

Central City Viaduct

Project Number: RRZ-TMT-14-2(123)
Control Number: 42013

Draft Environmental Assessment

Submitted Pursuant to 42 USC 4332 and 23 CFR 771, 772 & 774
to the US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration
by the Nebraska Department of Transportation

Project Sponsor signature indicates verification that the content of this document and the scope of the project are accurate. FHWA signature gives approval to distribute this information for public and agency review and comment. Such approval does not commit to approve any future grant requests to fund the Preferred Alternative.



for



11/15/2024

Date



for
Project Sponsor



11/12/2024

Date

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- L Biological Assessment
- M Cumulative Impacts
- N Public and Agency Coordination

Abbreviations

AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic
ACM	Asbestos Containing Material
ACS	American Community Survey
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
APE	Area of Potential Effects
AST	Aboveground Storage Tanks
BMP	Best Management Practice
BOR	Bureau of Reclamation
BNSF	Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway
BUG	Blacklight, Up-light, Glare
BUL	Biologically Unique Landscape
CAR	Closure Assessment Report
CE	Categorical Exclusion
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CIA	Community Impact Assessment
CN	NDOT Control Number
CR	County Road
CWA	Clean Water Act of 1972
dBA	A-Weighted Decibel
DEA	Draft EA
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
DOT	Department of Transportation
EA	Environmental Assessment
EF	Exposure Factor
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	US Environmental Protection Agency
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FE	Federally Endangered
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FMGP	Former Manufactured Gas Plant
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981

FR	Federal Register
FT	Federally Threatened
GIS	Geospatial Information System
HMR	Hazardous Materials Review
HPM	Highway Project Manager
HSPP	Highway Salvage Paleontology Program
IMS	Interactive Mapping System
IPLE	Individual Project Level Evaluation
IWM	Integrated Waste management
LAST	Leaking Above Ground Storage Tank
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
LST	Leaking Storage Tank
LUST	Leaking Underground Storage Tank
LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund
MEV	Per Million Entering Vehicles
MM	Mile Marker
MSAT	Mobile Source Air Toxics
NCRC	Nebraska Central Railroad Company
NCHRP	National Cooperative Highway Research Program
NDEE	Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy
NDOR	Nebraska Department of Roads
NDOT	Nebraska Department of Transportation
NDNR	Nebraska Department of Natural Resources
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
NESHAP	National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NGPC	Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act of 1966
NLEB	Northern Long-eared Bat
NNLP	Nebraska Natural Legacy Project
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPPD	Nebraska Public Power District
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
PEER	Platte People Education Environmental Recreation Group

PEM	Palustrine Emergent
PEMA/C	Palustrine Emergent Temporarily/Seasonally Flooded
PEMF	Palustrine Emergent Semi-Permanently Flooded
PM	Project Manager
PQS	Professionally Qualified Staff
PRRIP	Platte River Recovery Implementation Program
RBP	Risk Based Project
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976
ROW	Right-of-Way
RR	Railroad
SE	State Endangered
SFM	Nebraska State Fire Marshal
SHPO	Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office
ST	State Threatened
STA	Station Number
SVE	Soil Vapor Extraction
SVOC	Semi-volatile Organic Compounds
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
TCB	Tri-Colored Bat
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
TNM	Traffic Noise Model
TSM	Transportation System Management
Uniform Act	Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970
UPRR	Union Pacific Railroad
US-	United States Highway
USACE	US Army Corps of Engineers
USC	United States Code
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation
USFWS	US Fish and Wildlife Service
USC	United States Code
UST	Underground Storage Tank
UWAP	Unexpected Waste Action Plan
WHPA	Nebraska Wellhead Protection Area Act of 1998
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled

Chapter 1 Introduction and Purpose & Need

1.1 Introduction

The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT), in cooperation with the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the City of Central City (City), is proposing to reconstruct and relocate a segment of Nebraska Highway 14 (N-14). The proposed project would include the construction of a viaduct over the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) mainline tracks that run through Central City, and the reconfiguration of the intersection of N-14 and US-30 in downtown Central City. The general project location is shown in **Figure 1.1**. These improvements, known as the “Project”, have been included by NDOT in the *Surface Transportation Program Book Fiscal Years 2025-2030* and the *Nebraska Statewide Transportation Improvement Program Fiscal Year 2025-2028*. These improvements are proposed to be funded using a combination of federal, state and local funds, including funds from the City and the UPRR.

This Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) was prepared in compliance with the requirements of the *National Environmental Policy Act of 1969* (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations in the *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) (40 CFR 1500-1508), and guidelines in FHWA’s Technical Advisory T-6640.8A, *Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents*. The intent of these regulations and guidelines are to ensure that all factors are considered in the transportation decision-making process, including a concern for the environment and the involvement of the public (FHWA 1987).

1.2 Background

Central City is located in Merrick County, Nebraska, and is also the county seat of Merrick County. Central City, originally named “Lone Tree,” came into being in 1866 as the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) laid tracks through Merrick County. Fourteen years later, in 1880, the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad arrived in Central City, giving the city two railroads and leading to increased growth. In 1913 the first meeting of the Lincoln Highway Association was held in Central City, and the Association was strongly encouraged to use the central Platte River route for the new highway. These efforts ultimately brought the transcontinental highway across Nebraska, of which the Lincoln Highway (US-30) and N-14 pass through and intersect in downtown Central City. The development of the railroads and transcontinental highway helped to transform Central City from a one-building town into a steadily growing community. Today, the railroad and highways that traverse Central City remain vital in fostering growth and serve as an essential component to the city’s economy.

The segment of N-14 that extends through Central City has a state functional classification of “major arterial” and a national functional classification of “rural minor arterial” (NDOT 2014). N-14 provides a south-north connection through Nebraska, extending from the Nebraska-Kansas border southwest of Superior, NE, to the Nebraska-South Dakota border northeast of Niobrara, NE. N-14 passes through multiple towns and cities and provides a link for regional traffic. In Central City, N-14 shares an alignment with 17th Avenue, and is the main north-south roadway through the city. This segment of N-14 passes through downtown Central City, and intersects with US-30, a “rural principal arterial,” and the UPRR mainline in downtown Central City. Both N-14 and US-30 carry large volumes of local and regional traffic, including large volumes of industrial and agricultural related (freight) traffic. Approximately 20 miles south of Central City, N-14 also provides a connection to Interstate 80 (I-80), the only east-west interstate that extends through the entire state of Nebraska. **Figure 1.2** illustrates the Federal Functional Classification of N-14, as well as other roadways in the area (NDOT 2014).

44 In September 1996, the City requested that NDOT (NDOR at the time¹) perform a study to determine if
45 building a viaduct to carry vehicular/pedestrian traffic over the UPRR mainline tracks would be
46 justified. This request indicated the City's concern about the increased vehicular traffic on N-14 and
47 increased train traffic on the UPRR mainline, both of which run through downtown Central City. In
48 January 2007, a Categorical Exclusion (CE) was approved by FHWA for the realignment of N-14 and
49 the construction of a viaduct over the UPRR tracks. The Central City Viaduct Project was originally
50 proposed to begin just north of the Platte River (approximately three-quarters of a mile south of
51 Central City) and continue north to a point just north of 10th Street where it would tie back into the
52 existing N-14 on the north side of Central City. The original project included realigning N-14
53 approximately four blocks east through Central City utilizing right-of-way (ROW) from the existing
54 north-south oriented abandoned Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) (now owned by Nebraska
55 Central Railroad Company (NCRC)) rail corridor. That project also included the construction of a
56 viaduct to be built north of US-30 over the existing UPRR mainline tracks (NDOR & FHWA 2007).

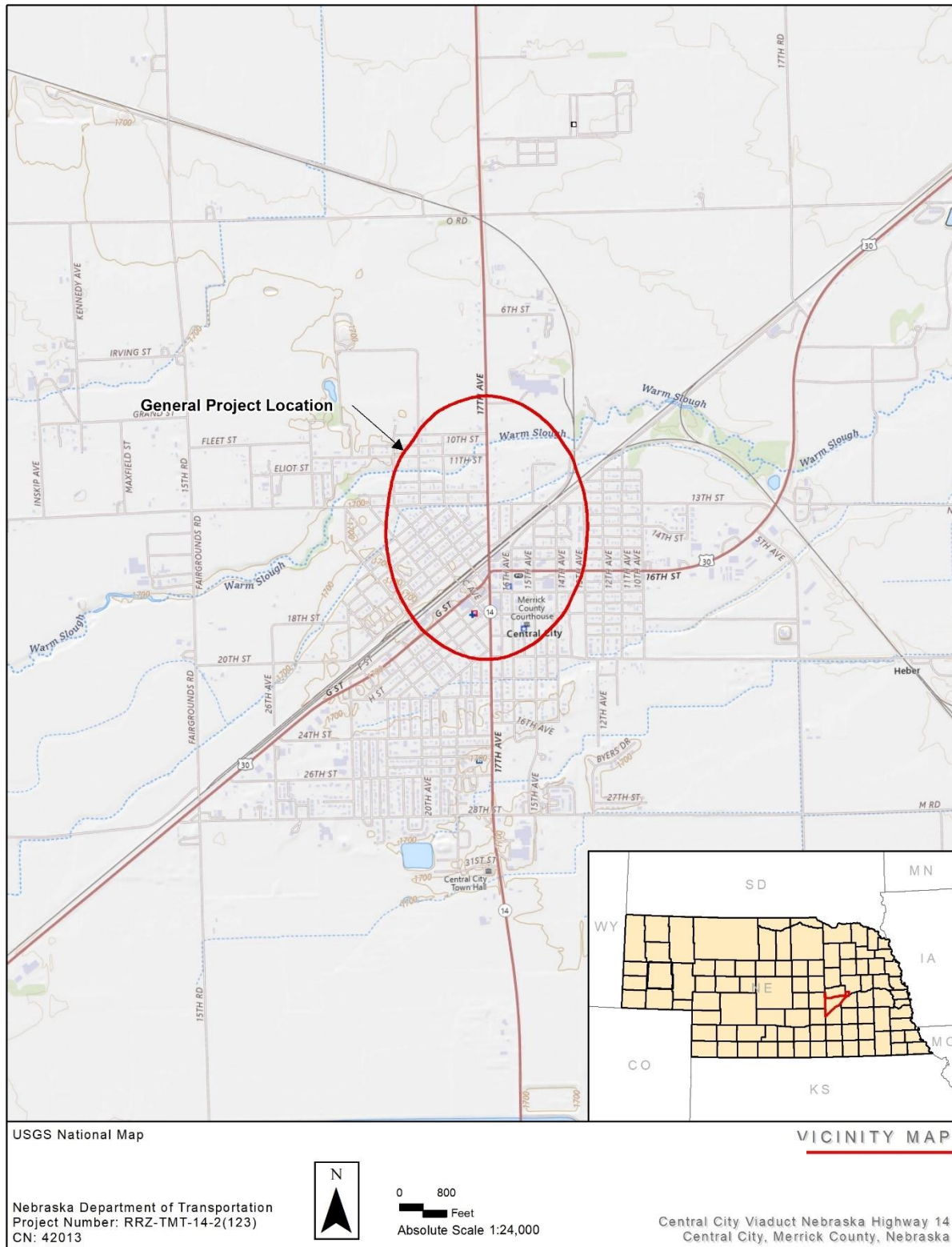
57 Since the initial study, the Project has undergone several developments to reach its current stage. In
58 2012, the project was reprogrammed more simply as a viaduct project over the UPRR, and no longer
59 included the bypass around downtown. Subsequently, a public information meeting was held in 2016
60 to present information on various alternatives and gather public input and support for the project.
61 During this meeting, key concerns were voiced by the public, including strong support to enhance
62 downtown access, reduce congestion, and address safety at the N-14 and US-30 intersection.
63 Concerns included worries about safety and large truck traffic at the intersection, as well as general
64 apprehensions about traffic flow and congestion in the downtown area. Comments highlighted the
65 potential benefits of closing the N-14 crossing to alleviate stoplight and railroad-related traffic issues.
66 Furthermore, it was emphasized that addressing the impact of US-30 truck traffic through downtown
67 should be considered. The public feedback, with nearly 20 percent expressing concerns about the
68 downtown intersection, highlights the importance of refining the project to address these issues and
69 meet community expectations. This includes the recognized need to improve the intersection of US-
70 30 and N-14 to accommodate anticipated changes in travel patterns resulting from the possible
71 realignment of N-14. Refer to **Chapter 4** for additional public involvement information.

72 In the following years, numerous alternatives were carefully evaluated and considered. Through this
73 process, a preferred alternative was identified that considered various factors such as traffic flow,
74 delays, and impacts on residences and businesses. These alternatives were presented to the public
75 during an open house public meeting in 2021, allowing for community feedback and input. More
76 detailed information on the public meeting and feedback can be found in Chapter 4. The preferred
77 alternative, which will be discussed in detail throughout the DEA, addresses the identified challenges
78 and fulfills the project's purpose and need.

¹ In 2017, the Nebraska Department of Aeronautics merged with the Nebraska Department of Roads to form the Nebraska Department of Transportation. For more history of NDOT see <https://dot.nebraska.gov/about/history/>

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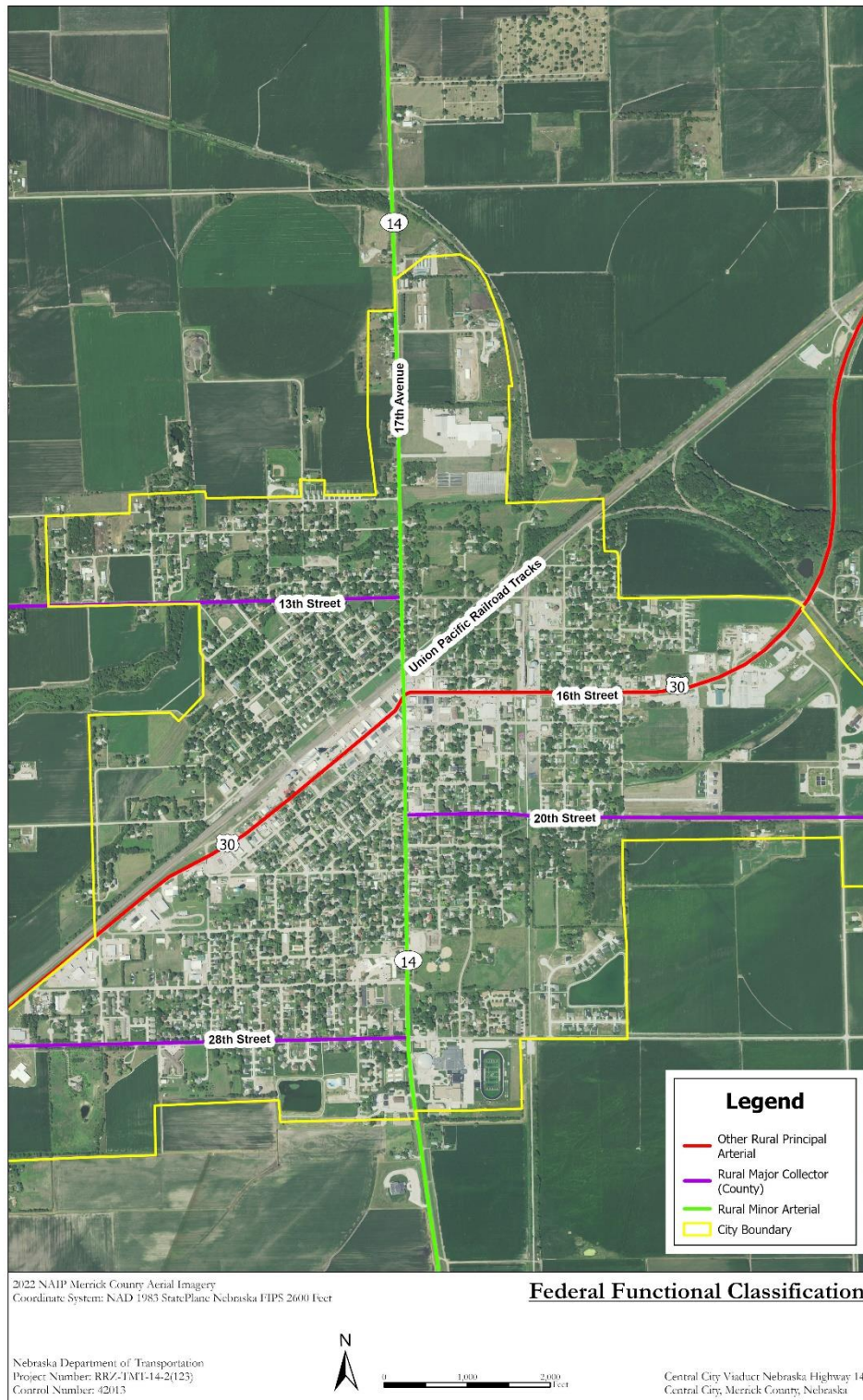
Figure 1.1 - Vicinity Map



80

81

Figure 1.2 - Federal Functional Classification System



82

83 1.3 Purpose of the Proposed Project

84 The purpose of this project is to:

- 85 • Eliminate conflicts between trains and vehicles at the existing N-14 at-grade UPRR crossing.
- 86 • Reduce traffic congestion and associated delays at the N-14 crossing of the UPRR tracks and
87 at the intersection with US-30.
- 88 • Improve operations and reduce crash costs associated with the N-14 and US-30 intersection.

89 1.4 Need for the Proposed Project

90 The NDOT identifies needs for railroad grade separation structures by considering the exposure
91 factor, traffic delays, and crash costs. The highway-rail crossing of N-14 and the UPRR mainline meets
92 NDOT's thresholds for considering a grade separation. NDOT has also determined a need to address
93 operational challenges at the intersection of N-14 and US-30 just south of the UPRR mainline.

94 1.4.1 Exposure Factor

95 According to Nebraska Title 415, Chapters 4 through 7 – *Rules and Regulations Concerning Highway-*
96 *Rail Grade Crossings*, exposure factor is a term defined as the product of average daily vehicle traffic
97 and average daily train traffic at a grade crossing. For example, if there are 100 vehicles per day and
98 50 trains per day, the exposure factor would be 5,000 (100 vehicles/day x 50 trains/day = 5,000
99 exposure factor) (Nebraska Administrative Code 2019). As stated in the NDOT Roadway Design
100 Manual, when the exposure factor reaches 50,000 or more, it is recommended to consider
101 implementing a grade separation (NDOT 2019).

102 The at-grade crossing of N-14 and the UPRR mainline currently has an exposure factor of
103 approximately 117,390. This is derived from the average annual daily traffic volume of approximately
104 2,795 vehicles crossing the tracks (2023 AADT) and the most recent average daily train count of 42 at
105 this crossing according to the Federal Railroad Administration in 2019. The exposure factor of
106 117,390 surpasses the NDOT threshold of 50,000 resulting in undesirable traffic conditions, including
107 delays, congestion, and safety concerns.

108 The occurrence of train and vehicle crashes at the UPRR crossings throughout Central City highlights
109 the importance of addressing the high exposure factor in this area. Analysis of crash data between
110 1975 and 2023 reveals a notable number of incidents, including 10 crashes and 7 fatalities, that have
111 occurred at the UPRR crossing of N-14, C Ave, or 13th Street. These findings emphasize the need to
112 improve safety and reduce the risks associated with these crossings.

113 1.4.2 Traffic Delays

114 The existing traffic delay issues on N-14 and its adjacent roads are closely tied to the high exposure
115 factor at the highway-rail grade crossing, where the volume of both vehicle and train traffic is
116 substantial. This intersection, particularly at N-14 and US-30 in downtown Central City, experiences
117 heavy congestion and is one of the busiest intersections in the city. The close proximity of this
118 intersection to the nearby UPRR mainline crossing, further exacerbates the problem. Passing trains
119 frequently block the crossing, halting north-south movement across the tracks, leading to backups
120 and traffic delays. Additionally, the irregular intersection of N-14 and US-30, resulting from the
121 convergence of two different street grid systems, adds to the congestion and makes navigation
122 challenging for drivers.

123 These traffic delays and congestion have a significant impact on the overall traffic flow within Central
124 City. The downtown district, where the N-14 and US-30 intersection is located, serves as a hub for

125 various businesses, restaurants, and offices. The traffic backups caused by the highway-rail grade
126 crossing obstructs on-street parking and parking lots, directly affecting the accessibility and
127 functionality of these establishments. Furthermore, as the UPRR mainline effectively divides the city
128 into north and south sides, the delays at the at-grade crossings pose a significant inconvenience for
129 residents and commuters traveling between these areas. Emergency vehicles face challenges, as the
130 blocked crossings impede their response time and restrict their movement.

131 The high volume of trains passing through the at-grade crossing contributes significantly to the traffic
132 delays experienced in Central City. With an average of 42 trains per day, each closing the crossing for
133 approximately 2.04 minutes, the crossing is blocked for approximately 85.5 minutes daily. This
134 information is used to estimate that approximately 162 vehicles per day are likely to get stopped at the
135 crossing³. To estimate the average duration of delayed vehicle, *National Cooperative Highway Research*
136 *Program Report 288* guidelines suggest a calculated value of 1.02 minutes, assuming a uniform
137 distribution of vehicles approaching and departing the crossing. Consequently, the daily total average
138 delay at the crossing is approximately 165 minutes, equivalent to 2 hours and 45 minutes each day.

139 These significant delays come with associated costs, both in terms of time wasted and fuel
140 consumed. NDOT estimates that each minute of delay costs a passenger vehicle \$0.371⁴ and a truck
141 \$0.61 statewide. Considering the traffic and train data at this crossing, the total delay cost over the
142 course of a year amounts to approximately \$37,048.

143 1.4.3 Crash Costs

144 Crash costs are derived by using the *Crash Prediction Model for Highway-Rail Grade Crossings in*
145 *Nebraska*. This model takes into consideration train speed, type of crossing (passive, flashing lights,
146 gates), number of daily vehicles and trains at the crossing, and accident history to develop a predicted
147 crash rate. Crash costs are a product of multiplying the predictive crash rate by societal crash costs
148 with a train. The average annual crash costs associated with the N-14 at-grade crossing is estimated
149 to be \$18,975. Added to the cost of delays, the existing at-grade crossing results in a total average
150 annual cost to the traveling public of approximately \$56,023.

151 While the primary focus of this project is to address the crash costs associated with the N-14
152 crossing, it is important to consider the crash costs at other major at-grade crossings throughout the
153 city. At C Avenue, the total annual crash and delay costs amount to approximately \$55,885, while at
154 13th Street, it is approximately \$53,341. When considering the combined total of these three
155 crossings, which amounts to \$165,249 per year, it becomes evident that crashes and delays at these
156 crossings have a significant economic impact on the surrounding area.

157 1.4.4 Operational Challenges

158 The downtown intersection in Central City, where N-14 and US-30 intersect, presents an operational
159 challenge due to the unusual and nonstandard roadway configuration. N-14, a major north-south
160 thoroughfare, intersects with US-30, a significant east-west route. The intersection's geometry
161 deviates from the standard grid pattern typically found in urban areas. N-14 and US-30 meet at an
162 angle, creating a skewed and asymmetrical configuration. This unique road alignment poses
163 challenges for drivers, as they must navigate the intersection while adjusting to the non-linear
164 alignment of N-14 and US-30. The unusual geometry, influenced by the existing building locations and
165 the railroad's orientation with the local roads, features angled convergence and offset lane
166 connections. This configuration can lead to driver confusion and unexpected movements, increasing

³ 85.5 minutes (delay per day) / 1440 minutes (in a day) x 2735 ADT = 162 vehicles/day get stopped by the train.

⁴ Costs associated with delay are based upon a 1970 NCHRP Report 133, Procedures for Estimating Highway User Costs, Air Pollution and Noise Effects that established costs of \$3.00 per hour and \$5.00 per hour for cars and trucks, respectively. Annually, NDOT uses the Consumer Price Index to adjust these values.

167 the likelihood of sideswipes and traffic incidents. According to NDOT crash data, this intersection
168 experiences 0.943 crashes per million entering vehicles (MEV), compared to the current statewide
169 average crash rate of 0.403 crashes per MEV for similar urban two-lane without surfaced shoulder
170 intersections. Between the years 2003 and 2013, a total of 64 crashes were recorded at the
171 intersection, with the most frequent recurring crash type involving sideswipes between vehicles in the
172 westbound left-turn and through/right-turn lane.

173 A revised safety analysis conducted for the three-year period from January 1st, 2018, to December
174 31st, 2020, shows an updated crash rate at the intersection of US-30 & N-14. The analysis from the
175 NDOT crash database documented a total of nine reported crashes, including two which resulted in
176 injuries. This resulted in a crash rate of 0.4 crashes per MEV, which is approximately 6% less than the
177 statewide average rate of 0.426 crashes per MEV for similarly classified roadways. However, all nine
178 of these crashes involved semi-trucks and seven of them were sideswipe same direction crashes
179 along the east approach of the intersection, consistent with the recurring crash type identified in the
180 previous 2015 study.

181 1.5 Summary

182 The purpose of this project is to eliminate conflicts between trains and vehicles, reduce traffic
183 congestion and delays, and improve operations in downtown Central City. N-14 serves as a primary
184 commuter route for residents of central Merrick County and the City of Central City, connecting them
185 to major roadways such as US-30 and I-80.

186 The proposed improvements would aim to eliminate the railroad crossing exposure factor and reduce
187 traffic congestion and associated delays at the N-14 and UPRR crossing. Additionally, enhancements
188 would aim to improve operations at the current intersection of N-14 with US-30 and reduce crash
189 costs. By implementing effective solutions, the project would improve traffic operations, increase
190 safety, and substantially reduce conflicts between trains and vehicles.

191 Chapter 2 Alternatives

192 2.1 Development of Concepts

193 In accordance with NEPA requirements, this EA presents a preferred alternative and a No Build
194 Alternative for evaluation. While other alternatives have been considered, detailed descriptions are not
195 provided throughout this document. This chapter outlines the process used to identify the range of
196 concepts and alternatives, offering a comprehensive overview. Additionally, it provides a detailed
197 description of the preferred alternative that is carried forward in this EA.

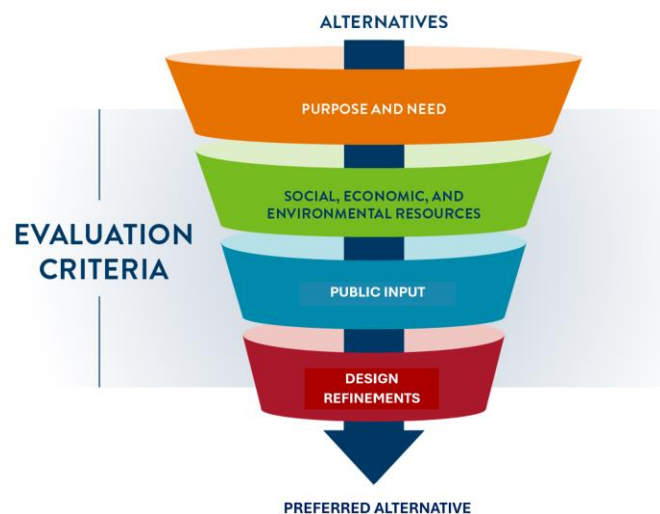
198 In 1996, the City of Central City approached the NDOT about addressing problems related to the N-14
199 crossing at the UPRR railroad tracks downtown. Concepts were explored at the time, resulting in a
200 decision to move forward with a limited bypass option that included a viaduct over the railroad tracks.

201 Over the years, additional concepts were explored, with some being eliminated from further
202 consideration. Additionally, since a good amount of time had passed and new conditions were present
203 in the City, certain concepts were no longer able to be considered or were no longer feasible. However,
204 the primary feature of the bypass option was a viaduct, and this feature has remained a part of the
205 overall solution to the transportation problems that persist.

206 More recently, to address operational challenges downtown, as explained in the previous chapter,
207 additional intersection improvements were evaluated. While each of these intersection alternatives
208 would partially meet the purpose and need, several of them were determined to be unfeasible or
209 unreasonable due to higher impacts downtown. Furthermore, public input was used to eliminate
210 alternatives that had public opposition or were seen as less favorable than other alternatives.

211 In summary, alternatives were first screened to determine if they satisfied some or all of the purpose
212 and need, and then whether or not they were reasonable. These alternatives were then screened using
213 public input and preliminary environmental impacts. The resulting combination of a viaduct alternative
214 as well as an intersection alternative was then refined to further minimize impacts to the environment
215 and downtown area. This chapter presents the concepts that were evaluated, and the refinement
216 process used to develop the preferred alternative. **Figure 2.1** shows how this process led to a
217 preferred alternative.

218 **Figure 2.1 - Alternative Screening Process**



219

220 2.2 Facility Type

221 Several types of mode separation facilities were evaluated regarding the project's purpose and need
222 and whether these alternatives are considered reasonable. The alternatives that were considered
223 include:

- 224 • No Build Alternative
- 225 • Roadway Underpass/Tunnel
- 226 • Railroad Overpass
- 227 • Transportation System Management
- 228 • Viaduct Alternative (Preferred)

229 These concepts were first screened for support of the project's purpose and need and then to
230 determine if they were reasonable.

231 2.2.1 No Build Alternative

232 The No Build Alternative, as defined by FHWA, includes normal, short-term, minor activities that
233 address safety and maintenance issues, without making any major improvements to the existing
234 transportation network, but does not preclude the construction of other planned improvements
235 through the City's long range planning process, the Comprehensive Plan, or through other county or
236 state projects. This Alternative does not meet the purpose and need as discussed in Chapter 1,
237 because it does not address the traffic delays, conflicts at the N-14/Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR)
238 intersection, or address operational challenges downtown Central City. Nonetheless, it has been
239 carried forward for analysis, and will be discussed in subsequent sections as a baseline for review.

240 2.2.2 Roadway Underpass/Tunnel

241 This alternative proposed the construction of a roadway tunnel under the UPRR crossing at N-14. One
242 major issue is the high-water table in the area, posing a risk of flooding or groundwater seepage into
243 the tunnel. Additionally, the proximity of this location to downtown Central City presents challenges
244 due to potential construction impacts. The implementation of a Roadway Underpass would likely
245 entail acquiring and demolishing several businesses within the construction limits as well as lowering
246 or severing the connection of N-14 and US-30, leading to substantial social and economic
247 consequences for the community. Furthermore, this alternative would cause substantial disruption to
248 the UPRR mainline during construction. Despite partially meeting the purpose and need, these
249 practical and technical challenges make it an unreasonable option.

250 2.2.3 Railroad Overpass

251 This alternative would have involved elevating the railroad tracks to create a bridge over N-14.
252 However, upon evaluation, it became evident that the Railroad Overpass option was neither
253 reasonable nor feasible, despite addressing portions of the purpose and need of the Project. The
254 construction of an overpass would require a substantially larger footprint, (i.e., approximately 1 mile in
255 each direction along the UPRR tracks), and more than doubling the area impacted, due to the
256 necessity of building tracks off alignment alongside the overpass structure to maintain railroad traffic
257 during construction. Furthermore, this alternative would cause substantial disruption to the UPRR
258 mainline during construction. Additionally, the substantial cost associated with this alternative made it
259 impractical when compared to other alternatives. Therefore, although it would partially meet the
260 purpose and need of the Project, the Railroad Overpass alternative is not considered reasonable.

261 2.2.4 Transportation System Management

262 Transportation System Management (TSM) includes strategies to optimize the performance of
263 existing infrastructure through implementation of multimodal and intermodal, cross-jurisdiction
264 systems, services, and projects designed to preserve capacity and improve security, safety and
265 reliability of the transportation system.” (MAP-21). This strategy, in the context of solving the
266 exposure factor and operational challenges downtown Central City could have included measures
267 such as Active Transportation and Demand Management (dynamic management, control, and
268 influence of travel times, demand, and traffic flow), Arterial Management (signal timing, access control
269 or management), Corridor Management (overall corridor planning and management to change vehicle
270 mixes and times), Freight Technology and Real Time Traveler Information (adding technology to
271 freight and other vehicles to warn of train crossings and to increase movement of goods) among
272 other options. These strategies have their limitations in their ability to provide long-term solutions, and
273 would have only addressed the separation of cars and vehicles from a programmatic standpoint, and
274 would not provide a physical separation solution. Therefore, since the purpose and need revolves
275 around eliminating conflicts between trains and vehicles, reducing traffic delays, improving operations,
276 and reducing crash costs, TSM alternatives would not fully satisfy the purpose and need. Additionally,
277 the substandard geometric features and traffic operations of the existing roadways would remain
278 unimproved. Taking these factors into consideration, the TSM alternative was eliminated from further
279 consideration.

280 2.2.5 Viaduct Alternative (Preferred)

281 The Viaduct Alternative proposes constructing a viaduct over the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) within
282 Central City. This plan includes closing two public at-grade crossings, a requirement mandated by Title
283 415 of the Nebraska Administrative Code for new grade separation projects.

284 According to Title 415 of the Nebraska Administrative Code, a new grade separation project, such as a
285 viaduct, requires the closure of at least two public at-grade crossings, including the one near the
286 location of the structure. In this case, the Viaduct Alternative is anticipated to close the at-grade
287 crossings of the UPRR at N-14/17th Ave, and 13th Street, thereby reducing the exposure factor
288 throughout the city.

289 A viaduct is also a reasonable alternative because it is able to be constructed using current technology
290 and methods and has been a proven solution to similar problems elsewhere in the State. Re-aligning a
291 roadway to cross the railroad tracks can be accomplished and presents a feasible solution that can
292 reduce impacts to the surrounding environment. The Viaduct Alternative stands out as the preferred
293 mode separation facility type due to its ability to eliminate conflicts at the at-grade railroad crossing,
294 reduce the exposure factor, reduce traffic delays, and improve safety. By implementing a viaduct over
295 the UPRR, the project would effectively address the purpose and need, contributing to enhanced traffic
296 flow and safety in downtown Central City.

297 2.3 Viaduct Alternatives

298 As explained earlier in this Chapter, once the facility type was selected that best met the purpose and
299 need, four Viaduct alternatives were considered for construction over the UPRR:

- 300 • 2007 Bypass Alternative
- 301 • On-Alignment Alternative
- 302 • East Close Alternative
- 303 • West Alternative
- 304 • East Alternative (Preferred)

305 Viaduct alternatives were screened based on construction feasibility, operational impacts to the
306 highway during construction, cost, social impacts, and preliminary environmental impacts. The
307 viaduct alternatives are depicted in **Figure 2.2** below. After the evaluation and selection of a preferred
308 alignment for the viaduct, performance measures for evaluation of the downtown intersection were
309 developed. The evaluation process for the downtown intersection alternatives is explained further in
310 **Section 2.4**.

311 2.3.1 2007 Bypass Alternative

312 Originally approved in 2007, this alternative would involve constructing a new roadway to bypass only
313 the downtown area, aiming to alleviate concerns with the downtown intersection and reduce the
314 exposure factor. This alternative would have re-aligned N-14 beginning approximately 0.75 miles
315 south of Central City's southern corporate limits. The alignment would have run about four blocks east
316 of the downtown area, between 14th and 13th Avenues, utilizing the BNSF right-of-way, then extend
317 north over the UPRR tracks and rejoin the existing N-14 near 6th Street. The **Preferred Alternative**
318 **(2.6.2)** essentially follows the northern half of this old alternative, from US-30 north over the UPRR
319 railroad tracks and back to the existing N-14. When considered again in recent years, given the time
320 that passed since 2007 and changes to property ownership for the abandoned BNSF railroad line, the
321 southern half of this bypass alternative, however, would have required a substantial increase in right-
322 of-way and would likely have faced public controversy due to bisecting what is now Central Park.

323 Several factors ultimately led to the determination that the 2007 Bypass Alternative is not the
324 preferred alternative. The substantial increase in costs associated with acquiring new right-of-way and
325 constructing additional roadway miles was a primary concern. Additionally, implementing a bypass
326 could have economic impacts by diverting traffic away from the downtown area, potentially affecting
327 local businesses that rely on through traffic. Also since the initial review of this alternative in 2007,
328 Central Park and the Dark Island Trail have been developed within the original footprint of the
329 proposed bypass. Both of these properties would require an extremely high threshold of avoidance
330 and minimization, effectively eliminating the viability of this option. Given these constraints, the 2007
331 Bypass Alternative was eliminated.

332 2.3.2 On-Alignment Alternative

333 The On-Alignment Alternative, which involved reconstructing N-14 on its existing alignment and
334 constructing a viaduct over the UPRR, was considered but not selected as the preferred alternative for
335 the Project. This decision was made due to several key reasons and concerns. One major issue was
336 the increased impact to nearby buildings, particularly in the downtown area. Building a viaduct over
337 the railroad tracks on the current N-14 alignment would have resulted in adverse effects on buildings
338 in the vicinity, including potential relocations of residences and businesses. Approximately 13-15
339 residences and 14-16 businesses were anticipated to be impacted, potentially including two historic
340 structures.

341 Furthermore, the On-Alignment Alternative would have created challenges in connecting the proposed
342 viaduct with US-30. The viaduct would have had to begin south of US-30, resulting in the structure
343 passing over US-30 itself, thereby disrupting the existing system connection between the two
344 highways. This would require substantial alterations to the surrounding local street network and
345 businesses to redirect US-30 to N-14, thereby severing other local connections and disrupting the local
346 street network.

347 Additionally, constructing a viaduct on the existing alignment would have required a lengthy bridge,
348 resulting in increased costs compared to other alternatives. Moreover, this alternative would have had
349 the highest number of standing structure impacts out of all the alternatives, with an estimated 27
350 structures affected.

351 Considering these factors, the On-Alignment Alternative was deemed unfavorable due to its adverse
352 impacts on the central business district, disconnection between N-14 and US-30, increased costs, and
353 substantial standing structure impacts. As a result, the On-Alignment Alternative was eliminated.

354 2.3.3 East Close Alternative

355 The East Close Alternative, which involved constructing a new roadway along the NCRC rail corridor
356 between 13th Avenue and 14th Avenue, constructing a viaduct over the UPRR, and tying it into 13th
357 Street, was evaluated but not chosen as the preferred alternative for the Project. Several factors
358 contributed to the decision to eliminate this alternative from further consideration.

359 One concern was the design aspect of a curved bridge with superelevation over the railroad tracks,
360 which was deemed undesirable by the NDOT Bridge Division due to design challenges and increased
361 construction complexity. Additionally, the grade change from the viaduct down to 13th Street was
362 unfavorable, posing potential issues for trucks descending from the viaduct along 13th Street. The
363 steep grade could have adversely impacted truck maneuverability and safety.

364 Furthermore, the East Close Alternative would have resulted in severed access to 16th Avenue,
365 requiring a cul-de-sac on 16th Avenue and limiting access only from the south (E Street). This
366 disruption to the local street network would have negatively affected local connections and traffic
367 flow.

368 Another substantial consideration was the proximity of a substation located east of the proposed
369 alternative. The substation is near the proposed alignment footprint and had the potential to be
370 impacted, adding substantial costs and complications to the Project.

371 Considering these factors, including the design and construction concerns with the curved bridge,
372 unfavorable grade changes, severed access to 16th Avenue, and the proximity of the substation, the
373 East Close Alternative was eliminated.

374 2.3.4 West Alternative

375 The West Alternative was explored as a potential option for the Project. This alternative would have
376 involved the viaduct's construction on C Ave, commencing near the intersection of C Ave and N-14,
377 and extending northwest towards the intersection of C Ave and 13th Street. The alignment would
378 require a sharp right turn onto 13th street and then extend east towards N-14.

379 One of the main issues with the West Alternative is its alignment with the existing grid system in
380 Central City. The city's roadway network follows two different grid systems. While the majority of the
381 roadways adhere to the traditional north-south and east-west orientation, the area west of N-14, from
382 13th Street to 22nd Street, is laid out in a diagonal manner, following the UPRR mainline. Realigning N-
383 14 in this area to accommodate the west alignment alternative would be neither reasonable nor
384 practical, given the existing layout of the street system. Such a realignment would have resulted in
385 increased impacts on residences and downtown businesses and would have severed east-west
386 connectivity across C Avenue.

387 Furthermore, the west alignment alternative would disrupt the connection between N-14 and US-30.
388 The viaduct would have to begin south of US-30, necessitating its passage over US-30 itself and
389 disrupting the existing system connection between the two highways. This would require substantial
390 alterations to the surrounding local street network and businesses to redirect US-30 to N-14.

391 During public outreach in November 2016, negative feedback was received concerning this alignment,
392 leading to the removal of this alternative from further consideration in January 2017. Considering the
393 issues with the existing grid system, increased impacts on residences and businesses, and the
394 disruption of N-14 and US-30 connection, the west alignment alternative was eliminated.

395 **2.3.3 East Alternative (Preferred)**

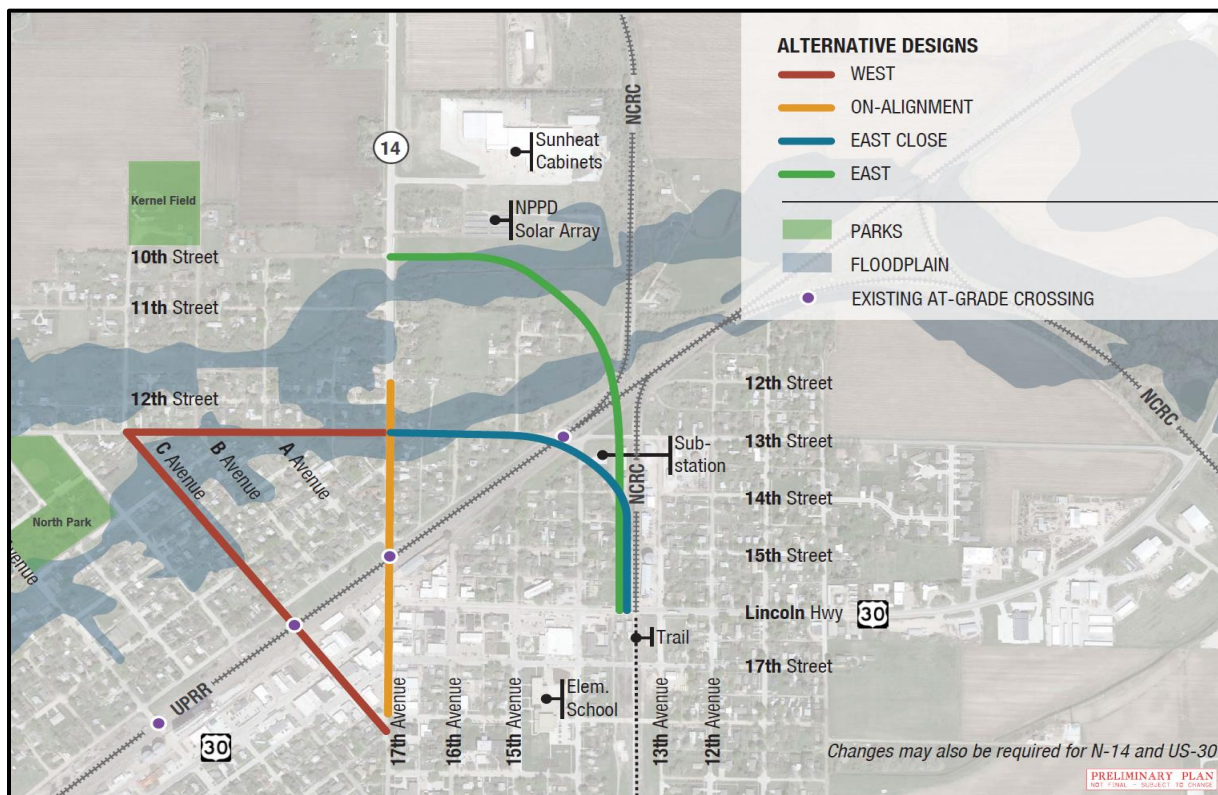
396 The East Alternative has emerged as the preferred option for the Project, presenting advantages
397 compared to other alternatives. This alternative entails the construction of a new roadway along the
398 NCRC rail corridor between 13th Avenue and 14th Avenue, the installation of a viaduct over the UPRR,
399 and the addition of lanes north of the UPRR that would connect back to N-14 at 10th Street.

400 The benefit of the East Alternative is its ability to maintain overall north-south and east-west
401 connections throughout the city. Although the closure of 13th Street at the viaduct is anticipated, it is
402 not expected to substantially alter traffic patterns. With the closure of the at-grade crossing on 13th
403 Street, traffic volumes there are projected to decrease. All other streets and connections east and
404 west of the viaduct will remain operational.

405 Moreover, the East Alternative minimizes the impact on properties and historic structures, with only an
406 estimated three to four commercial buildings affected, and no anticipated direct impacts to historic
407 properties. While the proximity of the electrical substation to this alternative is acknowledged, any
408 impacts to the facility are assumed to be manageable and can be mitigated effectively. Appropriate
409 measures can be implemented to ensure the substation remains unaffected and continues to provide
410 uninterrupted service.

411 Considering the preservation of north-south and east-west connections, minimal disruptions to
412 residences and historic properties, and the ability to address concerns related to the nearby
413 substation, the East Alternative stands out as the preferred choice for the Project.

414 **Figure 2.2 - Proposed Viaduct Alternatives**



415
416 *Map information was prepared and presented in 2016.

