

LETTERS OF CONCURRENCE



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

100 Centennial Mall North, Room 220
Lincoln, NE 68508-3851
Nebraska.FHWA@FHWA.DOT.GOV

November 14, 2000

NEBRASKA DIVISION FHWA

In Reply Refer To:
HRW-NE

Ms. Amy Zlotsky
Olsson Environmental Sciences
1111 Lincoln Mall
Lincoln, NE 68508

SEE ADDRESSEES:

DPU-3300(1)
Integrating NEPA/404 Processing,
Concurrence in Alternatives Carried Forward for Environmental Impact Statement
Due: December 20, 2000

The proposed project would involve the construction of a beltway around the south and east of Lincoln, Nebraska. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is preparing an environmental impact statement for the proposed improvements. A Purpose and Need statement was forwarded to all merge agencies on April 9, 1996. All agencies have concurred with the purpose and need statement.

The NEPA/404 merge procedures provide for four written concurrence points during project development. These points are:

- Purpose and Need
- Alternatives Carried Forward
- Selected Alternatives
- Impact Minimization

Please review the enclosed preliminary Draft Environmental Impact Statement. If your agency concurs in the statement, please sign the concurrence block below and return a signed copy of this letter to the Federal Highway Administration **by December 20, 2000**. We will assume you concur with the preliminary draft Environmental Impact Statement if we do not receive a written response by December 20, 2000, however, if you need additional time for review, please contact us prior to December 20th to discuss your needs.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the project in more detail, please contact Ed Kosola at 402-437-5973.

Sincerely yours,

Edward W. Kosola
Realty/Environmental Officer

Enclosure

Concurrence: Alternatives Carried Forward

“We have reviewed the preliminary Draft Environmental Impact Statement on project DPU-3300(1) and concur that it is satisfactory. The information provided to date is adequate and we agree that the project can be advanced to the next stage of project development.”

Signed: _____

Title: _____

Agency: _____

Date: _____

ADDRESSEES:

Mr. Joe Cothorn
Environmental Services Division
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
901 N. 5th St.
Kansas City, Kansas 66101

Mr. Steve Anschutz
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
203 West Second Street
Grand Island, NE 68801

Mr. Rex Amack
Nebraska Game and Park Commission
2200 N. 33rd Street
Lincoln, NE 68503

Mr. Jay Ringenberg
Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality
P. O. Box 98922
Lincoln, NE 68509-8922
CC: John Bender, Water Quality Standards Coordinator
P. O. Box 98922
Lincoln, NE 68509-8922

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Attention: Planning Division
215 North 17th Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68102

Nebraska Program Manager
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
Nebraska Regulatory Office - Wehrspann
8901 South 154th Street, Suite 1
Omaha, Ne 68138-3621



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

DEC 20 2000

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

DEC 15 2000

Edward Kosola
U.S. Department of Transportation
Nebraska Division FHWA
100 Centennial Mall North, Room 220
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508-3851

SUBJECT: DPU-3300(1), Integrated NEPA/404 Processing of Draft EIS for South and East Beltways

Dear Mr. Kosola:

This is to inform you that EPA has received and reviewed the Preliminary Draft Environmental Impact Statement (PDEIS) for the South and East Beltways in Lincoln, Nebraska, November 14, 2000. In your cover letter, you ask for concurrence for the 'Alternatives Carried Forward.' Unless found unsatisfactory by other agencies, USEPA concurs with those alternatives. EPA offers the following suggestions for the writing and/or presentation of data in the PDEIS.

1) Many of the claims presented in the PDEIS will require other agency endorsement. For example, your analysis that no Threatened or Endangered Species will be affected by the project may be (and probably is) accurate. However, final endorsement lies with the Fish and Wildlife Service. Similarly, your scheme for wetlands mitigation (see p. 3.40) is subject to approval by the U.S. Corps of Engineers, and your research into the effects of the project on Historical or Cultural Resources is subject to review by the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office. Assuming that these and other appropriate agencies agree with your assessments, USEPA concurs with the 'Alternatives Carried Forward'.

2) Paragraph 2.1.4 Transportation Demand Management (TDM)/Transportation System Management (TSM) Improvements. This paragraph begins with a general description of the appropriateness of TDM/TSM in a city such as Lincoln (and as a former resident of Lincoln, I agree with this general assessment). However, it also includes some very specific claims: "Even a doubling or tripling of transit usage, car pooling or adjusted work schedules would not significantly affect traffic congestion. More specifically, it would accomplish little within the south and east beltways study area." This language implies that modelling or scientific study has been performed. If this is the case, a reference to that study would be appreciated.

3) Paragraph 3.16.3. Proposed Mitigation (for wetlands destruction). "Mitigation has been proposed to replace the wetlands at a minimum ratio of 1:1 replacement-to-loss." Depending on the type of wetland being impacted (i.e. forested, emergent, impounded, etc), ratios greater than 1:1 are sometimes preferred.

