

3.0 ALTERNATIVES

This chapter of the DEIS presents a summary of the alternative development process, including early alternative locations studied and documented in the *Mississippi River Crossing Study* (1996 Study), the *I-94/TH 10 Regional Connection Scoping Document* (1997 Scoping Document) and the *I-94/TH 10 Regional Connection Scoping Decision Document* (2001 Scoping Decision Document). This chapter also discusses the refinement of alternative alignments during the DEIS process, including the consideration of several sub-alternatives. Finally this chapter provides a description of the alternatives that were analyzed in detail for the DEIS.

3.1 SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

3.1.1 1996 Mississippi River Crossing Study

In 1995, in response to observed congestion on a number of highway corridors between I-94 and TH 10 (across the Mississippi River), Mn/DOT initiated a study of safety and congestion issues on I-94, TH 10 and the roadways that connect them between northwest Twin Cities (Elk River) and southeast St. Cloud. The 1996 Study analyzed growth and development trends, existing land use conditions, existing and forecast traffic and travel patterns, and crashes and safety concerns on study area trunk highways. The results of this analysis indicated that a future improved or new regional connection between I-94 and TH 10 within the study area is needed to address existing and future congestion and safety problems.

Based on this analysis, the study focused on the evaluation of seven new and existing regional transportation corridors to provide a high-capacity connection between I-94 and TH 10 within the study area (see Figure 3.1, Corridors A through F). In identifying potential corridor locations, general consideration was given to optimizing transportation linkages as well as avoiding potential environmental impacts (wetlands, floodplains, known cultural resources, etc.).

One or more potential alignments within each corridor were identified for evaluation using benefit/cost and operation analyses to test the relative effectiveness of each corridor in solving transportation safety and congestion problems. In addition to providing a comparison among the corridors, the benefit/cost analysis provided information regarding desirable orientation of alignments within the corridors. The alignments with the highest benefit/cost ratios were generally oriented in a north-south direction due to dominant northwest to southeast travel patterns, while those with a southwest-northeast direction generally had the lowest ratios.

Based on the evaluations of the benefit/cost and transportation function, the study recommended four of the seven corridors be carried forward into the environmental review process (Corridors A, B, C, and D1 [renamed Corridor D in subsequent environmental studies]). The other three corridors were eliminated from further consideration due to poor benefit/cost results and/or inability to serve regional trips or decrease congestion at existing corridor locations.

In addition to Corridors A through F, one additional corridor, Corridor G, located along the southeast edge of the City of St. Cloud (see Figure 3.1), was considered as an addendum to the 1996 Study to determine if future local and regional river crossing trip demands in the St. Cloud area could be accommodated by one highway bridge. This corridor was studied because the

Figure 3.1

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St. Cloud APO was also considering the construction of a new bridge in this area to increase future river crossing capacity. Corridor G was analyzed using the same evaluation process as was used for Corridors A through F. The results indicated that the benefit/cost ratio for this alignment was less than 1.0, which is considered poor. The alignment had several other problems, including impacts to a state-owned wildlife management area, capacity limitations due to high combined local/regional demand, and potential geometric design concerns due to curves and close access ramp spacing needed to fit the alignment within the physical constraints of the corridor. Therefore, Corridor G was eliminated from further consideration and was not carried into scoping.

Although the study focused primarily on the technical evaluation of the regional transportation needs within the study area, the study also provided many opportunities for local governments (including a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) established for this study) and interested citizens to provide input on local issues and concerns. See Chapter 13 for more detailed information on the public involvement process.

3.1.2 I-94/TH 10 Regional Connection Scoping Process

The scoping process for the I-94/TH 10 Interregional Connection EIS took a more detailed look at the transportation function and environmental issues associated with the four corridors carried forward from the 1996 Study. The 1997 Scoping Document and the 2001 Scoping Decision Document describe the alternatives development and decision-making process in detail. The four corridors (Corridors A, B, C, and D1 [renamed D] from the 1996 Study) are shown in Figure 1.1.

