, but reduces the potential to enhance wildlife movement by the construction of longer bridges. Either alternative would have a significant adverse impact on traffic safety and operations by creating a short, two-lane restricted section in an otherwise continuous four-lane rural expressway.

In view of the limited degree of impact and potential for mitigation with normal four-lane dualization on existing location, none of the alternatives are considered prudent.

Impacts

The physical effects on the users of the area relate mainly to visual conditions, although loss of 6.7 acres of land, 2 percent of the total, for four-lane construction will reduce the habitat and thus the hunting potential slightly. The slightly higher elevation and the broader expanse of pavement of the four-lane highway will visually intrude in the natural area to a greater degree than the existing highway.

At the proposed northerly ROW line, construction of a four-lane facility will cause a maximum daytime noise level increase of 3 dBA over comparable two-lane roadway conditions. The noise level increase will decrease to a difference of 1 dBA at a distance of 1,000 feet, again measured from the four-lane ROW line. Nighttime noise levels will be increased by approximately 1 dBA at all distances less than 1,000 feet. South of the railroad embankment, construction of a four-lane facility will result in a negligible change in noise levels. All noise level increases due to a four-lane roadway should be barely perceptible (3 dBA or less). There should be no perceptible difference in noise levels between the two-lane improvement and the no-action alternative. Thus, noise impacts should not be significant in any case.

Mitigative Measures

Suitable replacement lands in excess of the 6.7 acres to be acquired for highway use exist adjacent to the unit. In addition, new bridges at Jack Creek and a culvert location near the center of the unit can be built long enough to provide wildlife trails under the highway to improve wildlife movement between the north and south tracts. The flattened slopes of the improved highway can be planted with suitable grasses to furnish additional wildlife habitat within the highway right-of-way or with screen type plantings to reduce the visual intrusion of the roadway. Noise mitigation for the minor changes are not warranted.

Since four-lane dualization in this area is not anticipated for many years under the proposed staging program, action to acquire replacement lands and develop detailed design features are not appropriate at this time. However, Mn/DOT and FHWA will work with MDNR and USFWS at the appropriate time to refine and implement features providing the acceptable types of mitigation and will acquire replacement lands of at least equal fair market value and reasonable equivalent wildlife value.

Coordination

The U.S. Department of Interior - Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) served as cooperating agencies in the preparation of the DEIS, including the draft "Impacts on Section 4(f) Properties" statement. Representatives of these agencies participated in the scoping process, assisted with field inventories, and helped identify environmental impacts and mitigative measures, as documented in the DEIS and its supporting Technical Appendices. Included was a meeting with Mn/DOT representatives on July 18, 1980 to discuss impacts of the proposal on the Valleeau Wildlife Management Unit. Suggestions for mitigation were offered which have been incorporated into this statement.

The U.S. Department of Interior also submitted comments on the draft Section 4(f) statement as part of its response to the DEIS (see page 50). The Department concluded that "Should the Federal Highway Administration determine that reconstruction of TH-60 on the existing alignment is necessary and sufficient to meet regional transportation needs, we would concur that there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the proposed direct use of...the Valleeau Wildlife Management Unit (4-lane option only)... and that the proposed measures to minimize harm...would satisfy the second proviso of Section 4(f), provided firm commitments for their implementation are included in the final statement." Such findings and commitments are included in this final statement.

MDNR's formal comments on the draft 4(f) statement (see page 51) also conclude mitigation for potential impacts to the Valleeau Wildlife Management Unit appear adequate, given than commitments are made to provide replacement lands of equal or greater wildlife value and to coordinate refinement of the plans with the MDNR.

Copies of the draft 4(f) statement were provided to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for review and comment. No comment was received.

Conclusion

Based upon the above considerations, it is determined that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of land from the Valleau Wildlife Management Unit, and that the proposed action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the Section 4(f) property resulting from such use.

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

INTRODUCTION

The following are written comments on the Draft EIS received by Mn/DOT from various federal, state, and regional agencies and individuals. The responses of Mn/DOT to specific elements of the comments are included. Reference letters added to the copies of the comments correspond to the lettered responses. A list of agencies, organizations and officials to whom copies of the Draft EIS were sent and from whom comments were received is provided below. This list also indicates the page of the FEIS where each comment and response is printed.

List of Agencies, Organizations and Officials To Whom Copies of the Draft EIS Was Sent And From Whom Comments Were Received

	<u>DEIS</u> <u>Sent</u>	<u>Written</u> <u>Comment</u> <u>Received</u>	<u>See</u> <u>FEIS</u> <u>Page(s)</u>
<u>Legislators</u>			
U.S. Rep. Vin Weber	X		
U.S. Rep. Thomas M. Hagedorn	X		
State Senator Marion Menning (Edgerton)	X		
State Senator Darrel Peterson (Fairmont)	X		
State Senator Dennis Fredrickson (Morgan)	X		
State Rep. Bruce Anderson (Slayton)	X	X	80
State Rep. Wendell O. Erickson (Hills)	X		
State Rep. George L. Mann (Windom)	X		
State Rep. David M. Jennings (Truman)	X		
State Rep. Gilbert D. Esau (Mountain Lake)	X		
<u>Federal Agencies</u>			
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation	X	X	67
Department of Agriculture			
Agricultural Stabilization & Conservation			
Service	X		
Soil Conservation Service	X		
Department of the Army			
Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District	X	X	68
Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District	X	X	68
Department of Commerce	X	X	70
Department of Health, Education & Welfare	X		
Department of Housing & Urban Development	X		
Department of the Interior			
Office of the Secretary		X	69-70
Fish & Wildlife Service	X		
Heritage Conservation & Recreation Service	X		
Department of Transportation			
Federal Aviation Administration	X	X	71
Federal Railroad Administration	X		
Council on Environmental Quality	X		
Environmental Protection Agency	X	X	62-66
Federal Emergency Management Agency	X		
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	X	X	71

	DEIS Sent	Written Comment Received	See FEIS Page(s)
<u>State Agencies</u>			
Department of Agriculture	X		
Department of Economic Development	X		
Department of Natural Resources	X	X	76-78
Department of Public Safety	X		
Energy Agency	X		
Environmental Quality Board	X		
Historical Society	X	X	79
Pollution Control Agency	X	X	72-75
State Planning Agency	X		
Water Resources Board	X		
<u>Regional, County and Local Agencies</u>			
Region Nine Development Commission	X		
Southwest Regional Development Commission	X	X	81
Cottonwood County	X	X	81
Nobles County	X	X	81
Jackson County	X		
Watsonwan County	X	X	82
Alba Township	X		
Butterfield Township	X		
Delafield Township	X		
Great Bend Township	X		
Hersey Township	X		
La Crosse Township	X		
Lakeside Township	X		
Lorain Township	X		
Midway Township	X		
Mountain Lake Township	X		
St. James Township	X		
City of Bingham Lake	X		
City of Brewster	X		
City of Butterfield	X		
City of Heron Lake	X		
City of Mountain Lake	X	X	83
City of St. James	X	X	83
City of Wilder	X		
City of Windom	X	X	84
City of Worthington	X	X	84
<u>Others*</u>			
Chicago & Northwestern Transportation Co.	X		
Pepin, Dayton, Herman, Graham & Getts	X	X	88-94
Interstate Power Co.	X		
Minnesota Good Roads	X	X	86
TH 60 Advisory Committee	X		
Highway 60 Action Corporation	X	X	85
Windom Area Chamber of Commerce		X	86
Worthington Area Chamber of Commerce		X	86
Heron Lake Community Club, Inc.		X	86
Linus Liepold		X	102
Wilber Hartberg		X	103

	<u>DEIS Sent</u>	<u>Written Comment Received</u>	<u>See FEIS Page(s)</u>
Truman Hartberg		X	103
Mr. & Mrs. Virg Freitag		X	103
Sam Franz		X	102
Clarence Blomgren, Jr.		X	95-97
John F. Zender		X	98-99
Albert D. Thiessen		X	99
Robert Anderson		X	103
Harvey Stoez		X	100
Frank Foley		X	103
Chester King		X	103
Jacob M. Harder		X	102
Harold Vatndal		X	100
Richard Linscheid		X	101
F.A. "Jim" Miller		X	104

*Note: Copies of the DEIS were available for public review at a number of locations in the affected corridor and at the corridor information meeting and public hearing.

WRITTEN COMMENTS: FEDERAL

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



UNITED STATES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION V
230 SOUTH DEARBORN ST.
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60604

REPLY TO ATTENTION OF:

Mr. Lyle L. Hansen
Director
Office of Design Services
Minnesota Department of Transportation
Transportation Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

02 JUL 1982

RE: NEPA-DE-FHW-F40200-MN(82055)

Dear Mr. Hansen:

We have completed our review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for T.H. 60, Worthington to St. James, in Nobles, Jackson, Cottonwood and Watonwan Counties, Minnesota. The proposed project consists of 52 miles of improvements to T.H. 60, to be staged over a 25-year period. This highway is a principal corridor connecting southwest Minnesota with the Twin Cities area, and the grain markets with the Gulf Coast and the Duluth - Superior area.

The most significant impacts associated with the two build alternatives are the conversion of prime agricultural land to highway use, the filling of wetland areas adjacent to the proposed roadways, and the increase in noise levels in the urban areas. Based on information provided in the EIS, it appears that the alternative which uses the existing right-of-way from Worthington to Windom and new alignment from Windom to St. James has a slightly more positive impact upon the environment, when compared to the other alternatives, provided the mitigative measures to minimize the impacts to prime farmlands, wetlands, streams and noise levels are implemented. Since a commitment has not been made regarding the mitigative measures, we have rated the project as ER (environmental reservations). In our detailed comments we have also requested that additional information be provided regarding measures to reduce the loss of prime farmlands and stream channelization. We have categorized the EIS as class 2 (additional information needed). The date and classification of our comments will be published in the Federal Register in accordance with our responsibility to inform the public of our views on other agencies' projects.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this draft EIS. If you or your staff have any questions regarding our comments, please contact Mr. Bill Franz, at 312/886-6687. We note from our review of the draft EIS that several appendices are available which provide specific information on the assessment of wetlands, air quality, noise levels and prime farmlands. The information in these appendices would assist us in the continued analyses of the environmental impacts

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for T.H. 60, Worthington to St. James, Nobles, Jackson, Cottonwood and Watonwan Counties, Minnesota

The proposed project is the improvement of 52 miles of highway between Worthington and St. James in southwest Minnesota. Construction would be staged over a 25-year period. Three alternatives were evaluated in the environmental impact statement (EIS): (1) no-action, (2) construction on existing alignment, and (3) construction on new alignment in the northern portion of the project. The most significant environmental impacts associated with project development are: (a) loss of prime farmlands, (b) stream channelization, (c) filling of wetlands, and (d) noise level increases. The EIS has discussed these areas of potential impact, as well as mitigative actions which could be taken to reduce them.

Prime Farmlands

The area served by T.H. 60 (southwestern Minnesota) is used intensively for farming. Much of the additional land required for the roadway would be prime farmland (80-90%). There are essentially three alternatives: (a) the existing alignment, (b) the existing alignment from Worthington to Windom and new alignment from Windom to St. James, and (c) the existing alignment from Worthington to Mountain Lake and new alignment from Mountain Lake to St. James. These alternatives will result in a loss of prime farmland ranging from 395-411, 801-831 and 585-635 acres, respectively, when compared to the "no-action" alternative. The acreage of prime farmland required for the highway has been reduced through several steps including the reduction in the width of the median and the plans to construct only two lanes of new highway until, and if, traffic conditions warrant the need for two additional lanes.

Our Agency agrees with and commends the Minnesota Department of Transportation for taking these steps to minimize the loss of prime farmlands. However, we request that an alternative be evaluated which uses more of the existing right-of-way between the communities of Bingham Lake, Mountain Lake, Butterfield and Windom, and an existing bypass around the community of Bingham Lake. From viewing the aerial photographs included in Appendix A, we particularly note that there appears to be a northerly bypass of Bingham Lake which could be retained and connected relatively easily to the existing route. The extent to which this alternative could further minimize prime farmland impacts should be assessed. It may be that these alternatives have already been considered but eliminated because of other reasons, e.g., social or economic factors. If that is the case, a summary of that reasoning should be presented in the Final EIS.

One of the mitigation measures under consideration to reduce the amount of prime farmland taken is to return excess highway right-of-way to agricultural uses. This mitigation measure would primarily be used in the northern portion of the project where new location is being considered between Windom and St. James or Mountain Lake and St. James. We commend this proposal and recommend that it be implemented as soon as it is feasible. The EIS indicated that the old roadway would be rededicated to agricultural purposes and production levels would be approximately 80-90% of the prime farmlands adjacent to them within five years. The Final EIS should explain whether these lands are prime farmlands or marginal farmlands which will need additional management to attain the estimated yields.

of the project and we request that a copy of each assessment be sent to us as soon as possible. Also, because of the large size of the project and the nature of the environmental impacts involved, we believe a site visit would be beneficial and will be contacting your office in that regard.

Sincerely yours,

Barbara Taylor Beckley
Barbara Taylor Beckley, Chief
Environmental Review Branch
Planning and Management Division

Attachment

Copies:
L.L. Hansen
R.P. Pecore
L. Elita-L. Foote
L. Filter-M. Flygare
Public Hearing File

Wetlands

The impacts upon wetland areas are similar for all alternatives. The most significant wetland impacts expected are at Duck Lake. A narrow strip of wetland would be required for the construction of the two, future additional lanes. Since this area has been identified as a valuable wetland, specific mitigation measures at this site should be considered. By constructing the two additional lanes between 3.5 and 5.3 acres of emergent vegetation, adjacent to the open water of Duck Lake, will be lost. To restore this habitat, we request that consideration be given to deepening the areas which flood only seasonally, so that they will support emergent vegetation. This measure may also serve to protect the integrity of the highway roadbed by minimizing erosion due to wave action.

Additional mitigative measures have been proposed in the EIS to offset the loss of wetlands. These mitigative measures are still in the planning stages and have not been finalized. We request the opportunity to participate in the early discussions regarding mitigation to prevent future delays related to our review of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permit for the project. Plans included in the EIS regarding the use of borrow pits to mitigate wetland losses appear to be especially promising.

Stream Channelization

The EIS indicated that there is the potential for the relocation of five streams along the corridor. Some of the relocations would result in a shortened stream length. The potential for subsequent increased stream velocities to cause increased bank erosion should be assessed in the Final EIS. The Final EIS should include the design plans for the stream channel work to provide information necessary for consideration of the 404 permit. Mitigation to offset the impacts of stream channelization include leaving or expanding old channels to increase their value as wetland areas. We believe that this proposal has the potential to be environmentally beneficial and recommend that it be pursued further.

Noise Impacts

Routing the traffic on new alignment from Windom to St. James results in the least number of residential sites exceeding the Federal Highway Administration's Design Noise Levels and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's standards. While the number of residences exposed to noise levels which exceed the standards are reduced, some residences will experience noise level increases of up to 20 dBA. In our opinion, increases greater than 10 dBA are significant. The number of residences exposed to such levels should be identified and mitigation measures should be considered at these sites. If residences where increases of 10 dBA or greater are the same or adjacent to residences where noise standards will be exceeded, mitigation would be even more warranted. Noise contour maps would be helpful in identifying areas subject to increased noise levels, and determining whether noise attenuation is feasible and should therefore be provided.

Additional Comments

The southern portion of the project will be constructed on existing alignment. The final EIS should discuss how traffic will be maintained during the

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (cont'd)

-3-

cont'd construction phase. If local roads will be used as detour routes, the impacts from routing traffic on these roads should be evaluated.

J Warren Lake is used as a walleye rearing pond. The draft EIS indicated that total dissolved solids levels have reached levels in excess of 500 parts per million at this lake. With the addition of two more lanes of highway adjacent to Warren Lake, greater amounts of total dissolved solids can be expected to enter the lake. Measures to divert highway runoff away from this lake should be investigated and discussed in the Final EIS.

Response:

- A. The preferred alternative, as selected by the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Transportation, is to construct on new alignment from St. James to southwest of Mountain Lake, and to reconstruct on existing alignment from Mountain Lake to Worthington. The selection was made on the basis of overall costs and benefits, including but not limited to the environmental considerations presented by the USEPA. These reasons are given in the "Preferred Alternative" section of this FEIS, pages 6-9.

Commitments to mitigation, including information on proposed restoration of portions of existing TH 60 to farmland use, are provided in the "Impact Mitigation Measures" section, pages 11-25 and in answer to comment "D" below.

- B. Copies of the requested appendices were forwarded to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on July 20th, 1982.

They include:

- o Appendix D - TH 60 Engineering Studies Report
- o Appendix E - TH 60 Soils and Geology Report
- o Appendix F - TH 60 Noise Analysis Report
- o Appendix G - TH 60 Air Quality Analysis Report
- o Appendix H - TH 60 Energy Analysis Report
- o Appendix I - TH 60 Natural Resources Report
- o Appendix J - TH 60 Farm Inventory Report
- o Appendix K - TH 60 Preliminary Right-of-Way Acquisition and Relocation Report
- o Appendix L - TH 60 Citizens Advisory Committee Reports

Mr. Bill Franz of the USEPA accompanied Mn/DOT personnel on the requested site investigation through the project corridor on May 25, 1983.