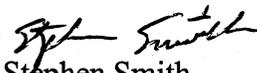
4) Table 4.1 LEVEL IV: SUMMARY OF BELTWAY BENEFITS AND IMPACTS (p. 4.2). There are two impacts listed, back to back: Benefit Cost Ratio, and Cost Effectiveness. The Benefit Cost Ratio for three alternatives is listed, ranging from 0.55 to 0.96. The Cost Effectiveness, on the next line, is (I believed) defined as simply warranting a 'yes' response if the Benefit Cost Ratio (from the previous line) exceeds 1.0. As already noted, those ratios range 0.55-0.96, yet all alternatives warrant a 'yes' response in the Table.

This discrepancy is explained in footnotes, which suggest that the two rows of numbers were calculated based on two different BOS land use plans (BOS and BOS II). The reader is then referenced to Table 2.14 on page 2.43.

I would suggest simplifying and clarifying this aspect of the Table. Table 4.1 is a summary comparison of the four alternatives, and as such may be the first (or even only) data studied by the lay public. It is not clear why different land use plans (BOS and BOS II) are used for different impacts being analyzed, and the referenced page (2.43, Table 2.14) does not aid in understanding.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project. I look forward to participating in the remaining concurrence points (Selected Alternatives and Impact Minimization) on the project. If you have any questions or require technical assistance you may contact me at 913-551-7656.

Sincerely,



Stephen Smith

NEPA Team

U.S. EPA, Region VII

Concurrence: Alternatives Carried Forward

"We have reviewed the preliminary Draft Environmental Impact Statement on project DPU-3300(1) and concur that it is satisfactory. The information provided to date is adequate and we agree that the project can be advanced to the next stage of project development."

Signed: 
Title: Acting Nebraska Field Supervisor
Agency: U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Date: November 17, 2000

DEC 20 2000

Concurrence: Alternatives Carried Forward

"We have reviewed the preliminary Draft Environmental Impact Statement on project DPU-3300(1) and concur that it is satisfactory. The information provided to date is adequate and we agree that the project can be advanced to the next stage of project development."

Signed: Frank J. Albrecht
Title: Environmental Analyst Supervisor
Agency: NGPC
Date: 12-19-00

Concurrence: Alternatives Carried Forward

DEC 20 2000

"We have reviewed the preliminary Draft Environmental Impact Statement on project DPU-3300(1) and concur that it is satisfactory. The information provided to date is adequate and we agree that the project can be advanced to the next stage of project development."

Signed: 
Title: Deputy Director
Agency: NRED
Date: 12-11-00



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, OMAHA DISTRICT
215 NORTH 17TH STREET
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68102-4978

DEC 14 2000

December 8, 2000

Planning Branch

Mr. Edward Kosola
Federal Highway Administration
Federal Building, Room 220
100 Centennial Mall North
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508-3851

Dear Mr. Kosola:

We have reviewed your letter in regard to the Preliminary Draft EIS and Draft Section 4(f) Statement and concur with the selection of Alternatives Carried Forward.

It is our understanding that issues regarding Regulatory matters will be coordinated with Keith Tillotson of the Nebraska Regulatory office.

Enclosed is the endorsement you requested. If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Peterson of our staff at (402)221-4628. Thank you for the opportunity to review this proposal.

Sincerely,

Candace M. Gorton
Chief, Environmental and Economics Section
Planning Branch
Planning, Programs and Project
Management Division

Enclosure

Concurrence: Alternatives Carried Forward

"We have reviewed the preliminary Draft Environmental Impact Statement on project DPU-3300(1) and concur that it is satisfactory. The information provided to date is adequate and we agree that the project can be advanced to the next stage of project development."

Signed: Candace Gordon

Title: Chief, Environmental & Economics Sec.

Agency: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Date: 12-11-00



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, OMAHA DISTRICT
NEBRASKA REGULATORY OFFICE-KEARNEY
1430 CENTRAL AVENUE STREET, SUITE 4
KEARNEY, NEBRASKA 68847-6856

DEC 05 2000

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

December 4, 2000

Mr. Ed Kosola
Federal Highway Administration
100 Centennial Mall North
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

Dear Mr. Kosola:

I am writing to comment on the preliminary draft environmental impact statement for South and East Beltways, Lincoln, Nebraska (Project No. DPU-3300(1)). Based on the Corps of Engineers authority under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, I have limited my review to wetlands and floodplains.

After reviewing all of the wetland data sheets, I regard the findings as highly preliminary. First, some of the observations were conducted from a distance, since access to private property was apparently not obtained. The observations could not be considered to qualify as "approved" determinations. Second, most of the data sheets had incomplete soils data, resulting in an educated guess, but not a wetland determination. This might possibly result in overestimating the wetland acres. Third, I noted that 3 of the 88 sheets provided supporting evidence for a wetland, yet the conclusion was "not a wetland". In conclusion, whenever a permit application is submitted, it will need to be accompanied by completed data sheets.

I reviewed section 3.18 on floodplains and noted the various alternatives for channel crossings (i.e. channel straightening, bridge extensions). The Corps of Engineers will issue a permit for the project design that is determined to be the least environmentally damaging, practicable alternative. If channel straightening is proposed for any of the crossings, it will be very important to explain the rejection of a bridge extension as a practicable alternative.

