

**FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS**

for the.

**INTERSTATE 29 (I-29) SOUTHBRIDGE INTERCHANGE BETWEEN  
INTERCHANGES IN SERGEANT BLUFF AND SALIX**

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA**

**IM-029-6(278)139—13-97**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has determined that this project will have no significant impact on the human and natural environment. This Finding of No Significant Impact is based on the attached Environmental Assessment (EA) which has been independently evaluated by FHWA and determined to adequately and accurately discuss the need, environmental issues, and 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 EA.

Date

5/6/20

For FHWA

*Michael S. Patton*

## Description of Proposed Action

Woodbury County, Iowa, in coordination with the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is proposing to construct an interchange on Interstate 29 (I-29). The project would involve constructing a new interchange between the existing interchanges at Sergeant Bluff, Iowa, to the north (1st Street/Aviation Boulevard, Interchange 141) and Port Neal Landing in Salix, Iowa, to the south (County Road D51/260th Street, Interchange 135). The new interchange would add access to I-29 from 235th Street, both east and west of I-29. The existing 235th Street, which currently does not cross I-29, would be realigned from approximately 0.9 mile west of Port Neal Road, west of I-29, to a point approximately 0.25 mile west of County Road K-45, east of I-29. Banner Road north of 235th Street would also be realigned.

## Environmental Assessment Availability

The Environmental Assessment (EA) was signed on January 2, 2020, and was distributed to federal, state, and local resource agencies on January 21, 2020, for review and comment. A notice of public availability of the EA was placed on Iowa DOT's website on January 20, 2020, at <https://iowadot.gov/ole/NEPA-Compliance/NEPA-documents/Interstate-29-Southbridge-Interchange>.

## Review and Comment Period

A review and comment period was established for receipt of comments on the EA, with an expiration date of March 9, 2020. A public hearing for the project was held at the Sergeant Bluff Community Center on February 27, 2020. The public hearing used a combined open forum and formal presentation format. A written summary of this meeting was prepared and is available upon request from the Woodbury County Secondary Roads Department.

## Agency Comments

Five agency comments were received and are summarized in Table 1. Copies of these comments are included in Appendix A.

**Table 1. Summary of Agency Comments**

Date	Agency & Comment	Response from Woodbury County
1/23/20	Iowa Department of Natural Resources (Iowa DNR) (Seth Moore) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Iowa DNR clarified that the bigroot prickly pear (<i>Opuntia macrohiza</i>) does occur in the Study Area, but outside of the Proposed Alternative Impact Area. Iowa DNR agrees that there is no suitable habitat for the bigroot prickly pear in the Proposed Alternative Impact Area.</li></ul>	Thank you for the clarification on the existence of the bigroot prickly pear within the Study Area, and inference that the Project would not affect the reported population.
1/23/20	Iowa DNR (Christine Schwake) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>No additional concerns or comments to make at this time.</li></ul>	No response needed.

Date	Agency & Comment	Response from Woodbury County
1/27/20	US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) (Heidi Woeber) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The January 1, 2020, Environmental Assessment was reviewed and USFWS had no further comments.</li> </ul>	No response needed.
1/28/20	US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) (Albert Frohlich) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Project has been assigned permit number 2020-120. Please submit a Section 404 joint application. Uncertain if wetland impacts were calculated using National Wetland Inventory wetlands or if a wetland delineation had been performed.</li> </ul>	Page 27 of the EA indicated that a wetland delineation was conducted to define wetland boundaries in the Study Area. If wetlands cannot be avoided during final design, the County will submit a Joint Application Form for USACE review and approval prior to Project construction.
2/5/20	Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs/Iowa State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) (Heather Gibb) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SHPO will make comments and recommendations pertaining to Section 106.</li> </ul>	Iowa DOT confirmed that SHPO had no comments on the EA.

