Chicago to Council Bluffs-Omaha

Regional Passenger Rail Planning Study

Cooperating Agency Meeting

October 25, 2012

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Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Study Summary and Update
3. Discussion of Cooperating Agency Role
   a. Agency Interests and Concerns
   b. Available Information
   c. Input on the Project
4. Project Schedule
5. Action Items
6. Meeting Conclusion

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Part of Midwest Regional Rail Initiative

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Major Project Tasks

- NEPA / Alternatives Analysis
- Service Development Plan
- Conceptual Engineering

All Major Tasks are Interrelated and Completed Concurrently

Tiered NEPA Process

- Phased Process for Completing NEPA Analysis and Documentation
  - Tier 1 – environmental analysis at the program level – large in scale/broad in scope
  - Tier 2 – environmental analysis at the project level – multiple separate sections, smaller in scope/scale

- Project is Regional and Long-Term
  - Corridor-wide analysis required for Tier 1
  - Tier 2 analysis at the project level will be conducted as funding is available for logical sections of the Project, and will be done concurrently with preliminary design

Tier 1 NEPA

- Tier 1 - Corridor Wide or "Program Level" Environmental Document
  - Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement
  - Broad High Level Evaluation of Potential Route Alternatives
  - Determine Preferred Route Alternative
  - Identify Cities for Potential Station Stops
  - Prepare Draft EIS and Obtain Public / Agency Input
  - Identify Future "Project Level" (Tier 2) Environmental Studies

Tier 1 Decisions

- Tier 1 Project Decisions
  - Route Selection
  - Identify Cities with Passenger Stations
  - Service Options (maximum speed; daily frequency)
  - Identify Tier 2 Sections
- Input sought through Online Public Meetings, Public Information Meetings, review of Tier 1 Draft EIS and Public Hearings
- Decisions Documented in the Final EIS and Record of Decision

Environmental Studies

Efforts Completed To Date

- Administrative Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) reviewed by DOT's/FRA and revised
- Draft EIS submitted to Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) for final approval
- Webinar with Cooperating Agencies today

Next Steps

- Publish Draft Tier 1 EIS (Next Month)
- Final Tier 1 EIS (Spring 2013)
- Record of Decision (Spring 2013)

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Purpose and Need

- **Purpose:** The Project would create a competitive passenger rail transportation alternative to the available automobile, bus, and air service and would meet needs for more efficient travel between major urban centers by:
  - Decreasing travel times.
  - Increasing frequency of service.
  - Improving reliability.
  - Providing an efficient transportation option.
  - Providing amenities to improve passenger ride quality and comfort.
  - Promoting environmental benefits, including reduced air pollutant emissions, improved land use options, and fewer adverse impacts on surrounding habitat and water resources.
- **Need:** Improved passenger rail service is needed due to increasing travel demand resulting from population growth and changing demographics between Chicago and Omaha as well as the need for competitive and attractive modes of travel.

Alternatives Considered

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Alternatives Analysis

- Evaluation Criteria
  - Purpose and Need
  - Environmental Feasibility
  - Technical Feasibility
  - Economic Feasibility
- Alternatives Analysis Evaluation Process
  - Coarse Level Screening
  - Fine Level Screening

