

ADDENDUM to ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT for SECTIONS A & B of the
US HIGHWAY 61 CORRIDOR
FROM ½ MILE NORTH OF IOWA HIGHWAY 78 to NORTH OF 130TH STREET
in
LOUISA COUNTY, IOWA
NHSX-061-3(61)--3H-58

1. Description of the Proposed Action

The Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) is preparing this reevaluation for **Sections A & B (Appendix A, Figure 1)** of the US Highway 61 Corridor from ½ Mile North of Iowa Highway 78 to North of 130th Street Environmental Assessment (EA) to address changes to the preferred alternative. An additional reevaluation will be prepared for Section C later as the design for that section continues to develop and impacts to socioeconomic, cultural, and natural resources are better understood and subsequent mitigation measures identified. The Environmental Assessment was signed on December 6, 2017. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for this project on September 17, 2019.

The proposed changes extend beyond the preferred alternative's impact area as documented in the EA and described in the FONSI. Therefore, these changes necessitate a reevaluation to ensure additional impacts to the human and natural environment remain insignificant. Due to the proposed changes and time lapsed from the FONSI, this EA Addendum has been prepared to fully document the changes. The Purpose and Need as described in the EA remains valid and consistent with this proposed action.

2. 2019 EA Preferred Alternative

The Proposed Alternative (hereafter "2019 EA Preferred Alternative") presented in the 2017 EA and subsequent 2019 FONSI consisted of constructing a new divided four-lane highway west of the City of Wapello (**Appendix A, Figure 2**). The 2019 EA Preferred Alternative would utilize the existing U.S. 61 infrastructure from approximately 30th Street to just south of 65th Street with two new lanes being constructed west of U.S. 61. The Preferred Alternative would depart existing U.S. 61 just south of 65th Street and run north-northwest where a new diamond interchange would be constructed at U.S. 61 and County Road G-62, approximately one-half mile west of the Wapello corporate limits. The 2019 EA Preferred Alternative would turn back north-northeast before crossing the Iowa River with two new lanes and a new bridge crossing the Iowa River constructed west of existing U.S. 61. The proposed U.S. 61 alignment would crossover 65th Street, 70th Street, 100th Street (Cemetery Road), K Avenue, and maintain at-grade intersections with H-16/40th Street, J Avenue, G-56, and 130th Street. The intersections with existing U.S. 61 would be removed.

3. 2020 Revised Preferred Alternative

Following the issuance of the FONSI, the Iowa DOT continued discussions with local officials and identified a design modification to the 2019 EA Preferred Alternative. The Iowa DOT added j-turns at the proposed at-grade intersection of the new U.S. 61 alignment and existing 65th Street intersection to improve access to U.S. 61 south of Wapello (**Appendix A, Figure 2**). The City of Wapello also elected to fund the improvement of 142nd Street from County Road G-62 to 100th Street, which was integrated into this alternative. The project was re-evaluated for environmental impacts on December 14, 2020 and received concurrence from FHWA that the original FONSI remained valid.

4. 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative

The Iowa DOT has continued discussions with local officials and identified several design modifications to increase access to U.S. 61 south of Wapello, improve safety, and reduce project costs. The "2025

Revised Preferred Alternative” presented here in this document includes the following changes to Sections A & B of the project (**Appendix A, Figure 3**):

Removal of J-Turns at 65th Street. Construction of full diamond interchange near the proposed U.S. 61 alignment and existing 65th Street.

City and County officials indicated a desire for an additional full interchange south of the City of Wapello. The Iowa DOT agreed to a full interchange with the condition that K Ave would be closed at the proposed realignment of U.S. 61.

Closure of K Avenue and elimination of proposed U.S. 61 bridges over K Avenue.

Closure of K Avenue is the result of the proposed south interchange. Elimination of the U.S. 61 bridges or the possibility of a bridge over U.S. 61 for K Avenue was eliminated due to project costs, design considerations, and future maintenance costs.

Extension of 100th Street south (frontage road) to intersect with G-62, west of the proposed interchange. Elimination of U.S. 61 bridges over 100th Street. Closure of 100th Street east to 142nd Avenue.

Elimination of U.S. 61 bridges over 100th Street was identified in a value engineering study to reduce project costs and future maintenance costs. The resulting change to 100th Street provides improved access to U.S. 61 for residents west of County Road G-62. Due to these changes, the City of Wapello has elected not to improve 142nd Street from 100th Street to County Road G-62.

Addition of right and left-turn lanes at H-16 (40th Street).

City and County officials indicated a desire for left and right-turn lanes at the U.S. 61 and County Road H-16 (40th Street) intersection due to safety concerns.

5. Environmental Analysis

This section describes any changes to socioeconomic, cultural, natural, and physical impacts different than those reported in the original EA as a result of the design modifications proposed in the 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative only. Each resource section has been re-evaluated within the NEPA impact area (**Appendix A, Figures 4a & 4b**), unless specified otherwise. The NEPA impact area includes roadway right-of-way needs based on right-of-way plans submitted on August 5, 2025. Impacts discussed in this section are conservative, as efforts to minimize direct and indirect impacts will continue to be made during final design.

1.1. Socioeconomic Impacts

1.1.1. Land Use

The project in general will change land use directly with the construction of two new interchanges and an off-alignment section of U.S. 61 impacting primarily agricultural lands.

The additional interchange included in the 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative, located south of Wapello, may generate additional residential or commercial growth particularly near the northeast and southeast quadrants of the interchange and along the old U.S. 61 alignment. This could indirectly result in additional agricultural land being converted to non-agricultural use.

The 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative would also include the extension of 100th Street south to G-62, west of the proposed U.S. 61/G-62 interchange. This design modification is not expected to alter land use along the proposed 100th Street extension.

Changes in land use, in particular to agricultural lands, is not expected to have substantial impacts on the community or region as a whole. Direct impacts to agricultural lands equate to 0.2% of the 188,748 acres of agricultural land in Louisa County (2024).

1.1.2. Economic

Retail and commercial businesses may be affected by the project due to changing traffic patterns or business access. Some businesses, particularly those along existing U.S. 61 through the City of Wapello who rely on thru-travelers (e.g., fuel stations, mechanics) may be disproportionately affected with the majority of that traffic being routed outside the City of Wapello. However, the construction of the two interchanges may provide economic opportunities for development of these services along the new U.S. 61, potentially offsetting the loss of business.

The proposed improvements to U.S. 61 would make transportation goods and services along U.S. 61 safer and more efficient. Compared to the previous Preferred Alternatives, the 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative with its south interchange would improve access and reduce out-of-distance travel to south Wapello from U.S. 61.

During construction, all business access(s) would be maintained. Overall, the proposed modifications are not expected to result in additional impacts or change the original evaluation documented in the EA.

1.1.3. Parklands and Recreational Areas

There are no Parklands or Recreational areas within the impact area. The Louisa County Conservation Board (LCCB) owns a parcel of land along 70th Street near the future U.S. 61 alignment that was acquired for the future extension of the Hoover Nature Trail. The Hoover Nature Trail is comprised of both publicly and privately-owned/publicly-managed sections of trail located near Morning Sun and Columbus Junction that would eventually connect with future sections of trail developed near Wapello. This property does not qualify for Section 4(f) since the primary function of the property in its current state is not recreation and there are no existing plans, funding, or adjacent parcels to develop a functional trail within the project area. No other direct or indirect effects to Parklands and Recreational Areas are anticipated from the proposed modifications.

1.1.4. NRCS Easement

There are no NRCS easements within the impact area.

1.1.5. Right-of-Way

The 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative would result in the estimated temporary and permanent right-of-way (ROW) acquisitions of approximately 344 acres from approximately 37 private landowners within Louisa County. This would include both partial and total acquisitions. Following the completion of the project, acquisitions would be held in part by the Iowa DOT and Louisa County. Total acquisition include nine residences and no businesses. Several acquisitions will be required from agricultural land (see **5.3.6 Farmlands** for more information). Drainage/flowage easements will also be acquired from landowners to

mitigate for fill within the mapped floodplain (see **5.3.3 Floodplains** for more information). Efforts will be made during final design to minimize right-of-way acquisition and relocations to the extent practicable.

Right-of-way acquisition and relocations will be conducted in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970, as amended. Relocation assistance will be made available to all affected persons without discrimination. A ROW Public Information Meeting is tentatively planned for Fall 2025 to provide information to impacted landowners.