Social, economic and environmental (SEE) information as well as regional transportation criteria were considered during the scoping process in the development of alternative alignments within each corridor. SEE information considered during scoping included: National Wetland Inventory wetlands and waterbodies; floodplains; cultural resources; wildlife habitat; impacts to existing development including right of way acquisition and relocation; parks, wildlife refuges and Section 4(f) impacts. Regional transportation criteria considered included: interchange spacing; alignment orientation; and system connections to other trunk highways.

Input from the TAC and public meetings was used to further refine/modify these alignments, and ultimately a single alignment was identified for more detailed study in the DEIS within each of the four corridors. These alignments were described in the 2001 Scoping Decision Document. See Figure 1.1 for the alignment locations. All four alternative concepts included interchanges at I-94 and TH 10 as well as a grade-separated rail crossing near TH 10. With the exception of a possible expressway design for Corridor B through the City of Clearwater, all of the alternatives were proposed to be constructed using a freeway design.

3.1.3 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) Alternatives Development

The DEIS process further refined the alignments identified during the scoping process based on more detailed environmental information (i.e., delineated wetlands; cultural resource studies; fish/wildlife/vegetation; etc.) and development of alignment design geometrics (i.e., interchange

configuration; design speed/alignment radii; local roadway connections; etc.). This refinement resulted in some design changes to the four alternatives carried forward from the scoping process, including the development of several sub-alternatives.

Following is description of major alignment refinements and sub-alternatives developed during the DEIS process. Also provided is an explanation as to why sub-alternatives were either eliminated or retained for detailed analysis. (Figures 3.2-A.1 through 3.5-D.4 show alternatives retained for detailed analysis in the DEIS. These alternatives are discussed further in Section 3.2.)

3.1.3.1 Alternative A

No major alignment revisions to Alternative A occurred during the DEIS process. However, a sub-alternative for the alignment's connection to TH 10 was introduced. During the DEIS process, the St. Cloud APO proposed an alternative concept for the northernmost part of Alternative A (identified as Alternative A1) that the APO felt would provide better east-west continuity for the local St. Cloud river crossing being proposed at 33rd Street. The alignments for Alternative A and A1 are identical from I-94 to CSAH 8 with the key difference between the two alternatives being their connection to TH 10. With Alternative A, the interregional interchange would be located in the vicinity of the existing CSAH 3 intersection at TH 10 (see Figure 3.2-A.4). The local (33rd Street) crossing (being proposed by the St. Cloud APO as a separate project) would intersect with TH 10 at approximately CR 65. Alternative A1 would switch the locations of these two interchanges, with the local crossing intersecting with TH 10 at CSAH 3 and the interregional interchange intersecting with TH 10 at CR 65 (see Figure 3.6).

Alternative A1 was reviewed by Mn/DOT and a freeway operations analysis was completed for this alternative. The analysis indicated that this alternative would work operationally. It was also determined that the SEE impacts resulting from the two alternatives (A and A-1) would be relatively similar. As the Alternative A1 concept is still being considered by the local transportation planning agencies in conjunction with the 33rd Street crossing and the TH 10 corridor study process, it was decided that the DEIS would carry forward the original concept (Alternative A) for detailed analysis. If Alternative A is chosen as the preferred alternative, Mn/DOT and the local planning agencies would need to work together to decide on which of the two alternatives – Alternative A or A1 – to include as the preferred alternative in the FEIS analysis.

3.1.3.2 Alternative B

Although the general alignment of Alternative B has not changed from the alignment identified in scoping, the DEIS process included numerous sub-alternatives for Alternative B to address two main issues:

1. The location of a local access interchange, to maintain Clear Lake and CSAH 8 access to the interregional system.

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Figure 3.2-A.2 COLOR 11x17

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Figure 3.2-A.3 COLOR 11x17

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Figure 3.2-A.4 COLOR 11x17

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Figure 3.3-B.1 COLOR 11x17

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Figure 3.3-B.2 COLOR 11x17

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Figure 3.3-B.3 COLOR 11x17

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Figure 3.4-C.1 COLOR 11x17

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Figure 3.4-C.2 COLOR 11x17

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Figure 3.4-C.3 COLOR 11x17

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Figure 3.4-C.4 COLOR 11x17

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Figure 3.5-D.1 COLOR 11x17

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Figure 3.5-D.2 COLOR 11x17

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Figure 3.5-D.3 COLOR 11x17

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Figure 3.5-D.4 COLOR 11x17

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Figure 3.6

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2. How to provide an interregional connection through Clearwater that minimizes right of way and access impacts to the city while still meeting the interregional transportation need.