If you have any questions about my comments, feel free to contact me at (308) 234-1403.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Keith Tillotson".

Keith Tillotson
Senior Project Manager

From: "Tillotson, Dwight K NWO" <Dwight.K.Tillotson@nwo02.usace.army.mil>
To: 'Amy Zlotsky' <AZlotsky@oaconsulting.com>
Date: 12/19/00 8:53AM
Subject: RE: Lincoln Beltway PDEIS

Data sheets were complete for plants and hydrology but I noted that only 3 sites had any data under the soil profile description. This would be needed for a complete or "approved" jurisdictional determination, but, as I think about it, I don't think that a soil profile description is needed for a preliminary study such as this one. (In our own agency, we are now using "preliminary" and "approved" determinations for the purposes of the new appeal process.) I also recognize the limitations imposed by lack of access to some sites. I agree with the procedure/methodology for a PDEIS, as long as its limitations are recognized (i.e., skewing wetland acres to the high side) and its intent is clear.

I checked again on the sheets that came to a conclusion of no wetland when all 3 parameters were met: (1) Transect ID 32-11-8, Plot ID EF-1, (2) Transect ID 16-9-8, Plot ID EF-18, EF-19. In another case (Transect ID 17-10-8, Plot ID EM-4), the vegetation parameter was met, but was marked "no" by mistake under "Wetland Determination", resulting in a conclusion of no wetland.

If you have any questions at all, feel free to call or e-mail.

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Amy Zlotsky [SMTP:AZlotsky@oaconsulting.com]
> Sent: Monday, December 18, 2000 8:21 AM
> To: Tillotson, Dwight K
> Cc: Edward.Kosola@fhwa.dot.gov; Craig Mielke; Joan Darling
> Subject: Lincoln Beltway PDEIS

>

> Keith--I just got a copy of your comments. Would you mind sending me
> the numbers of the data sheets that you specifically feel are
> incomplete or have the wrong conclusion. There is nothing we can do
> about being denied access to properties...however, we should be able to
> provide complete data sheets. Would appreciate it.--Amy



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**
Region Seven

Nebraska Division Office
Federal Building, Room 220
100 Centennial Mall North
Lincoln, NE 68508-3851

June 13, 1996

Mr. Art Yonkey
Project Development Division
Nebraska Department of Roads
Lincoln, Nebraska

In Reply Refer To:
HOP-NE

Dear Mr. Yonkey:

DPU-3300(1); South and East Beltways Study, Lincoln, Nebraska;
Integrating NEPA/404 Processing, Concurrence in Purpose and Need

Enclosed are five concurrences from the following agencies in the Purpose and Need Statement for the subject project:

- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and
- Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality.

These agencies along with the Nebraska Department of Roads and the FHWA consider the Purpose and Need Statement satisfactory. The project can now be advanced to the next stage of project development.

The second concurrence point in the Nebraska Local Operating Procedures for Integrating NEPA/404 is Alternatives Carried Forward. The FHWA is also responsible for obtaining agency concurrence for this concurrence point. We will need, when available, copies of the full range of material on alternatives studied and copies of the preliminary draft environmental impact statement for review by the agencies.

Please transmit copies of the agency concurrences to the City of Lincoln and/or their consultants for placement in the appendix of the draft and final EIS.

Sincerely Yours,

Philip E. Barnes
Operations Engineer

19 APR 1996

South and East Beltways Study: Concurrence Point 1
Nebraska Local Operating Procedures for Integrating NEPA/404

PURPOSE AND NEED
South and East Beltways Study
Lincoln, Nebraska
DPU-3300(1)

BACKGROUND

The concept of a complete circumferential roadway system around the City of Lincoln has been discussed formally for about 35 years. The 1961 *Lincoln City-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan* identified Interstate 80 (north of the City) as the most important link in the circumferential route, supplemented by a loop system around the urban area. The 1966 *Lincoln Metropolitan Area Transportation Study* depicted an "East Side Freeway" and a "U.S. 77 West Bypass" in the Major Street Plan. In 1971, a comprehensive study was undertaken of the east and west bypasses that identified several alternate corridors and their associated costs and impacts. The following year, the State Highway Commission designated the U.S. Highway 77 (U.S. 77) west bypass as the top priority for funding. Since then, the efforts and resources of the community, NDOR, and various political entities have been focused on the completion of the U.S. 77 west bypass, the K and L Street connection between the west bypass and downtown area, and the Nebraska Highway 2 (Highway 2) connection to the west bypass along Van Dorn Street. As these projects approach completion, attention has focused on the need to complete the loop road network with south and east beltways.

PROJECT PURPOSE

Purpose. The purpose of the ongoing work is to conduct a Feasibility Study/ Alternatives Evaluation for multi-use transportation corridors along the south and east fringes of the City of Lincoln. The study includes preparation of the required Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/ Major Investment Study (MIS), as well as concurrent traffic, land use, and economic modeling to determine the project benefits and costs under several future scenarios. The south beltway corridor would connect Highway 2 with the recently completed U.S. 77 west bypass, while the east beltway corridor would connect Highway 2 with Interstate 80. These two corridors would complete a circumferential transportation system around the City of Lincoln.

