

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

for the

**East Side Corridor/SD100 Project
(Northern Segment: I-90 Exit 402 to Madison Street)**

Minnehaha County, South Dakota

DOE/EA – 2067

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Western Area Power Administration (WAPA)

ACTION: Adoption of Environmental Assessment (EA), issuance of Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), and selection of Preferred Alternative for implementation.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) have proposed to construct a 17-mile regional arterial roadway to connect I-29 to I-90 along the northeastern edge of the city of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The roadway is referred to as the East Side Corridor Project, also known as South Dakota Highway 100 (SD100).

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), FHWA and SDDOT completed an EA (2003) and Supplemental EA (2012) for the SD100 Project (hereafter, “EA”). For each phase of the SD100 Project, FHWA and SDDOT will re-evaluate the EA to ensure the analysis is still accurate and will also prepare a site-specific evaluation of the proposed work.

There are four major phases of the project. Phase 1, also called the Northern Segment, is 4 miles long and extends from the interchange of I-90 and North Timberline Avenue to south of Madison Street. In order to complete the Northern Segment, WAPA has proposed to undertake a federal action. WAPA will have no federal involvement during the remaining three phases of the project.

In September of 2014, FHWA and SDDOT completed a site-specific EA for the Northern Segment. In August of 2016, FHWA, SDDOT completed a second site-specific evaluation for the Northern Segment. The 2016 reevaluation was necessary because of changes to the project design and the need to recognize WAPA as a federal agency. In July of 2017, FHWA and SDDOT completed a third site-specific evaluation to describe off-site tree and stream mitigation sites, which were required by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Clean Water Act. Collectively, the 2014, 2016, and 2017 reevaluations are referred to as “reevaluations.” WAPA cooperated with FHWA and SDDOT during the development of the reevaluations.

WAPA has independently reviewed FHWA and SDDOT’s EA and subsequent reevaluations and determined they meet DOE NEPA standards. The EA and reevaluations included an assessment of the environmental effects of the individual actions which WAPA has jurisdiction over, as well as an analysis and disclosure of the potential environmental impacts of the SD100 Project.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: A copy of all SD100 associated NEPA documents are available at the following website:

<http://www.wapa.gov/ugp/Environment/default.htm>. For additional information, please contact:

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PROPOSED ACTION: FHWA and SDDOT propose to construct a 17-mile roadway to connect I-29 to I-90 near the Sioux Falls, South Dakota area. The Preferred Alternative for the Northern Segment is Alternative 4a of the EA, along with the design changes described in the reevaluations. A full and complete description of Alternative 4a can be found on page 4-1 of the 2014 reevaluation. A full and complete description of the design changes can be found on page 3 of the 2016 reevaluation.

Alternative 4a plus the associated design changes, hereafter called “2016 Preferred Alternative,” involves the following WAPA actions:

- Raising and relocating multiple WAPA structures along the Gavins Point to Sioux Falls and Brookings to Sioux Falls transmission lines,
- Modifying WAPA’s Sioux Falls Substation by relocating the septic system and relocating the access driveway onto WAPA property,
- Coordinating and executing temporary access agreements and easement outgrants to be issued to SDDOT, and
- Constructing an above-ground drainage system along WAPA’s Sioux Falls substation

ALTERNATIVES: DOE’s NEPA regulations require that EAs include a “No Action” alternative (10 CFR §1021.321(c)). The SD100 EA and reevaluations presented a “No Build” alternative, which assumed the project would not be constructed. A range of several build alternatives were developed and presented in the EA. Build alternatives varied from each other in several aspects, for example, in the number of lanes of traffic, access points, design speed, design criteria (alignments), and interchanges.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: Throughout the course of the project, there have been substantial opportunities for public involvement. Between 2001 and 2011, six public meetings were held and comments were accepted for 30 days after each draft version of the EA. An additional public meeting was held in October of 2014, along with a 30-day comment period. Since 2015, the public has been notified of the findings of each reevaluation.

Agency coordination with Federal, State and local governments was initiated in November of 2001 and continues to the present day. Agencies contacted include South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; South Dakota State Historical Preservation Office; among others.

Tribal coordination was initiated with several American Indian Tribes, beginning in 2003 and continuing to the present day. The tribal parties that were consulted regarding the Project were:

- Three Affiliated Tribes
- Ponca Tribe of Nebraska
- Flandreau-Santee Sioux Tribe
- Lower Brule Sioux Tribe
- Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate
- Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
- Yankton Sioux Tribe

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS: The EA and reevaluations disclosed the potential environmental impacts of the Project and alternatives (including the No Action and the 2016 Preferred Alternative).