## Public Hearing

A public hearing was held on February 27, 2020, at Sergeant Bluff Community Center, 903 Topaz Drive, Sergeant Bluff, Iowa. The purpose of the public hearing was to present the proposed preferred alternative and to gather feedback about the proposed alternative and the completed EA. The hearing was conducted utilizing a combined open forum and formal presentation format. The public was invited to attend anytime between 4:00 PM and 6:00 PM. A formal presentation was displayed, beginning at 4:45 PM, and was followed by an open microphone question and answer session. The public met informally with City and consultant staff both before and after the formal presentation. The public hearing was advertised on Iowa DOT's website on February 17, 2020, at [https://www.news.iowadot.gov/newsandinfo/2020/02/proposed-improvements-to-interstate-29-in-woodbury-county-to-be-discussed-february-27-in-sergeant-bl.html?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.news.iowadot.gov/newsandinfo/2020/02/proposed-improvements-to-interstate-29-in-woodbury-county-to-be-discussed-february-27-in-sergeant-bl.html?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery). A notice of the public hearing was published in the Sergeant Bluff Advocate on February 13, 2020, and in the Sioux City Journal on February 15, 2020.

There were 43 people who registered their attendance at the public hearing. During the hearing, the public had the opportunity to comment verbally or in writing. After the hearing comments could be sent to Iowa DOT or Woodbury County.

Comments expressed during the open house portion of the hearing focused primarily on the need for the project. Most attendees questioned the need for the project. Based on current traffic and lack of new industry in the area, they did not feel that traffic or development would require a new interchange. Landowners had a few questions regarding how connections were designed in consideration of their property and the access roads.

Iowa DOT recorded the formal presentation, as well as questions and answers during the formal hearing. Below is a summary of the oral comments, with responses in italics:

- This impact figure shows a boundary around some of my farm buildings; would they be impacted by the project? *The figure shows an impact boundary along a conceptual corridor. The EA*

*indicated that because it is early in the design process, the area potentially affected by the project would be less than what is portrayed within the impact corridor. These particular structures could be avoided when detailed design is conducted.*

- *I heard that my property might have a buried relative in these trees near the edge of my property. Would that affect the project? If a specific burial site is known, it would be avoided if possible. In the event that a burial site is discovered during construction, Iowa DOT has procedures to stop work and investigate the site before proceeding further in this location.*
- *We have valuable farmland that our families have been farming for more than 100 years. The County has been encouraging growth in this area but it has only been happening to a limited extent, mostly from expansion or consolidation of long-term companies in this area. Why is this project needed now? The project is consistent with the long-term plan, which projects growth in this area. Connectivity is minimal in this area. It might take more than 7 years to develop this project so it cannot wait to start after companies come in and develop their facilities.*
- *How will the project be paid for? Potentially with roadway and bridge funds through FHWA and Iowa DOT. Another potential funding option would be through Iowa DOT's Revitalize Iowa's Sound Economy (RISE) program.*
- *What would be the estimated cost for the project? Approximately 15-20 million dollars.*
- *Are funds available to design the project, acquire our land, and build the project? We are currently pursuing funding options to complete this project.*
- *Are any companies committed to coming into this area, and is the assumption that if we build it they will come to the area? No specific companies are known to be committed to development in this area. The area's long-term transportation plan has identified the approximate location of the project based on a future need of likely industrial and commercial growth.*
- *We don't see a current need for this project based on minimal traffic and growth in this area. Because the project might take more than 7 years to develop, the project needs are based on future projections 10 to 15 years from now.*
- *Do you know how long it took to complete the bypass and interchange in Lee County for Iowa fertilizer when they built their plan similar to the CF plant? No, but that project was on a state highway. That project involved different agencies and would have likely involved different timeframes for funding and approval.*
- *Is the project needed for traffic and safety concerns? Traffic demand is not a specific problem for this project. Initial modeling appeared to show excessive traffic demand, but models were rerun based on changed assumptions, and the projected demand is not excessive. Crashes also do not appear to be a particular problem.*
- *Why would the project be needed to create a safe and efficient transportation system? The need is related to connectivity because there is only one road (Dogwood Trail) that crosses the interstate within the 5.5 miles between the existing interchanges in Sergeant Bluff and Salix. Dogwood Trail is a curvy, 2-lane road that intersects the interstate and an at-grade railroad crossing.*
- *Are there any prohibitions or any other reasons (such as high taxes) why businesses haven't located in this area previously? Businesses make their decisions on specific areas to locate based on a variety of decisions. Part of our jobs is to work with planning officials to improve the road system to accommodate future growth.*

Written comments were received via the mail and email. Table 2 includes a summary of the comments and responses, if a response was requested.

