U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Federal Highway Administration

THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA
South Dakota Department of Transportation

Projects:
EM 1360(02), PCN 06JQ-85th St (270th St) - Fm Sundowner Avenue E 1 to Tallgrass Ave
IM 0292(88)74, PCN 07C6-I29 NBL - Fm 85th St to I229
IM 2292(104)0, PCN 07D0-I229 NBL - Fm I29 to Louise Ave

Sioux Falls, Lincoln County, South Dakota

This action complies with the Executive Order 11990 “Protection of Wetlands”.

Approved _____ Tom Lehmkuhl 2022.10.05 12:00:55 -05'00' Date: 10/05/2022
FHWA Environmental Engineer

Approved _____ Joanne M. Hight Date: Joanne Hight Digitally signed by Joanne Hight Date: 2022.10.05 10:21:05 -05'00'
SDDOT Administration Program Manager

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

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I-29 Exit 74 New Interchange at 85th Street, 85th Street from Sundowner Avenue to Tallgrass Avenue, I-229 NB Auxiliary Lane from the I-29/85th Interchange to I-229 Exit 1C, and Repaving of I-229 Exit 1C NB Exit to Louise Avenue, in the cities of Tea and Sioux Falls, South Dakota

1. INTRODUCTION

In compliance with Executive Order 11990 and in accordance with 23 CFR 771.777 and Technical Advisory T6640.8a, this statement sets forth the basis for a finding that there is no practical alternative to the placing of fill for highway construction in certain wetlands adjacent to a new interchange at I-29 and 85th Street and along 85th Street between Sundowner Avenue and Tallgrass Avenue in Tea and Sioux Falls, Lincoln County, South Dakota. All practicable measures to minimize the fill areas to reduce harm to the wetlands have been taken.

2. PROJECT LOCATION AND SUMMARY

The proposed project consists of the construction of a new interchange at I-29 and 85th Street in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The project's recommended design is a Diverging Diamond Interchange. The configuration also includes a connector ramp from southbound I-229 to the 85th Street exit ramp and a braided exit ramp from southbound I-29 to the 85th Street Exit, the construction of an auxiliary lane from the northbound I-29 entrance ramp to I-29 as it merges with I-229, and the reconstruction of the existing exit ramp at I-229 Exit 1C (Louise Avenue). The project also includes the two-lane paved section of 270th Street (future 85th Street) from its future interchange at I-29 west to 469th Avenue (Tea/Ellis Road).

Total estimated project construction cost is $49.4M. The project is tentatively scheduled to be constructed in FY 2025.

Attachment A shows the project location and illustrates the improvements included in the Build Alternative. **Attachment B** shows anticipated wetland impacts resulting from the Build Alternative.

3. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION / RELATED ACTIONS

The Purpose of the project is to address the main needs identified in the study area. These needs, which are listed below and will be addressed with equal importance and priority in this study, are:

- **System Linkage (Connectivity)** – The project is needed to address route inefficiencies that will be introduced with planned development surrounding the current transportation system. The connectivity need of the study area will be met if the project demonstrates that vehicle hours traveled (VHT) within the study area throughout the 2045 design year of the project do not exceed 101.5 million hours.

- **Traffic Operations (Mobility)** – The project is needed to ensure adequate levels of operation are maintained throughout the transportation network under projected traffic conditions. Several roadway segments and intersections within the existing network are expected to fail operationally under the projected traffic volumes. The mobility need of the study area will be met if the project demonstrates that acceptable levels of service (LOS) will be maintained on all roadway segments and at intersections on the local transportation network, according to SDDOT and City of Sioux Falls standards, under the projected traffic conditions. Acceptable levels of service are defined as LOS C for all freeway sections of I-29, I-229, and all ramp terminals within the study area, and LOS D for all arterial roadway sections and signalized intersections in the study area.

