

**FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
AND
SECTION 4(f) *DE MINIMIS* IMPACT FINDING
FOR
UNIVERSITY AVENUE/IA 934
FROM IA 58 to U.S. 63
BLACK HAWK COUNTY, IOWA
Project Number STP-934-0(9)—2C-07**

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 and Section 4(f) *de minimis* impact finding 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. The EA provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an EIS is not required. The FHWA takes full responsibility for the accuracy, scope, and content of the attached EA.

2/27/2014
Date

Michael Sabatini
For FHWA

1.0 Description of the Proposed Action

The University Avenue/IA 934 improvements are proposed to upgrade and modernize a five-mile segment of University Avenue/IA 934 between IA 58 in Cedar Falls and U.S. 63 in Waterloo, Black Hawk County, Iowa. Specifically, the project intends to improve pavement and bridge conditions, enhance safety, provide bicycle and pedestrian safety, improve traffic flow, and support economic growth and revitalization in the corridor.

The Preferred Alternative will reduce the roadway from six lanes to four lanes and incorporate the operational benefits of both optimized traffic signals and roundabouts at appropriate intersections along the corridor. The roadway would remain a 6-lane facility between the western study limits at IA 58 and Valley Park Drive in order to provide satisfactory traffic operations. The Preferred Alternative would incorporate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations and improved intersection crosswalks. Corridor aesthetic treatments, such as landscaping and public art, could also be incorporated into the Preferred Alternative.

2.0 Notice of Availability

On October 9, 2013, the Environmental Assessment (EA) was distributed to selected federal, state and local agencies for review and copies were made available for public review at the Iowa DOT District 2 office, Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments (INRCOG) office, the Waterloo Public Library, Cedar Falls Public Library, and the Rod Library at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls. A notice of EA availability and public hearing was published in the *Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier* newspaper on October 15, 2013 (See **Appendix A**).

3.0 Review and Comment Period

The EA was made available for review on October 15, 2013. Following publication of the EA, members of the public and federal, state, and local resource and regulatory agencies were invited to submit comments on the proposed action. The review and comment period was open until November 18, 2013.

Agency Comments

Three agency comment letters were received on the circulated EA. These comments, which are included in **Appendix B**, include one from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) dated October 17, 2013; one from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) dated October 28, 2013; and one from Black Hawk County dated November 12, 2013.

The correspondence received from the Iowa DNR noted that page 2 of their early coordination response letter dated November 9, 2011 was left out of the EA Appendix C, Agency and Tribal Coordination. The second page is included in the combined EA/FONSI and can be referenced in **Appendix B**.

The USACE comment letter noted that the project may be covered under Nationwide Permit 14 and stated that prior to beginning construction on this project, the Iowa DOT should submit a complete application for Department of Army Section 404 authorization, including a wetland delineation of the project area using the Corps' 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual and Midwest Regional Supplement.

The comment letter from Black Hawk County noted that because the project will not directly affect Black Hawk County roads or bridges, the county has no comments on the document.

Public Hearing

A public hearing was held on October 29, 2013 at the Clarion Inn in Cedar Falls from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Approximately 92 people attended the public hearing. The public hearing included a combined open forum and formal format for public participation and comment. Iowa DOT staff; along with staff from the INRCOG, the cities of Cedar Falls and Waterloo, and the consultant team, were present at the public hearing with plans, displays and related information to discuss the project informally between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. A formal presentation was held at 6:00 p.m. followed by a question and answer session. Opportunities were provided during the hearing for those in attendance to record oral and written comments. The public hearing was advertised in the notice of availability (Section 2.0) and on the Iowa DOT website at www.iowadot.gov/pim.

Displays dedicated to the proposed Section 4(f) *de minimis* impact finding were provided. The displays included large maps that highlighted proposed impacts to Rownd Park, Hope Martin Memorial Park, the Peet Junior High School open space, the Cedar Prairie Trail, and several historic properties in the project corridor. Opportunities for the public to comment on the proposed Section 4(f) *de minimis* impact finding were provided. No comments were received.

A written transcript of the hearing, including comments, questions, and responses from Iowa DOT staff, has been prepared and is available upon request. The comments and public hearing transcript were reviewed by Iowa DOT and FHWA and were considered as part of the basis for approval of the FONSI.

Comment Summary

Informal conversations were held with members of the public during the open forum portion of the public hearing and formal comments were recorded during the question and answer session following the formal presentation on the project. Sixteen members of the public provided verbal comments during the question and answer session. In addition, written and phone comments were also received during the public comment period and responses were provided by Iowa DOT staff (see Written Responses section below). A summary of the public comments received is provided in the following three paragraphs of this section.

There was both opposition and support expressed for the Preferred Alternative during the public hearing. In general, most attendees were supportive of improving the pavement condition of the University Avenue/IA 934 corridor and viewed it as being in poor condition today. However, there were mixed viewpoints on whether the roadway capacity should be reduced from six lanes to four lanes in the future. Several attendees expressed that the existing 6-lane roadway should remain in its current configuration and should not be reduced to a 4-lane roadway section. Others agreed that reducing the capacity would help provide for *Complete Streets* elements along the corridor, such as bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, which ties in with the region's Blue Zones initiatives.

