ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING REPORT

NAME OF PLANNING STUDY
PROJECT LOCATION

COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA

SUBMITTED ON:
Month Day, Year

SUBMITTED TO:

South Dakota Department of Transportation
700 East Broadway Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501

Federal Highway Administration
South Dakota Division
116 East Dakota Avenue, Suite A
Pierre, SD 57501

As consistent with 23 CFR 450

SUBMITTED BY:
Consulting Firm
Address
City, State, Zip Code

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a summary of next steps for the NEPA study, proposed class of action, alternatives brought forth to include in NEPA analysis.

INTRODUCTION

{The vision of this document is to correlate an active planning study that is taking place concurrently with the Environmental Screening Report. This process is different than a PEL which occurs before the Planning Study phase.}

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The current area of interest is [Project Location]. The South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) [include additional sponsors (i.e. additional State DOT, local agency, or others) as relevant] has undertaken this project to develop a more thorough understanding of the corridor. The project shall evaluate the existing and future operating conditions and features of the corridor with the goal of identifying existing conditions, anticipated problem areas, and developing and screening a reasonable range of potential improvements to improve operations and safety of the corridor for all modes of transportation. The results of these efforts may ultimately be used to support a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) decision and final design. This Environmental Screening Report identifies environmental resources and environmentally sensitive areas; the screening report is mostly composed of readily available data and limited field survey information. The purpose of this screening report is to identify resources early in the planning process to avoid fatal flaws and to consider sensitive environmental resources in the study area. The intent of this screening report is not to identify impacts but rather to identify potential resource areas for use in alternatives analysis to avoid and minimize impacts to resources during subsequent study phases while developing alternatives that meet purpose and need. If a recommended improvement receives funding, the results of the Environmental Screening Report will be carried forward at that time into project development, additional environmental review (NEPA-level or similar local environmental review process), design, and ultimately construction, maintenance, and operations.

[Have previous planning studies been conducted in this area? If so, please provide a brief chronology, including the years the were completed. Provide contact names and locations of the studies and study websites. Are there current or near-future (or other) studies or projects in the vicinity that are underway or will be undertaken? What is the relationship of this study to those studies/projects?]

PROJECT LOCATION

This project is located on [Project Location]. The approximate area of interest is shown in Figure 1. {What cities & counties does it cover? What major highways or major streets are covered? What are the intended termini of the corridor study?} The environmental study area is focused around the area most likely to be impacted by corridor transportation improvements.

{Ensure that NEPA study area and Project study area are not represented as one and the same. As NEPA will need to consider direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts, as well as casual effects. Thus, the environmental study area will entail a larger study area than the planning study area.}

{The Planning study is identifying the areas to be improved/addressed. Therefore, the establishment of Logical Termini should be determined at the onset of the environmental screening as it will become

component of the Purpose and Need Statement, demonstrate Independent Utility, be reflected into the NEPA Study Area vs. the Project Study Area, and will define the rational endpoints for the review of potential environmental resources that could be impacted.}

FIGURE 1: Study Area [utilize full page for Figure]

PRELIMINARY NEEDS, PURPOSE, AND GOALS/OBJECTIVES

SDDOT is conducting this study to examine the need for transportation improvements in [Project Location] to:

- [MOBILITY EXAMPLE: The purpose of this Project is to Improve the mobility of vehicular travel along Corridor X during the PM peak period, peak direction;]
- [CONGESTION EXAMPLE: The purpose of this project is to reduce congestion to a point where Roadway # operates at a LOS C in {planning horizon year};]
- [ACCESS EXAMPLE: The purpose of this project is to provide new highway access to Public Area XYZ;]
- [SAFETY EXAMPLE: The purpose of this project is to reduce rear-end crashes by 20%.]

{What is the forecast year used in the Planning Study to develop the preliminary needs, purpose, or the corridor vision and transportation goals and objectives?}

If the preliminary needs, purpose, or the corridor vision and transportation goals and objectives are attributed from a previous planning or corridor study then are the assumptions still valid?