- **Economic Development (Planned Economic Growth)** – The project is needed to achieve the planned development identified in local plans and proposals. The economic development need of the study area will be met if the project demonstrates a positive Net Present Value (NPV) will be achieved throughout its lifecycle.

Related Actions – Future Improvements in the Project Study Area

The Cities of Tea and Sioux Falls are planning to jointly improve 85th Street from 469th Avenue (Tea-Ellis Road / Heritage Parkway / CR 111) eastward to the western I-29/85th Street Interchange access control area. This project is tentatively scheduled for construction in 2024. Updates to the Sioux Falls MPO's LRTP & TIP for the 2023-2026 period have been submitted for this project. No permits have yet been submitted for these improvements but permitting for construction is expected to be completed in 2023 for the 2024 construction year.

The one-mile segment of 85th Street between 469th and 470th Avenues is planned to be developed as a 2-lane rural (paved) road with a 3rd turning lane with major intersections at each end. The east ¼ mile (approaching the interchange) will be urbanized with lanes transitioning from the 3-lane to a 5/6 Lane layout to blend in with the interchange. Two-lane improvement segments are expected to conform to existing roadway sections and not result in wetland impacts.

Similar plans for future improvements to Sundowner Avenue for the one-mile segment extending north from Gateway Boulevard/CR 106 to its intersection with 85th Street. This segment is expected to develop as a three-lane rural road section. This will include some minor road and shoulder widening, but impacts to the adjacent roadside ditches are anticipated to be minimal. Sundowner Avenue, from 85th Street north to 69th Street is expected to be paved as a rural two-lane section, with minimal or no impact to roadside ditches.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Four (4) alternatives were considered for the project, each as described below.

A. Existing Conditions Alternative

The Existing Conditions Alternative is a "no action" alternative. This alternative assumes that no interchange and no overpass would be constructed at I-29 and 85th Street. Any future construction would be limited to repaving and routine maintenance. The approved IJR acknowledges a phasing plan for many additional programmed and planned arterial network street projects to improve capacity, safety, and mobility in coordination with new interchange access on I-29 at 85th Street. Many of these phasing plan projects would proceed on the local system and independently as development needs dictate if an interchange is not constructed.

Although the no action alternative typically does not meet the purpose and need of a proposed transportation project, it is always carried forward to serve as the baseline when

analyzing the potential social, economic, and environmental impacts of other alternatives. Consideration of a no action alternative is required by Council of Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508).

B. No Build Alternative

With the No Build Alternative, an interchange would not be constructed at I-29 and 85th Street. However, this is not a “no action” alternative. The No Build Alternative assumes that the previously planned overpass at I-29 and 85th Street would be constructed. The approved IJR acknowledges a phasing plan for many additional programmed and planned arterial network street projects to improve capacity, safety, and mobility in coordination with new interchange access on I-29 at 85th Street. Many of these phasing plan projects would proceed on the local system in conjunction with the construction of an interchange, or independently as development needs dictate if an interchange is not constructed.

C. IJR Diamond Interchange with No Ramp Braids

A diamond interchange with no ramp braids was considered in the IJR as an option that would potentially reduce costs. This alternative was not selected as the IJR Recommended Alternative because it did not allow a minimum weaving distance of 2,000 feet and was not considered feasible. Because the IJR concluded that this alternative is not feasible, it will not be considered further during the NEPA process.

D. The Build Alternative includes the following components of the IJR Recommended Alternative.

- Construction of a Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) along I-29 at 85th Street. The configuration also includes a connector ramp from southbound I-229 to the 85th Street exit ramp and a braided exit ramp from southbound I-29 to the 85th Street Exit.
- Construction of a full auxiliary lane from 85th Street through the northbound I-229 Exit ramp, including the reconstruction of the existing Exit Ramp 1C at Louise Avenue.
- Two-lane paving of 270th Street from its future interchange at I-29 west to 469th Avenue (Tea/Ellis Road).
- Two-lane pavement of Sundowner Avenue from 69th Street to 270th Street.