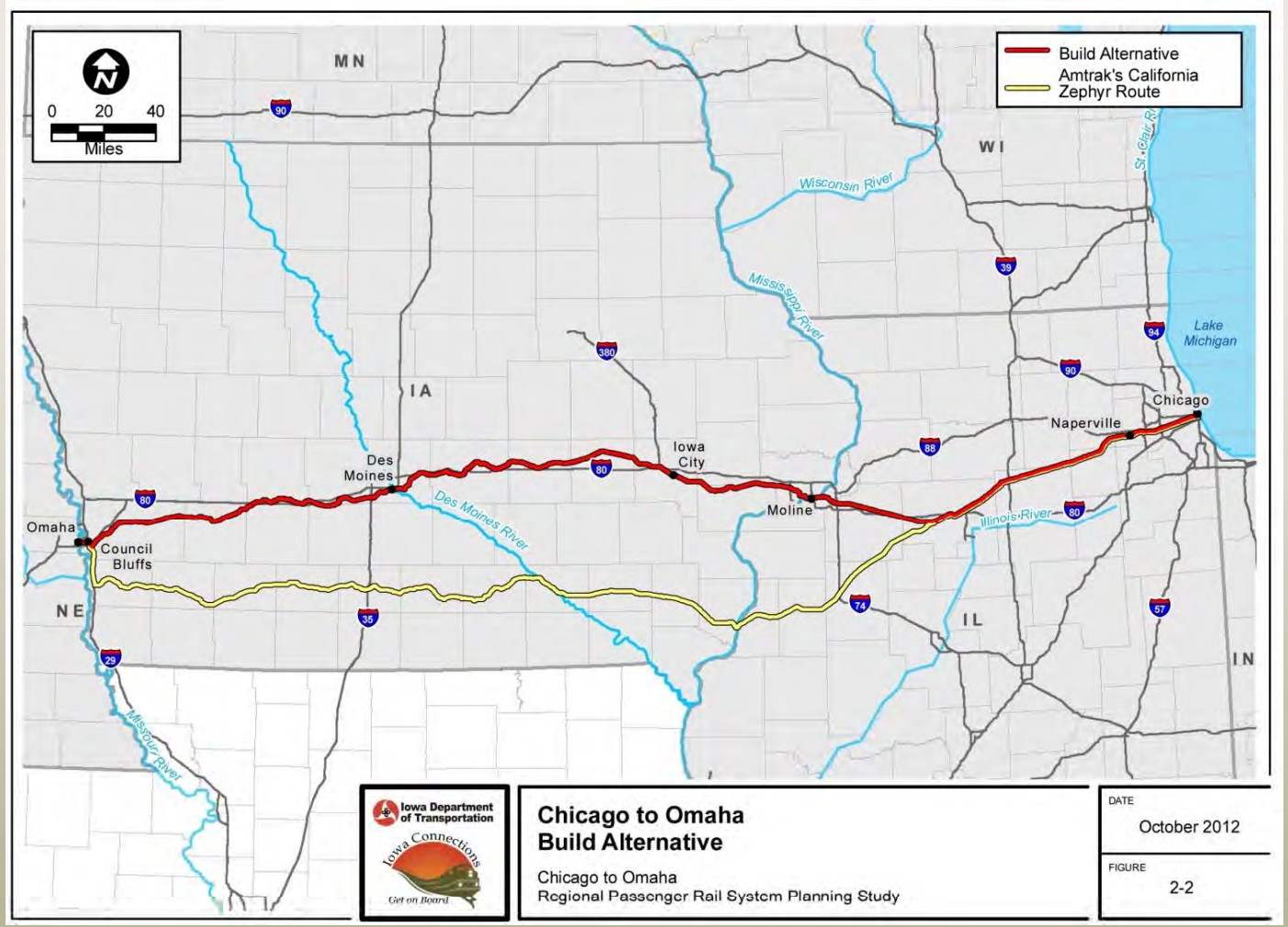
Alternatives Analysis Report

- Published Draft Alternatives Analysis Report
- Obtained Public and Agency Input – Public Meetings
- Final Alternatives Analysis Report to be published in Draft EIS

Preferred Alternative

- Detailed Evaluation of Route Alternatives
  - Evaluated 6 route alternatives in a two-step screening process
  - Identified Route Alternative 4-A as the only feasible and reasonable Build Alternative to carry forward in the EIS
  - Process Documented in Alternatives Analysis Report
- Additional Analysis for Service Level (Maximum Speed, Frequency, Station Stops)
- Build Alternative and No-Build Alternative analyzed in Tier 1 EIS
  - No-Build Alternative does not meet purpose and need but is baseline for environmental analysis
  - Build Alternative meets purpose and need and is the Preferred Alternative