417 **Table 2.1 Preliminary Comparisons of Viaduct Alternatives (as presented in 2021)**

Considerations	No Build	On Alignment	East Close	East	West
Wetland Impacts (Preliminary)	None	0.07 Acres	0.07 Acres	0.30 Acres	The West Alternative was eliminated in January 2017 after public input in November 2016, and was not further evaluated for additional impacts in greater detail.
Historic Property Impacts (Potential)	None	2 Structures	1 Structure	None	
Existing Park Impacts	None	None	None	None	
Planned Park Impacts	None	None	None	None	
Residential/Commercial Relocations	None	13-15 Residences 14-16 Businesses	9-10 Residences 3-4 Businesses	3-4 Businesses	
Floodplain/Floodway Impacts	None	Minor Impacts	Minor Impacts	Minor Impacts	
Existing Trail Impacts	None	None	Reconfigure North End of Dark Island Trail	Reconfigure North End of Dark Island Trail	
Accommodates Planned Trail/Pedestrian Crossing	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Major Utility Impacts	None	Moderate	May require relocation of substation	May require relocation of substation	
Eliminates N-14 At Grade Railroad Crossing	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Average Delay Per Day, N-14 Railroad Crossing *	164 Minutes	Decrease	Decrease	Decrease	
N-14 Railroad Crossing Exposure Factor **	114,870	Decrease	Decrease	Decrease	
Local Circulation Between Parcels	No Change	Changes	Changes	Changes	
Regional Connectivity Impacts	No Change	N-14/US-30 Connection at grade removed and reconfigured with loop	N-14/US-30 Connection maintained at grade but changes will be required at downtown intersection	N-14/US-30 Connection maintained at grade but changes will be required at downtown intersection	

418 * Approximately 162 vehicles are delayed each day for approximately 1.02 Minutes, assuming, train speeds of 70mph. Longer delays
419 are experienced during switching, unloading, and re-positioning of trains, and whenever speeds are slower

420 ** Based on 2021 traffic counts which indicated 2735 vehicles per day times 42 UPRR trains per day.

421 **2.4 Intersection Alternatives**

422 Following the evaluation of viaduct alignments, and determination of a preferred viaduct location,
423 performance measures for the downtown intersections were developed, and several location-specific
424 design alternatives were considered to minimize the frequency of crashes and to improve traffic flow
425 at the intersection of N-14 and US-30. Each concept was evaluated based on the ability to improve
426 operational challenges and the potential to impact social, economic, or natural resources. **Figures 2.3**
427 through **2.8** show the alternatives as they were presented at the November 18, 2021 Public Meeting.

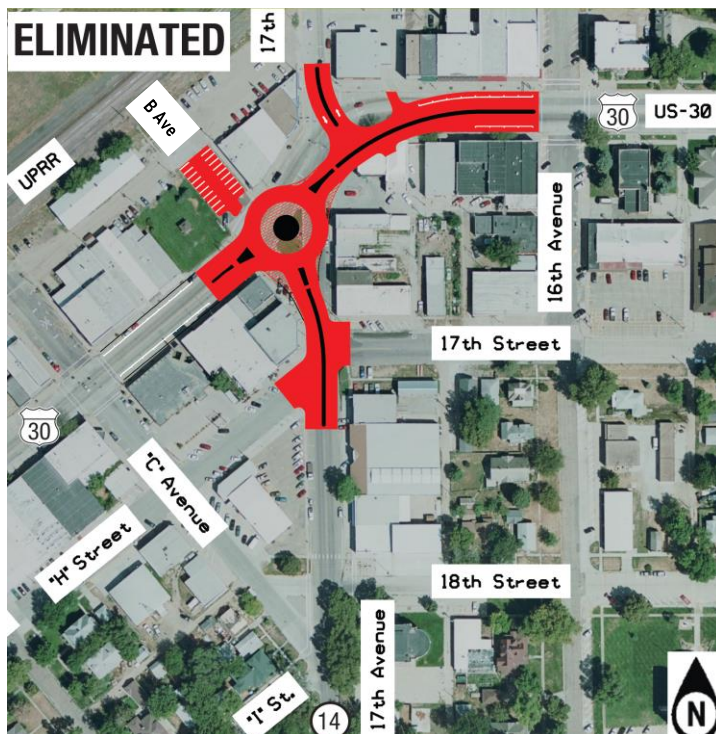
428 The following six Intersection alternatives were considered for construction:

- 429 • Minimal Diameter Roundabout
- 430 • Larger Diameter Roundabout
- 431 • Relocated Signalized Intersection
- 432 • One-Way Pairs (Preferred)
- 433 • Relocate N-14 to C Avenue
- 434 • Larger Roundabout Between B & C Ave

435 **2.4.1 Minimal Diameter Roundabout**

436 The Minimal Diameter Roundabout concept (**Figure 2.3**) proposed the construction of a 130-foot
437 diameter roundabout near the existing intersection of US-30 and B Avenue, accompanied by flattening
438 the US-30 horizontal curve through existing N-14. This roundabout size was chosen as the minimum
439 size to accommodate the high volume of tractor-trailers in the Project area. Under this concept,
440 access to B Avenue north of US-30 would be removed, and several highway intersections would be
441 converted to right-in/right-out operations. B Avenue itself would be converted into a parking lot.
442 Additionally, the intersections of US-30 and C Avenue could be converted to an unsignalized
443 intersection with stop control on the north and southbound approaches.

444 **Figure 2.3 - Minimal Diameter Roundabout**



445

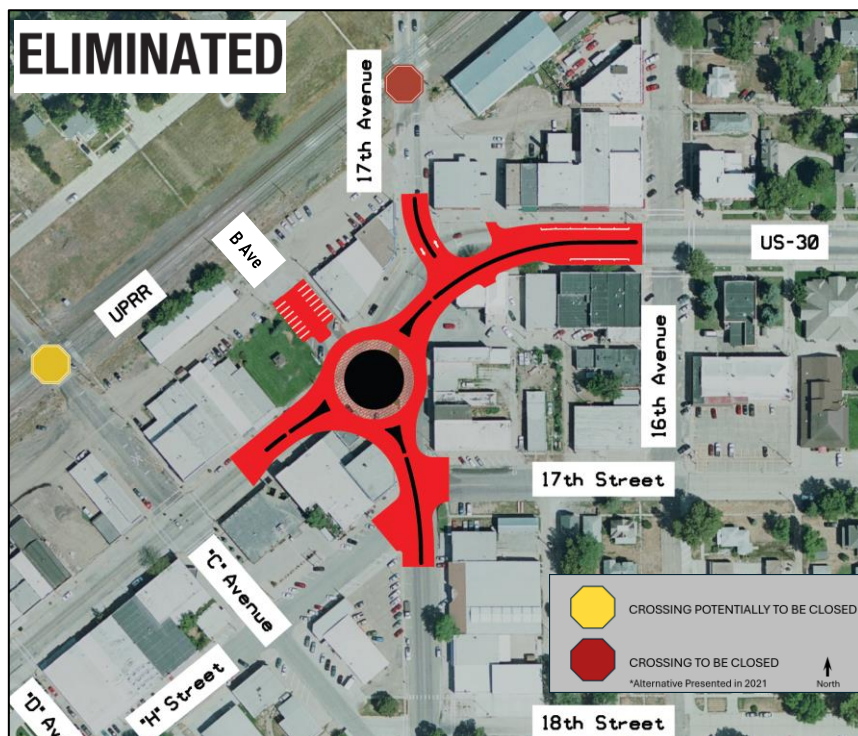
446 This alternative was eliminated from consideration due to its less than desirable turning radius,
447 making it difficult for trucks to navigate the roundabout effectively. Furthermore, the implementation
448 of this concept would have resulted in the loss of approximately 33 on and off-street parking stalls
449 and require the relocation of approximately 1 to 2 businesses. Considering these factors, the Minimal
450 Diameter Roundabout concept was eliminated from further consideration.

451 2.4.2 Larger Diameter Roundabout

452 The Larger Diameter Roundabout concept (**Figure 2.4**) proposed the construction of a 160-foot
453 diameter roundabout near the existing intersection of US-30 and B Avenue, along with the flattening of
454 the US-30 horizontal curve through existing N-14. The larger diameter of this roundabout was
455 intended to provide improved maneuverability for tractor-trailers compared to the Minimal Diameter
456 Roundabout concept. Similar to the previous concept, the connection to B Avenue north of US-30
457 would be removed, and B Avenue itself would be converted into a parking lot. Additionally, multiple
458 highway intersections would be converted to right-in/right-out operations, and the intersection of US-
459 30 and C Avenue could be converted to an unsignalized intersection with stop control on the
460 northbound and southbound approaches.

461 The Larger Diameter Roundabout concept was estimated to impact approximately 47 on and off-
462 street parking stalls and anticipated the need to relocate approximately 4 to 5 businesses (**Table 2.2**).
463 These potential social and economic impacts make this concept less favorable in addressing
464 operational challenges and improving traffic flow at the intersection of N-14 and US-30, and therefore
465 the Larger Diameter Roundabout was eliminated from further consideration.

466 **Figure 2.4 - Larger Diameter Roundabout**

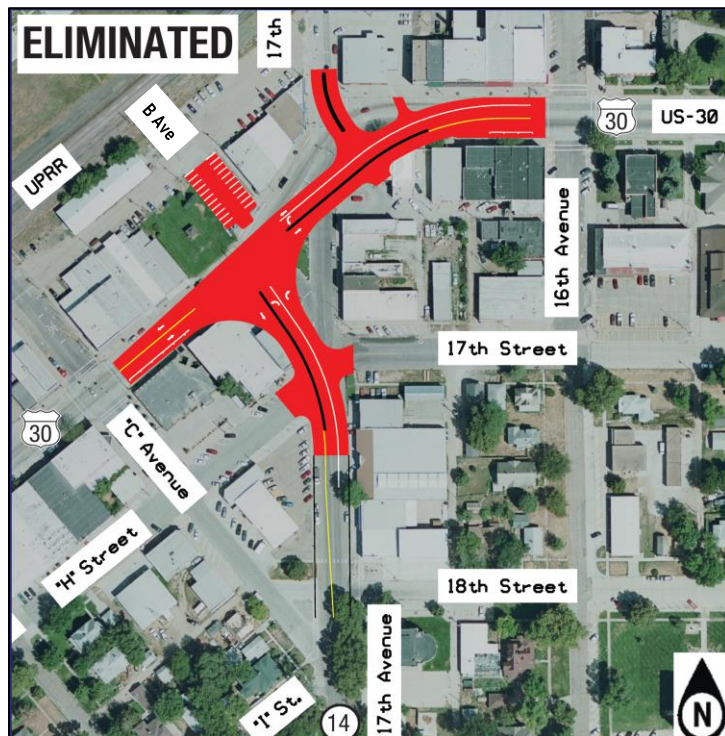


467

468 **2.4.3 Relocated Signalized Intersection**

469 The Relocated Signalized Intersection concept (**Figure 2.5**) involved moving the intersection of US-30
470 and N-14 slightly west of the existing B Avenue intersection, accompanied by the flattening of the
471 horizontal curve on US-30 east of B Avenue. This realignment aimed to create a closer-to-optimal
472 angle of approximately 90 degrees, with the intersection controlled by a traffic signal. However, this
473 concept was ultimately removed from consideration due to its substantial impact on businesses and
474 parking availability (**Table 2.2**). Approximately 6-7 businesses would have been affected, and
475 approximately 60 on and off-street parking stalls would have been lost. While the concept offered
476 potential improvements in intersection geometry and signal control, the evaluation process prioritized
477 minimizing adverse impacts on the community, leading to the elimination of this alternative.

478 **Figure 2.5 - Relocated Signalized Intersection**



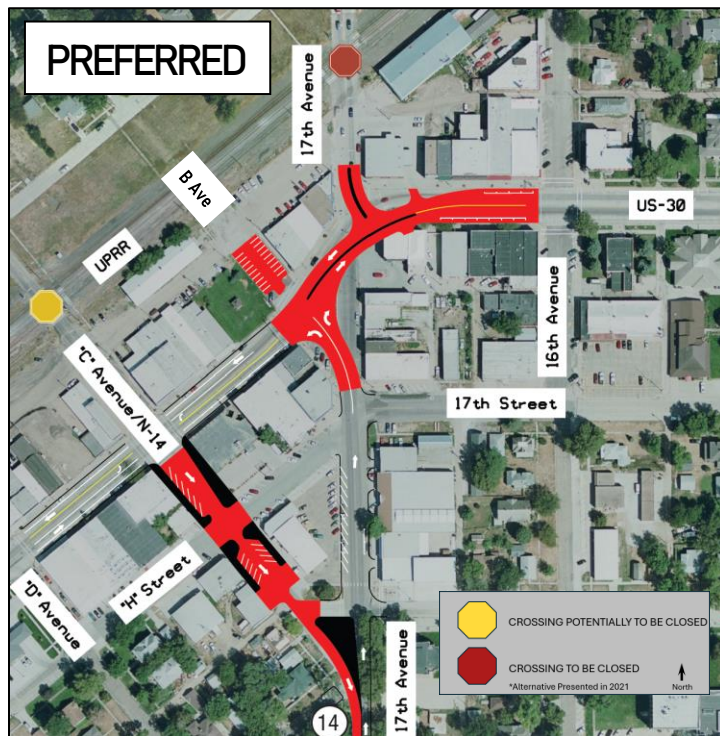
479

480 **2.4.4 One-Way Pairs (Preferred)**

481 The One-Way Pairs concept (**Figure 2.6**) proposed designating N-14 and C Avenue as one-way streets
482 in different directions. N-14 would be one-way northbound, while C Avenue would be one-way
483 southbound, between US-30 and I Street. This concept also involved flattening the horizontal curve on
484 US-30 east of B Avenue and eliminating the connection between US-30 and B Avenue north of US-30.
485 B Avenue would be converted into a parking lot.

486 The One-Way Pairs concept was chosen as the preferred alternative due to its potential to minimize
487 impacts. Originally in 2021, this alternative was anticipated to impact 1-2 businesses, and
488 approximately 29 parking stalls which was relatively lower compared to other alternatives. Today,
489 using principles of practical design, it is anticipated that no businesses would be affected by this
490 concept and the estimated impact on parking stalls is approximately 25 (**Table 2.2**). This concept is
491 expected to address operational challenges at the intersection of N-14 and US-30, avoid adverse
492 effects on businesses and parking availability, and reduce traffic delays during peak periods more
493 effectively than other alternatives. Refer to **Section 2.5** for more information on how this concept was
494 refined, after being selected, to minimize impacts.

495 **Figure 2.6 - One-Way Pairs**



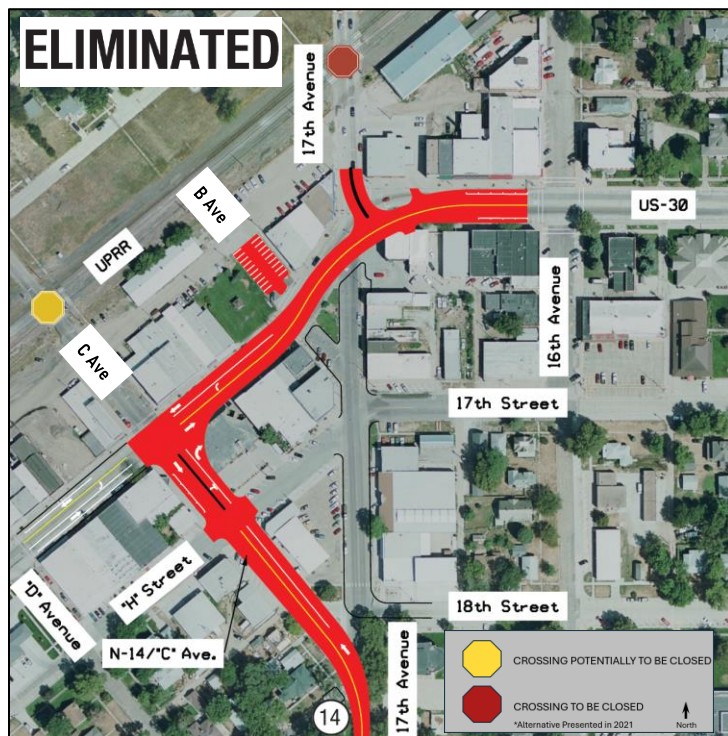
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497 **2.4.5 Relocate N-14 to C Avenue**

498 The Relocate N-14 to C Avenue concept (**Figure 2.7**) proposed designating C Avenue as N-14 and
499 converting 17th Avenue into a local street. In this concept, connections to US-30 at B Avenue (both
500 north and south of US-30) and at 17th Avenue (south of US-30) would be removed, along with
501 connections to N-14 at I Street and 18th Street. The resulting intersection of US-30 and N-14 (C Ave)
502 would be controlled by a traffic signal, and the horizontal curve on US-30 would be flattened to ensure
503 proper highway design speeds within the city limits.

504 However, this concept was not pursued further due to its potential impact on 2-3 businesses and the
505 potential loss of 60 parking stalls (**Table 2.2**). The adverse effects on businesses and parking
506 availability outweighed the benefits of this alternative, and it was therefore eliminated.

507 **Figure 2.7 - Relocate N-14 to C Avenue**



508

509 **2.4.6 Larger Roundabout Between B & C Ave**

510 The Larger Roundabout Between B and C Avenue concept (**Figure 2.8**) proposed the construction of a
511 160-foot roundabout at a strategic location that would optimize the intersection angles of US-30 and
512 N-14. This concept aimed to improve traffic flow and safety by flattening the curve on US-30 near 17th
513 Avenue and removing the connection between 17th Avenue and B Avenue. By implementing this
514 design, the existing traffic signal at the US-30 and C Avenue intersection would be replaced with an
515 unsignalized intersection controlled by stop signs.

516 Additionally, the concept involved the removal of connections to US-30 at B Avenue and 17th Avenue.
517 To enhance the efficiency of the roundabout, left-turns from US-30 would have been prohibited,
518 allowing only right-turn movements from side-street approaches. While this alternative presented
519 potential benefits in terms of traffic flow and safety, it was deemed less favorable due to its
520 substantial impact on local businesses. The implementation of the Larger Roundabout would have
521 resulted in the relocation of approximately 8-9 businesses and the loss of approximately 45 parking
522 stalls (**Table 2.2**), which raised concerns about the economic and social consequences of this
523 alternative. Due to these factors, this alternative was eliminated from further consideration.

524 **Figure 2.8 - Larger Roundabout Between B & C Ave**



525

526 **Table 2.2 Preliminary Comparisons of Intersection Alternatives (as presented in 2021)**

Considerations	No Build	Minimal Diameter Roundabout	Larger Diameter Roundabout	Relocated Signalized Intersection	One-Way Pairs	Relocated N-14 To C Avenue	Larger Roundabout B & C Avenue
Historic Property	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Relocations	None	1-2 Businesses	4-5 Businesses	6-7 Businesses	1-2 Businesses	2-3 Businesses	8-9 Businesses
Hazardous Materials	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Allows N-14 Grade Crossing Elimination	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Total AM/PM Peak Hour Delay (VEH/HR)*	20.02	9.96	9.93	8.38	6.41	7.58**	8.79
Loss of Parking	None	33 Stalls	47 Stalls	60 Stalls	29 Stalls	60 Stalls	45 Stalls
Truck Mobility Concerns	Yes	Less than desirable turning radius	No	No	No	No	No
Bicycle/ Pedestrian Mobility	No Change	Maintained	Maintained	Maintained	Maintained	Maintained	Maintained

527 *Total Delay at the US-30/N-14 and US-30/C Avenue intersections in 2046 if viaduct is built to the east.
 528 ** With this concept, the value represents the delay at one intersection. For other concepts and No Build, the value represents two
 529 intersections.

530 2.5 Preferred Alternative Refinements

531 Through the design process, refinements have been considered at the intersections of 10th Street and
 532 US-30 to integrate the proposed viaduct with the existing infrastructure. In the downtown area,
 533 adjustments were made to avoid adverse impacts on businesses and improve safety features.

534 2.5.1 New Intersection of N-14 and 10th Street (North Terminus)

535 Two intersection concepts were considered for the intersection of N-14 with 10th Street: a standard T-
 536 intersection and a roundabout. The standard T-intersection, while conforming to conventional design
 537 principles, presented limitations in terms of traffic flow efficiency. Given the desire for smooth traffic
 538 movement along the relocated N-14 and providing clear guidance for southbound drivers merging
 539 onto the new facility, the roundabout emerged as the preferred choice. Furthermore, the 10th Street
 540 area features sparse development, allowing for the implementation of a roundabout with minimal
 541 impact on existing structures.

542 2.5.2 New Intersection of N-14 and US-30 (South Terminus)

543 Two intersection concepts were considered for the intersection of N-14 with US-30: a standard T-
544 intersection and a roundabout. In contrast with the N-14 and 10th Street intersection, the new N-14
545 with US-30 intersection posed distinct challenges that influenced the preferred design of the
546 intersection. Here, the construction of a roundabout was deemed less favorable due to its substantial
547 spatial requirements. The current location of the intersection includes critical community assets such
548 as the north terminus of the Dark Island Trail, a movie theater, and a community activity center. The
549 implementation of a roundabout had the potential to encroach upon these facilities, which was a
550 concern. The need to preserve these facilities led to the conclusion that a roundabout was not the
551 most suitable alternative at the US-30 intersection. A standard T intersection would be used at this
552 location, as it would have the least number of impacts to surrounding structures, and would also meet
553 driver expectations along the US-30 corridor.

554 2.5.3 One-Way Pairs Design Refinements

555 The selection of the one-way pairs design aimed to minimize impacts on local businesses and parking
556 spaces. Despite this intention, the initial plan included challenges to avoid the Citizens Bank & Trust
557 Co., given the geometry of the roadway in that area. Recognizing this issue, NDOT undertook a
558 thorough refinement of the original concept. Through this process, NDOT avoided adverse effects to
559 the bank and incorporated safety enhancements to address recurring intersection crashes.

560 To properly redesign and prevent impacts to the bank, NDOT pursued a design relaxation, specifically
561 for the horizontal alignment minimum curve radius. The approved adjustment, altering the curve
562 radius from 333 ft. to 198 ft., avoided the bank and lowered the design and posted speed limit to 25
563 mph. This modification adhered to safety standards and resulted in considerable cost savings by
564 minimizing right-of-way impacts. The design relaxation was approved at the November 2023 meeting
565 of the Nebraska Board of Classifications and Standards (**Appendix A, Transportation and Traffic Data**).

566 The relocation of the intersection of US-30 and southbound N-14 westward to US-30 and C Avenue,
567 coupled with the new curve radius, would inherently improve safety along this corridor. Additional
568 safety measures, such as a 4 ft. median for head-to-head traffic separation and 20 ft. wide lanes with
569 a 2 ft. buffer, were integrated to accommodate anticipated truck traffic and address the observed
570 recurring crash trend between 2003 and 2022. This refined design of the one-way pairs concept would
571 not only avoid impacts to the bank but also address the operational challenges associated with this
572 intersection.

573 **Figure 2.9** shows the proposed roadway design prior to the relaxation, and **Figure 2.10** shows the
574 approved design relaxation version of the roadway. These figures are shown as presented at the
575 November 2023 meeting.

576 **Figure 2.9 - Before Design Relaxation (Preliminary Design)**



577

578 **Figure 2.10 - After Design Relaxation (Preliminary Design)**



579

580 2.6 Alternatives Carried Forward for Detailed Evaluation

581 2.6.1 No Build Alternative

582 The No Build Alternative represents the scenario where no changes or improvements are made to the
583 existing intersection of N-14 and US-30. Under this alternative, the current configuration and
584 operational challenges of the intersection would remain unchanged. Traffic congestion, safety
585 concerns, and conflicts between vehicles and trains would persist, leading to continued delays and
586 operational challenges for motorists. Although the No Build Alternative would not address the
587 Project's purpose and need, it is being carried forward for analysis to establish a baseline for
588 comparison of the build alternative.

589 2.6.2 Preferred Alternative

590 The Preferred Alternative for the Central City Viaduct Project is a comprehensive solution that
591 combines the East Viaduct Alignment, the One-Way Pairs concept downtown, and the inclusion of a
592 sidewalk along the viaduct and N-14. This approach effectively addresses the identified purpose and
593 need of the Project while also maintaining pedestrian access. The Preferred Alternative has logical
594 termini, and would preserve the connection of N-14 and US-30, thus providing a cohesive and
595 integrated transportation solution for the community.

596 The East Viaduct Alignment alternative would provide an efficient connection between N-14 and US-
597 30. By eliminating the exposure factor of the at-grade railroad crossings, the viaduct substantially
598 enhances safety for both motorists and pedestrians. Moreover, the integration of a sidewalk along the
599 viaduct further promotes pedestrian access and encourages active transportation.

600 In addition to the viaduct, the implementation of the One-Way Pairs concept in downtown Central City
601 optimizes mobility and enhances overall efficiency of the transportation network. By designating
602 specific streets as one-way pairs, potential conflicts, and congestion at the intersection of N-14 and
603 US-30 are reduced, improving operations, and reducing crash costs.

604 The Preferred Alternative, including the closure of two UPRR crossings (one at N-14/17th Avenue and
605 one at 13th Street), has received previous support and endorsement from relevant stakeholders,
606 including the City and its citizens. Initial discussions regarding this alternative took place in 2003, and
607 it was agreed upon again in 2007 by the signing of a resolution for the relocation of N-14 using a
608 bypass with a viaduct along the east side of the City. In 2024, an updated agreement between NDOT
609 and the City reaffirmed this commitment, designating the Viaduct Alternative with the One-Way Pairs
610 intersection as the locally preferred alternative. Furthermore, recent coordination with UPRR has
611 confirmed that they are willing to approve the construction of the Preferred Alternative provided it
612 meets certain requirements and conditions to be determined in Final Design. The Preferred Alternative
613 also includes the relinquishment of N-14 within the city limits, approximately between MM 81.55
614 (intersection of US-30) and MM 81.95 (south of the intersection with 10th Street).

615 The Preferred Alternative ensures that the purpose and needs of the Project are met effectively, and is
616 carried forward for detailed evaluation throughout this document.

617 2.7 Project Description

618 This Project is located in Central City, Merrick County, Nebraska and is located on Highways US-30
619 and N-14, starting at mile marker (MM) 337.50 and extending east to MM 337.87 on US-30 and
620 starting at MM 81.36 and extending north to MM 82.08 on N-14. Highway N-14 will be constructed on
621 a new alignment from MM 337.70 on US-30 north to MM 82.08 on N-14. This alignment will proceed
622 from US-30 MM 337.70 to the north crossing the Union Pacific Railroad and then will proceed to the
623 west to connect back to existing N-14 MM 82.08. Construction may begin and/or end approximately
624 500 feet ahead of or beyond the actual Project limits to accommodate transitioning the pavement
625 sections.

626 The existing roadway on N-14/17th Avenue from MM 81.36 to MM 82.08 consists of two 12 foot
627 composite lanes with shoulder for parking, curb and sidewalks. The existing roadway on US-30 from
628 MM 337.50 to MM 337.87 consists of three 12 foot composite lanes with parking, curb and sidewalks.

629 The improvements on this Project consist of constructing N-14 on a new alignment with a 580'
630 viaduct over UPRR. The roadway will be a two-lane curbed urban roadway with 12 foot lanes and 6
631 foot shoulders and a sidewalk on one side of the roadway. The UPRR crossings at N-14 and 13th
632 Street will be closed as part of this Project. The north intersection that ties into existing N-14 will be a
633 roundabout. The south intersection with US-30 will be a T-intersection.

634 The existing US-30 and N-14 intersection will be realigned to the west to approximately B Avenue.
635 C Avenue and 17th Avenue/N-14 from US-30 to I Street will be designated as one way pairs for
636 northbound and southbound N-14. N-14 will be constructed as one or two lane curbed urban sections
637 with 12 foot lanes, sidewalk and parking. US-30 roadway will be a three-lane curbed urban roadway
638 with 12 foot lanes, sidewalks and parking from MM 337.50 to MM 337.59 and MM 337.65 to 337.87.
639 US-30 roadway will be a two lane divided urban roadway with a 4 foot raised median and 20 foot lanes
640 with sidewalks from MM 337.59 to MM 337.65.

641 Improvements include new paving, culvert and storm sewer work, guardrail, MSE walls, fencing,
642 bridge, new intersections, improved intersections, sidewalks, pavement striping, lighting, pedestrian
643 signal and traffic signals.

644 Grading will be required for the entire length of the Project. US-30 and N-14 south of US-30 will be
645 constructed at existing grade. N-14 on the new alignment north of US-30 will consist of embankment
646 placement and MSE walls.

647 A new 580' bridge over the UPRR for N-14 will be constructed. This bridge will also span Trouble
648 Creek. MSE walls, fencing and guardrail will be constructed with the new bridge.

649 A new bridge size box culvert will be constructed for N-14 over Warm Slough. The existing bridge size
650 box culvert for existing N-14 will be extended.

651 This Project will be constructed under traffic with lane closures controlled by appropriate traffic
652 control devices and practices. Pedestrian routes will be designated during construction. For local
653 traffic there may be short term closures of side roads. To accommodate through truck traffic on N-14
654 and US-30 the following detours will be used on the highway system to bypass Central City during
655 construction. State highway detour for N-14 will be located from the intersection for N-14 and N-66 to
656 US-81 to N-92 to the intersection of N-92 and N-14. State highway detour for US-30 will be located
657 from the intersection of US-30 and US-281 to N-92 to the intersection of US-30 and N-92.

658 Additional property rights will be required to build this Project.

659 A segment of the N-14/17th Street between US-30 and the roundabout will be relinquished to the City.

660 Access to adjacent properties will be maintained during construction but may be limited at times due
661 to phasing requirements.

662 Chapter 3 Affected Environment and 663 Environmental Impacts

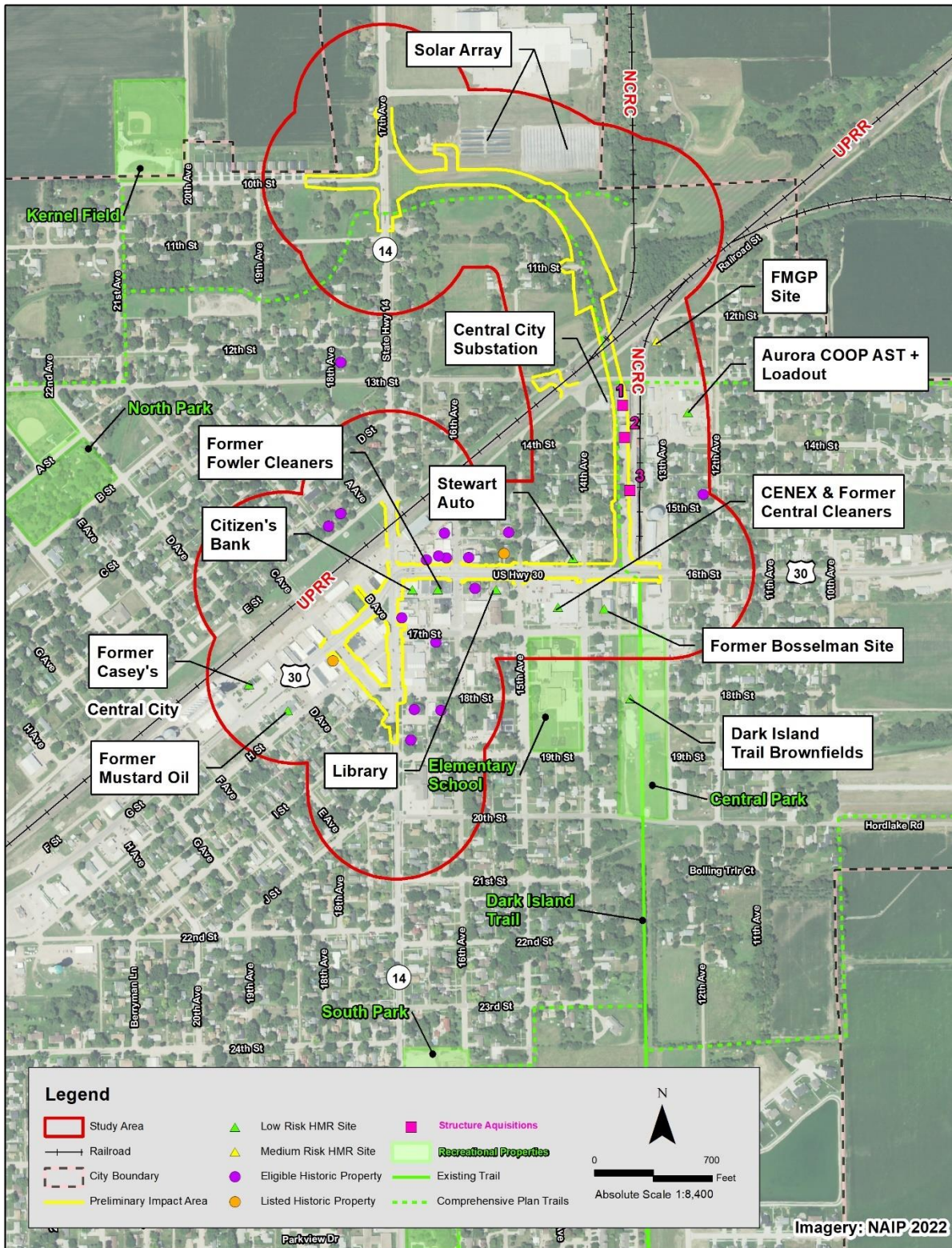
664 This chapter identifies environmental resources that would be affected by the proposed project and
665 the anticipated impacts on those resources. As described in further detail in this chapter, the Study
666 Area for the environmental analysis depends on the resource studied. In general, the Study Area
667 includes an area surrounding the proposed project alignment which extends along US-30 from MM
668 337.50 to MM 337.87 and along N-14 from MM 81.36 to MM 82.08 (**Figure 1.1**). The study area for
669 each resource, which varies by resource, is large enough to identify and address potential concerns.
670 Under NEPA, the context (the relationship between the project and its setting) and intensity of impacts
671 determine the significance of impacts from a project. CEQ guidance on preparing NEPA analysis notes
672 that environmental analysis should focus on significant issues and impacts should be discussed in
673 proportion to their significance (77 FR 14473, December 2012).

674 To describe the analysis of how the proposed Project affects environmental resources, this chapter
675 considers two groups of resources:

- 676 • **Environmental resources not evaluated in detail.** Section 3.1 identifies and briefly discusses
677 environmental resources that are typically studied as part of NEPA but are either not within the
678 Study Area or that may be within the Study Area but require only a cursory review.
- 679 • **Environmental resources requiring detailed analysis.** Sections 3.2 through 3.18 discuss
680 environmental resources that require detailed technical studies or analysis to determine the
681 context and intensity of potential impacts.

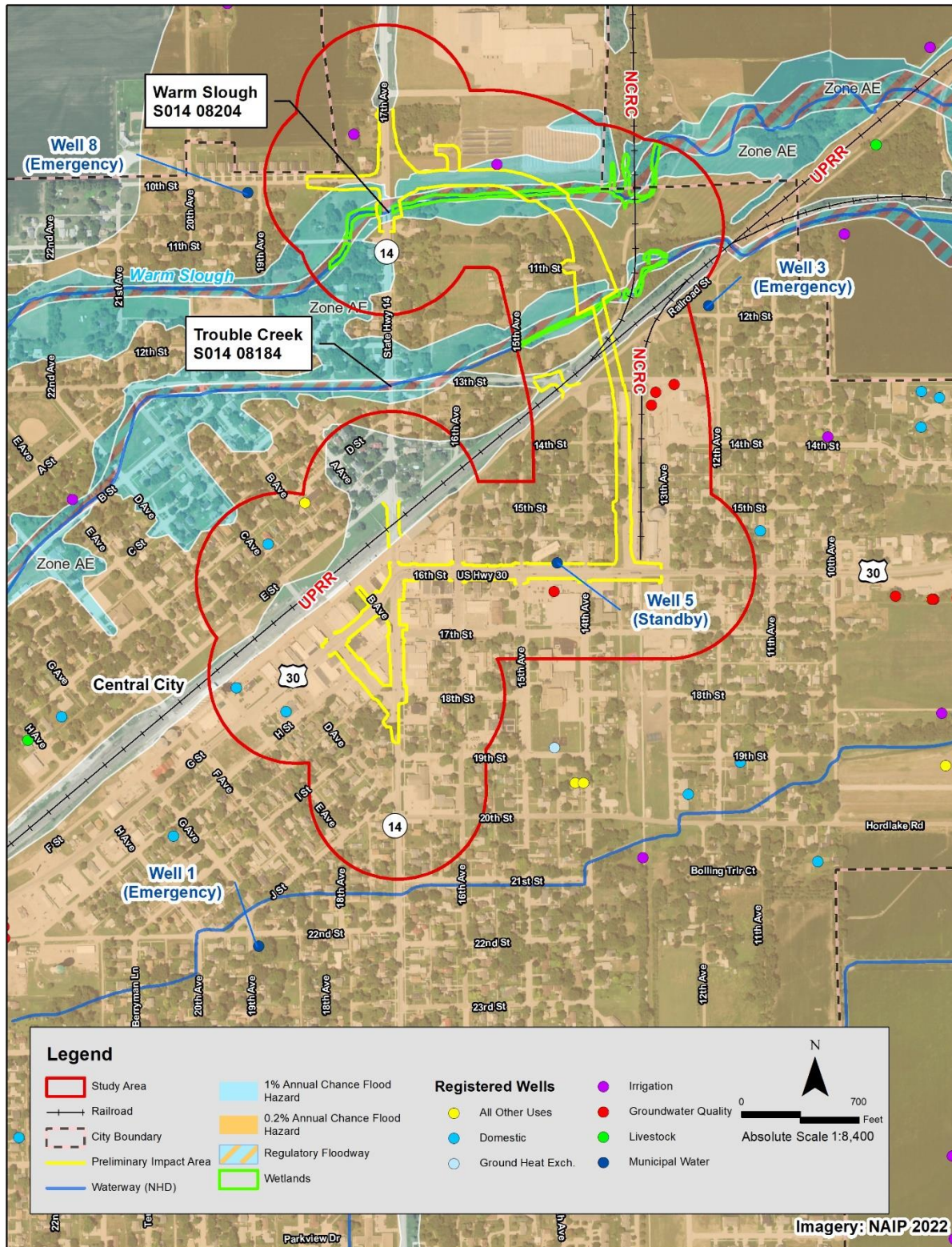
682 The Study Area and Preliminary Impact Area are both shown on **Figures 3.1** and **3.2**, along with the
683 various resources described in this chapter. The Preliminary Impact Area is based on conceptual
684 design information and is the approximate area where construction activities are anticipated to occur.
685 The Study Area is generally a 300 foot buffer around the centerline of the project alignment, and
686 encompasses most of the resources evaluated in detail. For those resources requiring a larger or
687 smaller study area, these extents are described in their respective sections. The final limits of
688 construction would be determined during final design and are expected to be wholly contained within
689 the Preliminary Impact Area.

690 **Figure 3.1 - Affected Environment**



691

692 **Figure 3.2 - Affected Environment**



693

694 3.1 Environmental Resources Not Evaluated in Detail

695 For this proposed Project, the following resources do not require discussion in the Draft EA because
696 they either do not occur within the Study Area, or, if they do occur in the Study Area, they require only
697 cursory review for potential impacts due to their proximity to the Project or the low intensity of the
698 impacts.

699 3.1.1 Farmland

700 The federal Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981 (FPPA; 7 CFR 658) was enacted to minimize
701 unnecessary conversion of farmland to other uses as a result of federal decisions. In addition, the
702 FPPA states that federal programs should be compatible with state and local policies or programs
703 that protect farmland. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) oversees FPPA
704 compliance.

705 Prime farmland is considered to be of national importance and is defined as land with the best
706 characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, and is available for these
707 uses. Unique farmland is land other than prime farmland that is used for the production of specific
708 high-value crops. Farmland of statewide or local importance is land, in addition to prime and unique
709 farmland, that is of statewide or local importance for the production of the same purposes as prime
710 farmland (7 CFR 657.5).

711 The entire Study Area is within the corporate limits of the City of Central City, which are specifically
712 considered urban, built-up land, and therefore, not considered prime farmland. The proposed project
713 would have no effects on prime farmland, farming operations, or other agricultural activities. Effects
714 on truck traffic, some of which may be agricultural, and to the nearby cooperative and railroad loading
715 areas are discussed in **Section 3.2 Transportation**.

716 3.1.2 Section 6(f)

717 Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act of 1965 (54 USC 200301–2000310)
718 restricts the conversion of recreational land to non-recreational land if the land was acquired with
719 money from the LWCF. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) reviewed the project for
720 LWCF Act encumbered lands on June 14, 2024. The review found that there was one property within
721 the Study Area, Central City Park. This property is located south of US-30 between 17th street, 20th
722 street, and 13th Ave. As described in **Section 3.11, Section 4(f) Properties**, there will be no direct
723 impacts to this park, and there will also be no restriction of access to the park, therefore, no further
724 action is needed. Coordination with NGPC can be found in **Appendix N Public and Agency**
725 **Coordination**.

726 3.1.3 Air Quality

727 The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (42 USC 7401 et seq.) control air toxic emissions in the United
728 States and regulate 188 air toxics, including Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSAT). FHWA has developed a
729 tiered approach with the following three categories for analyzing MSATs in NEPA documents,
730 depending on specific project circumstances:

- 731 • MSAT I – No analysis for projects with no potential for meaningful MSAT effects
- 732 • MSAT II – Qualitative analysis for projects with low potential MSAT effects
- 733 • MSAT III – Qualitative analysis to differentiate alternatives for projects with higher potential
- 734 MSAT effects

735 In addition to MSAT concerns, FHWA has developed mitigation strategies to reduce transportation
736 greenhouse gas emissions. NDOT and the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE)
737 entered into a Memorandum of Understanding in 2021 where NDOT adheres to the MSAT guidance
738 and NDEE monitors National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NDOT and NDEE 2021). Under the
739 Memorandum of Understanding, NDOT and NDEE commit to future exchanges of information
740 regarding non-attainment determinations, future highway projects, potential environmental issues, and
741 other issues of common interest.

742 The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publishes a list of the annual nonattainment and
743 maintenance status for each county by state under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (EPA
744 2023). Any county not listed has been designated in attainment since 1992. Merrick County is
745 currently in attainment for all criteria pollutants. In consideration of the scope of the Project, an MSAT
746 II Qualitative Memo was developed and can be found in **Appendix B Air Quality**. For each alternative of
747 the EA, the amount of MSAT emitted was assessed in relation to vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

748 The VMT estimated for the Preferred Alternative is slightly higher than that for the No Build Alternative
749 because the additional capacity would increase the efficiency of the roadway and would attract
750 rerouted trips from elsewhere in the transportation network. This increase in VMT would lead to higher
751 MSAT emissions along the highway corridor, along with a corresponding decrease in MSAT emissions
752 along the parallel routes. Because the estimated cumulative VMT is nearly the same, it is expected
753 that there would be no appreciable difference in overall MSAT emissions. The annual average daily
754 traffic (AADT) for this Project through 2049 is forecast to be no more than 7,380 in any given year; this
755 is well below the threshold of 140,000 to 150,000 AADT that would require MSAT III analysis.

756 Emissions would likely be lower than present levels in the design year because of EPA's national
757 control programs that are projected to reduce annual MSAT emissions by over 90 percent between
758 2010 and 2050 (FHWA 2016). Local conditions may differ from these national projections in terms of
759 fleet mix and turnover, VMT growth rates, and local control measures. However, the magnitude of the
760 EPA-projected reductions is so great, even after accounting for VMT growth, that MSAT emissions of
761 the Preferred Alternative are likely to be lower in the future.

762 Temporary impacts on air quality during construction may occur due to emissions and dust from
763 construction equipment. These impacts would be temporary and would not create a non-attainment
764 status within the Study Area.

765 Short-term adverse effects on air quality resulting from construction would be addressed or
766 minimized through NDOT's Standard Specifications for Highway Construction. Since Merrick County
767 is currently in attainment, and the Preferred Alternative would result in no appreciable difference in
768 overall MSAT emissions, no project-specific mitigation is proposed.

769 3.1.4 Wild and Scenic Rivers

770 The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System preserves certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural,
771 and recreational values. Two rivers within Nebraska are designated as part of the National Wild and
772 Scenic Rivers System, the Missouri River and Niobrara River (Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers
773 Coordinating Council 2024). The Project is not located within the Missouri River or Niobrara River
774 reaches. No Nationwide Rivers Inventory resources were identified in the Project Study Area (National
775 Park Service 2022).

776 3.1.5 Paleontology

777 In 1959, Nebraska's Legislature passed a law authorizing NDOT to enter into agreements with the
778 appropriate state agencies to remove and preserve paleontological remains when such remains were
779 to be disturbed by highway construction. This legislation also authorized the use of highway funds for

780 this specific purpose. This was the country's first paleontological salvage program, the Highway
781 Salvage Paleontology Program (HSPP), which is based on close cooperation among Contractors,
782 NDOT, and the University of Nebraska State Museum. In areas where new construction threatens
783 paleontologically sensitive areas, museum paleontologists follow a basic three-phase strategy of
784 salvage preconstruction, during construction, and post construction to recover the maximum amount
785 of scientific information without causing construction delays.

786 The Highway Paleontology Program has not identified any paleontological sites in the Study Area
787 (**Appendix N Public and Agency Coordination**). In the event of the discovery of paleontological
788 materials during construction, the Contractor would adhere to NDOT Standard Specifications for
789 Highway Construction. Standard avoidance, minimization and mitigation commitments are included in
790 **Chapter 5**.

791 Environmental Resources Evaluated in Detail

792 For this proposed Project, the following resources require detailed discussion in the Draft EA because
793 they occur within the Project Study Area and may have impacts resulting from the Preferred
794 Alternative.

795 3.2 Transportation

796 A transportation network consists of all modes of transportation for goods and people including road,
797 air, transit, trails, and rail. Access to and transport via these facilities are considered in evaluating
798 impacts by the alternatives.

799 3.2.1 Affected Environment

800 *National and State Highways*

801 There are two highways in the Study Area; US-30 and N-14. US-30 is a major east-west transportation
802 corridor in Nebraska, and serves several communities including Blair, Fremont, Columbus, Central City,
803 Grand Island, Kearney, and many other smaller communities in between. N-14 is a primary north-
804 south transportation corridor in central Nebraska, and serves communities including Superior, Clay
805 Center, Aurora, Central City, Fullerton, Albion, Neligh, Verdigre and Niobrara. Both N-14 and US-30 carry
806 large volumes of local and regional traffic, including large volumes of industrial and agricultural related
807 (freight) traffic. These highways intersect downtown Central City, and would be improved as part-of
808 this project.

