

FHWA-ND-EIS-18-02-D
02-04(001), PCN 16970



BILLINGS COUNTY
NORTH DAKOTA



Little Missouri River Crossing **PUBLIC HEARING**

Draft Environmental Impact Statement

July 23, 2018 ♦ Medora, ND & July 26, 2018 ♦ Bismarck, ND

Introduction

Thank you for attending today's public hearing for the Little Missouri River Crossing project. This public hearing provides you with the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Draft EIS contains details regarding a proposed crossing of the Little Missouri River in conjunction with upgrading existing roadways and/or creating new roadways. The project would connect the transportation network on the east side of the Little Missouri River to the transportation network on the west side of the Little Missouri River within the study area.

Purpose of the Public Hearing

The objective of the public hearing and public comment period for the Draft EIS is to get the most complete expression of public opinion regarding the project aspects on the record. Comments provided during the public hearing and public comment period will be considered before further decisions are made on the project alternatives. This public hearing includes a project presentation and opportunities to provide verbal and/or written comments. All comments will be entered into the public hearing record along with the public hearing presentation, exhibits, and materials.

This public hearing will discuss the following aspects of the Little Missouri River Crossing project:

- ◆ Purpose and need
- ◆ Recommended Preferred Alternative and its design features
- ◆ Potential environmental impacts from the Preferred Alternative
- ◆ Next steps in the environmental documentation process

Purpose and Need for the Project

The purpose of the project is to provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and commerce. Specifically, the purpose of the project is to conduct the following:

- ◆ Improve the transport of goods and services within the study area.
- ◆ Provide the public with a safe, efficient, and reliable connection between the roadways on the east and west sides of the Little Missouri River within Billings County (internal linkage) that also improves the connectivity and system linkage between Billings County and Golden Valley County roadway networks, with the added benefit of providing an additional connection between ND-16 and US Highway 85 within the study area.
- ◆ Construct a new river crossing over the Little Missouri River in a location that utilizes the existing transportation network, upgrading existing roadways, and/or creating new roadways to best meet roadway and structure design standards.
- ◆ Accommodate a variety of vehicles, ranging from two-wheel-drive passenger vehicles to agricultural, commercial, and industrial vehicles and equipment.





Alternatives

Two build alternatives (Alternatives A and K) and the no-build alternative (Alternative L) were carried forward for detailed analysis in the EIS. Alternative K has three options: Alternative K, Option 1; Alternative K, Option 2; and Alternative K, Option 3 (see **Figure 1**). The lead agencies, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) and Billings County, are recommending Alternative K, Option 1 as the Preferred Alternative (see **Figures 2 and 3**).

Alternative K, Option 1 would be approximately 8.3 miles long, of which 6.2 miles would closely follow the existing roadway alignment and 2.1 miles would be new roadway construction. Alternative K, Option 1 would include construction of a three to five span bridge over the Little Missouri River that would be approximately 600 feet long. Alternative K (all options) and Alternative K, Option 1 include expanded study areas that were environmentally cleared to provide flexibility in aligning the intersection at Belle Lake Road and to facilitate future landowner negotiations near the new bridge location, respectively. Construction and right-of-way/easement acquisition for Alternative K, Option 1 would cost approximately \$11.2 million.