1.1.6. Relocation Potential

The 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative would result in the displacement of nine residences for the construction of the additional southbound lane and interchange at G-62. In addition, the project will displace several commercial/agricultural buildings, such as machine sheds or grain bins.

Current replacement housing available is not of the type most in need which is rural residential. Based on online real estate search, replacement housing primarily consists of urban residential housing within the City of Wapello. However, there are a few rural residential properties and rural residential lots currently for sale near the project area. Additional housing may be available in nearby communities such as Mediapolis or Muscatine, which present viable commutes for displaced individuals maintaining a personal or professional connection with Wapello. Difficulties in locating replacement housing should be minimized by incorporating additional lead time into the relocation planning process. As the project construction and real estate acquisition dates become more certain, Iowa DOT will reassess residential housing availability as part of the detailed Acquisition Stage Relocation Plan.

The 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative is not expected to result in additional impacts or change the original evaluation documented in the EA.

1.1.7. Construction and Emergency Routes

The project will be phased and open to traffic during the whole construction period. The proposed extension of 100th Street south to G-62 would be paved and open to traffic prior to the closure of the existing section of 100th Street for grading of new US 61. This will ensure access to and from the City of Wapello as it currently exists for residences utilizing 100th Street.

The 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative is not expected to result in additional impacts or change the original evaluation documented in the EA.

1.1.8. Transportation

The proposed extension of 100th Street south to G-62 would eliminate the eastbound movement on 100th Street. This may increase out-of-distance travel for some users into the City of Wapello. Overall, the 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative is not expected to result in additional impacts or change the original evaluation documented in the EA.

1.2. Cultural Impacts

1.2.1. Historic Sites or Districts

A determination of *No Adverse Effect* received SHPO concurrence on June 9, 2016 for properties identified in the EA. None of these previously identified properties are located within the impact area of

Section A or B; therefore, the 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative is not expected to result in additional impacts or change the original evaluation documented in the EA.

1.2.2. Archaeological Sites

A determination of *No Adverse Effect* received SHPO concurrence on June 9, 2016 for properties identified in the EA. None of these previously identified properties are located within the impact area of Section A or B; therefore, the 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative is not expected to result in additional impacts or change the original evaluation documented in the EA.

1.2.3. Cemeteries

The 2025 Revised Preferred Alternatives avoids impacts to the Wapello Cemetery and would not inhibit access. The proposed extension of 100th Street south to G-62 would improve access to the Wapello Cemetery by providing a direct route from U.S. 61 via the G-62 interchange.

1.3. Natural Environment Impacts

1.3.1. Wetlands

There are approximately 7.28 acres of wetlands within the impact area. Of those, approximately 4.65 acres are classified as emergent wetland (PEMA/PEMC), 0.33 acres as scrub-shrub (PSSA) wetland, and 2.30 acres of farmed wetland. The project will require a Section 404 Permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for impacts to regulated wetlands due to grading and culvert work associated with the new U.S. 61 roadway. It is anticipated to be authorized under a Nationwide 14. The permit will be acquired prior to commencement of construction activities. Any special conditions will be adhered to throughout the duration of the construction period. Should mitigation for impacts be required, the Iowa DOT will be responsible for developing a mitigation site or obtaining mitigation credits from an approved mitigation bank.

The 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative is not expected to result in additional impacts or change the original evaluation documented in the EA.

1.3.2. Surface Waters and Water Quality

There are approximately 7,770 feet of streams and channels within the impact area. Of those, approximately 761 feet is classified as perennial stream and 995 feet of intermittent stream. The project will require a Section 404 Permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for impacts to regulated streams due to grading and culvert work associated with the new U.S. 61 roadway. It is anticipated to be authorized under a Nationwide 14. The permit will be acquired prior to commencement of construction activities. Any special conditions will be adhered to throughout the duration of the construction period. Should mitigation for impacts be required, the Iowa DOT will be responsible for developing a mitigation site or obtaining mitigation credits from an approved mitigation bank.

The 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative is not expected to result in additional impacts or change the original evaluation documented in the EA.

1.3.3. Floodplains/Drainage

The 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative will require a Letter of Map Revisions (LOMR) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) due to fill within the mapped floodplain (Zone A) resulting in an increase in the base flood elevation (BFE). There are approximately 43 acres of Zone A floodplain impacted by the 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative. The proposed alignment of U.S. 61 is expected to provide both positive and negative drainage impacts across the floodplain. Culverts will be placed in the new roadway embankment at locations that reduce the potential for the proposed embankment to cause backwater on locations with structures. The new roadway will result in approximately 35 acres of land becoming inundated during a 100-year event (1% chance) when previously would have remained dry. An additional 220 acres are considered areas of backwater with a depth of at least 1.5 feet during a 100-year event. Approximately 640 acres of land that would have been previously inundated during a 100-year event would now remain dry during a 100-year event due to the new roadway embankment funneling drainage to culverts and developed drainage ways. Of the 640 acres, approximately 64 acres occur within the City of Wapello (**Appendix A, Figure 5**). While the new roadway embankment may offer incidental flood protection to land east of the proposed roadway, the roadway embankment will not act as an official flood protection structure in any capacity. Additionally, if FEMA were to remap the floodplain after the road is constructed using current methods, the areas on the east side of the road would still be shown as flooded.

The Iowa DOT would purchase approximately 420 acres of drainage/flowage easements from ten landowners to satisfy Iowa DNR floodplain impact criteria and provide the County with a BFE for future development. The easements will be purchased for real estate that will be subject to additional flows and drainage issues due to the 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative. This one-time payment compensates landowners for any potential damages arising from potential increased flow or drainage issues. The easement does not restrict use of the property, allowing landowners to continue farming operations or construct structures on their property.

The Iowa DOT will continue working with the County Drainage District, Iowa DNR, and FEMA to acquire the appropriate permits necessary for the described changes to drainage and floodplains.

1.3.4. Threatened and Endangered Species

A threatened and endangered species assessment was conducted by Iowa DOT Biologists for Sections A&B. This assessment was conducted in 2024 and 2025 using desktop resources and data collected during field visits. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife's (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPAC) tool species list documents several federally-listed species potentially occurring in the project area (**Table 1**). The Iowa DOT determined habitat for the Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, and tricolored bat does occur within the impact area. The remaining species on the IPAC list do not likely have suitable habitat within the impact area for sections A and B.

Table 1. Federally-listed species with potential occurrence within the impact area.

Species	Federal Listing Status	Determination of Effect
Indiana Bat (<i>Myotis sodalis</i>)	Endangered	May affect, not likely to adversely affect
Northern Long-eared Bat (<i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>)	Endangered	May affect, not likely to adversely affect

Tricolored Bat (<i>Perimyotis subflavus</i>)	Proposed Endangered	May affect, not likely to adversely affect
Higgins Eye (<i>Lampsilis higginsii</i>)	Endangered	No effect
Monarch Butterfly (<i>Danaus plexippus</i>)	Proposed Threatened	No effect
Western Regal Fritillary (<i>Argynnis idalia occidentalis</i>)	Proposed Threatened	No effect
Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid (<i>Platanthera leucophaea</i>)	Threatened	No effect

The bat habitat that is present in several areas within sections A and B are located near the southern end of the project (near 40th Street). These areas are characterized as moderate to low-quality habitat for the above listed bat species. Other locations of trees within the project area do not present suitable habitat for the above listed bat species. These areas are small patches (less than 3 acres) isolated from water or riparian habitats and other forest patches of greater size. These areas also consist of species and composition that present low quality roosting potential for bats. A Bridge/Structure Bat Assessment was conducted for the Honey Creek Bridge located north of 40th Street. No signs of bats were observed during the assessment.

A total of 3.73 acres of suitable habitat will be impacted by the 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative. The Iowa DOT determined project activities **may affect, but will not likely adversely affect** the Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, and tricolored bat due to the lack of quality habitat. A **no effect** determination has been made for the remaining species potentially present within the impact area. The Iowa DOT coordinated with and received comment from the Iowa DNR on December 12, 2024. The USFWS concurred with the Iowa DOT's findings and determination on March 20, 2025 (**Appendix B**).

Avoidance and minimization measures include winter tree clearing following standard DOT specification 2101.01A that restricts tree clearing between October 1 and March 31. Exclusionary fencing will also be required around construction area at the northern end of the project adjacent to Millrace Flats WMA and Millrace Creek.