Build (Preferred) Alternative



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Tier 1 EIS Methodologies

- Resource Technical Memoranda Contents
  - Regulatory Framework for Environmental Resource
  - Data Collection (GIS, Website, and Published Data) and Agency Coordination
  - Review of Data and Description of Existing Environment
  - "High-Level" Evaluation of Potential Impacts
  - Potential Need for Mitigation

Tier 1 EIS Resources

- Transportation
- Land Use
- Agricultural Resources
- Socioeconomics
- Environmental Justice
- Elderly & Disabled
- Public Health & Safety
- Noise & Vibration
- Air Quality
- Hazardous Waste
- Cultural Resources
- Parks & Natural Areas
- Section 4(f) & 6(f)
- Visual Quality
- Water Resources
- Wetlands
- Water Quality
- Floodplains
- Geology
- Natural Habitats & Wildlife
- T & E Species
- Energy Use & Climate Change
- Construction Impacts
- Indirect & Cumulative Impacts
- Irreversible & Irretrievable Commitment of Resources
- Permits
- Summary of Impacts & Mitigation

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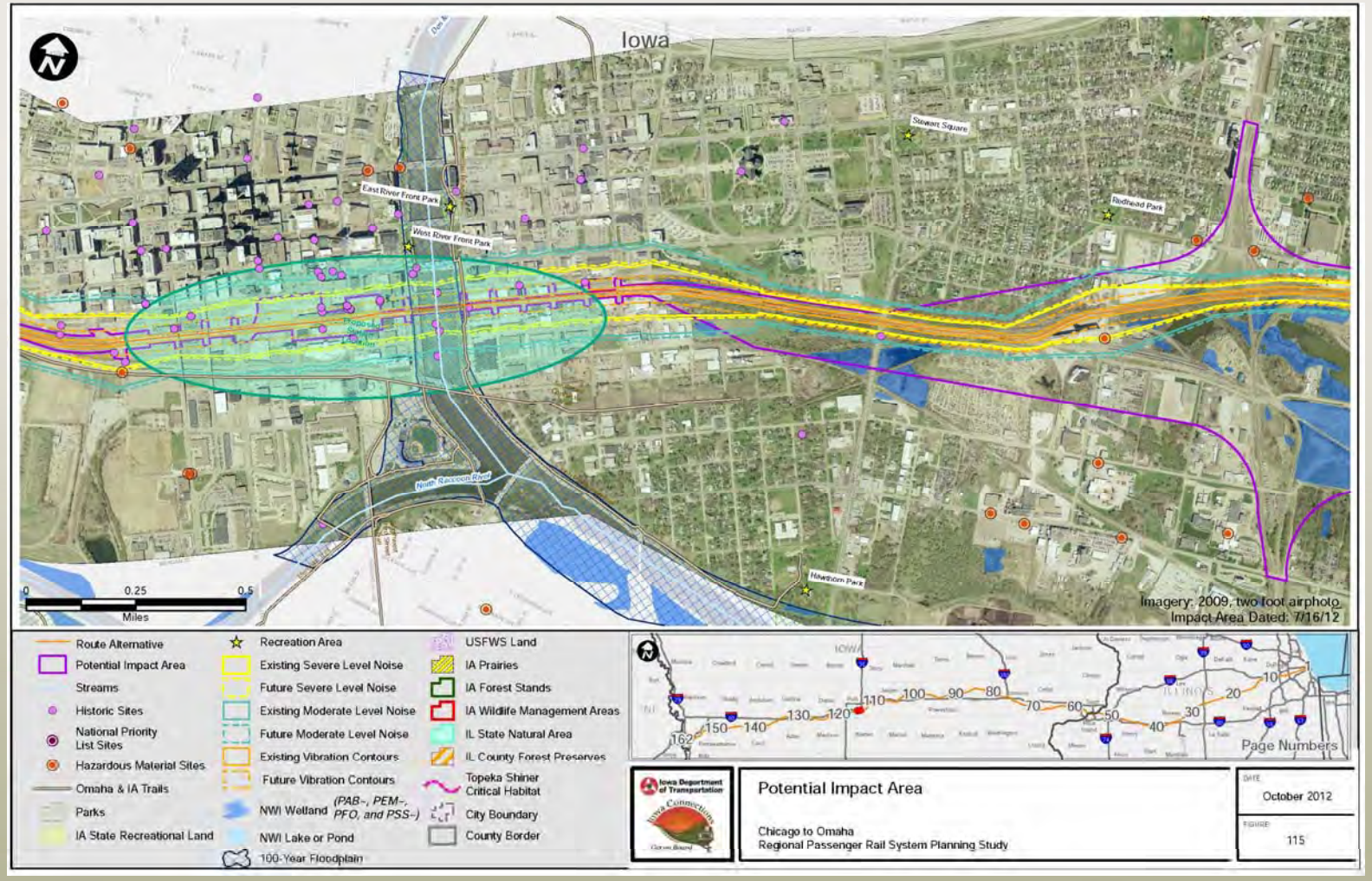
Tier 1 – Environmental Analysis