809 *Local Roadways*

810 Local roadways in the project study area provide essential access to major highways N-14 and US-30
811 for residents of Central City. These streets facilitate daily travel and local commerce, connecting the
812 community to broader regional networks. The project will focus on the following roadways in **Table**
813 **3.1** below, to enhance accessibility, improve safety, and optimize traffic flow for local users:

814 **Table 3.1 Local Roadways within the Study Area**

Street Name	Location/Description	Connection/Notes
C Ave	West of the US-30 and N-14 intersection. Provides north/south access across the UPRR.	Two-way street, intersects N-14 near I St.
B Ave	Immediately west of the US-30 and N-14 intersection.	Two-way north of US-30, one-way south, provides access to green space and businesses.

Street Name	Location/Description	Connection/Notes
I St	South of the US-30 and N-14 intersection.	Access to residential areas, intersects N-14 near the Presbyterian Church.
17th Ave	Known as N-14, runs north/south over the UPRR in downtown Central City.	Main north/south connection.
13th St	Provides west/east connection in northern Central City, crossing N-14 and the UPRR.	Crosses major routes.
Railroad St	Parallels the south side of the UPRR, east of N-14.	Provides access to railroad infrastructure.
E St	Parallels the north side of the UPRR, located both east and west of N-14.	Provides access to railroad infrastructure and a residential home in northeast Central City.
11th St	In the northeast quadrant of Central City.	Provides access to residential homes, dead end.
10th St	In the northern limits of the city, intersects N-14.	Access to residential areas and Central City baseball field.

815

816 *Railroads*

817 The study area includes two railroad lines: UPRR and NCRC. The UPRR mainline, oriented in a
818 northeast-southwest direction, intersects N-14 approximately 190 feet north of US-30/N-14
819 intersection and crosses several local streets such as F Avenue, C Avenue, and 13th Street within
820 Central City. Additional crossings occur just outside city limits at 15th Rd (Fairgrounds Rd) and 17th
821 Rd. This line is part of the historical Overland Route, stretching from Chicago to Oakland and is
822 considered America's busiest rail freight corridor with extensive triple-tracking to handle heavy traffic⁶.

823 Approximately 1,500 feet east of N-14, the NCRC railroad runs in a north-south direction and extends
824 18 miles from the south end of Central City to Palmer, NE. The NCRC line going north from Central
825 City is not currently utilized, because there are several bridges that have not been maintained and
826 cannot carry train traffic. However, NCRC has provided information that while the line is not in use
827 currently, repairs would be made and the line would be opened if new users required it. This line
828 intersects the UPRR mainline in Central City. Notably, a section of this line south of US-30, previously
829 discussed in the "Trails" section, has been abandoned and repurposed into a trail. North of this
830 abandoned segment, between 13th and 14th Avenue, the NCRC line is actively used for the delivery of
831 molasses into Central City, where it is offloaded onto trucks for distribution to local agricultural
832 producers.

833 *Airport*

834 The nearest public use airport to the Project Study Area is the Central City's Municipal Airport. It is
835 located approximately 2.8 miles west of Central City, with the runway positioned in a north/ south
836 orientation away from the project site. This airport serves smaller non-commercial aircraft. The
837 nearest commercial airports are the Central Nebraska Regional Airport in Grand Island and the Lincoln
838 Municipal Airport in Lincoln.

⁶ <https://nebraskaeducationonlocation.org/businesses/union-pacific-2/>

839 *Transit*

840 Transportation services in Central City include the Central City Mini Bus, and Midland Public Transit.
841 There are currently no public bus routes within Central City. The Central City Mini Bus⁷ transportation
842 service provides five days a week for senior citizens, disabled, and the general public. Two trips per
843 month are scheduled for Grand Island with an advance reservation. The Midland Public Transit⁸, in
844 cooperation with local city and county governments, provides affordable transportation to the public.
845 Rides are available Monday thru Friday for mid-Nebraska counties including Clay, Howard, Merrick,
846 Nuckolls, and Webster.

847 *Trails*

848 The project study area includes the Dark Island Trail, intersecting US-30 between 14th Ave and 13th
849 Ave. The trailhead at US-30 begins with a concrete path through Central Park, transitioning to fly ash
850 south of 20th Street as it continues south towards the Platte River. Extending 8 miles to Marquette,
851 NE, this trail follows a former abandoned railroad line and is part of a Rails to Trails initiative. It
852 accommodates cyclists, runners, and walkers. Additional information on the Dark Island Trail is
853 provided in **Section 3.11 Section 4(f) Resources**.

854 *Streetscaping*

855 In 2018, a streetscape project in downtown Central City was completed. This project was part of the
856 City of Central City Downtown Revitalization Plan (2015), developed by Miller & Associates, and funded
857 by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED) through a Community Development
858 Block Grant (CDBG). The revitalization efforts included the replacement and widening of sidewalks,
859 installation of new streetlights, upgraded crosswalks with improved markings and accessibility
860 features, expansion of parking facilities, and implementation stormwater drainage systems. Large
861 planters along the US-30 corridor downtown host colorful flowers, adding to the visual appeal of the
862 area. These improvements have significantly enhanced the aesthetic appeal, and functionality of the
863 downtown business district.

864 *Parking*

865 The downtown Central City area features a mix of on-street parallel and diagonal parking. Parking
866 along US-30 and N-14 is currently parallel, providing access to shops and services. The side streets
867 offer diagonal parking, which increases the number of available parking spaces. However, parking
868 along the north side of US-30 and at the intersection of N-14 is not ideally positioned. Traffic turning
869 through the existing geometric conditions may come too close to parked cars, posing potential safety
870 and congestion issues. Some off-street parking lots exist, but they are limited to specific businesses,
871 providing parking for employees and customers. These lots alleviate on-street parking congestion to
872 some extent.

873 *Driveway Access*

874 In downtown Central City, only a few businesses have driveway access directly off the highway
875 system, with most driveways accessed from side streets. Typically, driveway accesses are set up for
876 two-way entry and exit. East of the US-30 and N-14 intersection, several residential driveways abut US-
877 30. At the NCRC property, trucks enter via both the highway and off of 13th Street. North along N-14,
878 residential houses are prevalent and access their homes via driveways from the highway.

879 *Sidewalks*

880 The sidewalks in downtown Central City were updated as part of the 2018 revitalization project. In
881 front of the businesses, the sidewalks are approximately 10-12 feet wide and are in good condition
882 following the revitalization efforts. The sidewalks are now set up for ADA accessibility, ensuring that
883 they are navigable for all users, including those with disabilities. However, the sidewalks near the

⁷ <http://www.nebraskatransportation.org/intermodal/transit-dir/transitdir-rural.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.midlandtransit.com/>

884 NCRC track and the Dark Island trailhead are in poor condition, as they are currently covered in gravel,
885 soil, or are cracked. Additionally, sidewalks on N-14 north of the Warm Slough crossing do not exist,
886 which limits pedestrian mobility in that area.

887 *Greenspace*

888 Greenspace in downtown Central City is very limited. Currently, greenspace exists at two primary
889 locations. The first is Pocket Park, a privately owned area featuring a park bench and a gazebo.
890 Access to this park is available from B Ave and the sidewalk system on US-30. The second
891 greenspace area is located at the "triangle" southwest of the intersection of US-30 and N-14. While the
892 triangle does not feature any seating areas, it includes historical plaques and a large flagpole.

893 3.2.2 Impacts of the No Build Alternative

894 There would be no construction of the Project with the No Build Alternative. As a result, there would be
895 no impacts on the transportation network or access to properties beyond those needed to complete
896 routine roadway and bridge maintenance activities. The transportation network and facilities would
897 not be improved, and therefore, many of the problems associated with vehicular and pedestrian
898 mobility and safety would remain, including side-swipe crashes, sidewalks in poor condition, reduced
899 ability for turning movements, and less than optimal parking conditions for downtown businesses.

900 3.2.3 Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

901 *National and State Highways*

902 The project is expected to have minor, short-term impacts on the transportation network during
903 construction. Construction will proceed under traffic conditions, with lane closures managed by
904 appropriate traffic control devices and practices. To facilitate through truck traffic on N-14 and the US-
905 30 corridor, detours will be implemented to bypass Central City. For N-14, the detour will run from the
906 intersection of N-14 and N-66 to US-81, then N-92, and back to N-14. For US-30, the detour will extend
907 from the intersection of US-30 and US-281 to N-92, returning to US-30. Details and routes are available
908 in **Appendix A, Transportation and Traffic Data**.

909 The project includes relocating N-14 to a new alignment east of its current location between 13th and
910 14th Ave, featuring a viaduct over the UPRR. This change eliminates the need for highway traffic to
911 cross the UPRR tracks at the N-14 at-grade crossing, thereby reducing the traffic exposure to train
912 crossings and diverting highway traffic away from the residential neighborhood north of the UPRR.
913 Additionally, a new roundabout at the intersection of N-14 and 10th Street will slow down traffic and
914 direct it along the new route, preventing it from continuing south into Central City. The speed limit
915 along the new segment, over the viaduct, will be maintained at 35 miles per hour, consistent with the
916 current speed on N-14 north of 13th Ave. The speed limit downtown, through the curve at the
917 intersection of US-30 and N-14, would be reduced to 25 miles per hour (approximately F St. to 14th
918 Ave). Despite these alterations, the project will not adversely affect the transportation network as it
919 maintains access to the existing surrounding transportation infrastructure.

920 Significant modifications are proposed for downtown Central City, especially at the intersection of N-
921 14 and US-30 and adjacent segments:

- 922 • Closure of the at-grade crossing between N-14 and the UPRR.
- 923 • Improvement of the geometric alignment along the US-30 curve.
- 924 • Relocation of the intersection of US-30 and N-14 slightly westward.
- 925 • Closure of B Ave north of US-30 to create a "T" intersection with N-14 and US-30.
- 926 • Conversion of C Ave south of US-30 into a one-way street heading south.
- 927 • Conversion of N-14, between 19th Street and US-30, into a one-way street heading north.

928 These changes are designed to enhance the flow of traffic through downtown, improve safety at
929 intersections, and reduce congestion. With these improvements, although the highway routes through
930 Central City are altered, there will be no adverse effects on the transportation network.

931 *Local Roadways*

932 The project's modifications to Central City's local transportation infrastructure are designed to
933 enhance traffic flow and safety without causing adverse impacts on local mobility. Key changes, such
934 as the introduction of one-way streets and the removal of certain at-grade crossings, are strategically
935 planned to improve navigational efficiency while maintaining full accessibility within the city.
936 Temporary closures of side roads may occur during construction; however, residents and commuters
937 will be able to utilize adjacent streets to navigate around any disruptions. These enhancements,
938 including the construction of a roundabout and a new viaduct, are expected to facilitate smoother and
939 safer movements for all road users. Despite the restructuring of roadways, local access to major
940 highways and within the city will remain robust, ensuring that daily commutes and local commerce
941 are minimally affected. Ultimately, there will be no adverse effects on the local transportation network.
942 For a detailed overview of the specific roadway modifications, see **Table 3.2** below.

943 **Table 3.2 Modification to Local Roadways in the Study Area**

Street Name	Location/Description	Modifications
C Ave	West of the US-30 and N-14 intersection. Provides north/south access across the UPRR.	Converted to one-way southbound from US-30 to N-14.
B Ave	Immediately west of the US-30 and N-14 intersection.	North of US-30 closed and converted to parking. South of US-30 removed for new intersection placement.
I St	South of the US-30 and N-14 intersection.	Eastern terminus closed; access redirected to adjacent roadways.
17th Ave	Known as N-14, runs north/south over the UPRR in downtown Central City.	One-way northbound from south of US-30 to north of 19th St. Closure of at-grade UPRR crossing.
13th St	Provides west/east connection in northern Central City, crossing N-14 and the UPRR.	At-grade UPRR crossing closed.
Railroad St	Parallels the south side of the UPRR, east of N-14.	Unchanged functionality; new viaduct spans the street.
E St	Parallels the north side of the UPRR, located both east and west of N-14.	Unchanged functionality; new viaduct spans the street. Access to the residential house on E St would be maintained during construction.
11th St	In the northeast quadrant of Central City.	Cul-de-sac constructed at roadway end near viaduct fill material.
10th St	In the northern limits of the city, intersects N-14.	Intersection converted to a roundabout.

944

945 *Railroads*

946 The preferred alternative will close two at-grade crossings over the UPRR at N-14 and 13th Street,
947 significantly reducing the exposure factor to trains throughout Central City. This alternative includes a
948 three-span bridge with abutments and MSE walls located well outside the UPRR ROW. The center

949 span is long enough to span the main portion of the UPRR ROW, which is approximately 200' wide at
950 the crossing location. Additionally, all substructures would be located outside the UPRR ROW,
951 ensuring use of the property by the UPRR. This structure not only enhances safety by eliminating at-
952 grade crossings but also accommodates potential future expansions of the railway, should UPRR
953 decide to increase capacity. The viaduct will extend over both Railroad Avenue and E Street, ensuring
954 continued access for railroad maintenance operations.

955 The viaduct is designed to meet UPRR's height clearance requirements above the tracks. Fencing, as
956 stipulated by UPRR, will be installed atop the viaduct to prevent debris from falling onto the tracks,
957 ensuring additional safety. Additionally, an existing cantilever signal west of the proposed structure is
958 anticipated to require relocation, with the exact placement to be determined during the final design
959 phase. Throughout construction, coordination with UPRR would be required to ensure that the
960 installation of girders and piers does not disrupt the frequent movement of freight along the corridor.

961 Furthermore, the preferred alternative considers access to the NCRC property and track between 13th
962 and 14th Avenues. Adequate space has been allocated for truck movements in this corridor to
963 facilitate the efficient offloading of molasses from NCRC trains. Despite these infrastructure
964 modifications, the project is designed to have no adverse impacts on the essential functions of the
965 railroad transportation network.

966 *Airport*

967 The preferred alternative would construct a viaduct approximately 2.8 miles away from the southern
968 east end of Central City's Municipal Airport. The proposed height does not exceed the 200 ft height
969 restriction and would not obstruct the glide path at 100:1 slope from any point on the glide path.
970 Coordination was completed with NDOT Aeronautics on 5-13-2024. It was determined that this project
971 would have no impact on the Central City Municipal Airport (see **Appendix N, Public and Agency**
972 **Coordination**).

973 *Transit*

974 No impacts to the transit services in Central City are anticipated. The preferred alternative would have
975 temporary side road closures, but access would not be restricted, as other routes would be available
976 throughout Central City. The preferred alternative would have major, long-term, beneficial impacts on
977 the transportation network that would also benefit transit services.

978 *Trails*

979 The preferred alternative would have temporary impacts to the Dark Island Trailhead; these impacts
980 are discussed further in **Section 3.11 Section 4(f) Resources**.

981 According to the 2023 Central City Comprehensive Plan, residents have expressed strong support for
982 an inner-city trail system that would connect to the Dark Island Trail. The plan notes that extending the
983 Dark Island Trail north of Central City would link the community with other towns in the region. While
984 this project does not include a designated trail over the viaduct, it does not restrict the city's future
985 efforts to extend the trail north, as alternative routes across the UPRR can still be developed.

986 *Streetscaping*

987 The preferred alternative is expected to have both positive and negative impacts on the existing
988 streetscaping in downtown Central City. During the construction phase, some of the large planters
989 along the US-30 corridor may need to be temporarily removed or relocated. However, these planters
990 will be re-installed once construction is completed, ensuring that the visual appeal of the area is
991 restored. Construction limits will be refined during the final design phase to preserve as much of the
992 previously constructed streetscape as possible. Light poles and ADA crossings will be reconstructed,
993 though they may be slightly modified in their new locations. Overall, the project will aim to maintain
994 and enhance the streetscape, continuing the benefits brought by the 2018 revitalization project

995 *Parking*

996 The preferred alternative would modify parking in downtown Central City. With the conversion of some
997 one-way streets, parallel parking along N-14, specifically across the street from the lumber yard, would
998 be converted to diagonal parking. Additionally, B Ave would be closed to through traffic and
999 designated exclusively for parking, providing a dedicated space for vehicles. Parking near the
1000 intersection of US-30 and N-14 would be modified to ensure parking is only allowed where line of sight
1001 is adequate, and the geometry promotes safe parking. While the preferred alternative may reduce the
1002 total number of parking spaces throughout the corridor, it aims to provide safer and more clearly
1003 denoted parking areas. The loss of parking stalls downtown with the preferred alternative is
1004 approximately 25, with an additional reduction of about 2 stalls from 16th Ave to 14th Ave. Off-street
1005 parking would remain available at specific businesses, ensuring dedicated parking for employees and
1006 customers.

1007 *Driveway Access*

1008 The preferred alternative would cause slight changes in driveway access throughout the corridor. The
1009 largest modification would occur at Citizens Bank & Trust, where a bump-out would be constructed on
1010 the current N-14 roadway, extending the driveway to access the bank's drive-through. Traffic would
1011 exit via this longer driveway back to N-14 and be required to travel east on US-30 due to the one-way
1012 streets. At the NCRC property near the viaduct construction, driveway access would be modified to
1013 accommodate truck traffic. The new driveway would be relocated off the newly constructed N-14,
1014 allowing for right-in/right-out truck movement, while access from 13th Street along the north side
1015 would remain open. Additionally, driveway modifications would be required for the house on the
1016 northeast side of the roundabout, relocating the driveway to the north side of the new N-14 roadway.
1017 This driveway would also likely function as access to the solar array in northern Central City.

1018 *Sidewalks*

1019 The preferred alternative would largely preserve the existing sidewalks throughout the corridor,
1020 maintaining the improvements made during the streetscape project. However, layout changes would
1021 occur at several locations. Specifically, at the new intersection of US-30 and N-14, sidewalks would be
1022 constructed across the N-14 median along US-30 to maintain access to Citizens Bank & Trust.
1023 Additionally, bump-outs would be constructed throughout the project, shortening the distance
1024 pedestrians need to cross the streets and enhancing pedestrian safety. Layout changes would also
1025 occur near the Presbyterian Church along the south side of the project at C Ave and 18th Street. With
1026 the construction of one-way streets and median modifications, the sidewalks in this area will require
1027 adjustment. The sidewalks along the south side of US-30, near the new south terminus of the N-14
1028 connection and the Dark Island trailhead, would be restored to ensure access to the new sidewalk over
1029 the viaduct. The project would also include the construction of a sidewalk over the Warm Slough
1030 culvert, along the east side of 17th Avenue extending south from the roundabout, thereby improving
1031 pedestrian mobility in that area.

1032 *Greenspace*

1033 The preferred alternative would impact greenspace in downtown Central City. The "triangle"
1034 greenspace at the current intersection of N-14 and US-30 would be removed due to project
1035 modifications. However, there are opportunities to create new greenspaces at the new intersection,
1036 such as near the bank driveway, the median separating N-14 travel lanes, and the new bump-out
1037 where B Ave once was. The greenspace at the downtown pocket park would continue to function in its
1038 current capacity, with access from the new parking lot along B Ave being maintained. During the final
1039 design phase, NDOT would collaborate with the city to develop and implement streetscape ideas
1040 throughout the project. Additional greenspaces could be created in the new median near 18th St and C
1041 Ave, enhancing the overall aesthetic and environmental quality of the downtown area.

1042 3.2.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation

1043 Commitments:

1044 Access to properties may be limited at times throughout construction but would remain open. The
1045 Contractor would coordinate with property owners to maintain access to fields and residences.
1046 (Contractor)

1047 During construction of the viaduct, access to the residential property (1005 13th St, Central City, NE
1048 68826) shall be required. The contractor shall work with the property owner to provide adequate
1049 access. (NDOT, Contractor)

1050 Any contractor involved in the project should file a 7460-1 Form with the FAA for all structures or
1051 equipment over 200' tall, or that break a 100:1 slope from a public-use airport. This includes any
1052 trucks, cranes, or any equipment used on the project. A 7460-1 form will need to be filed for each new
1053 structure that may be part of this project, like bridges or overpasses or if an existing structure's
1054 elevation would change. (Contractor)

1055 3.3 Land Use

1056 Land use refers to the activities and purposes for which a particular piece of land is being utilized or
1057 intended to be utilized. This can include residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, or
1058 other uses. Zoning refers to the legal method utilized by local governments to regulate land use by
1059 dividing land into different zones and establishing rules and regulations for what activities and
1060 structures are allowed in each zone.

1061 3.3.1 Affected Environment

1062 The study area is generally centered around the intersection of US-30 and N-14, and includes the
1063 project footprint that outlines the viaduct and its approaches. Due to the potential traffic changes
1064 throughout Central City and along regional transportation routes, the study area extends throughout
1065 the city, specifically along the US-30 and the N-14 corridor. The study area would be encompassed
1066 within the city limits and therefore the independent jurisdictional authorities governing the land use is
1067 the City of Central City. The City's Comprehensive Plan, dated September 2023, is the regulatory
1068 framework for establishing zoning and land use.

1069 *Existing Land Ownership, Current Land Use and Zoning*

1070 Existing land ownership in the study area is mostly privately held, with the largest tracts of land being
1071 owned by UPRR, NCRC, and a few areas owned by the City.

- 1072 • UPRR ROW traverses the city from the southwest to northeast and varies in width along its
1073 alignment. The UPRR generally runs parallel with US-30 throughout Merrick County.
- 1074 • NCRC ROW originates at US-30 between 13th and 14th Avenue, and extends to the north out of
1075 the city limits. This property consists of the railroad line itself, as well as pole barns, grain silos,
1076 and tracks to service the area with commodities such as molasses.
- 1077 • Areas owned by the City of Central City or public properties, are scattered throughout the
1078 study area. Public properties located within the project footprint or adjacent include:
 - 1079 ○ A grass field with an outbuilding, that used to function as an old gas plant, at the
1080 intersection of 12th Street and 12th Avenue. This property is further discussed in
1081 **Section 3.12 Hazardous Materials.**
 - 1082 ○ Civic areas, including a public library and US Post Office are along US-30, between 15th
1083 and 16th Avenue. City owned recreational properties were identified on 13th Avenue,

1084 adjacent to the project. These areas are further outlined and discussed in **Section 3.10**
1085 **Historic Properties** and **Section 3.11 Section 4(f) Properties**.
1086 ○ A solar farm that is owned and operated by the City is located on the west side of N-14
1087 near 10th Street. Additional information can be found in **Section 3.5 Utilities**.

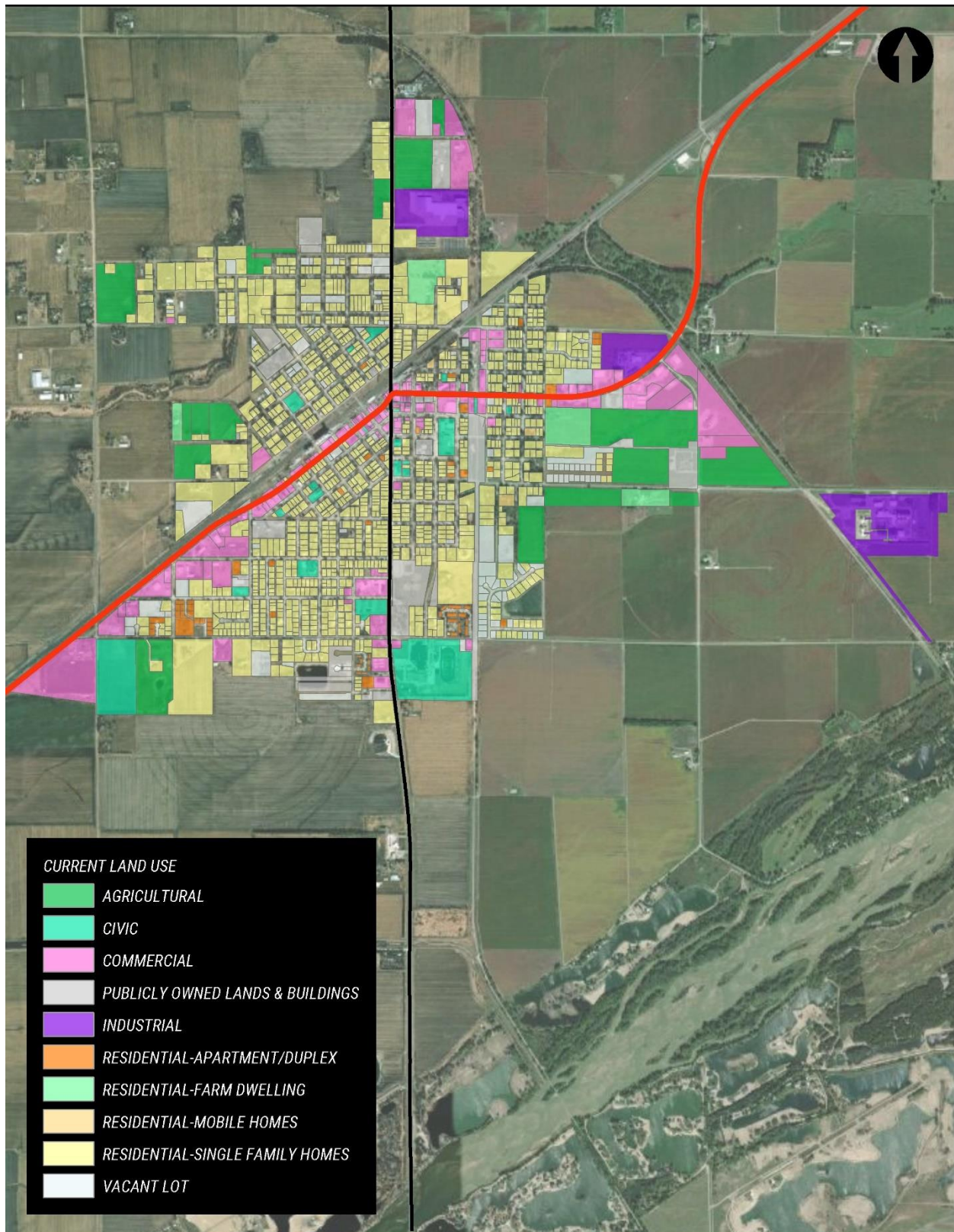
1088 Current land uses and zoning in the study area include a variety of residential, commercial, industrial,
1089 and civic areas, as shown in **Figure 3.3**.

- 1090 ● Residential properties and zoning are the dominant type of land use and zoning, and include
1091 single family homes, multi-family homes, and mobile homes.
- 1092 ● Commercially used and zoned areas occur in clusters. Most commercial businesses are
1093 located south of the UPRR mainline along US-30 and extend west from 13th Ave to the
1094 downtown area of Central City. Commercial businesses and zoning located to the north of the
1095 UPRR mainline occur near 10th Street on the east side of N-14 and extend north to the city
1096 limits.
- 1097 ● One industrially used area is located to the north side of the UPRR mainline near 10th Street
1098 on the east side of N-14 (Strobel Fabrication).
- 1099 ● Civic and city owned areas found south of the UPRR mainline along US-30 include the Central
1100 City Library, the US Post Office, and Central Park. Parks and Recreational Facilities owned by
1101 the city are discussed further in **Section 3.11 Section 4(f) Properties**.
- 1102 ● Vacant lots are scattered throughout the study area and are mostly zoned as residential or
1103 commercial.

1104 *Future Land Use*

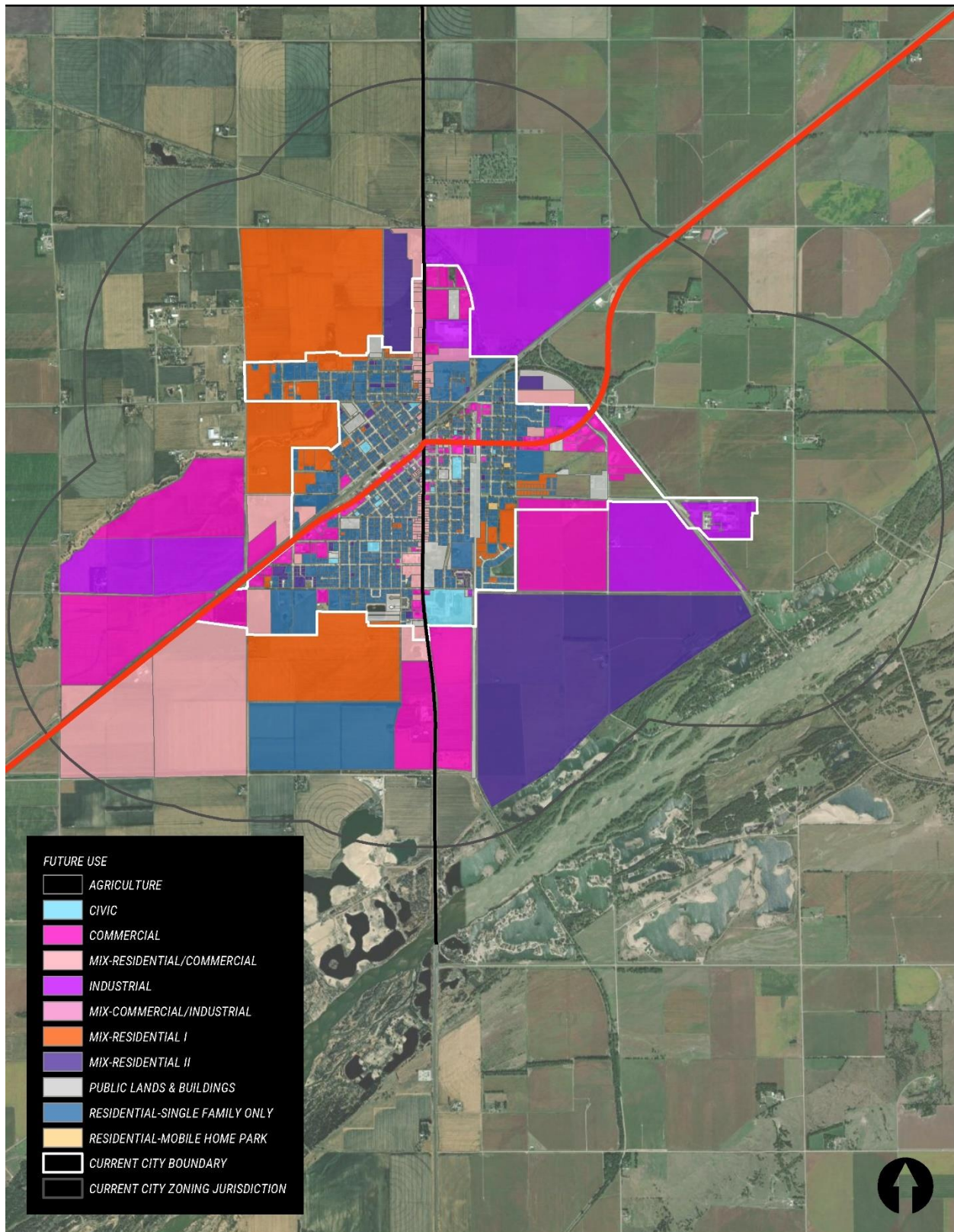
1105 As outlined in Central City's Comprehensive Development Plan (2023), future land uses and zoning are
1106 generally consistent with current land use and zoning (**Figure 3.4**), and no major changes are
1107 anticipated in the study area. Additionally, the 2023 Comprehensive Plan describes a desire to improve
1108 the intersection of US-30 and N-14 but does not specify how the land use or zoning would be
1109 modified.

1110 **Figure 3.3 - Existing Land Use and Zoning**



1111
1112 Source: Central City Comprehensive Plan (2023) prepared by Five Rule Rural Planning

1113 **Figure 3.4 - Future Land Use**



1114
1115

Source: Central City Comprehensive Plan (2023) prepared by Five Rule Rural Planning

1116 3.3.2 Impacts of the No Build Alternative

1117 The No Build Alternative would not result in the construction of the viaduct or other roadway
1118 improvements. As a result, there would be no right-of-way acquired by the proposed project and
1119 access points would be the same as what is currently in the study area. The No Build Alternative
1120 would be inconsistent with the 2023 Comprehensive Plan because it would not result in infrastructure
1121 improvements that support planned future land uses.

1122 3.3.3 Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

1123 The Preferred Alternative is consistent with existing and future land uses in the study area and would
1124 be consistent with the Central City Comprehensive Plan by addressing traffic flow and safety in the
1125 downtown area. Furthermore, the Comprehensive Plan acknowledges the importance of preserving
1126 the commercial corridors within Central City. The Preferred Alternative would improve traffic flow
1127 through the downtown commercial district while preserving these corridors and providing safer
1128 pedestrian access.

1129 As the new alignment would have limited access points, the potential for existing zoned residential
1130 areas along the corridor to transition to commercial uses is expected to be minimal. Since residential
1131 zoning currently exists adjacent to N-14, the alignment of the Preferred Alternative through these
1132 residential zones is anticipated to remain compatible with current residential land use. This is further
1133 supported by the fact that the alternative avoids displacing residences, thus maintaining the
1134 residential character along the corridor.

1135 Additionally, by avoiding impacts to businesses within the downtown area, the Preferred Alternative
1136 does not create a need for new commercial areas to accommodate displaced businesses. Therefore,
1137 the commercial center of Central City is expected to remain largely unchanged in terms of location
1138 and use, ensuring stability for existing businesses.

1139 As described in more detail in **Section 3.4.3 Right of Way and Acquisitions**, the Preferred Alternative
1140 would require approximately 12.2 acres of land acquisition:

- 1141 • Approximately 3.45 acres of land public land owned by the City which would include City
1142 owned vacant lots, utilities, and the City's ROW.
- 1143 • Approximately 0.8 acres of privately owned land that is zoned commercial or industrial.
- 1144 • Approximately 5.58 acres of privately owned land that is zoned residential.
- 1145 • Approximately 0.23 acres of the NCRC land that would not affect the use of the railroad.
- 1146 • Approximately 2.24 acres of BNSF railroad property.

1147 Except for land purchased for the project, no additional changes in land use are expected. No
1148 residences or businesses would be displaced, and properties would continue to be used in the same
1149 manner as existing conditions. To ensure consistency with the City's long-term vision, NDOT
1150 coordinated with the City to consider potential land use impacts. After coordination, the City
1151 determined that the preferred alternative would not have significant impacts to the surrounding land
1152 uses, and the project would be consistent with their long-term vision. Coordination with the City can be
1153 found in **Appendix C**. The Preferred Alternative is expected to maintain the established residential and
1154 commercial patterns within Central City without spurring major zoning or land use changes.

1155 3.3.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation

1156 Mitigation:

1157 The following mitigation would be required:

1158 Coordination with property owners would occur throughout the final design to provide access and
1159 minimize impacts for businesses and residences in the area.

1160 Property rights and acquisitions will be conducted by fair market value for the property rights and
1161 damages that may occur. Right of way acquisition will be conducted in conformance with the federal
1162 Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies of 1970 (Uniform Act) as
1163 amended (42 USC 4601 et seq.) and the Nebraska Relocation Assistance Act (Neb. Rev. Stat. Section
1164 76-1214 et seq).

1165 Access to individual businesses, residences, and other facilities will be maintained during
1166 construction.

1167 3.4 Right-of-Way and Acquisitions

1168 The evaluation of existing highway ROW and property acquisitions from adjacent properties considers
1169 the current land use and ownership of a parcel. Any property acquisition would be conducted by
1170 payment of fair market value for the property rights in conformance with the Uniform Relocation
1171 Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act), as amended (42 USC
1172 4601 et seq.), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Nebraska Relocation Assistance Act
1173 (Nebraska Revised Statutes Section 76-1214 et seq.).

1174 3.4.1 Affected Environment

1175 As discussed in **Section 3.3 Land Use**, existing land use within the Study Area consists of mostly
1176 residential, commercial, industrial, and civic areas. Residential properties are dominant with
1177 commercial areas occurring in clusters south of the UPRR mainline along US-30. Civic or public
1178 properties include parks, a library, post office, solar farm, and trail. The majority of parcels are privately
1179 owned. Additional property owners include the State of Nebraska, NDOT, railroads, and utilities.

1180 3.4.2 Impacts of the No Build Alternative

1181 There would be no construction of the Project with the No Build Alternative. ROW impacts may occur
1182 as part of other routine roadway and bridge maintenance activities; however, acquisitions for those
1183 projects would be evaluated on a project-by-project basis.

1184 3.4.3 Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

1185 The Preferred Alternative would require the acquisition of approximately 12.2 acres of new ROW, north
1186 of US-30 and east of N-14. No ROW acquisition would be needed downtown. Additionally, some
1187 exiting ROW may revert back to City ownership for landscaping, green space, or other purposes. The
1188 new ROW would be needed to construct the new viaduct, including the raised embankment, culverts,
1189 new driveways, and the new roundabout at N-14 and 10th Street. The project would also require
1190 approximately 1.36 acres of temporary easements. These temporary easements would be needed for
1191 the contractor to construct the project, but the property would not be required for maintenance
1192 purposes and would revert to the property owner after construction. The existing land uses of these
1193 parcels are predominantly farmsteads, grassed fields, residential, railroad land, and industrial or
1194 commercial. See **Table 3.3** for details.

1195

Table 3.3 Property Acquisitions of the Preferred Alternative

Tract Num	Property Ownership	Current Use (or zoning if vacant)	Acquire Full Parcel (Y/N)	Acquisition (ac)	Temporary Easement (ac)
1	BNSF	Railroad	N	2.24	0.29
2	Private	Residential	Y	0.09	
3	Private	Commercial	Y	0.19	
4	Private	Industrial/Commercial	N	0.59	0.07
5	UPRR	Railroad	N		0.59
6	Corporate	Industrial/Commercial	N	0.02	
7	Private	Vacant (Residential)	Y	0.43	
8	Private	Residential	N	1.54	0.15
9	NCRC	Railroad	N	0.23	0.26
10	Private	Vacant (Residential)	Y	0.10	
11	Private	Vacant (Residential)	Y	0.17	
12	Private	Residential	N	0.16	
13	Private	Residential	N	2.48	
14	Private	Residential	N	0.01	
15	Private	Residential	N	0.32	
16	Public	Utility	N	3.33	
17	Private	Residential	N	0.11	
18	Corporate	Residential	N	0.05	
19	Public	Residential	N	0.12	

Tract Num	Property Ownership	Current Use (or zoning if vacant)	Acquire Full Parcel (Y/N)	Acquisition (ac)	Temporary Easement (ac)
20	Private	Residential	N	0.001	
			TOTALS	12.2 ac	1.36 ac

1196 Relocation and removal of structures would also be required. **Table 3.4** describes these properties and
 1197 potential impacts. These impacts are based on conceptual design, and full or partial acquisitions
 1198 would be determined during the final design and ROW phases. ROW acquisition and relocations would
 1199 be conducted in accordance with the Uniform Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the
 1200 Nebraska Relocation Assistance Act (Nebraska Revised Statutes Section 76-1214 et seq.). Additional
 1201 information regarding the NDOT ROW and relocation procedures can be found on NDOT’s website:
 1202 <https://dot.nebraska.gov/business-center/row/>.

1203 **Table 3.4 Structure Relocations for the Preferred Alternative**

Site ID	Property Description	Owned/Leased	Impact
1	Dry Storage Building	Owned property	Acquisition and demolition of building.
2	Dry Storage Building	Leased property from NCRC	Acquisition and demolition of building.
3	Dry Storage Building	Owned property	Acquisition and demolition of building.

1204
 1205 Due to the nature of highway construction, on new alignment, uneconomic remnants may be possible.
 1206 An uneconomic remnant is defined as “a parcel of real property in which the owner is left with an
 1207 interest after the partial acquisition of the owner’s property, and which the acquiring agency has
 1208 determined has little or no value or utility to the owner” (49 CFR 24.2). If an uneconomic remnant is
 1209 identified during the ROW acquisition process, per 49 CFR 24.102(k) NDOT would offer to purchase
 1210 the remnant.

1211 Temporary impacts during construction may occur in the form of temporary easements or temporary
 1212 access restrictions. Any parcel or portion of a parcel acquired for temporary easements would be
 1213 returned to their original owner and condition following construction. Access to residential properties
 1214 would be maintained throughout construction and would be coordinated with the property owner prior
 1215 to any restrictions.

1216 **3.4.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation**

1217 **Commitments:**

1218 ROW acquisitions, types, and amounts are based on conceptual design. Impacts on ROW and
1219 properties would be further refined and minimized to the extent possible during the final design phase
1220 of the Project. (NDOT)

1221 Access to adjacent properties would be maintained throughout construction. Access restrictions
1222 would be coordinated with the property owner prior to the restriction. (NDOT, Contractor)

1223 Property rights acquisition would be conducted by paying fair market value for the property rights and
1224 damages that may occur. ROW acquisition would be conducted in conformance with the Uniform Act
1225 (42 USC 4601 et seq.), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Nebraska Relocation Assistance
1226 Act (Nebraska Revised Statutes Section 76-1214 et seq.). (NDOT)

1227 **3.5 Utilities**

1228 The potential of the Project to Affect utilities in the Study Area was considered by identifying utility
1229 resources and their location and orientation in relation to the Project. These effects were evaluated
1230 with respect to utilities crossed by or located within the Preliminary Impact Area.

1231 NDOT has the authority and responsibility to regulate utility occupancy on all state highway ROWs. In
1232 exercising this responsibility, NDOT may enter into agreements with political subdivisions regarding
1233 state highways located within their geographical boundaries. All other public roads and streets not
1234 designated as state highways are under the jurisdiction of the local political subdivisions in
1235 accordance with state statutes and local ordinances.

1236 **3.5.1 Affected Environment**

1237 The utilities listed in **Table 3.5** are located within the study area:

1238 **Table 3.5 Utilities in the Study Area**

Utility Type	Utility Companies/Providers
Gas	City of Central City
Power	City of Central City Southern Public Power District CC Solar, LLC
Telecommunication	Century Link (Lumen) VYVE Broadband Hamilton Telecommunications (NCTC) Cogent Communications Great Plains Communications Northeast Nebraska Telephone Co.

Municipal	Sewer and Wastewater - City of Central City Water - City of Central City
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1239

1240 The City of Central City substation is located southeast of the intersection of 13th Street and 14th
1241 Avenue and along the proposed N-14 alignment. It is located on the west side of the proposed south
1242 abutment of the new N-14 viaduct over the Union Pacific Railroad property. The substation itself is
1243 not within the immediate footprint of the project. However, transmission and distribution poles/lines
1244 crossing the proposed footprint.

1245 CC Solar, LLC’s solar farm (owned by the City of Central City) is situated along the proposed N-14
1246 alignment, on the property west of the intersection at N-14 and 10th Street. The facility includes two
1247 distinct sets of solar arrays, both positioned on a gravel base and interconnected by either
1248 underground or above ground power lines. Current access to the solar arrays is via a private driveway
1249 off of N-14, providing direct and exclusive entry to the site.

1250 **3.5.2 Impacts of the No Build Alternative**

1251 There would be no construction of the Project with the No Build Alternative. Impacts on utilities may
1252 occur as part of other routine roadway and bridge maintenance activities; however, these impacts
1253 would be evaluated on a project-by-project basis.

1254 **3.5.3 Impacts of the Preferred Alternative**

1255 For the Preferred Alternative, several utilities within and adjacent to the ROW would require relocation
1256 to accommodate project developments. The primary utilities affected include power lines, gas lines,
1257 and telecommunications infrastructure, all of which are widespread along the project corridor.
1258 Underground utilities may be relocated or encased under the new roadway.

1259 NDOT notified utility companies, via letter on July 29, 2024, that the project construction is upcoming.
1260 In this letter, NDOT alerted utility companies that the Project would likely require utility relocations.
1261 NDOT would continue to coordinate with utility companies during final design to identify specific utility
1262 impacts and needed relocations.

1263 The proximity of the Central City Power substation at the intersection of 13th Street and 14th Avenue
1264 to the new N-14 viaduct necessitates a reconfiguration of transmission lines and poles. Power lines
1265 would be adjusted to accommodate both the increased height and the expanded horizontal footprint
1266 of the new viaduct. While the substation itself would remain in its current location, the associated
1267 transmission and distribution poles and lines would need to be relocated, with options for either
1268 overhead or underground placement being considered. Minor disruptions in electrical service for
1269 residents may occur during reconfiguration work, though efforts will be made to minimize impacts.

1270 The Preferred Alternative would require the acquisition of a portion of the CC Solar, LLC property to
1271 facilitate the expansion of the N-14 roadway. Despite this, the main solar array structures would
1272 remain unaffected, ensuring continued operation without disruption. The proposed N-14 alignment
1273 would be constructed at-grade adjacent to the solar farm, which is expected to have minimal impacts
1274 on its operations. The project proposes the construction of a new access driveway to the east of the
1275 current access from N-14, pending an easement agreement, to replace the existing entry. Additionally,
1276 any power lines from the solar farm impacted by the project would be reconfigured to tie into the
1277 Central City Power distribution line.

1278 Utilities would be relocated in accordance with NDOT’s utility relocation policy. Impacted utility
1279 companies would be responsible for relocating their own facilities within the highway ROW at their

1280 own cost. Utility relocation may be eligible for reimbursement in certain circumstances. All required
1281 utility adjustments would be coordinated through NDOT and the Contractor in accordance with
1282 NDOT's Standard Specifications for Highway Construction during the appropriate phase of
1283 construction. Additional environmental impacts are not anticipated. The utility owner is responsible for
1284 obtaining any environmental permits and approvals required for utility relocation.

1285 3.5.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation

1286 **Commitments:**

1287 Impacts on utilities are not avoidable because several utilities are located near or within the existing
1288 ROW. The Contractor would follow the guidelines of NDOT's Utility Accommodation Policy (NDOT
1289 2024). It is NDOT's responsibility to notify utility companies of the need for relocation during the
1290 design stage of the Project. The NDOT Utility Section would coordinate utility agreements with the
1291 utility companies prior to construction. It is the Contractor's responsibility to notify utility companies of
1292 relocation needs during the construction phase of the Project for utilities that were not relocated
1293 before construction. (NDOT, Utility Provider(s))

1294 If utility relocation or replacement is required in a later phase of the Project, a re-evaluation would be
1295 required if (1) federal funds will be used for the utility work, or (2) the Project construction contractor
1296 will be responsible for the work.