1.3.5. Woodlands

There are no woodlands that meet the criteria of Iowa Code 314.23 within the impact area. The 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative is not expected to result in any impacts to woodland habitat.

1.3.6. Farmlands

Farmland, as defined by the NRCS, exists within the NEPA impact area. Approximately, 357 acres of farmland were proposed for conversion with the original Preferred Alternative. The 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative would convert approximately 289 acres of farmland to transportation use as state right-of-way. Of the 289 acres, 29 acres are considered *Prime Farmland*, 62 acres are *Farmland of Statewide Importance*, and 198 acres are *Prime Farmland if Drained/Irrigated*.

A USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form for Corridor Type Projects (NRCS-CPA-106) was completed for the 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative using a

previous estimated impact of 374 acres. The completed form is included in **Appendix C**. Projects receiving a total score of less than 160 need not be given further consideration for protection. The NRCS reviewed the NRCS-CPA-106 form, and based on the score, the project does not warrant additional review from the NRCS. The 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative would impact approximately 85 fewer acres than previously assessed.

Following completion of the project, adjacent farmland will remain farmable and farm support services will be unaffected. Excess land acquired by the Iowa DOT may be sold back to the original owner following completion of the project and could be converted back into agricultural use. Access to farm support services in the City of Wapello for some farms will be altered slightly with the closure of J Avenue, K Avenue, 65th Street, 70th Street, and 100th Street rerouting farm-to-market traffic to the two proposed interchanges. Minor out-of-distance travel is anticipated for some farming operations lacking a direct route to the interchange crossovers. The project could spur future commercial or industrial development adjacent to the proposed interchanges potentially impacting and converting farmland to non-farmland use.

Overall, the 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative is not expected to have a significant impact to farmland.

1.4. Physical Impacts

1.4.1. Noise

A revised noise analysis was completed on May 22, 2025. Noise analyses are completed for “Type I” highway projects when the potential for project related noise impacts exists, in accordance with 23 CFR Part 772 and Iowa DOT noise policy PPM 500.07.

Sixteen of the original 29 sensitive receptors were remodeled based on potential impacts from the 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative. “Existing” and “No-Build” noise level predictions were not updated from the 2010 model predictions. Existing and no-build noise level predictions were not expected to change based on the 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative. Additionally, existing and no-build noise levels are not as significant as the “build” condition noise levels.

The predicted 2050 build condition noise levels were between -6 lower to 19 dB(A) decibels higher than the predicted existing noise levels. Out of the 16 sensitive receptors that were remodeled (near the south end of project), there were two instances of the predicted noise levels approaching or exceeding the Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) for the 2050 build condition; however, both instances were for residences that have been identified as full acquisitions. In total, there are four instances where predicted 2050 build condition noise levels substantially exceeded existing condition noise levels for the proposed alternative; however, three instances are for residences that are identified as full acquisitions; and therefore, would not require noise abatement.

Noise abatement was not considered for the one receptor, 14387 100th Street, that exceeded the NAC for the 2050 build conditions for the 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative. This residence is a single, isolated receptor, which is generally not a candidate for effective, feasible and reasonable noise abatement measures. Therefore, the 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative is not expected to result in additional impacts or change the original evaluation documented in the EA.

1.4.2. Contaminated and Regulated Materials

An environmental review for the presence of regulated materials was completed to identify potential contaminated properties on February 14, 2025. One site was identified for having the potential for contamination due to the presence of regulated materials. The former Marvin Walker Residence, 4868 Hwy 61, Wapello (PIN 1214106000) has one registered underground storage tank (DNR UST (underground storage tank) #198912758) that was installed in 1979 and removed in 1989. This property is not identified as a leaking underground storage tank site. Impact to this property appears to be limited to entrance reconstruction.

The 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative will not impact or require ROW from the above property.

1.4.3. Utilities

The project would have minor impacts to utility providers with most impacts located in and around the County Road G-62 interchange. Utility providers will be coordinated with to avoid potential conflicts and minimize planned interruptions of service. Any unavoidable service interruptions will be limited to the greatest extent possible. The 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative is not expected to result in additional impacts or change the original evaluation documented in the EA.

1.5. Resource Summary Comparison

The table below details the resource impacts as proposed in the 2019 EA Preferred Alternative, 2020 Revised Preferred Alternative, and 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative. Note that the resource impacts for the 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative does not include impacts associated with Section C of the project. Resource impacts for Section C will be reported in a future EA Addendum.

Resource	2019 EA Preferred Alternative (FONSI)*	2020 Revised Preferred Alternative*	2025 Revised Preferred Alternative (Section A & B)
Total Project Area	646 acres	646 acres	441 acres
Historic Structures	1	1	0
Historic Districts	1 (0.65 acres)	1 (0.65 acres)	0
Archaeological Sites	1 (0.43 acres)	1 (0.43 acres)	0
Floodplains	159 acres	159 acres	43 acres
National or Scenic Rivers	0	0	0
Prairie	0	0	0
Recreational Areas	2	2	0
Refuge Areas	0	0	0
Regulated Materials	2 (0.70 acres)	2 (0.70 acres)	1
Sovereign Lands	3 (60 acres)	3 (60 acres)	0
Special Rivers	383 feet	383 feet	0 feet
Streams	12,213 feet	12,213 feet	7,700 feet
Woodlands and T&E Habitat (Bats)	71 acres	71 acres	3.73 acres

Resource	2019 EA Preferred Alternative (FONSI)*	2020 Revised Preferred Alternative*	2025 Revised Preferred Alternative (Section A & B)
Unique Landforms	0	0	0
Utilities	6	6	6
Wetlands	67 acres	67 acres	7.28 acres
WMA's	2 (43 acres)	2 (43 acres)	0
Businesses	4	4	0
Churches	0	0	0
Homes	15	15	9
Schools	0	0	0
Farmland	327 acres	357 acres	289 acres

*Included Section C in total impacts.

6. Public Involvement Activities

Iowa DOT officials visited the project area and City of Wapello on September 17, 2024 to provide flyers detailing the time and location of the public hearing to several community businesses and government offices within the City of Wapello, including Wapello City Hall, Wapello Public Library, Iowa State Extension and Outreach Louisa County, Casey's General Store, Dollar General Market, Arandas 3 Mexican Restaurant, and Mediapolis Savings Bank. DOT officials made a targeted effort to reach out to individual residences at the mobile home park off 100th Street, west of Wapello. The flyer also included an offering of translation services for project information and public involvement materials upon request.

A public hearing was conducted on October 1, 2024 at the Briggs Civic Center in Wapello to discuss the potential impacts of the planned highway improvements and present the updated preliminary design. The updated design reflects a collaborative effort between state, county, and city officials. Approximately 108 people attended the public hearing in person and 27 people attended virtually to provide public input. In attendance were representatives from the City of Wapello, Louisa County, Iowa DOT District 5, Iowa DOT Location & Environment Bureau, and the design consultant to present project information, answer questions, and document concerns. The hearing began with an open session during which attendees could express their views and ask questions in an informal setting. A formal presentation, followed by a question and answers session, was held after the open forum session.

Common questions or concerns included future access concerns to agricultural land and questions regarding the right-of-way acquisition and relocation process. Two individuals provided formal comments during the public hearing. Both expressed concerns regarding the closure of 70th Street and restricting access to grain markets. The Iowa DOT agreed to take these two comments under advisement to discuss and potentially investigate a solution.

