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THOMAS L. JUDGE
GOVERNOR



STATE OF MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS

HELENA, MONTANA 59601

H. J. ANDERSON
DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS

November 25, 1975

IN REPLY REFER TO:

RS-357 (12)
Valier - East

OK
LJP

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NOV 30 1975
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
COUNCIL

Environmental Quality Council
Capitol Station
Helena, Montana 59601

Gentlemen:

Attached for your information, are two (2) copies of the Agency Impact Determination for the above project, as approved by the Federal Highway Administration.

Very truly yours,

H. J. ANDERSON
DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS

By Stephen C. Kologi
Stephen C. Kologi, P. E., Chief
Preconstruction Bureau

32-SCK:mg
Enclosures

cc: K. F. Skoog

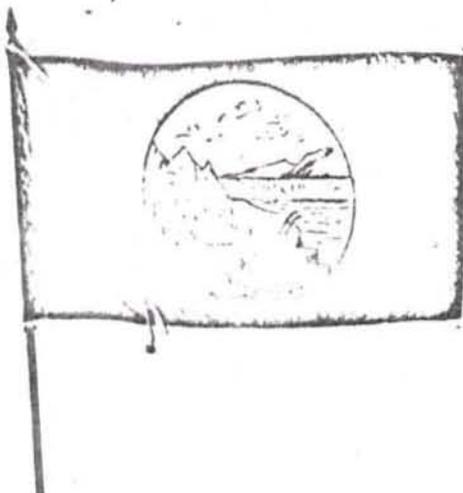
GEORGE VUCANOVICH CHAIRMAN
HELENA

Wm. M. KESSNER VICE CHAIRMAN
BLACK EAGLE

G. R. COONEY
BUTTE

P. L. BACHELLER
BILLINGS

BAXTER LARSON
WOLF POINT



STATEMENT

THOMAS L. JUDGE
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS

HELENA, MONTANA 59601

H. J. ANDERSON
DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS

October 15, 1975

IN REPLY REFER TO

RS-357 (12)
Valier - East

OCT 28 1975

QUALITY

U. S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
501 North Fee
Helena, Montana 59601

08 30.22 A3

Gentlemen:

This is to request your concurrence that the following Agency Impact Determination is appropriate for the subject project.

1. DETERMINATION OF THE PROPOSED HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

The proposed project is located in Pondera County on Federal Aid Secondary Route 216. It will begin on the east edge of Valier, a small town of about 600 people, and extend easterly toward I-15 along FAS 216 for approximately 7 miles. The attached map has the location of the project shown thereon.

The work to be performed will consist of grading, drainage, plant mix surfacing, signing, and striping. The numerous irrigation facilities in the vicinity of the project will be given special consideration and all necessary facilities will be perpetuated. Two tracks of the Montana Western Railroad will be crossed near the beginning of the project.

Average present traffic volumes and estimated future volumes for the project are as follows:

1975 Average Daily Traffic	=	745
2000 " " "	=	1514
Design Hourly Volume	=	209
Distribution	=	55-45%
Trucks	=	7.9%

The future traffic volume of 1514 vehicles per day warrants a 40' wide roadway however, it has not yet been determined if this width will be used. Something narrower may be considered depending on the desires of the Pondera County Commissioners.

GEORGE VUCANOVICH CHAIRMAN
HELENA

WM M KESSNER VICE CHAIRMAN
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This will not be a controlled access highway and all existing approaches will be perpetuated if needed.

The land in the vicinity of the project is generally flat to rolling and is devoted almost exclusively to irrigated farming, although a small amount is used for grazing cattle. Wheat, barley, and oats are the main crops grown in the area. Lake Frances is located a short distance to the south and west of the project.

2. PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The existing highway is in very poor condition and badly in need of reconstruction. Therefore, the major impact of this project will be to provide a new, improved highway facility for the traveling public. The primary social and economic impact of the project will be the provision of a better link between Valier and Interstate 15. School bus routes, mail routes, grain hauling routes, access to the recreational facilities at Lake Frances, etc., will be greatly improved.

Although the existing right-of-way is quite wide, ranging from 90' to 120', right-of-way will still be required throughout the length of the project. The total take is not expected to exceed 20 acres. The majority of this 20+ acres needed for right-of-way will be existing farmland that will be taken out of production.

No relocation is anticipated for the project.

The attached letter from the Montana Department of Fish and Game indicates that the project will not have any substantial effect on fish or wildlife habitat.

No historic sites, natural landmarks, or parks will be affected by the project. Due to the improved access that will be provided to Lake Frances, water-related recreation activities may increase. Access to religious, cultural, educational, recreational, and employment opportunities will be improved.

Since the project does not cross any rivers, streams, or lakes, water pollution is not expected to be a problem.