In addition to the above components, the Build Alternative would include ¾ access to 85th street from future local access roads that would be constructed as part of planned development in the area. This ¾ access would allow for right turns onto and off access roads at 85th Street and would also allow for left turns onto the access roads from 85th Street. Left turns from access roads onto 85th street would not be permitted. The Build Alternative also proposes the expansion of 85th street to six lanes between the 85th Street east access intersection and Tallgrass Avenue.

The Build Alternative was designed with the assumption that planned local roadway projects on Sundowner Avenue and Tallgrass Avenue would proceed to design and construction during the design and construction timeline of the Build Alternative. These local projects would include reconstruction of Sundowner Avenue and Tallgrass Avenue (currently gravel roads) to four-lane paved roads, and each of these projects would have independent utility. When considering impacts for the Build Alternative, the EA also looks at the potential impacts of intersection improvements on 85th Street at Sundowner Avenue and Tallgrass Avenue. Improvements to 85th Street at these intersections, including approaches from the local roads, would be needed to provide independent utility to the Build Alternative. These intersections have been conceptually

designed for the purposes of environmental analysis of the Build Alternative. Their impacts will be considered as part of the NEPA process for this project to allow for an accurate impact comparison between alternatives. However, these approaches would be fully designed and constructed as part of the independent local roadway projects, as agreed upon by project parties in a pre-annexation agreement signed prior to the initiation of this study.

Coordination of the Build Alternative final design efforts and the design of local intersection improvement projects on Sundowner Avenue and Tallgrass Avenue with 85th Street will involve additional future coordination to improve efficiency in the design process. Currently, both projects are programmed in the Sioux Falls MPO's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for design and construction in approximately the same timeframe as the Build Alternative.

The environmental effects of the No Build alternative have been fully analyzed and documented in an EA completed and signed November 2017. FHWA signed a FONSI in February 2018 based on the findings of the EA. As a result, effects from this alternative will not need to be explored further in the I-29 and 85th Street Interchange EA unless otherwise indicated. The effects from this alternative would be compared to those of the Build Alternative when selecting a Preferred Alternative if it is determined that both alternatives satisfy the purpose and need of the project.

The No Build and IJR Diamond Interchange with No Ramp Braids were dismissed due to various design-deficiency reasons. In addition, all the alternatives, except for the Existing Conditions Alternative, would result in wetland impacts. There are several wetlands situated near the highway which make them unavoidable with an overpass or interchange design. While the other alternatives would result in less wetland impact than the Build Alternative, they do not meet the purpose and need of the project and were dismissed (Section 2.0 within the EA).

5. BASIS FOR DETERMINING THE PROPOSED ACTION INCLUDES ALL PRACTICABLE MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM TO WETLANDS

Measures to minimize impacts to the wetlands were discussed and considered at all points of planning, location, and design of the project. Field delineations were conducted in November 2018 and July 2019 to identify the locations of wetlands within the study area. These delineations were updated in August 2022 to thoroughly investigate any potential stormwater pond areas. Elements of the Build Alternative, including drainage features, will be designed in such a way that they would avoid identified wetlands to the extent practicable. This includes consideration for an assessment of unavoidable impacts associated with cuts and fills necessary to satisfy SDDOT and City of Sioux Falls design standards for all roadways, sidepaths, and structural components of the project.

Wetland mitigation will be finalized following the Section 404 permit process with the USACE, though preliminary impacts and mitigation plan are discussed in Section 7 below. The mitigation plan for the proposed action proposes purchasing credits from a mitigation bank in the Lower Big Sioux Geographic Service Area (GSA). Off-site mitigation is being recommended because it is difficult to develop and maintain quality mitigation sites adjacent to roadways. Wetland mitigation for unavoidable impacts related to this project would be accomplished through the purchase of mitigation bank credits from a wetland mitigation bank.