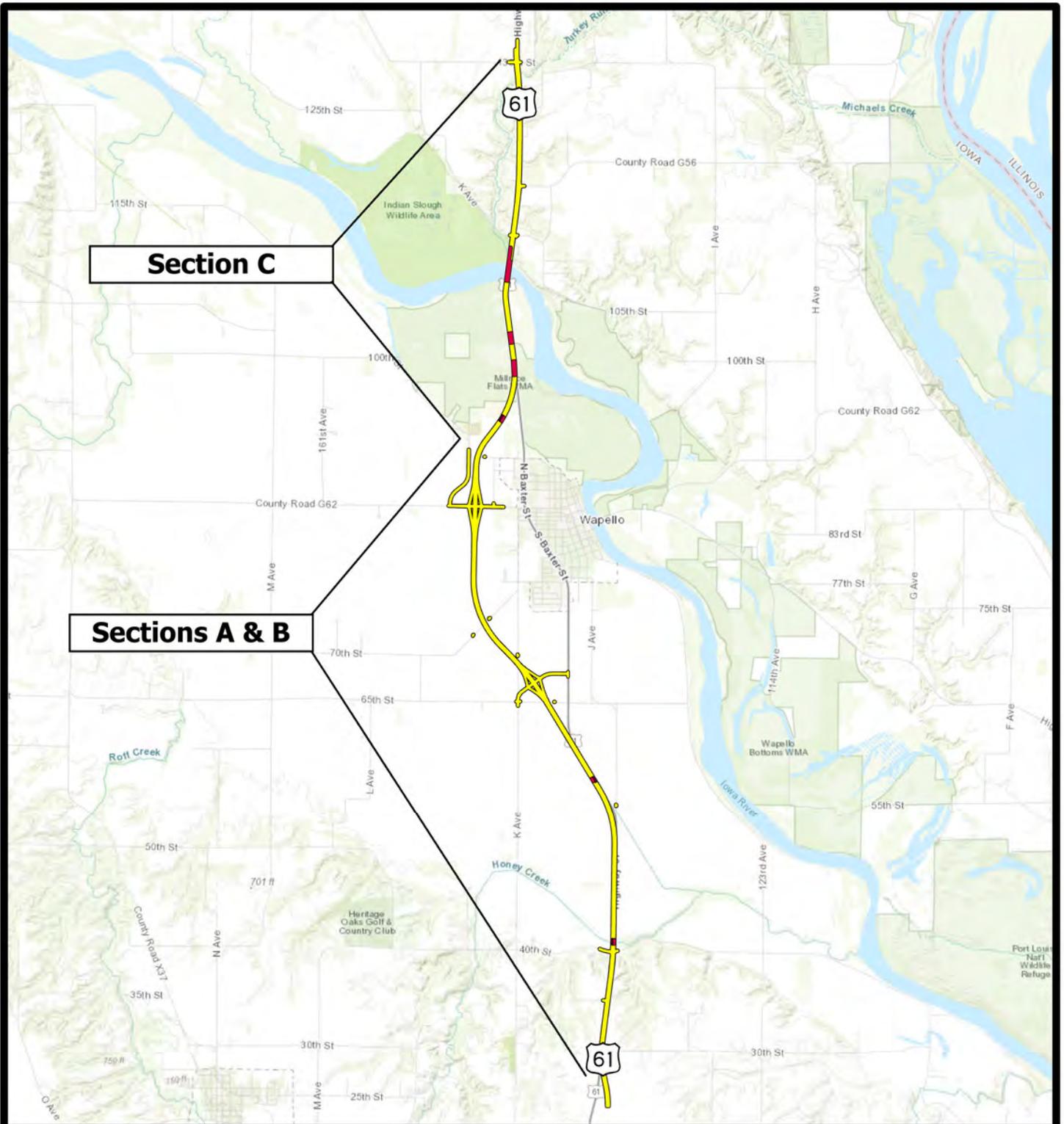
7. Agency Coordination

The Iowa DOT met with Drainage District #12 and Louisa County Engineer on August 14, 2025 to discuss the project drainage design. The Iowa DOT agreed to implement suggested changes to the drainage design north of County Road G-62. The Iowa DOT will continue to coordinate with the Drainage District and Louisa County in regard to the drainage/flowage aspects of the design.

A meeting was held on October 17, 2024 between Iowa DOT, Iowa DNR, and NRCS to discuss impacts to WMA property and NRCS easements (Section C).

APPENDIX A
FIGURES

FIGURE 1-5



IOWA DOT
 Location & Environment
 Bureau

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 Miles

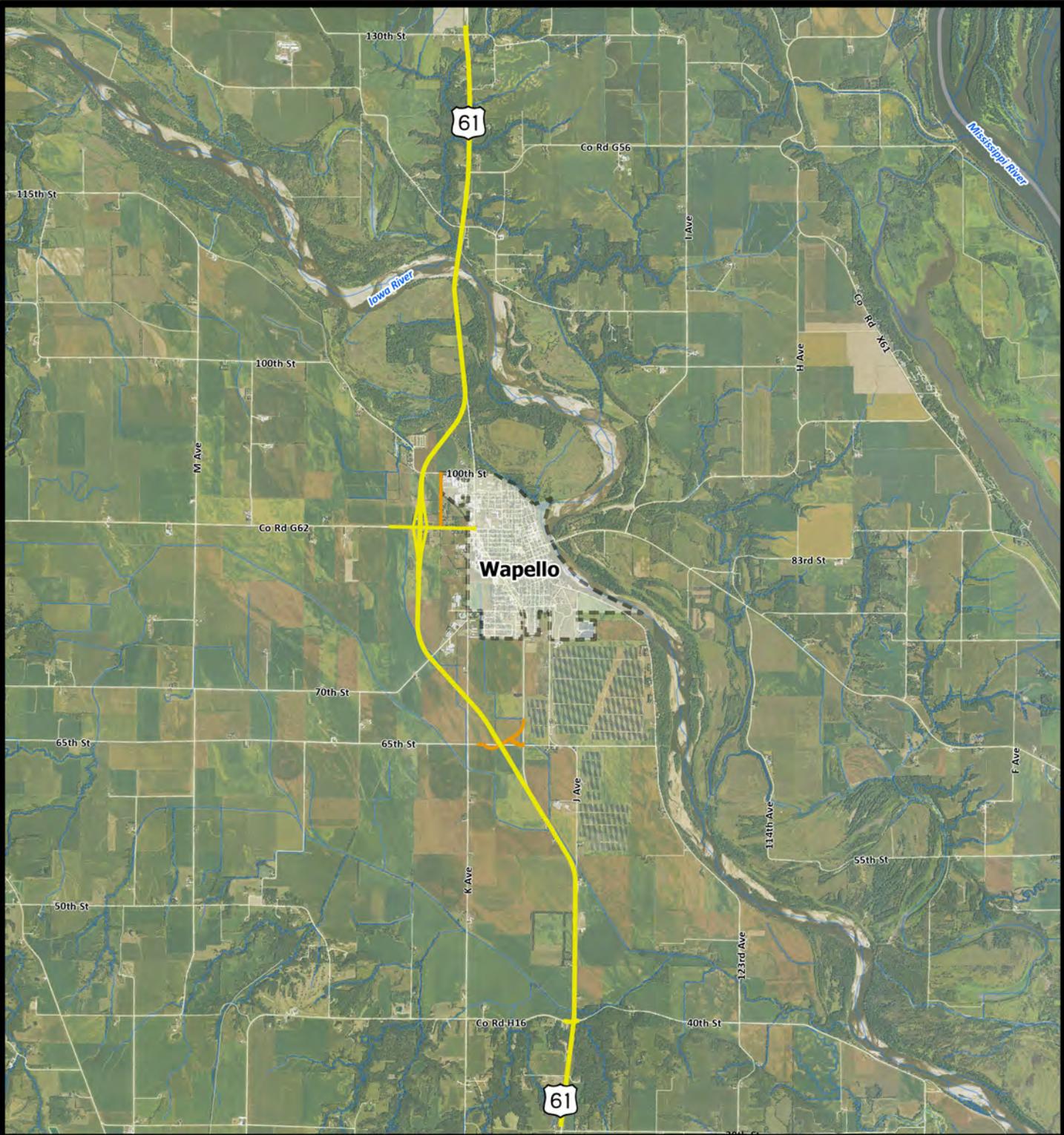
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Legend

- Project Alignment
- Future Bridge

Figure 1
Location Map
 NHSX-061-3(61)--3H-58
 0.5 mi N of IA 78 to
 130th St 2 mi S of IA 92
 Louisa County, Iowa