Other secondary goals that will be considered as part of the project include coordination with existing and planned drainageways and utility corridors; the consolidation of railway corridors in the south beltway corridor; the development of a linear park and hiker/biker/equestrian trail along both the south and east corridors; and the preservation of the corridor for wildlife habitat and an ecologically sensitive wilderness park.

Study Goal. The ultimate goal of the study is to determine if south and/ or east transportation corridors are needed and feasible and, if so, to identify preferred alignments to guide the preservation of right-of-way and allow for eventual construction of the beltways and related facilities.

PROJECT NEED

Although traffic data is not currently available for the beltways study, regional growth trends and previous studies have indicated a need for south and east beltways. Further analysis of project need will be conducted as part of the south and east beltways study, and will include concurrent and interdependent evaluations of land use and transportation patterns.

Regional Growth. The City of Lincoln and Lancaster County have had a long, sustained history of population expansion, with an average increase of around one percent per year over the past several decades. Much of this growth has taken place in the City of Lincoln, where population has been increasing at a rate of 1.6 percent annually for the past three decades, partially due to annexation. Some of the highest rates of growth have been on the south and east fringes of the City. This continued growth in both population and area necessitates planning ahead for future major transportation corridors.

Long-Range Regional Transportation Plan. The *Lincoln City/Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan* serves as the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization's Long-Range Regional Transportation Plan, and includes projects encompassing twenty years. The Community Congress, a citizen's advisory group involved in the update of the 1994 *Lincoln City-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan*, clearly established the desire of the community to complete the loop around the City. One of the goals suggested by the Community Congress and adopted by City and County officials was to "provide for a long-range plan to develop early identification of bypass corridors and right-of-way retention". The south and east beltway corridor study is being conducted for this purpose. The beltway system is viewed as an essential component of the regional transportation network that would move through traffic around congested urban areas, as well as reduce delay and improve traffic flow on the existing urban street system.

The South Beltway. The south beltway would provide an alternative connection between the relatively undeveloped portion of Highway 2 southeast of Lincoln and U.S. 77 in the southwest. Highway 2 is the most direct route between Kansas City (Interstate 29) and Interstate 80 west, and currently serves as a major truck route. The portion of the roadway within and adjacent to the city limits also serves as the City's primary arterial from growth areas in the south part of the City to downtown. A beltway could divert through traffic from the urbanized portions of Highway 2, and improve the

flow of interstate travel around the City. It could also reduce congestion on the urban street system and improve safety by reducing the number of heavy trucks that share the roadway with passenger vehicles with local destinations.

The East Beltway. The east beltway would connect Highway 2 in the southeast with Interstate 80 in the northeast, with access points to U.S. 6 (Cornhusker Highway) and U.S. 34 (O Street). This corridor could serve many trips between the southern and eastern portions of Lincoln and Interstate 80 east, including Omaha. It would relieve traffic on the existing urban street system and serve as a truck route.

Truck Routes. The 1993 *Lincoln Truck Route Study*, a comprehensive study of long-range and interim truck routes in the Lincoln area, strongly supports the need for south and east beltways to divert through truck traffic around the urban area. The need for these truck routes will become increasingly evident upon completion of the upgrade of Highway 2 between Lincoln and Nebraska City to an expressway facility. This facility, which is scheduled for completion in 1998, will likely experience increased use by through traffic, leading to increased traffic volumes on the urbanized portions of Highway 2.

Need for Advance Planning. The need for the south and east beltways is expected to increase as the City grows, and as state highways leading to the City become more congested. However, if the planning process is delayed until the need becomes urgent, acquisition of right-of-way will become increasingly costly and disruptive to the community. Conducting a comprehensive feasibility study at this time will provide for early determination and location of potential corridors. This will allow the growth of the City to occur around the corridors, rather than forcing a transportation corridor through otherwise developed areas.

Other benefits that can be expected from early identification of the corridors include more pro-active public participation and agency involvement; compressed time line; enhanced positive environmental impacts and reduced negative impacts; reduced impacts on developed property; reduced costs for right-of-way acquisition and roadway construction; fewer compromises in design; accelerated relief for other area roadways; and coordination with commercial and industrial parks.



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Highway
Administration**

Region Seven

Nebraska Division Office
Federal Building, Room 220
100 Centennial Mall North
Lincoln, NE 68508-3851

April 9, 1996

In Reply Refer To:
HOP-NE

Mr. Steve Anschutz
US Fish and Wildlife Service
203 West Second Street
Grand Island NE 68801

Dear Mr. Anschutz:

DPU-3300(1); South and East Beltways Study, Lincoln, Nebraska;
Integrating NEPA/404 Processing, Concurrence in Purpose and Need
for Environmental Impact Statement

By letter dated September 13, 1995, we advised each agency that we were initiating an environmental study for the South and East Beltways around Lincoln. A consultant team consisting of Wilbur Smith and Associates; HWS Consulting Group, Inc.; EA Engineering, Science and Technology; and the Center for Environmental Solutions was selected to perform the study. A comprehensive interagency scoping meeting was held on October 11, 1995, which included a bus tour of the corridor areas. A two day partnering workshop was held December 12-13, 1995, for the project's Management Board Committee, Technical Staff Committee, Citizen Advisory Committee, the consultant team and other interested parties. Also, working committee meetings and a public information meeting have been held.