- C. The "Existing Alignment" alternative presented in the DEIS uses the entire existing right-of-way between the communities of Bingham Lake, Mountain Lake, Butterfield and Windom--including the existing "bypass" of Bingham Lake--except for a minor realignment approximately 1/2 mile in length at the western edge of Bingham Lake. This realignment is required to eliminate a substandard horizontal curve and vertical profile in the existing roadway and to improve the existing hazardous intersection with County State Aid Highway 2. Note that this short realignment also applies to the "Existing Alignment - Worthington to Mountain Lake, New Alignment - Mountain Lake to St. James" preferred alternative. The short section of existing TH 60 right-of-way that would no longer be required for highway use with the minor realignment is proposed to be returned to farmland use, except for a portion adjoining the Carpenter Wildlife Management Area. The latter area is proposed to be added to the Wildlife Management Area, as described in the "Final Section 4(f) Evaluation" section of this FEIS.
- D. The portion of existing TH 60 proposed for restoration to agricultural purposes is constructed primarily on "prime" agricultural soils. They include soils in capability classes I (Nicollet series) and II (Canisteo and Webster series) as identified by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service. As discussed on DEIS page 78 and Appendix E, "TH 60 Soils and Geology Report", the existing roadway base consists of topsoil of depths up to 7 or 8 feet. Thus with proper regrading, soil scarification and drainage provisions, nearly full production value can likely be obtained along the restored section. The proposed restoration is described on page 12 of this FEIS.
- E. The deepening of selected seasonally flooded areas of Duck Lake could help make this area a more valuable wetland resource. The locations where such a practice could most reasonably be applied is at both the southeastern and southwestern shores of the lake. In these spots, existing Type 1 wetland could be altered to create a more "permanent" Type 2 or 3 wetland fringe to the lake. As indicated in the DEIS, however, it remains important that a relatively gradual slope be maintained from the edge of shore waterward in order to create a shallow shelf or littoral zone. Simply dredging a deep-water perimeter around the lake would not, in itself, promote to the fullest extent, invertebrate, fish and wildlife habitat. At such time in the staged development program that detailed plans are developed for four-lane dualization in the Duck Lake area, specific plans for wetlands mitigation at Duck Lake will be developed in conjunction with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

- F. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permit applications and related wetlands mitigation plans will be developed as part of the design process for each of the individual segments comprising the anticipated staged construction program. For each affected segment, Mn/DOT will invite design process participation of all agencies involved in the review of the Section 404 permit applications.
- G. As discussed on page 106 of the DEIS, the proposed channel relocations with shortened stream lengths are not anticipated to produce any significant changes in channel slope, velocity or bank erosion potential, due to the flat channel slopes and the backwater nature of flow during flood events. Design plans for the stream channel work and applications for related Section 404 permits will be prepared during the design process for each segment of the proposed staged construction, as discussed under comment F above. Mn/DOT considers the reuse and expansion of remnant sections of the old channel to develop wetlands an appropriate mitigative measure, and will work with affected agencies to incorporate such measures into the design plans. See page 16 of this FEIS.
- H. Areas subject to significant noise increase lie along the "inner" new alignment variation at the south edge of Mountain Lake and the "outer" variation at Heron Lake, locations where the nearest residences would also exceed State noise standards. Residences at the south edge of Butterfield would be subject to levels exceeding State nighttime standards under the "inner" alignment alternative, although increases are expected to be less than 10 decibels. Potential for noise attenuation barriers at these locations will be evaluated in detail during final design of the subject roadway sections, as described on page 15 of this FEIS.

Due to the scale of the project, inclusion of noise level contour maps in the DEIS was determined to be impractical. However, please note that Table 3 on page 14 of DEIS Appendix F, "Noise Analysis Report", does provide the noise level contour distances referenced to roadway location for both 2-lane and 4-lane configurations along each section of the existing and new alignment location alternatives. These "contours" were applied using 1"=100' scale layouts to identify the areas subject to increased noise levels and feasibility of attenuation as described in DEIS Appendix F.

- I. Proposed provisions for traffic maintenance during construction of the sections reconstructed on existing alignment are discussed on pages 23-24 of this FEIS. Some county roads will be used as detours. Anticipated impacts along these roads include:
- 1) A temporary increase in traffic and traffic related noise and visual impacts. The detours are, almost entirely, through rural areas where residences are generally set back from the roadway a distance sufficient to attenuate severe traffic noise.
 - 2) Potential damage to road pavements. Measures to upgrade the pavements prior to detour use and/or rehabilitate damaged sections are included in the mitigative measures.
 - 3) Businesses to be temporarily bypassed are primarily local service oriented and are not expected to be significantly affected.
- J. Measures to divert highway runoff from South Warren Lake have been investigated and are discussed on pages 17 and 34 of this FEIS.

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

Advisory Council On Historic Preservation

1523 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

June 16, 1982

District Engineer
Mankato District Office
501 South Victory Drive
Mankato, MN 56001

Dear Sir:

We have received your request for comments on the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for Trunk Highway 60 between the cities of Worthington and St. James in Minnesota. We note that this document is intended to provide a basis for improvements to TH 60 that will occur over the next 25 years. While the DEIS provides a summary of these improvements, long-range planning of this nature is based on assumptions about costs, funding, and traffic levels that may not prove to be accurate. Thus we recommend that the conclusions and findings in the DEIS be re-examined as specific improvement projects are funded.

A

From our review, however, we are concerned whether the DEIS provides a comprehensive background for an assessment of impacts on all historic and cultural properties. The surveys that have been conducted appear to have been designed to identify only archeological properties. While the surveys appear to have been adequate to identify all archeological properties, this orientation may well mean that historical properties, particularly bridges of engineering or historical importance, have been overlooked. Except for this possible omission, it appears that the DEIS provides an adequate overview regarding historic and cultural properties.

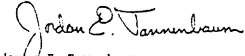
B

Please remember that compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act is a requirement independent of compliance with Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act. Prior to any decisions regarding this project, you should ensure that the responsibilities of both laws are fulfilled. You may wish to coordinate these separate responsibilities as provided for in 36 CFR Section 800.9 of the Council's regulations.

2

If we can be of any assistance, please contact Michael Quinn at (202) 254-3495.

Sincerely,


Jordan E. Tannenbaum
Chief, Eastern Division
of Project Review

Response:

- A. Federal Highway Administration regulations require that FEIS fundings be reevaluated during the detailed design process and that a supplemental statement be prepared if there have been significant changes in the proposed action, the affected environment, the anticipated impacts or the proposed mitigation measures. The regulations also require a written evaluation to be prepared if major steps to advance the action have not occurred within three years of FEIS approval.
- B. Studies conducted by the Minnesota Historical Society were designed to identify and assess all sites of "historic, architectural, archaeological or cultural" significance, as stated in the letters from the State Historical Preservation Office contained in DEIS Appendix C. The only sites of potential significance identified were archaeological properties. Further detailed investigation indicated that these sites did not meet applicable significance criteria. As a result, the State Historic Preservation Officer's review "reveals the location of no known sites of historic, architectural, cultural, archaeological, or engineering significance" which may be affected by the proposed project. (See page 29 of this FEIS).

Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
CLOCK TOWER BUILDING
ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS 61201

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

NCRED-PE

8 JUN 1982

SUBJECT: 330, FMMA-MN-EIS-82-01-D, Draft EIS and Section 404(f) Evaluation,
Trunk Highway 60 in Nobles, Jackson, Cottonwood, and Watonwan
Counties, Minnesota

District Engineer
Mankato District Office
501 South Victory Drive
Mankato, Minnesota 56001

Dear Sir:

The Rock Island District has reviewed the referenced document and has no comment regarding the proposed project.

The St. Paul District office has responsibility for activities in Minnesota which may require Department of the Army permits. They will comment separately on the referenced report.

Sincerely,

DOYLE W. MCCULLY, P.E.
Chief, Engineering Division

Copy Furnished:
Commander
US Army Engineer District,
St. Paul
ATTN: NCSCO-RF (Denise Blackwell-Kraft)
1135 US PO & Custom House
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
ST. PAUL DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
1135 U. S. POST OFFICE & CUSTOM HOUSE
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55101

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

NCSCO-RF (CC 0656)

8 JUN 1982

District Engineer
Mankato District Office
Minnesota Department of Transportation
501 South Victory Drive
Mankato, Minnesota 56001

Dear Sir:

Reference is made to the proposed Trunk Highway 60 project from Worthington to St. James, Minnesota.

The Regulatory Functions Branch has reviewed the draft environmental impact statement and 4(f) Evaluation. As stated previously, it appears individual permits will be required for some of the river and wetland crossings. However, to confirm this, more information would be required on the amounts and dimensions of the filling activities.

Our review indicates that the information included in the DEIS would be adequate for us to evaluate the impacts of the project. When plans become finalized for the actual construction, you should submit applications to this office.

Please forward a copy of the Final EIS when it becomes available. If you have any questions please contact Mr. Tim Fell at (612) 725-7775.

Sincerely,

for HAROLD E. TAGGATZ
Chief, Regulatory Functions Branch
Construction-Operations Division

Response:

- A. Preliminary analysis presented in Table 37 on page 111 of the DEIS indicates that for the preferred alternative, one individual permit would be required for 2-lane reconstruction and three for 4-lane dualization. Coordination with the Corps to determine actual requirements and preparation of permit applications will be conducted as appropriate during the detailed design process for each of the individual segments of the proposed staged construction program.

U.S. Department of the Interior



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

JUN 25 1982

Mr. William R. Lake
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
490 Metro Square Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear Mr. Lake:

This is in response to the request for the Department of the Interior's comments on the draft environmental/Section 4(f) statement for TH-60 (Worthington to St. James), Nobles, Jackson, Cottonwood, and Watonwan Counties, Minnesota.

SECTION 4(f) STATEMENT COMMENTS

A Should the Federal Highway Administration determine that reconstruction of TH-60 on the existing alignment is necessary and sufficient to meet regional transportation needs, we would concur that there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the proposed direct use of the Carpenter Wildlife Management Area (2- or 4-lane options) and the Valleau Wildlife Management Unit (4-lane option only), and the proposed constructive use (increased air/noise pollution and reduced ease of access) of Lommen Park.

B We also concur that the proposed measures to minimize harm listed on pages 139-140 and 143 would satisfy the second proviso of Section 4(f), provided firm commitments for their implementation are included in the final statement. With regard to Lommen Park, we agree that the opportunities for mitigation are limited but recommend that full consideration be given to the provision of additional landscaping to reduce as much as possible the aesthetic effects of increased traffic on the park. We also note that if a bypass alternative is selected a transfer of ownership of Lommen Park from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MN-DOT) to the local jurisdiction may be required -- if such is necessary, we recommend that the final statement include assurances that the property will continue to be available for public park and recreation use.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT COMMENTS

C Under the new alignment alternatives, a new TH-60 bridge would be built over the Des Moines River south of Windom. The final environmental statement should note that the Des Moines River from Petersburg to Windom Dam, from Windom Dam to Tailbot Lake Dam, from Tailbot Lake Dam to Lake Shetek Dam, and from that dam to the river's source, has been listed in the Nationwide Inventory of Rivers which are likely to qualify for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Mr. William R. Lake

2

C
cont'd

We are concerned that the construction of a new bridge over the river in connection with the TH-60 project could have adverse impact on the qualities of this stretch of the Des Moines River which prompted its inclusion in the inventory. Although the measures described on page 127 of the draft statement should, to a large degree, mitigate the impact the project might have on the aesthetic and scenic qualities of the river, we nevertheless recommend that additional coordination on this matter be undertaken with the Regional Director, National Park Service, in Omaha, and the results of that contact reported in the final statement if a new alignment alternative is selected.

FISH AND WILDLIFE COORDINATION ACT COMMENTS

D The draft statement accurately describes the need for Corps of Engineers Section 404 permits for project implementation, and adequately addresses the potential impacts to fish and wildlife resources from the various alternatives. Pursuant to the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) informs us that it would not object to the issuance of permits for any of the alternatives, providing adequate measures to minimize harm are included in final project plans. The FWS would be pleased to work with you, the MN-DOT, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the Corps, in development of a detailed mitigation plan for the project. In order to avoid delays during permit processing, we recommend that such a plan be developed prior to and included in the final environmental statement.

SUMMARY COMMENTS

The Department of the Interior has no objection to Section 4(f) approval of this project, providing firm commitments to implement the measures to minimize harm discussed above are included in the final statement.

Since we have a continuing interest in this project, we would be willing to provide technical assistance in further project development. For matters concerning parks and recreation, cultural resources, and Wild and Scenic Rivers, please contact the Regional Director, National Park Service, 1709 Jackson Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102-2571 (phone: FTS 864-3431; comm. 402-221-3431). For matters concerning fish and wildlife resources, and consultation under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, please contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 538 Federal Building and U.S. Court House, 316 North Robert Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101 (phone: FTS 725-7641; comm. 612-725-7641).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely,

Bruce Blanchard
Bruce Blanchard, Director
Environmental Project Review

cc: Mr. Richard P. Braun, Director
Minnesota Department of Transportation
John Ireland Boulevard
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Response:

- A. The Federal Highway Administration and the Minnesota Department of Transportation have determined that reconstruction of TH 60 on existing alignment in the sections adjoining the Carpenter Wildlife Management Area and the Valleau Wildlife Management Area is necessary and sufficient to meet regional transportation needs. The "Final Section 4(f) Evaluation" section on pages 41-57 of this FEIS describes the findings regarding feasible and prudent alternatives and commitments for implementation of proposed mitigative measures.
- B. The Federal Highway Administration has determined that Lommen Park is a highway wayside wholly within highway right-of-way and operated as a highway appurtenance and thus is not subject to Section 4(f) determination. References to Lommen Park have thus been deleted from the "Final Section 4(f) Evaluation" section. However, mitigation measures regarding the park have been retained (see page 15). Since a bypass of Windom was not selected as the "preferred alternative", transfer of ownership to a local jurisdiction will not be necessary.

- C. Inclusion of the Des Moines River in the "Nationwide Inventory of Rivers" is noted on page 31 of this FEIS. However, construction of a new river crossing will not be required under the preferred alternative (construction on existing alignment in the Windom vicinity).
- D. Detailed mitigation plans will be developed during the detailed design process for each of the individual segments comprising the staged construction sequence. The Fish and Wildlife Service has participated in the identification of the proposed mitigation measures described on pages 16-22 of this FEIS and will be invited to also participate in the detailed design process.

U.S. Dept. of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Washington, D.C. 20230
OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR
June 9, 1982



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SURVEY
Rockville, Md. 20852
June 8, 1982

Mr. Marcus Flygare
TH 60 Project Manager
Minnesota Department of Transportation
501 South Victory Drive
Mankato, MN 56001

Dear Mr. Flygare:

This is in reference to your draft environmental impact statement and draft section 4(f) evaluation entitled "T. H. 60, Worthington to St. James in Nobles, Jackson, Cottonwood and Watonwan Counties, Minnesota." The enclosed comments from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are forwarded for your consideration.

Thank you for giving us an opportunity to provide these comments, which we hope will be of assistance to you. We would appreciate receiving one copy of the final environmental impact statement.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Bagley
Joyce M. Wood
Director
Office of Ecology and Conservation

TO: PP/EC - Joyce M. Wood

FROM: OA/CS - Robert B. Rollins *RB*

SUBJECT: T. H. 60, Worthington to St. James in Nobles, Jackson, Cottonwood and Watonwan Counties, Minnesota (DEIS 8206.07)

The subject statement has been reviewed within the areas of the National Ocean Survey's (NOS) responsibility and expertise, and in terms of the impact of the proposed action on NOS activities and projects.

A Geodetic control survey monuments may be located in the proposed project area. If there is any planned activity which will disturb or destroy these monuments, NOS requires not less than 90 days' notification in advance of such activity in order to plan for their relocation. NOS recommends that funding for this project includes the cost of any relocation required for NOS monuments. For further information about these monuments, please contact Mr. John Spencer, Director, National Geodetic Information Center (OA/C18) or Mr. Charles Novak, Chief, Network Maintenance Branch (OA/C172), at 6001 Executive Boulevard, Rockville, Maryland 20852.

Enclosure: Memo from: Robert B. Rollins
National Ocean Survey



10TH ANNIVERSARY 1970-1980
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
A young agency with an historic
tradition of service to the Nation



10TH ANNIVERSARY 1970-1980
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
A young agency with a historic
tradition of service to the Nation

Response:

- A. The National Ocean Survey (NOS) will be consulted during the detailed design phase for each segment of the staged construction program to identify the location of any potentially affected monuments. Where appropriate, arrangements for their relocation will be made in advance of construction as required by Mn/DOT regulations.

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission



FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
CHICAGO REGIONAL OFFICE
130 SOUTH DEARBORN STREET, ROOM 3130
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60604

In reply refer to:
GEFP-CB

June 7, 1982

District Engineer
Minnesota Department of Transportation
Mankato District Office
501 South Victory Drive
Mankato, Minnesota 56001

Dear Sir:

Your Reference: 330 - FHWA-MN-EIS-82-01-D
Draft Environmental Impact Statement &
Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation for
Trunk Highway 60 in Nobles, Jackson,
Cottonwood & Watonwan Counties, Minnesota
Minnesota Projects P 016-1() & P 004-1()
State Project 5306, 3204, 1703 & 8303
From the City of Worthington
To the City of St. James

This is in response to your recent request inviting our review and comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft, Section 4(f) Evaluation (DEIS/46f).