Non-jurisdictional wetlands would be mitigated in accordance with FHWA regulation 23 CFR 777.9. The mitigation plan would be provided to the appropriate mitigation bank as part of the process for purchasing credits.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be implemented during all phases of construction to reduce impacts to aquatic resources from erosion and sedimentation. All disturbed areas will be restored and revegetated according to a project specific erosion and sediment control plan, which will be included in the project plans as Section D. The contractor will be required to submit a Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) Plan prior to commencing construction. With

implementation of these measures, it is anticipated that the construction of the proposed I-29 and 85th Interchange and associated roadways will not result in long-term impacts to aquatic resources along the project corridor. In addition to the above measures, the project will require a USACE Section 404 permit and a South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (SDDANR) General Permit Authorizing Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activities, and the project will comply with the conditions listed in these permits.

6. WETLAND IMPACTS

Several digital resources were examined, and a field review was conducted to determine wetland locations within the study area. Digital resources examined include:

- U.S. Geological Survey black and white aerial photographs (2016)
- U.S. Geological Survey LiDAR data for South Dakota
- The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic Maps (SSURGO) for Lincoln County
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory (NWI)

The primary field delineation site visit was conducted by Rebecca Beduhn, SEH Senior Scientist, on November 13, 2018, and a follow-up field delineation site visit was conducted on July 25, 2019. An additional wetland delineation was conducted by Ann Howell of Wetland Specialists, Inc. on July 22, 2022. The purpose of these visits was to identify areas meeting the technical wetland criteria in accordance with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual (USACE 1987) and the Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Midwest Region (USACE 2010). The wetlands for this project were evaluated as part of a larger study area. The numbering applied in the overall study is maintained in this document for consistency with the initial survey. However, this section discusses only those wetlands located within the 85th Street study area, as these are the wetlands which would have the potential to be impacted by actions associated with the 85th Street project.

In total, 44 wetland areas were delineated within the 85th Street study area. These include newly delineated wetlands for this study, as well as wetlands delineated in the past five years for other projects and approved by USACE (hereby referred to as wetlands delineated by others). Wetlands in the study area consist of primarily palustrine emergent wetlands (PEM), with one palustrine unconsolidated bottom (PUB) wetland.

The Preliminary Wetlands Assessment for the current survey was provided to the USACE on January 6, 2020, was supplemented on August 11, 2022, and both are included in **Attachment C**. It was determined that there are no wetlands present within the August 2022 review area. USACE provided Approved Jurisdictional Determinations (AJDs) for both delineations on March 6, 2020 and September 1, 2022. (**Attachment D**). The March 2020 AJD states that there are jurisdictional and non-jurisdictional waters located within the review area. Therefore, any activity involving the discharge of dredged or fill material within the waters of the United States would require a permit from the Corps of Engineers. The September 2022 AJD states there are no jurisdictional or non-jurisdictional waters located in the updated review area.

The Build Alternative results in an estimated 14.76 acres of permanent wetland impact (10.09 acres of jurisdictional wetlands, 4.67 acres of non-jurisdictional wetlands). Due to the space requirements of the necessary improvements and the number and proximity of wetlands within the study area, these impacts are unavoidable. There are no planned temporary wetland impacts or impacts to non-wetland Waters of the US. A Section 404 permit will be required for jurisdictional wetland impacts. Non-jurisdictional wetlands would need to be mitigated under EO 11990, in accordance with FHWA regulation 23 CFR 777.9. Delineated and impacted wetlands are shown in **Attachment B** and listed in **Table 1**. Completely avoiding wetlands would require the preferred alternative to be a no-build alternative, realignment alternative, or an alternative that creates a design exception (i.e. narrowing travel lanes or shoulders) on the Interstate Highway System.

These are not practicable options. A no-build alternative would not address the project's purpose and need. A realignment of I-229 would require the construction of unsafe curves in the alignment of the travel lanes. An alignment shift would likely require nearby I-229 bridge crossing relocations that would be prohibitively expensive. Narrowed travel lanes would not be acceptable due to potential safety and congestion issues that could result.

