

February 4, 2020

Abbi Ginsberg
Transportation Engineer/ROW Specialist
Federal Highway Administration
380 Jackson Street, Suite 500
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-2904

In reply refer to:
De Minimis Determination Notice of Intent Request for Sakatah State Trail
Minn. Proj. No. 4006-35

Trunk Highway (TH) 60 from TH 14 To Waterville
Blue Earth, Le Sueur, and Waseca County

Greeting,

MnDOT is requesting that FHWA issue a notice of intent to make a determination that the impact of the above reference project on Sakatah State Trail would be de minimis.

Information supporting this request is presented below.

1. General Project Information

SP: 4006-35

Federal Project No.:

Route: TH 60

From /To: TH 14 to Waterville

Description of Proposed Improvement: Pavement rehabilitation using full depth reclamation. The project also includes the addition of some right and left turn lanes within the project limits. Guardrail and culverts will be adjusted, repaired and/or replaced as needed. Pedestrian facilities will be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in the City of Madison Lake and Elysian. Nearly all of the accesses will be improved to provide traversable inslopes. At certain locations, accesses will be consolidated or removed.

2. Project Manager

Name: Forrest Hasty

Title: Project Manager

Address: 2151 Bassett Drive, Mankato MN 56001

Phone: 507-508-4018

Email: forrest.hasty@state.mn.us

3. Description of the Section 4(f) Property.

Name: Sakatah State Trail

Total Size (acres): Length is 39 miles

Location: The trail terminuses are White Sands Park in Faribault (near 7th St NW and Lyndale Ave N) to the N Riverfront Dr and TH 60/TH 14 intersection (also intersecting the Minnesota River Trail).

Section 4(f) Property Owner/Manager: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources/Insert Regional mgr

Official(s) with Jurisdiction (OWJ): Craig Beckman, 4C Supervisor, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR).

Type of Section 4(f) Property: Multi-use recreational trail

Function of or Available Activities on the Property: Hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, in-line skating, and snowmobiling. A wayside rest also exists near the trail within the City of Elysian that is utilized as a parking and staging area for trail users. Attached is the MnDNR pamphlet, Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail, for reference. The pamphlet depicts trail amenities and locations.

Description and Location of Existing and Planned Facilities: Sakatah State Trail follows a roughly east-west former railroad bed. The trail offers hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, in-line skating, and snowmobiling along the entire 39-mile paved trail. No changes are proposed for future or planned trail uses.

Access: The trail is accessible to users throughout the length of the trail at the many public road crossings. Designated parking facilities are located at nine locations along the trail.

Other Features or Attributes Important to the Section 4(f) resource: No other features or attributes.

4. Impacts to the Section 4(f) Property.

P.E. 1A and P.E. 1B (Sheet 2 of 4 in the attached maps)

Amount of land impacted (acres): 20,926.9 sq ft for TH 60 ditch needs

Permanent R/W Acquisition/Easements: 20,926.9 sq ft

Temporary Easements: 1,016.1 sq ft of temporary easements are needed. These are shown and explained in the Section 4f temporary occupancy letter.

Functions/Activities Affected: No functions of the trail will be affected

Facilities Affected: No facilities will be affected

Access Affected: None of the accesses to the trail will be affected

Other Features or Attributes Affected: Permanent easements are needed from property within the trail right of way, not the trail itself. Access and use of the Sakatah State Trail will not be affected. There are no features or attributes affected. The areas for easement are currently unused, fallow right of way. The existing trail right of way currently extends to the existing roadway surface edge, as depicted in Sheet 2 of 4. There currently is no space for TH 60 right-of-way. The purpose of this acquisition is to provide MnDOT personnel the ability to maintain the roadway shoulder, inslope, and ditch bottom without acquiring a permit from the MnDNR.

P.E. 2 (Sheet 3 of 4 in the attached maps)

Amount of land impacted (acres): 9,950.9 sq ft for culvert/ditch needs

Permanent R/W Acquisition/Easements: 9,950.9 sq ft

Temporary Easements: 2,487.7 sq ft of temporary easements are needed. These are shown and explained in the Section 4f temporary occupancy letter.

Functions/Activities Affected: No functions of the trail will be affected

Facilities Affected: No facilities will be affected

Access Affected: Trail access will not be affected

Other Features or Attributes Affected: Permanent easements are needed from property within the trail right of way, not the trail itself. Access and use of the Sakatah State Trail will not be affected. There are no features or attributes affected. The area for easement is currently unused, fallow right of way. The permanent easement will give MnDOT personnel the ability to perform maintenance of the in-place culvert and ditch in this area without the need for a permit from the MnDNR.