{Identify if this is a corridor-level Environmental Screening or a project-level Environmental Screening. If the project is being actively developed from the Planning Study, then Purpose and Need, logical termini, and independent utility analysis will need to become more specific to each project within the study area. One size fits all rarely applies to NEPA.}

{What steps will need to be taken during the NEPA process to make this a project-level purpose and need statement?}

RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES

During the planning study's alternatives screening process, alternative screening should focus on purpose and need/corridor vision, fatal flaw analysis, and possibly mode selection. Alternatives that have fatal flaws or do not meet the preliminary purpose and need/corridor vision will not be considered reasonable alternatives, even if they reduce impacts to a particular resource. Detail the range of alternatives considered, screening criteria, and screening process, including:

1. What types of alternatives were looked at?
2. How was the screening criteria and screening process selected?
3. For alternative(s) that were screened out, briefly summarize the reason for eliminating the alternative(s). [During the initial screening, this will predominantly focus on fatal flaws.]
4. Which alternatives should be brought forward into NEPA and why?
5. Did the public, stakeholders, and resource agencies have an opportunity to define the purpose and need as well as comment on the development of alternatives during this process?
6. Were there unresolved issues with the public, stakeholders, and/or agencies?

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND ISSUES

This section should be specific to identifying the resource or issues that will be integral to the NEPA study. And each resource/issue listed should provide the following data to later inform NEPA:

1. Is the resource or issue present in the NEPA Study Area?
2. Are impacts to the resource or issue involvement possible?
3. Are the impacts mitigable?
4. Discuss the level of review & method of review for this resource or issue and provide the name and location of any study or other information cited in the planning document where it is described in detail. Describe how the planning data may need to be supplemented during NEPA.]

Prior to delving into the discussion, provide discussion and reasoning of resources/issues eliminated from inclusion to Environmental Screening and subsequent NEPA study.

WATER RESOURCES, INCLUDING WATERS OF THE U.S., WATERS OF THE STATE, WETLANDS, STORM WATER, AND FLOODPLAINS

All waters in South Dakota fall into one of two categories: Waters of the United States and waters of the state. According to the Clean Water Act (CWA), waters are regulated in one of the following ways:

(1) obtain permit for dredge or fill material from USACE or the state agency, as appropriate (Section 404),
(2) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit and other discharge permits are to be acquired from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) or SDDENR (Section 402),
(3) water quality certification is required from state water resource agency, or for projects impacting tribal lands from the USEPA (Section 401), and
(4) all projects shall be consistent with the state nonpoint source pollution management program (Section 319).

Aquatic resources that are considered “jurisdictional” are subject to the multiple regulatory requirements set forth with Section 404 of the CWA. The CWA additionally requires that each state develop standards for their aquatic resources to ensure the beneficial uses are protected. South Dakota has developed surface water quality standards for all waters of the state. If water resources are determined to be non-jurisdictional the regulatory requirements are subject to guidance set forth by the state. The environmental analysis of aquatic resources encompasses many types of resources that may be encountered in the planning, construction, and maintenance of transportation projects.

Methodology

[Methodology Information]

Existing Conditions

[Existing Conditions Information]

[Waters of the U.S.]

[Wetlands]

[Storm Water]

[Floodplains]

Next Steps

[Next Steps Information]

WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System was created by Congress in 1968 (Public Law 90-542; 16 U.S.C. 1271 et seq.) to preserve certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations. The Act is notable for safeguarding the special character of these rivers, while also recognizing the potential for their appropriate use and development. South Dakota has approximately 9,513 miles of river, of which 93 miles are designated as wild & scenic—less than 1% of the state's river miles. The Missouri River is designated from Gavins Point Dam, South Dakota, downstream to Ponca State Park, Nebraska; and from Fort Randall Dam to Lewis and Clark Lake.

Methodology

[Methodology Information]

Existing Conditions

[Existing Conditions Information]

Next Steps

[Next Steps Information]

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES, MIGRATORY BIRDS, EAGLES, AND UNIQUE WILDLIFE HABITAT

NEPA requires the identification and assessment of reasonable alternatives that will avoid and minimize adverse effects on the quality of the human environment, which includes species and habitats protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA). Protecting threatened and endangered species in the planning, construction, and maintenance of transportation projects is an important step in complying with the ESA.

Methodology

USFWS provides a list of species by county and a list of threatened and endangered species for specific areas can also be accessed by requesting an Official Species List through the USFWS Information for Planning and Conservation (IPaC) system.