7. WETLAND MITIGATION

Wetlands in the project area are located within the Lower Big Sioux Geographic Service Area. As part of the wetland delineation process, the Hydrogeomorphic (HGM) Approach was utilized to determine the Functional Capacity Unit (FCU) score of the existing basins as wetland impacts will result from the proposed project. Full calculations for HGM can be found in the Hydrogeomorphic Model Worksheet in **Attachment E**. The number of FCUs required to be mitigated are calculated by multiplying the impact in acres by the FCI score. Wetland impacts and FCUs anticipated to be required for mitigation are included in Table 1 below. These values will be finalized following final design and wetland permitting.

For wetlands requiring mitigation under Section 404, a 1:1 ratio is assumed where credits are available in the same watershed and resource type. If the same resource type is not available, the mitigation ratio will increase to 1.5:1, for jurisdictional wetlands and wetlands impacts under EO 11990. Jurisdictional wetlands anticipated to be impacted that were delineated using Level 1 methodology (Wetland 35) were not evaluated using the HGM Model. Mitigation for these wetlands is calculated by acre of impact x 5.5 FCI x 1.5:1 mitigation ratio.

Because avoiding wetlands is a not a practicable option, a number of mitigation measures will be incorporated into the final design of the build alternative and mitigation commitments for construction will be incorporated into the project plans. These commitments may include adjustments to ditch grading, and the use of silt fencing and barrier protection (potential solutions, to be determined during final design). Off-site wetland mitigation through the purchase of wetland credits from a wetland bank is proposed to satisfy the requirements for both the Section 404 permit and "No Net Loss" per EO 11990. Wetland Banking is the preferred option for off-site mitigation, and since it is feasible for this project, other options for off-site mitigation such as In-lieu fee and permittee responsible site were not considered. On-site mitigation is not proposed due to the site constraints with available land. FCUs required for mitigation are separated by credit type under Section 404 EO 11990 in the following **Table 1.**

Table 1 – Wetland Impacts and Mitigation

Wetland Name	Wetland Impact (acres)	HGM Type	Jurisdictional Status	FCI Score	Mitigation Ratio (in-kind and in-place)	Mitigation Required Under (EO 11990 or Section 404)	Mitigation Required (FCUs)
Wetland 1	0.12	Prairie Pothole	Non-JD	4.46	1:1	EO 11990	0.5352
Wetland 2	2.03	Slope	Non-JD	4.79	1:1	EO 11990	9.7237
Wetland 3	1.00	Slope	Non-JD	4.92	1:1	EO 11990	4.9200
Wetland 5	0.06	Prairie Pothole	Non-JD	4.85	1:1	EO 11990	0.2910
Wetland 6	0.32	Prairie Pothole	Non-JD	5.52	1:1	EO 11990	1.7664
Wetland 9	0.13	Prairie Pothole	Non-JD	4.57	1:1	EO 11990	0.5941
Wetland 10	0.07	Slope	JD	3.38	1:1	Section 404	0.2366
Wetland 11	2.58	Slope	JD	4.77	1:1	Section 404	12.3066
Wetland 12	0.79	Prairie Pothole	JD	3.36	1:1	Section 404	2.6544
Wetland 15	0.01	Slope	Non-JD	4.07	1:1	EO 11990	0.0407
Wetland 23	1.34	Slope	JD	4.76	1:1	Section 404	6.3784
Wetland 33	0.78	NA	Non-JD	NA[1]	1:1	EO 11990	4.2900
Wetland 34	5.09	Slope	JD	4.39	1:1[2]	Section 404	22.3451
Wetland 35	0.22	NA	JD	NA[1]	1.5:1	Section 404	1.8150
Wetland 38	0.03	Slope	Non-JD	3.98	1:1	EO 11990	0.1194
Wetland 39	0.02	Slope	Non-JD	3.91	1:1	EO 11990	0.0782
Wetland 40	0.06	Slope	Non-JD	4.00	1:1	EO 11990	0.2400
Wetland 43	0.11	Slope	Non-JD	3.91	1:1	EO 11990	0.4301
Total Mitigation Required under Section 404							
Total Prairie Pothole FCUs							**2.6544**
Total Slope FCUs							**41.2667**
Non-Type Specific FCUs (Level 1 delineated wetlands)							**1.815**
Total Mitigation Required Under EO 11990							
Total Prairie Pothole FCUs							**3.1867**
Total Slope FCUs							**15.5521**
Non-Type Specific FCUs (Level 1 delineated wetlands)							**4.2900**

