

Public Hearing

NH-26-1(172) Minatare - US-385; C.N. 51521

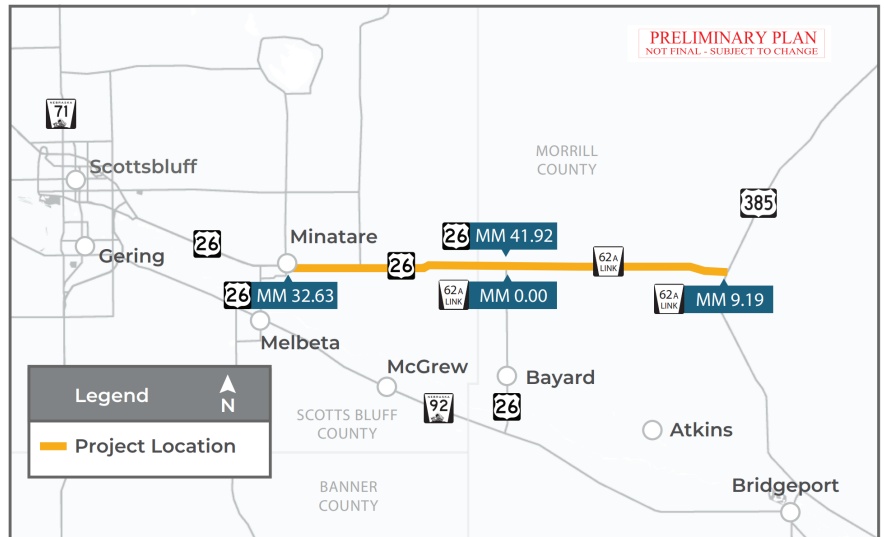
Minatare Elementary School Gym, 805 7th St, Minatare, Nebraska 69356

The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have developed a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and are seeking input on proposed improvements to approximately 18.5 miles located on US Highway 26 (US-26) and Nebraska Link 62A (L-62A) in Scotts Bluff and Morrill counties in Nebraska.

PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed project would expand the existing two-lane highway to a four-lane expressway. The project would start on US-26 just west of Minatare’s Main Street and extend east to the junction of US-26 and L-62A. The project would continue east on L-62A to the junction with US Highway 385.

The intersections would be improved throughout the project and there would be controlled access throughout the project.



PURPOSE & NEED

The purpose of the proposed project is to develop an improved transportation corridor connecting the junction of US-385 and L-62A, with the city of Minatare.

The improved corridor is intended to address the following transportation related purposes:

- To provide an improved highway on a congressionally designated National Highway System (NHS) High Priority Corridor that increases the efficiency and safety of travel
- To fulfill federal legislative intent of ISTEA, TEA-21, SAFETEA-LU, and MAP-21
- To fulfill state legislative intent of the Build Nebraska Act and the Transportation Innovation Act
- To address roadway and operational challenges of the existing facility

This project is needed because Congress has designated this corridor for completion; federal and state government legislative actions have provided ongoing funding and intent to construct it; and there are numerous roadway and operational challenges with the existing facility that reduce its efficiency and safety.

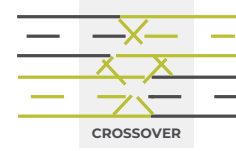
ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Three alternatives were developed and considered based on input from the public as well as federal and state resource agencies:



1. 2000 Selected Alternative

The 2000 Selected Alternative, as proposed in the 2000 FONSI, would involve expanding the existing 2-lane roadway to a 4-lane divided expressway by constructing additional lanes along the south side of US-26 from Minatare to CR 36 and along the north side of US-26/L62A from CR 36 to US-385.



2. Centered Alignment (Full Reconstruction)

This alternative proposes constructing a 4-lane divided highway along the center of the existing alignment.



3. South Offset Alignment Alternative

Additional lanes to be located south of the existing roadway using a 2+2 strategy for widening.