1297 If this utility work is identified during final design, NDOT would initiate the re-evaluation prior to Project
1298 letting. If the work is identified during construction, NDOT would initiate the re-evaluation prior to
1299 commencing utility work. (NDOT Environmental, NDOT District)

1300 If either one of the above two conditions does not apply, later relocation or replacement of utilities
1301 would be coordinated through NDOT and the Contractor per NDOT's Standard Specifications for
1302 Highway Construction, Subsection 105.06. Any environmental permits required for these utility
1303 relocations or replacements would be the responsibility of the utility. (NDOT District, Utility Provider(s))

1304 3.6 Community Impact Assessment

1305 A Community Impact Assessment (CIA) is a component of the environmental review process that
1306 considers how a proposed project may affect the people, institutions, neighborhoods, communities,
1307 organizations, and larger social and economic systems in the project's vicinity. A CIA helps assess the
1308 impacts to local communities, their characteristics, and cohesion, including distinct populations,
1309 housing, income and tax base, access to public services, and community facilities and resources.

1310 3.6.1 Affected Environment

1311 A CIA for the Study Area was conducted to gain a better understanding of the surrounding
1312 communities, identify and evaluate potential impacts to residents or community resources as a result,
1313 and develop measures for mitigating impacts. The CIA process included developing a Community
1314 Profile of existing community facilities, resources, public services, and socioeconomic characteristics
1315 based on available GIS layers, online data sources, and demographic data from the US Census
1316 Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates at the Census Block Group
1317 level of detail. Community resources within at least a half-mile from the Preferred Alternative were
1318 identified and evaluated for impacts, along with socioeconomic data for the seven Census Block
1319 Groups comprising the Study Area for these purposes:

- 1320 • Census Tract 9668, Block Group 1
- 1321 • Census Tract 9668, Block Group 2
- 1322 • Census Tract 9668, Block Group 3

- 1323 • Census Tract 9666, Block Group 1
- 1324 • Census Tract 9667, Block Group 2
- 1325 • Census Tract 9692, Block Group 1
- 1326 • Census Tract 9691, Block Group 2

1327 There are multiple communities and incorporated areas within the Study Area, which includes portions
 1328 of both Merrick and Hamilton Counties. It is home to nearly 6,500 people and more than 2,500
 1329 households. The proposed project is located completely within Central City, which is where most of
 1330 the Study Area’s community facilities, services, and other resources are located and where nearly half
 1331 of Study Area residents live. Outside of Central City, many of those living in nearby communities within
 1332 the Study Area rely on its services and facilities, or the entertainment, recreational, social, and
 1333 employment options it provides. These include places like schools, medical care facilities, grocery and
 1334 variety stores, parks, and restaurants, as well as social institutions and community events. For this
 1335 reason, small communities and rural areas outside of the Central City boundaries were considered
 1336 when defining the Study Area. They are included in the socioeconomic component of the Community
 1337 Profile (Census Tracts 9666, 9667, 9692, and 9691), and were taken into consideration when
 1338 evaluating potential community impacts associated with the proposed project.

1339 A socioeconomic summary of the Study Area is shown in **Table 3.6** and a summary of community
 1340 facilities and resources in **Table 3.7**.

1341 The full Community Impact Assessment Technical Memorandum can be found in **Appendix C,**
 1342 **Community Impacts.**

1343 **Table 3.6 Demographics Summary of Community Characteristics**

Area	Population	Median Age	Minority Population	Households	Median Household Income
United States	331,097,593	38.5	41.1%	125,736,353	\$75,149
Nebraska	1,958,939	36.9	22.9%	776,379	\$71,722
Merrick County	7,675	43.0	8.8%	3,175	\$57,873
Hamilton County	9,400	41.3	6.6%	3,577	\$73,254
Central City	3,035	37.0	12.4%	1,200	\$54,063
Study Area	6,490	43.0*	9.8%	2,516	\$69,063*
Census Tract 9668; Block Group 1 (Merrick County)	1,376	43.0	12.1%	565	\$46,285
Census Tract 9668; Block Group 2 (Merrick County)	793	33.5	9.0%	319	\$60,375
Census Tract 9668; Block Group 3 (Merrick County)	1,250	39.0	13.5%	459	\$58,664
Census Tract 9666; Block Group 1 (Merrick County)	692	48.2	5.5%	289	\$69,063

Area	Population	Median Age	Minority Population	Households	Median Household Income
Census Tract 9667; Block Group 2 (Merrick County)	617	37.2	2.6%	236	\$83,750
Census Tract 9692; Block Group 1 (Hamilton County)	734	48.0	3.3%	272	\$76,563
Census Tract 9691; Block Group 2 (Hamilton County)	1,028	46.0	14.7%	376	\$92,083

1344
1345

*Represents the median value of the seven Block Group estimates. The actual median age and income for the study area cannot be determined without the individual disaggregated data for each Block Group (Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 2022 5-Yr Estimates)

1346

Table 3.7 Summary of Community Facilities and Resources

Category	Facility or Resource
Schools	
Public Schools	Central City Elementary School Central City Middle School Central City High School
Private Schools	Nebraska Christian
Preschools	Merrick County Child Development Center
Places of Worship	
Churches	Heartland Evangelical Free Church Central City United Methodist Grace Bible Fellowship St Michael's Catholic Church St. Paul's Lutheran Church Grace Lutheran Church United Presbyterian Church Central City Baptist Church Community Bible Church Christ Church Episcopal
Parks or Recreation Areas	
Parks and Recreation Areas	Central Park Dark Island Park North Park South Park (Lone Tree Park) Kernel Field Baseball Park Bader Park Central City Downtown Park Merrick County Health & Fitness Center Bison Activity Dome Central City Aquatic Center

Category	Facility or Resource
Recreational Trail Facilities	Merrick County Fairgrounds Dark Island Trail
Entertainment Venues	Fox Theater (formerly Widman Theater) State Theater Performing Arts Center / Edwin & Bernice Lock Theater
Emergency Services	
Fire Rescue / EMS Services	Central City Volunteer Fire Department Central City Ambulance Service
Police Dispatch Services	Central City Police Station Merrick County Sheriff's Office Nebraska State Patrol Troop C
Medical Services	
Hospitals	Merrick County Medical Center
Transportation Services	
Public Transportation Services	Midland Public Transit (On-Demand Paratransit)
Airports	Central City Municipal Airport Central Nebraska Regional Airport (Grand Island)
Vulnerable Population Services*	
Senior Centers and Assisted Living Facilities	Central City Senior Center Central Assisted Living Life Essentials Assisted Living The Oaks at Central City Cottonwood Estates Central Assisted Living
Rent-Subsidized Housing	Bader Villa West
Utility and Information Services**	
Newspapers	The Republican-Nonpareil
Special Events and Memorials	
Special Events	Downtown Holiday Flag Displays Veterans Day Parade Lone Tree Days Trunk or Treat Fall Festival Chamber of Commerce Annual Gala Merrick County Fair Bader Park Family Halloween Bader Park Firework Show Dark Island Trail Taco Rides
Memorials and Cemeteries	Central City Cemetery

Category	Facility or Resource
	Downtown Veterans Memorial Plaques Heartland Veterans Memorial
Major Businesses and Employers	
Public-Sector Employers	Central City Public Schools Merrick County
Private-Sector Employers	Merrick Medical Center Green Plains Renewable Energy Aurora Cooperative Strobel Manufacturing

1347 *Resources serving low-income, minority, or Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations can be found in Section 3.7, which
1348 summarizes the Environmental Justice (EJ) review.

1349 **More information about utility services and providers can be found in Section 3.5.

1350 3.6.2 Impacts of the No Build Alternative

1351 There would be no construction of the proposed project with the No Build Alternative. As a result,
1352 there would be no direct impacts, adverse or beneficial, to communities in the Study Area. Existing
1353 traffic delays and unsafe conditions within the existing roadway network would continue, and
1354 opportunities to expand non-motorized mobility would be missed. There may also be long-term,
1355 indirect impacts associated with the No Build Alternative that adversely affect economic growth and
1356 development opportunities in Downtown Central City.

1357 3.6.3 Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

1358 The Preferred Alternative is consistent with local planning policies, as described in the most recent
1359 Central City and Merrick County Comprehensive Plans. The 2023 Central City Comprehensive Plan
1360 specifically mentions the existing intersection of N-14 and US-30 as being a safety concern for some
1361 residents and acknowledges that NDOT is considering re-routing traffic on these highways to improve
1362 traffic flows and safety. These improvements would provide a long-term benefit to local communities.

1363 Construction of the project would result in short-term, adverse community impacts in the form of
1364 disruptions to typical travel patterns and study area aesthetics. Examples of these include temporary
1365 roadway detours, access restrictions, traffic delays, and equipment/materials staging. In addition to
1366 being temporary, these impacts would be mitigated by using the NDOT Roadway Design Manual's
1367 standards related to work zone traffic control plans, NDOT's Standard Specifications for Highway
1368 Construction, and adherence to all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. After construction,
1369 there would be no permanent loss in access to existing community facilities or other community
1370 resources because of the proposed project, nor would it result in a permanent impediment to restrict
1371 emergency services or slow life-safety response times for parts of the community. Local communities
1372 would also experience short-term beneficial economic impacts from construction-related jobs and
1373 increased business from construction workers patronizing local businesses and service establishments.

1374 The proposed project would have minor, short-term adverse impacts on non-motorized mobility and
1375 recreation in the project area due to temporary closures of the Dark Island Trail during construction.
1376 Upon completion, the project will include a safe, elevated sidewalk on one side of the viaduct, providing
1377 an accessible route across the UPRR for pedestrians and enhancing mobility in the area. As a result,
1378 the project is expected to deliver major, long-term benefits to the community.

1379 Long-term impacts on the study area and local communities are anticipated to be a net benefit when
1380 considered collectively. The project would create long-term, adverse impacts for certain property
1381 owners as a result of the acquisitions required for its construction. These impacts would be mitigated
1382 with financial compensation for impacted property owners and would not have a significant financial
1383 impact on the community in terms of reducing local tax revenues or removing property that currently
1384 serves a better public use. The project would impact residents of Central City and the surrounding
1385 communities beneficially by creating a more efficient roadway network. It would have major, long-
1386 term, beneficial impacts, such as decreasing travel times, improving safety conditions, enhancing
1387 community connections, and expanding non-motorized mobility in Central City. Additional benefits
1388 may include increased economic activity, future development opportunities, and revitalization within
1389 Central City's downtown.

1390 Access to community resources, area schools, and emergency response services would not be
1391 adversely impacted by the proposed project. No neighborhoods or community resources would be
1392 isolated or divided by the viaduct structure, which would instead strengthen connections between the
1393 mostly residential parts of Central City north of the UPRR mainline, and those areas south of it, which
1394 contain most of the public buildings and community services. The proposed project would also have
1395 minor, long-term aesthetic impacts that are beneficial to the study area. This includes maintaining or
1396 installing new lighting and other upgraded streetscape elements that are consistent with recent
1397 improvements to the US-30 corridor in the downtown area. These streetscape improvements are part
1398 of a larger Central City vision to create a stronger sense of place and identity around its downtown.
1399 This includes installing features such as shade trees, open public spaces, and unique wayfinding
1400 signage that can transform both the appearance of the area, as well as the way the community
1401 interacts with it by encourage pedestrian activity and enhancing community cohesion.

1402 3.6.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation

1403 **Commitments:**

1404 The design and construction phases of the project would incorporate and follow the NDOT Roadway
1405 Design Manual's standards related to work zone traffic control plans, NDOT's Standard Specifications
1406 for Highway Construction, and adherence to all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. (NDOT
1407 Design)

1408 Vehicular and pedestrian access will be maintained for all businesses, services, and facilities during
1409 the anticipated temporary roadway closures. Construction activities would be coordinated with annual
1410 local events in an effort to minimize traffic delays and travel pattern disruptions, where possible.
1411 (Contractor)

1412 Efforts would be made during the design phase to minimize necessary property acquisition and
1413 relocations, where feasible. Property rights acquisition would be conducted by paying fair market value
1414 for the property rights and damages that may occur. Right-of-way acquisition would be conducted in
1415 conformance with the Uniform Act (42 USC 4601 et seq.), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and
1416 the Nebraska Relocation Assistance Act (Nebraska Revised Statutes Section 76-1214 et seq.). (NDOT
1417 Design, NDOT ROW Division)

1418 Central City's recent streetscape improvements, memorial plaques, and flag sleeves will be
1419 maintained or relocated for community events, social interactions, and public open space both during
1420 and after construction activities. (NDOT Design, NDOT District)

1421 3.7 Environmental Justice

1422 Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and
1423 Low-Income Populations (issued February 11, 1994) directs federal agencies to take the appropriate

1424 and necessary steps to identify and address “disproportionately high and adverse” effects of federal
1425 projects on the human health or environment of low-income and minority populations. Additionally,
1426 representatives of any low-income or minority populations in the community that may be affected by
1427 a project must be given the opportunity to be included in the impact assessment and public
1428 involvement process. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, federal agencies are required to
1429 ensure that no person, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, is excluded from participation
1430 in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving
1431 federal financial assistance. Title VI prevents discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional in
1432 any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance from FHWA.

1433 3.7.1 Affected Environment

1434 An environmental justice review was completed for the Project and can be found in **Appendix D,**
1435 **Environmental Justice.** The environmental justice study area spans multiple counties and
1436 communities due to the use of a detour for both US-30 and N-14. The project and detour are located
1437 within 25 block groups located within Hall County, Hamilton County, Howard County, Merrick County,
1438 and Polk County, Nebraska. Portions of the project study area are also located in the city of Central
1439 City and portions of the detour study area are also located in Central City, Grand Island city, Hordville
1440 village, Polk village, St. Libory CDP, Stromsburg city, and Wolbach village (see attached maps).

1441 Data from 2020 indicate that several block groups within Census Tracts 2, 4, 6, and 7 contain minority
1442 populations (primarily Hispanic/Latino and Black/African American) at greater percentages than the
1443 Nebraska state average, and 2018-2022 data show that block groups in Census Tracts 2, 7, and 9668
1444 contain low-income populations.

1445 Data for the study area, considering the total population affected by the project, indicate the presence
1446 of a Spanish-speaking LEP population that meets or exceeds the NDOT LEP outreach trigger of 1,000
1447 persons.

1448 After review of the Environmental Justice study area, a number of businesses and agencies were
1449 identified as likely to serve a minority and/or low-income population and/or provide services within
1450 Central City and the larger study area. A list of these businesses and civic institutions is included in
1451 **Appendix D, Environmental Justice.**

1452 Those businesses and civic institutions located within Central City include:

- 1453 • Solt-Wagner Funeral Home, located at 1507 17th St
- 1454 • The Dentist, located at 620 G St
- 1455 • Archer Credit Union, located at 510 G St
- 1456 • Central City Skate Park
- 1457 • Dark Island Park and Trail
- 1458 • The Collective, located at 1304 16th St
- 1459 • Merrick Foundation, located at 1532 17th Avenue Suite B
- 1460 • Miracle- Ear Hearing Aid Center, located at 1532 17th Ave
- 1461 • Eye Care Associates, located at 213 G St
- 1462 • Cornerstone Bank, located at 1631 16th St
- 1463 • Supernaw Law Office, located at 1611 16th St
- 1464 • Central City Police Station, located at 1616 16th Ave
- 1465 • Central True Value, located at 308 G St
- 1466 • Citizens Bank & Trust, located at 1634 16th St
- 1467 • Merrick Medical Center Auxiliary Thrift Shop, located at 1601 16th St
- 1468 • United States Postal Service, located at 1512 16th St
- 1469 • Central City Public Library, located at 1604 15th Avenue
- 1470 • Central City Mall (Jim’s Foods, Trav’s U-Save Pharmacy, CENEX gas), located at 1414 16th St

- 1471 • El Agave Mexican Restaurant, located at 1415 16th St
- 1472 • Central City School District, located at 1711 15th Avenue
- 1473 • Central City Elementary, located at 1711 15th Avenue
- 1474 • Central City Senior Center, located at 803 C Avenue
- 1475 • Merrick County Courthouse, located at 1510 18th St #1
- 1476 • Mission Heart, located at 412 G Street
- 1477 • Laundry Express, located at 1310 16th Street, Suite 2

1478 3.7.2 Impacts of the No Build Alternative

1479 There would be no construction of the Project with the No Build Alternative. As a result, there would be
1480 no effects to minority and/or low income populations identified in the study area.

1481 3.7.3 Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

1482 Minority, low-income, and LEP populations were identified in block groups in which this project is
1483 located. However, there are no anticipated disproportionately high and adverse human health or
1484 environmental effects to these groups, as defined in FHWA Order 6640.23A. The following project
1485 information for the Preferred Alternative was considered in making this determination:

- 1486 • The Central City Senior Center has only one entrance and one exit to the property that will be
1487 affected during the temporary road and lane closures. Midland Public Transit has vans that
1488 support the senior center running Monday through Friday 8am to 4pm.
- 1489 • This project will be constructed under traffic with lane closures controlled by appropriate
1490 traffic control devices and practices.
- 1491 • This project will not restrict access to emergency service facilities or providers during
1492 construction.
- 1493 • There will be no isolation, exclusion, or separation of minority or low-income individuals within
1494 a given community or from the broader community.
- 1495 • ROW will be required and there are approximately 21 tracts estimated for acquisition. No
1496 residential relocations are anticipated.
- 1497 • The preliminary estimate of ROW acquisition is approximately 13 acres of permanent
1498 ROW/easements, and approximately 2 acres of temporary ROW/easements. The type of
1499 property proposed to be acquired is residential acreage/pasture, vacant/pasture, railroad,
1500 industrial business/storage, and utility generation/distribution.
- 1501 • Three buildings will be acquired on the unnamed road between 14th Avenue and 13th Avenue.
- 1502 • Coordination with Union Pacific railroad will be needed. A temporary crossing and flaggers will
1503 be required. Pedestrian Access over the railroad tracks will be unchanged with the project.
- 1504 • There will be phasing for construction at US-30 and N-14 roadways in the downtown area and
1505 phasing for construction of the N-14 roundabout.
- 1506 • For local traffic, there may be short term closures of side roads. Access restrictions to
1507 businesses would be temporary and phased, but not known at this time.
- 1508 • There will be a loss of approximately 25 parking spots during construction; however, NDOT
1509 has determined that there wouldn't be negative impacts to businesses within the study area
1510 based on nearby available parking.
- 1511 • The Noise Study shows that there will be no adverse impacts that cannot be avoided or
1512 mitigated. None of the residential homes or commercial buildings along the new corridor will
1513 experience any adverse noise impacts.
- 1514 • A public information meeting and a targeted mailer before the meeting are anticipated for the
1515 project. A stakeholder meeting will be planned the day of and the day prior to the public
1516 hearing.

1517 3.7.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation

1518 **Commitments:**

1519 Considering the total population affected by the project, the presence of a Spanish-speaking LEP
1520 population exceeds the NDOT LEP outreach trigger of 5 percent of the population. Therefore, NDOT
1521 will utilize appropriate alternative language assistance measures to outreach to these communities in
1522 accordance with the current NDOT LEP Plan. (NDOT Communications)

1523 When formal local and pedestrian detour routes are determined, a re-evaluation would be conducted.
1524 This review was for the project and highway detours as described. It is anticipated that local traffic
1525 would use alternative routes to avoid construction. A local and pedestrian detour will be required, but
1526 local and pedestrian detour routes are not yet determined. If existing pedestrian facilities cannot
1527 provide a suitable pedestrian detour, an alternative detour may be required. (NDOT Civil Rights)

1528 Any written information that is dispersed to the public regarding this project must be translated into
1529 Spanish. Dispersed information does not include highway signs or electronic messaging boards, but
1530 does include, for example, public meeting invitations, mailers and postcards, legal notices, news
1531 releases, and project map/information handouts. Legal notices and news releases do not need to be
1532 translated if they are only to be placed in an English-language media source. Information that is
1533 distributed to businesses, public agencies, or to departments representatives of public agencies, does
1534 not need to be translated. (NDOT District, NDOT Communications)

1535 If a public meeting is held regarding this project, the written documents prepared for public dispersal
1536 (for example, project map/information handouts) at the meeting must be translated into Spanish.
1537 There must be a Spanish interpreter present. There must also be clear notice posted. There must also
1538 be clear notice posted in Spanish at the meeting that the interpreter is available. (NDOT
1539 Communications)

1540 Pedestrian routes will be designated during phased construction. Pedestrians will have access to one
1541 side of a street at a time. (Contractor)

1542 Access will be maintained at the entrance and the exit of Central City Senior Center during the
1543 anticipated temporary roadway closures. (Contractor)

1544 Other mitigation measures may be required depending on future project details and the need for
1545 detour(s). (NDOT Civil Rights)

1546 3.8 Visual Effects

1547 Visual resources are those physical features that make up the visible landscape, including land, water,
1548 vegetative, and man-made elements (FHWA 2015⁹). Visual considerations are given for general
1549 resources (public) and specific sensitive resources (including some parks, landscapes, and historic
1550 properties).

1551 In roadway projects, visual quality impacts are typically determined by the degree of change that will
1552 occur in the visual environment as a result of building a new roadway facility. Areas with a high degree
1553 of visual quality are more sensitive to changes in the visual environment than areas with a low or
1554 moderate degree of visual quality. The degree of change in visual quality is also related to viewer
1555 response, or how individuals who can see the transportation facility from an adjacent vantage point
1556 respond to the change in view. Another category of viewer includes users of the transportation facility
1557 who experience views from the road. Visual impacts can include any changes to the landscape or

⁹ https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/env_topics/other_topics/VIA_Guidelines_for_Highway_Projects.pdf

1558 viewshed caused by the project. "Aesthetics" refers to the visual qualities and design elements of the
1559 highway construction project itself.

1560 3.8.1 Affected Environment

1561 The visual environment of the project is characterized by an urban setting in the downtown area,
1562 densely lined with businesses. As the project area extends northward, the environment transitions into
1563 a mix of businesses, residences, and industrial uses. Further north, the landscape becomes
1564 predominantly rural, with farmland, open spaces, residences, and the city's solar array. The terrain
1565 throughout these areas is flat, but the presence of mature trees, grain bins and storage buildings
1566 outside of the downtown provides substantial vertical elements to the landscape. Additionally, recent
1567 streetscaping enhancements in the downtown area, including decorative lighting, new planters, and
1568 reconstructed sidewalks, have substantially improved the visual aesthetic of Central City's urban
1569 landscape.

1570 *Downtown Central City*

1571 Downtown Central City is a business district with a mix of architectural styles, including modern and
1572 historic structures. Green space is available in two small areas: a grassy illuminated intersection
1573 island with a flagpole and Downtown Park, a privately-owned pocket park with trees and a gazebo.
1574 These spaces compliment the recent streetscape improvements the city installed including ADA
1575 ramps, decorative lighting, planters and new sidewalks. A large mural visible from the US-30/N-14
1576 intersection, provides public art to the downtown.

1577 *Viaduct and North*

1578 The area where the proposed viaduct and associated approaches (between 14th Ave and 13th Ave)
1579 would be located on former NCRC property that contains pole barns, grain bins, railroad tracks, and
1580 residential neighborhoods surrounding this property. On the south, where the viaduct approach would
1581 connect with US-30, Merrick County activity center, the Dark Island Trail Head, and Fox Theater exist.
1582 Continuing north across the UPRR, the landscape consists of some residential properties, open fields,
1583 forested drainage ditches, and Central City's solar array.

1584 The most sensitive visual receptors are those individuals located in the vicinity of the proposed
1585 viaduct where there are currently storage buildings which would have the potential of undesirable
1586 views of the new structure.

1587 3.8.2 Impacts of the No Build Alternative

1588 There would be no construction under the No Build Alternative. Therefore, it would have no direct
1589 impacts to the visual or aesthetic landscape of the Study Area. However, current issues of traffic flow
1590 and congestion, operational challenges and high exposure factor would remain, which can be
1591 considered a visual impact. Since the residents living near the roadway are already experiencing these
1592 conditions, any visual impacts would be minor.

1593 3.8.3 Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

1594 *Downtown Central City*

1595 The Preferred Alternative would involve reconstruction of transportation infrastructure through the
1596 downtown area of Central City resulting in a visually similar transportation facility. There would be
1597 both benefits and impacts on the aesthetic value of the area.

1598 Construction of the Project would result in temporary visual impacts such as visibility of construction
1599 equipment and disturbed ground would result in minor adverse visual effects. Some of the recent
1600 streetscaping improvements would be temporarily and permanently impacted by the construction
1601 resulting in a minor adverse visual effect. The small grassy illuminated intersection island with a

1602 flagpole would be removed by the project resulting in a permanent visual impact. It is likely that flags
1603 would still be flown downtown, and the memorial plaques would be moved, but these locations would
1604 be determined during final design.

1605 Beneficial visual effects are expected as a result of the project by improving traffic flow, congestion
1606 and operational characteristics which are attained through improved geometrics (street layout). The
1607 large mural, the pocket park, and historic buildings will remain as they are currently so no impact to
1608 the visual character would occur to these elements. Overall given that this is an urban area, the visual
1609 effects for both viewers and users are considered neither a benefit beneficial nor an impact. The
1610 image below is an aerial view rendering of the anticipated reconstruction of the downtown area near
1611 the N-14 and US-30 intersection looking east.



1612
1613 Proposed downtown intersection looking east.

1614 *Viaduct and North*

1615 The viaduct and north would be constructed on new alignment in the vicinity of where large storage
1616 buildings, residential properties, grain silos, pole barns, open fields, forested drainage ditches and the
1617 City's solar array are currently located. The viaduct would be approximately 35 feet high and include
1618 MSE walls for the bridge approaches. Given the size of the viaduct, it would be visible from several
1619 vantage points in Central City and especially from residences adjacent to it. Pedestrians and Dark
1620 Island Trail users will be accommodated on the viaduct which will provide these users with an
1621 elevated view of Central City and the surrounding landscape which could be seen as a beneficial visual
1622 impact. A new T-intersection will be constructed at US-30 and the south end of the Preferred
1623 Alternative. Users of Fox Theater, Merrick County Activity Center, Laundry Express, and others near
1624 this location will have a new visual element with the addition of the roadway on property that is
1625 minimally developed currently, which may be considered a benefit or an impact depending on the
1626 viewer. The image below is a rendering of the viaduct and relocated N-14. This is an aerial view
1627 looking northeast.



1628
1629 Proposed viaduct looking northeast.



1630
1631 Proposed viaduct Looking northeast from E Street.

1632 At N-14 and 10th St, a roundabout would be constructed on land that is mostly open fields and
1633 forested. The roundabout would create a new visual element to viewers who reside near it by
1634 interfering with their previously established viewshed. The Preferred Alternative may be considered
1635 beneficial or adverse depending on the viewer.

1636 Although overall the project would alter the visual aesthetics of Central City, it generally aligns with the
1637 current and future land use in the area.

1638 3.8.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation

1639 Based on the information provided above, no mitigation measures for visual and aesthetic impacts
1640 will be required for the project.

1641 **3.9 Noise**

1642 Automobile noise primarily comprises sounds from engine exhaust, drive train, and tire/roadway
1643 interaction. This Draft EA is supported by an analysis of noise that is presented in the Traffic Noise
1644 Technical Memorandum found in **Appendix E, Noise**, which has been prepared in accordance with 23
1645 CFR 772, *Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise*; the FHWA
1646 *Highway Traffic Noise Analysis and Abatement Policy and Guidance* (FHWA 1995), and NDOT *Noise*
1647 *Analysis and Abatement Policy* (NDOT 2024).

1648 FHWA’s *Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise* (23 CFR 772) state that a noise impact
1649 occurs when the predicted traffic noise levels for a project approach¹⁰ or exceed noise abatement
1650 criteria for the land use activity categories shown in **Table 3.8**.

1651 **Table 3.8 Noise Abatement Criteria per Land Use Activity**

Activity Category	Activity ¹ Leq(h)	Activity Description
A	57 (exterior)	Lands on which serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance and serve an important public need.
B ²	67 (exterior)	Exterior residential (single-family and multi-family dwellings)
C ²	67 (exterior)	Exterior non-residential lands (schools, parks, cemeteries, etc.)
D	52 (interior)	Interiors of Category C facilities
E ²	72 (exterior)	Exterior developed land less sensitive to highway noise
F	---	Land uses not sensitive to highway traffic noise (agriculture)
G	---	Undeveloped lands

1652 Leq(h) = 1-hour equivalent sound level

1653 ¹ The Leq(h) Activity Criteria values are for impact determination only and are not design standards for noise abatement.

1654 ² Includes undeveloped lands permitted for this activity category.

1655 **3.9.1 Affected Environment**

1656 The primary tasks for the noise study were to identify receivers that approached or exceeded the
1657 Noise Abatement Criteria determined for different types of receivers and to determine the relative
1658 change in traffic noise levels anticipated due to the changes in alignment. Noise levels were predicted
1659 for 2020 Existing, 2045 No-Build conditions, and 2045 Build conditions. The Traffic Noise Model
1660 (TNM) was applied using the appropriate roadway, traffic, and sensitive receiver information to predict
1661 the noise levels for each scenario.

1662 In the Study Area, noise levels were measured at 126 noise-sensitive receptors representing seventy-
1663 eight (78) residences or properties zoned for residential, thirty-nine (39) receivers were identified to
1664 represent businesses along the corridor and nine (9) land use Category C areas and businesses
1665 (churches, senior centers, theaters, trails, etc). Additional information on noise levels within the Study
1666 Area is in **Appendix E, Noise**.

¹⁰ Approach is defined as noise levels within 1 A-weighted decibel (dBA) of the Noise Abatement Criteria for the activity category.

1667 3.9.2 Impacts of the No Build Alternative

1668 There would be no construction of the Project with the No Build Alternative. For the No Build
1669 Alternative, none of the receptors are predicted to approach or exceed the NAC for the land uses in the
1670 study area.

1671 3.9.3 Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

1672 The predicted noise levels indicated that there are no instances of build condition noise levels
1673 substantially exceeding no-build condition noise levels in the study area (increase of 15 dBA [A
1674 weighted decibels] over the existing levels).

1675 Results of the analysis showed that:

- 1676 • No receivers experienced noise levels approaching or exceeding the Noise Abatement Criteria
1677 for the future build scenario.
- 1678 • 2045 no-build noise levels increased between one (1) and two (2) dBA compared to existing
1679 levels (2020). Note that in general, a 1 dBA change is the smallest change in noise level a
1680 person can hear in a quiet environment, and changes in traffic noise levels of one or two dBA
1681 typically cannot be detected by humans (**Appendix E, Noise**).
- 1682 • Noise levels typically increased between one (1) and three (3) dBA when comparing the 2045
1683 No-Build and 2045 Build scenarios.

1684 The noise analysis indicates that **no receivers analyzed would have a noise impact in the 2045 Build**
1685 **scenario** due to noise levels approaching or exceeding the Noise Abatement Criteria.

1686 3.9.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation

1687 Commitments:

1688 Exhaust and muffler systems on construction equipment would be in good working order.
1689 Construction equipment would be maintained on a regular basis, and equipment may be subject to
1690 inspection by the construction project manager to ensure maintenance. (Contractor, NDOT Project
1691 Manager [PM])

1692 The Contractor would locate noise-emitting stationary equipment (for example, compressors, and
1693 generators) to avoid unnecessary impacts on residents and businesses. (Contractor, NDOT PM)

1694 3.10 Historic Properties

1695 An evaluation of the potential for cultural resources was completed in support of the Project. Cultural
1696 resources include a broad pattern of tangible and/or intangible evidence of past or present human
1697 lifeways and/or practices. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended,
1698 (NHPA) and implementing regulations at 36 CFR 800(1)(a), requires projects using federal land, funds,
1699 or permitting to consider any effects a proposed action may have on historic properties. A historic
1700 property is a property listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).
1701 Historic property types include buildings, structures, objects, archeological sites, and districts. A
1702 cultural resource is a historic property if the property is 50 years old or older and possesses
1703 significance in one or more of these criteria:

- 1704 • **Criterion A:** Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad
1705 pattern of history.
- 1706 • **Criterion B:** Is associated with the lives of persons significant in the past.
- 1707 • **Criterion C:** Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of
1708 construction, or represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values, or

1709 represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual
1710 distinction.
1711 • **Criterion D:** Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or pre-
1712 history.

1713 A historic property must also retain sufficient integrity to convey its NRHP significance. For the NRHP,
1714 there are seven aspects of integrity: location; design; setting; materials; workmanship; feeling; and
1715 association.

1716 3.10.1 Affected Environment

1717 The historic properties study area is known as the Area of Potential Effects (APE). The APE for Section
1718 106 purposes is defined at 36 CFR 800.16(d) as the geographic area or areas within which an action
1719 may directly or indirectly cause alterations in the character or use of historic properties, if any such
1720 properties exist. The APE for this project was identified in consultation with NDOT. A narrative of the
1721 APE and maps depicting the APE are included in **Appendix F, Historic Properties**.

1722 An evaluation of the potential for archeological resources within the APE was completed in March
1723 2024 by Brian Goodrich. An evaluation of the potential for architectural and structural resources within
1724 the APE was completed by Historic Resources Group, Inc. (HRG) in February 2024. The evaluation for
1725 cultural resources did not identify any archeological historic properties present within the APE. The
1726 evaluation for cultural resources identified nineteen architectural historic properties present within the
1727 APE. Of those nineteen properties, two buildings are individually listed in the NRHP:

1728 **MK02-007, FN90 Heber Hord House:** The Heber Hord House is a large two and a half story
1729 foursquare with a full-width front porch extending to a porte-cochere. The house was listed in
1730 the NRHP in 1987. The house is significant under criteria A and B for the significance of the
1731 Hord Family and as a center for agribusiness in Merrick County. The nomination includes the
1732 residence shown below and the former carriage house, now a five-car garage with upper-level
1733 apartment. The boundaries of the property include the legal lot associated with the residence.

1734 **MK02-008, FN 167 Martha Ellen Auditorium/State Theatre:** The State Theatre was listed in the
1735 NRHP in 1988 as the Martha Ellen Auditorium. The auditorium is significant under criterion A
1736 for its contribution to the performing arts in Nebraska. The boundaries of the property include
1737 the legal lot associated with the property.

1738 Other properties surveyed and recommended NRHP eligible:

1739 **820 D Avenue, FN209:** This large foursquare style residence is a full two-and-a-half stories
1740 with a shallow pyramidal roof and full-width projecting front porch. The porch is supported by
1741 truncated battered columns. Shallow through dormer windows project from the roof
1742 configuration. Stepped knee walls flank either side of the off-center stair accessing the front
1743 door and porch. This property is recommended NRHP eligible under criterion C for its
1744 architectural merit. The boundaries of the property include the legal lot associated with the
1745 building.

1746 **1819 17th Avenue, MK02-058, FN145:** This two-and-a-half foursquare residence has a steeply
1747 pitched pyramidal roof punctuated by flared eaves. A flared eave through dormer punctuates
1748 the roof on the main façade. A corner entry porch projects adjacent to an enclosed sunroom
1749 on the main façade. A floating oriel type window on the north façade provides visual interest to
1750 the relatively plain elevation. This property is recommended NRHP eligible under criterion C
1751 for its architectural merit, typifying the style. The boundaries of the property include the legal
1752 lot associated with the building.

1753 **1606 18th Street, FN 148:** This two-and-a-half story Victorian Era Queen Anne style residence
1754 has a steeply pitched cross gable roofline. A small steep pyramidal truncated tower projects
1755 from the crotch of the cross gables. The tower has a Palladian style window and ornamental
1756 turned brackets. A sloping roof covers the full-width and wrap around front porch. The porch
1757 has a pedimented center entry point supported by round columns with turned Ionic capitals.
1758 The porch corner projects out to a round gazebo type structure, fully supported by the round
1759 columns. Diamond shingles clad the steep gable ends with horizontal cladding at the base of
1760 the residence. This property is recommended NRHP eligible under criterion C in the area of
1761 architecture. The boundaries of the property include the legal lot associated with the building.

1762 **1801 17th Avenue, MK02-59, FN 143 Presbyterian Church:** The Presbyterian Church was
1763 identified in the Merrick County survey as an eligible property. The square building has a
1764 rounded apse and a symmetrical classically inspired main façade. A rusticated banded
1765 elevated water table demarcates the first-floor entrance with a banded cornice line
1766 emphasizing the square form of the building. This property is recommended NRHP eligible
1767 under criterion C for its architectural merit. The boundaries of the property include the legal lot
1768 associated with the building.

1769 **1606 and 1608 17th Street, FN142:** This two-story clipped gable barn was the original fire
1770 station for Central City. Two vehicle entrances with overhead doors are located on the main
1771 façade. A long bay of single-story vehicle storage extends south of the building and is
1772 accessed by the adjacent alley. The historic photo below is taken from the History of Merrick
1773 County. The building is eligible under criterion A for its contribution to the service development
1774 of Central City. The boundaries of the property include the legal lot associated with the
1775 building.

1776 **1617 16th Street, FN105:** The two-story commercial building on 16th Street is part of the
1777 downtown core of Central City. The property is located along Highway 30. Its brick façade has
1778 three storefronts each sheltered by a canvas awning. The single row of second story
1779 fenestration is also covered by awnings. Stepped brick detailing and a projecting cornice
1780 ornament the elevation. A name block states "Lucile 1915." This building is recommended
1781 NRHP eligible under criterion A for its contribution to commerce in Central City. The
1782 boundaries of the property include the legal lot associated with the building.

1783 **1607 16th Street, MK02-069, FN104:** The property at 1607 16th Street is a simple two-story
1784 brick façade with contrasting name block at the center of the cornice area that states
1785 "Kombrink 1936". The unornamented façade has one off-center recessed entry store front
1786 along with a pedestrian entrance accessing second floor space. Fenestration on the second
1787 floor is paired across the façade. Canvas awnings shelter the entirety of the storefront and
1788 each second-story window. This building is recommended NRHP eligible under criterion A for
1789 its contribution to commerce in Central City. The boundaries of the property include the legal
1790 lot associated with the building.

1791 **1601 16th Street, FN103:** The property at 1601 16th Street is another two-story brick
1792 commercial building. This property has a stepped façade with shield cartouche in the center
1793 with contrasting color cornice cap. The corner building has wrap around storefront and
1794 secondary entrance on the east elevation. Windows and storefront are both sheltered with
1795 canvas awnings. This building is recommended NRHP eligible under criterion A for its
1796 contribution to commerce in Central City. The boundaries of the property include the legal lot
1797 associated with the building.

1798 **MK02-175, FN 91, Merrick Hotel:** The Merrick Hotel is a three-story Italianate brick commercial
1799 property. The building has detailed window caps and a project applied cornice line. The
1800 building has some windows enclosed, but given its age, form and style it is recommended

1801 eligible under criterion C as an early commercial building and criterion A for its contribution to
1802 the commercial development of downtown Central City. Associated with the building is a
1803 textured concrete block carriage house. The boundaries of the property include the legal lot
1804 associated with the building.

1805 **1512 16th Street, MK02-176, FN176 U.S. Post Office:** The U.S. Post Office in Central City is a
1806 simple square building with classically inspired details. The main entrance is surrounded by
1807 four pilasters supporting the nameplate. Multi-light double hung windows are evenly spaced
1808 throughout the façade. It was designed in the Federal Style by James Wetmore and built in
1809 1927. The building is recommended eligible under criterion C for its architectural merit as well
1810 as criterion A for its contribution to the US Postal system and development of government
1811 systems in Central City. The boundaries of the property include the legal lot associated with
1812 the building.

1813 **1510 16th Avenue, MK02-171, FN106:** This two-story brick building is located along the
1814 railroad tracks and retains a canted footprint to follow the right-of-way. The building was used
1815 for an automotive garage and remains in that function today. An interior auto elevator remains
1816 in usable condition today. Spans of multi-light steel windows extend across the main elevation
1817 with canvas awnings sheltering the display windows and pedestrian entrance. The trapezoidal
1818 shaped building follows the lot line defined the adjacent rail tracks. Large banks of industrial
1819 multi-pane steel windows and overhead garage doors remain on the main façade. This
1820 building is recommended eligible under criterion C for its architectural merit and criterion A as
1821 an example of the commercial construction associated with the historic Lincoln Highway. The
1822 boundaries of the property include the legal lot associated with the building.

1823 **1203 15th Street, MK02-026, FN 52:** This two-story concrete block building is located within
1824 the visual APE on the east side of the railroad tracks. The residence has a shallow side gable
1825 with small, centered, gable end dormer window. The most defining feature, aside from the
1826 construction materials, is the full-width, two-story front porch with concrete railings. It is
1827 identified in the Merrick County survey as the William Edgar House. This building is
1828 recommended NRHP eligible under criterion C in the area of architecture for its distinctive
1829 style and design materials. The boundaries of the property include the legal lot associated
1830 with the building.

1831 **219 E Street, MK02-069, FN203:** The property at 219 "E" Street is a two-and-half-story Victorian
1832 Era Queen Anne residence. The residence has a steeply pitched complex roofline with a
1833 rounded turret and projecting tripartite second floor bay window. A full-width wrap-around
1834 porch is supported by paired rounded columns at either side of the entrance and single
1835 columns throughout the remainder of the porch. No porch rail or balustrade is present. This
1836 building is recommended NRHP eligible under criterion C for its architectural merit. The
1837 boundaries of the property include the legal lot associated with the building.

1838 **211 E Street, MK02-70, FN204, Isaac Traver House:** The Isaac Traver House is currently
1839 operating as the Merrick County Museum. The two-story Italianate residence has a shallow
1840 hipped roof with widows walk at the crest. A two-story partial-width centered project porch is
1841 supported by turned posts and ornate geometric balustrade. The overhanging eaves retain
1842 ornamental scrolled brackets. Fenestration on the main façade consists of paired one-over-
1843 one units. This residence is recommended NRHP eligible under criterion C for its architectural
1844 merit. The boundaries of the property include the legal lot associated with the building.

1845 **1502 15th Avenue, MK02-205, FN 84:** This 1 ½ story bungalow has a complex gable front roof
1846 line with overhanging eaves and brackets. A recessed central front porch has an
1847 asymmetrical façade with a single battered column supported by a stucco post. This
1848 residence is credited to Chadwick as builder. This building is eligible under criterion C for its

1849 architectural merit and as a representative of the bungalow building tradition in Central City
1850 associated with builder Jay Chadwick. It was built in 1921 for John Naylor. The boundaries of
1851 the property include the legal lot associated with the building.

1852 **1625 17th Street, FN132:** This one-story building is constructed of light-colored brick with
1853 contrasting colored lighter brick surrounding windows and doors. Glass block windows on the
1854 south wide and an original corner sign are some of the only punctuation on the stark modern
1855 building. It was constructed in 1957 for the Grand Lodge A.F. and A. M. of Nebraska. Today it
1856 remains a Masonic Temple used by the Lone Tree Lodge 36 A.F. & A.M. This building is
1857 recommended NRHP eligible under criterion A in the area of social/organizational as a
1858 fraternal hall. The boundaries of the property include the legal lot associated with the building.

1859 **1720 12th Street, MK02-114, FN210:** This one-story clapboard bungalow has a distinctive
1860 cross-gable roofline. The applied detail in brackets and stick-work connects the overhanging
1861 eaves with the body of the house and provides a unique geometric framework appearance to
1862 the façade. A partial width off-center project front porch is supported by two square battered
1863 columns. This residence is attributed to Jay Chadwick and contributes to the bungalow
1864 building tradition present in Central City. It was built for Dick Brown in 1924. It is
1865 recommended eligible under criterion C for its architectural merit. The boundaries of the
1866 property include the legal lot associated with the building.

1867 As part of the public open house meeting held on November 18, 2021, the following consulting parties
1868 were invited to attend:

- 1869 • SHPO
- 1870 • Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma
- 1871 • Central City
- 1872 • Merrick County Historical Society
- 1873 • Nebraska Central Railroad Company
- 1874 • Union Pacific Railroad

1875 On June 27, 2024, the consulting parties listed below were invited to comment on NRHP identification,
1876 evaluation, and project effects:

- 1877 • Arapaho Tribe of the Wind River Reservation, Wyoming
- 1878 • Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, Oklahoma
- 1879 • Northern Cheyenne Tribe of the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation, Montana
- 1880 • Oglala Sioux Tribe
- 1881 • Otoe-Missouria Tribe of Indians, Oklahoma
- 1882 • Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma
- 1883 • Rosebud Sioux Tribe of the Rosebud Indian Reservation, South Dakota
- 1884 • Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold reservation, North Dakota
- 1885 • Yankton Sioux Tribe of South Dakota
- 1886 • Merrick County
- 1887 • Central City
- 1888 • Merrick County Historical Society
- 1889 • United Postal Service (USPS)
- 1890 • Union Pacific Railroad
- 1891 • Rio Grande Pacific Railroad
- 1892 • Christopher & Kristen Fasbender
- 1893 • Rentovators
- 1894 • Travis & Gary Maresh
- 1895 • Merrick Medical Center Foundation
- 1896 • Lone Tree Lodge AF & AM

1897 The USPS concurred with the findings on July 8, 2024 and the Northern Cheyenne Tribe of the
1898 Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation, MT concurred with the findings of no historic properties
1899 affected on July 24, 2024.

1900 The 30-day comment period expired without receiving responses from the remaining consulting
1901 parties. This coordination can be found in **Appendix F, Historic Properties**.

1902 3.10.2 Impacts of the No Build Alternative

1903 There would be no construction of the Project, or use of temporary detours, with the No Build
1904 Alternative. As a result, there would be no impacts on the properties listed above beyond those needed
1905 to complete routine roadway and bridge maintenance activities.

1906 3.10.3 Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

1907 Nineteen historic properties were identified within the APE, but these properties will not be affected by
1908 the project as proposed. FHWA has determined that no historic properties will be affected by the
1909 proposed project and has made a project effects determination of *no historic properties affected*. A
1910 summary of the potential to affect each eligible/listed property is below in **Table 3.9**.