- Corridor level evaluation
- Desktop analysis (no detailed field studies)
- Study Area consists of a nominal 100-foot wide right-of-way plus a buffer area for potential infrastructure improvements
- Identified existing known resources, potential impacts and constraints

Example Constraints Map



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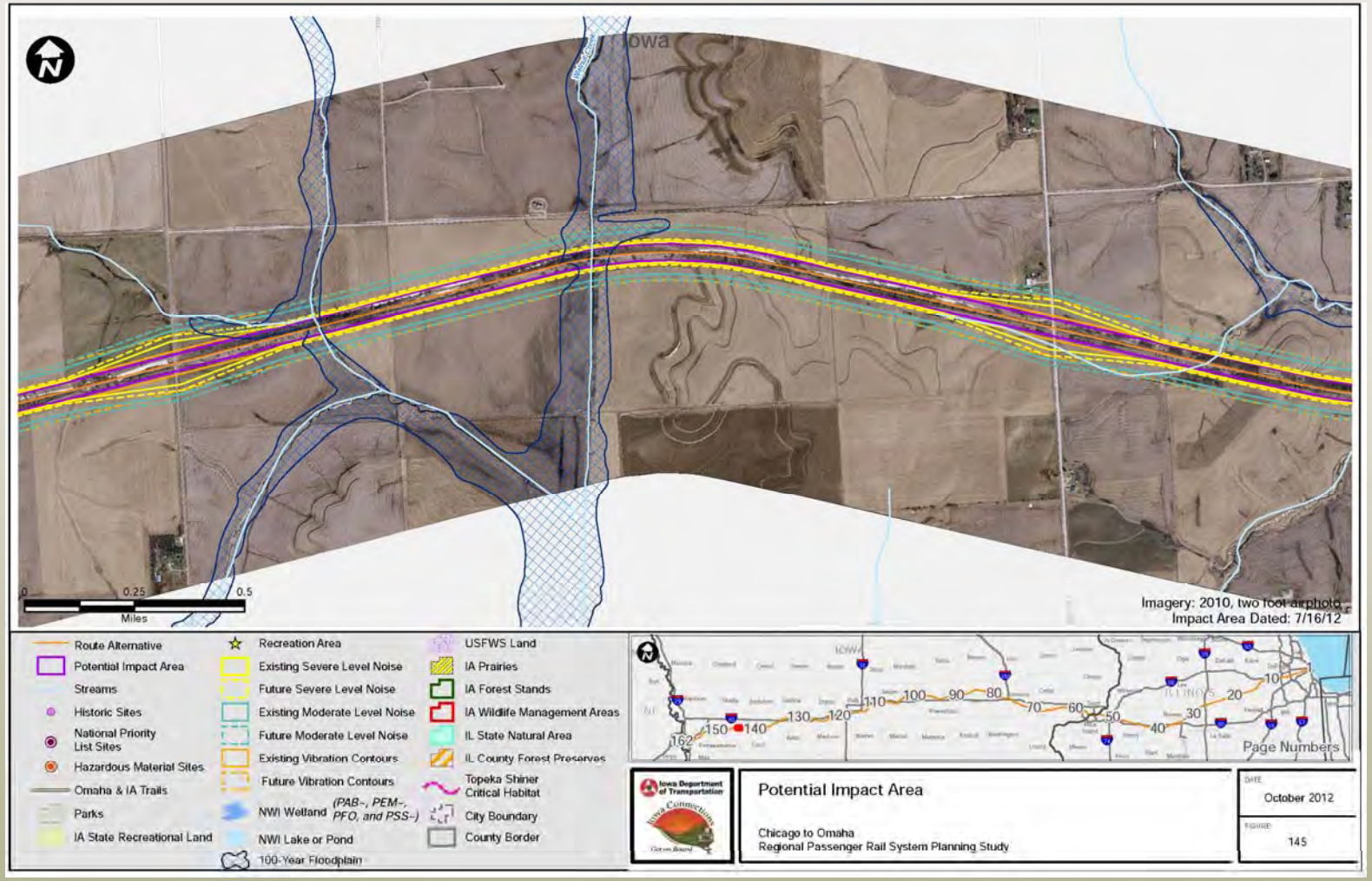
Example Constraints Map