[1]: Level 1 delineated wetlands mitigation requirement was calculated by: acres impacted x 5.5 FCI x mitigation ratio. This is explained in further detail in the narrative preceding this table.

[2]: Wetland 34 impacts include a prior-constructed wetland mitigation site by others unrelated to the proposed project. The final mitigation ratio, therefore, may need to be adjusted based on further coordination with USACE during the project's Section 404 permit application. In addition, Wetland 34 includes impacts associated with a prior construction project that was graded for the Northbound I-29/I-229 Auxiliary Lane which was not constructed and later added to the proposed action.

To compensate for permanent wetland impacts at the site, the project proposes to purchase wetland credits from Tetonka, LLP. Tetonka has confirmed it has the following credits available at this time between three wetland banks: 126.5065 depressional credits and 12.87 slope credits (**Attachment F**). There are insufficient slope credits available to offset the slope wetland impacts; however, a 1.5:1 ratio can be used for replacement out-of-kind under Section 404 and EO 11990. Assuming that the remaining slope credits will be replaced with prairie pothole credits with a higher ratio, there are sufficient credits available between the three banks owned by Tetonka LLP at this time (Calculation shown below). Tetonka, LLP has indicated that there may be sufficient slope credits available when this project moves into wetland permitting efforts.

The USACE has confirmed that credits which were purchased for the prior, but not constructed, I-29 overpass project can be applied to the anticipated Section 404 permit for the current proposed interchange project. A total of 4.55 FCUs are anticipated to be available for use. The USACE will require that the previous purchase agreement with Tetonka LLP be revised to include the Section 404 action, as well as EO 11990, as the intended and appropriate use for the credits. The final amount of previous purchased credits that can be applied to this project will be determined in future discussions including the USACE and Tetonka LLP, including the amount and type of wetland credits that will be required. This will be included as a commitment in the Environmental Assessment.

Additionally, a wetland pre-construction commitment to avoid or minimize harm to a USACE Section 404 permitted wetland mitigation site that is unrelated to the project – but may be impacted by the project (Wetland 34) – shall be considered and incorporated where practicable. This will include avoidance and minimization measures that may include ditch slope adjustments, silt fencing, and barrier (cable, concrete or steel) protection.

Table 2 – Mitigation Calculations

Slope FCUs required under Section 404 and EO 11990	Slope FCUs available by Tetonka, LLP	Remaining Slope FCUs to be replaced out-of-kind	Prairie Pothole FCUs required to offset remaining Slope FCUs (1.5:1)	Total Prairie Pothole FCUs required for the project (under Section 404 and EO 11990)
56.8188	12.87	43.9488	65.9232	77.8693

8. NEPA COORDINATION & DOCUMENTATION

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321-4370h and the Regulations for Implementing the procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR §§ 1500-1508), the SDDOT conducted an environmental review on the project to determine if significant impacts to the environment would occur because of the proposed project improvements and to determine the level of documentation required to comply with NEPA. Based on input from state and federal agencies, tribes that have an interest in projects located in Lincoln County and the public, SDDOT has determined this project will not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the environment and that NEPA compliance will be documented under an Environmental Assessment (EA).