1911 **Table 3.9 Effects to Historic Properties**

Historic Property Identified Within APE	Project Effects to Historic Property
MK02-007 (1505 16 th St)	None. Existing US-30/16 th St will be reconstructed in front of the property, as will the existing sidewalk and curb ramps and the existing driveway apron.
MK02-008 (706 C Ave)	None. Existing US-30/G St and C Ave will be reconstructed in front of the property, as will the existing sidewalk and curb ramps.
FN209 (820 D St)	None. No construction activity nearby.
MK02-058 (1819 17 th Ave)	None. No construction activity nearby.
FN148 (1606 18 th St)	None. No construction activity nearby.
MK02-059 (1801 17 th Ave)	None. Construction activity adjacent to the property include reconstruction of existing curb ramp at the NW corner of 17 th Ave and 18 th St, along with a small amount of parking adjacent to the curb ramp on 18 th .
FN142 (Parcel ID: 002896.00, 1608 17 th St)	None. No construction activity nearby.
FN105 (1611- 1617 16 th St)	None. Existing US-30/16 th St will be reconstructed in front of the property, as will the existing sidewalk and curb ramps.
MK02-069 (1607 16 th St)	None. Existing US-30/16 th St will be reconstructed in front of the property, as will the existing sidewalk and curb ramps.
FN103	None. Existing US-30/16 th St will be reconstructed in front of the property, as will the existing sidewalk and curb ramps.
MK02-175 (1525 16 th St)	None. Existing US-30/16 th St will be reconstructed in front of the property, as will the existing sidewalk and curb ramps.
MK02-176 (1512 16 th St)	None. Existing US-30/16 th St will be reconstructed in front of the property, as will the existing sidewalk and curb ramps.
MK02-171 (1510 16 th Ave)	None. No construction activity nearby; this property is located some distance from the viaduct and existing visual blockages in the landscape prohibit any views of the new viaduct.

Historic Property Identified Within APE	Project Effects to Historic Property
MK02-026 (1203 15 th St)	None. Included in visual APE for viaduct. Property faces away from viaduct and deciduous trees, grain elevators and other industrial railroad buildings will obstruct the view of the new viaduct from the historic property.
MK02-069 (219 E St)	None. Included in APE for visual effects relative to proposed pedestrian crossing which has since been removed from the proposed project.
MK02-070 (211 E St)	None. Included in APE for visual effects relative to proposed pedestrian crossing which has since been removed from the proposed project.
MK02-205 (1502 15 th Ave)	None. No construction activity nearby; this property is located some distance from the viaduct and existing visual blockages in the landscape prohibit any views of the new viaduct.
FN132 (1625 17 th St)	None. The project will reconstruct the existing sidewalk and the curb will be moved so that the large transmission poles will not be located in the street pavement. New curb ramps will be installed.
MK02-114 (1720 12 th St)	None. Included in visual APE for viaduct which will not be visible from this property.

1912 **3.10.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation**

1913 The following mitigation commitments have been identified for the project and will be addressed
1914 during Final Design and subsequent phases of the project:

1915 **Commitments:**

1916 Seven Sensitive Areas have been identified along this project:

- 1917 1) House, 1819 17th Ave, N-14, MM 81.48 – 81.50, east side
- 1918 2) Presbyterian Church, 1801 17th Ave, N-14, MM 81.53 – 81.56, east side
- 1919 3) Grand Lodge, 1625 17th St, N-14, MM 81.67 – 81.69, east side
- 1920 4) State Theatre, 706 C Ave, US-30, MM 337.58 – 337.60, south side and on C Ave, building face,
1921 west side of C Ave
- 1922 5) Commercial Buildings, 1601 – 1615 16th St, US-30, MM 337.60 – 337.63, north side
- 1923 6) Lincoln Manor Bar and Grill and Heber Hord House, 1525 16th St and 1505 16th St, US-30, MM
1924 337.64 - 337.70, north side
- 1925 7) US Post Office, 1512 16th St, US-30, MM 337.64 – 337.67, south side

1926 These Sensitive Area(s) shall be indicated on project plans. (Design)

1927 -----

- 1928 Seven Sensitive Areas have been identified along this project:
- 1929 1) House, 1819 17th Ave, N-14, MM 81.48 – 81.50, east side
- 1930 2) Presbyterian Church, 1801 17th Ave, N-14, MM 81.53 – 81.56, east side
- 1931 3) Grand Lodge, 1625 17th St, N-14, MM 81.67 – 81.69, east side
- 1932 4) State Theatre, 706 C Ave, US-30, MM 337.58 – 337.60, south side and on C Ave, building face,
- 1933 west side of C Ave
- 1934 5) Commercial Buildings, 1601 – 1615 16th St, US-30, MM 337.60 – 337.63, north side
- 1935 6) Lincoln Manor Bar and Grill and Heber Hord House, 1525 16th St and 1505 16th St, US-30, MM
- 1936 337.64 – 337.70, north side
- 1937 7) US Post Office, 1512 16th St, US-30, MM 337.64 – 337.67, south side
- 1938 No grading or project activities, including but not limited to, working, staging, borrowing, stockpiling, or
- 1939 storing material and/or equipment, shall occur within the boundary of the Sensitive Area(s).
- 1940 (Contractor)
- 1941 -----
- 1942 Sensitive Areas corresponding to historic building(s) have been identified on this project:
- 1943 1) House, 1819 17th Ave, N-14, MM 81.48 – 81.50, east side
- 1944 2) Presbyterian Church, 1801 17th Ave, N-14, MM 81.53 – 81.56, east side
- 1945 3) Grand Lodge, 1625 17th St, N-14, MM 81.67 – 81.69, east side
- 1946 4) State Theatre, 706 C Ave, US-30, MM 337.58 – 337.60, south side and on C Ave, building face,
- 1947 west side of C Ave
- 1948 5) Commercial Buildings, 1601 – 1615 16th St, US-30, MM 337.60 – 337.63, north side
- 1949 6) Lincoln Manor Bar and Grill and Heber Hord House, 1525 16th St and 1505 16th St, US-30, MM
- 1950 337.64 - 337.70, north side
- 1951 7) US Post Office, 1512 16th St, US-30, MM 337.64 – 337.67, south side
- 1952 Concrete sidewalks adjacent to historic buildings shall be removed by sawing and lifting; the use of a
- 1953 jackhammer of any type or size shall not be permitted per Section 601 of the Standard Specifications.
- 1954 When installing new concrete sidewalks adjacent to the historic properties, Section 1015.01 – 1015.04
- 1955 of the Standard Specifications shall be followed. (Contractor)
- 1956 -----
- 1957 Sensitive Areas corresponding to historic building(s) have been identified on this project:
- 1958 1) House, 1819 17th Ave, N-14, MM 81.48 – 81.50, east side
- 1959 2) Presbyterian Church, 1801 17th Ave, N-14, MM 81.53 – 81.56, east side
- 1960 3) Grand Lodge, 1625 17th St, N-14, MM 81.67 – 81.69, east side
- 1961 4) State Theatre, 706 C Ave, US-30, MM 337.58 – 337.60, south side and on C Ave, building face,
- 1962 west side of C Ave
- 1963 5) Commercial Buildings, 1601 – 1615 16th St, US-30, MM 337.60 – 337.63, north side
- 1964 6) Lincoln Manor Bar and Grill and Heber Hord House, 1525 16th St and 1505 16th St, US-30, MM
- 1965 337.64 - 337.70, north side
- 1966 7) US Post Office, 1512 16th St, US-30, MM 337.64 – 337.67, south side
- 1967 Any construction activities, materials, or pay items added to a project after letting that would occur
- 1968 adjacent to a historic building identified as a Sensitive Area in the plans or green sheet shall be
- 1969 reviewed by the NDOT Environmental Section. (NDOT District 4 Construction Project Manager)

1970 **3.11 Section 4(f) Properties**

1971 Section 4(f) of the US Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 USC 303) provides special
1972 protection for **publicly owned parks and recreational lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and**
1973 **significant public or private historic properties**. An impact, either direct or indirect, on one of these
1974 resources is considered a "use." A "use" of a Section 4(f) resource, as defined in 23 CFR 774.17,
1975 occurs: (1) when land is permanently incorporated into a transportation facility, (2) when there is a
1976 temporary occupancy of land that is adverse in terms of the statute's preservationist purpose, or (3)
1977 when there is a "constructive" (that is, indirect) use of land. The Project alternatives were evaluated
1978 based on impacts on Section 4(f) resources identified within the Study Area.

1979 **3.11.1 Affected Environment**

1980 Five resources were studied as Section 4(f) properties. These include Central Park, North Park, Kernel
1981 Field, Central City Elementary School, and the Dark Island Trail (see **Figure 3.1**).

1982 As discussed in **Section 3.6 Community Impact Assessment**, there are five recreational properties
1983 within the Study Area: Central Park, North Park, Kernel Field, Central City Elementary School, and the
1984 Dark Island Trail.

1985 **Central Park** contains a playground, tennis courts, a skate park, pavilions, green space, and a
1986 basketball court and is located one block south of US-30. The park is bounded by 17th Street
1987 to the north, 20th Street to the south, and 13th Avenue to the east. The Dark Island Trail
1988 passes through Central Park. Central Park is a recreational property and is always open for
1989 public use and falls under Section 4(f) protection.

1990 **North Park** is located at the intersection of D Avenue and B Street, 1500 feet northwest of US-
1991 30. The park features a practice baseball field, shelters, and horseshoe pits, along with
1992 greenspace and picnic tables. North Park is a recreational property and is always open for
1993 public use and falls under Section 4(f) protection.

1994 **Kernel Field** is located on the northwest corner of 10th Street and 20th Avenue, 1,100 feet
1995 west of N-14. Kernel Field consists of a baseball field, indoor batting cages, public art displays,
1996 and concession facilities. Kernel field is open to the public when not in use for scheduled
1997 activities and falls under Section 4(f) protection.

1998 **Central City Elementary School** playgrounds are located on the north and south sides of the
1999 school property. The north playground is located at the southwest corner of 14th Avenue and
2000 17th Street, one block south of US-30, and the south playground is located along the north
2001 side of 19th Street between 14th and 15th Avenues. The playgrounds are open for public use
2002 when not in use by the school and fall under Section 4(f) protection.

2003 **Dark Island Trail** is located between 14th and 13th Avenues along the former NCRC Railroad
2004 track starting at US-30 and extending south. The property for this trail was purchased by the
2005 City of Central City in 2014 and the trail was constructed in phases over the next several years.
2006 The trail is maintained by Central City to one mile south of town. At the L Road parking lot,
2007 ownership and maintenance changes to the Platte People Education Environment Recreation
2008 (PEER) Group. The entire trail is approximately 8 miles long, extending from the south side of
2009 US-30 to just south of Marquette, NE. The trail is a recreational property and is always open for
2010 public use and falls under Section 4(f) protection.

2011 The NDOT Section 4(f) Initial Assessment Form, which describes the potential Section 4(f) resources
2012 in the area and how they were identified and evaluated, is provided in **Appendix G, Section 4(f)**
2013 **Properties**.

2014 **3.11.2 Impacts of the No Build Alternative**

2015 There would be no construction of the Project with the No Build Alternative. As a result, there would be
2016 no impacts on the properties listed above beyond those needed to complete routine roadway and
2017 bridge maintenance activities.

2018 **3.11.3 Impacts of the Preferred Alternative**

2019 The Preferred Alternative would require the temporary occupancy of 100 square feet of the north end
2020 of the Dark Island Trail where it meets US-30. The closure would be for user safety and minor material
2021 staging only. No alterations would be made to the trail and the area would be restored to pre-
2022 construction condition or better following construction. During construction, the rest of the trail will
2023 remain open to the public and continue to operate normally. Access to the trail will be maintained
2024 from the Fox Theater parking lot and the Central Park parking lot. The Fox Theater parking area is
2025 currently the access point listed on the trail website. A Temporary Occupancy Exception was applied
2026 for the Dark Island Trail. Documentation can be found in **Appendix G**.

2027 No temporary easements or other property acquisitions are proposed for Central Park, North Park,
2028 Kernel Field, or Central City Elementary School. Access to all four properties would be maintained at all
2029 times.

2030 **3.11.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation**

2031 Temporary occupancy of 100 square feet of the Dark Island Trail is proposed. The current alignment
2032 and design reduced the impacts to a safety closure and material staging only.

2033 There would be no use of the remaining Section 4(f) properties as they are outside of the limits of
2034 construction and have no potential to be impacted. Specifically, construction would not impact these
2035 properties, property rights would not be required, and access would not be restricted.

2036 **Commitments:**

2037 The contractor shall not complete work, stage, stockpile or store materials within the boundaries of
2038 the following Section 4(f) properties: Central City Elementary School, Central Park, North Park or
2039 Kernel Field. If it is determined that temporary or permanent right-of-way is required from or access is
2040 restricted to a Section 4(f) property, coordination shall occur with NDOT Environmental. (Contractor)

2041 The following properties shall be marked on the project plans as sensitive areas: Central City
2042 Elementary School, Central Park, North Park, Kernel Field. (Design)

2043 The contractor shall not complete work, stage, stockpile, or store materials within the boundaries of
2044 The Dark Island Trail beyond the limits of construction. (Contractor)

2045 Following construction, the area of temporary easement would be restored to a similar if not improved
2046 state as before the construction. (Contractor)

2047 **3.12 Hazardous Materials**

2048 Hazardous materials, defined as substances that, because of their quantity, concentration, or physical,
2049 chemical, or infectious characteristics, may present a threat to public health or the environment.

2050 Hazardous materials are regulated by EPA and other federal and state agencies under the Toxic
2051 Substances Control Act of 1976 (15 USC 2601 et seq.); the Comprehensive Environmental Response,
2052 Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 USC 9601 et seq.); the Resource Conservation and
2053 Recovery Act of 1976 (RCRA; 42 USC 6901 et seq.); the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization
2054 Act of 1986; and the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986 (40 CFR 355).

2055 RCRA gives EPA the authority to control hazardous waste from “cradle to grave.” This includes the
2056 generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste. RCRA also set forth a
2057 framework for the management of non-hazardous solid waste. The 1986 amendments to RCRA
2058 enabled EPA to address environmental problems that could result from underground tanks storing
2059 petroleum and other hazardous substances. Nebraska Administrative Code Title 128, Nebraska
2060 Hazardous Waste Regulations regulates hazardous wastes in the state.

2061 3.12.1 Affected Environment

2062 A Hazardous Materials Review (HMR) was prepared in 2023 to identify environmental concerns
2063 associated with hazardous materials and petroleum products which could potentially be encountered
2064 during the construction project. The HMR included the review of the Nebraska Department of
2065 Environment and Energy (NDEE) Interactive Mapping System (IMS), Environmental Protection Agency
2066 (EPA) Enviromapper website, Nebraska State Fire Marshal (SFM) underground storage tank (UST)
2067 database, review of historical records, reviewing US Geological Survey topographic maps and historic
2068 aerial photography, an inquiry to the Central City Fire Department, a visual reconnaissance, and a
2069 subsurface investigation.

2070 A visual reconnaissance was conducted on June 22, 2023 to assess the Study Area for potential
2071 hazardous materials concerns associated with current land use and observable site activities. The
2072 visual reconnaissance identified two current gas stations, commercial and municipal facilities with
2073 UST/LUST history, the Aurora Cooperative facility and Nebraska Central Railroad Co. (NCRC) short
2074 line, a Central City electrical substation, the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) corridor, the Central City
2075 FMGP site, a city well house, and UPRR AST. The visual reconnaissance did not identify any issues
2076 that would negatively influence the project.

2077 In 2024, NDOT reviewed and approved the HMR utilizing their latest guidance and the current project
2078 description. The results are summarized in the HMR Professionally Qualified Staff (PQS) Memo
2079 (**Appendix H, Hazardous Materials**) and are presented below.

2080 **Medium potential sites:**

2081 **FMGP Central City, 1224 12th St.:** The Central City FMGP is located at 1224 12th Street
2082 just east of the southern approach of the proposed UPRR viaduct. The site is currently a
2083 land parcel owned by the City of Central City with a residence located thereon. Phase II
2084 subsurface assessment was conducted, and the boring located along the eastern FMGP
2085 parcel boundary (the furthest distance from the proposed UPRR viaduct location) was
2086 contaminated with SVOCs including significant levels of Naphthalene in soil and
2087 groundwater. The exact location of the proposed UPRR viaduct just west of the FMGP
2088 land parcel, and the limits or depths of excavations required for the project, has not been
2089 determined to date. However, local and regional groundwater flow is to the east-northeast
2090 along the Platte River Valley. The Central City FMGP site is identified as having Medium
2091 Potential to impact the project.

2092 **Low potential sites:**

2093 Low potential sites, along with medium potential sites are identified in **Table 3.10**, with additional
2094 details provided in **Appendix H**. **Figure 3.1** shows the locations of these sites.

2095 **Table 3.10 Hazardous Materials Sites in the Study Area**

Facility Name	Location	Facility Status	Potential to Impact	Distance Relative to Project
FMGP Central City	1224 12 th Street Central City, NE	Former coal gas site, FMGP site, Brownfields	Medium	Adjacent
Cenex Convenience Store (Former Bosselman Oil)	1310 16 th Street Central City, NE	UST, LUST, historical auto service	Low	Adjacent
Stewart Auto (Former Central Conoco)	1403 16 th Street Central City, NE	UST, LUST, historical auto service	Low	Adjacent
Central City Mall (Former Central City Cleaners)	1416 16 th Street Central City, NE	Historical dry cleaners, UST, LUST, historical auto service	Low	Adjacent
Central City Public Library	1506 16 th Street Central City, NE	UST, LUST	Low	Adjacent
Former Fowler's Dry Cleaning	1614 16 th Street Central City, NE	Historical dry cleaners	Low	Adjacent
Citizen's Bank	1634 16 th Street Central City, NE	UST, LUST	Low	Adjacent
Archer Credit Union (Former Mustard Oil)	510 G Street Central City, NE	UST, LUST, historical auto service	Low	150' west
Dairy Queen (Former Casey's)	519 G Street Central City, NE	UST, LUST, historical auto service	Low	300' west
Aurora Cooperative	13 th St. & 13 th Ave. Central City, NE	LAST	Low	Adjacent
Dark Island Trail	16 th St. & 13 th Ave. Central City, NE	Brownfields	Low	700' south

2096 ¹ LST = Leaking Storage Tank; UST = Underground Storage Tank, LUST = Leaking Underground Storage Tank, LAST = Leaking
2097 Above Ground Storage Tank, FMGP = Former Manufactured Gas Plant

2098 **3.12.2 Impacts of the No Build Alternative**

2099 The No Build Alternative does not involve any new right-of-way or construction activities other than
2100 general maintenance to existing roadways. As a result, the No Build Alternative does not have any
2101 effect to or from any known hazardous materials sites.

2102 **3.12.3 Impacts of the Preferred Alternative**

2103 Eleven hazardous material sites were identified that could impact the project.

2104 Based on the site reconnaissance observations, historical review, regulatory file review, current
2105 regulatory status, interviews, and the proposed scope of work; there is a low potential for
2106 contamination in soil and/or groundwater to be encountered during construction of the proposed
2107 project corridor along 16th Street, G Street, and the N-14 access connection to the proposed UPRR
2108 viaduct in Central City, pertaining to known contaminated sites (UST/LUST, historical auto, historical
2109 dry cleaners).

2110 There is a medium potential for contamination in soil and/or groundwater to be encountered during
2111 construction of the proposed viaduct spanning the UPRR corridor with regards to the Central City
2112 Former Manufactured Gas Plant (FMGP) that is located just east of the project footprint, dependent on
2113 depth of excavation and project limits at that location.

2114 It is recommended that no further investigation is necessary. A Medium Potential Commitment would
2115 be required. Any building structures to be demolished would require inspections for asbestos and
2116 there is the potential need for toxic metal/lead paint disposal.

2117 3.12.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation

2118 **Commitments:**

2119 The following commitments are needed for the preferred alternative. The specific “Contractor
2120 Commitments” are those that would be included in the contract documents and provide more basic
2121 information for field personnel. All commitments below are included in **Chapter 5**.

2122 **Unexpected Waste:**

2123 If contaminated soils/groundwater or unexpected wastes are discovered, The Contractor shall stop all
2124 work within the immediate area. The Contractor shall secure the area of the discovery and notify the
2125 NDOT Highway Project Manager (HPM). The Contractor shall not re-enter the discovery area until
2126 notified by the HPM. At the time of discovery, the HPM and Contractor shall utilize the NDOT
2127 Unexpected Waste Action Plan (UWAP) to coordinate appropriate actions. The actions to be carried
2128 out by the HPM are (but not limited to): verification that the Contractor has suspended construction
2129 activities in the area of the discovery, contact the Environmental Section Manager and make an entry
2130 into Site Manager that an unexpected waste discovery was made. The HPM shall then utilize the
2131 UWAP Notification Form (NDOT Form 691) to properly document the extent and type of waste. The
2132 HPM will ensure that proper disposal of the waste and any required health and safety mitigation is
2133 implemented by the Contractor. The Contractor is required by NDOT's Standard Specification section
2134 107.11 (Hazardous Material Discoveries) to handle and dispose of regulated material in accordance
2135 with applicable laws.

2136 Contractor Commitment: If contaminated soils/groundwater or unexpected wastes are discovered,
2137 The Contractor shall stop all work within the immediate area. The Contractor shall limit access to
2138 authorized personnel within the area of the discovery and notify the NDOT Highway Project Manager
2139 (HPM). The Contractor shall not re-enter the discovery area until notified by the HPM. At the time of
2140 discovery, the HPM and Contractor shall utilize the NDOT Unexpected Waste Action Plan (UWAP) to
2141 coordinate appropriate actions. The Contractor is required by NDOT's Standard Specification section
2142 107.11 (Hazardous Material Discoveries) to handle and dispose of regulated material in accordance
2143 with applicable laws.

2144 **Medium Potential Commitment:**

2145 There is a medium potential for FMGP contamination to be present in the soils/groundwater at project
2146 Central City Viaduct (CN 42013). One location identified below will have a medium potential for
2147 contamination to impact the project:

2148 **Central City Gas Plant (1224 12 Street):** Potential for SVOC contamination of soil and
2149 groundwater.

2150 The Contractor shall be aware of the possibility of encountering contamination in this area during
2151 construction activities and look for signs such as odor and/or discolored soil. The NDOT Highway
2152 Project Manager shall be notified seven days prior to when construction is expected to begin in the
2153 suspect area. If contamination is discovered, all work in the immediate area shall be stopped until the
2154 Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) and NDOT are notified, and a materials
2155 management plan has been developed and approved. The Contractor shall manage the waste in
2156 accordance with Title 132, Nebraska Integrated Solid Waste Regulation and Title 128, Nebraska
2157 Hazardous Waste Regulations. The Contractor is required by Standard Specification Section 107,
2158 Legal Relations and Responsibilities, to handle and dispose of contaminated material in accordance
2159 with applicable laws.

2160 **Asbestos:**

2161 The Contractor shall survey structures/buildings located at 1303 14th Street, 1312 13th Road, and the
2162 brick building at GPS coordinates 41.117415, -97.996558 for the presence or absence of asbestos
2163 containing material (ACM). The inspector must be certified in accordance with the Nebraska
2164 Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Nebraska Asbestos Control Program Regulations,
2165 Title 178. A list of Licensed Asbestos Inspectors can be found at:
2166 <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Asbestos.aspx>. Documentation of the survey shall be provided to the NDOT
2167 Highway Project Manager by the Contractor prior to structure demolition. The Highway Project
2168 Manager will record survey documentation in OnBase.

2169 If ACM is found to be present, removal and disposal of the ACM shall be in accordance with DHHS
2170 Nebraska Asbestos Control Program Regulations, Title 178 and will occur prior to any bridge
2171 demolition or renovation activities. The Contractor shall develop a removal and disposal plan in
2172 coordination with a licensed asbestos removal contractor and NDOT. A list of licensed asbestos
2173 removal contractors can be found at: <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Asbestos.aspx>

2174 Contractor Commitment: The Contractor shall survey structure(s) located at 1303 14th St., 1312 13th
2175 Rd., and the brick building at GPS coordinates 41.117415, -97.996558 for the presence or absence of
2176 asbestos containing material (ACM). The Contractor's inspector must be certified in accordance with
2177 the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Nebraska Asbestos Control
2178 Program Regulations, Title 178. If ACM is found to be present, the Contractor shall develop a removal
2179 and disposal plan in coordination with a licensed asbestos removal contractor.

2180 **Building Removal:**

2181 (Taken from Standard Specifications for Highway Construction 2017 Section 203.01; paragraph 4.)

2182 a. It shall be the responsibility of the Contractor to determine if any of the buildings to be
2183 removed have materials containing asbestos. If it is determined that some or all of the
2184 buildings contain asbestos, the asbestos shall be removed prior to the building removal. All
2185 asbestos shall be removed in accordance with State of Nebraska Health and Human Services
2186 Department, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Nebraska Department of Environment
2187 and Energy regulations. A Contractor trained and certified in asbestos handling shall perform
2188 all asbestos removal and handling operations.

2189 b. The work of determining if any of the buildings contain asbestos shall be considered
2190 subsidiary to the item "Remove Building at ____."

2191 c. The work of asbestos abatement will be paid for as "Extra Work" as described in Subsection
2192 104.04.

2193 **Lead Abatement:**

2194 There is potential for lead based paint to be found on the bridges painted components. If the method
2195 of removal of the components generates paint debris, the waste shall be handled in accordance with
2196 NDOT's Standard Specification for Highway Construction Section 732 (Lead-based Paint Removal)
2197 and Title 128, Nebraska Hazardous Waste Regulations. Extreme caution shall be taken to minimize
2198 the amount of potential lead based painted material or debris from causing or threatening to cause
2199 pollution of the air, land and waters of the State. The Contractors implementation plan efforts shall be
2200 documented in SWPPPTrack.

2201 **3.13 Water Quality**

2202 **Surface Waters (Streams and Lakes)**

2203 Nebraska's surface water resources are extensive, including approximately 18,000 miles of
2204 continuously flowing rivers and streams and about 430 square miles of lakes. Wildlife, including many
2205 native fish species, rely on Nebraska's streams for food, shelter, and breeding grounds. The Nebraska
2206 Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) develops water quality standards that designate the
2207 beneficial uses of surface waters and the water quality criteria to protect the assigned uses. Title 117 -
2208 Nebraska Surface Water Quality Standards forms the basis of water quality protection for all surface
2209 water quality programs conducted by the department.

2210 **Impaired Waters**

2211 Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act (CWA) (33 USC 1251 et seq.) requires states, territories, and
2212 authorized tribes (states) to identify and establish a priority ranking for all waterbodies to determine
2213 which ones are impaired. Once identified, states are to establish total maximum daily loads (TMDL)
2214 for the pollutants causing impairment in those waterbodies and to submit the list of impaired or
2215 unique waterbodies and TMDLs biannually to EPA.

2216 In Nebraska, the 303(d) List of Waters are identified through programs administered by NDEE and are
2217 documented in the 2022 Water Quality Integrated Report (NDEE 2023). The 303(d) List of Waters
2218 identifies streams and lakes that are impaired for one or more pollutants and that do not meet one or
2219 more water quality standards. It also identifies streams and lakes characterized as unique and
2220 sensitive. Impaired and unique waters are identified through assessment and monitoring programs
2221 administered by NDEE and other federal, state, and local agencies.

2222 **Groundwater**

2223 Groundwater is defined as "water occurring beneath the surface of the ground that fills available
2224 openings in rock or soil materials such that they may be considered saturated" (Nebraska
2225 Administrative Code Title 118). Nebraska Administrative Code Title 118, Ground Water Quality
2226 Standards and Use Classification, is the foundation of the regulatory programs in Nebraska that
2227 protect groundwater quality and prevent contamination in designated areas. Administered by NeDNR,
2228 it provides numerical standards for many parameters and requires that any substance introduced to
2229 groundwater, directly or indirectly, not cause the groundwater to exceed those standards. The NeDNR
2230 is responsible for permitting and maintaining records related to groundwater wells throughout the
2231 state.

2232 **Water Supply and Wellhead Protection Areas**

2233 The Wellhead Protection Area (WHPA) Act (Nebraska Revised Statutes Section 46-1501 et seq.)
2234 regulates potential sources of contamination near municipal and other public wells used to provide
2235 drinking water. The program is managed and enforced by NDEE, which also manages residential,
2236 irrigation, and monitoring wells in Nebraska.

2237 **Stormwater**

2238 Stormwater runoff is regulated through Section 402 of the CWA, and the National Pollution Discharge
2239 Elimination System (NPDES) permit procedures (40 CFR Part 122). NDEE administers this permit
2240 program and has specific requirements for the control of storm water runoff. NPDES permits are
2241 required for projects involving more than one acre of land disturbance.

2242 **3.13.1 Affected Environment**

2243 **Surface Water (Streams and Lakes)**

2244 Surface water in the Study Area generally flows overland from west to east to Warm Slough, located
2245 just north of 10th Street, or to Trouble Creek, a tributary to Warm Slough, which generally runs along
2246 13th Street (**Figure 3.2**). Warm Slough eventually connects to the Platte River northeast of Central
2247 City. These drainageways only carry water seasonally or after substantial rainfall. Notably, there are no
2248 streams or creeks with a consistent flow within the Study Area. The nearest large body of water can
2249 be found approximately 1.5 miles south of Central City, which is the Platte River and the adjacent
2250 gravel pits along its banks.

2251 **Impaired Waters**

2252 The 2022 Water Quality Integrated Report was reviewed for the project and a NDOT PQS memo
2253 addressing impaired water was issued (**Appendix I, Water Quality**) indicating there are no impaired
2254 waterbodies within the Study Area.

2255 **Groundwater**

2256 There are eleven (11) registered groundwater wells within the Study Area (**Figure 3.2**). Four (4) of the
2257 wells are listed as “groundwater quality,” two (2) are listed as “irrigation,” three (3) are listed as
2258 “domestic” and one (1) is listed as “other.” There is also one municipal well (described further below).
2259 The groundwater quality wells are generally located along or near US-30, the irrigation wells are
2260 located north of 10th Street, and the domestic wells are situated generally west of N-14.

2261 Because wells in place before 1993 are not required by law to be registered with NDNR, an unknown
2262 number of unregistered wells may be located within and along the Study Area.

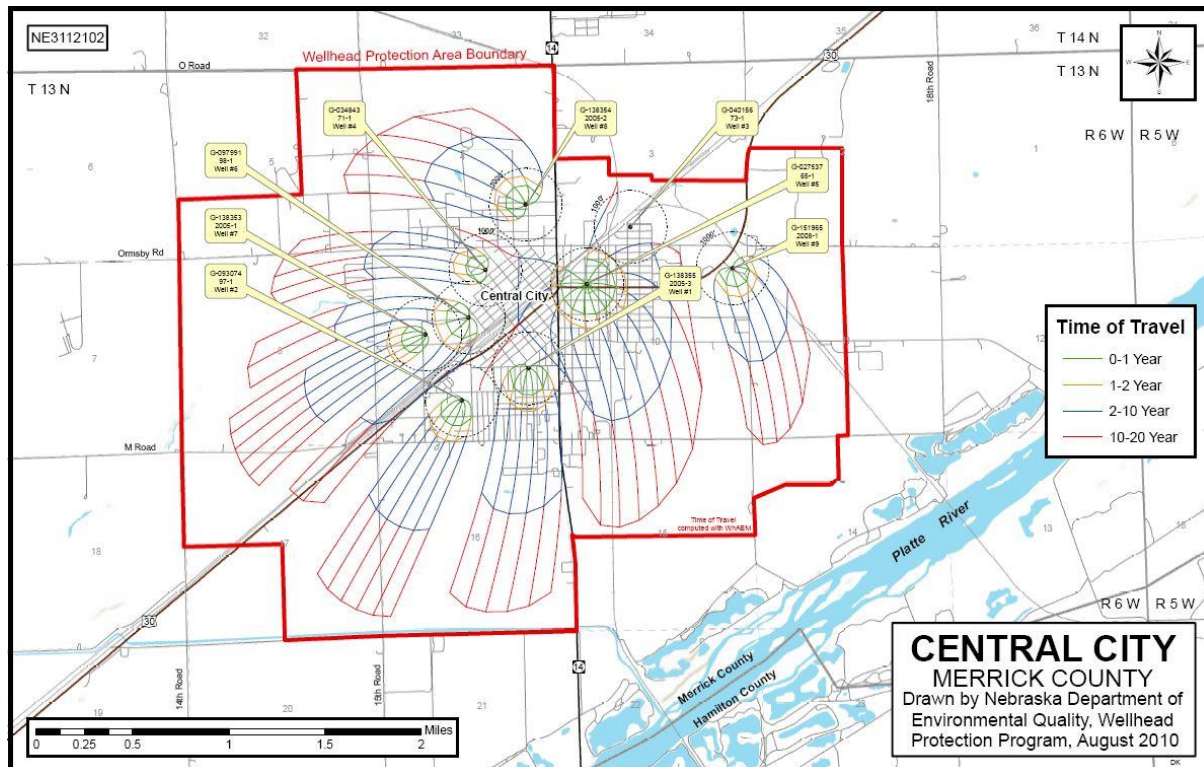
2263 **Water Supply and Wellhead Protection Areas**

2264 Central City supplies potable water to its residents from two active municipal wells (Wells 2 and 6),
2265 both situated outside the study area, on the west side of town (**Figure 3.2**). There are also additional
2266 municipal wells that are used for emergency purposes or are in standby, which means they can be
2267 used if needed to supplement during high usage periods or brought online to maintenance other wells.
2268 According to NDEE, these wells are not used on a regular basis, but rather, are “peak shaving” wells,
2269 used only during times of peak usage (i.e. summer), and are pumped directly into the water supply
2270 (Ryan Chapman, Wellhead Protection Program Coordinator, NDEE, personal communication, January
2271 22, 2014). Two of these of wells are situated nearby (Wells 3 and 8), and Well 5 is in the Study Area.

2272 A 500,000 gallon water tower is located on the west side of town, which is used to store water from
2273 the wells and to maintain water pressure throughout the city. Drinking water within central city is
2274 pumped straight from the aquifer via water distribution system, and is not treated because it is
2275 naturally potable directly from the ground.

2276 The project is located within the City of Central City designated WHPA (Figure 3.5); however, this area
 2277 does not have an approved Wellhead Protection Plan. The locations of the municipal drinking-water
 2278 supply wells protected by this WHPA are also shown on Figure 3.5. The figure also shows the time-of-
 2279 travel lines for each well, which indicates that the Study Area would potentially affect the 0-1 year zone
 2280 for Well 5, which is located near the intersections of US-30 and 15th Ave.

2281 **Figure 3.5 - Wellhead Protection Area for Central City, Nebraska**



2282
 2283 Source: Nebraska Department of Natural Resources

2284 **Stormwater**

2285 Storm water throughout Central City is conveyed through surface swales or ditches, or along the
 2286 gutters of the road network towards the east, and ultimately into Trouble Creek and Warm Slough.
 2287 Central City does not have an underground stormwater sewer system, as the shallow groundwater in
 2288 this area is not favorable to construct this utility.

2289 **3.13.2 Impacts of the No Build Alternative**

2290 There would be no construction of the Project with the No Build Alternative. As a result, there would be
 2291 no impacts on water quality, current groundwater levels, groundwater quality, or wells beyond those
 2292 needed to complete routine roadway and bridge maintenance activities.

2293 3.13.3 Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

2294 Surface Water (Streams and Lakes)

2295 The Preferred Alternative would result in minor impacts to Warm Slough due to the construction of a
2296 new box culvert to channel Warm Slough waters beneath the new roadway. Additionally, it would
2297 necessitate the extension of the existing Warm Slough box culvert along N-14/17th Street to
2298 accommodate the construction of a roundabout at 10th Street. Details on these impacts are
2299 discussed in **Section 3.14 Floodplains**, and **Section 3.15 Wetlands and Water Resources**.

2300 Impaired Waters

2301 According to the NDOT Water Quality PQS Memo prepared on March 29, 2024 (**Appendix I, Water**
2302 **Quality**), the Preferred Alternative would have no effect on impaired waters, as none exist in the Study
2303 Area.

2304 Groundwater

2305 Due to the inconsistent precision of the well locations in the NDNR groundwater wells dataset, wells
2306 were buffered 100 feet when calculating impacts to account for potential error in well location. The
2307 Preliminary Impact Area may affect two (2) registered groundwater wells: one each of "groundwater
2308 quality" and "irrigation." Impacts to active listed wells would be determined during final design. Any
2309 registered wells within the ROW would be properly decommissioned. NDOT would coordinate with the
2310 owners of any wells directly affected by the Preferred Alternative.

2311 *Water Supply Facilities and Wellhead Protection Areas*

2312 The Preferred Alternative would have no impact on the active municipal water supply wells used to
2313 provide water for Central City. In particular, Well 5, which is located inside a wellhouse along US-30
2314 near 15th Ave would not be affected by the construction of the new pavement on US-30 or from
2315 reconstruction of the adjacent sidewalks. NDOT would coordinate with Central City Utilities and the
2316 owners of any wells directly affected by the Preferred Alternative.

2317 The Preferred Alternative occurs within a WHPA. However, no direct impacts are anticipated to the
2318 groundwater or from potential contamination during construction. Typical and standard measures
2319 would be taken (as explained below) to avoid and minimize impacts.

2320 Stormwater

2321 The construction footprint exceeds the one (1) acre threshold; therefore, this project would require a
2322 NPDES permit to ensure that the runoff impacts are addressed. Temporary construction impacts on
2323 water quality are anticipated but would be mitigated through the acquisition of the permit and
2324 implementation of an associated Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Appropriate erosion
2325 control plans will be included with construction documents in the final design process. There are no
2326 permanent stormwater quality control measures currently proposed.

2327 The preferred alternative would be designed to handle stormwater off the new alignment and viaduct.
2328 Drop pipes would be installed to move the water towards the drainage ditches throughout the city.

2329 3.13.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation

2330 Commitments:

2331 NDOT would coordinate with the owners of wells that would be directly impacted by the proposed
2332 project. If the well is actively used, NDOT would replace the well or pay the owner to replace the well.
2333 NDOT would then have an independent contractor decommission the well after ROW negotiations and
2334 acquisitions are complete. If the well is not in use, the Contractor would decommission the well after
2335 negotiations with the owner (NDOT, Contractor)

2336 A licensed Water Well Contractor will decommission any wells in accordance with the Department of
2337 Health and Human Services (DHHS) regulations under Nebraska Administrative Code Title 178, Water
2338 Well Standards, Chapter 12, Water Well Construction, Pump Installation, and Water Well
2339 Decommissioning Standards (Nebraska DHHS 2005). (NDOT, Contractor)

2340 This project requires a Construction Stormwater Permit and that a Storm Water Pollution Prevention
2341 Plan (SWPPP) be maintained for the project. The Contractor shall understand the terms and
2342 conditions of the general National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit that
2343 authorizes the storm water discharges associated with activity from the construction site. For
2344 reference, the general permit is posted on the Department's website. (Contractor)

2345 A portion of the project has been identified as being located within the City of Central City Wellhead
2346 Protection Area. NDOT's Standard Specifications 107.01, 107.09, and 107.18 would address the
2347 contractor's responsibility to keep fully informed of, observe, and comply with all federal, state, and
2348 local laws and ordinances that affect the conduct of the work. (NDOT, Contractor)

2349 3.14 Floodplains

2350 A floodplain is any land area susceptible to being inundated by floodwaters from any source. A flood
2351 zone is a defined geographic area with a specific flood hazard risk based on the probability and
2352 impact of flooding on that area and is used to determine insurance requirements and costs. The
2353 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) classifies flood zones among five categories: low
2354 risk, moderate risk, high risk, coastal high risk, and undetermined risk. FEMA defines high risk areas as
2355 Zone A (or AE, AH, AO, AR, and A99), which are subject to inundation by the 1 percent annual chance
2356 exceedance event, also known as the 100-year or base flood event. A floodway is defined by FEMA as
2357 the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order
2358 to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a
2359 designated height. Executive Order 11988, *Floodplain Management*, directs federal agencies to avoid
2360 long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with modifying floodplains. FHWA regulations
2361 governing encroachments in floodplains are found in 23 CFR 650. FEMA administers the National
2362 Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which also establishes standards for compliance.

2363 3.14.1 Affected Environment

2364 The FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps have designated floodplains associated with Trouble Creek
2365 and Warm Slough. These floodplains are designated as Zone AE and located within the study area as
2366 shown in **Figure 3.2**. This designation is based on the Flood Insurance Study dated January 6, 2010,
2367 and signifies areas inundated by the base (100-year) flood with base flood elevations determined.
2368 Both the Trouble Creek and Warm Slough floodplains contain a regulatory floodway. See **Appendix J,**
2369 **Floodplains** for more information.

2370 3.14.2 Impacts of the No Build Alternative

2371 There would be no construction of the Project with the No Build Alternative. Floodplain and floodway
2372 impacts may occur as part of other routine roadway and bridge maintenance activities; however,
2373 these impacts would be evaluated on a project-by-project basis.

2374 3.14.3 Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

2375 Based on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps, topographic maps, and flood awareness mapping the
2376 Preferred Alternative encroaches on or runs parallel to the following floodplains: Trouble Creek (S014
2377 08184), and Warm Slough (S014 08204). The Preferred Alternative is not anticipated to cause greater

2378 than one (1) foot of rise in the base flood elevation of the floodplains it crosses, nor increase the
2379 potential for property loss and hazard of life.

2380 NDOT certified the following encroachments on June 17, 2024:

2381 *Trouble Creek, S014 08184*

2382 The project encroaches upon the Regulated Floodway for Trouble Creek in Section 3 T13N
2383 R6W. The waterway's ordinary high-water flow is conveyed through the highway by a (3-span,
2384 580 ft bridge), structure S014 008184. At this location the project conveys the bridge base
2385 flood (Q100 flood event) of 177cfs through the 580-foot-long structure, at a water surface
2386 elevation of 1693.27 feet. This meets the Floodplain regulations for no-rise in the floodway
2387 elevation.

2388 *Warm Slough, S014 08204*

2389 The project encroaches upon the Regulated Floodway for Warm Slough in Section 3 T13N
2390 R6W. The waterway's ordinary high-water flow is conveyed through the highway by a (box
2391 culvert with 3-12 ft span x 6 ft rise openings), structure S014 008204. At this location the
2392 project conveys the bridge base flood (Q100 flood event) of 1100cfs through the
2393 approximately 160-foot-long structure, at a water surface elevation of 1693.9 feet. (Final
2394 length to be determined by Roadway Design) This meets the Floodplain regulations for no-rise
2395 in the floodway elevation.

2396 *Warm Slough, Parallel Flow*

2397 This project encroaches on and runs parallel to the Warm slough floodplain from MM 81.88 to
2398 MM 82.08, on N-14. Hydraulic analysis study comparison for the Q100 flow existing to the
2399 Q100 proposed flow water surface elevations shows that the proposed water surface analysis
2400 with the encroachment does not increase the water surface above the existing. This meets the
2401 Floodplain regulations for 1 foot or less rise in the floodplain.

2402 According to 23 CFR 650.111; the Preferred Alternative would result in functionally dependent
2403 floodplain uses¹¹. A functionally dependent use is one that involves water conveyance at structures
2404 such as bridges and culverts. There would be limited impacts on the natural and beneficial floodplain
2405 values of the floodplains along this Project. Because there would be temporary soil disturbance during
2406 construction activities, sediment and erosion control best management practices (BMP) would be
2407 used during construction, and disturbed areas would be seeded following construction.

2408 There would be no significant encroachment to a base floodplain. The Preferred Alternative would not
2409 result in a base flood causing significant potential interruption or termination of this transportation
2410 facility, which is needed for emergency vehicles or a community's only evacuation route. It also would
2411 not result in a significant risk or potential for loss of life or property due to the base flood. This Project
2412 would not result in a substantial adverse impact on natural and beneficial floodplain values. An
2413 alternatives analysis related to the significance of encroachment into a base floodplain is not
2414 warranted based on the above rationale. This highway improvement project would maintain existing
2415 local and regional access to municipal, rural, and agricultural areas, and would not support
2416 incompatible floodplain development. Therefore, an alternatives analysis related to incompatible
2417 floodplain development is not warranted. A review of floodplain impacts can be found in the NDOT
2418 Floodplain PQS memo found in **Appendix J, Floodplains**.

¹¹ For transportation projects, functionally dependent use has been described as bridges, or any water conveyance structures or actions that facilitate the use of open space use (e.g. recreational trails, bicycle and pedestrian paths). Functionally dependent uses also include embankment, culverts, grading and guardrails, and other associated appurtenances or required work to support or protect a bridge or culvert.

2419 Temporary impacts on floodplains during construction may occur in the form of construction access
2420 and temporary structures. Floodplain development permits would be obtained prior to construction,
2421 and the Preferred Alternative would comply with local floodplain regulations.

2422 3.14.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation

2423 The box culverts to carry Warm Slough under the N-14 roadway would be designed to adequately
2424 convey flood flows along existing drainage patterns. Construction of the Project would have floodplain
2425 encroachments, but Project impacts are certified that federal, state, and local floodplain regulations
2426 are met, and a Floodplain Development Permit would be obtained from the appropriate jurisdictions
2427 prior to construction. All conditions of the permit would be adhered to during construction. (NDOT
2428 Environmental, Contractor)

2429 3.15 Wetlands and Water Resources

2430 Wetlands are “those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency
2431 and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of
2432 vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions” (33 CFR 328). A water resource in the
2433 context of this Project includes waterways (rivers, streams, and intermittent and ephemeral
2434 drainageways) or open water areas. Wetlands and water resources are defined as waters of the US or
2435 waters of the State. A water of the US is defined as “the territorial seas, and waters which are currently
2436 used, or were used in the past, or may be susceptible to use in interstate or foreign commerce,
2437 including waters which are subject to the ebb and flow of the tide; tributaries, lakes and ponds, and
2438 impoundments of jurisdictional waters; and adjacent wetlands” (33 CFR 328.3(a)). Waters of the State
2439 are defined as “all waters within the jurisdiction of this state, including all streams, lakes, ponds,
2440 impounding reservoirs, marshes, wetlands, watercourses, waterways, wells, springs, irrigation
2441 systems, drainage systems, and all other bodies or accumulations of water, surface or underground,
2442 natural or artificial, public or private, situated wholly or partly within or bordering upon the state”
2443 (Nebraska Administrative Code Title 126, Chapter 1).