Some slight, temporary, air pollution will occur during the construction process, however, this will be short-lived and last only as long as the project is under construction. The project is not in conflict with the State's plan for achieving federal ambient air quality standards and we agree with the determination of the Department of Health and Environmental Sciences that this project will not have a significant adverse effect on air quality in the area (See attached letter). Also, the project does not meet the requirements for review of projects as established by the Environmental Protection Agency. Their concern for air quality generally begins when the 10 year projected traffic increased 10,000 vehicles per day or when the 10 year projected traffic is 20,000 vehicles per day. The 20 year projected traffic for this project is only 1514 vehicles per day which is considerably less than EPA's figures.

During the construction phase of the project, there will have to be some disruption in the flow of traffic. There will undoubtedly be some delays and possibly a few short detours.

Erosion should not be a serious problem on the project as permanent erosion control measures will be incorporated into the design and temporary provisions will be used wherever necessary during construction. Also, disturbed areas will be seeded as soon as possible after they have been disturbed.

One person of Indian descent lives adjacent to the project and it may be necessary to purchase additional right-of-way from his property. The impact on this minority is not expected to be significant.

The majority of the land along this project can be considered to be undeveloped in regard to noise pollution since it is almost all devoted to farming. The only noise sensitive areas where the standards will apply are at the several homesites located adjacent to the project. These homesites would fit not land use category B which has an allowable future noise level of 70 dBA. An analysis of future noise levels indicates that a house would have to be within 50 feet of the E of the roadway before the allowable noise levels would be exceeded. Since our standard secondary right-of-way width provides 60 feet on each side of E, we do not expect the allowable noise levels to be exceeded at any of the homes adjacent to the project.

3. PROBABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS WHICH CANNOT BE AVOIDED

New right-of-way will be required which will take approximately 20 acres of farmland out of production.

Some temporary air pollution will occur during construction.

The flow of traffic will be disrupted while the project is under construction and detours and delays may be necessary.

Some short time disruption may be necessary while moving any conflicting utilities.

One minority may be affected by the project, however, the impact will not be very great since at most, it will require the taking of a small amount of his property for right-of-way.

It is estimated that construction of the project will require the consumption of about 200,000 gallons of diesel fuel and 25,000 gallons of gasoline.

Total estimated cost of the project is expected to be about \$1,500,000.

8. ALTERNATES

The possibility of studying alternate lines for the project was given serious consideration, however, no detailed or formal studies were made for several reasons. By following the present roadway, which has excellent alignment, we can make use of the existing right-of-way and thereby drastically cut down on the amount of new right-of-way needed for the new roadway. Also, by following the present highway, we will not be changing the local access patterns and will not require any new access roads as could be necessary on a new alignment. Service provided to the local farmers will still be as good as now exists. For these reasons, it

was not considered feasible to pursue any alternate lines for this project.

The "no-build" alternate was given some consideration, however, the existing road is badly in need of reconstruction due to serious break-up problems that occur every year. The Pondera County Commissioners have indicated their desire to have this roadway rebuilt, since they have assigned it as their number one priority after the Conrad-West project. Therefore, the "no-build" alternate had to be dropped.

9. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL SHORT-TERM USES OF MAN'S ENVIRONMENT AND MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

There will be some short-term uses of the environment during the construction of this project, however, we expect them to be insignificant. The flow of traffic will be greatly improved but the overall traffic patterns will not change. No manmade features will be taken to build this project, except for the existing highway facilities and possibly a garage and some sheds. The natural features that will be affected are insignificant. The construction process will disrupt the area and cause some traffic delay, however, this will be short-lived and last only as long as it takes to complete the necessary work. The farmland that will be taken out of production will not be available for agricultural use unless a demand greater than the highway causes a change back to its present use.

The long-term effect will be the provision of a safe and efficient transportation facility to serve the local people and the traveling public.

10. IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES

No resources other than money, labor, and road building materials will be irretrievably committed to this project. The land that will be required for right-of-way will not be available for other use unless a demand greater than the roadway requires a change in land use. The commitment of social and cultural resources will be insignificant. There does not appear to be any major irreversible commitment of resources that would significantly affect the environment in the area of the project. Therefore, the use of money, labor, and materials is considered to be justified as it will provide a much needed highway facility to serve the traveling public.

11. COORDINATION WITH OTHERS

The attached letter of intent was sent to all persons and agencies that were considered to have a vital interest in the project. The mailing list is included in the letter. Following the letter of intent are all the comments that were received.

Other pertinent correspondence is also attached.

BASIS FOR AGENCY IMPACT DETERMINATION

Based on the foregoing, it is felt that the proposed action is not a major action and will not significantly affect the environment, therefore an agency impact determination is appropriate.

Your early return of one signed copy of this statement will be appreciated.

Very truly yours,

H. J. ANDERSON
DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS

By Stephen E. Kologi
Stephen E. Kologi, P. E., Chief
Preconstruction Bureau

32-SCK:KFS:GLL:mg
Attachments

cc: J. R. Beckert
R. E. Champion
K. F. Skoog ✓
J. T. Sullivan
H. D. Flickinger

Concurred in by BAR Jove Date 11/19/75
Federal Highway Administration