IOWA DOT
Location & Environment
Bureau



Created August 2025

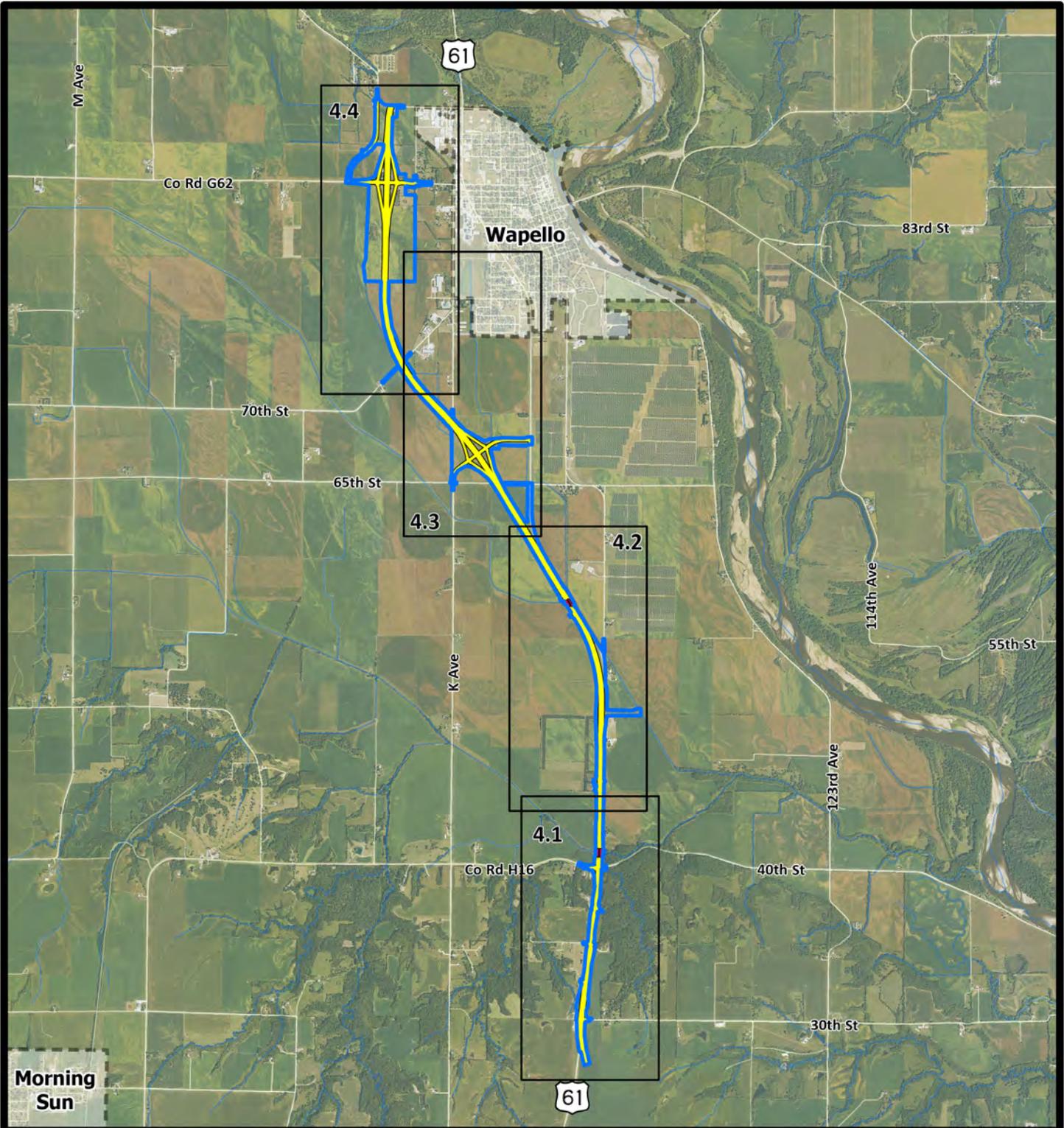


Legend

- 2019 EA Preferred Alternative
- 2020 Revised Preferred Alternative
- City Limits

Figure 2
Previous Preferred Alternatives

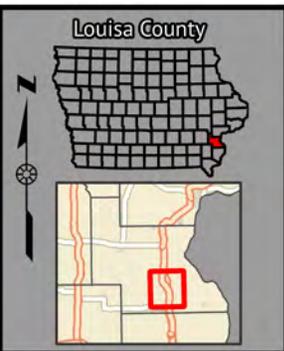
NHSX-061-3(61)--3H-58
0.5 mi N of IA 78 to
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Louisa County, Iowa



IOWA DOT
 Location & Environment
 Bureau

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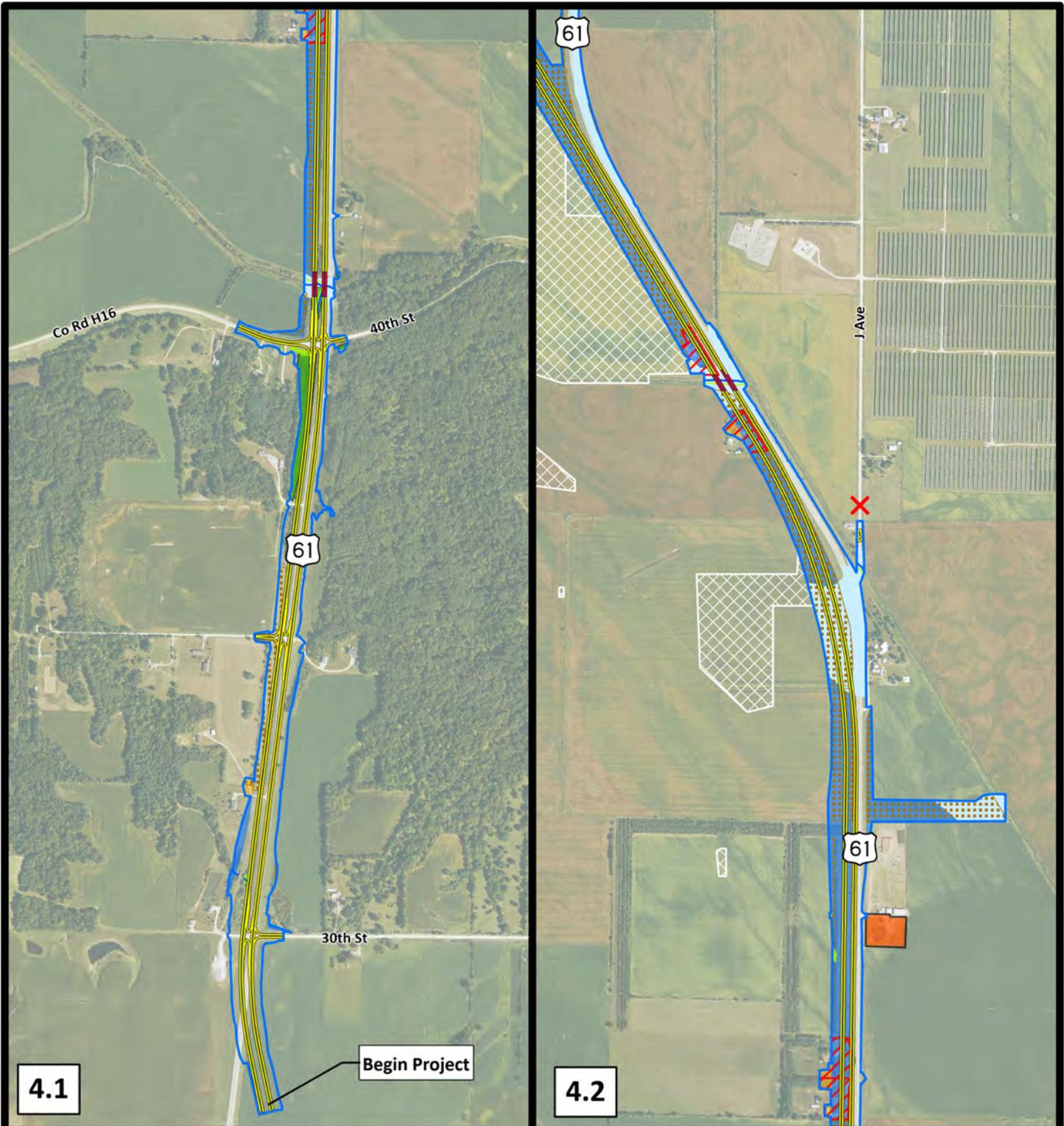
Created August 2025



Legend

- 2025 Revised Preferred Alternative
- Future Bridge
- City Limits
- NEPA Impact Area

Figure 3
2025 Revised Preferred Alternative
 NHSX-061-3(61)--3H-58
 0.5 mi N of IA 78 to
 130th St 2 mi S of IA 92
 Louisa County, Iowa