The second issue included two sub-issues that needed to be addressed by DEIS sub-alternative concepts:

- the feasibility of an expressway versus freeway design through Clearwater and how to maintain access to/from Clearwater and the regional system; and
- the configuration of the I-94/interregional connection interchange.

Clear Lake Interchange Sub-Alternatives

The location of a local interchange to serve Clear Lake was originally considered at the alignment's intersection with CR 57, as this location would not only provide the best connection from the interregional alignment to Clear Lake, but this location would also provide access to CSAH 8 (an important and heavily used county roadway) via CR 57. During review of this local interchange's location with the TAC, there was a question as to whether or not the interchange's location should be moved to connect directly to CSAH 8, as CSAH 8 has a higher functional classification than CR 57 (CSAH 8 is currently classified as a major collector west of TH 24 and a minor collector east of TH 24, whereas, CR 57 is classified as a local roadway). However, this location would provide a more circuitous route to/from Clear Lake. As the original location (CR 57) provides the most direct access to Clear Lake, and still provides access to CSAH 8, it was chosen as the preferred location for this local interchange.

City of Clearwater Sub-Alternatives

A number of sub-alternatives were developed to explore the range of design concepts that balance the goals of minimizing right of way and access impacts to Clearwater with the need to maintain an acceptable interregional connection capacity/level of operation. The following sections describe the range of sub-alternatives considered, how each sub-alternative met the above goals and, ultimately, how the preferred sub-alternative was identified for detailed study in the DEIS. Figures 3.7 through 3.12 show the concepts developed for these sub-alternatives.

Sub-Alternative B1

Sub-Alternative B1 was developed as a concept that would have the least right of way impacts to Clearwater (see Figure 3.7). It maintains the existing TH 24 alignment through the City of Clearwater, with reconstruction of the roadway as an expressway with all existing access to the interregional connection closed except for an at-grade signalized intersection at CSAH 75. All other access to TH 24/Sub-Alternative B1 within the city would be via frontage roads connecting to the CSAH 75 intersection. The at-grade signalized intersection at CSAH 75 would provide access from the interregional connection to downtown Clearwater and vice versa. North of the river, TH 24/Sub-Alternative B1 would be a four-lane freeway.

In an effort to minimize right of way acquisition within the city, the I-94/TH 24/Sub-Alternative B1 interchange was designed to remain as a standard diamond interchange, with an additional provision of a free right-turn lane to accommodate the dominant westbound I-94 to northbound interregional traffic. However, operationally the traffic volumes for the future southbound TH 24/Sub-Alternative B1 to eastbound I-94 movement would be far too high to be accommodated by the existing left-turn lane at the existing I-94/TH 24/Sub-Alternative B1 interchange. Thus, this alternative was eliminated from further consideration without any additional operational analysis.

Sub-Alternative B2

Originally Sub-Alternative B2 was conceived as a six-lane divided expressway through the City of Clearwater. Similar to B1, this sub-alternative would maintain the existing TH 24 alignment through Clearwater with all existing access along TH 24/Sub-Alternative B2 closed except for an at-grade signalized intersection at CSAH 75. All other access to TH 24/Sub-Alternative B2 within the city would be via frontage roads connecting to the CSAH 75 intersection. The at-grade signalized intersection at CSAH 75 would provide access from the interregional connection to downtown Clearwater and vice versa. Also, similar to B1, the design of B2 would utilize the existing diamond interchange; however, it would also include a loop ramp from southbound TH 24/Sub-Alternative B2 to eastbound I-94 to facilitate the future heavy volumes for this alternative. This alternative was also developed in an effort to minimize right of way acquisition in Clearwater. Figure 3.8 shows this sub-alternative.