Comments of this office are made in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the August 1, 1973 Guidelines of the Council on Environmental Quality. Our review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement is to determine the effect on matters concerning the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's responsibilities. Such responsibilities stem from the Federal Power Act and the Natural Gas Act and relate to the licensing of non-Federal hydroelectric projects and associated transmission lines; participation in planning and development of Federal hydroelectric projects; certification for construction and operation of natural gas pipeline facilities, defined to include both interstate pipeline and terminal facilities; and the permission and approval required for the abandonment of natural gas pipeline facilities.

Because the above-noted proposed development would not pose a major obstacle to the construction or operation of such facilities and because the Draft indicates that the natural gas and transmission lines affected by the project would be moved without any significant impacts, we have no specific comments.

These comments are of this office and therefore do not necessarily represent the views of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Sincerely,

Lawrence F. Coffill
Lawrence F. Coffill, P.E.
Regional Engineer

Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

Airports District Office
6301 - 1st Avenue, South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55450



MAY 21 1982

District Engineer
Mankato District Office
501 South Victory Drive
Mankato, Minnesota 56001

330 FHWA-MN-EIS-82-01-D Draft Environmental Impact Statement &
Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation for Trunk Highway 60 in Nobles,
Jackson, Cottonwood & Watonwan Counties, Minnesota; Minnesota
Projects P 016-1() & P 004-1() State Project 5306, 3204,
1703 & 8308 From the City of Worthington to the City of St. James

Dear Sir:

We have reviewed the subject draft Environmental Impact Statement and draft Section 4(f) Evaluation for the subject project and we have no comment on the proposal. We will not have a need to review the final EIS.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft EIS.

Sincerely,

Donald R. Stoddard
Donald R. Stoddard
State Program Officer

WRITTEN COMMENTS: STATE

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

June 21, 1982

District Engineer
Minnesota Department of Transportation
Mankato District Office
501 Victory Drive
Mankato, Minnesota 56001

RE: 330 FHWA-MN-EIS-82-01-D
Draft Environmental Impact Statement &
Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation for
Trunk Highway 60 in Nobles, Jackson,
Cottonwood & Watonwan Counties, Minnesota
State Projects 5306, 3204, 1703 & 8308
From the City of Worthington
To the City of St. James

Dear Sir:

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has reviewed the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on TH 60 Worthington to St. James and has several comments to offer.

While water resource impacts may not be considered primary issues in this project, protecting existing water quality and providing measures which could improve water resources should be thoroughly explored and quantified. The draft EIS has identified water resources impacted by the various alternatives. However, it is difficult to determine which streams, lakes or wetlands have a high resource value and which ones do not.

A The EIS could rank the water resources by their assigned water quality standards and potential uses, and determine which resources would be impacted the most by this project. Following this, decisions can be made concerning the implementation of any mitigative measures, if required.

Phone: (612) 296-7301

1935 West County Road 82, Roseville, Minnesota 55113-2785
Regional Offices • Duluth/Burnsville • Des Moines • Marshall/Rochester
Equal Opportunity Employer

District Engineer
Page Three
June 21, 1982

I It is also unclear what is meant by the 1995 emission rates described in the last paragraph of page 103 of the draft EIS. The analysis for 1995-2000 period should be described in greater detail in the final EIS.

J Construction generated noise levels and fugitive dust emissions are also of concern. In addition to the noise control measures listed at page 129 of the draft EIS, the final EIS should evaluate the rerouting of truck traffic to mitigate noise impacts at nearby residences.

K No mention was made of the fugitive dust emissions which will result from construction activities. Agency rule APC-6 requires that avoidable amounts of particulate matter be prevented from becoming airborne. Dust control measures such as job site cleanup, haul road maintenance, the watering of exposed areas undergoing grading, earth moving, or site preparation, cessation of operations during periods of high winds, covering of or applying dust suppressants to truck loads to prevent the escape of materials, and project phasing to minimize exposed surfaces should be included in the final EIS.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, feel free to call Deborah Pile (612-296-7216) of my staff.

Sincerely,

Louis J. Breinhurst
Louis J. Breinhurst
Executive Director

cc: Larry Johnson
Larry Landherr

District Engineer
Page Two
June 21, 1982

B This Agency supports the erosion and spill control measures discussed in the document. When an alternative is selected for the final EIS, specific erosion and spill control measures should be identified.

C We agree with the statement on page 120 that the wells near the roadway in the river channel deposits should be sampled and depths determined. Depending on how these wells were constructed they could be adversely impacted by the construction and operation of the roadway.

D From a noise impact standpoint, the best alternatives consist of reconstruction on the existing alignment from Worthington to Windom with construction of a new alignment from Windom to St. James. The second best alternative consists of reconstruction of the existing alignment from Worthington to Mountain Lake with construction of a new alignment from Mountain Lake to St. James. Compared to the existing alignment and no action alternatives, the new alignment alternatives would result in a net decrease in the number of receptors exceeding Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and state noise level standards in the cities of Windom, Mountain Lake and Butterfield. Overall, in rural and urban areas, fewer receptors would be adversely impacted with the new alignment alternatives.

E In addition, fewer federal noise standard violations will occur with the two-lane than with the four-lane alternative. However, there does not appear to be a significant difference in the number of receptors exceeding the state noise standards when comparing the two-lane and four-lane options. The Agency staff recommends that noise barriers such as earth berms be constructed wherever feasible to meet the state noise standards.

F From an air quality impact standpoint, the best alternatives are the new alignment alternatives because they would bypass existing congested city areas.

G It is unclear from the discussion of the air quality impacts which air quality (carbon monoxide (CO)) modelling analyses were used. The final EIS should state which Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) methods were used for this analysis (1975 or 1978 volume 9 guidelines, Highway I or II, or Mobile I or Mobile II). Moreover, the modelling results for the cities of Windom and Mountain Lake for the existing alignment alternatives, 8.1 ppm for an 8 hour average, is sufficiently close to the state and federal 8 hour average standard of 9.0 ppm to warrant remodelling with the most up-to-date techniques; that is, EPA's 1978 volume 9 guidelines, Highway II, and Mobile II (1981 emission factors). If the predicted CO levels exceed the standards and one of these alternatives is chosen, transportation control measures would have to be implemented.

Response:

- A. Description and categorization of each of the TH 60 corridor water resources by applicable Minnesota Pollution Control Agency use and water quality classification, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Public Water designation, existing water quality and nutrient condition, fish population and management, and/or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wetlands type classification is provided in DEIS Technical Appendix I, "TH 60 Natural Resources Report". This information is considered fully adequate to identify resource values for impact assessment and mitigative measure identification. Development of a numerical or other "ranking" is not considered either practical or necessary. General construction mitigation procedures are to be applied to all water resources. Special mitigative measures have been developed where appropriate at specific locations as described in "Impact Mitigation Measures" section of this FEIS.
- B. Specific erosion and spill control measures based on the guidelines presented in this FEIS will be prepared as part of the plans and specifications during the detailed design phase for each segment of the staged construction program.
- C. This statement applies to the new alignment location near Windom. Construction of the preferred alternative on existing alignment in the Windom vicinity will not affect the old river channel area.
- D. As shown in DEIS Tables 33 and 34, the greatest proportion of the net decrease in the number of receptors exceeding FHWA design noise levels and State standards is associated with the "New Alignment - St. James to Mountain Lake" portion of the preferred alternative. Continuation on new alignment to the south end of Windom would provide a further net decrease, but to a minor extent in comparison to the St. James to Mountain Lake section and to other costs and impacts associated with such construction.
- E. Preliminary noise analysis indicates potential for noise barrier construction at three locations, as discussed on page 15 of this FEIS. Detailed analysis will be carried out during future design phases for the affected segments of the proposed staged construction program. Decisions to implement noise barriers will be based on resident input and cost-effectiveness analysis.
- F. The preferred alternative does bypass the Mountain Lake urban section. As shown in Table 35 on page 104 of the DEIS, estimated "worst-case" carbon monoxide concentrations along existing TH 60 within Mountain Lake would be significantly reduced. Based on the consideration of overall costs, impacts and needs, the preferred alternative retains the existing urban section in Windom. Air quality levels are anticipated to remain within acceptable standards. Implementation of the recommended traffic operations improvements in the Windom urban section should help to assure acceptable air quality levels.

- G. As stated on page 4 of DEIS Appendix G, "TH 60 Air Quality Analysis Report", the supplemental screening analysis was carried out using the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) screening procedures for "Evaluating Indirect Sources", Volume 9, 1975, updated to reflect USEPA 1978 emission factors. A simplified application of the Volume 9 procedures developed by Mn/DOT for project level air quality analysis was used (Mn/DOT Memorandum, "Project Level Air Quality, Revised Simplified Analysis Instructions", 8/23/78 from J. Halvorson, Air Quality Engineer, Office of Environmental Affairs). Estimated concentrations in the simplified technique are based upon USEPA's Supplement No. 5 to "Compilation of Air Pollutant Emission Factors, AP-42", December 1975; updated to USEPA 1978 emissions factors, and the USEPA HIWAY dispersion model. For purposes of the TH 60 analysis, additional adjustments to the simplified technique were made to reflect TH 60 vehicle mix and cold start characteristics for rural and urban locations. These adjustments were made using correction factors contained in USEPA's "Evaluating Indirect Sources", Volume 9 (Revised), September 1978.
- H. The 8.1 ppm eight-hour average carbon monoxide concentration reflects estimated 1985 conditions, prior to construction of any of the proposed staged construction program. The value thus represents a worst-case estimate for the "no-build" condition. With regard to Mountain Lake, the preferred alternative would bypass the existing urban section. Under the anticipated staged construction program, this section would not be completed until approximately 1990. The estimated "worst-case" eight-hour concentrations are 1.7 ppm for the new alignment section and 4.7 for the remaining portion of old TH 60 within Mountain Lake. At Windom, the preferred alternative follows the existing alignment. However, construction is not anticipated for completion until approximately 1995. Under worst-case assumptions, the maximum estimated eight-hour concentration would be only 4.6 ppm. Note also that these "worst-case" estimates reflect a combination of peak traffic volumes and winter meteorological assumptions. As described in the DEIS, since peak traffic volumes on TH 60 occur during summer months, the results tend to overestimate probable peak concentrations. Based on these "worst-case" screening results and project consistency with the State Implementation Plan under the joint Mn/DOT-MPCA "Memorandum of Understanding" for highway projects, no further analysis is considered to be warranted.
- I. Since year 2000 emission factors were not available, emission factors for 1995 (determined as described in response "G" above) were applied to estimated traffic volumes for the year 2000. Each value represents the highest or "worst-case" condition for the 1995-2000 period. While not occurring at the same time, the combined result produces a "worst-case" concentration estimate for the period.

- K. Mn/DOT construction specifications require compliance with Minnesota Pollution Control Agency rule APC-6. The contractor is required to submit for acceptance a schedule for both temporary and permanent control measures, which must be approved by the field engineer.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

DNR-7



STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
CENTENNIAL OFFICE BUILDING • ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA • 55155

DNR INFORMATION
(612) 296-4157

File No. _____

District Engineer
June 18, 1982
Page 2

June 18, 1982

District Engineer
Mankato District Office
Minnesota Department of Transportation
501 Victory Drive
Mankato, Minnesota 56001

RE: 330 S.P. 5306, 3204, 1703, 8308, T.H. 60 from Worthington to St. James

Dear Sir:

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has reviewed the Draft EIS and 4(f) statement for the above-referenced project and offers the following comments for your consideration.

We do not see any major problems with the project as proposed. The alternative utilizing the present alignment from Worthington to Windom and a new alignment from Windom to St. James is preferred by DNR because it has the least impact on wetlands. This alignment would avoid any impacts to the Carpenter Wildlife Management Area, although the impacts on the Area of the existing alignment alternative appear minimal or possibly even beneficial.

The mitigation proposed for potential impacts to the Valleeau Wildlife Management Area appears to be adequate, but needs refinement and this should be coordinated with DNR wildlife personnel in our New Ulm Regional Office. Replacement lands should be of equal or greater wildlife value.

A

For other wetlands impacted by the project, the mitigation measures proposed, such as wetland restoration and properly designed borrow pit construction, appear to adequately compensate for potential impacts. Replacement wetlands should be of equal or greater value. Further refinement of the mitigation plan should be coordinated with DNR at the appropriate time.

B

The roadside vegetation management proposals are generally good, although we would like to see mowing delayed until August 1 instead of mid-July.

The DNR Division of Waters has reviewed the list of protected waters which will be affected by the project. A memo on this subject is attached for your information.

If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Ken Wald of my staff at 296-4790.

Sincerely,

Thomas W. Balcom
Thomas W. Balcom
Environmental Review Coordinator

TB:dje
20930

attachment

cc: Ron Harnack
Jon Parker
Maynard Nelson

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

B.

SF00005-02

STATE OF MINNESOTA

DEPARTMENT DNR - DIV. OF WATERS - BOX 18

Office Memorandum

Dennis Quan
June 11, 1982
Page 2

TO : DENNIS QUAN
Environmental Review

DATE: June 11, 1982

FROM : CHRIS HUGHES *CH*
Assistant Hydrologist

PHONE: 172-216

SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON T.H. 60 DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
(E.I.S.) AND DRAFT SECTION 4(F) EVALUATION

PROTECTED WETLANDS

1. Basin 17-9W
2. Basin 17-64W
3. Basin 32-87W

C

Some additions, deletions and changes have been made to Table 12 Page 56 Appendix I of the draft E.I.S. and Section 4F evaluation. Appendix I showing in red those additions, deletions and changes is enclosed with these comments.

CJH:jeh
Enclosure

The following list represents those protected waters of the State of Minnesota affected by the proposed T.H. 60 Improvement shown on the 1980 preliminary protected waters inventory maps. The list is sectioned by protected watercourses, protected lakes and protected wetlands. The protected waters in each section are in geographic sequence starting at St. James on the northeast end of the existing corridor and ending at Worthington on the southwest end of the existing corridor.

PROTECTED WATERCOURSES

1. Tributary to Butterfield Creek
2. Tributary to St. James Creek
3. Tributary to Butterfield Creek
4. Des Moines River
5. Des Moines River
6. Heron Lake Outlet
7. Jack Creek
8. Jack Creek
9. Elk Creek
10. Okabena Creek

RECEIVED

JUN 14 1982

Division of Waters

PROTECTED LAKES

1. Butterfield Lake (83-56P)
2. Regehr State Wildlife Management Area (17-1P)
3. Mountain Lake (17-3P)
4. Bingham Lake (17-7P)
5. Clear Lake (17-8P)
6. Warren Lake (17-21P)
7. Cottonwood Lake (17-22P)
8. Wolf Lake (17-13P)
9. String Lake (32-24P)
10. Federal Waterfowl Production Area (32-48P)
11. Timber Lake (32-58P)
12. Duck Lake (32-57P)
13. Heron Lake (32-57P)
14. Crosse State Wildlife Management Area (32-94P)
15. Cross State Wildlife Management Area (32-83P)

Response:

- A. The preferred alternative, "Existing Alignment - Worthington to Mountain Lake, New Alignment - Mountain Lake to St. James" will impact both the Carpenter and Valleau Wildlife Management Areas. Impact on the former area would occur during initial two-lane construction, the latter during ultimate dualization to four lanes. Neither would occur during the proposed first construction stage, which covers only the segment from St. James to Mountain Lake. Anticipated impacts, mitigation measures and coordination with DNR are discussed in detail in the "Final Section 4(f) Evaluation" section on pages 41-57 of this FEIS.
- B. The concern with the mowing of roadside ditches and rights-of-way is valid. Wildlife, notably song birds and the ring-necked pheasant, extensively, and on some areas almost exclusively, use these areas for nesting. As described on page 19 of this FEIS, current Mn/DOT maintenance policy does discourage full-width mowing in rural areas until after July 31 in order to avoid disturbance of nesting cover for wildlife. Farmers harvesting hay on the highway right-of-way are also encouraged to wait until after July 31. Exceptions are spot mowing of noxious weeds and mowing adjacent to homes, businesses and similar developed uses.
- C. Protected waters designations presented in Table 12, Page 56 of DEIS Appendix I were based on MDNR's 1979 Preliminary Designation of Public Waters and Wetlands. Additions, deletions and corrections to update Table 12 are listed on page 32 of this FEIS.

New Ulm Regional Resource Coordinator,

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources



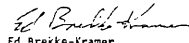
May 19, 1982

Mr. Marcus Flygare
TH 60 Project Manager
MN DOT
501 South Victory Drive
Mankato, MN 56001

Dear Mr. Flygare:

A In reviewing "T.H. 60 Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Section 4 (F) Evaluation", I noticed that there is no reference to the prairie remnant that occurs on the T.H. 60 right-of-way and parallels it on the CNW right-of-way. Is there any such reference in Appendix I, T.H. 60 Natural Resources Report? I do not have a copy of this Appendix.

Sincerely,


Ed Brekke-Kramer
Regional Resource Coordinator
P. O. Box 756, Highway 15 South
New Ulm, MN 56073
(507) 354-2196

EBK:jfb

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Response:

The existence of a limited amount of prairie resource along the CNW right-of-way was recognized on pages 119-120 of the DEIS and pages 63-64 of DEIS Technical Appendix I, "TH 60 Natural Resources Report". With the assistance of Mr. Brekke-Kramer, a more extensive listing of prairie remnant locations has been developed and measures to mitigate any potential adverse impacts have been identified. This information is contained on pages 19 and 31-34 of this FEIS.