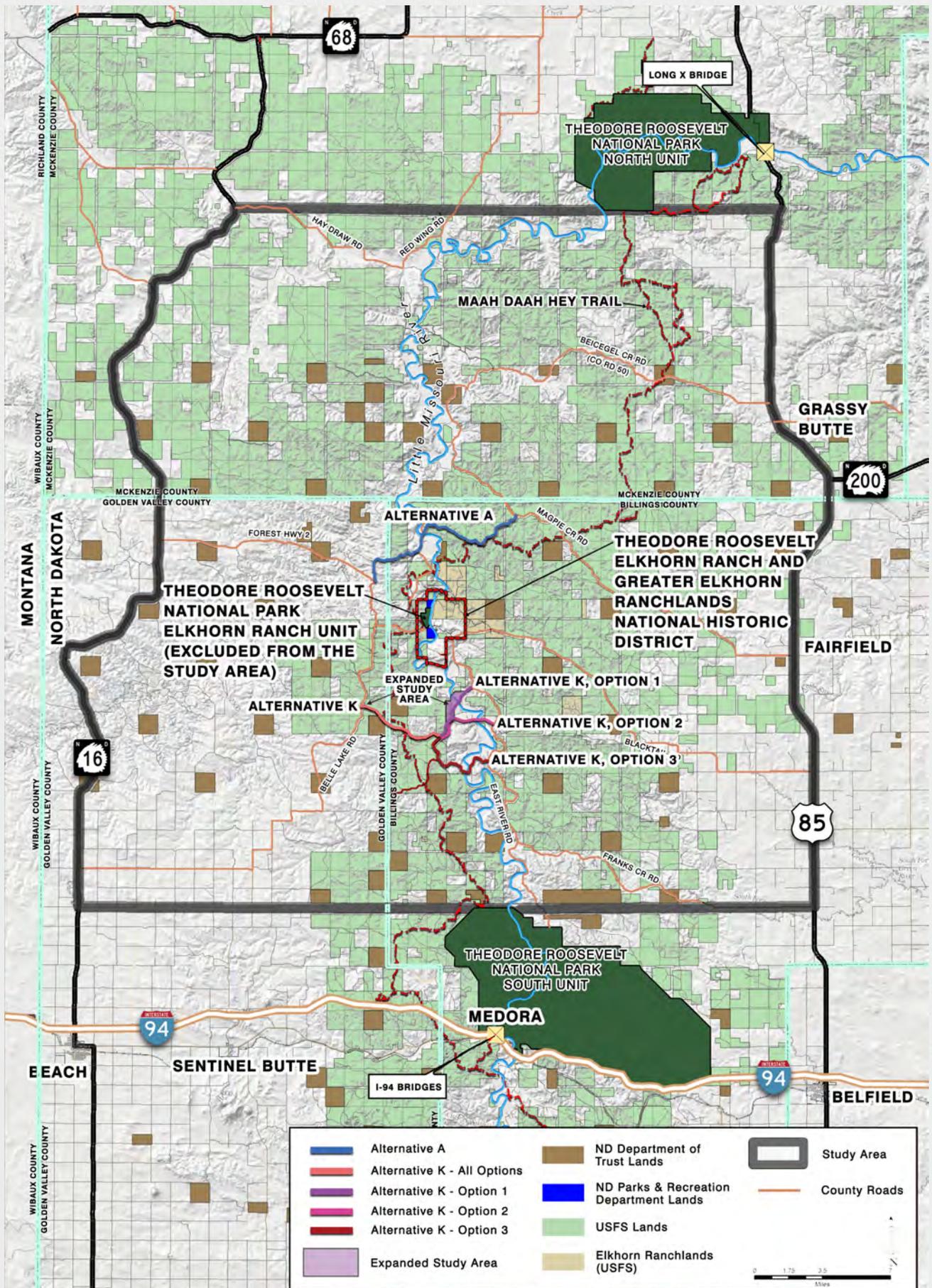


Figure 1, Alternatives for the Project

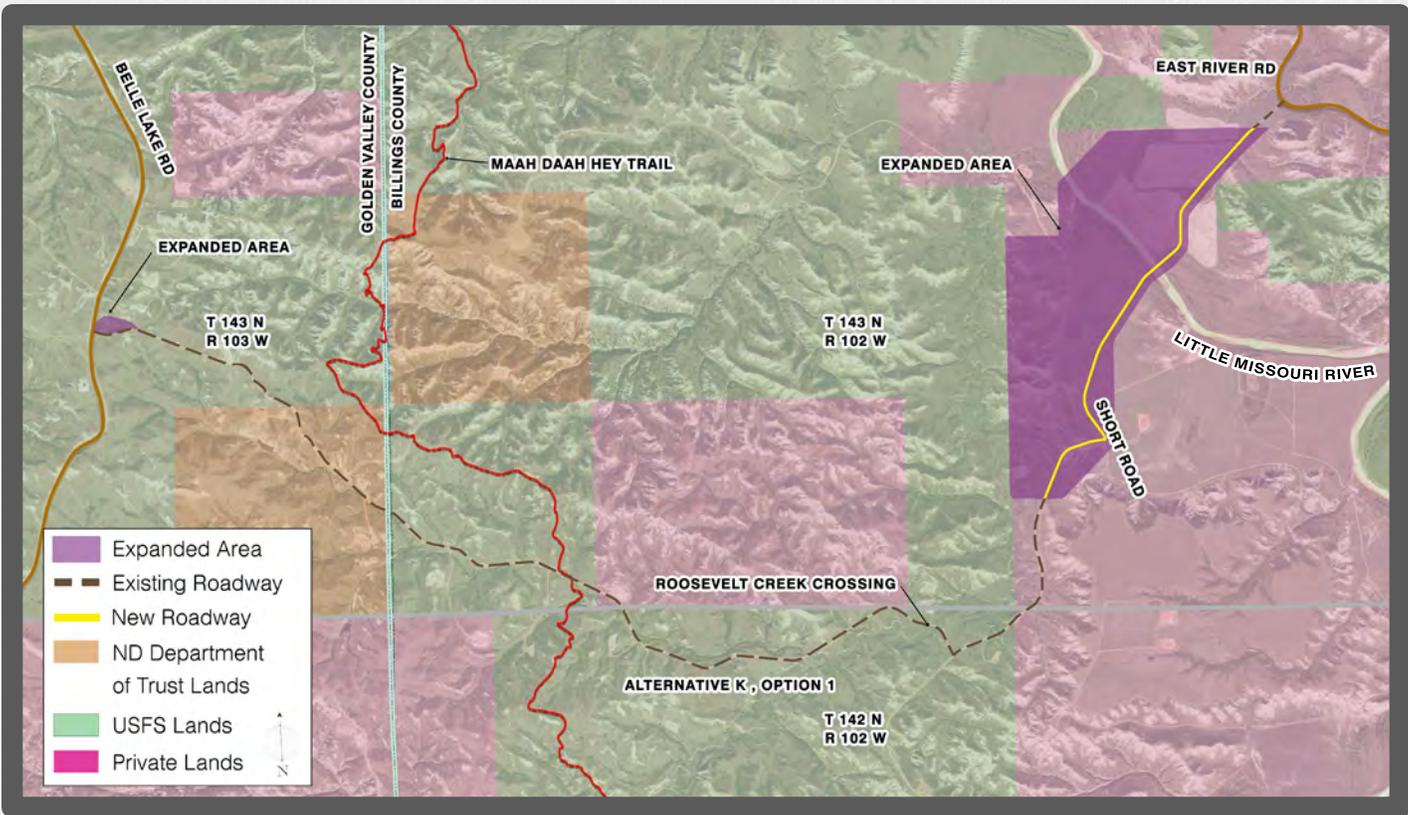


Figure 2, Map of Alternative K, Option 1 (Preferred Alternative)



Figure 3, Alternative K, Option 1 (Preferred Alternative) Bridge Simulation

Impacts

The lead agencies have identified Alternative K, Option 1 as the recommended Preferred Alternative, as it would meet the project's purpose and need with minimal environmental impacts. A summary of impacts from the Preferred Alternative are as follows:

- ◆ No impacts on cultural sites that are *Eligible* for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office has concurred with a *No Historic Properties Affected* determination.
- ◆ Local access to recreational and tourist facilities would be increased.
- ◆ Efficiency and reliability of the transportation system and emergency response times would be improved.
- ◆ Permanent right-of-way, as well as temporary and/or permanent easements, would be acquired from the North Dakota Department of Trust, US Forest Service (USFS), and/or private landowners.
- ◆ Temporary impacts during construction from fugitive dust and emissions associated with fossil fuel combustion.
- ◆ Permanent impacts on 1.65 acres of wetlands and 0.14 acres (1,873 linear feet) of Other Waters.
- ◆ Temporary construction impacts on Maah Daah Hey Trail where it intersects the roadway, with the trail remaining open during construction (Department of Transportation Act Section 4(f) temporary occupancy exception).
- ◆ No direct impacts on viewshed of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park–Elkhorn Ranch Unit or Theodore Roosevelt Elkhorn Ranch and Greater Elkhorn Ranchlands National Historic District.
- ◆ No traffic noise impacts on sensitive receptors (e.g., Maah Daah Hey Trail).
- ◆ *May Affect, not likely to adversely affect*, two wildlife species protected by the Endangered Species Act and *may impact* one USFS-designated sensitive wildlife species. *Will impact* one and *may impact* several additional USFS-designated sensitive plant species. The US Fish and Wildlife Service and USFS have concurred with these determinations.