4.1

Begin Project

4.2

IOWA DOT
Location & Environment Bureau

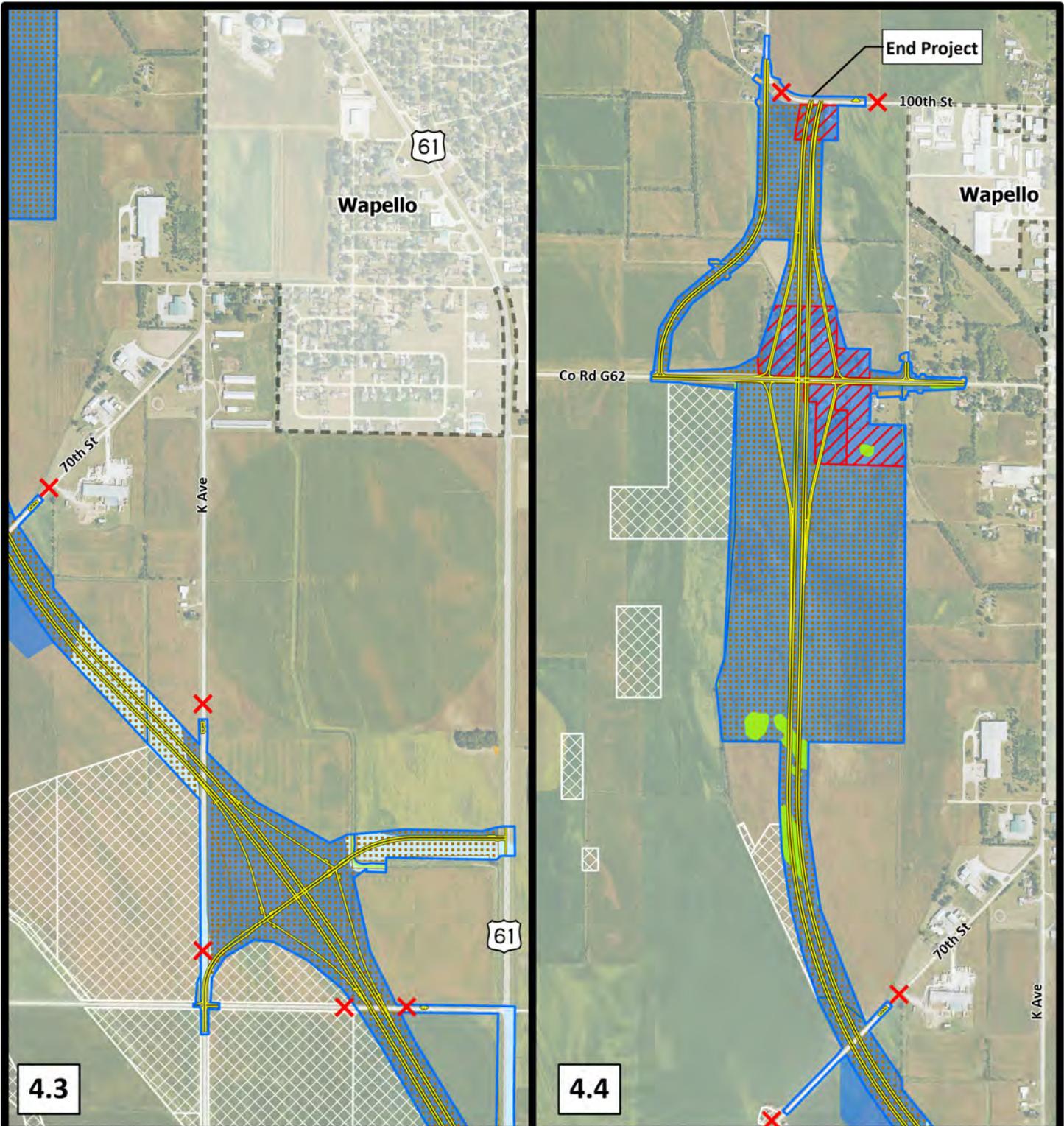
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Created August 2025

Legend	
	Future Bridge
	Revised Preferred Alternative
	Stream
	NEPA Impact Area
	Flowage/Drainage Easement
	Permanent Easement
	Temporary Easement
	Wetland
	Suitable Bat Habitat
	Farmland
	Zone A Floodplain
	Displacement
	Regulated Material Site
	Road Closure

**Figure 4a
Impact Map**

NHSX-061-3(61)--3H-58
0.5 mi N of IA 78 to
130th St 2 mi S of IA 92
Louisa County, Iowa



4.3

4.4

IOWA DOT
 Location & Environment
 Bureau

0 0.25
 Miles

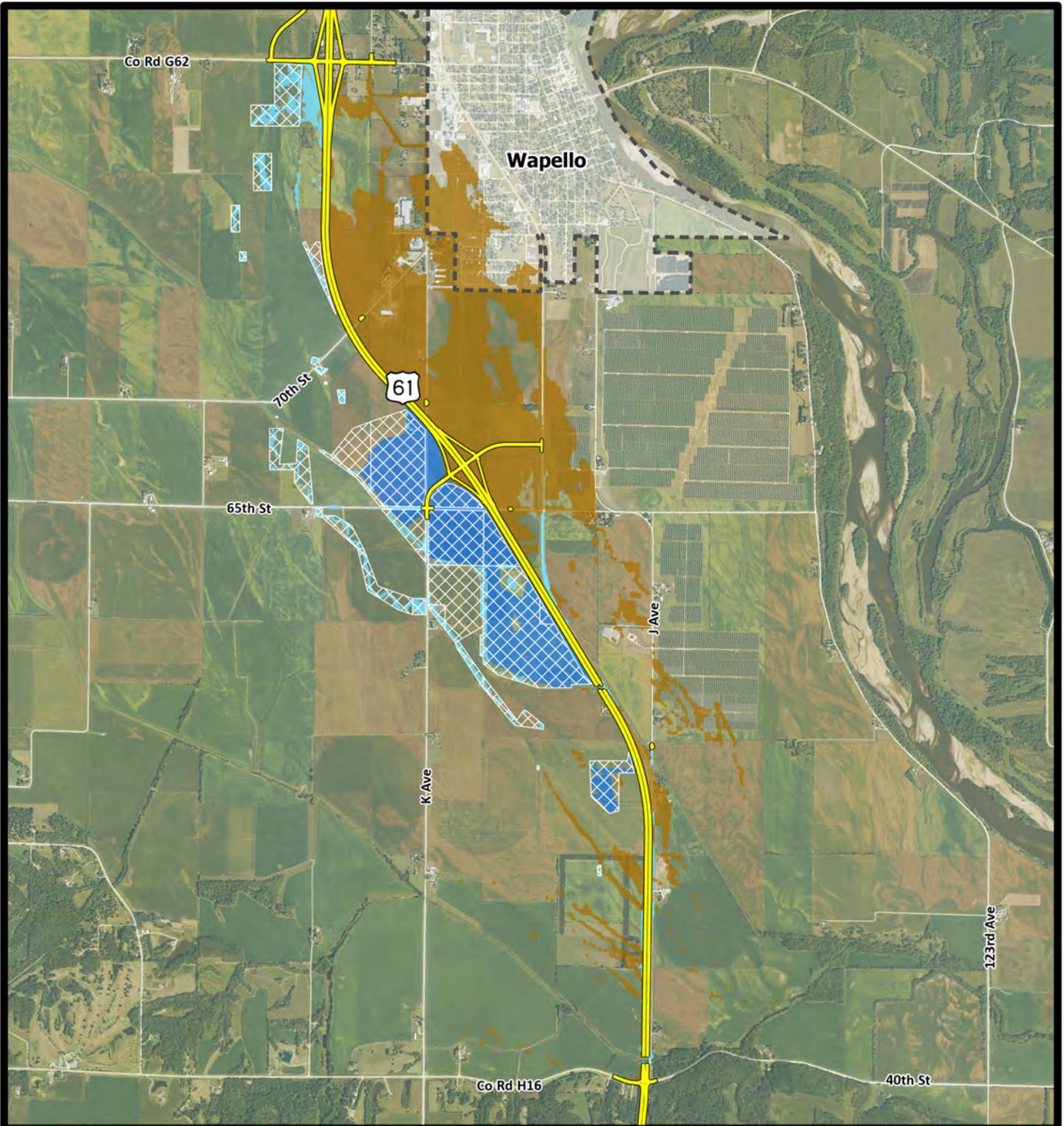
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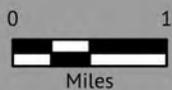
Future Bridge	Wetland
Revised Preferred Alternative	Suitable Bat Habitat
Stream	Farmland
NEPA Impact Area	Zone A Floodplain
Flowage/Drainage Easement	Displacement
Permanent Easement	Regulated Material Site
Temporary Easement	Road Closure

**Figure 4b
 Impact Map**

NHSX-061-3(61)--3H-58
 0.5 mi N of IA 78 to
 130th St 2 mi S of IA 92
 Louisa County, Iowa



IOWA DOT
Location & Environment
Bureau



Created August 2025



Legend

- Revised Preferred Alternative
- City Limits
- Flowage/Drainage Easement

Drainage Impacts

- Inundated (Post-Construction)
- Dry (Post-Construction)
- Backwater (1.5 ft deep)

**Figure 5
Drainage Map**

NHSX-061-3(61)--3H-58

0.5 mi N of IA 78 to
130th St 2 mi S of IA 92

Louisa County, Iowa

APPENDIX B
Agency Coordination

From: [LaPietra, Mike \(FHWA\)](#)
To: [Walter, Blake \[DOT\]](#)
Subject: RE: NEPA Re-Evaluation Plan - NHSX-061-3(61)--3H-58
Date: Monday, October 21, 2024 3:29:20 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

CAUTION:

This email originated from outside the Iowa Department of Transportation.
Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Walter,

Concur.