Minnesota Historical Society



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FOUNDED IN 1849

Building 25, Fort Snelling, St. Paul, Minnesota 55111 • (612) 726-

26 May 1982

Mr. C.P. Kachelmyer
Preliminary Design Engineer
Room 604
Transportation Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Mr. Kachelmyer:

RE: Minn. Proj. F016-1(), F004-1()
S.P. 1703, 3204-26, 5306-23,
8308 (T.H. 60)
From the Jct. I-90 at Worthington to
West Jct., T.H. 4 near St. James/
Mobles, Jackson, Cottonwood, and
Wacongan Counties

MHS Referral File Number: C 995

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the above referenced project.

A As we have stated in our letter of 15 December 1981, and as the report confirms, we believe that Duck Lake Site #2 requires further testing. When that testing has been completed by the Trunk Highway Archaeologist, we will forward our final comments.

Other than the above concern, we continue to believe that the project will have no effect of sites of historical, architectural, archaeological, cultural or engineering significance listed on the National Register or eligible for listing on the National Register.

Thank you for your participation in this important effort to preserve Minnesota's cultural resources.

Sincerely,

Russell W. Fridley
Russell W. Fridley
State Historic Preservation Officer

RWF/fr

Just 6-2-82
JRE

Response:

- A. The additional testing of Duck Lake Site #2 has been completed. See pages 29-31 of this FEIS for results.

Honorable Buzz Anderson,

Minnesota House of Representatives

Bruce W. (Buzz) Anderson
District 26A
Murray-Nobles-Pipestone Counties
Committees:
Agriculture
Chairman, Agriculture Programs
and Policies Subcommittee
Education
Vice Chairman, School Aids
Financial Institutions and Insurance
Banking Subcommittee
House Senate Committee on Public
Libraries, Co-Chairman
Judiciary



Minnesota
House of
Representatives

Harry A. Steen, Jr., Speaker

June 8, 1982

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Bruce W. (Buzz) Anderson, presently the State Representative of District 26A which is made up of portions of Murray, Nobles, and Pipestone Counties. I have served in this capacity nearly six years, and I am intimately familiar with the uncompleted portion of Highway 60 between the Iowa border and St. James. In addition, I am a lifelong native of southwestern Minnesota, having been raised in a small town where my father operated a small business. The aforementioned background provides me with a unique awareness of the needs, economically and socially, in our region.

I am writing to endorse the statement provided by the Highway 60 Action Committee, presented June 10, 1982, on the Environmental Impact Study. I want to emphasize the importance of the committee's belief that Highway 60 should be a four-lane expressway from the Iowa border to St. James in order to adequately meet the needs of the area. My beliefs and that of the committee are born out by numerous studies dating from 1962 to the present. In addition, the fact that the environmental impact of an expressway was relatively minor and could be dealt with easily. This, along with the fact that the cost differential between a two and four-lane expressway is reasonably small, provides even more reason as to why the four-lane project should proceed.

Lastly, let me state that as a public policymaker, I am not only personally committed to the four-lane expansion; but, politically, I have been and will continue to be willing to support the financial resources to finish this long overdue project.

Sincerely,

Buzz Anderson

Buzz Anderson
State Representative

kb

Reply to: ☐ 169 State Office Building, St. Paul, Minnesota 55155
☐ 3316 Maple Ave., Slaven, Minnesota 56172

Office: (612) 296-2068
Home: 634-9660



WRITTEN COMMENTS: LOCAL/REGIONAL

Southwestern Regional Development Commission, Transportation Committee

STATEMENT GIVEN JUNE 10, 1982 HIGHWAY SIXTY EIS HEARING FOR THE AVERAGE CITIZEN ON THE STREET, BY F. A. "JIM" MILLER AS AN ELECTED OFFICIAL OF COTTONWOOD COUNTY, I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS ON BEHALF OF SOME OF OUR AVERAGE CITIZENS ON THE STREET THEIR THOUGHTS AND STATEMENTS THAT THEY HAVE EXPRESSED TO ME. THESE ARE THE FOLKS THAT FEEL THEY CANNOT EFFECTIVELY EXPRESS THEIR THOUGHTS AT A HEARING SUCH AS THIS, OR ELSE THEY FEEL THEY WOULD BECOME EMOTIONAL AND SAY SOMETHING THEY SHOULDN'T. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE HAD TO STEER THEIR CARS DOWN HIGHWAY SIXTY, A BUMPY, TEN FOOT LANE, WITH GRAVEL SHOULDERS, IN A DRIVING RAINSTORM. OR, THEY ARE PEOPLE WHO HAVE SUFFERED A BROKEN WINDSHIELD FROM STONES THROWN UP BY PASSING TRUCKS. THEY HAVE WAITED PATIENTLY THROUGH ALL SORTS OF DELAYS OVER THE YEARS WHILE A FOUR LANE DIVIDED EXPRESSWAY BEARS THEIR BACKYARDS. THEY HAVE HEARD WITHIN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES, AND READ AND HEARD VIA THE NEWS MEDIA, STATEMENTS MADE BY BOTH MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH AND BY THOSE OF THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH THAT SOMETHING HAS TO BE DONE, AND WILL BE DONE TO COMPLETE HIGHWAY SIXTY. THEY UNDERSTOOD THAT THE CITIZEN ADVISORY STUDY HAD TO BE MADE. THEY WROTE LETTERS BY THE HUNDREDS SPEAKING OUT TO THIS AT THAT TIME. THEY UNDERSTOOD THAT AN EIS STATEMENT ESTIMATED TO TAKE EIGHTEEN MONTHS HAD TO BE MADE. BUT, INSTEAD OF EIGHTEEN MONTHS, IT IS NOW FORTY EIGHT MONTHS LATER AND HERE WE ARE TONIGHT FOR THE EIS PUBLIC HEARING. THESE AVERAGE CITIZENS DO NOT UNDERSTAND THIS. DURING THIS PERIOD THEY HAVE HAD TO TRAVEL A DANGEROUS OBSOLETE ROAD COMPARED TO TODAY'S STANDARDS, AND NOW THEY ARE LED TO BELIEVE THAT PERHAPS IN 1984 CONSTRUCTION, LASTING A PERIOD OF FIFTEEN YEARS WILL BE STARTED ON HIGHWAY SIXTY THAT WILL GIVE THEM A SYSTEM THAT MAY VERY WELL BE OBSOLETE BY THE TIME IT IS COMPLETED. AND THEN, IF EVERYTHING

STATEMENT BY F. A. "JIM" MILLER

ALL OF THE MEMBERS OF THIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE WHO REPRESENTED OUR REGION VOTED IN FAVOR OF THIS RECOMMENDATION. PAST STATISTICS INDICATE THAT OVER THE PAST TWENTY YEARS OUR SOUTHWESTERN AREA OF REGION EIGHT HAS HAD LITTLE IF ANY CONSTRUCTION FUNDING SPENT WITHIN ITS BOUNDARIES, WHILE OTHER AREAS HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED MILLIONS OF CONSTRUCTION DOLLARS AS OUR STATE'S NETWORK OF TRUNK HIGHWAYS HAVE BEEN BUILT IN AND EXTENDING OUTWARDS FROM THE METROPOLITAN AREA. IN CONCLUSION, BECAUSE OF THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE IN 1978, AND BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF OUR FAIR SHARE OF THE CONSTRUCTION DOLLARS OVER THE PAST TWENTY YEARS, AND BECAUSE OF THE PRESENT ACCOUNT AND THAT THE PROJECTED AFT FIGURES INDICATE ITS NEEDS, AND BECAUSE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF HIGHWAY SIXTY TO OUR REGION'S ECONOMIC FUTURE, IT IS OUR RECOMMENDATION THAT THE SAME CONTINUITY OF DESIGN OF A FOUR LANE DIVIDED EXPRESSWAY WITH A REDUCED MEDIAN BE CONSTRUCTED ALONG THIS CORRIDOR AND THAT A REALISTIC SCHEDULE OF BIDDING, LETTING AND CONSTRUCTION DATES BE DEVELOPED FREE FROM UNANNOUNCED CHANGES AND DELAYS SO A SOUND LOCAL AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY CAN BE DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED.

Cottonwood County

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation of the State of Minnesota, has for several years last past studied proposals for the improvement of State Highway Number 60 between St. James, Minnesota, and the Iowa line, and

WHEREAS, there have been several independent studies made of the traffic flow on said highway and the accident rates resulting from its present condition and,

WHEREAS, both the Department of Transportation studies and the independent studies have unanimously recommended that said highway be expanded to a four-lane expressway and,

WHEREAS, the Environmental Impact Statement Draft has indicated the same conclusions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by the County Board of Cottonwood County, Minnesota, that said Board hereby recommends the adoption of the Environmental Impact Statement to be submitted at the hearing to be held on June 10, 1982, and the construction of a four-lane divided expressway on said Highway 60 from St. James to I-90 at Worthington.

Passed and adopted this 9th day of June, 1982.

Frank J. Gungor
Chairman

ATTEST:

L. M. Gungor
County Auditor

Nobles County

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED, By the County Board of Commissioners of Nobles County, Minnesota, that, of the alternative road designs presented by the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the improvement of Trunk Highway 60 from St. James to Worthington, the County Board recognizes the four-lane expressway as the only practical and proper design for improvement of this major highway.

Certification

STATE OF MINNESOTA }
COUNTY OF NOBLES } CS

I, Ken W. Roberts, Auditor of said County of Nobles, do hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing copy with the original resolution adopted by the County Board on June 8, 1982, and now retaining on file and of record in my office and that the same is a correct transcript thereof and of the whole of such original.

Witness my hand and official seal
this 8 day of June, 1982.

Ken W. Roberts
Ken W. Roberts, Auditor
Nobles County, Minnesota

(Seal)

Watonwan County

Watonwan County
Public Works Department
Roads & Bridges - Parks - Sewer - Landfill
Buildings - Air Treatment - District
P.O. Box 487, Ph. 375-3341 ext. 281
St. James, Minnesota
56081

June 29, 1982

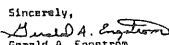
Marcus Flygers, TH 60 Project Manager
MN/DOT
501 South Victory Drive
Mankato, MN. 56001

Re: 317
FHWA-MN-EIS-82-01-D
Draft Environmental Impact Statement &
Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation for
Trunk Highway 60 in Nobles, Jackson
Cottonwood & Watonwan Counties, Minnesota
Minnesota Projects F 015-1() & F 004-1()
State Project 5306, 3204, 1703 & 6308
From the City of Worthington
To the City of St. James

Dear Mr. Flygers:

A The Watonwan County Board of Commissioners have reviewed the above referenced document and discussed the alternatives at their Commissioner meetings from time to time during the project development stages. The Commissioners support the continuation of an adequate highway along the south side of the C&NW railway to provide the southern bypass of Butterfield. They also support the use of the narrowest possible right-of-way to reduce the loss of productive farm land.

B Watonwan County relocated and constructed County State-Aid Highway 5 through the southern part of Butterfield in 1978 to provide a better interchange with TH 60 as proposed at that time. Watonwan County supports the plan layout for the interchange as proposed in 1978. We have no preference as to the outer or inner bypass except the taking of the least amount of agricultural land should be considered.

Sincerely,

Gerald A. Engstrom
Highway Engineer
ms

Sincerely,

Stan Karen
Chairman, County Board
of Commissioners

Equal Opportunity Employer

Response:

- A. The new alignment location along the south side of the C&NW railway bypassing Butterfield to the south has been selected as the preferred alternative. The proposed design for future four-lane dualization requires a 225-foot wide right-of-way, the minimum width allowable to retain a center median for safe storage of crossing and turning vehicles on an expressway-type facility with at-grade crossings.
- B. The proposed plan provides an at-grade intersection with relocated County State-Aid Highway 5 south of Butterfield, rather than a grade-separated interchange. This decision was based on an evaluation of costs and traffic requirements during the DEIS route location and environmental impact studies. Layout features will depend upon the detailed alignment selected. As described on page 5 of this FEIS, the selection between the inner and outer alignment variations will be made during the upcoming design phase for first stage construction. Among items to be considered will be the impact on farm operations, including both amount of land taken and the nature of farmland severance.

City of St. James



June 21, 1982

Mr. Marcus Flygare
TH 60 Project Manager
Minnesota Department of Transportation
501 South Victory Drive
Mankato, Minnesota 56001

Dear Mr. Flygare:

As representatives of the City of St. James, we wish to submit the following comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on proposed improvements to Minnesota Highway 60.

The City of St. James completely supports the improvement of TH 60 between St. James and Worthington. This highway is a major transportation corridor for southwestern Minnesota. The current design and condition of this highway clearly indicate the need for improvements. Upgrading TH 60 will improve vehicular safety and enhance the accessibility of communities in this region.

The City of St. James has, and will continue, to support the four-lane expressway alternative. We have experienced the benefits that this design has brought to our community. Our city has become much more accessible to the Twin Cities. The by-pass has created a new area for economic development. The expansion of TH 60 between St. James and Worthington will help enhance our position as a regional center. It will also convey many of the same benefits to the other communities along this route.

As public officials, we recognize the financial difficulties that are being experienced at all levels of government. These constraints may make the initial construction of a four-lane design impractical. Although a four-lane design is the most beneficial, we are not so short-sighted as to believe it is the only workable option. The proposed stated development would still make positive contributions to the Region. It is better to achieve benefits that are within our means, than to set our sights too high and end up with nothing.

The City of St. James P.O. Box 70 124 Arm. Blvd. So. St. James, MN 56081 (507) 375-3241
Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity Employer

Mr. Marcus Flygare
Page 2
June 21, 1982

We realize that there are many other issues to be resolved. Individual community impacts, use of agricultural land and overall environmental impacts are all factors which must be considered. The City of St. James is concerned about creating a safe and efficient transportation corridor. How these other factors are addressed is primarily a local issue. At this point, we are not in a position to comment.

Thank you for the opportunity to make our feelings part of the official record.

Respectfully,
THE CITY OF ST. JAMES

Dr. Roger Parsons, Mayor

Larry Miller, Council Member

Gary Storm, Council Member

Don Craig, Council Member

Kris Offerdahl, Council Member

Margaret Marling, Council Member

City of Mountain Lake (Represented by Elmer E. Friesen)

Elmer E. Friesen
Mountain Lake,
Minnesota 56159

Representative - City of Mountain Lake

A As requested by the mayor of our city - to present the need and desire to have two egret/egrets for the city of Mountain Lake. The council still remains in favor of a four lane bypass south of the city.

/s/
Elmer E. Friesen

Response:

- A. The preferred new alignment alternative to the south of Mountain Lake provides for access connections to and from Mountain Lake via existing TH 60 at both the east and west ends of the city for either the inner or outer alignment variation. The connectors would intersect at-grade with proposed TH 60, although studies indicated that conversion to interchanges would be feasible if warranted at some future date. To avoid potential adverse traffic, land use and environmental effects, proposed TH 60 would be grade separated from CSAH 2 south of Mountain Lake without interchange connections.

City of Windom

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF COTTONWOOD

I, the undersigned, being the duly qualified and acting City Clerk of the City Council of the City of Windom, Cottonwood County, Minnesota, hereby certify that I have carefully compared the attached with the original thereof on file and of record in my office, and find the same to be a full, true and complete transcript of Resolution #2082 duly adopted by the Windom City Council on the date indicated.

/s/ T. N. Weeks
City Clerk

RESOLUTION #20-82

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE CONSTRUCTION OF IMPROVED HIGHWAY #60 AT THE PRESENT LOCATION THROUGH THE CITY OF WINDOM, PROVIDED, THAT PROPER SAFETY PRECAUTIONS BE BUILT INTO THE SYSTEM FOR EAST-WEST TRAFFIC CROSSING HIGHWAY #60.

Introduced: Uhlhorn
Seconded: Purrington
In Favor: Uhlhorn, Purrington, Schwalbach & Tschertter
Against: Fossing
Motion declared carried

WHEREAS, A Location/Design Public Hearing for the proposed improvement of T.H. 60 from Worthington to St. James was held at 7:30 P.M. on June 10, 1982, and,

WHEREAS, The Minn. Dept. of Transportation invites comments from Public Bodies in writing in the event they were not ready to make a statement at the hearing on June 10, 1982.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF WINDOM, MINN. AS FOLLOWS:

1. The Windom City Council supports the improvement of T.H. 60 at its present location through the City of Windom, provided,
 - a) That proper and safe crossings are installed to move traffic East and West across Highway #60.
 - b) That proper and safe crossings be provided for pedestrians, and especially for children, having need to cross T.H. 60.

Adopted this 29th day of June 1982.

Dennis Frederickson, Mayor

Attest: T. N. Weeks, City Clerk

Response:

- A. Anticipated traffic operations improvements to TH 60 within the City of Windom include the installation of additional traffic signals at 6th Street (TH 62) and 16th Street. The signal will be coordinated with the existing signal at 10th Street. At 13th Street, 1st Avenue will be closed off from TH 60 to eliminate existing hazardous conditions. First Avenue at 16th Street will also be relocated to provide storage for vehicles stopped at TH 60. The addition of the traffic signals and related improvements should provide for and enhance the safety of vehicular and pedestrian crossing of TH 60.