**Table 2. Summary of Written Comments**

Date	Type of Comment	Comment	Response from Iowa DOT/Woodbury County
2/18/20	Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As somebody who is against the project, will I be able to voice my concerns at the public hearing?</li> </ul>	Yes
2/18/20	Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed project is nothing more than easy access for more residential development for Sergeant Bluff and will have no impact on Bridgeport Industrial Park. As a long-time resident of this area, there has been no economic growth in the Park.</li> <li>• The project funds would be better spent on the Highway 75 bypass from Southern Hills Mall to the Gordon Interchange on Highway 20, or resurfacing of Highway 20 from Gordon Drive to Merville.</li> <li>• The project will only help Sergeant Bluff, and not necessarily provide any kind of economic growth.</li> </ul>	No response requested
2/18/20	Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dogwood Trail was a road built for CF Industries but is not being used by the company as they still continue to use the Port Neal interchange.</li> <li>• Sergeant Bluff now wants another interchange and would be the only one to benefit from the project.</li> <li>• The proposed \$25 million cost is ridiculous.</li> </ul>	No response requested
2/7/20	Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In favor of the project</li> </ul>	No response requested

Date	Type of Comment	Comment	Response from Iowa DOT/Woodbury County
2/27/20	Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not in favor of the project</li> <li>• No industry is currently planning to come to this area.</li> <li>• The interchanges to the north aren't heavily utilized.</li> <li>• Farming is the main source of income in this area and several family owned farms have existed for hundreds of years.</li> </ul>	<p>Thank you for your interest in the I-29 Southbridge interchange project. Your input is important to the project and will be shared with the Woodbury County Board of Supervisors as well as the decision makers from the County's partners; City of Sioux City, City of Sergeant Bluff, City of Salix, the Iowa Department of Transportation and the Siouxland Initiative.</p> <p>A new interchange in this location has been part of the regional comprehensive plan since 2005. The land bordering I-29, in this area, is zoned general industrial and county long term transportation planning promotes improving transportation access to the area, regardless of the current land use. While the input from the local landowners is important, the consideration of other organizations and business interests is also considered.</p> <p>The current effort is the early planning stages of a multi-year project. A new interchange can take as long as a decade from development to completion of construction. The county and its partners are trying to position themselves to welcome new industry and strengthen the economic viability of the region.</p>
2/28/20	Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In favor of the project.</li> <li>• For traffic and safety reasons, I want the new interchange to avoid school and commuter traffic within the Sergeant Bluff area</li> </ul>	No response requested

## **New Information**

New information is available since the EA was published and the public hearing took place. Agency and public input on the EA were also considered. Changes to the EA and new information are described below.

### **Preferred Alternative**

Based on less environmental impact than other build alternatives considered, and on input received from resource agencies and the public, Alternative 2 has been selected as the preferred alternative.

### **Errata**

The EA provided an estimate of right of way (ROW) acquisition of approximately 503 acres based on full acquisition of each impacted parcel, when only partial acquisition of parcels would be required. The calculation was reviewed, and the impact area was determined to be approximately 110 acres in size, of which approximately 48 acres was within existing ROW (interstate, county, and railroad). Consequently, estimated ROW needs during preliminary design are closer to approximately 62 acres, of which almost all is considered farmland.

## **Basis for Finding of No Significant Impact**

Several human and natural environmental resources were not present in the project Study Area and others required only a summary review to confirm that there would be no significant impacts. The following resources were evaluated in detail in the EA and were determined to incur no significant impacts as a result of the project:

- Land Use
- Economics
- Right of Way
- Construction and Emergency Routes
- Transportation
- Historical Sites or Districts
- Wetlands
- Surface Waters and Water Quality
- Floodplains
- Wildlife and Habitat
- Threatened and Endangered Species
- Woodlands
- Farmlands
- Noise
- Visual
- Contaminated and Regulated Materials Sites
- Utilities

This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) documents compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and all other applicable environmental laws, Executive Orders, and related requirements.







## Special Conditions for Location Approval

Several conditions, noted below, were identified for approval and will be implemented during the design process prior to construction.