The project has been and will continue to be in coordination with the following agencies as it relates to wetland impacts:

- South Dakota Department of Environment & Natural Resources (renamed South Dakota Department of Agriculture & Natural Resources during this study)

- South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services – South Dakota Field Office
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

In addition, in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA (36 CFR Part 800), the SDDOT solicited comments on this project from the following tribes:

- Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe
- Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma
- Ponca Tribe of Nebraska
- Lower Brule Sioux Tribe
- Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Tribe
- Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
- Yankton Sioux Tribe
- Three Affiliated Tribes of North Dakota

Consultation letters were sent to each tribe on February 27, 2019 (**Attachment G**). One response letter was received from the Yankton Sioux Tribe on March 27, 2019 stating that the Tribal Historic Preservation Office does not have an interest in the proposed project but would like to be notified if any cultural artifacts are found. No other responses from tribes have been received.

Public Involvement

Open House style public meetings were held throughout the project, which helped the study team identify impacts and obtain input on the alternatives. Stakeholders were notified of the meetings through postcard mailings, the project website, press release, local newspaper ads, and social media. The following Open Houses were held for the project:

- Open House #1, April 17, 2019 – The focus of this meeting was to introduce the project and provide an overview of the scope and schedule, present a draft purpose and need, and present a draft range of alternatives. A presentation was provided by project staff, and poster-board exhibits were set up at the meeting. Comment forms were provided, and members of the study team were on hand to answer questions. Postcard invitations were mailed directly to 158 properties surrounding the project area. Approximately 120 individuals signed in at the meeting.
- Noise Abatement Analysis Meeting, August 7, 2020 – This meeting was held to share the results of the noise analysis with stakeholders who rent or own property in the study area. This study shared concepts for the noise barrier proposed by the Build Alternative and commenced the balloting process for the barrier.
- Open House #2 – An additional public information meeting will be held to present the findings of the EA. The details of this public meeting, public comments received, and responses to these comments, if needed, will be published later.

Public involvement documentation is included in **Attachment H**.

Other Stakeholders

Roles of members of the 85th Street Business District Joint Venture (85th Street JV), for the purposes of the environmental documentation process, were those of members of the public with special interest in the project due to land ownership and proximity to proposed improvements. Regular quarterly update project meetings were held with SDDOT, FHWA, and the 85th Street JV. These meetings allowed the local government agency to provide regular updates on the project

status and allowed the 85th Street JV members to provide input and ask questions. Environmental Documentation coordination meetings with the 85th Street JV group were held beginning in November 2018 and have continued to present.

Previous Public Involvement

Numerous public involvement activities were also conducted prior to this study during the EA Overpass study prior to the change in the project to include interchange full-access ramps from I-29. This included four open house style meetings to discuss the project throughout various stages of completion, and an additional public meeting to discuss the noise study. A presentation was given at each meeting and project staff were present to answer questions.

A Public Meeting/Open House for the I-29/I-229 Interchange Reconstruction and 85th Street Extension was also held prior to this study. A presentation was made to review the EA process, the purpose of the project, the proposed improvements and alternatives, and potential impacts.

Future Public Involvement

The EA document will be made available to public agencies and the general public for review and comments. The EA document will be available for a 30-day comment period at the following locations:

- SDDOT Website
- Sioux Falls City Hall, Engineering Department
- SDDOT Sioux Falls Area Office
- Siouxland Library, Caille Branch
- SDDOT Office of Project Development in Pierre
- FHWA Division Office, Pierre

FHWA will take into consideration all verbal and formal comments received during the comment period in determining whether the Preferred Alternative would or would not result in significant social, economic, and environmental impacts. If it is found that project does not result in significant impacts, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) document will be prepared and submitted to FHWA. The FHWA would take into consideration all verbal and formal comments received during the comment period in determining whether the Preferred Alternative would or would not result in significant social, economic, and environmental impacts. If a FONSI is determined, this document will be posted on the SDDOT and other project websites. If not, the agencies would consider whether the project will be pursued under an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

9. CONCLUSION

Based on the above considerations, it has been determined that there is no practicable alternative to the proposed construction in wetlands and that the proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands which may result from such use.