City of Worthington

CITY OF WORTHINGTON
HOBBS COUNTY WORTHINGTON, MINNESOTA 56187

HARLIND OWENS
MAYOR

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

OFFICE
P.O. BOX 522
PHONE 507-376-4821
CITY HALL
PHONE 507-376-3161

STATEMENT
CITY OF WORTHINGTON
ON
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR HWY. #60

The City of Worthington strongly supports the Highway 60 Action Corporation's position on the proposed trunk highway improvement. As Worthington is strongly dependent on the sale of agricultural products from our community and regional area we urge the department of transportation to approve a four (4) lane design in order that we export those valuable goods, safely and without delays.

We also believe traditionally, four lane highways have significantly attracted additional usage from purely a safety standpoint and we maintain that the vehicular projections will be greater than those presently anticipated and will definitely enhance the economic vitality of our community in the future.

Yours truly,

Harlin O. Owens
Harlin O. Owens
Mayor

WRITTEN COMMENTS: ORGANIZATIONS

Southwest Minnesota Highway 60 Action Corporation

Statement of Southwest Minnesota Highway 60 Action Corporation to the formal hearing on the Highway 60 Environmental Impact Study June 10, 1982.

The Southwest Minnesota Highway 60 Action Corporation is an organization made up of citizens and local government representatives in counties and communities served by Highway 60 from Mankato to the Iowa border. It was formed in 1965 to work with the State of Minnesota in accomplishing the state's goal, announced in 1962, of extending a four-lane expressway along Highway 60 to the Iowa line. The people and governmental units making up the corporation believed then and believe today that only a four-lane expressway can meet the travel and economic needs of Southwestern Minnesota. It believes that anything less than that will not be adequate. It believes to build first a two-lane improvement and subsequently come back to make it a four-lane road will result in excessive costs to highway users both in money and human lives.

We have read the environmental impact statement which is the subject of these hearings and we think the statement bears out these conclusions. We further believe the EIS bears out earlier studies which said the same thing. We refer to the 20-year needs study of 1962 which initiated the expressway program which has brought the road to St. James; the 1968 environmental impact study for the segment from St. James to Windom; the Highway 60 Socio-Economic Analysis done by James Barnes in 1971 for the Highway 60 Corporations in Minnesota and Iowa; the backbone plan developed by the State of Minnesota in 1972; the priority primary highway plan of 1973; the post 1980 plan of 1976; the Southwest Regional Development Commission comprehensive transportation plan of 1977; and the bi-regional citizen's committee study of 1978.

Every Study has consistently shown that nothing but a four-lane expressway will accommodate traffic on this route at the normal design level for rural roads. The present EIS says the same thing.

It reports present average daily traffic is between 1,000 and 4,600 vehicles per day and predicts this will rise to between 5,300 and 7,500 by the year 2,000. It says 30 percent of the road at present operates below the Class B level and with no improvements at all, 80 percent will be below that mark by the year 2,000. It says only a four-lane expressway will allow the entire route to operate at Class B by the year 2,000.

It says between 13 and 18 percent of the average daily traffic load is made up of heavy trucks, and another 25 percent by pickups, campers and vans, and that these percentages rise during summer and early fall months when the road is carrying its heaviest traffic. It says further that movement of agricultural machinery frequently slows and restricts traffic flow.

It says accident rates at present are about normal for a rural highway carrying its present traffic flow but warns that on two-lane highways "accident rates/increase significantly as traffic volumes approach and exceed 5,000 vehicles per day". The EIS says the accident rates can be expected to be 30 to 40 percent higher on a two-lane road than on a four-lane facility.

We further note the EIS raises no major environmental problems that cannot be easily mitigated. Taking of agricultural land can be as little as 100 or as high as 900 acres but return of up to 230 acres of present day right of way to private agricultural use is feasible. There are no major wildlife or environmental problems.

Studies have shown that affects of new road construction on existing highway oriented businesses are so slight as to not be a major deciding factor.

And we note the EIS projects cost differentials between an inadequate two-lane and an adequate four-lane are only between 31 and 41 percent.

An environmental impact study, if it is to be anything more than bureaucratic busywork, should be used as a tool by which to make intelligent decisions. It should never be used as a tool to justify a prior decision.

If one reads the draft EIS in light of these truths, we believe it says the only adequate improvement for Highway 60 from St. James to Worthington is a four-lane expressway. Since we firmly believe it says exactly that we support adoption of the document.

Response:

- A. Evaluation of highway improvement needs for the TH 60 corridor to provide safe and efficient traffic service and meet the economic development goals of the region support the eventual dualization to four-lanes, particularly for projected traffic demands for the year 2000 and beyond and in view of the high proportion of truck traffic in the corridor. However, in view of funding limitations and statewide as well as local priorities, the Mn/DOT Commissioner has determined that a proposed staging program providing initial upgrading of current substandard sections to modern two-lane standards, using a design compatible with subsequent four-lane dualization, will best address both immediate and long-term needs. The reasons are discussed on pages 6-9 of this FEIS.

Windom Area Chamber of Commerce



WINDOM AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

920 2ND AVENUE • BOX 8 • 5607 - 891 - 2752 • WINDOM, MN 56101

June 29, 1982

Mr. Marcus Flygare
TH 60 Project Manager
MN Department of Transportation
501 South Victory Drive
Mankato, MN 56001

Dear Mr. Flygare:

As concerned citizens and business people of the City of Windom, we, the Board of Directors and Executive Committee of the Windom Chamber of Commerce, wish to state our position to recommended action on T.H. 60.

We believe that the best option is to upgrade and improve the present two lane facility to permit level "B" or better operation for the following reasons:

1. Need for immediate safety improvement rather than awaiting "possible" four lane funding in the distant future.
2. The loss of precious farmland and of accessibility to farmland and therefore increased financial impact on an already suffering rural economy caused by the building of an expressway.
3. The loss of non-resident business now being realized would occur as a result of the expressway.
4. Although the majority of the Citizens Advisory Committee recommended a four lane expressway, it should be remembered that the majority had hopes that the building of such a facility would be soon forthcoming under the much better economic conditions existing at the time of the study.
5. Those most strongly advocating the expressway option were serving the best economic interests of the Worthington business community at the expense of others.

We believe that in the best interest of immediate improvement to safe travel as well as in the best economic interest of business (farm and city alike), upgrading of the existing two lane facility is the only realistic option available.

When funding becomes available, a four lane facility along the present road bed should be utilized due to the reduced cost and reduced tax burden and further increased safety.

Sincerely,

Bill Schmidt
President Pro Tem

Worthington Area Chamber of Commerce



Worthington Area
Chamber of Commerce

1017 THIRD AVENUE P.O. BOX 310 WORTHINGTON, MINNESOTA 56187

TELEPHONE (507) 372-2919

Statement of the Worthington Area Chamber of Commerce to the formal hearing on the Highway 60 Environmental Impact Study June 10, 1982.

The Worthington Area Chamber of Commerce after careful consideration and detailed study concurs with the position paper prepared by the Highway 60 Action Corporation. The economic stability of our area depends greatly on the availability of a safe traffic flow from S.W. Minnesota to and from the Twin Cities area. A four lane designed highway as outlined in the report will provide the needed safe travel route.

It is necessary to enhance Minnesota's number one industry; Agriculture, therefore, a safe method of moving commodities is essential.

Sincerely,

Norma Gallagher
President

dsl

... Doing things most people think "just happen" ...

Heron Lake Community Club, Inc.

HERON LAKE COMMUNITY CLUB, INC.

BUCKLE UP
PARADISE



HERON LAKE
MINNESOTA

June 7, 1982

Mr. Marcus Flygare
TH60 Project Manager
Mn/DOT
501 South Victory Drive
Mankato, MN 56001

Dear Mr. Flygare:

At the June 3, 1982 meeting of the Heron Lake Community Club, after some discussion on the Highway Hearing at Windom scheduled for Thursday, June 10, 1982, a motion was made, seconded and unanimously carried that the Heron Lake Community Club support the resolution adopted and presented by the Highway 60 Action Corporation.

Sincerely yours,

Warren L. Sontag, Chairman

Robert M. Johnson, Minn. Good Roads

Robert M. Johnson
3402 University Ave. S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55414

Representative: Minnesota Good Roads

We need Highway 60 upgraded soon.

WRITTEN COMMENTS: OTHERS

Pepin, Dayton, Herman Graham & Getts

PEPIN, DAYTON, HERMAN, GRAHAM & GETTS
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

CHARLES A. DAYTON
RICHARD G. PEPIN, JR.
JOHN R. HERMAN
ANTHONY W. GRAHAM
PEPIN & GETTS
JAMES A. FAYNE
JOHN C. ALLEN
FRANKLIN J. DILLON
CAROLYN COLLIER
JOHN H. L. LUTHEBERG

330 OLIVER CATHART
TEN SOUTH FIFTH STREET MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55402

(612)339-7533

July 2, 1982

District Engineer
Mankato District Office
501 Victory Drive
Mankato, Minnesota 56001

Re: T.H.60 Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Draft
Section 4 (F) Evaluation, Worthington to St. James,
Minnesota

Dear Sir:

We represent a number of farmers who are located along the proposed improvement section. Our clients position is strongly in favor of a modern, upgraded, two-lane road on the present road-bed. We were informed by Mr. Mark Flygare that an extension of time for the receipt of comments had been granted until July 7, 1982. We agree that the present highway 60 is in need of improvement and widening for safety reasons. However, we believe that the alternative which we favor has been given inadequate treatment in the draft EIS, and that if a two-lane highway is constructed, as we suggest, benefits which are claimed for a four lane highway would be largely achieved.

Inadequate discussion of the relative importance of Agricultural Land Preservation:

A The draft EIS does not adequately characterize the importance of preservation of prime farmland to Minnesota. Even though the amount of farmland which would be taken may be relatively small in light of the total farmland in the state, numerous recent studies have shown that conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses has been occurring piecemeal from numerous sources both nationwide and from Minnesota, and the total impact of such losses is a serious. Currently, Minnesota is losing about 50,000 acres of farmland per year according to the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs at the University of Minnesota, as an educated guess. A Minnesota state planning agency study has

PEPIN, DAYTON, HERMAN, GRAHAM & GETTS

District Engineer
Page Three
July 2, 1982

These losses are very disturbing when you look at the hefty contributions agricultural products make to the state and nation's economy. Minnesota rates number four in the nation in prime farmland. In terms of dollars, the loss of one million acres of prime farmland can equal an annual loss of 140,000,000 bushels of corn at \$1.50 a bushel, the equivalent of 490,000,000 irretrievably lost each and every year thereafter."

Mr. Gray also noted the insidious nature of farmland loss, with a few acres being nibbled here and there, amounting to a huge total.

The most difficult aspect of agricultural land conversion is that it usually occurs in small increments -- 20 acres here, 80 acres there. These increments are cumulative and add up to the three million acres of agricultural land converted annually. Since this occurs at a local level in a piecemeal fashion, the magnitude of these losses is often not felt immediately. Many times, the conversion process takes place over a number of years and reduces the overall viability of the existing agriculture little by little.

Mr. Gray also noted the same pressure for production observed by the Minnesota State Planning Department in the 1975 study, and stated that the National Agricultural Lands Study had projected that virtually all our potential cropland will be in production by the year 2000, thus placing upward pressure on food prices, and producing an adverse effect on inflation. A copy of Mr. Gray's statement is attached as Exhibit 2.

A cont'd Finally, the EIS fails to note the importance of the particular lands that would be taken for a relocated two-lane or a four-lane alternative. These are among the most highly productive croplands in the state and their significance as such should also be noted. See, Minnesota Cropland Resources, Minnesota State Planning Agency, May 1979 (a booklet identifying the most productive lands.)

We have the following comments and questions concerning the draft EIS. We expect that our comments and questions

PEPIN, DAYTON, HERMAN, GRAHAM & GETTS

District Engineer
Page Two
July 2, 1982

concluded that "given a high crop demand in a moderate crop yield, a reasonable alternative, a total harvested acreage of 22.6 million acres would be needed in 1990. This level of production would approach the limits of available cropland in the state." Notebook of Land Use Projections, St. Paul, Minnesota, June 1978.

Last year, the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board concluded that preservation of prime agricultural land was so important that it adopted, following an extensive process over a period of several years, a special regulation governing the siting of power plants on prime agricultural land, and limiting the amount of land which could be taken for any new power plant to one-half acre of prime farmland per megawatt of generating capacity. A great deal of research was done by the power plant siting staff in connection with the public hearing process. A thorough literature search was undertaken in order to examine the need for a regulation which would admittedly preserve only a few acres of farmland. A copy of the power plant siting staff's discussion of the evidence is contained in the Statement of Need and Reasonableness and attached hereto as Exhibit 1. That discussion also demonstrates the strong legislative policy of the state for the preservation of productive agricultural land, the rapid loss of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses, and the need for state agencies to avoid actions which would result in the loss of prime farmland.

At the state's expense, a national expert on agricultural land policy, Robert J. Gray, Director of Policy Development for the American Farmland Trust, appeared and testified in support of the proposed restrictions to prevent the taking of agricultural lands for power plants. His testimony described the National Agricultural Lands Study, of which he was the director, and the results of the study, showing an 88 million acre decline on "land in farms" between 1969 and 1978. Mr. Gray stated that the implications of these major changes and shifts in land use for Minnesota are very important. Minnesota lost 490,000 acres of agricultural land during the period from 1967 to 1977 and a decrease of one million forty-nine thousand acres of "land in farms" during the period 1969 to 1978, or 2.5% of the state's farmland base. He concluded that:

PEPIN, DAYTON, HERMAN, GRAHAM & GETTS

District Engineer
Page Four
July 2, 1982

and your responses will be included in the final EIS.

Systems Linkages, Page 3:

Where in the legislation governing highway construction is "design continuity" identified as a specific goal?

B As noted in our letter of September 19, 1975 regarding the draft and final EIS for the portion of T.H.60 between St. James and Worthington (FMAA-n-EIS-72-7-f), it is not fair to compare the benefits of a planned construction of an entire system to the harm to a small portion of the system. To the extent that the EIS identifies an advantage of a four-lane over a two lane construction because of design continuity, we believe that it emphasizes an inappropriate and irrelevant factor. Benefits to the system would also be provided by upgrading the two-lane highway.

Geometric Deficiencies, Page 4:

C As noted above, there is general agreement, which includes our clients, that existing T.H.60 is obsolete by modern roadway standards, and that improvement is necessary for reasons of safety. Thus, the matter of the condition of the roadway is not supportive of any particular alternative, but only of a change in general.

Structural and Maintenance Considerations, Page 4:

D Please describe the methods used by the highway department in utilizing an old roadbed, between Madelia and Lake Crystal, for which the highway department won an award.

E A present environmental impact statement cannot be used to justify a decision to be made some 10, 15, or 20 years in the future to expand a two-lane highway to a four-lane highway. A new environmental impact statement will be required at that decision point, based on then existing data and conditions.

Traffic-Present and Projected Demands, Page 7, 8:

F We have little confidence in traffic projections because they have proved to be inaccurate in the past.

Pepin, Dayton, Herman Graham & Getts (cont'd)

PEPIN, DAYTON, HERMAN, GRAHAM & GETTS

District Engineer
Page Five
July 2, 1982

G The small percentage of trips that travel the entire study corridor underscores our position that the benefits to other systems and linkages with other systems should not be over-emphasized. The assumed detriment of a slowing of traffic in urban areas fails to take into account the fact that many of trips are to, from, or between the urban areas in questions.

Service Levels, Page 9:

As noted above, service levels in urban areas are not detrimental, since most of the trips are to, from or between urban areas, and only a small percentage of trips travel the entire corridor.

Safety, Page 11:

H What is the basis for the undocumented assertion that the accident would likely be approximately 30-40% lower than for an upgrade two-lane facility, if opposing traffic is separated by a four-lane alternative. What are the assumptions underlying the statement?

I On the present alignment, there have been no fatalities in Butterfield or Mountain Lake from 1938 to 1982, and this time span involves approximately 57.5 million vehicles. The overpass east of Butterfield had no fatalities from 1938 to 1980, a time span involving 50 million vehicles.

Rail, Page 13:

J The figures provided are outdated since they do not include the 80-81 statistics. The rail line is in the process of being upgraded, and the heavy welded one-quarter mile rail sections are on site and ready to be installed.

Staging Options Considered, Page 11:

K The discussion demonstrates an advantage of construction on the existing alignment, since construction on the new alignment will not allow construction of the highest priority segments first.

Severances and Triangulation, Page 78:

L We believe that the draft EIS seriously under estimates

District Engineer
Page Six
July 2, 1982

L cont'd the magnitude of the harm resulting from severances and triangulation, particularly by reason of a new alignment.

Farmland Acquisition, Page 73-78:

M Land reclaimed from the existing roadbed is simply not of comparable quality to land which would be taken for a new alignment. For example, prime land would have an assessed valuation of approximately \$2,400 per acre. We feel that reclaimed roadbed land should be classified as "Class C" and would have an assessed evaluation of \$1,000.

Farmstead Impact, Page 79:

N This section is inaccurate. At least one farm residence will be taken by the proposed new alignment, "Butterfield outer location." See "Alternatives 20, 21". A farmstead located in Section 29 in the extreme southeast portion thereof will be taken. On that same aerial photograph, there are five other residences which will be affected by an extreme proximity to the new alignment proposal, and an impact in terms of noise and their quality should be assessed with respect to those residents. See enclosed copy of sheet 20.