Preliminary analysis of B2 included the review of year 2040 forecast turning movements and critical lane analysis to determine what intersection geometrics and traffic controls would be necessary through the city. This analysis indicated that the TH 24/Sub-Alternative B2 mainline would need to be 12 lanes (eight through lanes and four turn lanes) through the city instead of the originally envisioned six lanes. This would result in extensive right of way acquisition within the city, defeating the purpose of developing this alternative (i.e., to minimize right of way acquisition).

This sub-alternative was eliminated from further consideration as it would not only require substantial right of way acquisition within the City of Clearwater, but even with the proposed geometrics it was determined that operations of this alternative would likely be poor (level of service [LOS] D) in the vicinity of the I-94 interchange by year 2040.

Sub-Alternative B3

This sub-alternative included the reconstruction of the I-94/TH 24 interchange and a freeway through the City of Clearwater. This interchange was designed to facilitate northwest to southeast directional interregional travel, in order to minimize the footprint of the interchange and minimize right of way acquisition. All access from the new alignment to/from downtown Clearwater would be eliminated with a freeway concept and there would be no direct access between I-94 and TH 24 to the south. An overpass would be provided at CSAH 75 to allow movement across the interregional connection within the city. To provide local access between downtown Clearwater and I-94 and access to/from I-94 and south TH 24, an additional local interchange along I-94 would be needed. This sub-alternative considered two locations for a

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Figure 3.8

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Figure 3.9

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Figure 3.10

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Figure 3.11

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Figure 3.12

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new local interchange – 2.5 miles west of the I-94/interregional connection interchange (Sub-Alternative B3-1 shown in Figure 3.9) and 1.5 miles east of the I-94/interregional connection interchange (Sub-Alternative B3-2 shown in Figure 3.10). Based on input from the City of Clearwater, the western local access interchange concept was eliminated because it was located too far from the developing areas of the city and it did not adequately connect to county or local roads on the south side of I-94.

The I-94/Sub-Alternative B3 interchange concepts for Sub-Alternatives B3-1 and B3-2 only provided access between the interregional connection and I-94 to the east. Without full access between the interregional connection and I-94, these concepts were considered unacceptable to FHWA. Thus, the Sub-Alternative B3-2 concept was revised to provide full access to I-94. This revised concept was identified as Sub-Alternative B3-2A (see Figure 3.11) and included a local interchange to the east of the interregional interchange. City representatives noted that although the eastern local access interchange was preferable to the previously-considered western interchange, that the eastern local access interchange still added approximately three miles to trips to/from the areas of the city north and south of I-94. This would affect economic development, as well as school and emergency vehicle service provisions within the city.

Sub-Alternative B3-2A was eliminated from further consideration due to its poor connectivity from I-94 to south TH 24 and due to its circuitry for local traffic (within the City of Clearwater and to/from the city and the regional system).

Sub-Alternative B4

Sub-Alternative B4 included an interchange at the I-94/interregional connection that accommodated all directional moves to/from I-94, the regional connection to the north and TH 24 to the south. The I-94/Sub-Alternative B4 interchange was designed as a cloverleaf with two high-speed directional ramps between I-94 westbound/interregional connection northbound and the interregional connection southbound/I-94 eastbound (see Figure 3.12). Similar to Sub-Alternative B3, this concept included a freeway through Clearwater with an overpass at CSAH 75, but no direct access to downtown Clearwater.

As part of Sub-Alternative B4, three concepts were considered to provide local access to/from downtown Clearwater. Sub-Alternative B4-1 included a local interchange 2.5 miles west of the I-94/interregional connection interchange similar to Sub-Alternative B3-1. Sub-Alternative B4-2 included a local interchange 1.5 miles east of the I-94/interregional connection interchange, similar to Sub-Alternative B3-2. Sub-Alternative B4-3 included an overpass located just east of the interregional interchange between CSAH 75 and CR 7 providing access to TH 24 and I-94 (see Figure 3.12). Based on input from the City of Clearwater, Sub-Alternative B4-3 was chosen as the most favorable concept for Sub-Alternative B4, since it minimized the travel distance for inter-city trips across I-94.