Table 1: Summary of Environmental Impacts of 2016 Preferred Alternative

<i>Resource Area</i>	<i>Impacts</i>
Land	The City of Sioux Falls, along with Minnehaha County, has planned for land use conversion and future residential and commercial development in the project vicinity. The Preferred Alternative is consistent with the expected development considered in the land use plans and long-range transportation plans.
Utilities	Impacts to private and public utilities will occur. Construction will likely require relocation of natural gas, sanitary sewer, storm water sewer, water, and telecommunication lines. Some utilities will be relocated within existing right-of-way, while other utilities will require additional right-of-way. Specifically, twelve WAPA transmission poles will be relocated. Two of the poles will require additional right-of-way.
Pedestrians and Bicycles	A new 10-foot wide path and additional crossing signals will improve pedestrian and bicycle access and safety.
Visual Impacts and Aesthetics	The viewshed and landscape will be altered from a rural, agricultural setting to an urban roadway setting.
Archeological and Historic Resources	No Adverse Effect.
Economic Resources	All businesses north of the I-90/N. Timberline Avenue interchange will be temporarily impacted during construction as a result of modifications to their existing access points and existing landscaping.
Environmental Justice	Minority and low-income populations are present within the project area, however, these populations will not experience adverse or disproportionate effects as a result of the project.
Noise	Two impacted residences.
Relocations	Three residences will be acquired and minor right-of-way acquisitions will be needed from roughly six businesses/entities.

	Approximately 3 acres of right-of-way near the Sioux Falls Substation will be acquired from WAPA.
Farmland	Up to 215 acres of farmland will be impacted. The Farmland Conversion Impact Ratings Form rated the project below the 160-point threshold and no further consideration is required under the Farmland Protection Policy act.
Wetlands and Other Waters of the U.S.	<p>Impacts to 4.12 acres of wetlands will occur. All appropriate permits and permissions will be obtained for any impacts to jurisdictional wetlands or other waters of the U.S that cannot be avoided. As part of the required permitting, stream mitigation will be completed at a site approximately 4 miles north of the project area.</p> <p>A series of culverts, staged at differing elevations, are necessary to manage pond discharge rates and discharge rates from the intermittent stream during the 2-year, 5-year, 10-year, 25-year, 50-year, and 100-year storm events. Culvert crossings will impact approximately 845 linear feet of waters of the U.S.</p> <p>A bridge crossing over the Big Sioux River will impact approximately 225 linear feet of waters of the U.S.</p>
Floodplain	The project will cause a minimal rise to the water elevation of the Big Sioux River, but not to a level that will affect cumulative water elevations in the area. A floodplain development permit will be obtained before construction begins.
Vegetation, Fish, and Wildlife	<p>The project will result in minor loss of habitat in the project area and a moderate loss of habitat in Cactus Hills. Surveys will be completed to identify bald eagle nests and migratory bird habitat prior to construction.</p> <p>Trees impacted along the Big Sioux River corridor will be mitigated at 2:1 acres planted versus impacted. Roughly 1.5 acres of trees will be impacted and 3 acres of trees will be planted in the Good Earth State Park.</p>
Federally Threatened and Endangered Species	The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with all determinations to species protected under the Endangered Species Act.
Cumulative Impacts	Considering the present and reasonably foreseeable future activities and their limited impact, and considering the impact avoidance, minimization, and mitigation commitments, adverse cumulative impacts will not be significant.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS:

Environmental commitments have been embedded with the project as a required component of any selected alternative and are listed on page 5-1 of the EA.

FINDING: The EA and reevaluations identified no significant impacts to environmental resources or the human environment which would result from the SD100 project, including WAPA’s federal actions. The principal reason for the lack of significant environmental impacts is the use of avoidance measures and environmental commitments as a required component of

the project. Because WAPA has found the SD100 project to not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is warranted and an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

This FONSI was prepared in accordance with *Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act* (40 CFR §1508.13) and the DOE NEPA Implementing Procedures (10 CFR §1021.322).

DECISION:

WAPA has decided to adopt the EA and subsequent reevaluations, which are hereafter referred to as DOE/EA-2067, and issue this FONSI. WAPA has selected the 2016 Preferred Alternative, including all applicable avoidance and minimization measures described in DOE/EA-2067, for implementation.

Issued at Billings, Montana on July 26, 2017



Robert J. Harris

Senior Vice President and UGP Regional Manager