Over half of the attendees opposed the addition of roundabouts at corridor intersections and expressed a preference for retaining signalized intersections. In addition, the incorporation of *Complete Streets* improvements such as bicycle and pedestrian accommodations received mixed support from attendees. Many supported the incorporation of on-street bike lanes and mixed use paths along the corridor, but some attendees expressed concerns about bicycles sharing the road with vehicular traffic. The majority of the concerns related to safety, truck traffic operations, snow removal and the additional right-of-way and construction costs.

The potential effects of the Preferred Alternative on the corridor's economic growth and vitality were also discussed, both positively and negatively, during the public hearing. Many thought travelers would avoid the corridor if roundabouts and capacity reductions were put in place. Others felt that *Complete Streets* treatments and roundabouts would contribute positively to the economic revitalization of the study corridor.

Written Responses

Individual written comments for which responses were prepared by Iowa DOT are summarized below.

- **Comment #1** – How can I get information about the project and be kept informed about decisions that are being made?

Response #1 – The public can visit the public meeting website for the Environmental Assessment document and the Project Statement.

<http://www.news.iowadot.gov/pim/2013/10/iowa-934university-ave-cedar-fallswaterloo-oct-29.html>.

- **Comment #2** – It appears that the bike path is not separated from the roadway traffic. Additionally, will a reduction to 4 lanes be able to safely sustain the projected 30,000 vehicles per day?

Response #2 – The Local Advisory Council asked to incorporate 6-foot wide bike lanes at the outside edges of the roadway, dedicated to bicyclists, in addition to a 10-foot wide separated multiuse path for both bicyclists and pedestrians outside of the roadway on the south side and a 6-foot wide separated sidewalk on the north side.

The estimated 30,000 vehicles per day is a volume projected to be reached in 2040, but only in the area between IA 58 and Tucson Drive, where the roadway would remain as a 6-lane facility. East of Valley Park Drive the roadway would be reduced to 4 lanes and the 2040 traffic is projected to peak at 26,450 vehicles per day at Falls Avenue. Traffic will be lower elsewhere along the corridor. With proposed enhancements to the signal systems, the optional replacement of selected signal systems with roundabouts, and other improvements, the Iowa DOT is confident that the proposed alternative will safely and efficiently handle projected 2040 traffic volumes.

- **Comment #3** – I am opposed to roundabouts and bicycle lanes, which I believe will be unsafe on a road as busy as University Avenue/IA 934.

Response #3 – The documentation of environmental issues within the corridor footprint allows design and construction to be conducted within that established footprint, but does not make decisions on final design of the roadway mainline and intersections. The cities of Cedar Falls and Waterloo will lead the design decision effort.

- **Comment #4** – I and many people I know are opposed to roundabouts. Drivers don't know how to use them properly. Just re-time the signal light patterns instead.

Response #4 – Roundabouts are being constructed in many places because they allow free flowing traffic and experience fewer crashes and less severe crashes. The Iowa DOT website features a roundabout section that provides safety and educational information at <http://www.iowadot.gov/roundabouts/roundabouts.htm>. The study also included an alternative with synchronized traffic signals. The Preferred Alternative includes a combination of synchronized signals and roundabouts to best balance the safety and operational needs of the corridor.

- **Comment #5** – Don't build roundabouts. Just repave and put a turn lane in the middle. Avoid private business land owners. Also, the street is too busy and unsafe for kids on bike paths.

Response #5 – The traffic projections for the corridor may not function in a 5-lane, undivided section of highway with the center turn lane. Each of the alternatives in the study provides two travel lanes in each direction with a raised median similar to what exists today. The alternatives with signalized intersections provide left and right turn lanes as warranted. For the locations showing roundabouts, there are instances where a right turn lane will allow free flow of vehicles traveling in that direction.

Right of way needs can be minimized in the design phase. The study includes on-street bike lanes, but also includes a separated 10-foot wide multiuse path for bicycles and pedestrians and a 6-foot wide sidewalk.

- **Comment #6** – I support roundabouts for efficient traffic management and safety. The road is in need of repair and a decision needs to be made quickly.

Response #6 – The Preferred Alternative includes a combination of synchronized signals and roundabouts to best balance the safety and operational needs of the corridor. The DOT is required to conduct a study such as this Environmental Assessment when anticipating the use of Federal dollars for a transportation project. With the study very near completion, we anticipate the cities will determine a new design for the roadway or consider other maintenance measures.

- **Comment #7** – How will the proposed roadway improvement work affect the Kmart and Foster's Mattress properties, and will the owners be contacted if the improvements will require property acquisition?

Response #7 – Currently, the proposed project is only under a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) study and not yet under design. The footprint area of the concept is being studied for any environmental and social impacts within this footprint, which must be documented in order to receive approval and funding from the Federal Highway Administration.