"Bypass" Effects, Page 85:

O The claimed benefits to businesses near or on existing T.H.60 from "improved shopper convenience" is totally speculative and unsupported by any data.

Borrow Pit Treatment, Page 127:

P Has the borrow pit land been included in the calculations of the acreage of agricultural land which will be taken as a result of the construction?

Comparisons of Alternatives, Table 59, Page 139:

Note that comparing the travel time through the entire corridor for a two-lane upgraded roadway utilizing the existing alignment without bypasses, and a two-lane road on the existing alignment but with bypasses, there is only a four-minute travel time difference.

New Alignment, Butterfield Inner Location, Appendix Page 19-21:

Q Please provide information as to the cost and descrip-

PEPIN, DAYTON, HERMAN, GRAHAM & GETTS

District Engineer
Page Seven
July 2, 1982

Q cont'd tion of the bridge necessary for crossing the CMW railroad tracks south of Butterfield. The tracks are not being considered for abandonment so a bridge would be necessary. However, utilizing the existing alignment, that crossing the railroad tracks at a point farther north, would eliminate a need for this bridge.

Mileage:

R What is the total mileage traveling between St. James to Worthington vs. via Interstate 90 and highway 47. How does that mileage compare with the mileage via a new alignment which bypasses the cities?

Use of Outdated Data:

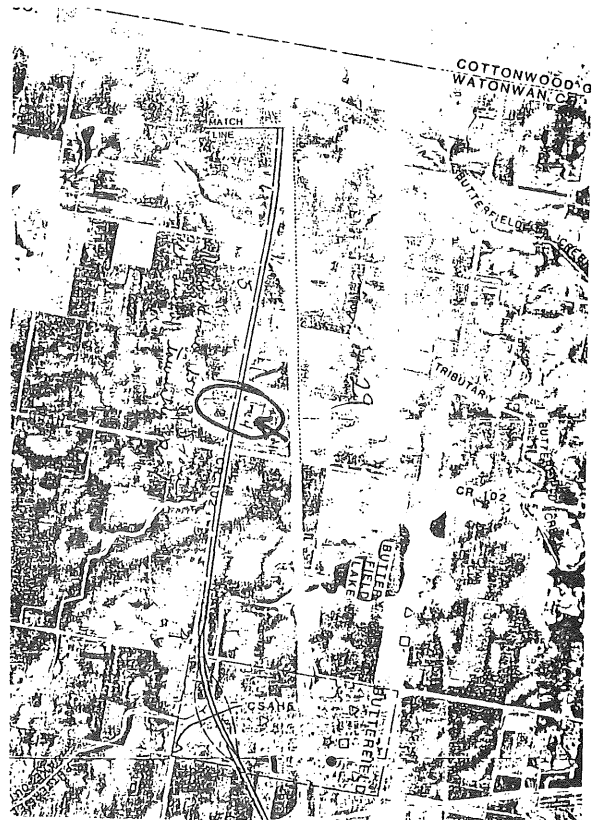
S The use of data from differing base time periods necessarily creates inaccuracy. The EIS uses many different time periods. For example, the cash income figures for agriculture are taken from the year 1978. The tax base figures are for 1980. The travel and travel-oriented business figures are 1978 data. In times of rapid inflation, a difference of a few years may make a significant change in the cost benefit analysis, therefore, the data should be utilized from the same time periods for all purposes, or the differences explained and appropriate adjustments made. This problem of changing costs and benefits also points out the impossibility of relying upon a present EIS, issued in 1982, as a basis for a decision which may be made 10, 15 or 20 years in the future, on the issue of whether a two-lane roadway should be "dualized" to a four-lane.

Respectfully submitted,

PEPIN, DAYTON, HERMAN, GRAHAM & GETTS

Charles K. Dayton
Charles K. Dayton

CKD/rj
cc: Clarence Bloomgren
Albert Thiessen
Richard Lindschied
Harold Vatendal
John Zender



Response:

(Note: Exhibits 1 and 2 enclosed with the preceeding letter have not been reproduced above due to their length. However, their content is summarized in the letter.)

- A. Impacts on prime farmland are addressed throughout the DEIS as one of the most significant concerns. For example, the "Summary Comparison of Alternatives" (DEIS pages 42-43) identifies farm impacts on one of the six major significant concerns for decision making. The "Abstract" and "Summary" at the beginning of the DEIS both identify loss of prime farmland as a significant adverse impact of the project. The "Agriculture" portion of the "Affected Environment" section (DEIS pages 52-58) identifies agriculture as the area's primary economic resource, compares agricultural characteristics of the area to the region and State, and identifies most of the farmland in the corridor as prime farmland. Because of the particular concern for farm impacts, a special inventory of farmland and farm operations was conducted on a farm by farm basis and is reported in Appendix J, "TH 60 Farm Inventory Report". Jensen Management Services, Inc., farm management specialists assisted with the inventory and assessment of impacts. Because of its importance, a separate portion of the "Environmental Consequences" section is devoted specifically to farm impacts (DEIS pages 73-82). The DEIS specifically shows the acreage of "prime" farmland acquisition required and prime cropland production loss for each of the alternatives (DEIS Tables 25-27, pages 74-77), identifies the adverse effect of such takings, and proposes measures to help mitigate the impact of such acquisition.
- B. The DEIS does not profess that "design continuity" is a specific goal in legislation governing highway construction, nor does it "compare the benefits of a planned construction of an entire system to the harm of a small portion of the system". Federal Highway Administration regulations for EIS preparation identify "system linkage" characteristics as one among many items to be considered in identifying and describing the purpose and need for a project. It is addressed as such in the TH 60 DEIS.

Design continuity is commonly recognized as one of the design elements affecting both traffic safety and desirable flow characteristics, which are goals of highway design and are not "inappropriate or irrelevant". The DEIS does state that while two-lane reconstruction "...would not provide system design continuity, it would help retain the functional utility of TH 60 as a principal arterial in the face of increased travel demands and physical obsolescence of existing TH 60". The proposed staged construction program provides for initial reconstruction to modern two-lane standards, with subsequent staged dualization to a four-lane expressway, consistent with funding limitations and current and projected traffic demands.

- C. Geometric deficiencies were identified in the DEIS as part of the basic need for improvement documentation and as input to the prioritization of need among segments of the overall 52-mile corridor (DEIS pages 34-35). While the poor existing roadway condition affects the cost to upgrade to acceptable standards under the "Existing Alignment" alternative, it is otherwise not directly supportive of any particular alternative and was not presented as such in the DEIS.
- D. A commendation was received for quality of construction of a bituminous overlay on existing TH 60 between Lake Crystal and Mankato. The award was presented for the "ride quality" of the overlay and should not be construed as an award for innovation or ingenuity. Old roadway slabs are routinely overlaid as a stopgap maintenance measure and, like TH 60, are in need of additional work in 10 to 15 years. Use of the old TH 60 roadway slab involved widening by 4 feet and overlaying. As part of a four-lane project, prevailing vertical sight problems could be retained since passing sight distance was not required. This would not be the case on TH 60 from St. James to Wilder as a two-lane road.
- E. State and Federal policies provide that new highways or improvements of existing highways should not be based on current traffic volumes alone, but on future traffic expected to use the facilities. Desirably, a highway should be designed to accommodate traffic demands anticipated to occur within the life of the facility under reasonable maintenance. A period of 20 years is widely used as a basis for design, as a reasonable compromise between a facility's useful life, the uncertainties of long-range projections and the consequences of inaccurate projections. This includes Mn/DOT design policy.

Both U.S. Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) environmental impact statement regulations provide for the evaluation of large, multi-year staged construction projects on a "tiering" approach, the basic initial statement covering the overall project alternatives and impacts as a whole. During the detailed design phase for each individual stage, these regulations require a reevaluation of the initial FEIS findings. A supplemental impact statement(s) must be prepared if there have been significant changes in the proposed action, the affected environment, the anticipated impacts or the proposed mitigation measures.

- F. Forecasts of travel demand are dependent upon a reasonably accurate and stable view of future social, economic and demographic conditions. While all forecasts are subject to error due to uncertainties and unpredictable conditions, past projections for relatively stable rural areas such as the TH 60 corridor have proven to be reasonably accurate, generally within $\pm 10\%$. For example, Mn/DOT's System Planning Analysis Report 250 completed during the 1978 TH 60

Citizen's Advisory Committee Study revealed that actual 1976 state-wide traffic counts for rural areas compared to projections made in 1966 showed agreement within about 5%. Most significant traffic projection "inaccuracies" have occurred in major urban areas, where land development conditions are highly volatile and difficult to predict over long-range periods. Note also that to reflect uncertainties with respect to energy constraints and potential travel diversion, an alternate "constrained travel" forecast scenario was developed and used in the TH 60 DEIS impact evaluation.

- G. The traffic delay estimates for the speed restricted urban sections presented in the DEIS do, in fact, reflect that many of the trips are to, from or between the urban areas in question. As described on DEIS pages 9-10, the reported travel delays are for through traffic only for the respective urban areas in question. Thus the DEIS finding that "TH 60 through travel delay per vehicle is greatest in Windom, but overall lost travel time is greater in Mountain Lake, due to the higher volume of through traffic in Mountain Lake".
- H. Both State and national accident statistics support the DEIS conclusion that "under projected traffic conditions, the accident rate for a four-lane expressway would likely be approximately 30 to 40 percent lower than for an upgraded two-lane facility". Projected average Daily Traffic (ADT) in rural sections of TH 60 is generally in the 4,000 to 7,000 vehicles per day range.

For example, Minnesota Statewide trunk highway accident statistics for the 1981-82 period show rates of 1.2 versus 2.0 (accidents per million vehicle travel miles) for two-lane rural versus four-lane rural expressway facilities under such conditions, a difference of 40%. Trunk highway statistics for the 1977-79 period shown on DEIS page 1 reflect even greater differences. The National Highway Research Program Report 47, Accident Rates as Related to Design Elements of Rural Highways reveals similar results. Typical accident rates for a two-lane rural highway of 4000-7000 ADT are reported in the range of 2 to 3 accidents per million vehicle miles, while comparable rates for four-lane rural expressways are in the range of 1.5 to 2 accidents per million vehicle miles, or approximately 30% lower on the average.

The TH 60 Citizens Advisory Committee Study annual accident estimates for TH 60, which included both urban and rural sections of the entire 52 mile corridor, also indicates a 30 to 40 percent difference. For the existing alignment alternative, the total annual accidents estimate was 370 for a two-lane configuration versus 270 for a four-lane configuration. For the new alignment alternative, the comparable estimate was 329 versus 207 accidents. (Pages XIV 6-7, "TH 60 Improvement Study" Notebook, TH 60 Citizens Advisory Committee).

- I. Available records from the Mn/DOT computerized accident record file for the period 1976 through 1981 reveal no fatal accidents in Butterfield or Mountain Lake. Information from earlier years was not available. However, during the 1976-1981 period 12 personal injury accidents and 46 total accidents were reported. As shown in DEIS Table 5, the total 1976-1979 accident rate on TH 60 per million vehicle travel miles was 2.0 in Mountain Lake and 3.1 in Butterfield, compared to an average of 0.9 on rural sections.

Four fatal accidents were reported on the Butterfield overpass and its approaches during the 1976-1981 period. They occurred on 9/04/76, 12/21/78, 5/11/80 and 4/11/81. Again, data was not available for earlier years. A total of 16 accidents were reported at this location during the 1976-81 period. As shown in DEIS Table 5, the rural section that includes this location has a much higher than normal accident rate (1.5 versus 0.9), due to the hazardous overpass.

- J. DEIS figures were based on statistics in the 1979 Minnesota State Rail Plan. Updated rail statistics are provided on pages 27-28 of this FEIS.
- K. Construction of the highest priority section, St. James to Butterfield, remains first on the construction schedule although new alignment has been selected as the preferred alternative in this portion of the corridor. Continuation of construction as proposed will complete all four of the top priority sections within the first four proposed construction stages.
- L. The DEIS provides a listing of the actual number of properties affected by severance and triangulation, the acreage severed from farmsteads, and the length of roadway-field frontage where new or increased triangulation would occur. Corresponding damage cost estimates presented in the DEIS were prepared by Jensen Management Service of Luverne, Minnesota, professional farm management and real estate appraisal specialists. The effects of such impacts were also considered in rating the degree of overall impact on each individual farm operation affected by the various alternatives. Jensen Management also assisted in this rating process.
- M. In the first few years following reclamation, the land can be expected to have a reduced capability and assessment comparable to "Class C" farmland. However, in view of the mitigating conditions and measures described in the DEIS and on page 12 of this FEIS, the land can be expected to attain capability and assessment characteristics comparable to adjoining prime farmlands within a reasonable time period. Since the short-term reduction would be reflected in the cost to the new owner to acquire the land, the future rise in value would help to compensate for decreased yield or additional costs during the interm period.

- N. No farm residences would need to be taken for the Butterfield "outer" alignment location. With regard to the farmstead in Section 29, the initial two-lane roadway would be in the approximate location of the existing township road. This road is approximately 150 feet from the farm residence, which is the nearest building on the farmstead. Widening of the right-of-way to trunk highway standards would require the acquisition of a strip of land approximately 40 feet wide. The new right-of-way line would be approximately 80 feet from the residence. Future four-lane dualization would occur to the opposite site of the roadway from the farmstead. Air quality and noise impacts on this farmstead and the five other residences cited are included in the analysis of air quality and noise impacts discussed on DEIS pages 98-105 and Appendices F and G.
- O. As discussed in the DEIS, the conclusion that TH 60 businesses serving largely local community needs would likely benefit from improved shopper convenience and shopping environment due to reduced traffic is supported by a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) evaluation of bypass study findings for 45 areas reported in Social and Economic Effects of Highways (U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, 1974, pages 63-66). Adverse business impacts are mostly limited to highway oriented concerns such as gas stations and motels, with most bypassed communities reporting an overall business increase. Similar findings are also reported in an analysis of 24 bypass studies reported in Beneficial Effects Associated with Freeway Construction (National Cooperative Highway Research Program Report 193, Transportation Research Board, National Research Council, Washington, DC, 1978, pages 18-19).
- P. Borrow pit land was not included in the calculations of agricultural land to be taken. Such calculations would only be speculative, since no sites have been identified.
- Q. A detailed description of the proposed bridge(s) over the Butterfield to Welcome branchline of the CNW for the new alignment alternatives south of Butterfield is contained in Table 7, Page 70 of DEIS Appendix D, "TH 60 Engineering Studies Report". Estimated cost of the initial two-lane bridge is \$275,000 and was included in the cost estimates for the new alignment alternatives. A second, similar bridge was included in the cost for future four-lane dualization. For the existing alignment alternative, upgrading of the existing at-grade crossing was assumed, including provision of truck stopping lanes in accordance with Mn/DOT standards at a cost of approximately \$50,000.
- R. The distance from TH 60 - TH 4 interchange near St. James to the TH 60 - I-90 interchange at Worthington via TH 4 and I-90 is approximately 63.5 miles. The comparable distance on a new alignment TH 60 bypassing Butterfield, Mountain Lake and Windom would be approximately 53 miles.

- S. Virtually all data and estimates used in the DEIS for comparison of costs and benefits were based on a common analysis year - 1980 (e.g. construction and right-of-way costs, tax base loss). "Present" travel data as presented in the DEIS was based primarily on 1978 counts. The data was, however, reevaluated and adjusted where necessary to represent a reasonable approximation of 1980 levels (see Table 1, Page 36 of DEIS Appendix D). Similarly, data for TH 60 corridor travel oriented businesses was primarily collected during 1978, but was considered reasonably representative of 1980 conditions. Thus, the DEIS acknowledges:

Since the survey, an additional restaurant has opened on TH 60 in Windom and various ownership changes have occurred. Further changes are likely before any new TH 60 facility could be constructed. Some other businesses such as auto and farm implement dealers or drug stores may experience minor sales loss, but are primarily local trade dependent. The survey data is considered to provide a reasonable indicator of the extent and character of business activity along TH 60 for the most sensitive business types. (DEIS, p. 85).

The 1978 agricultural cash income figures were not used for cost-benefit analysis, but only to profile the nature of the area's agricultural economy, indicating the relative importance of crops versus livestock and the order of magnitude of farm income. Similar data recently available for 1980 (in Minnesota Agricultural Statistics, 1982, Minnesota Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, June, 1982) confirm that the figure continues to reasonably reflect the characteristics of the area's farm economy. Estimates of crop production value lost due to farmland acquisition (DEIS Table 26) were based on 1979 statistics, the most recent available at the time of analysis. However, current crop values are not significantly different and the previous estimates are considered to continue to represent a reasonable estimate of the order of magnitude of impact.

Projections of future traffic indicate that a four-lane facility will be warranted. As discussed under response "E" above, EIS findings will be reevaluated during the detailed design phase for each segment of the staged construction program, and a supplemental impact statement will be prepared if significant changes in the need for, or impact of, the project occur.

Clarence Blomgren, Jr.