Sub-Alternative B4 was eliminated from further consideration based on preliminary operational analysis and design. The location of the I-94/interregional connection interchange would not allow enough distance between the I-94 westbound entrance ramps and the Clearwater Rest Area exit ramp for weaving traffic; therefore, this alternative was eliminated from further consideration.

Sub-Alternative B5

Sub-Alternative B5 is similar to Sub-Alternative B4 in all aspects (including the local access overpass between CSAH 75 and CR 7) except for the I-94/interregional connection interchange. Due to the design and operational concerns with the I-94/interregional connection interchange for Sub-Alternative B4, Sub-Alternative B5 retained the diamond interchange at the current I-94/TH 24 interchange location (which results in adequate spacing from the westbound I-94 entrance ramp to the Clearwater Rest Area) with the same interregional connection ramp configuration as Sub-Alternative B4. Sub-Alternative B5 was identified as the alignment for Alternative B to be carried forward for detailed analysis in the DEIS (see Figures 3.3-B.1 through 3.3-B.3).

3.1.3.3 Alternative C

Although no sub-alternatives were considered for Alternative C, public comments received during initial public meetings for the DEIS (March 2002) and TAC input resulted in a slight shift of the alignment from the location identified in scoping. The Alternative C alignment was shifted west from its original alignment in the vicinity of the Mississippi River crossing in order to minimize floodplain impacts and minimize impacts to a large oak forest adjacent to the north side of the Mississippi River. The alignment was also shifted just north of the river to align closer with the existing section lines to reduce the number of parcels bisected. The shift north of the river reduces wetland impacts and minimizes farmland impacts by following the section lines.

Like Alternative B, a local interchange along Alternative C was also proposed to continue to provide convenient access between Clearwater and Clear Lake. The location of the local interchange was proposed at the alignment's intersection with TH 24. Figures 3.4-C.1 through 3.4-C.4 show the proposed Alternative C alignment.

3.1.3.4 Alternative D

Refinement of the Alternative D concept during the DEIS focused on two areas: 1) development of the I-94/interregional connection interchange to minimize operational impacts to I-94 at the rest area; and 2) development of the TH 10/interregional connection interchange with and without a connection to TH 25 to the north.

I-94/Interregional Connection Interchange

The first interchange concept developed during the DEIS process connected the southbound interregional ramp to I-94 at approximately 800 feet south of the existing eastbound I-94 ramp exiting to the Elm Creek Rest Area. Due to operational concerns associated with the close spacing of these two ramps the I-94 exit ramp to the rest area was relocated approximately 1,400 feet north of its existing location. This interchange concept also required relocation of the existing local access bridge over I-94 that connected Barton Ave and CR 111 further north to a new location – approximately 0.8 mile north.

In order to reduce impacts to the existing rest area, the overall I-94/Alternative D connection design concept was revised. The southbound interregional ramp to I-94 was shifted behind the rest area and connected to I-94 south of the rest area ramp, with sufficient ramp spacing to avoid merging traffic conflicts (see Figure 3.5-D.1). The design revisions to the southbound interregional ramp also allowed the local access bridge over I-94, connecting Barton Avenue and CR 111, to remain at its existing location.

TH 10/Interregional Connection Interchange

Four sub-alternatives were considered for the TH 10/interregional interchange. The mainline for the four Alternative D sub-alternatives is identical from I-94 north to CSAH 8. From CSAH 8 to TH 10 the mainline alignment and location of the TH 10/interregional interchange slightly varies for each of the sub-alternatives. Sub-Alternatives D1, D2 and D4 described below, all provide a direct connection from the TH 10/interregional interchange to TH 25 but differ in how they cross existing farmland parcels. Sub-Alternative D3 does not provide the direct TH 25 connection at the interchange. Figures 3.13 through 3.15 show the TH 10/interregional connection interchange concepts for these four sub-alternatives.