The project encompasses two basic project corridors and the general limits for the project are:

- The South corridor area: Yankee Hill Road to 0.8 km (1/2 mile) South of Saltillo Road and U.S. 77 on the west to Nebraska Highway 2 on the East
- The East corridor area: I-80 to Nebraska Highway 2 and 96th Street on the West to 0.8 km (1/2 mile) East of 148th Street
- The approximate length of the study area is 27.4 km (17 miles).

The general design concept for the proposed South and East Beltways envisions a multi-lane freeway or expressway-type facility with design features such as depressed center median, paved shoulders, full control of access, fence along the right-of-way, bridges at creek crossings, two-span bridges over the beltways, few if any at-grade intersections, and 62 meters to 75 meters (203 ft. to 246 ft.) typical right-of-way widths. Greater

right-of-way widths could be proposed for buffer areas or joint corridor uses. At a minimum, interchanges would connect the South and East Beltways to U.S. Highway 77, Nebraska Highway 2, U.S. Highway 34, and Interstate 80.

The primary goal of the study is to place the sponsoring agencies in a position to preserve the transportation corridors within the South and East fringes of Lincoln.

The merge procedures provide for four written concurrence points during project development. These points are:

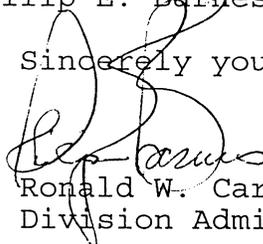
- Purpose and Need
- Alternatives Carried Forward
- Selected Alternatives
- Impact Minimization

We are now ready to reach concurrence on Purpose and Need. Merge resource agencies were invited and/or attended the project scoping meeting, partnering workshop, various technical committee meetings and the public information meeting. A draft Purpose and Need for the Project was provided for comment to the Citizen's Advisory, Technical Advisory and Management Board Committees and comments received were incorporated into the purpose and need statement. Based on this input it was determined that the Purpose and Need was ready for agency concurrence and is enclosed.

Please review the enclosed Purpose and Need project statement. If your agency concurs in the statement, please sign the concurrence block below and return a signed copy of this memorandum to the Federal Highway Administration by May 3, 1996.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project, please contact Mr. Philip E. Barnes at 437-5971.

Sincerely yours,


 To: Ronald W. Carmichael
 Division Administrator

Enclosures

Concurrence: Purpose and Need

"We have reviewed the Purpose and Need statement for this project's environmental impact statement and concur that it is satisfactory. The information provided to date is adequate and we agree that the project can be advanced to the next stage of project development."

16 APR 1996

9

Signed: Steven Anschutz
Title: Acting Field Supervisor
Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Date: April 15, 1996

Signed: Rosemary C. Hargrave
Title: Nebraska State Program Manager
Agency: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Date: 6-6-96

Signed: 
Title: NEPA Program Manager
Agency: U.S. EPA Region 7
Date: May 7, 1996

Signed: Patrick W. Rice
Title: Assistant Director
Agency: Dept. Environmental Quality
Date: 6/5/96

Signed: Rex Amack
Title: Director
Agency: Game & Parks Commission
Date: April 15, 1996

INTERAGENCY SCOPING MEETING

INTERAGENCY SCOPING MEETING

An Interagency Scoping Meeting for the South and East Beltways Project was held on 11 October 1995. Attendees included representatives of Federal, State, and local resource agencies; utilities and railroads in the project area; members of the project's Technical Advisory Committee; and the consultant team. A list of attendees is provided in Exhibit G-1. The purpose of the scoping meeting was to present the project to the agencies, utilities, and railroads, and to solicit their input and concerns. Following a formal presentation, a bus tour of the study area was given. The group reconvened after the bus tour to make observations and discuss concerns.

Comments were as follows.

Floodplains/Wetlands. Concerns over potential impacts to the Stevens Creek watershed were expressed by a number of agencies. The potential for impacts to the creek is greatest if the beltway were to parallel the creek. Because the East Beltway corridor runs parallel to Stevens Creek, it was suggested that it would be best to cross the creek at a right-angle, to quickly get out of the floodplain, and then avoid the creek for the rest of the route. The riparian strip along Stevens Creek should also be preserved. Wetlands should be avoided to the extent possible throughout the corridor, and mitigated if impacts are unavoidable. Some wetlands occur between Saltillo and Rokeby Roads along Salt Creek, and along Stevens Creek.