2444 The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is the agency charged with administering and enforcing
2445 federal laws related to wetlands under CWA Section 404 (33 USC 1344). The USACE Omaha District
2446 has jurisdiction over wetlands affected by the Project. NDEE is responsible for Section 401 Water
2447 Quality Certification for any project requiring a federal permit or license that includes a discharge into
2448 a water of the State. In addition, NDEE determines whether projects comply with Nebraska
2449 Administrative Code Title 117, Nebraska Surface Water Quality Standards.

2450 Executive Order 11990, *Protection of Wetlands*, requires federal agencies (including FHWA) to
2451 implement “no net loss” measures for wetlands (42 FR 26961). These measures include a phased
2452 approach to implement wetland impact avoidance, then minimization of impacts if wetlands cannot
2453 be avoided, and finally mitigation. In Nebraska, “no net loss” is tracked and applied on an annual,
2454 program-wide basis for federally funded projects rather than on an individual-project basis.

2455 3.15.1 Affected Environment

2456 Wetlands were identified within the Study Area during delineations conducted on June 22, 2023. The
2457 findings of the delineation can be found in **Appendix K, Wetlands**.

2458 **Wetlands:**

2459 Eleven (11) wetlands were identified within the Study Area. All delineated wetlands were classified as
2460 palustrine emergent (PEM) and total 2.513 acres. Refer to **Table 3.11** for a summary of wetland areas.
2461 Locations of wetlands in the Study Area are shown in **Figure 3.2** and **Appendix K, Wetlands**.

2462 **Table 3.11 Wetlands Identified in the Study Area**

Wetlands	
Wetland Type ¹	Area (acres)
PEMA/C	2.359
PEMF	0.154
Total	2.513

2463 ¹ PEMA/C = Palustrine Emergent Temporarily / Seasonally Flooded; PEMF = Palustrine Emergent Semi-Permanently Flooded.

2464 **3.15.2 Impacts of the No Build Alternative**

2465 There would be no construction of the Project with the No Build Alternative. Wetland and water
2466 resources impacts may occur as part of other routine roadway and bridge maintenance activities;
2467 however, these impacts would be evaluated on a project-by-project basis.

2468 **3.15.3 Impacts of the Preferred Alternative**

2469 The Preferred Alternative would permanently affect approximately 0.091 acres of wetlands as shown
2470 **Table 3.12**. Construction of the Preferred Alternative would require a CWA Section 404 Nationwide
2471 Permit from USACE.

2472 **Table 3.12 Wetland Impacts**

Wetland Impacts	
Wetland Type ¹	Area (acres)
PEMA/C	0.091
Total	0.091

2473 ¹ PEMA/C = Palustrine Emergent Temporarily / Seasonally Flooded.

2474
2475 Temporary impacts to wetlands are anticipated. These impacts would be included in the Section 404
2476 permitting process. Any resources that would be temporarily impacted would be restored to pre-
2477 construction condition or better and planted with an appropriate seed mix.

2478 **3.15.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation**

2479 Based on the preliminary impacts, wetland mitigation is not anticipated. The following commitments
2480 will be required for the preferred alternative.

2481 **Commitments:**

2482 All wetlands within the project limits that are not permitted for impact would be marked on the Project
2483 plans and the E Sheet as avoidance areas. (NDOT Roadway Design, NDOT Environmental)

2484 The Contractor shall not stage, store, waste, or stockpile materials and equipment in undisturbed
2485 locations or in known/potential wetlands and/or known/potential streams that exhibit a clear “bed
2486 and Bank” channel. Potential wetland areas consist of any area that is known to pond water,
2487 swampy areas, or areas supporting known wetland vegetation or areas where there is a distinct
2488 difference in vegetation (at lower elevations) from the surrounding upland areas. (Contractor)

2489 Avoidance and minimization measures would be further refined during the preliminary and final design
2490 processes as appropriate. The design would comply with the policy of Executive Order 11990 (42 FR
2491 26961) regarding impacts on wetlands. Additionally, any project using federal transportation funds
2492 must adhere to the net gain of wetland policy (23 CFR 777.11(g)), where there would be no net loss of
2493 wetlands across the program in a given year. (NDOT Roadway Design, NDOT Environmental)

2494 3.16 Threatened and Endangered Species

2495 The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 USC 1531–1544), protects federally listed
2496 endangered and threatened species, and the Nebraska Nongame and Endangered Species
2497 Conservation Act of 1975 (Nebraska Revised Statutes Section 37-801 to 37-811) provides protection
2498 for State-listed species. Other species with special protection are bald eagles (*Haliaeetus*
2499 *leucocephalus*) and golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act
2500 of 1940, as amended (16 USC 668–668d) and migratory birds under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of
2501 1918, as amended (16 USC 703–712). Violation of these laws can be charged as misdemeanors or
2502 felonies, and conviction can result in fines of more than \$100,000 and/or imprisonment.

2503 USFWS, FHWA, NDOT, and NGPC have developed a programmatic biological assessment protocol for
2504 all federally and state-listed species in Nebraska to streamline the Section 7 coordination process. The
2505 2023 Nebraska Biological Evaluation Programmatic Agreement was signed by all parties on March 8,
2506 2023, with USFWS concurrence on March 14, 2023, and NGPC concurrence on March 20, 2023. The
2507 agencies have developed a list of construction activities that occur as part of transportation projects
2508 and have reviewed the potential for impacts on the federally and state-listed species in Nebraska. The
2509 Programmatic process includes the following steps; only the first four steps are required for projects
2510 that would not affect listed species or are not likely to adversely affect species with the
2511 implementation of standard conservation conditions:

- 2512 • Complete a Biological Evaluation Form to document the habitat characteristics of a project's
2513 Action Area.
- 2514 • Identify species or critical habitat potentially present in a project's Action Area¹².
- 2515 • Screen species and critical habitat based on characteristics of the Action Area.
- 2516 • Identify the potential for impact on individual species and/or critical habitat based on the
2517 construction activities that would be conducted for the project.
- 2518 • Complete an Individual Project Level Evaluation if a project may have an effect on a listed
2519 species or if conservation conditions are recommended for a species not likely to be present.
- 2520 • Complete a biological evaluation, which may be required if adverse effects on a species are
2521 anticipated even with the implementation of conservation conditions.

2522 3.16.1 Affected Environment

2523 The data for federally listed and state-listed threatened and endangered species in Merrick County
2524 was reviewed, and each species was assessed individually to determine the potential presence or
2525 absence of suitable habitat within the Study Area, as described in the following paragraphs.

¹² Action area is defined by regulation to mean all areas to be affected directly or indirectly by the Federal action and not merely the immediate area involved in the action (50 CFR § 402.02).

2526 For the Project Action Area, USFWS lists 12 federally protected species and NGPC lists 11 state
2527 protected species. **Table 3.13** lists federally and state-listed threatened and endangered species with
2528 potential for occurrence in the Project Action Area, as well as a brief description of suitable habitat for
2529 the listed species.

2530 **Table 3.13 Federal & State Listed Threatened and Endangered Species in the Study Area**

Status ¹	Common Name	Scientific Name	Habitat Description
FE, SE	Black-footed ferret	<i>Mustela nigripes</i>	Prairie dog town or complexes 1,000 acres or more in size.
FT, ST	Eastern black rail	<i>Laterallus jamaicensis</i>	Wetlands containing herbaceous, persistent, emergent wetland plant cover, dense overhead cover, soils that are moist to saturated, and interspersed with, or adjacent to, very shallow water.
FE, SE	Eskimo curlew	<i>Numenius borealis</i>	Wet meadows, burned over prairies, or newly plowed fields.
FE, SE	Gray wolf	<i>Canus lupus</i>	Wide range of habitats including prairie, mountains, temperate forests, wetlands, tundra, and taiga. Areas where they are accepted by people.
FT, SE	Interior Least Tern	<i>Sternula antillarum athalassos</i>	Barren to sparsely vegetated sandbars along rivers, sand and gravel pits, and lake and reservoir shorelines.
FE, SE	Northern long-eared bat	<i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>	Hibernates in caves and mines. Swarms in surrounding wooded areas in autumn. During late spring and summer, roosts and forages in upland forests.
FE, SE	Pallid sturgeon	<i>Scaphirhynchus albus</i>	Large river systems such as the Platte River or lower tributaries. Preferred habitat has a diversity of depths and velocities formed by braided channels, sand bars, islands, sand flats and gravel bars.
FT, ST	Piping plover	<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	Barren to sparsely vegetated sandbars along rivers, sand and gravel pits, and lake and reservoir shorelines.
FT, ST	Rufa red knot	<i>Calidris canutus rufa</i>	Open mud flats and/or mud and sandy shorelines free of vegetation.
Proposed FE ²	Tri-colored bat	<i>Perimyotis subflavus</i>	Hibernates in caves and mines. Swarms in surrounding wooded areas in autumn. During late spring and summer, roosts and forages in woodland.
FT, ST	Western prairie fringed orchid	<i>Platanthera praeclara</i>	Wet prairies and sedge meadows.
FE, SE	Whooping crane	<i>Grus americana</i>	Sub-irrigated grasslands, meadows, shallow wetland habitat, farm ponds, major rivers, agricultural land outside of densely populated residential, commercial, or industrial areas.

Sources: USFWS 2024; NGPC 2024.

Note:

¹ FT=Federally Threatened; FE = Federally Endangered; ST=State Threatened; SE=State Endangered

² Tri-colored bat is proposed to be federally listed as endangered; an official federal listing opinion is anticipated in 2024. All species federally listed as threatened or endangered are also listed by the state of Nebraska under State Statute 37-802(1).

2531
2532
2533
2534
2535

2536 According to Natural Heritage Records, there are documented occurrences of interior least tern, piping
2537 plover, and whooping crane within one mile of the detour route, however there are no records of the
2538 species within 1 mile of where work is occurring. The detour route does not have any work associated
2539 with it and the proposed construction would take place within the urban environment of Central City.
2540 There is no critical habitat present within the Project Action Area.

2541 Of the species identified within **Table 3.13**, suitable habitat exists within the Project Action Area for the
2542 eskimo curlew, northern long-eared bat, and the tricolored bat. No suitable habitat was identified for
2543 the remaining species.

2544 Eskimo curlew may use a portion of the Project Action Area for foraging habitat. Agricultural fields,
2545 grassland/pasture, and emergent wetlands provide suitable habitat for the species. However, there are
2546 no known recent records or extant populations that currently exist in Nebraska.

2547 Waterways in the form of linear wetlands exist throughout the project alignment. Trouble Creek and
2548 Warm Slough are both considered linear wetlands. These wetlands transverse through deciduous tree
2549 cluster that may be suitable for the northern long-eared bat and tri-colored bat. Beyond the riparian
2550 corridors associated with waterways, wooded areas across the Project Action Area are characterized
2551 by a sparse number of trees and are considered fragmented in nature. It's likely that the northern long-
2552 eared bat and tricolored bat would utilize larger woodland tracts associated with the riparian corridors
2553 near the Platte River for summer roosting and foraging activities, although either species may also use
2554 other available habitats within the area.

2555 Northern long-eared bat and tri-colored bat have been known to use human-made structures for
2556 occasionally roosting, such as barns and sheds. The bats may also use bridge and large culvert
2557 structures for summer roosting. There are approximately two bridge or bridge-sized culverts in the
2558 Project Action Area. The NDOT conducted a survey in February of 2024 to inspect structures along N-
2559 14 for evidence of bats. After assessment, no bats or evidence of bat usage was detected.

2560 The federally endangered and threatened species review was conducted according to the
2561 Programmatic Agreement for the Nebraska Federal Aid Transportation Program. **Appendix L,**
2562 **Threatened and Endangered Species** contains the forms completed for the Project based on this
2563 Programmatic Agreement.

2564 3.16.2 Impacts of the No Build Alternative

2565 There would be no construction of the Project with the No Build Alternative. As a result, there would be
2566 no impacts on protected species beyond those needed to complete routine roadway and bridge
2567 maintenance activities.

2568 3.16.3 Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

2569 Based on the analysis conducted using the Programmatic Agreement review process, the preferred
2570 alternative may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, northern long-eared bat and tricolored bat
2571 with the conservation conditions listed below in **Section 3.16.4**. These species are the only listed
2572 species identified through the Programmatic process that may potentially be impacted by the
2573 Preferred Alternative.

2574 Northern long-eared bat (NLEB) was initially evaluated through the FHWA, FRA, FTA Programmatic
2575 Biological Opinion for Transportation Projects within the Range of the Indiana Bat and Northern long
2576 eared-Bat on IPaC. The project fell outside the scope of Programmatic Agreement; therefore, an
2577 Individual Project Level Evaluation (IPL) was utilized to evaluate impacts to NLEB.

2578 Tri-Colored Bat (TCB) is a proposed endangered species. Since the Tri-Colored Bat is not included in
2579 any programmatic agreements NDOT evaluated the impacts to Tri-Colored Bat in an IPL.

2580 USFWS and NGPC concurred with the below described effect determinations and conservation
2581 conditions on 6/25/2024 and 6/20/2024. The approved biological assessment, and associated
2582 documentation can be found in **Appendix L, Threatened and Endangered Species**.

2583 **Northern Long-eared Bat and Tri-colored Bat**

2584 Potentially suitable habitat for northern long-eared bat and tri-colored bat is present, but there are no
2585 historic records for either species within the Project Action Area and there are no identified
2586 hibernacula or maternity roosts within 1 mile of the Preferred Alternative. Tree clearing, wood
2587 vegetation removal, and structure removal activities associated with the Preferred Alternative have the
2588 potential to impact both bat species. Based on NDOT's commitment to implement the avoidance and
2589 minimization measures listed in **Section 3.16.4**, the Preferred Alternative may affect, but is not likely to
2590 adversely affect, northern long-eared bat or tri-colored bat.

2591 **3.16.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation**

2592 To minimize any potential impacts on protected species, specific conservation conditions would be
2593 implemented during design and construction (see **Appendix L, Threatened and Endangered Species**).

2594 **A-1 Changes in Project Scope.** If there is a change in the project scope, the project limits, or
2595 environmental commitments, the Highway Project Manager shall coordinate with the NDOT
2596 Environmental Section to evaluate potential impacts prior to implementation. Environmental
2597 commitments are not subject to change without prior written approval from the NDOT Environmental
2598 Section. (*District Construction*)

2599 **A-2 Conservation Conditions.** Conservation conditions are to be fully implemented within the project
2600 limits as shown on the plans. (*District Construction, Contractor*)

2601 **A-3 Early Construction Starts.** Contractor request for early construction starts must be coordinated
2602 by the Project Construction Engineer with NDOT Environmental for approval of early start to ensure
2603 avoidance of listed species sensitive lifecycle timeframes. Work in these timeframes could require
2604 consultation with the USFWS and NGPC. (*District Construction, Contractor*)

2605 **A-4 T&E Species.** If federal or state listed species are observed during construction, the Highway
2606 Project Manager will contact NDOT Environmental Section to determine if additional species
2607 conservation conditions would be required prior to continuing project construction activities. Contact
2608 NDOT Environmental for a reference of federal and state listed species. Coordination with the USFWS
2609 and NGPC may be required depending on the species identified and construction activities. (*NDOT
2610 Environmental, District Construction, Contractor*)

2611 **A-5 Refueling.** Refueling will be conducted outside of those sensitive areas identified on the plans, in
2612 the contract, and/or marked in the field. (*Contractor*)

2613 **A-6 Restricted Activities.** The following project activities shall, to the extent possible, be restricted to
2614 between the beginning and ending points (stationing, reference posts, mile markers, and/or section-
2615 township-range references) of the project, within the right-of-way designated on the project plans:
2616 borrow sites, burn sites, construction debris waste disposal areas, concrete and asphalt plants, haul
2617 roads, stockpiling areas, staging areas, and material storage sites.

2618 For activities outside the project limits, the contractor should refer to the Nebraska Game and Park
2619 Commission website to determine which species ranges occur within the off-site area. The contractor
2620 should plan accordingly for any species surveys that may be required to approve the use of a borrow
2621 site, or other off-site activities. The contractor should review the T&E Matrix agreement (on NDOT's
2622 website), where species survey protocols can be found, to estimate the level of effort and timing
2623 requirements for surveys.

2624 Any project related activities that occur outside of the project limits must be environmentally
2625 cleared/permitted with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission as well as any other appropriate
2626 agencies by the contractor and those clearances/permits submitted to the District Construction
2627 Project Manager prior to the start of the above listed project activities. The contractor shall submit
2628 information such as an aerial photo showing the proposed activity site, a soil survey map with the
2629 location of the site, a plan-sheet or drawing showing the location and dimensions of the activity site, a
2630 minimum of 4 different ground photos showing the existing conditions at the proposed activity site,
2631 depth to ground water and depth of pit, and the "Platte River depletion status" of the site. The
2632 contractor must receive notice of acceptance from NDOT environmental, prior to starting the above
2633 listed project activities. These project activities cannot adversely affect state and/or federally listed
2634 species or designated critical habitat. (*NDOT Environmental, District Construction, Contractor*).

2635 **A-7 Waste/Debris.** Construction waste/debris will be disposed of in areas or a manner which will not
2636 adversely affect state and/or federally listed species and/or designated critical habitat. (*Contractor*)

2637 **A-8 Post Construction Erosion Control.** Erosion control activities carried out by NDOT Maintenance or
2638 others after construction is complete, but prior to project close-out, shall adhere to any standard
2639 conservation conditions for species designated for the project limits during construction. (*NDOT*
2640 *Maintenance, District Construction, Contractor*)

2641 **S-1 Fencing.** When project-related fence construction/relocation work is required to be done prior to
2642 the start of construction, and if the fence work occurs outside urban or cropland areas that are not
2643 within swift fox or mountain plover range, then fencing can be \installed/relocated at any time using
2644 the following criteria:

- 2645 a. the fencing is temporary in nature and/or consists of only hand-driven posts
- 2646 b. the work does not compact the soils (ex. through the use of heavy equipment) or cause soil
2647 disturbance beyond the driving of posts
- 2648 c. within the **whooping crane** migration corridor, work occurring within a half of a mile of
2649 wetlands or perennial waters will occur between the hours of 10:00 am to 4:00pm when the
2650 work is between March 6 – April 29 or October 9 – November 15

2651 If the fencing work cannot meet these criteria, then NDOT Right-of-Way Division shall coordinate with
2652 NDOT Environmental Section prior to the completion of Right-of-way negotiations.

2653 **S-2 Platte River Depletions.** To the maximum extent practical, efforts will be made to design the
2654 project and select borrow sites to prevent depletions to the Platte River. If there is any potential to
2655 create a depletion, NDOT (during design) and the Contractor (for borrow sites) shall follow the current
2656 Platte River depletion protocols for coordination, minimization, and mitigation. In general, the following
2657 are considered de minimis depletions, but may still require agency coordination; a project which: a)
2658 creates an annual depletion less than 0.1 acre feet, b) creates a detention basin that detains water for
2659 less than 72 hours, c) diverted water that will be returned to its natural basin within 30 days, or d)
2660 creates a one-time depletion of less than 10 acre feet. (*NDOT Roadway Design, Contractor*)

2661 **S-3 Revegetation.** All permanent seeding and plantings (excluding managed landscaped areas) shall
2662 use species and composition native to the project vicinity as shown in the Plan for the Roadside
2663 Environment. However, within the first 16 feet of the road shoulder or within high erosion prone
2664 locations, tall fescue or perennial ryegrass may be used at minimal rates to provide quick groundcover
2665 to prevent erosion, unless state or federally listed threatened or endangered plants were identified in
2666 the project area during surveys. If listed **plants** were identified, any seed mix requirements identified
2667 during resource agency consultations shall be used for the project. (*NDOT Environmental*)

2668 **S-4 Sensitive Areas.** Environmentally Sensitive Areas will be marked on the plans, in the field, or in the
2669 contract by NDOT Environmental for avoidance. (*NDOT Environmental, NDOT Roadway Design, District*
2670 *Construction*)

- 2671 **S-5 Species Surveys.** If species surveys are required during the construction phase of the project
2672 (including pre-construction surveys), results will be sent by NDOT Environmental Section to the
2673 USFWS, NGPC, and if applicable the USACE. (NDOT Environmental, District Construction)
- 2674 **S-6 Permanent LED Lighting (NDOT Design Commitment):** Only LED roadway luminaries listed on the
2675 NDOT "Nebraska Qualified Material Vendors List" will be considered for use on Nebraska highway
2676 lighting projects. Proposed changes to the following LED lighting requirements would require
2677 resource agency (USFWS and/or NGPC) coordination and approval prior to installation:
- 2678 • Nominal CCT – 3000 +/- 300 K
 - 2679 • BUG Ratings – Maximum nominal Backlight (N/A), Uplight (0), Glare (N/A)
 - 2680 • Lumen Output – N/A
- 2681 Any proposed changes to the listed requirement(s) must be presented to the NDOT Environmental
2682 Section for Agency Coordination and approval.
- 2683 **Northern long-eared Bat / Tri-colored Bat**
- 2684 **General AMM 1.**
- 2685 Ensure all operators, employees, and contractors working in areas of known or presumed bat habitat
2686 are aware of all FHWA/FRA/FTA (Transportation Agencies) environmental commitments, including all
2687 applicable AMMs. (NDOT Environmental, District, Contractor)
- 2688 **Lighting AMM 1.**
- 2689 Direct temporary lighting away from suitable habitat during the active season (**April 1st – October 31st**).
2690 (District, Contractor)
- 2691 **Lighting AMM 2.**
- 2692 When installing new or replacing existing permanent lights, use downward-facing, full cut-off lens
2693 lights (with same intensity or less for replacement lighting); or for those transportation agencies using
2694 the BUG system developed by the Illuminating Engineering Society, the goal is to be as close to 0 for
2695 all three ratings with a priority of "uplight" of 0 and "backlight" as low as practicable. (Design,
2696 Contractor)
- 2697 **Tree Removal AMM 1.**
- 2698 Modify all phases/aspects of the project (e.g., temporary work areas, alignments) to avoid tree
2699 removal. (Design, District, Contractor)
- 2700 **Tree Removal AMM 2.**
- 2701 Apply time of year restrictions for tree removal when bats are not likely to be present (**November 1st to**
2702 **March 31st**), or Limit tree removal to 10 or fewer trees per project at any time of year within 100 feet of
2703 the existing road/rail surface and **outside of documented** roosting/foraging habitat or travel corridors;
2704 visual emergence survey must be conducted with no bats observed. (NDOT environmental, District,
2705 Contractor)
- 2706 **Tree Removal AMM 3.**
- 2707 Ensure tree removal is limited to that specified in project plans and ensure that contractors
2708 understand clearing limits and how they are marked in the field (e.g., install bright colored
2709 flagging/fencing prior to any tree clearing to ensure contractors stay within clearing limits). (District,
2710 Contractor)

2711 **Tree Removal AMM 4.**

2712 Do not remove documented Indiana bat or NLEB roosts that are still suitable for roosting, or trees
2713 within 0.25 miles of roosts, or **documented** foraging habitat any time of year. (*District, Contractor*)

2714 **NLEB/TCB -A Structure Removal.** Apply time of year (**November 1st to March 31st**) restrictions for
2715 structure removal (when bats are not likely to be present). (*NDOT Environmental, District, Contractor*)

2716 **3.17 Fish, Wildlife, and Vegetation**

2717 This section describes the fish and wildlife species that inhabit the Study Area as well as the
2718 vegetation in the Study Area. Threatened or endangered species and their associated habitat are
2719 discussed in **Section 3.16**. Applicable federal and state legislation is summarized below.

2720 The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended (16 USC 703–712), states that construction
2721 activities in grassland, wetland, stream, and woodland habitats, and those that occur on bridges (for
2722 example, that may affect swallow nests on bridge girders) that would otherwise result in the taking of
2723 migratory birds, eggs, young, and/or active nests should be avoided. Although the provisions of
2724 Migratory Bird Treaty Act are applicable year-round, most migratory bird nesting activity in Nebraska
2725 occurs from April 1 to September 1.

2726 The Nebraska Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act of 1975 (Nebraska Revised
2727 Statutes Section 37-801 et seq.) specifies that the state should conserve non-game species, as well
2728 as species determined to be endangered or threatened, for human enjoyment, for scientific purposes,
2729 and to ensure their continued existence as a part of our natural world.

2730 Noxious weeds are typically invasive species that harm natural ecosystems. Several regulations and
2731 guidelines have been issued to help limit the spread of noxious weeds, including Executive Order
2732 13112, *Invasive Species*; the Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act (Nebraska Revised Statutes
2733 Sections 2-945.01 to 2-970); and the Nebraska Noxious Weeds Regulations (Nebraska Administrative
2734 Code Title 25, Chapter 10).

2735 **3.17.1 Affected Environment**

2736 The project is located within the Topographic Region of the Valleys, which consists of flat-lying land
2737 along the major streams of Nebraska. The materials of the valleys are stream deposited silt, clay,
2738 sand, and gravel.

2739 According to the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project, the project is located in the Tallgrass Prairie
2740 Ecoregion, a historically upland prairie with diverse community types ranging from deciduous
2741 woodlands to wet meadows and saline wetlands. The ecoregion receives between 25 and 36 inches
2742 of precipitation annually, more than any other ecoregion in the state. Common native vegetation
2743 includes big bluestem, Indian grass, switchgrass, Canada wild-rye, and a variety of wildflowers and
2744 forbs such as showy goldenrod, skyblue aster, and purple coneflower. Most watercourses in the
2745 ecoregion, like the Missouri River, are lined with riparian forests composed of cottonwood, willow,
2746 boxelder, American elm, oak, black walnut, hickory, and other deciduous trees. The Platte River,
2747 approximately 1.6 miles southeast of the project, is a classic example of a prairie river. Historically, the
2748 Platte River was shallow with a braided channel measuring three miles at it's widest and a multitude
2749 of sandbars. Glaciers, wind, and water have shaped the topography of the tallgrass region and today
2750 the land surface is mainly rolling hills intersected with stream valleys. Receding glaciers left behind till
2751 deposits, hilly moraines, and windblown loess. Approximately two percent of Nebraska's tallgrass
2752 prairie remains intact. This is the result of land-use shifting toward agricultural production and urban
2753 development.

2754 At present, more than 300 species of resident and migratory birds, 55 mammal species, 75 species of
2755 fish, 53 species of amphibians and reptiles, and potentially hundreds of species of insects occur in the
2756 Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem (Schneider et al. 2011). Common wildlife species that may occur in the
2757 Study Area include coyote, opossum, raccoon, white-tailed deer, skunk, cottontail rabbit, fox squirrel,
2758 red fox, and turkey.

2759 According to the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project (NNLP), the project doesn't exist in a Biologically
2760 Unique Landscape (BUL) of Nebraska, however, the project is approximately 4.3 miles north of the
2761 Rainwater Basin BUL and approximately 7.2 miles northeast of the Central Platte River BUL.

2762 The Project is located within the city limits of Central City and consist of an urban environment that is
2763 zoned for commercial, industrial, and residential properties. The project south of the UPRR mainline
2764 would be constructed on existing roadways, and commercially developed areas. North of the UPRR
2765 mainline and east of N-14, the project would be constructed on new alignment through an area that is
2766 zoned for residential and commercial property, but has not been fully developed. The existing
2767 conditions in this area consists of grassland vegetation, sparsely wooded areas, and linear PEMA
2768 wetlands associated with Warm Slough and Trouble Creek. Warm Slough and Trouble Creek are
2769 considered linear wetlands, and do not have associated bed and banks or perennial flows.

2770 The upland vegetation north of the UPRR tracks is primarily composed of grassland and woody
2771 species such as Smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), white mulberry
2772 (*Morus alba*), hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*), American plum (*Prunus americana*), green ash (*Fraxinus*
2773 *pennsylvanica*), eastern cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*), American elm (*Ulmus americana*), eastern red
2774 cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*), black walnut (*Juglans nigra*), and red
2775 mulberry (*Morus rubra*). Wetland vegetation north of the UPRR tracks is primarily composed of
2776 grasses and forbs associated with the two drainage ways. The dominant species include reed canary
2777 grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) and various species of knotweed (*Persicaria spp.*)

2780 3.17.2 Impacts of the No Build Alternative

2781 There would be no construction of the Project with the No Build Alternative. Impacts on fish, wildlife,
2782 and vegetation may occur as part of other routine roadway and bridge maintenance activities.
2783 Impacts on fish, wildlife, and vegetation for those projects would be evaluated on a project-by-project
2784 basis.

2785 In addition, the No Build Alternative would result in neither disturbance nor improvement of the area's
2786 vegetation composition. There would be no new disturbances to vegetation beyond those needed to
2787 complete routine roadway and bridge maintenance activities.

2788 3.17.3 Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

2789 The proposed project would impact areas primarily composed of grassland, road surfaces, and
2790 lowland cover types, characterized by a blend of native and invasive vegetation typical of the tallgrass
2791 prairie ecosystem. Construction activities, including land clearing and grubbing, will primarily disturb
2792 introduced species like smooth brome and reed canary grass.

2793 The new viaduct structure will span Trouble Creek, and the project includes the addition of a new
2794 bridge-sized box culvert over Warm Slough, as well as the extension of the existing bridge-sized box
2795 culvert on N-14. These additions are designed to maintain current drainage patterns throughout the
2796 area. During construction, some riparian vegetation near waterways will be temporarily disturbed,
2797 particularly during the installation of bridges and culverts.

2798 Post-construction, it is expected that roadside ditches and other disturbed areas will naturally
2799 regenerate, potentially leading to the reestablishment of wetland vegetation. All disturbed areas will

2800 undergo revegetation using an NDOT-approved native seed mix designed to improve and restore plant
2801 species composition. This approach aims not only to recover the areas impacted by construction but
2802 also to enhance their ecological value over time. Due to the urban nature of the project, and with
2803 proper mitigation, the preferred alternative is anticipated to have no adverse effects on fish, wildlife, or
2804 vegetation within the project study area.

2805 3.17.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation

2806 In accordance with NDOT's Avian Protection Plan (NDOT 2018), NDOT would make every effort to
2807 schedule clearing and grubbing, large tree removal, or other work activities that may impact migratory
2808 bird nests, outside of the primary Nebraska nesting season of April 1 to September 1. If any of the
2809 aforementioned activities would be required during this period, a nesting survey would be completed
2810 by a qualified biologist prior to work commencing. Specific to bridge and culvert work, the required
2811 survey period extends through September 30. (NDOT Environmental, Contractor)

2812 In efforts to maintain aquatic wildlife connectivity, the Preferred Alternative may use temporary
2813 structures during construction. The use of temporary structures would facilitate aquatic life
2814 movements during construction in accordance with CWA Section 404 Nationwide Permit General
2815 Condition No. 2: Aquatic Life Movements. Proposed structures would be constructed at appropriate
2816 sizes and elevations so as not to impede aquatic life movements. (NDOT Environmental, Contractor)

2817 To avoid impacts on fish and other aquatic organisms, an erosion control plan and a SWPPP would be
2818 developed and implemented. In accordance with the SWPPP and the requirements in the General
2819 Construction Storm Water Permit, NDOT would inspect all erosion and sediment control BMPs every
2820 14 days and after every precipitation event of 0.5 inch or greater. Any BMP adjustments and repairs
2821 would occur within 7 days of the inspection to ensure that water quality is being protected to the
2822 maximum extent practicable. The SWPPP would be maintained, and discharge points would be
2823 monitored by NDOT until the site is 70 percent revegetated. (NDOT Environmental, Contractor)

2824 According to NDOT's Standard Specifications for Highway Construction, Subsection 202.01(2)(b), the
2825 Contractor would be responsible for disposal of all vegetation for NDOT ROW and the limits of
2826 construction. Disturbed areas would be seeded in accordance with NDOT's Standard Specifications,
2827 Subsection 803.02. Revegetation of the area following construction would occur using seed mixtures
2828 containing native grasses, legumes, and forbs to appropriately landscape the region, as specified in
2829 NDOT's Plan for the Roadside Environment for a rural highway corridor (NDOT 2008). (NDOT
2830 Environmental, Contractor)

2831 As stated in NDOT's Standard Specifications for Highway Construction, Subsection 107.12, "The
2832 Contractor should prevent the transfer of invasive plant and animal species and should wash all
2833 equipment at the Contractor's storage facility prior to entering the construction site. The Contractor
2834 should inspect all construction equipment and remove all attached vegetation and animal prior to
2835 leaving the construction site." (NDOT Environmental, Contractor)

2836 Appropriate mulching materials, as defined in NDOT's Standard Specifications for Highway
2837 Construction, Subsection 806.02(1), should be applied and should not include brome hay, rushes,
2838 cattails, reed canary grass, wide-bladed grass, or invasive species. All sod, if required, to be applied to
2839 the Project should be free from noxious weeds and all other weeds. (NDOT Environmental, Contractor)

2840 3.18 Cumulative Impacts

2841 Assessing cumulative impacts considers whether adding "one more project" to what is already going
2842 on in the Project Study Area would be the tipping point into making the overall impact significant.
2843 Indirect impacts are from actions, often taken by others, at a later time because of the Project.

- 2844 The following definitions apply to this section and are based on 40 CFR 1500–1508:
- 2845 • **Direct effect** – caused by the Project and occurs at the same time and place. [Note: The direct
- 2846 effects of the Preferred Alternative were described in the previous sections of this Draft EA].
- 2847 • **Indirect effects** – caused by the Project but occur later in time or are farther removed in
- 2848 distance but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects may include growth-inducing
- 2849 effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population
- 2850 density or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems.
- 2851 • **Cumulative impact** – change in the environment resulting from the incremental impact of the
- 2852 project when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the
- 2853 Project Study Area.

2854 3.18.1 Affected Environment

2855 The methodology used to address cumulative impacts involves identifying **past, present, and**

2856 **reasonably foreseeable future** projects; reviewing resources that would be affected by the Project;

2857 determining the approximate time frames and locations of impacts; considering the types of impacts

2858 likely; and selecting the resources requiring detailed evaluation of cumulative impacts.

2859 Past and present projects can include those that are currently under construction and would be

2860 completed prior to the analyzed project or those that could change the functionality of a region, such

2861 as traffic patterns or induced growth. Reasonably foreseeable future projects can include ongoing

2862 projects, such as transportation and commercial or industrial development, that are not expected to

2863 be completed by the time the analyzed project would begin construction or are planned projects that

2864 are included in planning documents for the area.

2865 **Table 3.16** lists the projects that were identified as past, present and reasonably foreseeable:

2866 **Table 3.14 Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Projects**

Projects	Timeframe
NDOT CN 42691, STP-14-2(128), In Central City and South Central City redevelopment of 8 acres of former NCRC land to parkland Private development added 11 new residential units on 10 th St in Central City Private development added a six-plex housing unit near 14 th St and 14 th Ave intersection Central City solar array, built to bring 500kW of energy to the community	Past
NDOT CN 41704, S-30-4(1046), US-30 Expansion, Grand Island NDOT CN 42782A, NH-STP-81-2(154), US 81 Stombsburg North NDOT CN 42782B, NH-81-2(155), In Stombsburg NDOT CN 42826, NH-281-2(129), US 281 St Libory North and South NDOT CN 42816, STP-39-2(107), N-92 Silver Creek to Duncan	Present
NDOT CN 42966, STP-14-2(129), I-80 North to Aurora NDOT CN 43007, STP-14-2(130), Aurora North NDOT CN 42948, NH-30-4(164), US-30 in Grand Island NDOT CN 42943, NH-30-5(141), Chapman to Central City NDOT CN 42818, NH-30-5(136), Central City East	Future

NDOT CN 42929, NH-30-5 (139), Chapman West	
NDOT CN 43025, NH-34-4(138), In Grand Island and South (NB)	
NDOT CN 42963, STP-92-4(110), N-92 Platte River West	
NDOT CN 42967, S-81-2(1051), US 81 York to Columbus	

2867 See **Appendix M, Cumulative Impacts** for further discussion on these actions.

2868 **Resources Considered for Impacts Analysis:**

2869 Based on the impacts from the Project and the nature of the above-identified projects, no resources
2870 were carried forward for a detailed cumulative impacts evaluation. The cumulative impact analysis
2871 can be found in **Appendix M, Cumulative Impacts**.

2872 **3.18.2 Impacts of the No Build Alternative**

2873 Direct impacts associated with the No Build Alternative are evaluated in this Draft EA. Additionally, all
2874 past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions have been or would be permitted based on federal,
2875 state, and local resource requirements prior to construction. There would be no cumulative impacts
2876 associated with the No Build Alternative and the projects listed above.

2877 **3.18.3 Impacts of the Preferred Alternative**

2878 Direct impacts associated with the Preferred Alternative are evaluated in this Draft EA.

2879 No adverse, cumulative impacts are anticipated for any of the resources discussed above due to the
2880 Preferred Alternative and past actions. The past actions would have been permitted based on federal,
2881 state, and local requirements.

2882 No adverse, cumulative impacts are anticipated for any of the resources discussed above due to the
2883 Preferred Alternative and present or future actions. The identified projects by their nature do not have
2884 more than minor impacts on adjacent resources. These projects would be permitted based on federal,
2885 state, and local resource requirements prior to construction.

2886 **3.18.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation**

2887 To avoid or minimize cumulative impacts to the transportation network, NDOT district office should
2888 consider the timeline of construction on official planned detour routes so that this work is not
2889 occurring when the roadway is needed as a detour for this project.

2890 **3.19 Summary of Impacts**

2891 A summary of the impacts resulting from the Preferred Alternative is provided in **Table 3.15**.

2892 **Table 3.15 Summary of Impacts**

Resource	Impacts
Farmland	The entire Study Area is within the corporate limits of the City of Central City, which are specifically considered urban, built-up land, and therefore, not considered prime farmland. There would be no effects on prime farmland, farming operations, or other agricultural activities.
Section 6(f)	The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission review found that there is one (1) Land and Water Conservation Fund Act property within the Study Area, Central City Park. There are no direct impacts to this park nor restricted access, therefore, no further action is needed.
Air Quality	The vehicle miles traveled (VMT) estimated for the Preferred Alternative is slightly higher than that for the No Build Alternative. This increase in VMT would lead to higher MSAT emissions along the highway corridor, along with a corresponding decrease in MSAT emissions along the parallel routes. Because the estimated cumulative VMT is nearly the same, it is expected that there would be no appreciable difference in overall MSAT emissions.
Wild and Scenic Rivers	There are no Wild and Scenic Rivers present, and there would be no impacts.
Paleontology	The Highway Paleontology Program has not identified any paleontological sites in the Study Area. In the event of the discovery of paleontological materials during construction, the Contractor would adhere to NDOT Standard Specification for Highway Construction.
Transportation	The Project is anticipated to have minor, short-term, adverse impacts on the transportation network during construction. Construction would proceed under traffic conditions, with lane closures managed by appropriate traffic control devices and practices. To facilitate through truck traffic on N-14 and the US-30 corridor, detours will be implemented to bypass Central City. After construction, the Project would enhance flow of traffic through downtown, improve safety at intersections, and reduce congestion.
Land Use	The preferred alternative would convert approximately 12.2 acres of land into the transportation facility, with land acquired from both public and private entities. No additional changes in land use are expected beyond the land purchased for the project. Conversion of this land would be compatible with land use plans. Temporary impacts during construction may occur in the form of temporary easements for access
Right-of-Way and Relocations	The Preferred Alternative would require the acquisition of approximately 12.2 acres of new right-of-way (ROW) north of US-30 and east of N-14, with no ROW acquisition needed downtown. Additionally, the project is anticipated to acquire 1.36 acres in temporary easements for construction. The Preferred Alternative would also involve the acquisition and relocation of three dry storage buildings. The existing land uses of these parcels are predominantly farmsteads, grassed fields, residential, railroad land, and industrial or commercial.

Resource	Impacts
Utilities	The Preferred Alternative would require the relocation of several utilities, including power lines, gas lines, and telecommunications infrastructure, to accommodate project developments. Utilities located within the ROW would be responsible for relocating their own facilities at their own cost, while utilities outside of the ROW may be eligible for compensation as determined by NDOT. Underground utilities may be relocated or encased under the new roadway, and adjustments to transmission lines and poles near the Central City Power substation would be required. NDOT would continue to coordinate with utility companies during final design to identify specific impacts and needed relocations.
Community Impact Assessment	The Project would have minor, short- and long-term, beneficial impacts on the populations in and near the Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Study Area. Minor, short-term impacts will occur during the construction phase of the Preferred Alternative due to detours and access restrictions, which will be managed following NDOT's construction standards. The local economy will also see short-term beneficial impacts from increased business activity due to construction jobs. Long-term, the project is expected to enhance community connections, safety, and non-motorized mobility, thereby improving access to community facilities and emergency services and enhancing the quality of life for residents. Additionally, long-term economic and population benefits are anticipated from the improved traffic flow and streetscape aesthetics, fostering stronger community cohesion and stimulating economic opportunities in Central City
Environmental Justice	Minority and low-income populations were identified in the Study Area based on NDOT's Environmental Justice methodology developed in coordination with FHWA. However, there are no anticipated disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects to these groups, as defined in FHWA. Translations or specialized outreach for limited English proficiency is required for this Project because a population with limited English proficiency was identified for the total population affected by the Project.
Visual Effects	Temporary visual impacts will stem from construction activities, including visible equipment and disturbed ground. Permanent visual impacts will result from the removal of a small, illuminated intersection island and the introduction of new structures like a viaduct, roundabout, and T-intersection. Overall, while the project will alter Central City's visual aesthetics, it aligns with current and planned land uses, blending new structures with the existing urban environment.
Noise	The noise analysis indicates that in the 2049 Build scenario, no receivers would experience a noise impact, as noise levels are not projected to approach or exceed the Noise Abatement Criteria. For the 2049 scenario, the no-build noise levels show only a minimal increase of one to two dBA from existing levels in 2020, a change that is generally imperceptible to humans. Additionally, when comparing the 2049 No-Build to the 2049 Build scenarios, noise levels are expected to increase by one to three dBA. This subtle variation suggests that the project's impact on environmental noise levels will be minimal and largely undetectable by humans.
Historic Properties	Nineteen historic properties were identified within the APE, but these properties will not be affected by the project as proposed. FHWA has determined that no historic properties will be affected by the proposed project and has made a project effects determination of <i>no historic properties affected</i> .

Resource	Impacts
Section 4(f) Properties	<p>The Preferred Alternative would require the temporary occupancy of 100 square feet of the north end of the Dark Island Trail where it meets US-30. Dark Island Trail will remain open to the public and continue to operate normally. Alternative access will be maintained from the Fox Theater parking lot and the Central Park parking lot.</p> <p>The Preferred Alternative does not require any temporary easement or other property acquisitions within the Study Area.</p>
Hazardous Materials	<p>Eleven hazardous material sites were identified that could impact the project. There is a low potential for contamination in soil and/or groundwater to be encountered during construction of the proposed project corridor along 16th Street, G Street, and the N-14 access connection to the proposed UPRR viaduct. There is a medium potential for contamination in soil and/or groundwater to be encountered during construction of the proposed viaduct with regards to the Central City Former Manufactured Gas Plant. A Medium Potential Commitment is required.</p> <p>Any building structures to be demolished would require inspections for asbestos and there is a potential need for toxic metal/lead paint disposal.</p>
Water Quality	<p>Impacts on streams, irrigation canals, and drains would include construction of a new box culvert for Warm Slough and lengthening the existing N-14 box culvert.</p> <p>The Preliminary Impact Area may affect two (2) registered groundwater wells. Any registered wells within the ROW would be properly decommissioned. NDOT would coordinate with the owners of any wells directly affected by the Preferred Alternative.</p> <p>A NPDES permit is required to ensure that stormwater runoff impacts are addressed. Temporary construction impacts on water quality are anticipated but would be mitigated through the acquisition of the permit and implementation of an associated Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan.</p>
Floodplains	<p>The Preferred Alternative would encroach on or run parallel to the Trouble Creek and Warm Slough floodplains. The Preferred Alternative is not anticipated to cause greater than one (1) foot of rise in the base flood elevation of the floodplains it crosses, nor increase the potential for property loss and hazard to life.</p> <p>Per 23 CFR 650.111, the Preferred Alternative would result in functionally dependent floodplain uses. There would be limited impacts on the natural and beneficial floodplain values of the floodplains along this project. The Preferred Alternative would not result in a base flood causing significant potential interruption or termination of the transportation facility, which is needed for emergency vehicles or a community's only evacuation route. It also would not result in a significant risk or potential for loss of life or property due to the base flood. This Project would not result in a substantial adverse impact on natural and beneficial floodplain values.</p> <p>Temporary impacts on floodplains during construction may occur in the form of construction access and temporary structures. A floodplain development permit and certifications would be obtained prior to construction, and the Project would comply with local floodplain regulations.</p>

Resource	Impacts
Wetlands and Water Resources	The Preferred Alternative would permanently affect approximately 0.091 acres of wetlands. Temporary impacts to wetlands are anticipated and would be restored to pre-construction or improved conditions. Construction of the Preferred Alternative and temporary impacts requires a CWA Section 404 Nationwide Permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers.
Threatened and Endangered Species	The Preferred Alternative may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, northern long-eared bat and tricolored bat. Avoidance and minimization measures for the bat species will be implemented.
Fish, Wildlife, and Vegetation	Given the already substantial ecological alterations due to the urbanization of the study area, the ecosystem is likely more resilient to the disturbances anticipated from construction. During construction, some riparian vegetation near waterways will be temporarily disturbed, particularly during the installation of bridges and culverts. Vegetation disturbed during Project construction would consist mainly of introduced species found commonly throughout the area. Revegetation in all disturbed areas would use NDOT-approved native seed mixes that would improve plant species composition.
Cumulative Impacts	No adverse, cumulative impacts are anticipated for any of the resources previously discussed, considering the Preferred Alternative along with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions. All related projects will adhere to federal, state, and local resource requirements prior to construction, ensuring compliance with regulatory standards.