Sub-Alternative D1

At CSAH 8, this sub-alternative heads northeast to TH 10. The TH 10/interregional interchange is located between CR 53 and TH 25 and includes a connection to TH 25. Although this concept provides the most direct connection between the Alternative D connection and TH 25, it also has the greatest impact on farm operations, since it bisects large farm fields north and south of TH 10. Figure 3.13 depicts Sub-Alternative D1.

Sub-Alternative D2

At CSAH 8, this alternative continues northward, paralleling existing CR 53 to minimize farm bisection south of TH 10. The TH 10/interregional interchange is located at the intersection of CR 53 with TH 10. The interchange provides a connection to TH 25, but in providing this connection bisects large farm parcels north of TH 10. Figure 3.14 depicts Sub-Alternative D2.

Sub-Alternative D3

This sub-alternative is similar to Sub-Alternative D2 in that it parallels existing CR 53 to minimize farm bisections and has an interchange at the intersection of CR 53 with TH 10. However, this sub-alternative does not provide a connection to TH 25. Figure 3.15 depicts Sub-Alternative D3.

Sub-Alternative D4

This sub-alternative is similar to Sub-Alternative D2; however, in order to reduce farm bisection impacts north of TH 10, the interregional interchange connection to TH 25 has been shifted east to follow existing property lines (see Figure 3.5-D.4).

In order to determine whether or not a connection to TH 25 should be provided for Alternative D, a benefit/cost analysis was completed to assess the potential benefits and costs of adding this connection. The results of the analysis identified that the TH 25 connection, compared to no direct TH 25 connection, would result in a benefit/cost ratio of 9.75. This analysis eliminated Sub-Alternative D3 from further consideration, as it does not provide a connection to TH 25. Between the other three sub-alternatives, D4 results in the least amount of impacts to farmland, thus based on the benefit/cost analysis and farmland impacts, Sub-Alternative D4 was chosen as the Alternative D alignment to be carried forward for detailed analysis in the DEIS.

3.2 ALTERNATIVES RETAINED FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS IN THE DEIS

As outlined in the previous section, the Build alignments carried forward from the scoping process were refined during the DEIS process and preferred concepts were identified for each Build Alternative to be retained for detailed study/comparison in the DEIS. Once the preferred concept for each Build Alternative was identified, local and regional access (including private driveways, and city, township and county roads) were reviewed and developed. Figures 3.2-A.1 through 3.5-D.4 depict the proposed improvements for each Build Alternative, and Table 3.1 summarizes the estimated costs for all of the DEIS alternatives.

3.2.1 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative would continue to utilize the existing TH 24 corridor as the interregional connection between I-94 and TH 10, including existing at-grade access points, intersection/interchange configurations, and highway alignments and geometrics. The No-Build Alternative would include needed safety improvements and reconstruction of the existing TH 24 corridor (as required by routine maintenance) between I-94 and TH 10 within the study area. It is assumed that by 2040, the existing TH 24 bridge over the Mississippi River would need to be replaced as part of the No-Build Alternative. The No-Build Alternative could also include the consolidation of direct access points along TH 24 if safety conditions warrant it. Social, economic and environmental impacts of the No-Build Alternative are analyzed where relevant and compared to impacts of the Build Alternative.

3.2.2 Build Alternatives

3.2.2.1 Alternative A

As discussed in the previous section, the original Alternative A alignment was retained as the preferred alternative to be carried forward for detailed analysis in the DEIS. This alternative involves the construction of a new interregional freeway connection between I-94 and TH 10. The connection includes: two new interchanges (at I-94 and TH 10); a four-lane freeway approximately 6.5 miles in length; a new bridge over the Mississippi River; grade-separation of the BNSF Railroad and interregional connection; and four new overpasses at CSAH 75, CSAH 8, CR 60, and CR 65. This alternative also includes the replacement of the existing TH 24 bridge over the Mississippi River by 2040.