The concept plan shows, if a roundabout were designed, there would be access changes to the frontage road south of the Kmart parking lot, and a potential access drive closure due to the splitter island. At this time, the impacts of intersection or roadway design, or a construction zone are unknown. Those decisions will be left to the cities to determine in the design phase, at which time the owners of impacted properties will be contacted.

- **Comment #8** – Is there a time table to this project if it is approved, and are their newer than 2009 traffic count maps available?

Response #8 – There is not a current time frame for reconstruction of University Avenue/IA 934, as there is no funding for the project at this time. The Iowa DOT intends to leave the corridor's intersection design decisions up to the cities.

The 2009 traffic counts are updated annually if the statewide data shows a significant growth in averages. Statewide, the Iowa DOT has 140 traffic counters that are averaged each month. The Iowa DOT will increase/decrease those numbers if the 140 counter averages show significant differences in the state. Those maps are referred to as having "average annual daily counts" - meaning, the peaks and lows that occur during events and even holidays are removed. The 2013 data will not be available until the spring or summer of 2014.

- **Comment #9** – University Avenue needs to stay at 6 lanes rather than 4, because the traffic during busy times in this area is awful.

There would be many accidents in roundabouts on a road as busy as University Avenue. I have seen several near-accidents at other roundabouts in Cedar Falls, mostly involving older people that don't know what to do at roundabouts.

Has a bike traffic study been done? There is not enough bike traffic to make bike lanes cost effective or worth the effort, and the safety of the bike riders would be at great risk. Just resurface the road and leave it the way it is.

Response #9 – See Response #2 above. No design decisions are being made at this time and the project is not funded for construction. Your comments are included for consideration in the written summary of the public hearing.

- **Comment #10** – Traffic flows well currently, so leave the road 6 lanes and repave it. Four lanes with roundabouts will interfere with traffic flow and snow plowing. Save costs by keeping the existing stoplights, not buying out businesses, and not putting in bike lanes and bike paths.

Response #10 – The study examined how to accomplish a similar or better flow of traffic with the variety of intersection treatments, such as signals, right-in/right-out access, or roundabouts. Currently, no design decisions have been made. The cities will determine a new design for the roadway or consider other maintenance measures during the design phase.

- **Comment #11** – The project is too costly in terms of dollars and business acquisitions. A reduction to 4-lanes would not handle the projected increase in traffic. Just repave the roadway, do not harm businesses, and do not add unsafe bike lanes.

Response #11 – See Response #2 above. Also, the documentation of environmental issues within the corridor footprint allows design and construction to be conducted within that established footprint. Roadway and intersection design decisions will be made by the cities during the design phase.

- **Comment #12** – I am very supportive of roundabouts. A previous study showed a relocation of the Tunis Drive intersection because of its poor location and traffic congestion. Why is that concept not included in this study?

Response #12 – This study looked at various options for Tunis Drive, including a roundabout, traffic signal, or right-in/right-out left-in, to see if the existing location could be utilized with the different configurations. The roundabout footprint was very significant, so the right-in/right-out left-in configuration was selected for the current location, versus a skewed intersection to the west of the existing configuration. Although modifications to the local frontage roads and parking lot connections can improve traffic flow, they were not included in this study because it would be a part of a local project conducted by the city of Waterloo. During the design phase, the city would work with adjacent property owners and refine the intersection location.

- **Comment #13** – Roundabouts would make University Avenue more user-friendly. The road is in desperate need of accessible bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

Response #13 – The Preferred Alternative includes a combination of synchronized signals and roundabouts to best balance the safety and operational needs of the corridor. A reconstruction project is not funded at this time and no final design decisions

have been made. Roadway and intersection design decisions will be made by the cities during the design phase.

- **Comment #14** – There is a strong difference of opinion as to whether University Avenue should be reconstructed as a Complete Street or just resurfaced. Several people want the pavement condition to be addressed quickly.

Response #14 – Although the Iowa DOT does not intend to pursue the Complete Streets concept, pavement treatments for critical areas could be assessed, but major material improvements are not anticipated for the near future. The Iowa DOT has also had initial discussions with Cedar Falls and Waterloo concerning transfers of jurisdictions for the roadway, but these are in the very early stages.

4.0 New Information

The following section provides new information or changes since publication of the EA and the October 29, 2013 public hearing.

- EA Section 5.1.3, Churches and Schools, page 24 – a fourth bullet item should be included, as follows:
 - Hagerman Baptist Church – Building located north of University Avenue/IA 934 and northwest of the Fletcher Avenue/Janney Avenue intersection. Parking lot parcel located at the southwest corner of the intersection.
- EA Section 5.1.3, Churches and Schools, Impacts of the Proposed Alternative, page 24, after the 3rd sentence - a new sentence should be included, as follows:
 - A small portion of land from the Hagerman Baptist Church parking lot parcel would require acquisition, although the paved parking lot would not be impacted.
- EA Section 5.2.3, Section 4(f) Properties, Impacts of the Proposed Alternative, Parks and Recreation Area Impacts, page 45 – the last two sentences of the first paragraph should be modified as follows:
 - Through a public hearing, the public was afforded the opportunity to review and comment on the Proposed Alternative's effects on the 4(f) properties and the *de minimis* impact finding intent. No comments on the impacts were received during the public comment period. Following the public hearing, Iowa DOT coordinated with the Cedar Falls Department of Recreation, Parks & Art, the Waterloo Department of Leisure Services, and the Peet Junior High School to obtain written concurrence that the University Avenue/IA 934 project will not adversely affect the activities, features, or attributes that make the properties eligible for Section 4(f) protection.