South Dakota Game Fish & Parks provides a list of state listed Threatened & Endangered Species. Sensitive sites for eagles and other raptors as well as areas of wildlife/fish concerns should be identified for the study area.

Existing Conditions

[Existing Conditions Information]

[General Physical Setting and Hydrology]

[Habitat Description]

[Special-Status Species]

[Migratory Birds and Eagles]

Next Steps

[Next Steps Information]

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Section 106 of the NHPA, as amended, guides the process of considering the effects of federal undertakings on historic properties. As such, Section 106 applies to federal agencies and to projects that are carried out with federal financial assistance; or those requiring a federal permit, license, or approval. Section 106 seeks to accommodate historic preservation concerns with the needs of federal undertakings through consultation among the agency officials and other parties with an interest in the effects of the undertaking on historic properties. This section defines key terms used in the protection of historic properties, introduces the applicable authorities, and describes the environmental commitments established for compliance with Section 106.

Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act of 1966 provides protection to publicly owned parks, recreation areas

(including recreational trails), wildlife or wildfowl refuges, or any publicly or privately-owned historic site listed or eligible for listing on the NRHP. Compared to the many procedural environmental laws that apply to federal highway actions, Section 4(f) is a substantive law that precludes project approval if there is a use of a Section 4(f) property when a prudent and feasible avoidance alternative is available. Additional information on the correlation between Section 106 and Section 4(f) will be provided in the Section 4(f) & Section 6(f) section.

Methodology

A letter should be sent to the Archaeological Research Center (ARC) requesting a records search to identify historic properties within the Area of Potential Effect (APE). Performing a cultural resources survey is not necessary during the Environmental Screening process.

Existing Conditions

[Location Background]

[Resources Listed on the National Register of Historic Places]

[Other Potentially Eligible Resources]

Next Steps

[Next Steps Information]

SECTION 4(F) AND SECTION 6(F) RESOURCES

Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act of 1966 provides protection to publicly owned parks, recreation areas (including recreational trails), wildlife or wildfowl refuges, or any publicly or privately-owned historic site listed or eligible for listing on the NRHP. The law only applies to USDOT agencies. Compared to the many procedural environmental laws that apply to federal highway actions, Section 4(f) is a substantive law that precludes project approval if there is a use of a Section 4(f) property when a prudent and feasible avoidance alternative is available.

Some park and recreational resources are also regulated under the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act of 1965 which established a federal funding program to assist states in developing outdoor recreation sites. Section 6(f) of LWCF ensures that a recreational area funded with LWCF assistance is continually maintained in public outdoor recreation use unless NPS approves the conversion in accordance with the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) (36 CFR 59.3). When a Section 6(f) land conversion is proposed for a highway project, replacement land will be necessary. Coordination for Section 6(f) projects is done with the South Dakota Game Fish & Parks (SDGFP) Grants Coordinator. SDGFP will consult with the NPS Midwest Regional Director or designee to make a determination on the potential impacts on Section 6(f) properties and replacement

properties.

Methodology

[Methodology Information]

Existing Conditions

[Existing Conditions Information]

Section 4(f)

[Section 4(f)]

Section 6(f)

[Section 6(f)]

Next Steps

[Next Steps Information]

PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Paleontological resources are the fossilized remains of prehistoric plant and animal organisms, as well as the mineralized impressions (trace fossils) left as indirect evidence of the form and activity of such organisms. These non-renewable resources may be scientifically significant.

Methodology

A paleontological survey is not necessary as part of this study. There are no laws within South Dakota requiring the review of paleontological resources as a part of the NEPA process. If during the coordination process it is brought up with the land managing agency, paleontological resources should be considered. Additionally, paleontological resources must be taken into account if they are identified as components of cultural resources or Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs).

Existing Conditions

[Existing Conditions Information]

Next Steps

[Next Steps Information]

LAND USE AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES

Land use affects the quality of life and environment of the community. Land use designations often include zoning, future land use and growth management areas, conservation easements, urban infrastructure service boundaries, and annexation plans as well as past, existing, and future development trends. Incorporating current and future land use and forecasting land use and trends are a key consideration in transportation planning, design, and construction. Land use should be taken into consideration although there are no FHWA or SDDOT land use regulations.

Economic resources are viewed through the lens of population, household, and employment trends for the study area. It is complemented by depictions and descriptions of current and future land uses that provide an understanding of areas of future growth.