- Any potential ROW acquisition will be minimized during the final design process to reduce impacts. The County will coordinate with business and property owners during the ROW acquisition process to negotiate compensation for ROW acquired. Acquisitions will be conducted in accordance with the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 and Iowa Code 316, the “Relocation Assistance Law.”
- The construction of the proposed project will be staged so traffic and access to property will be maintained. Construction of the project will be completed under traffic along the interstate with temporary lane closures. Crossovers will be used to facilitate interstate traffic during interchange construction. A detailed staging plan will be developed during final design.
- FAA Form 7460-1 will be filed with the Federal Aviation Administration prior to construction.
- As design advances, efforts will be made to avoid and minimize impacts to Water of the US, including wetlands. A Section 404 Clean Water Act permit (anticipated to be a Nationwide Permit) will be acquired from USACE with Section 401 water quality certification. Based on the anticipated minimal amount of wetland impacts, no mitigation for wetland impacts will be required. All disturbed areas will be seeded with native grasses and appropriate erosion control measures will be implemented. Clearing of vegetation will be limited to that which is absolutely necessary for construction of the project.
- A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Stormwater Discharge Permit for Construction will be obtained from the Iowa DNR. Impacts on surface waters from stormwater runoff will be minimized in accordance with the NPDES permit and the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) prepared in compliance with the permit.
- A floodplain permit will be acquired from Woodbury County.
- As design advances, construction activities will be coordinated with public utilities to avoid potential conflicts and to minimize planned interruptions of service.
- If the project will include any new air emission units, including portable equipment such as cement batch plants, asphalt plants, or limestone crushing plants, the project may be subject to construction permitting requirements for these units or plants. If required, an Air Quality Construction Permit will be acquired from the Iowa DNR.
- Reasonable precautions will be taken to minimize fugitive dust, including wetting of disturbed areas, in accordance with 567 IAC rule 23.3(2)(c).
- Open burning (burning of combustible materials where combustion products are emitted into the open area without passing through a chimney or stack) will be done in accordance with 567 IAC rule 23.2(455B).
- Iowa DOT’s Standard Note 232-9 will be included in project plans; this requires tree removal after September 30th and before April 1st.
- Iowa DOT’s Standard Specification 1107.18.C will be included in the plans in compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
- Impacts on center pivot irrigation systems will be coordinated with the affected landowner, with an analysis of loss of equipment and potential reconfiguration to determine compensation.

- If any contamination above regulatory limits is encountered near any locations with aboveground storage tanks associated with farm operations, construction will be stopped and Iowa DOT will be notified. Proper handling and disposal of any contaminated soil (including decontamination of equipment) will be conducted.
- Two 161 kilovolt transmission line towers could potentially need to be relocated for constructing the proposed action. Actual impacts or avoidance of these structures will be determined during final design.
- Coordination with the Union Pacific Railroad will be conducted for approval on improving a crossing of their ROW, and on any temporary closures to improve the crossing.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Agency Correspondence**

**Mark Nahra**

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**From:** Moore, Seth <seth.moore@dnr.iowa.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 23, 2020 2:33 PM  
**To:** Mark Nahra  
**Subject:** Re: Notification of Availability of Environmental Assessment for I-29 Southbridge Interchange/SL 13681

Here are the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) comments on the EA.

The DNR has reviewed the 2020 Environmental Assessment. One minor clarification is that although the document (p. 34) states that Bigroot Prickly Pear (*Opuntia macrorhiza*) was not observed during the HDR surveys [presumably of the Study Area] (HDR 2017c), the species does indeed occur in the Study Area at the site previously identified in our DNR email of 2016 (north of Browsers Lake, confirmed by John Pearson DNR Botanist, during a field visit in September 2016). However, while this site is within the Study Area, it is outside of the Proposed Alternative Impact Area (which, like all other alternatives, is located south of Browsers Lake). The DNR agrees there is no suitable habitat for it in the Proposed Alternative Impact Area.

Please let me know if you have any questions,

Thank you,



**Seth Moore** | Environmental Specialist  
**Iowa Department of Natural Resources**  
P 515-725-8464 | F 515-725-8201 | 502 E 9th St, Des Moines IA 50319  
[www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov)



On Thu, Jan 23, 2020 at 10:21 AM Goss, Brian <[Brian.Goss@hdrinc.com](mailto:Brian.Goss@hdrinc.com)> wrote:

Subject: Interstate 29 Southbridge Interchange Between Interchanges in Sergeant Bluff and Salix

Woodbury County, Iowa.