Copies of the concurrence letters are included in **Appendix B**. Based on the public comment period results and the park and school officials' concurrence letters, the FHWA has determined that a *de minimis* impact finding applies to the Preferred Alternative's impacts on the Section 4(f) parks and trails.

EA Section 5.2.3, Section 4(f) Properties, Impacts of the Proposed Alternative, Historic and Archaeological Site Impacts, page 45 – the last sentence of the third paragraph on that page should be modified as follows:

- Based on the SHPO’s written concurrence with Iowa DOT’s “no adverse effect” determination, FHWA has determined that a *de minimis* impact finding applies to the Preferred Alternative’s impacts on historic properties.
- EA Section 5.5, Cumulative, Table 5-10, page 59 – the following information should be added as the 2nd row (after “Schools”):

Resources Affected	Direct and Indirect Effects of Preferred Alternative	Potential Cumulative Effects
Churches (no. & ac.)	0.16 acre – open land from Hagerman Baptist Church parking lot parcel.	No additional impacts anticipated

- EA Section 5.6, Streamlined Resource Summary, Table 5-11, page 61 – the following information should be added in the Churches and Schools row under the “Proposed Alternative” column, regarding Hagerman Baptist Church impacts:

Resource	Unit	No-Build Alternative	Preferred Alternative
Churches & Schools	No. and acres	0	0.45 acre – open space from Peet Jr. High School; 0.16 acre – open land from Hagerman Baptist Church parking lot parcel

5.0 Basis for Finding of No Significant Impact

The EA evaluated resources present in the project area for effects as they may occur for the construction of the proposed University Avenue/IA 934 project. The EA documents the absence of significant impacts associated with the implementation of the Preferred Alternative.

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

6.0 Special conditions for location approval

The following permits will be obtained during design and prior to construction of the project:

- A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit No. 2 for Storm Water Discharge Associated with Construction Activities (NPDES Storm Water Permit) from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources will be acquired for minimization of storm water runoff and erosion associated with land disturbance activities.
- A Section 404 Permit from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District and Section 401 Water Quality Certification from Iowa Department of Natural Resources (Joint Application Form for Protecting Iowa Waters) will be acquired for placement of fill material in waters of the U.S., including wetlands and streams; and for water quality protection.

- A Section 408 Approval from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District will be acquired for approval of work on or near the federal levee along Black Hawk Creek.
- A Floodplain Construction Permit from Iowa Department of Natural Resources (Joint Application Form for Protecting Iowa Waters) will be acquired for impacts to the floodplains at Black Hawk Creek, South Branch of Dry Run Creek, and the tributary of Dry Run Creek.

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

- Modifications to local, public connecting cross streets, and public and private access driveways, frontage roads and backage roads were identified to improve traffic flow and access to and from adjacent businesses and residences along the corridor. Final decisions on the modifications to public and private connections and their associated funding would be made by the cities of Cedar Falls and Waterloo during the design phase of the project.
- Relocations and property acquisition would be conducted in conformance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970, as amended, and Iowa Code 316, the "Relocation Assistance Law". Complicated relocation problems that may arise will be addressed by the state's commitment to the provisions of 49 CFR 24.404 (Replacement Housing of Last Resort). Relocation assistance would be made available to all affected persons without discrimination. Parking impacts would be mitigated through compensation or replacement of parking adjacent to, or in another portion of the parcel.
- Coordination with MET officials would take place during the design stage of the project to determine necessary bus route modifications, and to determine locations of bus pull-out areas and improved bus shelters along the corridor, thereby providing opportunities for MET to plan bus stop improvements and rider amenities.
- Crosswalks and sidewalk ramps at intersections will comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.
- Impacts to Section 4(f) parks and recreation resources, and to properties that are listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places will be avoided or minimized in accordance with the *de minimis* impacts finding, as discussed in the EA document.
- In accordance with Iowa Code 314.23, Environmental Protection, woodland removed in the Black Hawk Creek riparian corridor would be replaced by plantings as close as possible to the initial site; or by acquisition of an equal amount of woodland in the general vicinity for public ownership and preservation; or by other mitigation deemed to be comparable to the woodland removed, including, but not limited to, the improvement, development, or preservation of woodland under public ownership.
- All known and unknown hazardous materials encountered during construction will be properly handled and disposed of in compliance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Where hazardous material or solid waste is identified in the required right-of-way, resolution with the property owner would be conducted prior to purchase. Standard best management practices would be used for demolition, clearing and grubbing. Buildings that are identified for demolition would be thoroughly inspected for

both stored hazardous materials and hazardous materials used in the construction of the building (e.g. asbestos, etc.).