Methodology

A review should be conducted of existing and proposed land use in the study area and any anticipated changes in land use, including the following information:

- Municipal/county planning documents
- Zoning maps and master plans
- Aerial photographs
- USGS and other maps
- Digital orthographic quadrangle images
- GIS data

Coordination letters may be sent to the local governments, Tribes, or economic development corporations to determine any potential land use or social/economic impacts.

Existing Conditions

[Existing Conditions Information]

[Current Land Use]

[Future Land Use]

Next Steps

[Next Steps Information]

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL RESOURCES

Transportation provides mobility and access for the daily activities of a community. As such, major changes to the transportation system may affect the various aspects of a community. The magnitude of the projected change is evaluated for each of the following social characteristics: population, public services and facilities, community character and cohesion, and traffic circulation.

Methodology

A desktop review should be conducted to identify statistics used for the analysis. Statistics for the city and county should be utilized, while primarily focusing on the study area.

Existing Conditions

[Existing Conditions Information]

[Population]

[Public Services and Facilities]

[Community Character and Cohesion]

[Traffic Circulation]

Next Steps

[Next Steps Information]

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are important components in a community's transportation infrastructure. Promoting development of facilities for use by pedestrians and bicycles is an important consideration during transportation planning. Existing and planned bicycle and pedestrian facilities are summarized in this section.

Methodology

A desktop should be conducted to identify existing pedestrian/bicycle facilities located within the study area and determine the locations of existing sidewalks, pedestrian bridges, footpaths, bike routes, and designated trails. Tools to identify facilities include maps, aerial photos, local governments, and users.

Existing Conditions

[Existing Conditions Information]

Next Steps

[Next Steps Information]

VISUAL RESOURCES AND AESTHETICS

Visual resources are the natural and cultural features of the landscape that define its aesthetic quality and form the overall impression, or visual character, of an area. Visual impacts can generally be defined in terms of the relationship between the area's physical characteristics, the presence and location of viewers, and the character and quality of the environment in which a project is located.

Methodology

The methodology can include a description of the study area's topography, as well as current and future land use. Discussion may also include detailing distinctive landscape character units such as:

- Residential (urban, suburban, rural) uses
- Commercial, industrial, and municipal uses
- Parks, recreational areas, and trails
- Water and natural resources
- Agricultural open space and undeveloped lands

Existing Conditions

[Existing Conditions Information]

Next Steps

[Next Steps Information]

PRIME AND UNIQUE FARMLANDS

Protecting farmland from conversion from agricultural use to build infrastructure during the planning, construction, and maintenance of transportation projects is an important step in complying with the provisions of 7 CFR 658 et seq. Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA). In accordance with the FPPA, important farmland includes all land that is defined as prime, unique, or farmlands of statewide or local

importance based on soil types. SDDOT identifies important farmland from currently published or interim soil survey maps and data produced and certified by the NRCS National Cooperative Soil Survey Program.

Methodology

The NRCS Web Soil Survey should be utilized in order identify types of soil within the study area, including prime, unique, and statewide and locally important farmlands.

Existing Conditions

[Existing Conditions Information]

Next Steps

[Next Steps Information]

AIR QUALITY

Protecting air quality in the planning, construction, and maintenance of transportation projects is an important step in complying with provisions of 42 USC 7401 et seq., the Clean Air Act (CAA). The South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (SDDANR) Air Quality Program is responsible for maintaining air quality levels in South Dakota. It is responsible for air quality levels that protect human health, safety and welfare, and the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) established through the CAA.

Methodology

[Methodology Information]

Existing Conditions

[Existing Conditions Information]

Next Steps

[Next Steps Information]

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Hazardous materials include substances or materials which have been determined by the EPA to be capable of posing an unreasonable risk to health, safety, or property. Hazardous materials may exist within the study area at facilities that generate, store, or dispose of these substances, or at locations of past releases of these substances. Examples of hazardous materials include asbestos, lead-based paint, heavy metals, dry-cleaning solvents, and petroleum hydrocarbons (e.g., gasoline and diesel fuels), all of which could be harmful to human health and the environment. The SDDANR Hazardous Waste Section is responsible for providing technical assistance as well as regulating the storage, treatment, transport, and disposal of hazardous waste in the state of South Dakota.