A flood management study of the Stevens Creek watershed is currently underway by the Lower Platte Natural Resources District. They expect to narrow down alternatives from 4 to 2 by end of year. All alternatives include preservation of a corridor along Stevens Creek, possibly to the elevation of the 100-year floodplain. This may be accomplished through easement or title. Alternatives may or may not have structures at the north end of the watershed. A large landowner activist group developed in response to this study.

Wilderness Park. Wilderness Park is part of the National Trails System. Any impacts to it would require replacement land. The Van Dorn Connector used a 2:1 replacement ratio to mitigate impacts to the park. If mitigation is required, land south of park would be desirable. The Lincoln/Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan calls for Wilderness Park to extend south of Saltillo Road to Roca. Wilderness Park is County-owned land that is managed by the City. The park also serves as flood storage area.

Threatened and Endangered Species. No threatened or endangered species issues are anticipated, and surveys are unlikely to be required. The only possibility would be if there is any potential habitat for prairie fringed orchid.

Farmland. Beltways will unavoidably cross conservation terraces; farmers may require compensation. Since some conservation terraces will drain toward the beltways, the project should determine drainage outlet requirements. There will also be some prime farmland impacts.

LIST OF ATTENDEES
Interagency Scoping Meeting

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Ray Ayars	-Lincoln Chamber of Commerce
Philip Barnes	-Federal Highway Administration
Terry Barton	University of Nebraska-Lincoln
John Bender	-Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality
Val Bohaty	-USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Mike Brienzo	-Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department
Mark Brohman	-Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
Steve Burnham	-Federal Highway Administration
Walter Case	-HWS Consulting Group
Randy Evans	-Norris Public Power District
Roger Figard	Rail Transportation Safety District
Terry Genrich	-City of Lincoln - Parks and Recreation Department
Mike Gorman	-HWS Consulting Group
Jack Guinn	Northern Natural Gas Company
Rick Haden	-City of Lincoln - Public Works
Steve Hanks	-Lincoln Electric System
Vic Hannan	-Conoco, Inc.
William Hurst	-Nebraska Department of Roads
Wally Jobman	-US Fish and Wildlife Service
Glenn Johnson	-Lower Platte South Natural Resources District
Ted LaGrange	-Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
Laura Lenzen	-Nebraska Department of Roads
Steve McBeth	-Nebraska Department of Roads
Mary McKenney	-EA Engineering, Science, and Technology
Kevin McLaurry	Federal Highway Administration
Garry Mick	-US Army Corps of Engineers
Kent Morgan	-Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department
John Peterson	-US Army Corps of Engineers
Rich Ruby	-Nebraska Department of Roads
Roger Ruckman	Northern Natural Gas Company
Leonard Sand	-Nebraska Department of Roads
Al Schroeder	-Lincoln Telephone Company
Virendra Singh	-City of Lincoln - Public Works
D.D. Smith	-City of Lincoln - Public Works
Tim Stewart	-Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department
Steve Sulek	-Lancaster County Rural Water District No. 1
Dick Webb	-Nebraska Department of Roads
Amy Zlotsky	-EA Engineering, Science, and Technology

Note: Invited organizations that were not represented include the Federal Transit Authority, Environmental Protection Agency, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Department, Burlington Northern Railroad, Union Pacific Railroad, Nebraska Natural Resources Commission, People's Natural Gas, Williams Pipeline Company, Nebraska Public Power District and CableVision.

Utilities. The City of Waverly wells would be hard to relocate because of contamination problem to the north. Relocations would have to be further south, or would have to hook into City of Lincoln water. The project should consider the existing long-range plans of Lincoln Water System and Lincoln Electric System.

Land Use. A new regional shopping center is proposed north of Highway 2 between 84th and 98th Streets. The center will encompass 350 ac. and has the potential for more than 6 million square feet of mixed use space (probably retail and residential).

Secondary impacts on land use should be considered, such as urbanization within drainage corridors. The urban versus rural character of the transportation facility, and its connectivity to the urban transportation system should also be considered.

Cultural Resources. Historic and archaeological sites within the corridor, especially the Schrader archaeological site.

Procedural Issues. Comments were made regarding the following procedural issues.

- Notice of Intent for project needs to be prepared ASAP.
- Agencies and organizations that were invited but did not attend this meeting should be encouraged to attend future meetings, especially FTA.
- Procedural requirements of the NEPA\404 process were clarified. Early on, the project proponents agreed to create a “merged committee” to merge the 404 and NEPA process. The merged committee consists of representatives from FHWA, the Corps, NDOR, EPA, FWS, NDEQ, and NGPC. There are four points at which their concurrence is required in order for the project to proceed. These are: (1) Purpose and Need Statement, (2) Alternatives to Be Carried Forward, (3) Preferred Alternative, and (4) Mitigation. These agencies should be added to the Technical Advisory Committee.
- The consultant noted that all concerned agencies will be solicited for input, not just those on the merged committee.
- The County Ecological Advisory Committee should be included in the planning process.
- Concept of “environmental justice” may apply. Can’t take cheaper home and spare more expensive ones. Consider ways to make the project better from an environmental point of view.
- It will be important to purchase land for a full interchange at US 77.