- During the design process, proper coordination with utility companies will take place to determine further details regarding location, extent, and relocation of utilities; to avoid potential conflicts; and to ensure utility service disruptions are minimized.
- The final decision about intersection type, at the southeast quadrant of the University Avenue/IA 934/Fletcher Avenue intersection, will be made during the final design process, to avoid impacts to a proposed future lift station.

Appendix A
EA Notice of Availability

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AVAILABILITY
FOR THE PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT OF IOWA 934/UNIVERSITY AVENUE IN
CEDAR FALLS/WATERLOO FROM IOWA 58 TO U.S. 63**

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Notice is hereby given to all interested persons that a public hearing will be held on October 29, 2013, between 5 and 7 p.m., at the Clarion Inn, 5826 University Avenue, Cedar Falls, Iowa, to discuss the proposed improvement of Iowa 934/University Avenue in Cedar Falls/Waterloo from Iowa 58 to U.S. 63.

The purpose of this hearing is to update the public on the progress of the project; present the completed Environmental Assessment for the study area, the alternatives carried forward in the EA and the impacts of these alternatives; and gather feedback from the public about the project and EA. The Build Alternative under consideration would provide for improving the pavement and bridge conditions; enhancing safety; providing bicycle and pedestrian access and mobility; improving traffic flow; and supporting economic growth and revitalization.

The Iowa Department of Transportation in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration has prepared an EA for this project. Copies may be obtained by contacting either of the following:

Jim Rost, Director
Office of Location and Environment
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, Iowa 50010
Telephone: 515-239-1798

Lubin Quinones, Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
Iowa Division Office
105 Sixth Street
Ames, Iowa 50010
Telephone: 515-233-7300

A copy of the EA will be available for inspection at the hearing and is also available for viewing at the Iowa Department of Transportation, District 2 Office, 1420 Fourth Street SE, Mason City, IA 50401; Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments, 501 Sycamore, Suite 333, Waterloo, IA 50703; Waterloo Public Library, 415 Commercial Street, Waterloo, IA 50701; Cedar Falls Public Library, 524 Main Street, Cedar Falls, IA 50613; and Rod Library, University of Northern Iowa, 1227 W 27th Street, Cedar Falls, IA 50614.

A review deadline of November 18, 2013, has been established for receipt of comments on this document. All comments received on the EA by that date will be considered by the Iowa Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration in their evaluation of the environmental impacts of the project. Comments on the EA should be submitted to the Director, Office of Location and Environment, at the above address.

The Environmental Assessment evaluates the Build Alternative and the No-Build Alternative for the study area. Potential impacts of the alternatives to wetlands, water resources, historic buildings, homes, businesses, parks, and public facilities and services have been evaluated and are included in the EA. Information regarding the Build Alternative will be available at the public hearing. The No-Build Alternative would be the continuation of the highway system as it exists. It would not address the safety needs, increasing traffic volumes and outdated geometrics of the roadway within the project corridor.

This alternative would not satisfy the Project Purpose and Need requirements. However, it is carried forward to serve as a baseline for comparison with the Build Alternative.

The purpose of the proposed project is to upgrade and modernize Iowa 934/University Avenue between Iowa 58 in Cedar Falls and U.S. 63 in Waterloo. The Build Alternative would reduce the roadway from six lanes to four lanes and incorporate both optimized traffic signals and roundabouts. The completed roadway would generally include two 12-foot wide driving lanes in each direction, a 16-foot wide median, a 6-foot wide on-street bicycle lane, a 2-foot wide curb and gutter, a 6-foot wide sidewalk on the north side and a 10-foot wide multi-use path on the south side.

The following changes in access would occur along the corridor:

- Valley Park Drive, Holiday Road, Waterloo Road, Cedar Heights Drive, Midway Drive, Progress Drive, the Greenhill Road western terminal, Falls Avenue, Sager Avenue, Fletcher Avenue and U.S. 63 intersections would be converted to multi-lane roundabouts.
- New intersection access points would be developed at Royal Drive and Melrose Drive on the north side of Iowa 934/University Avenue, and at the south frontage road just east of Cedar Heights Drive. Royal Drive and the south frontage road access point would be developed as right-in/right-out intersection types to assist with traffic flow, access and connectivity to adjacent businesses. Melrose Drive would include a right-in/right-out and additional left-in movement for use by traffic traveling eastbound on Iowa 934/ University Avenue.
- The Black Hawk Village shopping center intersection would be converted from a signalized intersection to a right-in/right-out and additional left-in movement for use by traffic traveling westbound on Iowa 934/University Avenue.
- Tunis Drive would be converted from a signalized intersection to a right-in/right-out and additional left-in movements for use by both traffic traveling eastbound and westbound on Iowa 934/ University Avenue.
- Wallgate Avenue would be converted from a signalized intersection to a two-way stop controlled intersection.

All other intersections along the corridor would maintain their existing intersection types, but would incorporate improvements to turn lanes, vehicle storage lengths, signal timings and phasings.