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Impact Summary

Resource Topic	No-Build Alternative	Build Alternative
Transportation	Increased traffic congestion on highway system	Competitive transportation alternative; reduced freight traffic interference
Land Use, Zoning, and Property Acquisitions	Minor impacts	Impacts on land use, primarily on industrial and farmland
Agricultural Resources	Minor impacts	Impacts 3,190 acres prime farmland and 840 acres statewide important farmland
Socioeconomic Environment	Minor improvements to socioeconomic conditions (Chicago to Quad Cities only)	Economic benefits provided through job creation, joint development, improved accessibility, and increased economic activity (Chicago to Council Bluffs - Omaha)
Title VI and Environmental Justice	No disproportionate adverse impacts anticipated	Beneficial economic and mobility impacts (Des Moines)
Elderly and People with Disabilities	New accessible service between Chicago and Quad Cities	New accessible service between Chicago and Omaha
Public Health and Safety	Improvements to at-grade crossings and signals (Chicago to Quad Cities)	Improvements to at-grade crossings and signals (Chicago to Council Bluffs - Omaha)
Noise and Vibration	Minor impacts	1.6 noise impacts per mile; 7 vibration impacts per mile
Air Quality	Increase in pollutant emissions over time due to fewer modal shifts	Decrease of most pollutant emissions due to increased modal shifts
Hazardous Waste and Waste Disposal	Minor impacts	Minor impacts on 3 Superfund, 34 leaking underground storage tank, 27 Non-National Priorities List, and 1 wastewater treatment facility sites

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Impact Summary (cont.)

Resource Topic	No-Build Alternative	Build Alternative
Cultural Resources	No known impacts	Impacts 50 historic properties (33 buildings, 13 historic districts, 3 bridges, and 1 structure)
Parks and Federally or State-Listed Natural Areas	Minor impacts	Impacts 44 parks, 24 recreation areas, and 22 natural areas
Section 4(f) and 6(f) Properties	No known impacts	Impacts 44 public parks, 21 public recreation areas, 8 public refuges, and 50 historic properties
Visual Resources and Aesthetic Quality	Minor impacts	Impacts on visual resources (parks, natural areas, riparian corridors) and sensitive receptors (Des Moines)
Waterways and Water Bodies	Minor impacts	Impacts 104,150 linear feet of streams, 32 acres of lakes, and 33 acres of ponds
Wetlands	Minor impacts	Impacts 238 acres
Water Quality	Minor impacts	Impacts 24 streams on 303(d) list of impaired water bodies; more impacts than No-Build Alternative
Floodplains	Minor impacts	Impacts 1,657 acres
Topography, Geology, and Soils	Minor impacts	More impacts than No-Build Alternative, but minor impacts on Loess Hills
Natural Habitats and Wildlife	Minor impacts	Impacts 178 acres of natural terrestrial habitat; aquatic habitat impacts; increase in noise and vibration, train collisions, and water pollution

Impact Summary (cont.)