OTHER AGENCY COORDINATION



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

Nebraska NRCS State Office
Federal Building, Room 152
100 Centennial Mall North
Lincoln, NE 68508-3866

RECEIVED

JUL 07 2000

July 6, 2000

OLSSON ASSOCIATES

Dale R. Vagts
Environmental Scientist
Olsson Environmental Sciences
1111 Lincoln Mall
P.O. Box 84608
Lincoln, NE 68501-4608

Dear Mr. Vagts:

The Natural Resources Conservation Service has completed Parts II, IV, and V of the enclosed Form AD1006, Farmland Conversion Impact Rating, for the proposed improvements to South and East Beltways study, Lancaster County, Nebraska.

This completes the Natural Resources Conservation Service requirements under the Farmland Protection Policy Act.

Sincerely,

STEPHEN K. CHICK
State Conservationist

Acting

Enclosure

FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING

PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency)		1. Date of Land Evaluation Request <i>3 July 2000</i>	2. Sheet <u>1</u> of <u>1</u>	
3. Name of Project <i>Lincoln South and East Beltways DEIS</i>		4. Federal Agency Involved <i>Federal Highway Administration</i>		
5. Proposed Land Use <i>Highway</i>		6. County and State <i>Lancaster, Nebraska</i>		7. Type of Project: Corridor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>
PART II (To be completed by NRCS)		1. Date Request Received by NRCS <i>07/05/00</i>		2. Person Completing the NRCS parts of this form <i>Roger Kanable</i>
3. Does the site or corridor contain prime, unique, statewide or local important farmland? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> (If no, the FPPA does not apply - Do not complete additional parts of this form)		3. Acres Irrigated <i>14,000</i>	5. Average Farm Size <i>305</i>	
6. Major Crop(s) <i>Corn</i>		7. Farmable Land in Government Jurisdiction Acres: <i>460,666</i> <i>85%</i>		8. Amount of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: <i>252,900</i> <i>47%</i>
9. Name of Land Evaluation System Used <i>LESA-NRCS</i>		10. Name of Local Site Assessment System <i>None</i>		11. Date Land Evaluation Returned by NRCS <i>July 6, 2000</i>

PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency)	Alternative Corridor Rating			
	SM-4 / EC-1	SM-4 / EM-1	SM-4 / EF-1	
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly	<i>1749.45</i>	<i>1623.81</i>	<i>1717.02</i>	
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly, Or To Receive Services	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	
C. Total Acres in Site	<i>1749.45</i>	<i>1623.81</i>	<i>1717.02</i>	
PART IV (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information				
A. Total Acres Prime and Unique Farmland	<i>1139</i>	<i>1152</i>	<i>1221</i>	
B. Total Acres Statewide and Local Important Farmland	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	
C. Percentage of Farmland in County or Local Govt. Unit to be Converted	<i>0.323</i>	<i>0.300</i>	<i>0.317</i>	
D. Percentage of Farmland in Govt. Jurisdiction with Same or Higher Relative Value	<i>45</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>38</i>	
PART V (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Criterion <i>Relative Value of Farmland to be Serviced or Converted (Scale of 0 - 100 Points)</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>71</i>	

PART VI (To be completed by Federal Agency) Corridor or Site Assessment Criteria (These criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5(b & c))	Max. Points	Corridor	Other		
1. Area in Nonurban Use	15	15	<i>14</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>14</i>
2. Perimeter in Nonurban Use	10	10	<i>9</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>8.5</i>
3. Percent of Site Being Farmed	20	20	<i>16</i>	<i>16.5</i>	<i>16.5</i>
4. Protection Provided by State and Local Government	20	20	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>
5. Distance from Urban Built-up area	0	15	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
6. Distance to Urban Support Services	0	15	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
7. Size of Present Farm Unit Compared to Average	10	10	<i>5</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>5</i>
8. Creation of Non-Farmable Farmland	25	10	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>
9. Availability of Farm Support Services	5	5	<i>5</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>5</i>
10. On-Farm Investments	20	20	<i>12</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>12</i>
11. Effects of Conversion on Farm Support Services	25	10	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
12. Compatibility with Existing Agricultural Use	10	10	<i>4</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>4</i>
TOTAL CORRIDOR OR SITE ASSESSMENT POINTS		160			

PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency)					
Relative Value of Farmland (from Part V above)	100	<i>68</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>71</i>	
Total Corridor or Site Assessment (From Part VI above or a local site assessment)	160	<i>72</i>	<i>72.5</i>	<i>72</i>	
TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)	260	<i>140</i>	<i>143.5</i>	<i>142</i>	

PART VIII (To be completed by Federal Agency after final alternative is chosen)		
1. Corridor or Site Selected:	2. Date of Selection:	3. Was A Local Site Assessment Used? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Reason For Selection:		

Signature of person completing the Federal Agency parts of this form: <i>Dale Vagts</i>	DATE <i>3 July 2000</i>
--	----------------------------



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services
Nebraska Field Office
203 West Second Street
Grand Island, Nebraska 68801

RECEIVED

OCT 13 1995

EA Engineering, Science, and Technology
Lincoln, NE

October 12, 1995

Ms. Amy Zlotsky
Project Manager
EA Engineering, Science & Technology
121 South 13th Street, Suite 701
Lincoln, NE 68508

Dear Ms. Zlotsky:

This responds to your October 11, 1995, request for comments from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed South and East Beltways Project, City of Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska (EA# 13094.01). These comments are provided as technical assistance and predevelopment consultation and do not constitute a Service report under authority of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.) on any required Federal environmental review or permit.