The Build Alternative would impact relatively minor amounts of property from Rownd Park, the Peet Junior High School open space, Hope Martin Memorial Park, and the Cedar Prairie Trail. These properties are Section 4(f) resources that are subject to protection as public recreational facilities. The Build Alternative would also affect several properties that are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The impacts would involve temporary construction impacts and/or acquisition of minor amounts of land (but not impacts to the structures). The affected properties include the Rownd/Kelly house, the R.P Speer/Nelson house, the Cedar Falls post-war homes residential historic district, and the city of Waterloo water tower.

De minimis impacts on publicly owned parks, recreation areas, and wildlife and waterfowl refuges are defined as those that do not adversely affect the activities, features, and attributes of the Section 4(f) resources. *De minimis* impacts on properties that are listed on or eligible for listing on the NRHP are defined as impacts that have no adverse effect on the historic properties. The Federal Highway Administration is proposing to make *de minimis* impact determinations for the effects of the Build Alternative on the recreational and historic properties listed above. This is your opportunity to review and comment on the proposed *de minimis* effect determinations.

This public hearing will be conducted utilizing a combined open forum and formal format. Iowa Department of Transportation staff along with City and INRCOG staff will be present with plans, displays and related information to discuss the project informally between 5 and 6 p.m. Interested individuals are encouraged to attend the hearing anytime during the informal session to express their views and ask questions about the proposed improvement.

A formal presentation will begin at 6 p.m. followed by a question and answer session. There will be a three minute limit per speaker during the question and answer session. Persons wishing to make a formal presentation will need to designate this at the time of registration. Oral and written statements will be accepted during both the open forum and the formal sessions.

Written statements and related exhibits, in place of or in addition to oral statements made at the public hearing, will be accepted at the hearing or may be submitted to the Office of Location and Environment, Iowa DOT, 800 Lincoln Way, Ames, Iowa, 50010 or via the public meetings website at www.iowadot.gov/pim. All written material received by November 18, 2013, will be included in the project transcript.

For general information regarding the proposed improvement or the public hearing, contact:

Krista Rostad, Transportation Planner
Iowa Department of Transportation District 2 Office
1420 Fourth Street SE, Mason City, Iowa 50401
Telephone 641-423-7584 or 800-477-4368
Email krista.rostad@dot.iowa.gov.

All persons interested in the project are invited to attend this hearing. The meeting room is accessible for persons with disabilities. If you require special accommodations at the hearing, please notify Ms. Rostad by October 22, 2013, so arrangements can be made.

Additional information concerning this project will be posted as it becomes available at the Iowa DOT's website: <http://www.iowadot.gov/pim>.

Federal and state laws prohibit employment and/or public accommodation discrimination on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, gender identity, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or veteran's status. If you believe you have been discriminated against, please contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission at 800-457-4416 or Iowa Department of Transportation's affirmative action officer. If you need accommodations because of a disability to access the Iowa Department of Transportation's services, contact the agency's affirmative action officer at 800-262-0003.

Appendix B
Resource Agency Comments

From: Schwake, Christine [DNR]
Sent: Thursday, October 17, 2013 8:51 AM
To: Vine, Janet [DOT]
Subject: RE: NEPA Document Availability from Iowa Department of Transportation

Hi Janet –

The only comment I have is that page 2 of Kelly Poole's comment letter (dated 11/9/2011) was left out of the document.

Thanks, Chris

CHRISTINE SCHWAKE Environmental Specialist



Iowa Department of Natural Resources
515.281.6615 | christine.schwake@dnr.iowa.gov
502 E 9th St | Des Moines, IA 50319-0034

WWW.IOWADNR.GOV   

Leading Iowans in Caring for Our Natural Resources.

From: Vine, Janet [DOT]
Sent: Thursday, October 17, 2013 8:36 AM
To: Schwake, Christine [DNR]
Subject: NEPA Document Availability from Iowa Department of Transportation

Re: University Avenue/ IA 934
Environmental Assessment
STP-934-1(9)- -2C-07

To Whom it May Concern:

The Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT), in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration, has completed the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the improvement of University Avenue/ IA 934 from IA 58 in Cedar Falls to US 63 in Waterloo, Black Hawk County, Iowa. The EA can be viewed on the Iowa DOT web site at the following URL:

<http://www.iowadot.gov/ole/OLESite/nepadocuments.aspx>

The Iowa DOT is soliciting comments on the document during the comment period, which ends on November 18, 2013. Please postmark your comments by that date and send them to:

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

Telephone: (515) 239-1225

A hard copy of the EA has also been sent to your office.