Thanks,

Mike LaPietra
Transportation Specialist
FHWA Iowa Division
105 Sixth Street, Ames IA 50010
Phone: 515-233-7302
Fax: 515-233-7499

From: Walter, Blake [DOT] <Blake.Walter@iowadot.us>
Sent: Monday, October 21, 2024 12:59 PM
To: LaPietra, Mike (FHWA) <Mike.LaPietra@dot.gov>
Cc: Newell, Deeann <DeeAnn.Newell@iowadot.us>
Subject: NEPA Re-Evaluation Plan - NHSX-061-3(61)--3H-58

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Department of Transportation (DOT). Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Mike,

Project Background

On December 6, 2017, the Environmental Assessment was signed for the U.S. 61 improvements between IA 78 and 130th Street in Louisa County. The FONSI for the project was signed on September 17, 2019. A re-evaluation was completed on December 14, 2020. Additional design modifications have been made following the 2020 re-evaluation. For this current re-evaluation, it was determined the Iowa DOT needed to draft an addendum to the Environmental Assessment to cover these additional design modifications.

Schedule Change

There have been changes to the project schedule that affect the NEPA re-evaluation. Attached is a figure showing the original project schedule for each project section (A-C) of the project. Grading was scheduled to begin in FY27 for all sections. Complexities arising from certain design elements and various environmental impacts (i.e., NRCS easement impacts, wetland mitigation banking, and T&E monitoring) in Section C has necessitated a change in schedule. It is now being proposed to delay grading for Section C

only until FY 2029, in order to identify resolutions to the design and environmental impacts.

Proposed NEPA Approach

For this current re-evaluation, the DOT proposes completing two separate addendums to the Environmental Assessment. The first addendum would re-evaluate Sections A & B in an effort to receive concurrence in time to begin the ROW process in FY26 and commence grading activities in FY27. The second addendum would re-evaluate Section C as soon as solutions/mitigation have been identified for the design and environmental impacts, with a goal of receiving concurrence in time for ROW in FY28 and grading to begin FY29. This addendum will address the NRCS easement impacts that occur only within Section C.

A single re-evaluation for all sections of the project would result in a delay for the entire project. This proposed solution satisfies DOT’s NEPA obligations while still fitting the anticipated project schedule.

Do you concur with this approach given the information provided? Please let me know if you need any more information or have questions.

County : Louisa
Project Code : 11-58-061-010
Phase Number : NHSX-061-3(61)--3H-58
Location : 0.5 mi N of IA 78 to 130th St 2 mi S of IA 92
Work Code : 9040-Preliminary Engineering
Project Directory : 5806101011
NEPA Classification : EA
NEPA Project Type : Reconstruction
Road Type : Primary
NEPA ID : 5379
NEPA Clearance : 04/03/2023
NEPA Reevaluation : 12/14/2020

Thanks,
Blake

Blake Walter
NEPA Partner
Location and Environment
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, Iowa, 50010
515-239-1527
Blake.Walter@iowadot.us
iowadot.gov



Determination of Effect for Threatened & Endangered Species

Form 760004 (08-13)

Project Name: Preliminary Engineering		Highway No.: US 61	County: Louisa
Project No.: NHSX-061-3(61)--3H-58	Letting Date: 2/16/2027	PLSS/UTM:	Station No.:
Project Description: Sections A and B of the US 61 Wapello bypass. Includes two new interchanges (G62 and 65 th St) and improving US 61 from two lanes to a divided four-lane highway.			
Are there documented occurrences of T&E species within 1 mile of the project?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<i>If yes, list species:</i> A review of references checked below identified occurrences of Grass Pickerel (<i>Esox americanus</i>), Sweet Indian Plantain (<i>Cacalia suaveolens</i>), and Curved-pod Corydalis (<i>Corydalis curvisiliqua</i>) within one mile of the project.			
Are there documented occurrences of T&E species within the limits of construction?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
<i>If yes, list species:</i> A review of the references checked below determined that no documented species are located within the project's limits of construction.			
Is there likely to be habitat for T&E species within the project's limits of construction?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<i>If yes, list species:</i> A review conducted of the references checked below determined that habitat for the Indiana Bat, Northern Long-eared Bat, and Tricolored Bat occurs within the project's limits of construction. Additionally, habitat for the Blanding's Turtle and Eastern Musk Turtle occur at the north end of the project.			
Describe current geographic setting (native habitats, adjacent land use, etc.) and potential project impacts: Forested wetlands at north end of project adjacent to Millrace Flats WMA. Mostly agricultural areas moving south until Honey Creek and forested riparian zones to the south. Total of 22.7 acres of suitable bat habitat within project limits. Bat habitat is moderate to mostly low quality based on species and demography of forest communities.			
Will the project likely require borrow?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
DETERMINATION OF EFFECT ACTION			
<input type="checkbox"/> No Effect <input type="checkbox"/> No Effect (by following recommendations) <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Further Study <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> May Affect – Not Likely to Adversely Affect <input type="checkbox"/> May Affect – Likely to Adversely Affect			
Further Study – Consisting of the Following		Iowa DOT Recommendations	
		Winter tree clearing according to Standard Spec 2101.01A. Exclusion fencing surrounding construction areas at the north end of the project adjacent to floodplain wetlands of Millrace Flats WMA and Millrace Creek.	
References: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natural Areas Inventory <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> T&E Species Range Maps <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos <input type="checkbox"/> Soils of Concern Data <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: D05 dated 1/2/2025			
Prepared by: B. Struecker		Date: 2/20/2025	
Agency Concurrence: LINCOLN OLIVER		Date:	
		Digitally signed by LINCOLN OLIVER Date: 2025.03.20 14:21:48 -05'00'	

INDIVIDUAL SPECIES EVALUATION - Determination of Effect for Threatened & Endangered Species (Continued)

Project Name:		Highway No.:	County:
Project No.:	Letting Date:	PLSS/UTM:	Station No.:

SPECIES EVALUATION

Species of Concern:	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State	Species Trait or Characteristic:
---------------------	---	----------------------------------

Description of Project Impacts:

Direct Effects from habitat/species impacts: Take Harm Harass

Effects beneficial, insignificant, and/or discountable Effects possible but can be managed Effects are major

Indirect Effects from habitat/species impacts: Harm Harass

Effects beneficial, insignificant, and/or discountable Effects possible but can be managed Effects are major

Cumulative Effects from habitat/species impacts: Harm Harass

Effects beneficial, insignificant, and/or discountable Effects possible but can be managed Effects are major

NOTES:

SPECIES SPECIFIC DETERMINATION OF EFFECT

May Affect – Not Likely to Adversely Affect May Affect – Likely to Adversely Affect

Prepared by:	Date:
Agency Concurrence:	Date:

12/2/2024

BROCK STRUECKER
KENNETH BRINK
IOWA DOT
800 LINCOLN WAY
AMES, IA 50010

RE: Environmental Review for Natural Resources 2024-1448ER-01
Project Description: US 61 bypass around Wapello NHSX-061-3(61)--3H-58. This is the middle segment crossing the Iowa River. Work includes 4 lanes of US 61 on new alignment.
Project Location: Iowa River and Millrace Flats
Project County: Louisa
Project Latitude / Longitude Location(s): 41.1763/-91.2041
Project Legal Description: Sec. 34/T75N/R03W

Dear Kenneth Brink,

Thank you for inviting Department comment on the impact of this project. The Department has records of various species in the project area and outlined below. The review below looks at both the 2014 Stantec report and Department records and knowledge. Department records and data are not the result of thorough field surveys. If listed species or rare communities are found during the planning or construction phases, additional studies and/or mitigation may be required.