Butterfield, MN
June 30 1982

Mr. Marcus Fligore
T4 60 Project Manager
DOT 501 South Victory Drive
Fargo, ND 58001

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement T4 60

Dear Marc:

A I take exception to the figures used in the Impact Study on assessed values. The Study claims to use 1980 values when in fact the value used for Butterfield township was for 1979. The 1980 value was \$5,938,574.00, an error of \$1,088,574.00. This report has a 1982 date. I realize 1982 values would not have been available but 1981 would have been for over a year. Butterfield township has an assessed valuation for 1981 of \$2,033,570.00. This is \$2,133,570.00 higher than the value used. To me, as an assessor, this is a very significant rise and this is only one township--if you multiply this in all of the townships affected by this study it will show a much larger impact on tax bases.

I think somewhere along the line we are missing a point. If we assume that for the approximately 45 years that T4 60 has been in use and there was an average of 3500 vehicles per day that used this 52 mile segment, if each vehicle would have paid \$1.21 we would now have enough money to build a modern 2 lane road on the existing alignment and this doesn't allow for any maintenance or snow removal. We are not funding our roads fairly. If the users of this on any highway paid their fair share we wouldn't rely so heavily on the automobile. Too many of the 58,765,000 vehicles would have been willing to pay their share! This would have amounted to a "use value" of 2.33 cents per mile. We do pay approximately .8 cents per mile and that is to use all of the roads and streets. With this kind of reasoning is it any wonder that our State and Federal governments are bankrupt?

T4 60 letter continued page 2

B The number of acres taken from agriculture class 1 and 2 soils in the tables are very vague. I am under the impression that the Federal government and the state of Minnesota have almost forbidden the squandering of prime soils. As far as the reclamation of the old road bed, from what I have seen, maybe someday it will be class 1 and 2 but the land you propose to take is now class 1 and 2.

C I feel the overall report minimizes the tax base, the prime land loss and the construction costs. Past history proves your traffic projections have been completely inaccurate.

I sincerely believe that we need and have needed a modern two lane highway on the existing alignment. I'm sure we all would like to have a four lane road but lets face facts, we can't even afford what's here now! Sad isn't it?????

Sincerely,
Clarence Blomgren Jr.
221 Butterfield, MN 55120

Response:

- A. The total assessed valuation figure for Butterfield Township of \$5,900,000 (rounded from \$5,896,043) shown in Table 32 of the DEIS was based on data provided by the Watonwan County assessors office. Data was requested for 1980 and the data sheet provided by the Assessors Office was entitled "Tabular Schedule of Valuation, Rates and Taxes of 1980". Subsequent checking with the Assessors office reveals that the data is actually a 1979 assessment for taxes payable in 1980. However, the evaluation of impact on the township tax base is not significantly affected, since the estimated assessed value lost due to right-of-way acquisition and total assessed value are on a common base. Thus, the DEIS estimate of the portion or percent of the total tax base lost due to right-of-way acquisition (i.e., the ratio of assessed value lost to total assessed value) is essentially the same as if the \$6,988,000 assessed value were used, since both the total assessed value and the estimated assessed value lost would have the same proportional change. This is demonstrated in the following sample calculations for two-lane on existing alignment and four-lane on new alignment alternatives. As shown, the portion of tax base lost is approximately equal (or slightly less) if the higher total assessment value is used. Thus, the impact on tax bases has, if anything, been conservatively overestimated.

Sample Calculations - Tax Base Loss:

Acquisition for 2-Lane Improvements on Existing Alignment

1980 Estimated Fair Market Value of R.O.W. Acquisition = \$ 62,000
(Appraisal by Jensen Management Service, Inc.)

Method A: Using 1980 Payable (1979 Assessment) Assessors Values:

Total Assessed Valuation for Township = \$ 5,869,043
Total Assessors Market Value for Township = \$33,446,718

Estimated Assessors Market Values of
R.O.W. Acquisition = \$ 34,000

Estimated Assessed Value of R.O.W.
Acquisition = $\frac{5,869,043}{33,446,718} \times 34,000$ = \$ 6,000

% of Tax Base Lost = $\frac{6,000}{5,869,043}$ = $\frac{.10\%}{(DEIS \text{ Table } 32)}$

Method B: Using 1981 Payable (1980 Assessment) Assessors Values:

Total Assessed Valuation for Township = \$ 6,988,574
Total Assessors Market Value for Township = \$37,547,600

Estimated Assessors Market Values of
R.O.W. Acquisition = \$ 38,000

Estimated Assessed Value of R.O.W.
Acquisition = $\frac{6,988,574}{37,547,574} \times 38,000$ = \$ 7,000

% of Tax Base Lost = $\frac{7,000}{6,988,574}$ = $\frac{.10\%}{(DEIS \text{ Table } 32)}$

Acquisition for 4-Lane Improvement on New Alignment

1980 Estimated Fair Market Value of R.O.W. Acquisition = \$ 333,000
to 368,000

Method A: Using 1980 Payable (1979 Assessment) Assessors Values:

Estimated Assessors Market Values of
R.O.W. Acquisition = \$ 183,000
to 203,000

Estimated Assessed Value of R.O.W.
Acquisition = $\frac{5,869,043}{33,446,718} \times (183,000 \text{ to } 203,000)$ = \$ 32,000
to 36,000

% of Tax Base Lost = $\frac{32,000 \text{ to } 36,000}{5,869,043}$ = $\frac{.55\% \text{ to } .61\%}{(DEIS \text{ TABLE } 32)}$

Method B: Using 1981 Payable (1980 Assessment) Assessors Values:

Estimated Assessors Market Values of
R.O.W. Acquisition = \$ 205,000
to 228,000

Estimated Assessed Value of R.O.W.
Acquisition = $\frac{6,988,574}{37,547,600} \times (205,000 \text{ to } 228,000)$ = \$ 38,000
to 42,000

% of Tax Base Lost = $\frac{38,000 \text{ to } 42,000}{6,988,574}$ = .54% to .60%

- B. The number of acres of "prime" farmland (Class 1 and 2 soils) taken for each alignment alternative for both 2-lane and 4-lane construction stages are clearly shown in DEIS Tables 25 and 27, and summarized in DEIS Table 39. The range shown in DEIS Tables 25 and 39 reflect the different impact depending on the alignment variations chosen at Butterfield, Mountain Lake, Windom and Heron Lake. Acreage taken for each alignment variation is shown in DEIS Table 27.
- C. The tax base, prime agricultural land loss and construction cost estimates presented in the DEIS are considered to be valid estimates that are reasonably representative of the magnitude of impact and the differences between the alternatives. They are based on relatively detailed alignment layouts at 1"=100' scale and data obtained from county assessors, the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, and recent Mn/DOT construction cost experience on similar roadway work. Past Mn/DOT traffic projections for rural areas such as TH 60 have been reasonably accurate, as discussed in the response to comment "F" of Pepin, Dayton, Herman, Graham and Getts on page 91 of this FEIS.

John F. Zender

Butterfield, Minn.
June 25, 1982

-2-

To: Minnesota Department of Transportation
Mr. Mark Flygare

RE: E I Statement Highway #60

SAFETY:

I would like to address the matter of safety in three areas where the concern for safety seems to run deeply: those are the villages of Mt. Lake, Butterfield, and the Viaduct area three miles east of Butterfield. I am involving a time span of about 44 years (1938 on) and a total volume of some 50 to 60 million vehicles.

Butterfield Village: The business district here in the village of Butterfield is about 4 or 5 city blocks long, and using figures from 1938 until today, with close to a total of 60 million vehicles having passed through this town, no fatalities have ever taken place. I feel this is reason to stay on the present road bed rather than by-pass south of town on new roadbed.

Mt. Lake Village: The combined business and residential district in Mt. Lake is perhaps 12 blocks long, and using the same time span of 44 years, with close to 60 million vehicles total having passed through these 12 city blocks, no fatalities have taken place. I feel this also is reason to stay on the present road bed rather than by-pass on new roadbed south of town.

Viaduct Area: From 1938 to about 1980, with perhaps 55 million total vehicles having passed over this viaduct, no fatalities have taken place. At about this point in time (1980) two accidents involving fatalities did take place, one a motorcycle accident and the other an auto-truck accident. In both accidents, extenuating circumstances prevailed. In the auto-truck accident, extremely glare-ice conditions were not taken care of by the Highway Department. I believe the motorcycle incident or accident should also be looked at as having extenuating circumstances, but I will decline in having comments on these extenuating circumstances.

Conclusion: Safety record over a period of 44 years in the areas of Butterfield Village, Mt. Lake Village, and also the Viaduct area, all things considered, is excellent and is reason to build on the present road bed.

ECONOMY:

Present road bed and cement conditions on #60 are rather excellent from a view point of "pot holes and break-up" when compared to most Interstate Highways which have the large cracks plus hairline type cracks or break up similar to looking at a pocket type road map. I believe use of the present roadbed for modernizing #60 from St. James to Worthington is feasible and economical, the same as using the old #60 roadbed from Mankato to St. James was feasible and economical. (One engineer received a special commendation for using this "old" roadbed.)

Conclusion: Perhaps 75 to 100 million dollars of taxpayers money can be saved by using the old roadbed. In view of the rough financial times we are facing in Minnesota from the iron range to the farm land in the south, I believe this "extra" money could be used for more urgent causes.

LAND USE

Statistically, the equivalent of six of our smaller states such as Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, New Jersey, etc., have been covered with cement. I believe it is time to discontinue this abuse of our good farm land. Further more, I do not believe that obliterated road beds can be successfully returned to farm use as claimed by some, especially those who do not farm. (For instance, Chiropractors.)

VEHICLE PER DAY COUNT

3000 to 3500 total vehicles per day does not justify a new two-lane highway on new roadbed. For this kind of vehicle count the old road bed should be sufficient.

IOWA'S INTENTIONS

The state of Iowa has no intentions of doing any major work, according to the sufficiency ratings given #60, from the Iowa border south.

Yours truly,

John F. Zender
John F. Zender

Response:

- A. According to available safety records for the period 1976-1981, the locations cited have significantly higher accident rates than the rural sections for the remainder of TH 60 from St. James to Worthington. Included are four fatal accidents in the viaduct area---one each in 1976, 1978, 1980 and 1981. See response to comment "I" of Pepin, Dayton, Herman, Graham and Getts on page 92 of this FEIS for further detail.
- B. Use of the present roadbed for modernization of TH 60 is limited by the substandard profile and cross-section of the existing roadway, particularly between St. James and Wilder, as documented on DEIS pages 4 to 7. Significant regrading and some additional right-of-way would be required to obtain a suitable roadway profile and cross-section on the existing location. As described in the response to comment "D" of Pepin, Dayton, Herman, Graham and Getts, the commendation was received for "ride quality" of a bituminous overlay on existing TH 60 between Lake Crystal and Mankato. As part of a four-lane project, prevailing vertical sight problems could be retained since passing sight distance was not required. This would not be the case on TH 60 from St. James to Wilder as a two-lane highway.

- C. State and Federal policies provide that new highways or improvements of existing highways should not be based on current traffic volumes alone, but on future traffic expected to use the facilities. A 20-year projection period is commonly used as a basis for design. Current Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes in rural sections between St. James and Worthington range from approximately 3000 to nearly 5000 vehicles per day. Mn/DOT projections indicate that these volumes are anticipated to increase to approximately 4000 to 7500 vehicles per day by the year 2000, as shown in DEIS Table 2. Truck traffic in the corridor effectively increases the ADT volumes by an additional 15 to 35 percent, since each truck displaces more than one car in the traffic flow, particularly in sections where passing sight is a problem. Thus, effective passenger-car "equivalent" volumes are significantly higher than the actual ADT volumes.

Albert D. Thiessen

STATEMENT CARDS WERE RECEIVED THE EVENING OF THE HEARING.
LETTERS AND DOCUMENTS WERE RECEIVED DURING THE REQUIRED WAITING
PERIOD. THEY ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Albert D. Thiessen
Rt. 2 Box 20
Butterfield, MN 56120

As I have stated many times before I feel that a good modern updated two lane road with turnoffs will handle the traffic very well and who knows in years to come another two lanes can always be added. We need a better road than what we got and the sooner we get one the better and let it be a two lane on the present alignment. It is one thing to have good roads but we also have to have the produce to haul on it. We can't raise it on concrete. If you want to talk about accidents I know about them too. I had a son involved in one on Highway 15 near Lewisville, Mn. on Feb. 2, 82. He was given only a 15% chance to get to the University Hospitals alive by a Madelia Doctor. He was there at the U of M for 64 days but now he is home and doing well as he is still getting therapy three times a week. So we do need good roads but that does not mean that they have to be 4 lane. It is still the driver behind the wheel that makes a vehicle safe. He has to use good judgement in all that he does while on any road two lane or 4 lane.

A If by any chance DOT should decide to go the inner relocation on the south side of Butterfield, which would be thro my farm, would you consider moving the road bed as far north as possible be it 50 or more feet as I do think it is closer to my house as it is to the city.

Please enter this in the record of the meeting held June 10, 82 at Windom.

Thank you

Albert D. Thiessen
Rt. 2 Box 20
Butterfield, MN 56120

I would like to see an improved 2 lane thro town but if the inner bypass is chosen I would like to see it moved to the north 50 or so ft. more whatever possible to get it from my house.

Response:

- A. If the "inner" alignment variation for the preferred new alignment alternative at Butterfield is selected during the design phase, the potential for shifting the alignment to increase the separation from the Thiessen farmstead will be investigated. On the preliminary 1"=100' scale layouts, the near roadway of TH 60 is located approximately 200 feet from the Thiessen residence. A significant shift appears unlikely because of intersection spacing requirements between TH 60 and Prairie Avenue along the nearby section of relocated CSAH 5.

Harold Vatndal

Harold Vatndal
Butterfield,
Minnesota

- A | I feel they should use the old roadbed as much as possible. I do not feel the turn back land is what it is cracked up to be. Is tiling on this land considered? I feel it is like restoring an old car it can be done but maybe will cost twice the price of a new one. The highway in Butterfield can not be too busy as trucks park their trailers on it for days at a time.

Response:

- A. As discussed in prior response to comments of Pepin, etal. and Mr. John Zender, use of the existing roadbed is limited by the substandard profile and cross-section of the existing roadway, particularly between St. James and Wilder. Significant regrading and some additional right-of-way would be required to upgrade the existing roadway to modern standards. Tiling of the portions of existing TH 60 proposed for farmland reclamation has been considered, as described on page 13 of this FEIS.

Harvey Stoesz

Harvey Stoesz
Mountain Lake,
Minnesota

- A | I am a land owner along the route between Mountain Lake and Butterfield and feel that a good 2 lane along the existing roadway be sufficient. The traffic is not as one is led to believe. I'd like to see traffic count for one week not in a town but in the country.

Response:

- A. Traffic volume information is provided in the DEIS for both in-town and rural locations. These are based on numerous traffic counts taken throughout the corridor both as part of Mn/DOT's regular traffic monitoring program and supplemental counts specifically conducted for the TH 60 studies. These include counts taken to identify traffic variation by time of day, day of week, and month of year.

Richard Linscheid

Richard Linscheid
R.R. 1 Box 174
Butterfield, MN 56120

I believe Highway 60 should be rebuilt on the present alignment to a two-lane status. If the present alignment were used more lives would be saved sooner, because the construction could be completed at an earlier date. And more miles could be constructed due to the lower cost.

A

I also question the projected cost of \$4.5 million per mile to rebuild Hwy 60 on the present roadbed versus \$5 million for a new alignment south of the railroad tracks. Are these reasonable estimates when the cost of Highway 71 from Jackson to Windom to have the old concrete completely demolished, drain tile installed, and recovered with a new 7" to 9" overlay was a little over \$100,000 per mile?

Certainly the use of prime agricultural land which we have in Southwestern Minnesota has to be preserved. When you start out a new alignment for a new roadbed, you are severing and cutting up farmland which makes production much more costly for the farmer both in fuel and in time to plant and harvest his crops.

Certainly the fuel and time to reconstruct a new road and to tear up old road and re-profile it in a manner so it could be farmed would be tremendously more. This land from old roadbed could never be made into prime farmland.

Farms and businesses have been established along the present alignment. If these businesses do not relocate (which would take more farmland), jobs will be lost and the tax base will be decreased, adding problems to an already difficult situation.

Let's get Highway 60 rebuilt to a modern two-lane road as soon as possible! What do we have to lose?

Response:

- A. The cost estimates of \$4.6 million versus \$5.0 million refer to cost per year under the comparative staging programs -- not the cost per mile. The cost per mile for the two lane upgrade on existing alignment would be approximately \$1.3 million per mile (\$70 million for the 52 mile section). This cost includes bridge and culvert replacements and major regrading costs necessary to upgrade TH 60 to modern standards, and intersection improvements on in-town sections. It also includes estimated right-of-way, engineering and design costs.

The \$135,000 per mile cost for TH 71 included construction cost only and was for a relatively simple 4 1/2" bituminous overlay over a 25 year old concrete pavement. The concrete was fractured as part of the project but was not removed. It continues to function as a part of the road structure. Perforated pipe was placed on the south half of the project to help drain water from under the slab. No vertical grade or horizontal location changes were necessary.

Jacob M. Harder

Jacob M. Harder
207 North St.
Mountain Lake, MN

A In Section 4-105-34, the proposed highway will cross over our land cutting it in two. We will have to have a way to cross over the highway to farm on both sides. Otherwise we will be cut off from one side.

