

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

For

**U.S. 218
FROM CEDAR RIVER TO IOWA 116 INTERCHANGE
NEAR WAVERLY
NHSX-218-8(124)--3H-09**

BREMER COUNTY, IOWA

The FHWA has determined that this project will not have any significant impact on the human and natural environment. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is based on the attached Environmental Assessment which has been independently evaluated by the FHWA and determined to adequately and accurately discuss the need, environmental issues, impacts of the proposed project and appropriate mitigation measures. It provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. The FHWA takes full responsibility for the accuracy, scope and content of the attached Environmental Assessment.

Date

8/21/2015

For FHWA

Michael S. Peltier

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action consists of upgrading U.S. 218 from the Janesville Cedar River Bridge crossing north to the Iowa 116 interchange near Waverly in Bremer County, Iowa. It passes through a rural mix of land uses, including farmland, rural residential and a housing subdivision.

The current roadway is a 4-lane, rural facility with a divided median with access allowed at 1,000-foot spacing. Currently, there are a total of 16 at-grade access points that allow direct access onto U.S. 218 in this portion of the roadway. These 16 access points were tallied by counting each entrance on U.S. 218 from the east and west so that, for instance, 250th Street was counted as two access points. The accesses include farm field accesses, residential accesses and public roadways. Traffic volumes on U.S. 218 have increased significantly since it opened in the early 1990s. This increase in traffic, coupled with numerous at-grade intersections, has resulted in safety and traffic operation issues. Therefore, this project proposes to improve the roadway by reducing access to interchanges only.

NOTICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AVAILABILITY

Notification of the availability of the Environmental Assessment (EA) was forwarded to local, state and federal agencies on April 1, 2015. Notices for availability of the EA were published on May 12 and 14, 2015, in the Waverly Bremer County Independent and Waverly Democrat newspapers, respectively. Advertisements of public hearing were published in the Waverly Bremer County Independent and Waverly Democrat newspapers on May 19 and May 21, 2015, respectively. Notice of the public hearing was also included on the Iowa DOT website at www.iowadot.gov/pim.

PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY AND COMMENT PERIOD

A Public Hearing was held for this project on June 2, 2015, in Janesville, Iowa. There were 100 persons present at the June 2, 2015, Public Hearing held at the Riviera Roose Community Center. Displays of the EA graphics, including the Preferred Alternative, were available for viewing. The hearing began with an open forum session where attendees could ask questions and express concerns and was followed by a formal presentation in which several persons had questions and comments. There were two comment letters left during the hearing, and six letters were received following the hearing. Closing date for comments on the Public Hearing and EA was June 16, 2015.

A transcript of the hearing has been prepared and forwarded to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The transcript, which is a separate written document, is available to anyone by request through the Iowa DOT Office of Location and Environment, Public Involvement Section.

AGENCY COMMENTS

Three agencies responded to the EA notification and distribution. Letters from the Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Iowa Department of Natural Resources appear in Appendix A of this Finding of No Significant Impact. Responses to these agency comments are shown in Table 1 below.

**TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF AGENCY COMMENTS**

Date	Agency and Comment	Response
April 6, 2015	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Further Comment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Response Necessary
June 15, 2015	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommends placing shrubs and trees for visual noise and particulate matter barrier. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the noise abatement cost/benefit analysis did not justify adding noise barriers, during final design, Iowa DOT will consider using methods to reduce tire/pavement noise. Longitudinal grooving of pavements has been shown to be quieter than transverse grooving used in the past. Also, at the time of final design, Iowa DOT may consider if trees and shrubs can be safely and effectively added to the right-of-way as a way of screening residences from the adjacent roadway.
June 23, 2015	Iowa Department of Natural Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No site-specific records found. • If listed species are encountered in future phases, additional studies and/or mitigation may be required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Response Necessary

CHANGES FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE EA

Traffic Counts

Following publication of the EA, it was noted that the traffic volumes presented in Table 3-1 were inaccurate. Table 2 shows the revised volumes.

**TABLE 2
REVISED TRAFFIC VOLUMES FROM EA**

Location	Year					
	1996	2000	2005	2013	2020	2040
Maple Street at North Limits of Janesville	7,300	12,100	16,100	18,506	21,747	31,804
Iowa 116 Interchange	8,200	13,900	17,100	19,291	23,046	33,735

Residential Displacements

On page 14 of the EA, it stated that “seven (7) residential properties would be subject to relocation.” However, it should have stated that up to seven (7) residential properties would potentially be subject to relocation. During final design, efforts will be made to minimize impacts to adjacent properties.