In accordance with Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act 1973, we have determined that the following federally listed species may occur in the vicinity of the proposed project:

<u>Listed Species</u>	<u>Expected Occurrence</u>
Peregrine falcon (<u>Falco peregrinus</u>)	Migration
Bald eagle (<u>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</u>)	Migration, winter resident
American burying beetle (<u>Nicrophorus americanus</u>)	Resident, grasslands
Western prairie fringed orchid (<u>Plantanthera praeclara</u>)	Tall-grass prairie, and wet meadows

Peregrine falcons are generally associated with wetlands and open areas, such as cropland and grassland. Most observations in Nebraska are in January, late April to early May, and September. Sightings are occasionally reported at or in the vicinity of the State Capitol building.

Bald eagles migrate statewide and utilize mature riparian timber near streams, lakes, and wetlands. The primary bald eagle migration and wintering period is mid-November to April 1. Migrating eagles may pass through the project area, however, there does not appear to be anything (e.g., potential feeding sites) which would attract them to the area.

The American burying beetle may occur anywhere in the eastern two-thirds of the state. In Nebraska it has been collected in grassland, mixed grassland/cropland, and riparian woodland. Past surveys have not found any beetles in the Lincoln area, and a survey would not be required by the Service.

The western prairie fringed orchid was listed as a threatened species on September 28, 1989. Populations have been confirmed in Seward, Sarpy, Lancaster, Hall, and Cherry counties, and may occur at other sites in Nebraska. It is an inhabitant of tall-grass calcareous silt loam or sub-irrigated sand prairies. Any tracts of the aforementioned prairies should be considered to be potential habitat for this threatened plant. The Service would not require surveys unless tracts of native tall-grass prairie are identified which would be affected by the project.

If the Federal action agency determines that the proposed project may affect listed species, formal Section 7 consultation should be requested from this office. If they determine that there will be no effect, further consultation is unnecessary.

We further recommend that you identify the impacts which the proposed project would have on wetlands and woodland habitat. The most environmentally sensitive areas within the project area are Wilderness Park, Salt Creek, Stevens Creek, and any remnant tracts of tall-grass prairie.

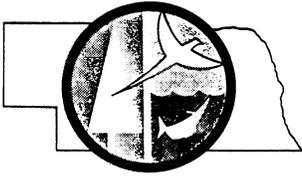
We appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on this proposed project. Should you have questions, please contact Mr. Wally Jokman within our office at (308)382-6468.

Sincerely,

Acting 
Nebraska Field Supervisor

cc: NGPC; Lincoln, NE (Attn: Mark Brohman)
NDEQ; Lincoln, NE (Attn: John Bender)
EPA; Kansas City, KS (Attn: Tom Taylor)

(7)Beltway.ltr



Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

2200 N. 33rd St. / P.O. Box 30370 / Lincoln, NE 68508-0370 / 402-471-0641 / Fax: 402-471-5528

October 30, 1995

RECEIVED

NOV 1 1995

EA Engineering, Science, and Technology
Lincoln, NE

Ms. Amy Zlotsky
Project Manager
EA Engineering, Sci. & Tech.
121 S. 13th Street, Suite 701
Lincoln, NE 68508

RE: South and East Beltway Project, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Dear Ms. Zlotsky:

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission staff members have reviewed the beltway project noted above and we would reiterate our position as expressed at the October 11th scoping meeting.

Our main concerns with this proposed project are the wetlands and riparian areas along Salt Creek and the Stevens Creek watershed. We would like to see impacts minimized in these areas. Any native grassland or wetlands should be given additional consideration, since this corridor has been heavily farmed and urbanized by acreages and subdivisions. It is also our desire that impacts to Wilderness Park be avoided or mitigated to the satisfaction of all parties involved.

We concur with the US Fish and Wildlife Service's T&E species "may occur" list (Peregrine falcon, Bald eagle, American burying beetle and Western prairie fringed orchid) in their letter dated October 12, 1995. Since the occurrence or disturbance of these species in this corridor is unlikely, we will require no surveys or additional information. If this project is delayed several years and new information about one of these species becomes available, or a new listing occurs, we may require additional information or surveys at that time.

It is our hope that adequate greenspace and city parks are planned in conjunction with this project and future urban sprawl is addressed. We appreciate being involved in the early planning stages and hope to continue to be involved with this project as it progresses. When a final route is selected, we would appreciate the opportunity to provide additional suggestions. If you have any questions, please call me at 471-5422.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Brohman
Environmental Analyst Supervisor

cc: Philip Barnes, John Bender