The Threatened and Endangered Plant Species Habitat Assessment by Stantec identified several species and the DOT should be aware of the potential for the following species to occur in the project area. The Department has the following comments:

There are two areas of upland forest habitat in the overall project area, one at the north end and one at the south end. The Stantec report identified several species with suitable habitat: Marginal Shield Fern (*Dryopteris marginalis*, state-Threatened), Oval Ladies-tresses (*Spiranthes ovalis*, presently state-Threatened but likely to be delisted in pending update of the state list), and False Hellebore (*Veratrum woodii*, now renamed *Melanthium woodii*, presently state-Threatened but likely to be delisted in pending update). One additional species we recommend adding to the list of plant species with suitable habitat in upland woods based on nearby records is Pinesap (*Monotropa hypopitys*, state-Threatened).

One area of bottomland habitat in the central part of the project area in in the Iowa River floodplain with a complex of public wildlife areas including Indian Slough, Wapello Bottoms, and Millrace Flats. The Stantec report identified several species with suitable habitat: Cliff Conobea (*Leucospora multifida*, presently state-Endangered but likely to be relisted as state-Threatened), Sweet Indian Plantain (*Cacalia suaveolens*, now renamed *Hasteola suaveolens*, presently state-Threatened but likely to be relisted as Special Concern), Yellow Monkey Flower (*Mimulus glabratus*, presently state-Threatened but likely to be relisted as Special Concern), Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid (*Platanthera leucophaea*, federally Threatened, state-Endangered), Pale Green Orchid (*Platanthera flava*, presently state-Endangered but likely to be relisted as Special Concern).

The Stantec habitat assessment (completed in 2014) evaluated suitable habitat for a number of state-listed animal species. Listed Endangered species include: Red-Shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), Northern Harrier State (*Circus cyaneus*), King Rail (*Rallus elegans*), and the Copperbelly Water Snake (*Nerodia erythrogaster neglecta*). Threatened species include: Diamond Water Snake (*Nerodia rhombifera*), Speckled Kingsnake (*Lampropeltis getulus*), Blanding's turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*; also under review for federal protection), Musk Turtle (*Sternotherus odoratus*), and the Grass Pickerel (*Esox americanus*). Other Species of Note (State Special Concern): Zabulon Skipper (*Poanes zabulon*), Zebra Swallowtail (*Eurytides marcellus*), and the Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*).

The report of the 2014 mussel survey indicates river habitat in the project corridor above and below the bridge is predominantly shifting sands and unsuitable for mussels. Only three living mussels, all common species, were collected during the survey. This is consistent with NAI records for the area.

The project is within the range of the Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, and/or tricolored bat; and there are numerous occurrence records of these bat species including the northern long-eared bat within the identified corridor. DOT is aware of the location of roost trees. Tree removal should follow the DOT range-wide programmatic consultation with the Federal Highway Administration for transportation and the most current USFWS guidance.

The Department has records of active eagle nests in the vicinity of this project. Bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) were removed from the federal list of threatened and endangered species in 2007, and are no longer protected under the Endangered Species Act. However, bald eagles remain protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Please contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Rock Island Field Office, 1511 47th Avenue, Moline, IL 61265 regarding the proposed project.

DNR Fisheries Bureau recommends that every effort should be made to minimize disturbance to wetlands, backwaters, and the river channel in an effort to preserve habitat or to prevent large plumes of sediment which travel downstream leading to reductions in water quality. These sorts of changes can impact fish and wildlife. Fish will often move to escape these sorts of negative impacts (but not always). Mussel beds can be partially buried once sediment settles. Disturbance to wetlands and backwaters can change how an ecosystems function, such as reducing connectivity to main channel areas which may reduce/block access for use by aquatic organisms. Minimizing disturbance by ensuring impacts are restricted to within the construction zone will be key. Impacts of any sort should be minimized especially given suitable habitat exists to support many different threatened and endangered species. Moreover, common species should remain common post-construction.

Wildlife Bureau comments are attached to this review letter along with the Land Owner Concurrence Letter. Also attached is the navigable waters signage plan and should be shared with the DOT engineering group.

This letter is a record of review for protected species, rare natural communities, state lands and waters in the project area, including review by personnel representing state parks, preserves, recreation areas, fisheries and wildlife but does not include comment from the Environmental Services Division of this Department. Department data are not the result of thorough field surveys. If additional endangered or threatened listed species or rare communities are found during the planning or construction phases, additional studies and/or mitigation may be required. This letter does not constitute a permit. Other permits may be required from the Department or other state or federal agencies before work begins on this project.

Please reference the following DNR Environmental Review/Sovereign Land Program tracking number assigned to this project in all future correspondence related to this project: 2024-1448ER-01.

If you have questions about this letter or require further information, please contact me at 515-330-6432.

Sincerely, **Casey Laskowski**
Digitally signed by Casey Laskowski
Date: 2024.12.02 13:27:43 -06'00'

Casey Laskowski
Environmental Specialist
Conservation and Recreation Division

APPENDIX C

NRCS FARMLAND CPA-106 FORM

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

PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency)	3. Date of Land Evaluation Request	4. Sheet 1 of _____
---	------------------------------------	---------------------

1. Name of Project	5. Federal Agency Involved
--------------------	----------------------------

2. Type of Project	6. County and State
--------------------	---------------------

PART II (To be completed by NRCS)	1. Date Request Received by NRCS	2. Person Completing Form
--	----------------------------------	---------------------------

3. Does the corridor contain prime, unique statewide or local important farmland? (If no, the FPPA does not apply - Do not complete additional parts of this form). YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	4. Acres Irrigated Average Farm Size
---	--

5. Major Crop(s)	6. Farmable Land in Government Jurisdiction Acres: _____ %	7. Amount of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: _____ %
------------------	---	--

8. Name Of Land Evaluation System Used	9. Name of Local Site Assessment System	10. Date Land Evaluation Returned by NRCS
--	---	---

PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency)	Alternative Corridor For Segment			
---	---	--	--	--

	Corridor A	Corridor B	Corridor C	Corridor D
--	------------	------------	------------	------------

A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly				
---	--	--	--	--

B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly, Or To Receive Services				
---	--	--	--	--

C. Total Acres In Corridor				
----------------------------	--	--	--	--

PART IV (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information				
--	--	--	--	--

A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland				
--	--	--	--	--

B. Total Acres Statewide And Local Important Farmland				
---	--	--	--	--

C. Percentage Of Farmland in County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted				
---	--	--	--	--

D. Percentage Of Farmland in Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value				
--	--	--	--	--

PART V (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information Criterion Relative value of Farmland to Be Serviced or Converted (Scale of 0 - 100 Points)				
--	--	--	--	--

PART VI (To be completed by Federal Agency) Corridor Assessment Criteria (These criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5(c))	Maximum Points			
--	-----------------------	--	--	--

1. Area in Nonurban Use	15			
-------------------------	----	--	--	--

2. Perimeter in Nonurban Use	10			
------------------------------	----	--	--	--

3. Percent Of Corridor Being Farmed	20			
-------------------------------------	----	--	--	--

4. Protection Provided By State And Local Government	20			
--	----	--	--	--

5. Size of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average	10			
--	----	--	--	--

6. Creation Of Nonfarmable Farmland	25			
-------------------------------------	----	--	--	--

7. Availability Of Farm Support Services	5			
--	---	--	--	--

8. On-Farm Investments	20			
------------------------	----	--	--	--

9. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services	25			
---	----	--	--	--

10. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use	10			
--	----	--	--	--

TOTAL CORRIDOR ASSESSMENT POINTS	160			
----------------------------------	-----	--	--	--

PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency)				
---	--	--	--	--

Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)	100			
--	-----	--	--	--

Total Corridor Assessment (From Part VI above or a local site assessment)	160			
---	-----	--	--	--

TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)	260			
--	------------	--	--	--

1. Corridor Selected:	2. Total Acres of Farmlands to be Converted by Project:	3. Date Of Selection:	4. Was A Local Site Assessment Used? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
-----------------------	---	-----------------------	--

5. Reason For Selection:

Signature of Person Completing this Part:	DATE
---	------

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