Resource Topic	No-Build Alternative	Build Alternative
Threatened and Endangered Species	Suitable habitat for federally and state-listed species	Suitable habitat for federally and state-listed species with potential for impact from constructing a new Missouri River crossing
Energy Use and Climate Change	Increase in energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions due to fewer modal shifts	Long-term decrease in energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions due to increased modal shifts
Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources	Minor commitments of land, construction materials, financial resources, and energy consumption by automobiles	Substantial commitments of land, construction materials, financial resources, and energy consumption
Short-Term Use versus Long-Term Productivity	Short-term construction impacts of other projects, including benefit of construction employment, Minimal reduction in long-term productivity of natural resources, and improvement in transportation network.	Short-term construction impacts (including benefit of construction employment) and reduction in air pollutant emissions and long-term productivity of natural resources beyond that of the No-Build. Improved long-term socioeconomic productivity through transportation network enhancement.
Indirect and Cumulative Impacts	Increase in vehicular traffic congestion and decrease in air quality and energy	Reduced traffic congestion and vehicle emissions; reduced ridership of other transportation modes; improved air quality and safety; indirect impacts on parks, natural areas, and wildlife; increased chance of hazardous material incidents and water pollution; transit-oriented development near stations

Tier 2 Activities and Decisions

- Refinement of the impact area through preliminary engineering
- Site-specific environmental field studies and analysis with refined impact area
- Tier 2 NEPA documents for each section (can be CE's, EA's, or EIS's)
- Identify project-level environmental commitments (mitigation)
- Permit decisions
- Localized option selection (ex., Des Moines alignment; Missouri River Crossing alignment)

Public Involvement

Efforts Completed to Date

- First (Online only) Public Meeting Held
  - Focus – Project Scope – Purpose and Need
- Second (Online and In-Person) Public Meeting Held
  - Focus – Alternatives Analysis
- Community Toolkit Launched to Public
  - Including ongoing community survey
- Numerous Project Presentations Conducted

Next Steps

- Public Hearing (Online and In-Person) – December 2012

Public Hearing

Chicago, Ill.	Des Moines, Iowa	Council Bluffs, Iowa
• Date: Tuesday, December 11 • Time: 4-7 p.m. • Location: Union Station, 210 S. Canal St.	• Date: Wednesday, December 12 • Time: 4-7 p.m. • Location: Des Moines Botanical Center, 909 Robert D. Ray Drive, Oak/Willow Room	• Date: Thursday, December 13 • Time: 4-7 p.m. • Location: Council Bluffs Public Library, 400 Willow Ave., Conference Room A/B