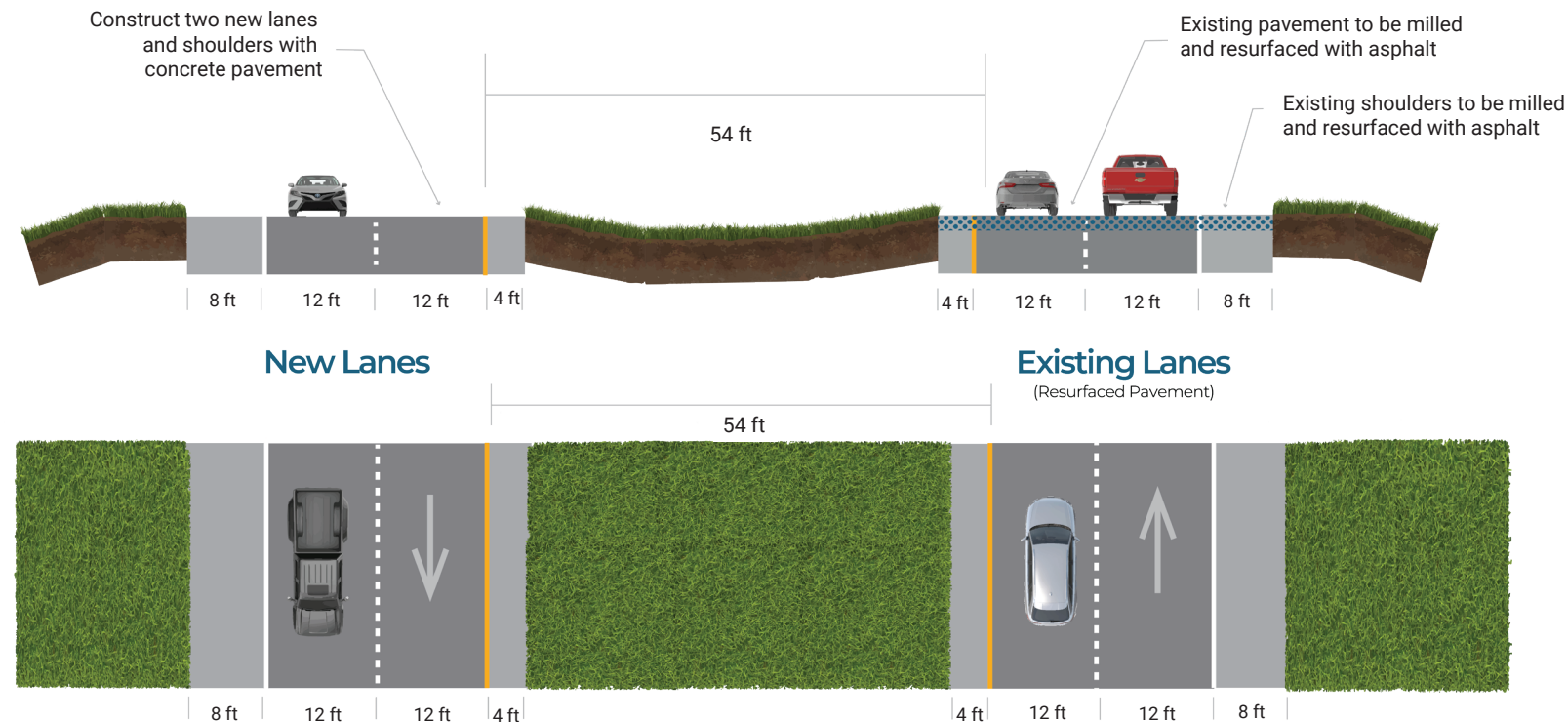


4. North Offset Alignment Alternative (Preferred)

Additional lanes to be located north of the existing roadway using a 2+2 strategy for widening.



PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE TYPICAL SECTION



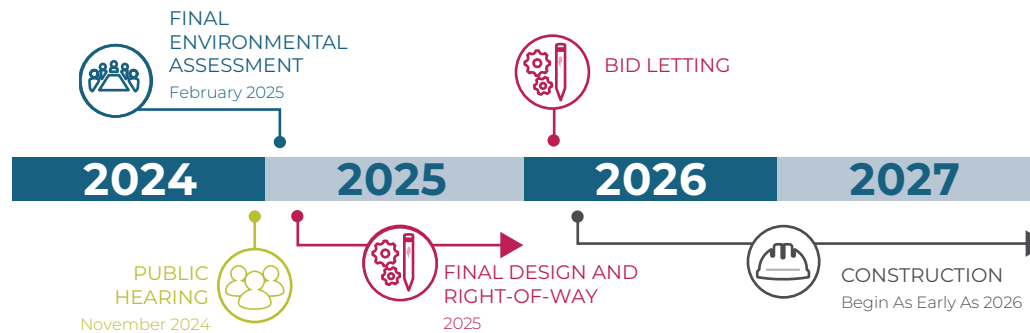
PRELIMINARY PLAN
NOT FINAL - SUBJECT TO CHANGE

SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

CONSIDERATIONS

Land Use	260 acres would be converted to NDOT ROW
Farmland	188 acres would be converted to NDOT ROW 22 center pivots would be impacted
Right-of-Way and Relocations	15 houses would be acquired, and 4 major outbuildings and 15 minor outbuildings would be acquired
Utilities	Relocations would be required
Irrigation Canals & Districts	Three canals (Minatare, Tri-State, and Interstate) would be impacted by construction
Historic Properties	No Adverse Effects to the Sod House at CR 79 and Harry's Curve Historic District
Section 4(f) Properties	De minimis determinations applied to all impacted properties
Hazardous Materials & Contamination	Medium Potential to encounter soil and shallow groundwater contamination at Harry's One Stop and former Tony's Service Station
Noise Impacts	Six receptors would see an increase in noise levels, but all of these would be acquired
Floodplains	Five regulated (or calculated) floodplains would be encroached upon. No adverse effect.
Water Quality	Twelve groundwater wells may potentially be impacted
Wetlands and Other Water Resources	13.5 Acres of Wetlands; 2500 Linear Feet of Ephemeral, Intermittent and Perennial Streams; 4700 Linear Feet of Irrigation Conveyances
Threatened and Endangered Species	Not Likely to Adversely Affect: Swift Fox, Northern Long-eared Bat, Black-footed Ferret and Tricolored Bat

ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE & COST



ESTIMATED COST:
\$94.7 MILLION*

*Funding comes from federal and state sources.

SCOPE OF WORK

Proposed improvements for the preferred alternative would include paving new lanes, as well as milling and resurfacing the existing lanes. Additional work would include utility relocations, culvert and storm sewer work, new guardrail, removing and replacing existing guardrail, a new bridge, new intersections, improved intersections, access relocations (i.e. new frontage roads) and side road modifications. Grading would be required for the entire length of this project. The bridge over Ninemile Creek (Structure Number S026 03470) would be used in place and a new bridge would be built with the new set of lanes. A grade raise of the entire structure is not anticipated.

The following bridge-size box culverts would be extended:

- Minatare Drain Canal (Structure Number S026 03505)
- Irrigation Conveyance (S026 03916)
- Wildhorse Creek (S026 04114)
- Wildhorse Canyon (SL62A 00116)
- Tri-State Canal (SL62A 00537, SL62A 00582, SL62A 00613)

The following bridge-size box culverts would be replaced:

- Irrigation Conveyance (SL62A 00152)
- West Water Creek (SL62A 00463)
- Red Willow Creek (SL62A 00595)
- Irrigation Conveyance (SL62A 00648)

RIGHT-OF-WAY

The proposed project would require the acquisition of additional property rights, which could include new right-of-way (ROW), control of access (CA), permanent easements (PE), temporary easements (TE), residential and commercial relocations and/or impacts to existing center pivot irrigation systems. If your property is impacted by this project, you would be contacted by a representative from NDOT's Right of Way Division once the design footprint has been established.

TRAFFIC ACCOMMODATIONS

The project would be constructed under traffic, with lane closures controlled by appropriate traffic control devices and practices. Temporary surfacing may be required to accommodate phased construction. Closures at the junction with county roads may be needed to construct intersections but adjacent county roads would not be closed at the same time. Access to adjacent properties would be maintained during construction but may be limited at times due to traffic phasing requirements.

FEEDBACK

Comments will be collected through **December 6, 2024** and should be submitted to:



Sierra Luhn
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(402) 479-3103

Information regarding the proposed project, including an electronic version of the draft EA is available on the NDOT website at ndot.info/51521. For those without internet access, information may be obtained at NDOT Headquarters: 1500 Nebraska Parkway, Lincoln, NE, 68502 or by contacting:

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