2893 **3.20 Permits and Approvals**

2894 Permits and approvals that would be required to implement the Project are listed in **Table 3.16**.

2895 **Table 3.16 Permits and Approvals**

Permit or Approval	Granting Agency(ies)	Reason
Clean Water Act Section 404 permit	USACE	Authorization is required for placement of dredged or fill material in wetlands or other waters of the US. An Individual Permit with mitigation is anticipated.
Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification	NDEE	This certification is required as part of the Section 404 permit issuance.
National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) general stormwater discharge permit for construction activities, Clean Water Act, including a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)	NDEE	The NPDES permit, required for construction sites greater than 1 acre in size, authorizes (with the implementation of permit-specified mitigation) the discharge of stormwater associated with activities from a construction site. A SWPPP is required under the general permit to help prevent stormwater pollution, and control erosion and sedimentation.
Floodplain Development Permit	Merrick County	As a participating party in FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program, Merrick County regulate activities that encroach within their FEMA-designated Zone A 100-year floodplains.

Permit or Approval	Granting Agency(ies)	Reason
Section 4(f) of the US Department of Transportation Act	FHWA	FHWA must approve the use of properties protected by Section 4(f). A temporary occupancy is anticipated for the Dark Island Trail. Section 4(f) documentation and coordination would occur following the public hearing.
Air Quality Construction Permit	NDEE	This permit would be required if a new emission unit (such as a portable batch plant for paving applications) were needed for construction. It has not yet been determined if a portable plant would be needed for the Project. Acquisition of this permit, if needed, would be the responsibility of the roadway construction Contractor.
Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act	USFWS	Section 7 consultation with USFWS must occur regarding potential impacts on threatened and endangered species and their habitat. Evaluation according to the 2023 NDOT Programmatic Agreement for Biological Assessment with USFWS, FHWA, and NGPC has indicated a "May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect" determination for the northern long-eared bat, and tri-colored bat with implementation of conservation conditions and avoidance and minimization measures.
Nebraska Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act	NGPC	Consultation with NGPC must occur regarding potential impacts on state-listed threatened and endangered species and their habitat. Evaluation according to the 2023 NDOT Programmatic Agreement for Biological Assessment with USFWS, FHWA, and NGPC has indicated a "May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect" determination for the northern long-eared bat, and tri-colored bat with implementation of conservation conditions and avoidance and minimization measures.

2896

2897 Chapter 4 Agency and Public Coordination

2898 This chapter summarizes agency coordination and public involvement that have taken place during
2899 the development of this DEA. NDOT used a variety of methods for providing information to and getting
2900 input from stakeholders. A project stakeholder is anyone who has an interest in or may be affected by
2901 the proposed Project, either directly or indirectly, including businesses, resource agencies, elected
2902 officials, and public officials. **Appendix N** contains agency coordination including coordination letters,
2903 scoping meeting materials, and comments received. **Appendix N** also contains public meeting
2904 materials and comments received from the public as well as stakeholder input.

2905 4.1 Resource Agency Coordination

2906 A resource agency is a division of government with a specific regulatory role and technical expertise
2907 that can provide knowledge or assistance. Involving agencies early and throughout development of
2908 the Project can help identify potential issues and streamline permitting processes. Agencies have had
2909 the opportunity to comment on the Project three times during Project development.

2910 4.1.1 Kickoff & Pre-Scoping Meeting

2911 A kickoff and pre-scoping meeting was held on August 7, 2012, at Nebraska Department of
2912 Transportation. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the project overview and background,
2913 preliminary purpose and need, alternatives, the study areas, agency scoping plan/meeting, FHWA
2914 concerns/key issues and next steps.

2915 FHWA was in attendance. During the meeting, NDOT gave a brief history of the project, which
2916 previously included re-aligning N-14 several blocks to the east. This alignment was studied in 2006 in
2917 a Categorical Exclusion (CE) that was approved in January 2007. The alignment studied in the CE was
2918 not carried forward due to the inability to reach an agreement with the BNSF railroad company, the
2919 owners of the property at the time, regarding the purchase of ROW. Other topics discussed were that
2920 NDOT's railroad train-mile-tax program would be used to provide some funds for the project, NDOT's
2921 exposure factor criteria, and the policy for the required closing of other nearby railroad crossings. A
2922 fact sheet was provided that described information about the project, and listed potential
2923 environmental resources that may occur in the study area.

2924 Several questions were asked regarding the exposure factor criteria, the closure of railroad crossings,
2925 the previous alignment, the CE, and the potential environmental resources.

2926 4.1.2 Agency Scoping Meeting

2927 An agency scoping meeting was held on September 10, 2012, at NDOT Headquarters in Lincoln,
2928 Nebraska. Local, state and federal agencies were invited. The purpose of the meeting was to present
2929 the Project to the agencies and to seek input on the Project purpose and need, study area, past work
2930 completed, natural resources, hazardous materials, trails, potential historic resources, socio-
2931 economic/environmental justice, traffic operations, crossing closure evaluation, and pedestrian
2932 crossings.

2933 4.1.3 FHWA Risk-Based Project (RBP) Kickoff Meeting

2934 In 2023, a risk-based project (RBP) meeting was held on July 19, 2023, via Teams. NDOT and FHWA
2935 were in attendance. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss project background and history,
2936 current scope and proposed effort, preferred alternative, purpose and need, and scheduling and
2937 reporting. Discussion during the meeting included the topics of noise and beginning environmental

2938 justice reviews. Part of the conversation involved letting FHWA know early when documents are being
2939 sent over for review, including agency reviews in timelines and potentially inviting FHWA to Project
2940 Coordination Meetings. There was also discussion regarding assuming the presence of endangered
2941 bats.

2942 4.1.4 Agency Scoping Meeting

2943 Another agency scoping meeting was held on September 11, 2023, at NDOT Headquarters in Lincoln,
2944 Nebraska. Ten (10) local, state and federal agencies were invited. The purpose of the meeting was to
2945 present the background and project history, and potential project impacts. The meeting then received
2946 agency comments regarding the proposed project. There was discussion regarding the tricolor bat,
2947 potential schedule risks, and if the project was seeking expedited reviews from any other agencies.

2948 4.2 Public and Stakeholder Coordination

2949 The purpose of public involvement during the NEPA process is two-fold: (1) it provides stakeholders
2950 with information about the proposed Project and its status; and (2) it allows NDOT to get input on the
2951 proposed Project or Project Study Area. Ideally, public involvement builds agreement about a project
2952 solution by determining benefits and impacts while addressing concerns that have been identified.

2953 4.2.1 Public Meeting

2954 A public information open house meeting was held on November 17, 2016, at Central City Elementary
2955 School, in Central City, Nebraska. Approximately 88 people were in attendance. At the meeting, NDOT
2956 presented proposed alternatives, environmental resources, potential impacts, and allowed feedback
2957 from the public. The general response for the project was positive. The East and East Close proposed
2958 alternatives seemed to be favored. Some preference was given to the On-Alignment route. The West
2959 alternative was largely opposed.

2960 NDOT received 34 comments during the specified comment period (October 27, 2016, through
2961 December 5, 2016). Of the 34 comments, 17 indicated a preferred alternative with 16 of those favoring
2962 one or both East Alignments. A plan was made to proceed forward in developing environmental
2963 documents for the two east alternatives as well as the on-alignment alternative. Other concerns heard
2964 at the meeting and through written comment included the viaduct size and capacity, business and
2965 home impacts and pedestrian safety.

2966 The comments and corresponding responses are summarized in **Table 4.1** and are detailed in the
2967 public meeting summary in **Appendix N**.

2968 Table of public comments and responses (Comments from the same person were merged):

2969 **Table 4.1 Comments and Responses**

Comment	Response
<p>Concerned about safety and access to the hospital. Supportive of a viaduct, especially the East and East Close alternatives.</p>	<p>Your concern for safety and emergency access is greatly appreciated. With any solution, safety and first responder access will remain a top priority in this project. The viaduct solutions would reduce the delay time for vehicles crossing the tracks, and would provide access at all times, as opposed to the current situation, where trains can block multiple crossings for extended durations. There are also great safety benefits to separating trains from pedestrian and vehicle traffic.</p> <p>We will continue to also take into consideration the needs of local truck traffic as they try to access key locations within Central City (CO-</p>

Comment	Response
	OP, Ethanol Plant, etc.). While reducing the truck traffic going through town is outside of the scope of this project, modifications at the intersection of US-30 and N-14 will likely reduce the amount of congestion currently taking place in that location.
Consider grain trucks going to the elevator and ethanol plant.	RESPONSE COMBINED WITH OTHER
Concerned about heavy truck traffic in downtown area. Supportive of East alternatives to allow better access and less congestion for downtown. Currently crosses the tracks at C Street often.	We will continue to take into consideration the needs of local truck traffic as they try to access key locations within Central City (CO-OP, Ethanol Plant, etc.). While reducing the truck traffic going through town is outside of the scope of this project, modifications at the intersection of US-30 and N-14 will likely reduce the amount of congestion currently taking place in that location.
Commonly walks across Hwy 14. Consideration of large truck traffic.	We recognize that the busy traffic in Central City's downtown area has grown to be a concern. We will continue to look at alternatives to help alleviate the safety concerns and traffic backups for residents. Each of the proposed solutions would likely involve some improvements to the downtown area, specifically the N-14/US-30 intersection. The environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts on traffic patterns and pedestrian safety from these improvements.
Safety at Hwy 14/Hwy 30 intersection is a concern, as well as large truck traffic. Prefer either East route.	We recognize that the busy traffic in Central City's downtown area has grown to be a concern. We will continue to look at alternatives to help alleviate the safety concerns and traffic backups for residents and businesses. Each of the proposed solutions would likely involve some improvements to the downtown area, specifically the N-14/US-30 intersection near your office. The environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts on traffic patterns and pedestrian safety from these improvements.
Concern about safe construction, and a joint effort for residents and businesses to be involved and concerns heard. The East Route is preferred, and roundabouts are ok.	<p>Your concern for safety during construction is greatly appreciated. Strict safety protocol during construction would be followed for a safe and successful project.</p> <p>We appreciate the Public's feedback, and will continue working closely with the Central City community as we develop this project. Another meeting will be scheduled in the future to bring more design details to the public, and gain more input on a refined set of alternatives.</p>
Decreased train noise will be a benefit. Concerned about citizens safely exiting their car when parked on Main Street because of heavy truck traffic. Requested that Hwy 30 become a 4-lane Hwy from Missouri Valley to Kearney. Supportive of a Hwy 14 overpass.	Reduced train noise, safety and access will all be benefits of this project. We recognize that the busy traffic in Central City's downtown area has grown to be a concern. We will continue to look at alternatives to help alleviate the safety concerns and traffic backups for residents. Adding lanes on US-30 outside of Central City are not in this project's plans at this time, however, each of the proposed solutions would likely involve some improvements to the downtown area, specifically the N-14/US-30 intersection. The environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts on traffic patterns and pedestrian safety from these improvements. In addition, noise will also be reviewed and taken into consideration as the project progresses.

Comment	Response
<p>Concerned that the large amount of truck traffic through town may not be corrected by an overpass. Concerned that the West and On-Alignment alternatives would create complications to get to many businesses.</p>	<p>While reducing the truck traffic going through town is outside of the scope of this project, modifications at the intersection of US-30 and N-14 will likely reduce the amount of congestion currently taking place in that location.</p> <p>We recognize your concern with the West and On-Alignment alternatives, and have decided not to carry the West Alignment forward as an option.</p>
<p>Although the reduction of traffic through town is an economic concern, supportive of an alternative that takes the traffic away from town and off the current 17th Avenue Route.</p>	<p>Your concern for safety and heavy traffic is greatly appreciated. We recognize that the busy traffic in Central City's downtown area has grown to be a concern. We will continue to look at alternatives to help alleviate the safety concerns and traffic backups for residents. Each of the proposed solutions would likely involve some improvements to the downtown area, specifically the N-14/US-30 intersection. The environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts on traffic patterns and pedestrian safety from these improvements.</p>
<p>Overall safety and the safety of children traveling to/from school is a concern. Traffic flow and congestion in town is a concern, as well as long-term usage and building for future traffic predictions.</p>	<p>Your concern for safety and long-term usage is greatly appreciated. The environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts on current and future traffic patterns and pedestrian safety from these improvements. We will also continue to take into consideration the needs of local truck traffic as they try to access key locations within Central City (CO-OP, Ethanol Plant, etc.). While reducing the truck traffic going through town is outside of the scope of this project, modifications at the intersection of US-30 and N-14 will likely reduce the amount of congestion currently taking place in that location.</p>
<p>Limiting traffic/train interaction and increased access for emergency vehicles is a benefit to this project. There are also benefits economically and socially for the growth of Central City. Better access to businesses is needed. Some businesses are waiting to expand until this project is completed to ensure essential services, like emergency response. Concerns remain for the Hwy 14/Hwy 30 intersection. Even with a viaduct, would encourage a re-route of Hwy 30 around the South end of town and take N-14 west and south to join with Hwy 30 West of town. Would support acquiring properties to address the intersection/congestion if needed.</p>	<p>Economic development, property acquisition and the vitality of Central City are very important considerations for this project, and will be considered in our alternative analysis. Separating train and traffic and increased emergency vehicle access will be great benefits to this project. We will continue to take into consideration the needs of local truck traffic as they try to access key locations within Central City (CO-OP, Ethanol Plant, etc.). While reducing the truck traffic going through town and a re-route of Hwy 30 are outside of the scope of this project, modifications at the intersection of US-30 and N-14 will likely reduce the amount of congestion currently taking place in that location.</p>
<p>Concerns are for the safety of school buses and other vehicles, as well as pedestrians crossing the tracks. A viaduct especially benefits emergency vehicles. Concerned about protecting "historic" properties. Most supportive of the East Alternative.</p>	<p>Your concern for safety and emergency access is greatly appreciated. With any solution, safety and first responder access will remain a top priority in this project. The viaduct solutions would reduce the delay time for vehicles crossing the tracks, and would provide access at all times, as opposed to the current situation, where trains can block multiple crossings for extended durations. There are also great safety benefits to separating trains from pedestrian and vehicle traffic.</p> <p>Historic properties, and the vitality of Central City are also very important considerations for this project, and will be considered in our alternative analysis.</p>

Comment	Response
<p>When an ambulance needs to cross and a train is on the tracks, every second counts for that person. A unique consideration is funeral processions to the cemetery.</p>	<p>Your concern for safety and emergency access is greatly appreciated. With any solution, safety and first responder access will remain a top priority in this project. The viaduct solutions would reduce the delay time for vehicles crossing the tracks, and would provide access at all times, as opposed to the current situation, where trains can block multiple crossings for extended durations. There are also great safety benefits to separating trains from pedestrian and vehicle traffic.</p>
<p>Feels that an overpass is needed and would like to see it built sooner, rather than later. Travels as much North as South out of town, usually along Hwy 14. Believes an overpass would be safer for everyone. Prefers the East Close or East Alternatives, but would like to see any overpass built.</p>	<p>Thank you for your support of the proposed viaduct. Safety and the environmental impacts in Central City are very important considerations for this project, and will be considered in our alternative analysis.</p> <p>Environmental impacts, including wetlands, are very important considerations for this project, and will be evaluate through the environmental assessment process. All appropriate permits will be attained if needed.</p> <p>Your concern for emergency access is greatly appreciated. With any solution, safety and first responder access will remain a top priority in this project. The viaduct solutions would reduce the delay time for vehicles crossing the tracks, and would provide access at all times, as opposed to the current situation, where trains can block multiple crossings for extended durations. There are also great safety benefits to separating trains from pedestrian and vehicle traffic.</p>
<p>Believes the build alternatives are beneficial for emergency personnel, and believes it is needed. Concerned about environmental impacts on wetlands.</p>	<p>RESPONSE COMBINED WITH OTHER</p>
<p>Does not want to see businesses being moved from the downtown area. Also does not want homes destroyed. Crosses F Ave 4-5 times a day, and C Ave and Hwy 14 once a day. Concerned with farmers that have to get grain to the elevators and the ethanol plant. Thinks it would be inconvenient to have several crossings closed, but believes the viaduct would help with traffic back up. Believes the best option for the community is the East Close Alignment, closing just the Hwy 14 crossing, allowing access to the ethanol plant and elevators, as well as access across C & F Aves. Closing Hwy 14 crossing would help eliminate the stop lights and railroad problems of traffic back up.</p>	<p>Economic development, wetland impacts, property acquisition and the vitality of Central City are very important considerations for this project, and will be considered in our alternative analysis.</p> <p>We continue to take into consideration the needs of local truck traffic as they try to access key locations within Central City (CO-OP, Ethanol Plant, etc.). While reducing the truck traffic going through town is outside of the scope of this project, modifications at the intersection of US-30 and N-14 will likely reduce the amount of congestion currently taking place in that location.</p> <p>There are also great safety benefits to separating trains and traffic, and providing uninterrupted emergency vehicle access. Closing a railroad crossing would increase safety for vehicles crossing the tracks, and encourage use of the viaduct, reducing traffic back up around the tracks.</p>
<p>Other communities smaller than Central City have viaducts, and it would be an economic boost for development. Believes the viaduct is needed to provide improved safety North of the tracks, in particular for</p>	<p>Your concern for safety and emergency access is greatly appreciated. With any solution, safety and first responder access will remain a top priority in this project. The viaduct solutions would reduce the delay time for vehicles crossing the tracks, and would provide access at all times, as opposed to the current situation, where trains can block</p>

Comment	Response
<p>fire equipment and ambulances. Improved access for farmers north of tracks to ethanol and Cargill as well. Many large semis have to wait for trains when hauling grain, etc. Funeral processions can be split up due to waiting for trains. Uses the 14th Avenue crossing several times each week. Prefers the viaduct being built on the East Alternative.</p>	<p>multiple crossings for extended durations. There are also great safety benefits to separating trains from pedestrian and vehicle traffic.</p> <p>Economic development, and the vitality of Central City are also very important considerations for this project, and will be considered in our alternative analysis. We will continue to take into consideration the needs of local truck traffic as they try to access key locations within Central City (CO-OP, Ethanol Plant, etc.). While reducing the truck traffic going through town is outside of the scope of this project, modifications at the intersection of US-30 and N-14 will likely reduce the amount of congestion currently taking place in that location.</p>
<p>East – Concerned about environment and cost</p> <p>East Close – Most Reasonable</p> <p>On Alignment – Best plan, but concerned about width</p> <p>West – No</p> <p>Crosses the tracks several times a week while managing rental properties. Concerned about safety, and lessening noise from the railroad. Consider truck traffic. Believes the viaduct is needed badly.</p>	<p>Your concern for safety and emergency access is greatly appreciated. With any solution, safety and first responder access will remain a top priority in this project. The viaduct solutions would reduce the delay time for vehicles crossing the tracks, and would provide access at all times, as opposed to the current situation, where trains can block multiple crossings for extended durations. There are also great safety benefits to separating trains from pedestrian and vehicle traffic.</p> <p>In addition, we will continue to look at alternatives to help alleviate traffic backups for residents. While reducing the truck traffic going through town is outside of the scope of this project, modifications at the intersection of US-30 and N-14 will likely reduce the amount of congestion currently taking place in that location.</p>
<p>Concerned about the potential loss and/or forced relocation for some residential properties. Believes an overpass is necessary as it will decrease wait times at the crossings, particular in life-or-death situations for emergency vehicles. Downtown streets will last longer if the truck and trailer traffic is reduced.</p> <p>Worries that regardless of placement, noise pollution will be an issue due to trailers using Jake Brakes. Questions the economics of this issue after the last effort was not completed. Concerned about the proposed overpass ending at the start of the Hike & Bike Trail where there will be heavy foot traffic.</p> <p>A roundabout may involve part of their yard. In what way will property owners be compensated for loss of property and property devaluation?</p>	<p>Economic development, property acquisition, the trail system, and the vitality of Central City are very important considerations for this project, and will be considered in our alternative analysis. Your concern for safety and emergency access is greatly appreciated. With any solution, safety and first responder access will remain a top priority in this project. The viaduct solutions would reduce the delay time for vehicles crossing the tracks, and would provide access at all times, as opposed to the current situation, where trains can block multiple crossings for extended durations. There are also great safety benefits to separating trains from pedestrian and vehicle traffic.</p> <p>A traffic noise study will be completed to predict if there are any traffic noise impacts in the future as a result of the project and if potential impacts are mitigatable. However, this study is not able take into consideration noise as a result of engine braking. If engine braking is a problem once the project is constructed, it is best to contact the local law enforcement or city officials regarding your concern. The local agencies may have measures they can use to help prevent or reduce engine braking.</p>

Comment	Response
	<p>We appreciate your feedback, and will continue working closely with you and the Central City community as we develop this project, especially if a viaduct design should impact your property. Once preliminary design has been conducted, a clearer picture of any potential impacts caused by the alternatives being considered will be known. Another meeting will be scheduled further into the environmental and design process to bring more details to the public, and gain more input on a refined set of alternatives.</p>
<p>Concerned about safety. Thinks that the East Close Alternative is the best choice because of its proximity to the North Side residents and best for traffic coming from all directions. Second choice would be the East Alternative. Does not believe the No-Build, West or On Alignments are feasible.</p>	<p>Your concern for safety and emergency access is greatly appreciated. With any solution, safety and first responder access will remain a top priority in this project. The viaduct solutions would reduce the delay time for vehicles crossing the tracks, and would provide access at all times, as opposed to the current situation, where trains can block multiple crossings for extended durations. There are also great safety benefits to separating trains from pedestrian and vehicle traffic.</p>
<p>Concerned about ease of travel to town and ease of customers being able to get to their business on the North side of town. Crosses Hwy 14 more than 6times/day for work.</p>	<p>Economic development, and the vitality of Central City are very important considerations for this project, and will be considered in our alternative analysis. The viaduct solutions would reduce the delay time for vehicles crossing the tracks, and would provide access at all times, as opposed to the current situation, where trains can block multiple crossings for extended durations. This would allow unblocked access to your business on the north end of town.</p>
<p>Believes the far East Alternative would be too far away from the population and may only be used when the crossings are blocked with a sitting train. The West alignment would greatly impact a mostly residential area, and is concerned that the On-Alignment Alternative would impact businesses that would likely not relocate. Farm equipment travel needs, especially in the area moving grain to the elevator and ethanol plant should be considered. Believes something should be done about the Hwy 30 truck traffic through downtown, backing up traffic and making it difficult for both foot and vehicle travel.</p>	<p>Economic development, and the vitality of Central City are very important considerations for this project, and will be considered in our alternative analysis.</p> <p>We will continue to take into consideration the needs of local truck traffic as they try to access key locations within Central City (CO-OP, Ethanol Plant, etc.). While reducing the truck traffic going through town is outside of the scope of this project, modifications at the intersection of US-30 and N-14 will likely reduce the amount of congestion currently taking place in that location.</p> <p>With the construction of a viaduct, one or more railroad crossings will be closed to provide an increase in safety and to encourage the use of the viaduct. Vehicle and pedestrian traffic are very important considerations for this project, and will be considered in our alternative analysis.</p>
<p>Believes that having a viaduct would help attract businesses and residents. Believes an overpass shows that the town is progressive and caring of citizen's safety. Prefers the East Alternative, followed by the East Close Alternative, and is thankful for the efforts to get the City an overpass. Being a retired RN, has seen situations where an ambulance could not reach citizens due to a stopped train, and resulting in death in part to the delay. Has also seen fires north of town with fire equipment</p>	<p>Economic development, and the vitality of Central City are very important considerations for this project, and will be considered in our alternative analysis.</p> <p>Your concern for safety and emergency access is greatly appreciated. With any solution, safety and first responder access will remain a top priority in this project. The viaduct solutions would reduce the delay time for vehicles crossing the tracks, and would provide access at all times, as opposed to the current situation, where trains can block</p>

Comment	Response
<p>delays. Believes the On-Alignment Alternative impacts the downtown area negatively. The West Alternative impacts the residential area. Believes that the No-Build alternative is not an option for the protection of life and safety for citizens. Concerned that citizens living south of the tracks will favor no-build to save money.</p>	<p>multiple crossings for extended durations. There are also great safety benefits to separating trains from pedestrian and vehicle traffic.</p> <p>We will also continue to take into consideration the needs of local truck traffic as they try to access key locations within Central City (CO-OP, Ethanol Plant, etc.). While reducing the truck traffic going through town is outside of the scope of this project, modifications at the intersection of US-30 and N-14 will likely reduce the amount of congestion currently taking place in that location.</p>
<p>Concerned on the effect of the area in which the viaduct is constructed. The safety and access for emergency vehicles to cross the tracks is a benefit. Lives on a farm NW of town, and brings 100,000+ bu of corn to the ethanol plant annually. Commonly crosses the tracks along Hwy 14, and crosses the tracks each time they come to town because all services are to the south of the tracks. There is a large volume of truck traffic to the ethanol plant, as well as cattle truck traffic through town on Hwy 14 and Hwy 30. Prefers the East Alternative first, followed by the East Close Alternative. Does not believe the West and On-Alignment Alternatives are acceptable.</p>	<p>RESPONSE COMBINED WITH OTHER</p>
<p>Believes the West Alternative would cause too many congestion issues for downtown, the On-Alignment would require the removal of too many homes, and the East Alternative would push traffic too far back and require paving roads for the extra traffic. Believes the East Close Alternative is the best option.</p> <p>Typically crosses the tracks on Hwy 14, and sometimes C Avenue. Cemetery processions also use Hwy 14.</p> <p>Believes this needs to be done for the safety of the community Looking forward to having a safe pedestrian crossing with the Dark Island Trail. Likes how the East and East Close Alternatives meet up. Trains are often stopped on the tracks, and a way to cross the tracks in case of an emergency is desired.</p>	<p>Your concern for safety and emergency access is greatly appreciated. With any solution, safety and first responder access will remain a top priority in this project. The viaduct solutions would reduce the delay time for vehicles crossing the tracks, and would provide access at all times, as opposed to the current situation, where trains can block multiple crossings for extended durations. There are also great safety benefits to separating trains from pedestrian and vehicle traffic. Trail connectivity and pedestrian safety are important considerations for this project and will be considered in our alternative analysis.</p>
<p>Has an in-home daycare on the north side of the tracks, and walks the children across the tracks during the day. Is concerned that a pedestrian walkway along heavy-traffic roads would be unsafe for their group of small children.</p>	<p>Your concern for safety of pedestrian traffic is greatly appreciated. A shared-use non-vehicular pathway would accommodate pedestrians and bicycle traffic along the new roadway and viaduct. During the alternative analysis process, need for a shared-use pathway or separate pedestrian overpass will be evaluated.</p>

Comment	Response
<p>In favor of the overpass. Owns two rental homes on the East and East Close Routes, expressed willingness to work with ROW. Provided consideration of Green Plains Ethanol truck traffic.</p>	<p>We will continue to take into consideration the needs of local truck traffic as they try to access key locations within Central City (CO-OP, Ethanol Plant, etc.). While reducing the truck traffic going through town is outside of the scope of this project, modifications at the intersection of US-30 and N-14 will likely reduce the amount of congestion currently taking place in that location.</p>
<p>Most in favor of the East Alternative, perceived to have the least amount of impacts to homes. Economic concerns if traffic doesn't stay on Hwy 30.</p>	<p>Economic development, and the vitality of Central City are very important considerations for this project, and will be considered in our alternative analysis.</p>
<p>Most in favor of the East Close Alternative, perceived to have less impacts to homes, is a reasonable route for bicycle and pedestrian traffic, and provides a better traffic route. Is confident the curve over the tracks can be completed safely.</p>	<p>Economic development, the navigability, and vitality of Central City are very important considerations for this project, and will be considered in our alternative analysis.</p>
<p>Concerned money spent on this project could be better used on other projects. Expressed concern the town will suffer economic impacts due to missed opportunities from out-of-town visitors. Feels emergency vehicles will have increased travel time due to the potential improvements. Concern there will be a large amount of impacts to homes, property owners, businesses and trees.</p>	<p>Your concern for safety and emergency access is greatly appreciated. With any solution, safety and first responder access will remain a top priority in this project. The viaduct solutions would reduce the delay time for vehicles crossing the tracks, and would provide access at all times, as opposed to the current situation, where trains can block multiple crossings for extended durations. There is also a great safety need to separate trains from pedestrian and vehicle traffic.</p> <p>Economic development, tree and property relocation or acquisition, and the vitality of Central City are very important considerations for this project, and will be considered in our alternative analysis. Each of the proposed solutions would likely involve some improvements to the downtown area, specifically the N-14/US-30 intersection. The environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts on traffic patterns and pedestrian safety from these improvements.</p>
<p>In favor of the East and East Close Alternatives. Prefers the East Alternative due to least amount of impacts. Pleased to know that access over the tracks would be available while train is passing through town. Lives on the north side of town on 17th Ave, and crosses the tracks on a regular basis. Expressed concern for emergency vehicle access if nothing if no improvements are made. Traffic backs up for 2-3 blocks in 2-4 directions due to trains. Trucks have a difficult time finding an alternate route. There is a continuous flow of trucks through town. Very much in favor of the viaduct.</p>	<p>Your concern for safety and emergency access is greatly appreciated. With any solution, safety and first responder access will remain a top priority in this project. The viaduct solutions would reduce the delay time for vehicles crossing the tracks, and would provide access at all times, as opposed to the current situation, where trains can block multiple crossings for extended durations. There are also great safety benefits to separating trains from pedestrian and vehicle traffic.</p> <p>We also recognize that the busy traffic in Central City's downtown area has grown to be a concern. We will continue to look at alternatives to help alleviate the safety concerns and traffic backups for residents. Each of the proposed solutions would likely involve some improvements to the downtown area, specifically the N-14/US-30 intersection. The environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts on traffic patterns and pedestrian safety from these improvements.</p>

Comment	Response
<p>Main concern is safety and emergency vehicle access. Lives on Hwy 14 on the north side of town, all daily trips require crossing the tracks. Completely opposed to On-Alignment Alternative. Concern the On-Alignment Alternative would destroy the downtown environment. West Alternative is not a good option for truck traffic. Concerns with roadway width and strength for trucks. Prefers the East Alignment.</p>	<p>RESPONSE COMBINED WITH OTHER</p>
<p>Owns a daycare, concern with road closure. Lives on 13th Ave, crosses the tracks at 13th St. Not in favor of a viaduct in the front yard. Concerned during construction her roadway will be closed. Daycare parents need access to her house for drop off and pick up. Additionally, her brother-in-law farms land off that same roadway. Access will need to be maintained.</p>	<p>Economic development, and the vitality of Central City are very important considerations for this project, and will be considered in our alternative analysis. We will work with you to ensure access to your business remains open.</p>
<p>Believes West and East alignments are “out of the way” and On-Alignment would complicate the already confusing 14/30 intersection. Supports the East Close option. Most concerned about emergency transportation. Also concerned about how the viaduct will look aesthetically. Doesn’t want to see a large “eye sore” for the community. Also concerned about closing RR crossings. Wants to leave as many open as possible for convenient business and home access.</p>	<p>Your concern for safety and emergency access is greatly appreciated. With any solution, safety and first responder access will remain a top priority in this project. The viaduct solutions would reduce the delay time for vehicles crossing the tracks, and would provide access at all times, as opposed to the current situation, where trains can block multiple crossings for extended durations. There are also great safety benefits to separating trains from pedestrian and vehicle traffic with the closure of railroad crossings.</p> <p>Economic development, and the aesthetics and vitality of Central City are very important considerations for this project, and will be considered in our alternative analysis. Once preliminary design has been conducted, a clearer picture of any potential impacts caused by the alternatives being considered will be known.</p>

2970 **4.2.2 Public Meeting**

2971 A public information open house meeting was held on November 18, 2021, at Central City High
 2972 School, in Central City, Nebraska. Approximately 109 people were in attendance. At the meeting, NDOT
 2973 presented the purpose and need, alternatives considered but eliminated, alternatives under further
 2974 consideration, potential impacts, environmental resources, and historic resources.

2975 NDOT received 34 comments during the specified comment period (October 28, 2021, through
 2976 December 18, 2021).

2977 The comments and corresponding responses are summarized in Table 4.2 and are detailed in the
 2978 public meeting summary in **Appendix N**.

2979

Table 4.2: Comments and Responses

Which of the viaduct alignment alternatives do you prefer and why?	Which of the intersection alternatives do you prefer and why?	When considering the alternatives for this proposed project, what are your concerns? What potential benefits do you anticipate?	What street(s) do you use to cross the railroad tracks, how often, and for what purpose?	What social, economic, and environmental concerns do you have on each alternative?	Additional comments, questions, or concerns.	How do you cross the RR tracks. Check all that apply.	NDOT Response
East Alternative because 1. largest area available at N-14 junction & 2. disrupts the least number of property owners.	None. The downtown area shouldn't be disrupted, traffic flow would improve w/closing N-14 RR crossing. The brick businesses shouldn't be relocated.	Concerns- Disruption of business and home owners	N-14 crossing for business and entertainment, no often. 13th St. for access to ethanol plant.	Efficient access to city businesses. Quick easy access for trucks.	Pedestrian/bike RR crossing viaduct would also be needed close to C Avenue.	Drive	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preference for the East Alternative, for your preference on the No Action Alternative and preference for a pedestrian railroad crossing. Improvement would be designed to limit the number of disruptions. Recognized concern regarding the impacts. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.
East Alternative- Least disruptive to homes and businesses	None. Leave downtown alone. The viaduct will slow our problems w/closing HWY 14. No adequate space for round-a-bouts. Proposals unsightly.	Concerns- Disruption of businesses. Benefits-traffic flow over RR tracks, better emergency access	Hwy 14 RR crossing- would forgo if viaduct installed	Not enough space for round-a-bouts. Appearance of round-a-bouts.	Leave downtown alone. Provide viaduct over RR. Who keeps trash off the fence if Hwy 14 RR crossing closed?	Drive	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preference for East Alternative and No Action Alternative. Improvement would be designed to limit the number of disruptions. Recognize concern regarding the impacts. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Maintaining the railroad property and fence responsibility of Union Pacific Railroad. Thanked for participation.
East alternative	One-way pairs. 4.					Drive	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preference for the East Alternative and Concept 4 (one-way pairs). Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.
Whichever works better for those that live in the city.	Whichever works better for those that live in the city.	Whichever works better for those that live in the city.	Whichever works better for those that live in the city.	Whichever works better for those that live in the city.	Whichever works better for those that live in the city.	Drive	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preference. Concern for safety and emergency access appreciated. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.

Which of the viaduct alignment alternatives do you prefer and why?	Which of the intersection alternatives do you prefer and why?	When considering the alternatives for this proposed project, what are your concerns? What potential benefits do you anticipate?	What street(s) do you use to cross the railroad tracks, how often, and for what purpose?	What social, economic, and environmental concerns do you have on each alternative?	Additional comments, questions, or concerns.	How do you cross the RR tracks. Check all that apply.	NDOT Response
East close alternative connecting to 13th St.-1.closer route already in use when street is closed.	Larger roundabout to keep traffic moving and least interruption to C ave and local traffic.	Closing too many alternate/existing crossings and dividing the town. Easy access to the other 1/2 of the town.	C Ave for church, kids school, grocery shopping, getting gas. 10x's or more a day.	Socially and economically-easy access around town	C Ave is important to keep open. It connects to North Park, Kernal Field, and Ormsby connecting to Archer Worms etc. in the most direct way.	Drive Walk Bike	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preference for the East Close Alternative and Concept 2. Appreciated concern re: potential for railroad crossing closures. Nebraska Highway 14 (N-14) and 13th Street likely to be closed. Other crossings are under consideration and the environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.
East-no business loss	Concept 4- Roundabouts are confusing, less business loss	Safety benefits-less time wasted waiting on trains-less noise	Hwy 14- to go to Nursery north of town	Economic-affecting businesses Safety at intersection of 30/14		Drive	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preference for the East Alternative and Concept 4. Concern appreciated for safety at the U.S. Highway 30 (US-30) and Nebraska Highway 14 (N-14). Safety would remain a top priority. Recognized concern regarding the impacts. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.
East Alternative-minimal building cost	Concept 4- Minimal building loss Better traffic flow	Concerns-better/safer Hwy 14/30 intersection Flow of traffic on Hwy 30	Hwy 14- to get North of town	Building Loss/Structural Loss/Business loss		Drive	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preference for the East Alternative and Concept 4. Concern appreciated for safety at the U.S. Highway 30 (US-30) and Nebraska Highway 14 (N-14). Safety would remain a top priority. Recognized concern regarding the impacts. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.
10th -impacts fewer # of residences	Roundabout-traffic flow 2nd- Relocate Hwy 14 to C Ave- requires a stop light	If you close C Ave or F Ave-needed for truck traffic to and from the elevator	F Ave- majority of time, home and work C Ave- less often		Anything is better than what we have now	Drive Bike	Thanked for sharing preference for the East Alternative and Concept 4 (one-way pairs). Concern appreciated for safety at the U.S. Highway 30 (US-30) and Nebraska Highway 14 (N-14). Safety would remain a top priority. Recognized concern regarding the impacts. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.

Which of the viaduct alignment alternatives do you prefer and why?	Which of the intersection alternatives do you prefer and why?	When considering the alternatives for this proposed project, what are your concerns? What potential benefits do you anticipate?	What street(s) do you use to cross the railroad tracks, how often, and for what purpose?	What social, economic, and environmental concerns do you have on each alternative?	Additional comments, questions, or concerns.	How do you cross the RR tracks. Check all that apply.	NDOT Response
None- they both dump traffic to Hwy 30. It solves 1 problem and creates another 1.	Both are no good	No benefits to the project- Central City doesn't benefit	Hwy 14- work- no benefit to closing all of the RR crossings to force viaduct usage		Go back to the drawing board		Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. The No Action Alternative is being reviewed as part of process. Thanked for participation.
None-Poorly thought out- forcing use of viaduct-curved structure with short approaches creates hazards for weather/large truck traffic/oversized loads	None- disruption of: downtown traffic/parking/businesses; Hwy 30 traffic	Disruption of traffic to Hwy30/parking downtown	C Ave, 13th St, Fairgrounds Rd, Hwy 14	Disruption to downtown/disruption to businesses. Added traffic to Hwy 30. Major loss of parking. Traffic hazards due to viaduct.	Getting emergency responder input. Hwy 30 traffic not improving/getting worse	Drive	Concern for safety and emergency access appreciated. Safety and first responder access remain top priority. Recognized concern regarding the impacts. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.
East alternative- it affects less residential home	One-way Pairs- less impact on businesses and senior center/senior citizens	1. Impact to handicap/senior citizens. Kids safety walking to/from school. 2. Hwy 30 traffic- better flow. Emergency Service access. Hwy 14 not being impeded	13th St- daily; 14th St.- daily; C Ave and F Ave- weekly, all for work	Concept 2- businesses/parking being affected. Also, semi traffic Concept 4- need traffic light @C Ave for pedestrians Concept 5- impact to senior citizens/their parking	Harvest Season- C Ave/F Ave truck traffic for Hwy 30 Keep F Ave and C Ave RR crossings open for farmers (grain elevator)	Drive	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preference for the East Alternative and Concept 4. Concept 4 may include a traffic signal at intersection of U.S. Highway 30 (US-30) and Nebraska Highway 14 (N-14). Concern for safety and emergency access appreciated. Safety and first responder access remain top priority. Recognized concern regarding the impacts. Parking stalls would remain compliant with ADA for all proposed alternatives. Thanked for concerns re: truck traffic, especially during harvest season. Will evaluate potential for impact on truck traffic. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.
East-impact fewer residences. Prefer roundabout at highway 30 intersection	Concept 2- best traffic flow		Hwy 14 and Ave F- 3 or 4 times a week. During harvest season 16-20 times a day		An intersection as in concept 2 and no viaduct would improve traffic flow	Drive	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preference for the East Alternative and Concept 2. Thanked for concern re: truck traffic utilizing F Avenue and C Avenue. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.

Which of the viaduct alignment alternatives do you prefer and why?	Which of the intersection alternatives do you prefer and why?	When considering the alternatives for this proposed project, what are your concerns? What potential benefits do you anticipate?	What street(s) do you use to cross the railroad tracks, how often, and for what purpose?	What social, economic, and environmental concerns do you have on each alternative?	Additional comments, questions, or concerns.	How do you cross the RR tracks. Check all that apply.	NDOT Response
None- affects to businesses/residences	Keep C Ave open-main roads for those that live North Don't close RR Crossings-main crossing for emergency vehicle Address Hwy 30 traffic-light timing	Roundabout-semi's being able to use it/buildings demolished to make room for it	E St. and C. Ave-home Hwy 14- to access the other side of the RR	How many businesses/homes destroyed to make it happen	Farmers/people that live on other side of tracks/students use C Ave to cross the RR	Drive	Appreciate input. Thanked for comments, concerns, and preference for the No Action Alternative. No Action Alternative will be carried through the environmental and design review process. Concern for safety appreciated. Safety and first responder access remain top priority. Roundabout options allow truck traffic to use the concrete apron of roundabout; roundabout option no need for traffic signals or traffic light timing concerns. Thanked for concern re: truck traffic accessing grain elevator during harvest season. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts.Thanked for participation.
None-homes/businesses affected. It would be better to go around Central City and come out by the fairgrounds/hospital. Two proposed routes are more costly.			13th St and Hwy 14- to travel North of CC. Take gravel if RR tracks blocked due to trains	Due to large truck traffic-keep routes simple-detour around town. Cost of project is concern too.	An overpass is needed w/2 major highways. Traffic flow with semi's is a concern.	Drive Walk Bike	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing comments and concerns. Will continue to look at alternatives to help alleviate truck traffic. Routing traffic to the outside of town outside scope of project. Modifications at intersection U.S. Highway 30 (US-30) and Nebraska Highway 14 (N-14) likely reduce congestion. Thanked for input re: rerouting US-30 and N-14. Likely be more costly than alternatives. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.
East Alternative-connect to 13th St	#4- More Parking/less business relocation	Traffic flow through triangle better	C Ave and Hwy 14- too many farm North of town			Drive	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preference for the East Close Alternative and Concept 4. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts.Thanked for participation.

Which of the viaduct alignment alternatives do you prefer and why?	Which of the intersection alternatives do you prefer and why?	When considering the alternatives for this proposed project, what are your concerns? What potential benefits do you anticipate?	What street(s) do you use to cross the railroad tracks, how often, and for what purpose?	What social, economic, and environmental concerns do you have on each alternative?	Additional comments, questions, or concerns.	How do you cross the RR tracks. Check all that apply.	NDOT Response
None-routing all of the traffic will increase problems on Hwy 30			C Ave or Hwy 14-2 to 4 times a week		Need overpass above RR tracks and Hwy 30 like overpass on Dodge in Omaha	Drive	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for comments and concerns. Appreciated idea of creating a structure similar to the Dodge Street Expressway. The cost of structure exceeds the proposed alternatives and likely greater impacts. Proposed viaduct alternatives designed to limit disruptions and reduce congestion at intersection of Nebraska Highway 14 (N-14) and U.S. Highway 30 (US-30). Each viaduct option designed to meet standard specifications. Thanked for participation.
East Close-better for truck traffic	Concept 2-eliminates traffic lights	Better flow of traffic. Safety crossing RR	Hwy 14 and C Ave- going back and forth from farm			Drive	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preference for the East Close Alternative and Concept 2. Thanked for concern re: truck traffic accessing grain elevator during harvest season. Concern appreciated for safety. Safety and first responder access remain top priority. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.
None-move route around CC. Drop the overpass next to the hospital		Any overpass in town will take up too much space and be costly	Use them all	Don't worry about businesses, worry about traffic flow	Put new viaduct by new hospital. Take the traffic South. Wahoo, Fremont, and Scuyler did it right.	Drive	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing your comments and concerns. Continue to look at alternatives to help alleviate truck traffic. Routing traffic to the outside of town outside scope of project. Modifications at intersection U.S. Highway 30 (US-30) and Nebraska Highway 14 (N-14) likely reduce congestion. Combination of re-routing N-14 and US-30 with grade separation likely more costly than alternatives. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.
East Close Alternative-connects 13th St/would help businesses	Concept 4 - least restrictions on businesses	More traffic for businesses. Relocating people and their homes.	Hwy 14 and C Ave- to get to ball field and grass dump			Drive	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preferences for the East Close Alternative and Concept 4. Recognized concern regarding the impacts. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.