Methodology

[Methodology Information]

Existing Conditions

[Existing Conditions Information]

Next Steps

[Next Steps Information]

NOISE

Noise from highway traffic and construction is an important environmental consideration in transportation projects. SDDOT applies 23 CFR 772 for noise analysis and abatement procedures.

Highway projects fall into three types:

Type I projects are defined as federal-aid highway projects in a new location or the physical alteration of an existing highway that significantly changes either the horizontal or vertical alignment or increases the number of through-traffic lanes. Type I projects can also include new or altered weigh stations, rest stops, ride-share lots, or toll plazas. Noise analysis is not required for the no-build alternative or other eliminated alternatives. SDDOT uses this definition to determine whether or not a project is Type I.

Type II projects are defined as federal-aid highway projects for noise abatement on an existing Highway. For a Type II project to be eligible for Federal-aid funding, the highway agency must develop and implement a Type II program in accordance with section 772. 7(e). Type II programs are voluntary, and SDDOT has elected not to have a Type II program.

Type III projects are defined as federal-aid highway projects that do not meet the classifications of a Type I or Type II project. Type III projects do not require a noise analysis.

Methodology

For the purposes of this environmental screening, no noise study should be conducted. Instead, a review of noise conditions within the study area should be conducted to identify noise-sensitive locations and benefited receptors.

Existing Conditions

[Existing Conditions Information]

Next Steps

[Next Steps Information]

RIGHT-OF-WAY, ACQUISITION, AND RELOCATION POTENTIAL

The potential of right-of-way (ROW), acquisition, and relocation impacts are described in this section to evaluate how property owners and tenants (e.g., residential, business, non-profit, farm, ranch) may be directly and indirectly impacted by proposed right-of-way acquisition and associated business and residential displacements and relocations. The impacts may occur as a result of acquisition of specific businesses and residences or through disruption of business activity and neighborhood/community interaction characteristics that result in relocations.

Methodology

While specific ROW acquisitions or relocations are not known in the Environmental Screening phase, a desktop review should be conducted to identify existing land use in the area for potential ROW uses in the NEPA project(s) phase.

Existing Conditions

[Existing Conditions Information]

Next Steps

[Next Steps Information]

UTILITIES

Aboveground and buried utilities within the study area are outlined in this section.

Methodology

A desktop review should be conducted to identify existing utilities in the area including, but not limited to, electric, gas, water, and wastewater. The providers of the utilities should also be included.

Existing Conditions

[Existing Conditions Information]

Next Steps

[Next Steps Information]

OTHER ISSUES

[Are there any other issues that NEPA should be aware of? I.e. Public and/or stakeholders have expressed specific concerns, Utility problems, Access or ROW issues, Encroachments into ROW, Need to engage – specific landowners, citizens, citizen groups, or other stakeholders, special or unique resources in the area, Federal regulations that are undergoing initial promulgation or revision, Title VI, other…]

Methodology

[Methodology Information]

Existing Conditions

[Existing Conditions Information]

Next Steps

[Next Steps Information]

REASONABLY FORESEEABLE EFFECTS

[Were environmental effects that are reasonably foreseeable and have a reasonably close causal relationship to the project action considered in the Environmental Screening Report? Provide the

information and reference where the analysis can be found.]

MITIGATION STRATEGIES

[Summarize any mitigation strategies discussed at the planning level that should be analyzed during NEPA.]

STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

[What were the key steps and coordination points of stakeholders, regulatory/resource agencies, and public in the decision-making process?]
[What additional coordination needs to occur with stakeholders, regulatory/resource agencies, tribes, etc. during NEPA?]
[What is the projected public involvement and outreach to occur during NEPA?]

CONCLUSION

[Summarize the likely environmental impacts that will occur with project. Explain risk determination.]
[If project(s) are to be developed from this study then identify the funding source(s) and an anticipated NEPA document type]
[Name the red flags that NEPA needs to take a proactive approach towards.]
[Identify date/anticipated date that project will be programmed in the STIP. If NEPA study is 5+ years from the Environmental Screening date, then the recommendations presented here may need to be revisited.]
[What is the anticipated NEPA schedule with the identified NEPA document identified as the deliverable]

REFERENCES

[References]

APPENDIX

[Appendix]