Response:

- A. Approximately 110 acres of the existing 122 acre Harder tract would be located south of the "inner" alignment variation. Approximately 80 acres would be south of the "outer" alignment variation. This portion of the tract would not be directly accessible from the remaining 8 acre (inner) to 38 acre (outer) portion north of the roadway, but would be accessible from the township road bordering the property on the south. In addition to the property acquisition cost, fair market value damages for splitting of the property will be compensable. Since the property is operated on a rental basis with no farmstead located on the property, the two portions may have to be rented and operated separately rather than on a common basis. The northern portion may also be subject to residential development, particularly under the inner variation, since it closely adjoins existing residential development in Mountain Lake.

Linus Liepold

Heron Lake, Minnesota
June 28, 1982

Dear Sirs:

I wish to have my comments added to the record of the Impact Statement on Highway 60.

About 10 years ago a school teacher from Germany visited relatives in Minnesota. One thing has always stuck in my mind about her as she said in broken english "You must haf lots of cows in America, so much grass by roads. But I see no cows." "We don't waste like that in Germany."

This past week a semi-driver tried to pass another truck as it was making a left turn off Highway 60. It ended on its top with 800+ bushels of soybeans on the ground. It would have made no difference if the highway were 2 lane or 6 lane that driver would still have tried to pass. I believe some drivers need all the highway that is built. Two years ago in the spring we went to Waseca on I-90 from Exit 57 to the exit for Waseca, we counted 11 places where cars and semi trucks had left the road, and there wasn't any snow at that time. This was either the cause of fatigue or carelessness.

On two occasions in the last month I have been forced off on to the shoulder by semi's who have passed oncoming traffic and couldn't make it back to the right lane without a collision if I hadn't taken the shoulder. The speed limit signs through Heron Lake to them must mean speed up instead of 40 MPH.

If traffic speed limits were set at absolute 55 it might make a difference.

June 4, 1982 my son came home through Mankato after college graduation at Waseca about 9:00 P.M. The next day he said dad why do they need a 4 lane? I didn't meet one car from Mankato to Heron Lake. The traffic count is high but thats what the highway is made for to use.

Lets upgrade Highway 60 with hard surfaced shoulders and right lane turn off. At todays prices we do not need 4 lane highways.

At todays prices we may think the grass is not needed, but the world is starving for food not cement.

Sincerely,

/s/
Linus Liepold
Landowner & Operator

Sam Franz

Mountain Lake, Mn.
June 3, 1982

Mr. Marcus Flygare
TH 60 Project Manager
Mankato District Office
Mankato, Mn. 56001

Dear Mr. Flygare:

It is time we started looking ahead on our highway system. A good and adequate highway is an asset to everyone. We are told that by the year 2000 we will have 43million more vehicles on our highways. Also, the fatality rate is 2 1/2 times less on Interstate four-lanes than on two-lane highways.

Hwy. 60 has more vehicles than any similar highway in Minnesota. It traverses the center of our grain and livestock territory. Most of this freight goes to market by truck, and these trucks are fed into Hwy. 60 from adjoining areas. Our railroad service is decreasing as more and more railroads are abandoned.

We have enough land now, and in the foreseeable future, for all our needed services: highways, pipelines, telephones, electric power lines, and recreation and any other needs. Through technology, we are constantly increasing our agricultural production. In fact, farmers are asked and subsidized by our government to idle from 10 to 20 percent of our cropland to hold down burdensome surpluses of grain crops.

Whether or not we have good and adequate highways, we pay for them in additional truck and car repairs and higher insurance rates. And lives lost on overcrowded highways can never be replaced.

Yours truly,

Sam Franz
Sam Franz

Robert Anderson

Robert Anderson
Route 1, Box 21
Mountain Lake, MN 56159

A four lane on T.H. 60 from St. James to Worthington is not in our best interest because:

1. Going around Mountain Lake would hurt business.
2. Our nations economy can not stand the excessible spending.
3. Some of our Nations prime farm land would be lost.
4. At the present 55 mile speed limit, a good two-lane is adequate.
5. Transportation in the future should be more by railroad and less and less by truck in order to save energy and help our nation meet its own energy needs.

If the present two-lane was upgraded and funds were available this would be my choice.

Frank Foley

Frank Foley
Heron Lake,
Minnesota

Representative: Heron Lake

Should be 4 lane all the way to Iowa border.

Mr. & Mrs. Virg Freitag

5-13-82

In regards to the Public Hearing being held June 10th in Windom.

We live next to T.H. 60 in Butterfield. As the hi-way is our neighbor, we certainly do know that the hi-way is a very much traveled road. Besides the terrible condition it is in, the safety factor is almost nil. I should think a new 4-lane would give this area safer and more efficient way of travel besides aid in economic development.

Both of us would like to see the 4-lane not end at St. James but continue West to Worthington.

/s/
Mr. & Mrs. Virg Freitag
Butterfield, MN 56120

Chester King

Chester King
Box 145
Butterfield, MN

All we need is two-lane highway upgraded with right and left turn off and permanent shoulders and using present roadbed.

I'm not in favor of 4 lane bypass south of Butterfield.

Wilbur Hartberg

6-10-82

Mark Flygare
Mankato, MN

Dear Mr. Flygare:

Interstate 90 should be adequate for the Worthington area.

I suggest, rather than the expense of another 4 lane highway through Jackson County, that the present Highway 60 be made an upgraded 2 lane.

Make the road from St. James to Sherburn a heavy duty 2 lane for trucks.

Post sufficient signs so travelers can find Interstate 90.

Sincerely yours,
/s/
Truman Hartberg
RR #2 Box 92
Heron Lake, MN 56137

Truman Hartberg

Dear Sirs:

In regard to the Highway No. 60 - Study, I feel that it has been one more way to waste our tax money. The first study that was conducted 3-4 years ago by our region representative at a cost of \$150,000 was suppose to be impartial yet region 8 was represented by 4 past Highway No. 60 club presidents and one active Highway 60 member - at the State level I was told that these studies generally come out the way they are suppose to.

We would like to see Highway No. 60 made into an improved 2 lane road with passing lanes every few miles. - We can't afford anything better at the present time and if in the future, it would be justified a four lane could be built. - How can the State even consider another 4 lane road when we have one a few miles to the south. Do we need two 4 lane roads through Jackson County and there is only one 4 lane (94) between here and the Canadian Border.

There never has been so much propaganda and politics on a road as Highway No. 60. They always make the accidents worse. - I'm surprised the State leaders are taken in by the propaganda all put out by a few people.

They say it will only ruin about 1000 acres of the best land in the State, and for what. When I drive around St. James I always get the feeling somebody had to much money to spend when I look at all the overpasses etc. This same traffic goes through St. Peter and etc. with no problems.

Submitted by
/s/ Wilbur Hartberg
Heron Lake
Minnesota 56137

F. A. "Jim Miller

STATEMENT GIVEN JUNE 10, 1982 HIGHWAY SIXTY HEARING
FOR SOUTHWESTERN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE BY F. A. "JIM" MILLER.

I AM JIM MILLER. I AM SPEAKING IN BEHALF OF THE TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE OF REGION EIGHT OF WHICH I AM CHAIRMAN. WE HAVE REVIEWED
THE T. H. SIXTY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT DRAFT FROM WORTHINGTON
TO ST. JAMES.

TO OUR KNOWLEDGE THERE IS NOT ANY MAJOR PROBLEM OR OBSTACLES THAT
WOULD AFFECT THE COMPLETION OF HIGHWAY SIXTY OVER THIS ROUTE. AS A
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE COVERING THE NINE COUNTIES OF SOUTHWESTERN
MINNESOTA WE ARE AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR TRUNK HIGHWAY SYSTEMS
IN OUR NINE COUNTY AREA. HOW IMPORTANT THEY ARE TO OUR AGRICULTURE
MOVEMENT, AND OF THE ECONOMIC IMPACT THAT THEY PLAY, IN EITHER THE
SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF OUR REGION'S ECONOMIC EXISTANCE. WE ARE ALSO
AWARE THAT THE HIGHWAY SIXTY CORRIDOR IS THE MOST HEAVILY TRAVELED
TRUNK HIGHWAY SYSTEM WITHIN OUR NINE COUNTY AREA AND THAT IT SERVES
BOTH THE FARM TO MARKET MOVEMENT INTO AND OUT OF OUR GRAIN TERMINALS
WHICH ARE CONCENTRATED ALONG ITS ROUTE. THEIR COMBINED CAPACITY AND
VOLUME OF BUSINESS IS PERHAPS THE GREATEST THAT CAN BE FOUND IN ANY
SOUTHERN MINNESOTA AREA AND THAT HIGHWAY SIXTY'S OVERALL TRAFFIC AND
TRUCK MOVEMENT IS ONLY SLIGHTLY LOWER THAN THAT OF I-90, THE FEDERAL
INTERSTATE THAT PASSES THROUGH OUR REGION.

OUR REGION'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN LISTS HIGHWAY SIXTY AT THE TOP OF ITS
LIST FOR CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION IN OUR REGION.

WE WERE A PART OF THE BI-REGION CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE STUDY IN
1978 ALONG WITH REGION NINE. AT THE COMPLETION OF THIS STUDY THE
MAJORITY OF THOSE ON THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED TO THE MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION THAT THE REMAINDER OF HIGHWAY SIXTY BE
CONSTRUCTED TO A FOUR LANE DIVIDED EXPRESSWAY WITH A REDUCED MEDIAN.

STATEMENT, 1982 HIGHWAY SIXTY HIS HEARING, cont'd

GOES WELL, IN TEN YEARS THEY MAY HAVE A TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT
WILL RESEMBLE THE ONE THAT IS PRESENTLY NEAR THEIR BACKYARDS SERVING
THEIR NEIGHBORS THESE PAST YEARS. THEY TELL ME THAT IT MAKES THEM
FEEL LIKE SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS WITH SECOND-CLASS SERVICE.

SO, WHAT ARE THEY SAYING? TO THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES
OF STATE GOVERNMENT THEY ARE SAYING, JUST DON'T TELL US SOMETHING
SHOULD BE DONE TO HIGHWAY SIXTY, LET'S GET IT DONE! TO THE MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION THEY ARE SAYING, GET THE STUDYING DONE,
FULFILL THE COMMITMENTS GIVEN TO THEM OVER THE YEARS! CONSTRUCT FOR
THEM A FIRST-CLASS FOUR LANE DIVIDED EXPRESSWAY AS YOU HAVE DONE
FOR THEIR NEIGHBORS AND GET THE JOB DONE IN A TIME PERIOD SO THAT
THEY CAN SEE ITS COMPLETION AND ARE STILL HERE TO USE IT AS THE
FIRST-CLASS CITIZENS THEY ARE.

IN THE MEANTIME, THE ONLY OTHER MESSAGE PERHAPS THEY WOULD LIKE TO
EXPRESS IS THE SAME MESSAGE MANY OF THEM CARRY ON THE BUMPERS OF
THEIR CARS EVERY DAY.

"PRAY FOR ME, I DRIVE HIGHWAY 60!"

PUBLIC HEARING COMMENTS

A public hearing was held on June 10, 1982 at the Windom Senior High School in Windom, Minnesota to receive comments on the TH 60 DEIS. Approximately 80 people were in attendance and comments were received from 20 people representing themselves and/or organizations.

Many of the comments received were in the form of written statements, statement cards and/or resolutions. These comments have been incorporated in the preceeding written comments sections and thus are not repeated herein.

This section does provide a summary of other oral comments made at the hearing and, as appropriate, responses thereto.

Comment

Numerous TH 60 studies have been conducted dating back more than 20 years -- the highway has been "studied to death". We need to start building, not conduct more studies.

Response

Numerous studies of TH 60 have been conducted, both specifically focused on TH 60 and as part of statewide studies, as acknowledged in the DEIS. However, highway funding limitations and changing transportation priorities have forced Mn/DOT to reevaluate highway construction throughout the State, including TH 60. Moreover, current laws and administrative rules require the detailed process of environmental studies, hearing and documentation covered in this EIS that were not provided in the prior studies. These procedures must be carried out before final design and construction can begin. As noted in this document, additional study and documentation may also be necessary in subsequent phases of the anticipated phased construction program should there be significant changes in the proposed action, the affected environment, the anticipated impacts or the proposed mitigation measures.

Comment

Elimination of bonding and interest limits and new funding legislation is needed to provide sufficient funding for improvement of TH 60 and other needed projects in the State.

Response

Since the Public Hearing, the passage of Constitutional Amendment # 2 in November 1982 has removed ceilings on bonding and interest rates. Recent passage of Federal and State gas tax increases have also improved the highway funding situation. While TH 60 must compete for funding with numerous other statewide needs, and while funding priorities are reviewed and revised on a year-to-year basis, current indications are that a reasonable schedule can be maintained for completing the proposed TH 60 improvements in the years ahead.

Comment

Only a four-lane expressway can meet the travel and economic needs of southwestern Minnesota. Only a four-lane expressway will allow the entire route to operate at the normal design level (Class B) for rural roads by the year 2000.

Response

Highway traffic capacity analyses (DEIS Appendix B, "TH 60 Engineering Studies Report", pages 46 to 51) for TH 60 indicate that an improved, modern two-lane facility will permit traffic service levels at or near the Service Level "B" criteria under the projected traffic demands to the year 2000 for much of the 52 mile corridor. Service level "B" provides stable traffic flow without unreasonable delays and an operating speed (highest overall speed under favorable weather conditions) of approximately 50 miles per hour. Exceptions are:

- a) urban speed reduced sections where the existing alignment is retained (i.e., within Windom and possibly Heron Lake for the preferred alternative);
- b) the approximate four mile segment (8% of corridor length) from Windom to Wilder, which would operate at a "C" rural service level.

However, service levels for most of the remaining rural sections would be at or approaching, a borderline "B-C" range under projected year 2000 volumes. Therefore, further traffic increases beyond the year 2000 would push the service level below the "B" or borderline "B-C" range. Projection of traffic volumes past the year 2000 was not considered practical or reliable for purposes of the corridor planning studies. However, the projection that demand volumes would likely be approaching normal design thresholds by the year 2000 was taken into account in the decision to continue to plan for -- and to implement the first-stage two-lane improvements compatible with -- future four-lane dualization. Also considered were (a) the comparative traffic safety benefits, particularly in view of the heavy truck usage, and (b) the importance of the route to the movement of agricultural goods and economic development objectives of the region, since four-lane would permit service level "A" (55 mph) operating conditions through the rural sections of the corridor.

Comment

Highway 60 should be rebuilt to an improved two-lane status on the present alignment. This will provide the quickest and most economical way to improve Highway 60 -- more miles can be constructed earlier because of the lower cost, saving more lives sooner. If needed sometime in the future, then we could go to four-lane.

Response

As described in the "Preferred Alternative" section of this FEIS (pages 1-9, funding limitations and lower cost for upgrading along the existing alignment were major factors in the decision to construct a modern two-lane facility during initial construction stages and to construct on existing alignment for approximately 80 percent of the 52 mile corridor from St. James to Worthington. Construction on new alignment in the remaining 20 percent of the corridor bypassing Mountain Lake and Butterfield is preferred because the long term benefits to the communities and motorist were found to outweigh the relatively minor additional costs and other impacts in this portion of the corridor. In view of projected future traffic demands and economic development objectives of the area, the design of initial two-lane construction, the special right-of-way preservation measures and the overall staged construction program have been specifically developed to provide for future dualization to a four-lane facility.

After construction of the initial two-lane improvement stages, but prior to implementation of four-lane dualization, the traffic conditions and projections will be reviewed and updated to determine if dualization remains a desirable course of action.

Comment

Highway 60 should remain on existing alignment through Windom. The cost of a new alignment around Windom is greater than any other area because of all the bridges required. The current bridge over the Des Moines River at Windom was only recently built at a high cost.

Response

The preferred alternative does retain the existing alignment through Windom as suggested. The above reasons were among the factors considered in the decision, as described in the "Preferred Alternative" section pages 8-9.

Comment

Along the Windom bypass alternative, access should be provided at CSAH 13 and or CSAH 17, to allow traffic to "go east and come in from the east" into Windom.

Response

The Windom bypass alternative was not selected as the preferred alternative. However, if it had been selected, the proposal to not provide access at CSAH's 13 and 17 (cross traffic would be maintained by grade separations) was based on the following considerations, as described in the DEIS:

- a) proposed access via existing TH 60 connections at each end of Windom plus a third interchange at TH 71 or CSAH 26 would provide reasonably convenient and safe access to Windom for the demand volumes requiring such access;
- b) access at CSAH 13 and 17 would induce unplanned and undesirable development activity incompatible with the Windom comprehensive plan;
- c) resultant traffic increases along CSAH's 13 and 17 in Windom would be incompatible with adjoining residential land uses and require substantial roadway modifications to accomodate the additional traffic.

Comment

Work of the TH 60 Citizens Advisory Committee resulted in several important features to reduce the costs and impacts of TH 60 improvements. These include such features as the reduced median design to limit prime farmland taking and other acquisition, restoration of portions of existing TH 60 to farmland use under the new alignment alternatives, at-grade intersections on the new alignment bypasses of Mountain Lake and Butterfield, a shortened new alignment alternative at Bingham Lake, and special design considerations at the Heron Lake and the Heron Lake electrical substation.

Comment

Studies of our trucking operations throughout Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota have shown that we use our brakes 20 to 25 times more on two-lane roadways than we do on four-lane roadways -- not only a cost factor but a safety problem. We also know that we run on a fuel consumption at least 15 percent better on a four-lane roadway.