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**TABLE 3.1
COST ESTIMATES FOR ALTERNATIVES**

COST	ALTERNATIVE				
	No-Build	A	B	C	D
Construction Cost of Interregional Connection (excludes right of way acquisition) ⁽¹⁾	\$8,000,000	\$94,449,000	\$94,616,000	\$97,876,000	\$109,136,000 ⁽²⁾
Right of way and Relocation Costs	N/A	\$12,010,000	\$13,361,000	\$7,305,000	\$3,552,000
Total Cost of Interregional Connection (construction plus right of way)	\$8,000,000	\$106,459,000	\$107,977,000	\$105,181,000	\$112,688,000

⁽¹⁾Cost estimates for the No-Build Alternative and Build Alternatives A, C and D include \$8 million for replacing the existing TH 24 bridge.

⁽²⁾Construction cost for Alternative D includes approximately \$9,400,000 for the TH 25 connection.

It should be noted that at the City of St. Cloud’s and the St. Cloud APO’s request, Mn/DOT analyzed whether or not a future interchange could be located at the interregional connection’s intersection with CSAH 8. Mn/DOT determined that a future local interchange at this location would be physically and operationally possible. (Section 4.1.2 summarizes the operational analysis.) However, this interchange will not be constructed by Mn/DOT as part of Alternative A. Construction of the CSAH 8 interchange would need to be pursued independently by local jurisdictions.

As noted in Section 3.1.3 above, the Sub-Alternative A1 concept has not been eliminated from consideration. Because the SEE impacts of Alternatives A and A1 would be relatively similar, Alternative A was used as the basis for assessing SEE impacts in the DEIS. However, if Alternative A is selected as the preferred alternative following the DEIS process, than a decision would need to be made (in partnership with local transportation planning agencies) whether to carry Alternative A or A1 forward for analysis in the FEIS document.

3.2.2.2 Alternative B

As discussed in Section 3.1.3, Sub-Alternative B5 was chosen as the sub-alternative to be carried forward for detailed analysis in the DEIS for Alternative B. This alternative utilizes the existing TH 24 alignment from I-94 to approximately 70th Avenue, reconstructing it as a freeway facility. At 70th Avenue, the alignment shifts northward along 70th Avenue to its intersection with TH 10. (Note: 70th Avenue is an existing roadway that has been closed to traffic at TH 24.) This alternative includes: modifications to the existing I-94/TH 24 interchange; a new interchange at the TH 10/interregional connection; four-lane freeway approximately 5.2 miles in length; replacement of the existing TH 24 Mississippi River bridge; a new local interchange at CR 57; grade-separation of the BNSF Railroad and the interregional connection; and three new overpasses at CSAH 75, CSAH 8 and CR 76.

3.2.2.3 Alternative C

As discussed in the previous section, Alternative C has experienced only minor alignment revisions since the scoping process. This alternative includes the construction of a new interregional freeway connection between I-94 and TH 10. (Note: the northern segment of this alignment is similar to Alternative B and follows 70th Avenue from its intersection with TH 24 north to TH 10.) This alternative includes: two new interchanges at I-94 and TH 10; a four-lane freeway approximately 5.5 miles in length; a new bridge over the Mississippi River; a new local interchange at TH 24 in Clear Lake; grade-separation of the BNSF Railroad and the interregional connection; and three new overpasses at CSAH 75, CSAH 8 and CR 76. This alternative also includes the replacement of the existing TH 24 bridge over the Mississippi River by 2040.

3.2.2.4 Alternative D

As discussed in Section 3.1.3, Sub-Alternative D4 was chosen as the sub-alternative to be carried forward for detailed analysis in the DEIS. This alternative involves the construction of a new interregional freeway connection between I-94 and TH 10. This alternative follows the alignments of two existing gravel roads—Barton Avenue and CR 53—for portions of its alignment. This alternative includes: two new interchanges (at I-94 and TH 10/TH 25); a four-lane freeway approximately 5.9 miles in length; a new bridge over the Mississippi River; grade-separation of the interregional connection over CSAH 75; grade-separation of the BNSF Railroad and interregional connection; and an overpass at CSAH 8. This alternative also includes the replacement of the existing TH 24 bridge over the Mississippi River by 2040.