BASIS FOR FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

This FONSI documents compliance with NEPA and all other applicable environmental laws, Executive Orders and related requirements.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS ASSOCIATED WITH LOCATION APPROVAL

Relocation Assistance

A total of up to seven (7) potential residential displacements could occur. During final design, every effort will be made to minimize the number of homes displaced. Iowa DOT will provide more information about actual displacements during the final design process. Any displacements and other land acquisitions will be made in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

Noise Mitigation

During final design, Iowa DOT will consider methods to reduce tire/pavement noise on US 218 to adjacent properties. Utilizing longitudinal grooving on the pavement may help reduce noise and will be analyzed for use on this project.

Permitting and Approvals

Construction of the project will involve routine permitting. A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit will be obtained during final design of the project. Also, a Section 404 permit will be required for wetland impacts.

Appendix A
Agency Comment Letters



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Rock Island Field Office
1511 47th Avenue
Moline, Illinois 61265
Phone: (309) 757-5800 Fax: (309) 757-5807

IN REPLY REFER
TO

FWS/RIFO

April 6, 2015

Mr. James Rost, Director
Office of Location and Environment
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, Iowa 50010

Dear Mr. Rost:

We have reviewed your April 1, 2015, request for any additional comments we may have regarding the Environmental Assessment for upgrading U.S. 218 from Cedar River to the Iowa 116 Interchange near Waverly, in Bremer County, Iowa (NHSX-218-8(124)—3H-09). We have reviewed the document and have no further comments.

This precludes the need for further action on this project as required under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. Should this project be modified or new information indicate endangered species may be affected, consultation should be initiated.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact Heidi Woeber of my staff at extension 209.

Sincerely,


Kraig McPeek
Field Supervisor

Newell, Deeann [DOT]

From: Summerlin, Joe <summerlin.joe@epa.gov>
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2015 8:58 AM
To: Newell, Deeann [DOT]
Subject: US 218 From Cedar River to the Iowa 116 Interchange Near Waverly in Bremer County, IA NHSX-218-8(124)--3H-09

Dear Mrs. Newell:

This letter corresponds to the environmental assessment dated March 11, 2015 concerning U.S. Hwy. 218 from Cedar River to the Iowa 116 interchange near Waverly, IA. Thank you for involving the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) during the consideration of environmental impacts either to or from this project.

In evaluating this action, I referred to EPA Region 7's NEPAassist database for spatial relationships of environmentally regulated facilities and remediation sites. No issues were found that should interfere with the planned project.

In the noise section of the document, it noted that Iowa Department of Transportation performed an economic assessment on noise barriers and found that the cost/benefit analysis would preclude neighborhoods from receiving any protections. Several FHWA and EPA studies have shown that noise barriers, including vegetative barriers, reduce ambient air pollution as much as 50% in nearby homes. EPA recommends placing, at the bare minimum, shrubs and trees that would not only provide a visual barrier, but also, some noise protection and reduce ultra-fine particulate matter levels from entering nearby homes.

Also, EPA recommends Iowa DoT reads and becomes familiar with the Revised Draft Guidance for Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change Impacts, dated December 18, 2014.

Sincerely,

Joe Summerlin
NEPA Reviewer
EPA, Region 7
11201 Renner Blvd.
Lenexa, KS 66219
(913) 551-7029

Newell, Deeann [DOT]

From: Moore, Seth [DNR]
Sent: Tuesday, June 23, 2015 4:03 PM
To: Newell, Deeann [DOT]
Cc: Sipe, Stacey [DNR]
Subject: Environmental Review for Natural Resources 11580

Dear Ms. Newell

US 218 from Cedar River Bridges in Janesville N. to IA 116 Interchange in Waverly
NHSX-218-8(124)—3H-09

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

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

Please reference the following DNR Environmental Review/Sovereign Land Program tracking number assigned to this project in all future correspondence related to this project: 11580.

If you have questions about this letter or require further information, please contact me at (515) 725-8464.

SETH MOORE Sovereign Lands & Environmental Review Coordinator



Iowa Department of Natural Resources
515.725.8464 | seth.moore@dnr.iowa.gov
502 E. 9th Street | Des Moines, IA 50319-0034

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Leading Iowans in Caring for Our Natural Resources.