Janet M. Vine

NEPA Compliance Section

Office of Location and Environment, Iowa DOT

800 Lincoln Way

Ames, IA 50010

Phone: 515.239.1467



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT
PO BOX 2004 CLOCK TOWER BUILDING
ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS 61204-2004

October 24, 2013

RECEIVED

OCT 28 2013

Office of Location & Environment

Ms. Janet Vine
NEPA Document Manager
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, Iowa 50010

Dear Ms. Vine:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Environmental Assessment for the improvement of University Avenue/IA 934 from IA 58 in Cedar Falls to U.S. 63 in Waterloo, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

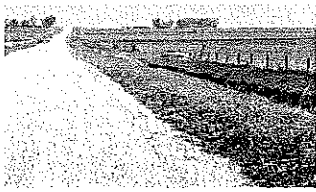
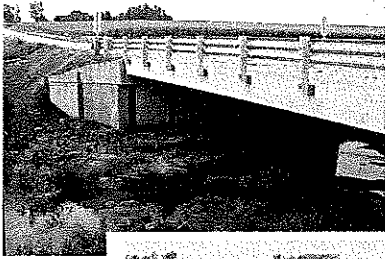
It appears your project may be covered under Item 14 of the nationwide permits. When your project plans are complete, and prior to initiation of construction on this project, you should submit a complete application for Department of the Army Section 404 authorization. Your complete application should include a wetland delineation of your project area using the Corps' 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual and Midwest Regional Supplement.

Should you have any questions, please contact our Regulatory Branch by letter, or telephone me at 309/794-5367.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael D. Hayes".

Michael D. Hayes
Project Manager
Regulatory Branch



Office of the
**Black Hawk County
Engineer**

316 East Fifth Street, Room 211

Waterloo, Iowa 50703-4774

Telephone: 319-833-3008

Fax: 319-833-3139

E-mail: engineer@co.black-hawk.ia.us

Catherine F. Nicholas, PE
County Engineer

Ryan Brennan, EI
Assistant Engineer I

Lynn Kloberdanz
Geoffry A. Tinker, PLS
Engineering Staff

Jan Hix
Budget Administrator

Rick Buffington
Maintenance Superintendent

Wayne Even
Maintenance Supervisor

November 12, 2013

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

RECEIVED

NOV 19 2013

Office of Location & Environment

Good Day Mr. Rost:

I have completed my review of the Environmental Assessment for the improvement of University Avenue/IA 934 from IA 58 in Cedar Falls to U.S. 63 in Waterloo. Because this project will not directly affect Black Hawk County roads or bridges I have no comments on the document. Thank you for this opportunity to review the document.

Sincerely,

Catherine F. Nicholas, P.E.
County Engineer

Cc: Board of Supervisors
Krista Rostad, IA DOT



STATE OF IOWA

TERRY E. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
ROGER L. LANDE, DIRECTOR

November 9, 2011

RECEIVED

NOV 16 2011

Iowa Department of Transportation
Attn: Janet Vine
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

Office of Location & Environment

RE: Environmental Review for Natural Resources
IA 934/University Avenue
Cedar Falls to Waterloo
Black Hawk County
Section 17-23/ 26-30, Township 89N, Range 13W
Section 13/24, Township 89N, Range 14W

Dear Ms. Vine,

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.

Any construction activity that bares the soil of an area greater than or equal to one acre including clearing, grading or excavation may require a storm water discharge permit from the Department. Construction activities may include the temporary or permanent storage of dredge material. For more information regarding this matter, please contact Ruth Rosdail at (515) 281-6782.

The Department administers regulations that pertain to fugitive dust IAW Iowa Administrative Code 567-23.3(2)"c." All persons shall take reasonable precautions to prevent the discharge of visible emissions of fugitive dusts beyond the lot line of property during construction, alteration, repairing or demolishing of buildings, bridges or other vertical structures or haul roads. All questions regarding fugitive dust regulations should be directed to Jim McGraw at (515) 242-5167.

Please reference DNR project tracking number 6732 in future correspondence regarding this project. If you have questions about this letter or require further information, please contact me at (515) 281- 8967.

Sincerely,

Kelly Poole
Environmental Specialist
Conservation and Recreation Division

FILE COPY: Kelly Poole

Tracking Number: 6732

CC:



Iowa Department of Transportation

800 Lincoln Way, Ames, Iowa 50010

515-239-1467

Fax: 515-239-1726

December 5, 2013

Mark Ripplinger, Director
Human & Leisure Services
606 Union Road
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613

RE: *De Minimis* Impact Finding Concurrence
IA 934 from the Waterloo/Cedar Falls City Limits East to US 63
STP-934-0(9)- -2C-07

Dear Mr. Ripplinger:

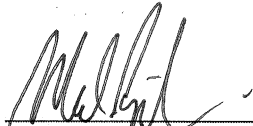
An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared on the subject project and the public was given the opportunity for review and comment on the EA from October 16, 2013 to November 18, 2013. The EA analyzed the effect of the project on the protected activities, features, and attributes of parks and recreational facilities in Cedar Falls and identified that Rownd Park and the Cedar Prairie Trail would be impacted by the project. See table below.

Park/Recreation Area Name	Total Size	Impact Quantity	Type of Impacts
Rownd Park	14.7 ac.	0.07 ac. (property)	Property acquisition. Relocation impacts to trail within park during construction (see Cedar Prairie Trail below)
Cedar Prairie Trail (& Main Street Trail loop)	13.9 ac., 8 mi.	0.16 ac. (trail property) 1,330 l.f. (trail relocation)	Property acquisition. Trail relocated/reconstructed to maintain continuity. Temporary closures or relocation during construction.

Iowa DOT previously notified you by letter dated August 15, 2013 that FHWA intended to make a *de minimis* finding characterizing the impacts to Rownd Park and the Cedar Prairie Trail. No comments on the impacts were received during the public comment period on the EA.