- ◆ Traffic volume increase of 3.5 percent for roads associated with the Alternative and adjacent roadways. (Not expected to generate new traffic; however, the redistribution of local trips attracted to the new bridge is anticipated to increase the typical 2.5 percent traffic growth rates by 1 percent for roads associated with the alternative and adjacent roadways.)



Document Availability and Comments

The Draft EIS will be available for public review at the following locations:

- ◆ Billings County Courthouse, 495 4th St, Medora, ND, (701) 623-4377
 - › <http://www.billingscountynnd.gov/klj>
- ◆ Dickinson Area Public Library, 139 W 3rd St, Dickinson, ND, (701) 456-7700
- ◆ Golden Valley County Courthouse, 150 1st Ave SE, Beach, ND, (701) 872-4331
- ◆ McKenzie County Public Library, 112 2nd Ave NE, Watford City, ND, (701) 444-3785
- ◆ NDDOT Central Office, 608 E Boulevard Ave, Bismarck, ND, (701) 328-2500
 - › <https://www.dot.nd.gov/projects/dickinson>
- ◆ NDDOT Dickinson District Office, 1700 3rd Ave W, Suite 101, Dickinson, ND, (701) 227-6500
- ◆ NDDOT Williston District Office, 605 Dakota Parkway W, Williston, ND, (701) 774-2700
- ◆ North Dakota State Library, 604 E Boulevard Ave, Bismarck, ND, (701) 328-4622

Written statements or comments about the project must be submitted by August 20, 2018, to:

Jen Turnbow, Project Manager
KLJ
PO Box 1157
Bismarck, ND 58502-1157
Or: LMRC@kljeng.com

Next Steps

At the end of the public comment period, the project team will review and consider all public comments received. The selected Alternative will be noted in the Final EIS after comments on the Draft EIS have been fully considered. Upcoming milestones in completing the environmental study for the Little Missouri River Crossing project include preparation of the Final EIS/Record of Decision for publication. It is the intent of the FHWA to issue a single document that consists of the Final EIS and Record of Decision pursuant to Public Law 112-141, 126 Stat. 405, Section 1319(b), unless the FHWA determines statutory considerations preclude issuance of the combined document pursuant to Section 1319.