Which of the viaduct alignment alternatives do you prefer and why?	Which of the intersection alternatives do you prefer and why?	When considering the alternatives for this proposed project, what are your concerns? What potential benefits do you anticipate?	What street(s) do you use to cross the railroad tracks, how often, and for what purpose?	What social, economic, and environmental concerns do you have on each alternative?	Additional comments, questions, or concerns.	How do you cross the RR tracks. Check all that apply.	NDOT Response
East Alternative- less traffic on 13th St	Concept 2- Roundabouts are difficult due to blindness	Must be able to walk to businesses and have traffic lights at highway crossings	C Ave and 17 Ave- walking to bank and businesses.	Concerns- traffic increase on C Ave and 13th St		Drive Walk	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preference for the East Close Alternative and Concept 2. Concept 2 would include marked pedestrian crosswalks and signage. Vehicular traffic expected to yield to pedestrians utilizing crosswalk. Crosswalk design and signage would meet ADA standards. Viaduct intersections under consideration. Traffic signals may be included and would have signaled pedestrian crosswalk. If roundabout at either end of viaduct, a pedestrian crosswalk would have proper signage meeting ADA standards. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate impacts. Thanked for participation.
			17th Ave		Go further North around to East old tracks. Concerned about speed limit on Hwy 14		Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for comments and concerns. Routing traffic outside of town outside scope of t project; modifications at intersection of U.S. Highway 30 (US-30) and Nebraska Highway 14 (N-14) likely reduce congestion. A traffic study would be completed to determine the designed speed limits. Thanked for participation.
The straight viaduct or East Alternative	Concerned about roundabouts being used correctly by drivers	Concerned about semi traffic flow going to elevator. Travel down Hwy14. Traffic flow take alley and line up for the elevator is E to W only. Elevator at F.					Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preferences for the East Close Alternative. Thanked for concern and input regarding truck traffic accessing grain elevator during harvest season. The roundabout options are designed to allow truck traffic to use the concrete apron of the roundabout. If roundabout selected, additional information, materials, and resources may be dispersed to answer questions. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.

Which of the viaduct alignment alternatives do you prefer and why?	Which of the intersection alternatives do you prefer and why?	When considering the alternatives for this proposed project, what are your concerns? What potential benefits do you anticipate?	What street(s) do you use to cross the railroad tracks, how often, and for what purpose?	What social, economic, and environmental concerns do you have on each alternative?	Additional comments, questions, or concerns.	How do you cross the RR tracks. Check all that apply.	NDOT Response
East Viaduct- Less impact on residents. Better in winter for semi's.	Roundabout- far safer than signals and improve traffic flow	Concern-impact to residents Benefits- better traffic flow/not having to wait on train	13th St crossing-for work 10 times a week	- Social- displacement of residents from their homes Economic- none Environmental - none	Want to see viaduct- currently worried about emergency vehicles getting stuck	Drive	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preference for the East Close Alternative and Concept 2. Concern for safety and emergency access appreciated. Safety and first responder access remain top priority. Recognized concern regarding the impacts. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.
13th St over 10th St. because we use it daily. Viaduct is better suited for west end of town.	Concept 4 or 5- Roundabouts not my favorite	Viaduct Concerns- traffic noise, brighter lights, train noise, increased traffic on 13th ave	17th St.- sometimes 14th St.- 2-8 times everyday for work/school/ac tivities	Viaduct Concerns- traffic noise, brighter lights, train noise, increased traffic on 13th ave	Viaduct Concerns- traffic noise, brighter lights, train noise, increased traffic on 13th ave Want molasses plant removed so the train wouldn't be needed.	Drive Bike	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preference for the East Close Alternative and Concept 4 or Concept 5. A traffic signal may be included for both Concepts 4 and 5 at the U.S. Highway 30 (US30)/N-14 intersection. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Removing the molasses plant is outside the scope of this project. Thanked for participation.
13 St. Alternative- main road for us used daily	Prefer roundabouts over traffic lights	Viaducts are better than crossings Concerns: train noise off viaduct, affect to traffic and street lights on 15th St.	13th- several times a day for school/home	Viaduct Concerns- traffic noise, brighter lights, train noise, increased traffic on 13th ave	Truck Scale at end of 13th Ave needs moved. Closing 13th St crossing will affect trucks using scale.	Drive Bike	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preference for the East Close Alternative and Concept 2. Traffic signals may be placed on intersection improvement alternative. Appreciated information regarding the truck scale. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.
East Viaduct to 10th Street	4 or 5	Possible historic significance of triangle area downtown as landmark.	NA	Pedestrian crossing at D Ave	Preserve C Ave and F Ave		Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for preferences for the East Alternative, Concept 4 or Concept 5 and preference for pedestrian crossing over railroad. A traffic signal may be included for both Concepts 4 and 5 at the U.S. Highway 30 (US-30)/N-14 intersection. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.

Which of the viaduct alignment alternatives do you prefer and why?	Which of the intersection alternatives do you prefer and why?	When considering the alternatives for this proposed project, what are your concerns? What potential benefits do you anticipate?	What street(s) do you use to cross the railroad tracks, how often, and for what purpose?	What social, economic, and environmental concerns do you have on each alternative?	Additional comments, questions, or concerns.	How do you cross the RR tracks. Check all that apply.	NDOT Response
Neither	Neither	traffic, noise, impacts to city	NA	loss of parking, impacts to businesses, roundabouts don't work, need stoplight at US-30 and 15th Ave.	New bypass by hospital		Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for comments and concerns. Routing traffic outside of town outside of scope of this project. Modifications at intersection U.S. Highway 30 (US30) and Nebraska Highway 14 (N-14) would likely reduce congestion. Roundabouts are alternatives and NDOT will fully evaluate the potential impacts. Recognize concern for loss of parking. Improvement designed to limit disruptions. NDOT will evaluate parking needs. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.
East Close Alternative-closer access to Central City	Concept 4- concept 2 or 5 lose business parking	Benefits-bypassing the train traffic	C Ave, F Ave, Hwy 14- Fairgrounds	None	Emergency vehicles need to get past tracks without waiting for train.	Drive Walk Bike	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preferences for the East Close Alternative and Concept 4 (one-way pairs). Concern for safety and emergency access appreciated. Safety and first responder access remain top priority. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.
East Close Alternative-Connects to 13th Street. Makes it easier for semi's heading to ethanal plant.	Concept 4- other concepts affect businesses	Benefits- being able to cross train tracks	Fairground Road-visit family	Construction effect on downtown businesses.	Build the 13th Street overpass.	Drive	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preferences for the East Close Alternative and Concept 4. Recognized concern regarding the impacts. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.
East Close Alternative-Connects to 13th Street. Makes it easier for semi's heading to ethanol plant.	One Way Pairs Concept 4- loss of parking with other options	Benefits- being able to cross train tracks	C Ave, Fairgrounds Rd, F Ave- daily	Emergency vehicles would be able to cross the tracks.	Build the 13th Street overpass.	Drive Walk Bike	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preference for the East Close Alternative and Concept 4. Concern for safety and emergency access appreciated. Safety and first responder access remain top priority. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.

Which of the viaduct alignment alternatives do you prefer and why?	Which of the intersection alternatives do you prefer and why?	When considering the alternatives for this proposed project, what are your concerns? What potential benefits do you anticipate?	What street(s) do you use to cross the railroad tracks, how often, and for what purpose?	What social, economic, and environmental concerns do you have on each alternative?	Additional comments, questions, or concerns.	How do you cross the RR tracks. Check all that apply.	NDOT Response
East Close Alternative- connects to 13th Street	Concept 4- loss of parking with other options	Concerns- losing parking for businesses if overpass isn't built Benefits- always being able to get around tracks. Emergency vehicles being able to cross	Fairgrounds Rd, C Ave, F Ave,- daily work/school	Emergency vehicles would be able to pass without waiting/children would be to school on time	Listen to the people who live by the tracks and deal with it daily. Build the 13th Street overpass.	Drive Walk Bike	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preference for the East Close Alternative and Concept 4. Concern for safety and emergency access appreciated. Safety and first responder access remain top priority. Recognize concern for loss of parking. Improvement designed to limit disruptions. NDOT will evaluate parking needs. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.
East Alternative- smoothest movement of traffic, less impact on housing/businesses	Concept 4- reduces delays, creates ease of traffic, limited impact on business, less construction	Concerns- None Benefits- safety, lack of delays, ease of travel	C Ave mostly to access baseball field	Don't worry about concerns- proceed	Very in favor of overpass due to safety concerns and transportation delays.	Drive	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preference for the East Alternative and Concept 4 (one-way pairs). Concern for safety and emergency access appreciated. Safety and first responder access remain top priority. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.
East Close Alternative- Connects to 13th Street. Makes it easier for semi's heading to ethanol plant.	Concept 4- loss of parking with other options	Benefits- always being able to get around tracks. Emergency vehicles being able to cross	C Ave- 4-6 times/day to get to and from work. G Street (Hwy 30) Fairgrounds Rd-daily	Emergency vehicles would be able to cross the tracks.	Please build overpass, it is necessary to keep people/property safe on North side of town. transportation delays.	Drive Walk Bike	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preference for the East Close Alternative and Concept 4. Concern for safety and emergency access appreciated. Safety and first responder access remain top priority. Recognize concern for loss of parking. Improvement designed to limit disruptions. NDOT will evaluate parking needs. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.
East Close Alternative- connects to 13th Street	Concept 4- loss of parking with other options	Concerns- losing parking for businesses if overpass isn't built Benefits- being able to cross the tracks at any time, semi's would have a more direct path for grain delivery	Fairgrounds Rd, C Ave, F Ave- daily	Emergency vehicles would be able to cross the tracks.	Please build the 13th St overpass transportation delays.	Drive Walk Bike	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preference for the East Close Alternative and Concept 4 (one-way pairs). Concern for safety and emergency access appreciated. Safety and first responder access remain top priority. Recognize concern for loss of parking. Improvement designed to limit disruptions. NDOT will evaluate parking needs. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.

Which of the viaduct alignment alternatives do you prefer and why?	Which of the intersection alternatives do you prefer and why?	When considering the alternatives for this proposed project, what are your concerns? What potential benefits do you anticipate?	What street(s) do you use to cross the railroad tracks, how often, and for what purpose?	What social, economic, and environmental concerns do you have on each alternative?	Additional comments, questions, or concerns.	How do you cross the RR tracks. Check all that apply.	NDOT Response
Concept 4- least impact to businesses/homes	Concept 4- least impact to businesses/homes	Nothing but good will come from viaduct-please make this happen	All streets are used-active bike and travel by car.	Least invasive impact is concept 4	We need the viaduct to make the community a safe place. Overpass transportation delays.	Drive Walk Bike	Appreciate input. Apologized for time taken to respond. Thanked for sharing preference for the viaduct alternatives and Concept 4. Concern for safety and emergency access appreciated. Safety and first responder access remain top priority. Environmental and design process will fully evaluate the potential for impacts. Thanked for participation.

2980

2981 4.3 Public Hearing

2982 Following the approval and publication of the Draft EA by FHWA, a public hearing will be held
 2983 December 18, 2024 to seek comments on the Draft EA and present the Preferred Alternative. The
 2984 hearing will also provide a public forum to allow members of the public to comment on the Project. A
 2985 public notice advertising the hearing time and location will be provided in newspapers and targeted
 2986 mailers as was done for the public information open house.

2987 4.4 Availability of Draft EA for Review

2988 An electronic version of the Draft EA is available for review on the NDOT website at:

2989 <https://dot.nebraska.gov/projects/environment/pubs/project-docs/>

2990 Hard copies of the Draft EA are available for review at the following locations:

- 2991 • NDOT Headquarters (1500 Nebraska Parkway, Lincoln, NE)
- 2992 • FHWA Nebraska Division (100 Centennial Mall N., Lincoln, NE)
- 2993 • NDOT District 4 Headquarters (211 North Tilden St, Grand Island, NE)
- 2994 • Central City Public Library (1604 15th Ave, Central City, NE)

2995

2996 Chapter 5 Commitments and Mitigation

2997 This chapter summarizes the commitments and mitigation measures identified in **Chapter 3** of this
2998 Environmental Assessment. The mitigation measures include resource-specific strategies and special
2999 provisions that have been identified through the NEPA process to address potential environmental
3000 impacts. These commitments are designed to avoid, minimize, or compensate for the effects of the
3001 proposed project on the environment.

3002 5.1 Farmland

3003 No mitigation measure for farmland will be required for the project.

3004 5.2 Section 6(f) Properties

3005 No mitigation measures for Section 6(f) properties will be required for the project.

3006 5.3 Air Quality

3007 No mitigation measures for air quality will be required for the project.

3008 5.4 Wild and Scenic Rivers

3009 No mitigation measures for wild and scenic rivers will be required for the project.

3010 5.5 Paleontology

3011 In the event of a discovery of paleontological materials during construction, NDOT Standard
3012 Specifications for Highway Construction, Subsection 107.10 (2017, pg. 64) states, "The Engineer
3013 should be immediately notified when any such articles are uncovered, and the Contractor should
3014 immediately suspend operations in the area involved until such time that arrangements are made for
3015 their removal and preservation." (Contractor)

3016 5.6 Transportation

3017 Access to properties may be limited at times throughout construction but would remain open. The
3018 Contractor would coordinate with property owners to maintain access to fields and residences.
3019 (Contractor)

3020 During construction of the viaduct, access to the residential property (1005 13th St, Central City, NE
3021 68826) shall be required. The contractor shall work with the property owner to provide adequate
3022 access. (NDOT, Contractor)

3023 Any contractor involved in the project should file a 7460-1 Form with the FAA for all structures or
3024 equipment over 200' tall, or that break a 100:1 slope from a public-use airport. This includes any
3025 trucks, cranes, or any equipment used on the project. A 7460-1 form will need to be filed for each new
3026 structure that may be part of this project, like bridges or overpasses or if an existing structure's
3027 elevation would change. (Contractor)

3028 5.7 Land Use

3029 Coordination with property owners would occur throughout the final design to provide access and
3030 minimize impacts for businesses and residences in the area.

3031 Property rights and acquisitions will be conducted by fair market value for the property rights and
3032 damages that may occur. Right of way acquisition will be conducted in conformance with the federal
3033 Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies of 1970 (Uniform Act) as
3034 amended (42 USC 4601 et seq.) and the Nebraska Relocation Assistance Act (Neb. Rev. Stat. Section
3035 76-1214 et seq).

3036 Access to individual businesses, residences, and other facilities will be maintained during
3037 construction.

3038 5.8 Right-of-Way and Relocations

3039 ROW acquisitions, types, and amounts are based on conceptual design. Impacts on ROW and
3040 properties would be further refined and minimized to the extent possible during the final design phase
3041 of the Project. (NDOT)

3042 Access to adjacent properties would be maintained throughout construction. Access restrictions
3043 would be coordinated with the property owner prior to the restriction. (NDOT, Contractor)

3044 Property rights acquisition would be conducted by paying fair market value for the property rights and
3045 damages that may occur. ROW acquisition would be conducted in conformance with the Uniform Act
3046 (42 USC 4601 et seq.), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Nebraska Relocation Assistance
3047 Act (Nebraska Revised Statutes Section 76-1214 et seq.). (NDOT)

3048 5.9 Utilities

3049 Impacts on utilities are not avoidable because several utilities are located near or within the existing
3050 ROW. The Contractor would follow the guidelines of NDOT's Utility Accommodation Policy (NDOT
3051 2024). It is NDOT's responsibility to notify utility companies of the need for relocation during the
3052 design stage of the Project. The NDOT Utility Section would coordinate utility agreements with the
3053 utility companies prior to construction. It is the Contractor's responsibility to notify utility companies of
3054 relocation needs during the construction phase of the Project for utilities that were not relocated
3055 before construction. (NDOT, Utility Provider(s))

3056 If utility relocation or replacement is required in a later phase of the Project, a re-evaluation would be
3057 required if (1) federal funds will be used for the utility work, or (2) the Project construction contractor
3058 will be responsible for the work.

3059 If this utility work is identified during final design, NDOT would initiate the re-evaluation prior to Project
3060 letting. If the work is identified during construction, NDOT would initiate the re-evaluation prior to
3061 commencing utility work. (NDOT Environmental, NDOT District)

3062 If either one of the above two conditions does not apply, later relocation or replacement of utilities
3063 would be coordinated through NDOT and the Contractor per NDOT's Standard Specifications for
3064 Highway Construction, Subsection 105.06. Any environmental permits required for these utility
3065 relocations or replacements would be the responsibility of the utility. (NDOT District, Utility Provider(s))

3066 5.10 Community Impact Assessment

3067 The design and construction phases of the project would incorporate and follow the NDOT Roadway
3068 Design Manual's standards related to work zone traffic control plans, NDOT's Standard Specifications

- 3069 for Highway Construction, and adherence to all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. (NDOT
3070 Design)
- 3071 Vehicular and pedestrian access will be maintained for all businesses, services, and facilities during
3072 the anticipated temporary roadway closures. Construction activities would be coordinated with annual
3073 local events in an effort to minimize traffic delays and travel pattern disruptions, where possible.
3074 (Contractor)
- 3075 Efforts would be made during the design phase to minimize necessary property acquisition and
3076 relocations, where feasible. Property rights acquisition would be conducted by paying fair market value
3077 for the property rights and damages that may occur. Right-of-way acquisition would be conducted in
3078 conformance with the Uniform Act (42 USC 4601 et seq.), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and
3079 the Nebraska Relocation Assistance Act (Nebraska Revised Statutes Section 76-1214 et seq.). (NDOT
3080 Design, NDOT ROW Division)
- 3081 Central City's recent streetscape improvements, memorial plaques, and flag sleeves will be
3082 maintained or relocated for community events, social interactions, and public open space both during
3083 and after construction activities. (NDOT Design, NDOT District)

3084 5.11 Environmental Justice

- 3085 Considering the total population affected by the project, the presence of a Spanish-speaking LEP
3086 population exceeds the NDOT LEP outreach trigger of 5 percent of the population. Therefore, NDOT
3087 will utilize appropriate alternative language assistance measures to outreach to these communities in
3088 accordance with the current NDOT LEP Plan. (NDOT Communications)
- 3089 When formal local and pedestrian detour routes are determined, a re-evaluation would be conducted.
3090 This review was for the project and highway detours as described. It is anticipated that local traffic
3091 would use alternative routes to avoid construction. A local and pedestrian detour will be required, but
3092 local and pedestrian detour routes are not yet determined. If existing pedestrian facilities cannot
3093 provide a suitable pedestrian detour, an alternative detour may be required. (NDOT Civil Rights)
- 3094 Any written information that is dispersed to the public regarding this project must be translated into
3095 Spanish. Dispersed information does not include highway signs or electronic messaging boards, but
3096 does include, for example, public meeting invitations, mailers and postcards, legal notices, news
3097 releases, and project map/information handouts. Legal notices and news releases do not need to be
3098 translated if they are only to be placed in an English-language media source. Information that is
3099 distributed to businesses, public agencies, or to departments representatives of public agencies, does
3100 not need to be translated. (NDOT District, NDOT Communications)
- 3101 If a public meeting is held regarding this project, the written documents prepared for public dispersal
3102 (for example, project map/information handouts) at the meeting must be translated into Spanish.
3103 There must be a Spanish interpreter present. There must also be clear notice posted. There must also
3104 be clear notice posted in Spanish at the meeting that the interpreter is available. (NDOT
3105 Communications)
- 3106 Pedestrian routes will be designated during phased construction. Pedestrians will have access to one
3107 side of a street at a time. (Contractor)
- 3108 Access will be maintained at the entrance and the exit of Central City Senior Center during the
3109 anticipated temporary roadway closures. (Contractor)
- 3110 Other mitigation measures may be required depending on future project details and the need for
3111 detour(s). (NDOT Civil Rights)

3112 5.12 Visual Effects

3113 No mitigation measures for visual and aesthetic impacts will be required for the project.

3114 5.13 Noise

3115 Exhaust and muffler systems on construction equipment would be in good working order.

3116 Construction equipment would be maintained on a regular basis, and equipment may be subject to
3117 inspection by the construction project manager to ensure maintenance. (Contractor, NDOT Project
3118 Manager [PM])

3119 The Contractor would locate noise-emitting stationary equipment (for example, compressors, and
3120 generators) to avoid unnecessary impacts on residents and businesses. (Contractor, NDOT PM)

3121 5.14 Historic Properties

3122 Seven Sensitive Areas have been identified along this project:

- 3123 1) House, 1819 17th Ave, N-14, MM 81.48 – 81.50, east side
- 3124 2) Presbyterian Church, 1801 17th Ave, N-14, MM 81.53 – 81.56, east side
- 3125 3) Grand Lodge, 1625 17th St, N-14, MM 81.67 – 81.69, east side
- 3126 4) State Theatre, 706 C Ave, US-30, MM 337.58 – 337.60, south side and on C Ave, building face,
3127 west side of C Ave
- 3128 5) Commercial Buildings, 1601 – 1615 16th St, US-30, MM 337.60 – 337.63, north side
- 3129 6) Lincoln Manor Bar and Grill and Heber Hord House, 1525 16th St and 1505 16th St, US-30, MM
3130 337.64 - 337.70, north side
- 3131 7) US Post Office, 1512 16th St, US-30, MM 337.64 – 337.67, south side

3132 These Sensitive Area(s) shall be indicated on project plans. (Design)

3133 -----

3134 Seven Sensitive Areas have been identified along this project:

- 3135 1) House, 1819 17th Ave, N-14, MM 81.48 – 81.50, east side
- 3136 2) Presbyterian Church, 1801 17th Ave, N-14, MM 81.53 – 81.56, east side
- 3137 3) Grand Lodge, 1625 17th St, N-14, MM 81.67 – 81.69, east side
- 3138 4) State Theatre, 706 C Ave, US-30, MM 337.58 – 337.60, south side and on C Ave, building face,
3139 west side of C Ave
- 3140 5) Commercial Buildings, 1601 – 1615 16th St, US-30, MM 337.60 – 337.63, north side
- 3141 6) Lincoln Manor Bar and Grill and Heber Hord House, 1525 16th St and 1505 16th St, US-30, MM
3142 337.64 – 337.70, north side
- 3143 7) US Post Office, 1512 16th St, US-30, MM 337.64 – 337.67, south side

3144 No grading or project activities, including but not limited to, working, staging, borrowing, stockpiling, or
3145 storing material and/or equipment, shall occur within the boundary of the Sensitive Area(s).
3146 (Contractor)

3147 -----

3148 Sensitive Areas corresponding to historic building(s) have been identified on this project:

- 3149 1) House, 1819 17th Ave, N-14, MM 81.48 – 81.50, east side
- 3150 2) Presbyterian Church, 1801 17th Ave, N-14, MM 81.53 – 81.56, east side
- 3151 3) Grand Lodge, 1625 17th St, N-14, MM 81.67 – 81.69, east side

- 3152 4) State Theatre, 706 C Ave, US-30, MM 337.58 – 337.60, south side and on C Ave, building face,
3153 west side of C Ave
3154 5) Commercial Buildings, 1601 – 1615 16th St, US-30, MM 337.60 – 337.63, north side
3155 6) Lincoln Manor Bar and Grill and Heber Hord House, 1525 16th St and 1505 16th St, US-30, MM
3156 337.64 - 337.70, north side
3157 7) US Post Office, 1512 16th St, US-30, MM 337.64 – 337.67, south side

3158 Concrete sidewalks adjacent to historic buildings shall be removed by sawing and lifting; the use of a
3159 jackhammer of any type or size shall not be permitted per Section 601 of the Standard Specifications.
3160 When installing new concrete sidewalks adjacent to the historic properties, Section 1015.01 – 1015.04
3161 of the Standard Specifications shall be followed. (Contractor)

3162 -----

3163 Sensitive Areas corresponding to historic building(s) have been identified on this project:

- 3164 1) House, 1819 17th Ave, N-14, MM 81.48 – 81.50, east side
3165 2) Presbyterian Church, 1801 17th Ave, N-14, MM 81.53 – 81.56, east side
3166 3) Grand Lodge, 1625 17th St, N-14, MM 81.67 – 81.69, east side
3167 4) State Theatre, 706 C Ave, US-30, MM 337.58 – 337.60, south side and on C Ave, building face,
3168 west side of C Ave
3169 5) Commercial Buildings, 1601 – 1615 16th St, US-30, MM 337.60 – 337.63, north side
3170 6) Lincoln Manor Bar and Grill and Heber Hord House, 1525 16th St and 1505 16th St, US-30, MM
3171 337.64 - 337.70, north side
3172 7) US Post Office, 1512 16th St, US-30, MM 337.64 – 337.67, south side

3173 Any construction activities, materials, or pay items added to a project after letting that would occur
3174 adjacent to a historic building identified as a Sensitive Area in the plans or green sheet shall be
3175 reviewed by the NDOT Environmental Section. (NDOT District 4 Construction Project Manager)

3176 5.15 Section 4(f) Properties

3177 The contractor shall not complete work, stage, stockpile or store materials within the boundaries of
3178 the following Section 4(f) properties: Central City Elementary School, Central Park, North Park or
3179 Kernel Field. If it is determined that temporary or permanent right-of-way is required from or access is
3180 restricted to a Section 4(f) property, coordination shall occur with NDOT Environmental. (Contractor)

3181 The following properties shall be marked on the project plans as sensitive areas: Central City
3182 Elementary School, Central Park, North Park, Kernel Field. (Design)

3183 The contractor shall not complete work, stage, stockpile, or store materials within the boundaries of
3184 The Dark Island Trail beyond the limits of construction. (Contractor)

3185 Following construction, the area of temporary easement would be restored to a similar if not improved
3186 state as before the construction. (Contractor)

3187 5.16 Hazardous Materials

3188 Unexpected Waste:

3189 If contaminated soils/groundwater or unexpected wastes are discovered, The Contractor shall stop all
3190 work within the immediate area. The Contractor shall secure the area of the discovery and notify the
3191 NDOT Highway Project Manager (HPM). The Contractor shall not re-enter the discovery area until
3192 notified by the HPM. At the time of discovery, the HPM and Contractor shall utilize the NDOT
3193 Unexpected Waste Action Plan (UWAP) to coordinate appropriate actions. The actions to be carried
3194 out by the HPM are (but not limited to): verification that the Contractor has suspended construction

3195 activities in the area of the discovery, contact the Environmental Section Manager and make an entry
3196 into Site Manager that an unexpected waste discovery was made. The HPM shall then utilize the
3197 UWAP Notification Form (NDOT Form 691) to properly document the extent and type of waste. The
3198 HPM will ensure that proper disposal of the waste and any required health and safety mitigation is
3199 implemented by the Contractor. The Contractor is required by NDOT's Standard Specification section
3200 107.11 (Hazardous Material Discoveries) to handle and dispose of regulated material in accordance
3201 with applicable laws.

3202 Contractor Commitment: If contaminated soils/groundwater or unexpected wastes are discovered,
3203 The Contractor shall stop all work within the immediate area. The Contractor shall limit access to
3204 authorized personnel within the area of the discovery and notify the NDOT Highway Project Manager
3205 (HPM). The Contractor shall not re-enter the discovery area until notified by the HPM. At the time of
3206 discovery, the HPM and Contractor shall utilize the NDOT Unexpected Waste Action Plan (UWAP) to
3207 coordinate appropriate actions. The Contractor is required by NDOT's Standard Specification section
3208 107.11 (Hazardous Material Discoveries) to handle and dispose of regulated material in accordance
3209 with applicable laws.

3210 **Medium Potential Commitment:**

3211 There is a medium potential for FMGP contamination to be present in the soils/groundwater at project
3212 Central City Viaduct (CN 42013). One location identified below will have a medium potential for
3213 contamination to impact the project:

3214 **Central City Gas Plant (1224 12 Street):** Potential for SVOC contamination of soil and
3215 groundwater.

3216 The Contractor shall be aware of the possibility of encountering contamination in this area during
3217 construction activities and look for signs such as odor and/or discolored soil. The NDOT Highway
3218 Project Manager shall be notified seven days prior to when construction is expected to begin in the
3219 suspect area. If contamination is discovered, all work in the immediate area shall be stopped until the
3220 Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) and NDOT are notified, and a materials
3221 management plan has been developed and approved. The Contractor shall manage the waste in
3222 accordance with Title 132, Nebraska Integrated Solid Waste Regulation and Title 128, Nebraska
3223 Hazardous Waste Regulations. The Contractor is required by Standard Specification Section 107,
3224 Legal Relations and Responsibilities, to handle and dispose of contaminated material in accordance
3225 with applicable laws.

3226 **Asbestos:**

3227 The Contractor shall survey structures/buildings located at 1303 14th Street, 1312 13th Road, and the
3228 brick building at GPS coordinates 41.117415, -97.996558 for the presence or absence of asbestos
3229 containing material (ACM). The inspector must be certified in accordance with the Nebraska
3230 Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Nebraska Asbestos Control Program Regulations,
3231 Title 178. A list of Licensed Asbestos Inspectors can be found at:
3232 <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Asbestos.aspx>. Documentation of the survey shall be provided to the NDOT
3233 Highway Project Manager by the Contractor prior to structure demolition. The Highway Project
3234 Manager will record survey documentation in OnBase.

3235 If ACM is found to be present, removal and disposal of the ACM shall be in accordance with DHHS
3236 Nebraska Asbestos Control Program Regulations, Title 178 and will occur prior to any bridge
3237 demolition or renovation activities. The Contractor shall develop a removal and disposal plan in
3238 coordination with a licensed asbestos removal contractor and NDOT. A list of licensed asbestos
3239 removal contractors can be found at: <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Asbestos.aspx>

3240 Contractor Commitment: The Contractor shall survey structure(s) located at 1303 14th St., 1312 13th
3241 Rd., and the brick building at GPS coordinates 41.117415, -97.996558 for the presence or absence of

3242 asbestos containing material (ACM). The Contractor's inspector must be certified in accordance with
3243 the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Nebraska Asbestos Control
3244 Program Regulations, Title 178. If ACM is found to be present, the Contractor shall develop a removal
3245 and disposal plan in coordination with a licensed asbestos removal contractor.

3246 **Building Removal:**

3247 (Taken from Standard Specifications for Highway Construction 2017 Section 203.01; paragraph 4.)

3248 a. It shall be the responsibility of the Contractor to determine if any of the buildings to be
3249 removed have materials containing asbestos. If it is determined that some or all of the
3250 buildings contain asbestos, the asbestos shall be removed prior to the building removal. All
3251 asbestos shall be removed in accordance with State of Nebraska Health and Human Services
3252 Department, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Nebraska Department of Environment
3253 and Energy regulations. A Contractor trained and certified in asbestos handling shall perform
3254 all asbestos removal and handling operations.

3255 b. The work of determining if any of the buildings contain asbestos shall be considered
3256 subsidiary to the item "Remove Building at ____."

3257 c. The work of asbestos abatement will be paid for as "Extra Work" as described in Subsection
3258 104.04.

3259 **Lead Abatement:**

3260 There is potential for lead based paint to be found on the bridges painted components. If the method
3261 of removal of the components generates paint debris, the waste shall be handled in accordance with
3262 NDOT's Standard Specification for Highway Construction Section 732 (Lead-based Paint Removal)
3263 and Title 128, Nebraska Hazardous Waste Regulations. Extreme caution shall be taken to minimize
3264 the amount of potential lead based painted material or debris from causing or threatening to cause
3265 pollution of the air, land and waters of the State. The Contractors implementation plan efforts shall be
3266 documented in SWPPPTrack.

3267 **5.17 Water Quality**

3268 NDOT would coordinate with the owners of wells that would be directly impacted by the proposed
3269 project. If the well is actively used, NDOT would replace the well or pay the owner to replace the well.
3270 NDOT would then have an independent contractor decommission the well after ROW negotiations and
3271 acquisitions are complete. If the well is not in use, the Contractor would decommission the well after
3272 negotiations with the owner (NDOT, Contractor)

3273 A licensed Water Well Contractor will decommission any wells in accordance with the Department of
3274 Health and Human Services (DHHS) regulations under Nebraska Administrative Code Title 178, Water
3275 Well Standards, Chapter 12, Water Well Construction, Pump Installation, and Water Well
3276 Decommissioning Standards (Nebraska DHHS 2005). (NDOT, Contractor)

3277 This project requires a Construction Stormwater Permit and that a Storm Water Pollution Prevention
3278 Plan (SWPPP) be maintained for the project. The Contractor shall understand the terms and
3279 conditions of the general National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit that
3280 authorizes the storm water discharges associated with activity from the construction site. For
3281 reference, the general permit is posted on the Department's website. (Contractor)

3282 A portion of the project has been identified as being located within the City of Central City Wellhead
3283 Protection Area. NDOT's Standard Specifications 107.01, 107.09, and 107.18 would address the
3284 contractor's responsibility to keep fully informed of, observe, and comply with all federal, state, and
3285 local laws and ordinances that affect the conduct of the work. (NDOT, Contractor)

3286 5.18 Floodplains

3287 The box culverts to carry Warm Slough under the N-14 roadway would be designed to adequately
3288 convey flood flows along existing drainage patterns. Construction of the Project would have floodplain
3289 encroachments, but Project impacts are certified that federal, state, and local floodplain regulations
3290 are met, and a Floodplain Development Permit would be obtained from the appropriate jurisdictions
3291 prior to construction. All conditions of the permit would be adhered to during construction. (NDOT
3292 Environmental, Contractor)

3293 5.19 Wetlands and Water Resources

3294 All wetlands within the project limits that are not permitted for impact would be marked on the Project
3295 plans and the E Sheet as avoidance areas. (NDOT Roadway Design, NDOT Environmental)

3296 The Contractor shall not stage, store, waste, or stockpile materials and equipment in undisturbed
3297 locations or in known/potential wetlands and/or known/potential streams that exhibit a clear “bed
3298 and Bank” channel. Potential wetland areas consist of any area that is known to pond water,
3299 swampy areas, or areas supporting known wetland vegetation or areas where there is a distinct
3300 difference in vegetation (at lower elevations) from the surrounding upland areas. (Contractor)

3301 Avoidance and minimization measures would be further refined during the preliminary and final design
3302 processes as appropriate. The design would comply with the policy of Executive Order 11990 (42 FR
3303 26961) regarding impacts on wetlands. Additionally, any project using federal transportation funds
3304 must adhere to the net gain of wetland policy (23 CFR 777.11(g)), where there would be no net loss of
3305 wetlands across the program in a given year. (NDOT Roadway Design, NDOT Environmental)

3306 5.20 Threatened and Endangered Species

3307 **A-1 Changes in Project Scope.** If there is a change in the project scope, the project limits, or
3308 environmental commitments, the Highway Project Manager shall coordinate with the NDOT
3309 Environmental Section to evaluate potential impacts prior to implementation. Environmental
3310 commitments are not subject to change without prior written approval from the NDOT Environmental
3311 Section. (*District Construction*)

3312 **A-2 Conservation Conditions.** Conservation conditions are to be fully implemented within the project
3313 limits as shown on the plans. (*District Construction, Contractor*)

3314 **A-3 Early Construction Starts.** Contractor request for early construction starts must be coordinated
3315 by the Project Construction Engineer with NDOT Environmental for approval of early start to ensure
3316 avoidance of listed species sensitive lifecycle timeframes. Work in these timeframes could require
3317 consultation with the USFWS and NGPC. (*District Construction, Contractor*)

3318 **A-4 T&E Species.** If federal or state listed species are observed during construction, the Highway
3319 Project Manager will contact NDOT Environmental Section to determine if additional species
3320 conservation conditions would be required prior to continuing project construction activities. Contact
3321 NDOT Environmental for a reference of federal and state listed species. Coordination with the USFWS
3322 and NGPC may be required depending on the species identified and construction activities. (*NDOT
3323 Environmental, District Construction, Contractor*)

3324 **A-5 Refueling.** Refueling will be conducted outside of those sensitive areas identified on the plans, in
3325 the contract, and/or marked in the field. (*Contractor*)

3326 **A-6 Restricted Activities.** The following project activities shall, to the extent possible, be restricted to
3327 between the beginning and ending points (stationing, reference posts, mile markers, and/or section-

3328 township-range references) of the project, within the right-of-way designated on the project plans:
3329 borrow sites, burn sites, construction debris waste disposal areas, concrete and asphalt plants, haul
3330 roads, stockpiling areas, staging areas, and material storage sites.

3331 For activities outside the project limits, the contractor should refer to the Nebraska Game and Park
3332 Commission website to determine which species ranges occur within the off-site area. The contractor
3333 should plan accordingly for any species surveys that may be required to approve the use of a borrow
3334 site, or other off-site activities. The contractor should review the T&E Matrix agreement (on NDOT's
3335 website), where species survey protocols can be found, to estimate the level of effort and timing
3336 requirements for surveys.

3337 Any project related activities that occur outside of the project limits must be environmentally
3338 cleared/permitted with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission as well as any other appropriate
3339 agencies by the contractor and those clearances/permits submitted to the District Construction
3340 Project Manager prior to the start of the above listed project activities. The contractor shall submit
3341 information such as an aerial photo showing the proposed activity site, a soil survey map with the
3342 location of the site, a plan-sheet or drawing showing the location and dimensions of the activity site, a
3343 minimum of 4 different ground photos showing the existing conditions at the proposed activity site,
3344 depth to ground water and depth of pit, and the "Platte River depletion status" of the site. The
3345 contractor must receive notice of acceptance from NDOT environmental, prior to starting the above
3346 listed project activities. These project activities cannot adversely affect state and/or federally listed
3347 species or designated critical habitat. (*NDOT Environmental, District Construction, Contractor*).

3348 **A-7 Waste/Debris.** Construction waste/debris will be disposed of in areas or a manner which will not
3349 adversely affect state and/or federally listed species and/or designated critical habitat. (*Contractor*)

3350 **A-8 Post Construction Erosion Control.** Erosion control activities carried out by NDOT Maintenance or
3351 others after construction is complete, but prior to project close-out, shall adhere to any standard
3352 conservation conditions for species designated for the project limits during construction. (*NDOT*
3353 *Maintenance, District Construction, Contractor*)

3354 **S-1 Fencing.** When project-related fence construction/relocation work is required to be done prior to
3355 the start of construction, and if the fence work occurs outside urban or cropland areas that are not
3356 within swift fox or mountain plover range, then fencing can be installed/relocated at any time using
3357 the following criteria:

- 3358 d. the fencing is temporary in nature and/or consists of only hand-driven posts
3359 e. the work does not compact the soils (ex. through the use of heavy equipment) or cause soil
3360 disturbance beyond the driving of posts
3361 f. within the **whooping crane** migration corridor, work occurring within a half of a mile of
3362 wetlands or perennial waters will occur between the hours of 10:00 am to 4:00pm when the
3363 work is between March 6 – April 29 or October 9 – November 15

3364 If the fencing work cannot meet these criteria, then NDOT Right-of-Way Division shall coordinate with
3365 NDOT Environmental Section prior to the completion of Right-of-way negotiations.

3366 **S-2 Platte River Depletions.** To the maximum extent practical, efforts will be made to design the
3367 project and select borrow sites to prevent depletions to the Platte River. If there is any potential to
3368 create a depletion, NDOT (during design) and the Contractor (for borrow sites) shall follow the current
3369 Platte River depletion protocols for coordination, minimization, and mitigation. In general, the following
3370 are considered de minimis depletions, but may still require agency coordination; a project which: a)
3371 creates an annual depletion less than 0.1 acre feet, b) creates a detention basin that detains water for
3372 less than 72 hours, c) diverted water that will be returned to its natural basin within 30 days, or d)
3373 creates a one-time depletion of less than 10 acre feet. (*NDOT Roadway Design, Contractor*)

3374 **S-3 Revegetation.** All permanent seeding and plantings (excluding managed landscaped areas) shall
3375 use species and composition native to the project vicinity as shown in the Plan for the Roadside
3376 Environment. However, within the first 16 feet of the road shoulder or within high erosion prone
3377 locations, tall fescue or perennial ryegrass may be used at minimal rates to provide quick groundcover
3378 to prevent erosion, unless state or federally listed threatened or endangered plants were identified in
3379 the project area during surveys. If listed **plants** were identified, any seed mix requirements identified
3380 during resource agency consultations shall be used for the project. (*NDOT Environmental*)

3381 **S-4 Sensitive Areas.** Environmentally Sensitive Areas will be marked on the plans, in the field, or in the
3382 contract by NDOT Environmental for avoidance. (*NDOT Environmental, NDOT Roadway Design, District*
3383 *Construction*)

3384 **S-5 Species Surveys.** If species surveys are required during the construction phase of the project
3385 (including pre-construction surveys), results will be sent by NDOT Environmental Section to the
3386 USFWS, NGPC, and if applicable the USACE. (*NDOT Environmental, District Construction*)

3387 **S-6 Permanent LED Lighting (NDOT Design Commitment):** Only LED roadway luminaires listed on the
3388 NDOT "Nebraska Qualified Material Vendors List" will be considered for use on Nebraska highway
3389 lighting projects. Proposed changes to the following LED lighting requirements would require
3390 resource agency (USFWS and/or NGPC) coordination and approval prior to installation:

- 3391 • Nominal CCT – 3000 +/- 300 K
- 3392 • BUG Ratings – Maximum nominal Backlight (N/A), Uplight (0), Glare (N/A)
- 3393 • Lumen Output – N/A

3394 Any proposed changes to the listed requirement(s) must be presented to the NDOT Environmental
3395 Section for Agency Coordination and approval.

3396 **Northern long-eared Bat / Tri-colored Bat**

3397 **General AMM 1.**

3398 Ensure all operators, employees, and contractors working in areas of known or presumed bat habitat
3399 are aware of all FHWA/FRA/FTA (Transportation Agencies) environmental commitments, including all
3400 applicable AMMs. (*NDOT Environmental, District, Contractor*)

3401 **Lighting AMM 1.**

3402 Direct temporary lighting away from suitable habitat during the active season (**April 1st – October 31st**).
3403 (*District, Contractor*)

3404 **Lighting AMM 2.**

3405 When installing new or replacing existing permanent lights, use downward-facing, full cut-off lens
3406 lights (with same intensity or less for replacement lighting); or for those transportation agencies using
3407 the BUG system developed by the Illuminating Engineering Society, the goal is to be as close to 0 for
3408 all three ratings with a priority of "uplight" of 0 and "backlight" as low as practicable. (*Design,*
3409 *Contractor*)

3410 **Tree Removal AMM 1.**

3411 Modify all phases/aspects of the project (e.g., temporary work areas, alignments) to avoid tree
3412 removal. (*Design, District, Contractor*)

3413 **Tree Removal AMM 2.**

3414 Apply time of year restrictions for tree removal when bats are not likely to be present (**November 1st to**
3415 **March 31st**), or Limit tree removal to 10 or fewer trees per project at any time of year within 100 feet of

3416 the existing road/rail surface and **outside of documented** roosting/foraging habitat or travel corridors;
3417 visual emergence survey must be conducted with no bats observed. (*NDOT environmental, District,*
3418 *Contractor*)

3419 **Tree Removal AMM 3.**

3420 Ensure tree removal is limited to that specified in project plans and ensure that contractors
3421 understand clearing limits and how they are marked in the field (e.g., install bright colored
3422 flagging/fencing prior to any tree clearing to ensure contractors stay within clearing limits). (*District,*
3423 *Contractor*)

3424 **Tree Removal AMM 4.**

3425 Do not remove documented Indiana bat or NLEB roosts that are still suitable for roosting, or trees
3426 within 0.25 miles of roosts, or **documented** foraging habitat any time of year. (*District, Contractor*)

3427 **NLEB/TCB -A Structure Removal.** Apply time of year (**November 1st to March 31st**) restrictions for
3428 structure removal (when bats are not likely to be present). (*NDOT Environmental, District, Contractor*)

3429 **5.21 Fish, Wildlife, and Vegetation**

3430 In accordance with NDOT's Avian Protection Plan (NDOT 2018), NDOT would make every effort to
3431 schedule clearing and grubbing, large tree removal, or other work activities that may impact migratory
3432 bird nests, outside of the primary Nebraska nesting season of April 1 to September 1. If any of the
3433 aforementioned activities would be required during this period, a nesting survey would be completed
3434 by a qualified biologist prior to work commencing. Specific to bridge and culvert work, the required
3435 survey period extends through September 30. (NDOT Environmental, Contractor)

3436 In efforts to maintain aquatic wildlife connectivity, the Preferred Alternative may use temporary
3437 structures during construction. The use of temporary structures would facilitate aquatic life
3438 movements during construction in accordance with CWA Section 404 Nationwide Permit General
3439 Condition No. 2: Aquatic Life Movements. Proposed structures would be constructed at appropriate
3440 sizes and elevations so as not to impede aquatic life movements. (NDOT Environmental, Contractor)

3441 To avoid impacts on fish and other aquatic organisms, an erosion control plan and a SWPPP would be
3442 developed and implemented. In accordance with the SWPPP and the requirements in the General
3443 Construction Storm Water Permit, NDOT would inspect all erosion and sediment control BMPs every
3444 14 days and after every precipitation event of 0.5 inch or greater. Any BMP adjustments and repairs
3445 would occur within 7 days of the inspection to ensure that water quality is being protected to the
3446 maximum extent practicable. The SWPPP would be maintained, and discharge points would be
3447 monitored by NDOT until the site is 70 percent revegetated. (NDOT Environmental, Contractor)

3448 According to NDOT's Standard Specifications for Highway Construction, Subsection 202.01(2)(b), the
3449 Contractor would be responsible for disposal of all vegetation for NDOT ROW and the limits of
3450 construction. Disturbed areas would be seeded in accordance with NDOT's Standard Specifications,
3451 Subsection 803.02. Revegetation of the area following construction would occur using seed mixtures
3452 containing native grasses, legumes, and forbs to appropriately landscape the region, as specified in
3453 NDOT's Plan for the Roadside Environment for a rural highway corridor (NDOT 2008). (NDOT
3454 Environmental, Contractor)

3455 As stated in NDOT's Standard Specifications for Highway Construction, Subsection 107.12, "The
3456 Contractor should prevent the transfer of invasive plant and animal species and should wash all
3457 equipment at the Contractor's storage facility prior to entering the construction site. The Contractor
3458 should inspect all construction equipment and remove all attached vegetation and animal prior to
3459 leaving the construction site." (NDOT Environmental, Contractor)

3460 Appropriate mulching materials, as defined in NDOT's Standard Specifications for Highway
3461 Construction, Subsection 806.02(1), should be applied and should not include brome hay, rushes,
3462 cattails, reed canary grass, wide-bladed grass, or invasive species. All sod, if required, to be applied to
3463 the Project should be free from noxious weeds and all other weeds. (NDOT Environmental, Contractor)

3464 5.22 Cumulative Impacts

3465 To avoid or minimize cumulative impacts to the transportation network, NDOT district office should
3466 consider the timeline of construction on official planned detour routes so that this work is not
3467 occurring when the roadway is needed as a detour for this project.