Project Number: IM-029-6(278)139--13-97

Dear Seth:

**Brian Goss**

*Senior Scientist*

**HDR**

1917 S. 67<sup>th</sup> Street  
Omaha, NE 68106-4933  
D 402-399-4933 M 402-980-2546  
[brian.goss@hdrinc.com](mailto:brian.goss@hdrinc.com)

[hdrinc.com/follow-us](http://hdrinc.com/follow-us)



January 23, 2020

MR MARK NAHRA  
WOODBURY COUNTY ENGINEER  
759 E FRONTAGE RD  
MOVILLE IA 51039

RE: Interstate 29 Southbridge Interchange between Interchanges in Sergeant Bluff and Salix Environmental Assessment, Woodbury County, Iowa  
Project Number: IM-029-6(278)139--13-97

Dear Mr. Nahra:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Environmental Assessment for the construction of a new interchange between the existing interchanges at Sergeant Bluff, Iowa, to the north (1st Street/Aviation Boulevard, Interchange 141) and Port Neal Landing in Salix, Iowa, to the south (County Road D51/260th Street, Interchange 135). I have no additional concerns or comments to make at this time.

If you have any questions, please call me at (515) 725-8399.

Sincerely,

Christine Schwake  
Environmental Specialist



## United States Department of the Interior

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



IN REPLY REFER  
TO:

FWS/IL-IA FO

January 27, 2020

Mr. Mark J. Nahra, P.E.  
Woodbury County Engineer  
Woodbury County Secondary Road Department  
759 East Frontage Road  
Moville, Iowa 51039

Dear Mr. Nahra:

We received the Notification of Availability of Environmental Assessment, dated January 23, 2020, for the I-29 Southbridge interchange between interchanges in Sergeant Bluff and Salix, Woodbury County, Iowa (Project # IM-029-6(278)139—13-97. We have reviewed the January 1, 2020, Environmental Assessment 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 me at extension 209.

Heidi Woeber  
Fish and Wildlife Biologist  
Ecological Services  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
1511 47th Avenue  
Moline, IL 61265  
309/757-5800, ext. 209  
309/757-5807 Fax  
[heidi\\_woeber@fws.gov](mailto:heidi_woeber@fws.gov)

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iowa.doc



**Mark Nahra**

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**From:** Frohlich, Albert J CIV USARMY CEMVR (US) <Albert.J.Frohlich@usace.army.mil>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 28, 2020 8:40 AM  
**To:** Mark Nahra  
**Subject:** I 29 EA

Hello Mark -

We have your EA and I offer the following comment.

At this time, we do not know if a DA 404 Permit is required. Should the project involve fill into a jurisdictional wetland or Water of the U.S., please submit a joint application. I did see that there were wetland impacts in the EA, but do not know if these were calculated using the National Wetland Inventory or actual on the ground delineations. I have given the project the number 2020-120. When an application is ready, please submit it for evaluation.

Al Frohlich

**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF  
CULTURAL AFFAIRS**

**IOWA ARTS COUNCIL    PRODUCE IOWA    STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA**

CHRIS KRAMER, DIRECTOR

KIM REYNOLDS, GOVERNOR  
ADAM GREGG, LT. GOVERNOR

This notification is a receipt that your request for comment by the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has been received.

Date Received: **2/5/2020**

30 Day Period: **3/6/2020**

Agency: **FHWA**

SHPO R&C #: **060197066**

**IMN-029-6(170)--0E-97 I-29/235TH ST - SOUTHBRIDGE INTERCHANGE PROJECT - -  
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE - NHPA DETERMINATION - ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

Be advised that the successful conclusion of consultation with the SHPO does not fulfill the agency's responsibility to consult with other parties who may have an interest in properties that may be affected by this project. Nor does it override the sovereign status of federally recognized American Indian Tribes in the Section 106 consultation process.

SHPO will make comments and recommendations according to our responsibility defined by Federal law pertaining to the Section 106 process. If you have contacted the SHPO for technical assistance, we will provide comments and recommendations based on best practices and the information available in your submission. Should you not receive comments by the end of the 30-Day Period, please contact me at the number or email below, referencing the R&C # above.

**Should you have any questions please contact me at the number or email below, referencing the R&C # above.**

**SHPO Review & Compliance Coordinator**  
**(515) 281-4137**  
[heather.gibb@iowa.gov](mailto:heather.gibb@iowa.gov)