Same information available online from www.iowadot.gov/chicagotoomaha

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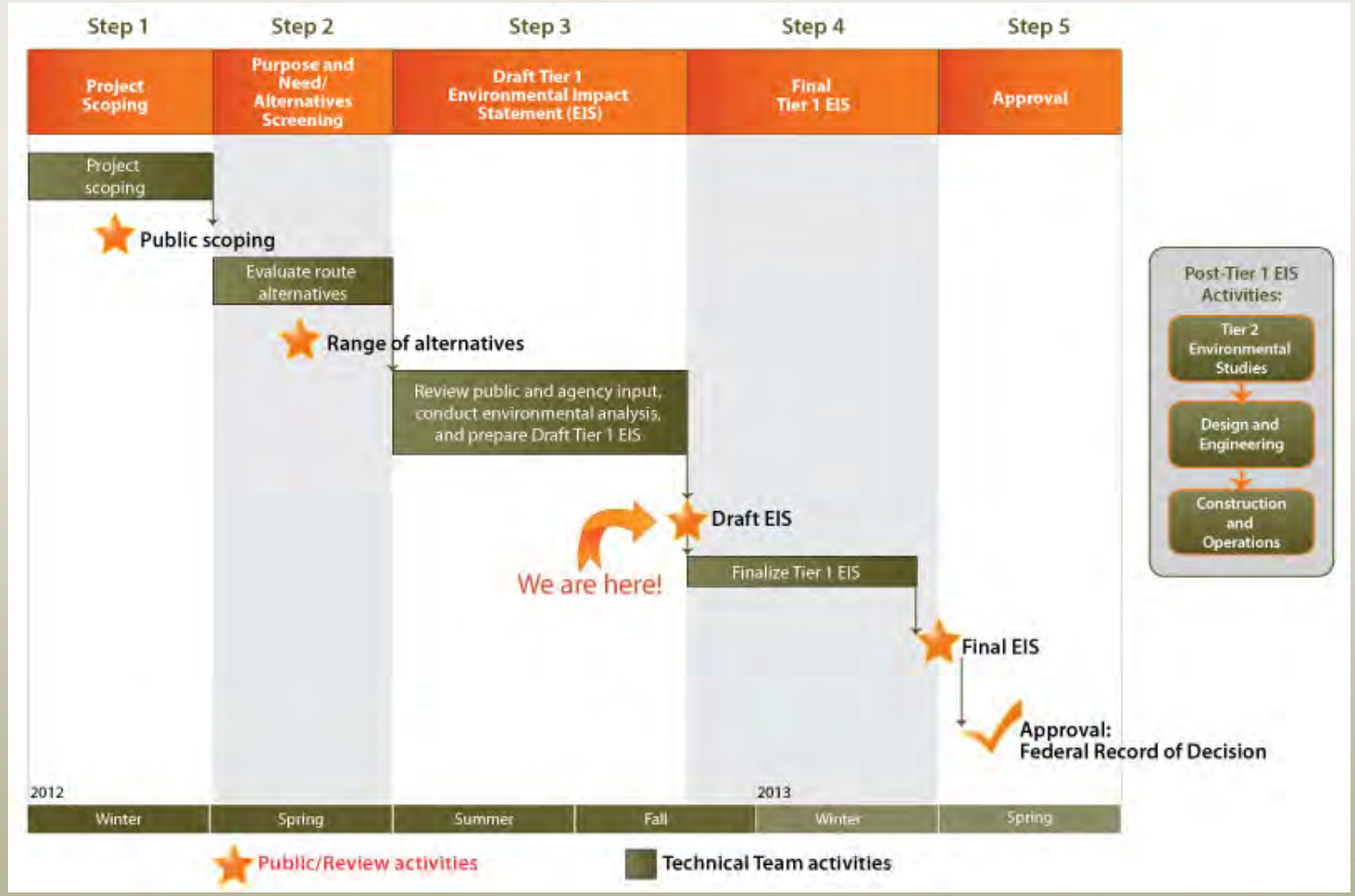
Cooperating Agency Input

- Agency Scoping
  - Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS
  - Early Coordination Packages
  - Agency Scoping Meeting
  - FRA Request for Cooperating Agencies
- What are we seeking?
  - Identification of Your Issues of Concern
  - Information Relevant to Resources Under Your Management
  - Input on the Distributed Draft EIS
  - Input on the Final EIS

Project Schedule



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Discussion of Issues

- Open Discussion of Agency Interests and Concerns at Tier 1 Level of Study and in Future Tier 2 Analyses
- Resource Agency Available Information

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Action Items

- Summary and Recordation of Action Items Identified at the Cooperating Agency Meeting

Meeting Conclusion

Thank You for Your Participation and Input!!

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