If you agree with the finding, please concur by signing the statement below.

As the official having jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) resources, it is agreed that the project will not adversely affect the activities, features, and attributes that make these properties eligible for Section 4(f) protection.



Authorizing Official

12/6/13
Date

You may contact me at 515.239.1467 or janet.vine@dot.iowa.gov if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Janet M. Vine
Iowa Department of Transportation
NEPA Compliance Section

cc: Mike LaPietra, FHWA
Krista Rostad, IA DOT



Iowa Department of Transportation

800 Lincoln Way, Ames, Iowa 50010

515-239-1467

Fax: 515-239-1726

December 5, 2013

Paul Hutting, Director
Waterloo Leisure Services
1101 Campbell Avenue
Waterloo, Iowa 50701

RE: *De Minimis* Impact Finding Concurrence
IA 934 from the Waterloo/Cedar Falls City Limits East to US 63
STP-934-0(9)- -2C-07

Dear Mr. Hutting:

An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared on the subject project and the public was given the opportunity for review and comment on the EA from October 16, 2013 to November 18, 2013. The EA analyzed the effect of the project on the protected activities, features, and attributes of parks and recreational facilities in Waterloo and identified that Greenhill Trail, Hope Martin Memorial Park, and Sergeant Road Trail would be impacted by the project. See table below.

Park/Recreation Area Name	Total Size	Impact Quantity	Type of Impacts
Greenhill Trail	4 mi.	345 l.f. (temporary)	Potential temporary closures or relocation during construction.
Hope Martin Memorial Park	128 ac.	0.27 ac. <i>de minimis</i>	Property acquisition of open space only, on each side of Fletcher Avenue. No features or attributes impacted.
Sergeant Road Trail	49.9 ac., 10 mi.	310 l.f. (temporary)	Potential temporary closures or relocation during construction.

Iowa DOT previously notified you by letter dated August 15, 2013 that FHWA intended to make a *de minimis* finding characterizing the impacts to Greenhill Trail, Hope Martin Memorial Park, and Sergeant Road Trail. No comments on the impacts were received during the public comment period on the EA.

If you agree with the finding, please concur by signing the statement below.

As the official having jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) resources, it is agreed that the project will not adversely affect the activities, features, and attributes that make these properties eligible for Section 4(f) protection.

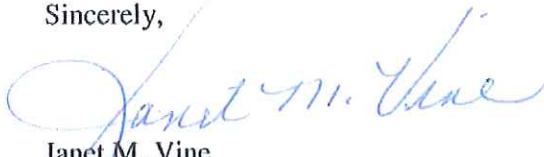


Authorizing Official

12-5-2013
Date

You may contact me at 515.239.1467 or janet.vine@dot.iowa.gov if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,


Janet M. Vine
Iowa Department of Transportation
NEPA Compliance Section

cc: Mike LaPietra, FHWA
Krista Rostad, IA DOT



Iowa Department of Transportation

800 Lincoln Way, Ames, Iowa 50010

515-239-1467

Fax: 515-239-1726

December 5, 2013

Doug Nefzger, Director of Business Affairs
Peet Junior High School
525 E Seerley Boulevard
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613

RE: *De Minimis* Impact Finding Concurrence
IA 934 from the Waterloo/Cedar Falls City Limits East to US 63
STP-934-0(9)- -2C-07

Dear Mr. Nefzger:

An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared on the subject project and the public was given the opportunity for review and comment on the EA from October 16, 2013 to November 18, 2013. The EA analyzed the effect of the project on the protected activities, features, and attributes of parks and recreational facilities in Cedar Falls and identified that the Peet Junior High School athletic field would be impacted by the project. See table below.

Park/Recreation Area Name	Total Size	Impact Quantity	Type of Impacts
Peet Jr. High Athletic Fields	17.6 ac.	0.45 ac.	Property acquisition of open space, but no impacts to athletic fields. Impact limit boundary is 5 to 6 feet away from (south of) goal posts of fields.

Iowa DOT previously notified you by letter dated August 15, 2013 that FHWA intended to make a *de minimis* finding characterizing the impacts to the Peet Junior High School athletic field. No comments on the impacts were received during the public comment period on the EA.

If you agree with the finding, please concur by signing the statement below.

As the official having jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) resources, it is agreed that the project will not adversely affect the activities, features, and attributes that make these properties eligible for Section 4(f) protection.



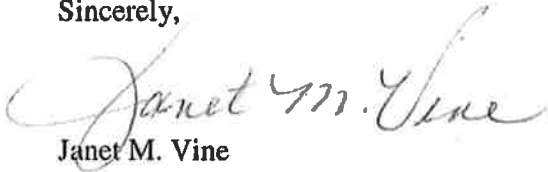
Authorizing Official



Date

You may contact me at 515.239.1467 or janet.vine@dot.iowa.gov if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Janet M. Vine
Iowa Department of Transportation
NEPA Compliance Section

cc: Mike LaPietra, FHWA
Krista Rostad, IA DOT