P.E. 3 (See Sheet 4 of 4 in the attached figures)

Amount of land impacted (acres): 796.1 sq ft for culvert/ditch needs

Permanent R/W Acquisition/Easements: 796.1 sq ft

Temporary Easements: 2,986 sq ft of temporary easements are needed. These are shown and explained in the Section 4f temporary occupancy letter.

Functions/Activities Affected: No functions of the trail will be affected

Facilities Affected: No facilities will be affected

Access Affected: Trail access will not be affected

Other Features or Attributes Affected: Permanent easements are needed from property within the trail right of way, not the trail itself. Access and use of the Sakatah State Trail will not be affected. There are no features or attributes affected. The area for easement is currently unused, fallow right of way. The permanent easement will give MnDOT personnel the ability to perform maintenance on the in-place culvert without the need for a permit from the MnDNR.

5. Considerations:

P.E. 1A and P.E. 1B (Sheet 2 of 4 in the attached maps)

Impact avoidance: No impacts to the trail or trail users will take place as a result of this permanent easement. The easement is needed so that MnDOT personnel can maintain the in-place ditch and culverts without the need for a permit from the MnDNR to enter the property. Currently, the MnDNR (trail) right-of-way encroaches onto the shoulder of TH 60.

Planning to minimize harm: The permanent easement area allows for a standard right-of-way width for a trunk highway, no additional right-of-way is being acquired. The north side of Th 60 in this area is lacking an appropriate right-of-way width for maintenance and ditch purposes.

Mitigation: The area will be restored by taking out the in-place roadway embankment, creating a ditch section, and seeding with native seed mixes per Mn DNR guidelines.

Enhancement: Trail users will have a safer trail experience due to the roadway/trail intersection being removed. Removal of the road, and replacing it with a ditch, will provide a more natural feel for trail

users as they traverse this area. The 516th St closure area will be reseeded following MN DNR guidelines. The acquired right-of-way will be reseeded following MnDNR guidelines and consultation.

P.E. 2 (Sheet 3 of 4 in the attached maps)

Impact avoidance: No impacts to the trail or trail users will take place as a result of this permanent easement. The easement is needed to facilitate roadway widening in this area, a culvert extension to remove obstructions from the roadway clear zone, and re-shaping of the ditch.

Planning to minimize harm: The current TH 60 roadway through the City of Elysian currently lacks left-turn lanes. A left turn lane is only being added at the TH 60 and CR 11/1st St SW intersection, not at all the TH 60 intersections within Elysian.

Mitigation: The area will be restored to acceptable grades and seeded with native seed mixes per MnDNR guidelines and consultation.

Enhancement: N/A

P.E. 3 (See Sheet 4 of 4 in the attached figures)

Impact avoidance: No impacts to the trail or trail users will take place as a result of this permanent easement. The easement is needed to give access to MnDOT personnel to maintain the in-place culvert without the need for a permit from the MnDNR.

Planning to minimize harm: The existing culvert extends into the Sakatah State Trail right-of-way. Right-of-way is only being acquired to keep the culvert within MnDOT right-of-way for maintenance purposes. No additional right-of-way is being proposed.

Mitigation: The area will be restored to acceptable grades and seeded with native seed mixes per MnDNR guidelines and consultation.

Enhancement: N/A

6. Coordination with Responsible Official with Jurisdiction (OWJ) Over the Section 4(f) Property:

Early coordination meetings have taken place, as detailed below:

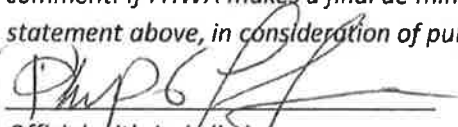
- 08-21-2018: Meeting at the New Ulm MnDNR Headquarters to discuss the project scope in general and the anticipated Sakatah Trail right-of-way impacts more specifically. MnDOT, Bolton & Menk (Consultant Design Engineer), and MnDNR personnel were present.
- 07-15-2019: Meeting at St. Paul MnDNR Headquarters with MnDOT, Bolton & Menk, and MnDNR personnel. This meeting discussed specifically the impacts to the Sakatah Trail right-of-way. MnDNR personnel also walked through the 4f process and provided guidance on the requirements, process, and timelines.
- 07-18-2019: Meeting at MnDOT D7 headquarters with MnDOT personnel, Kent Skarr (DNR acquisition and development section leader), Craig Beckman (Area 4C supervisor), and Paul Hansen (District 9 supervisor). This meeting was to review the Sakatah Trail right-of-way impacts and discuss the 4f process.

Official with Jurisdiction (OWJ) Statement

As the official with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) resource described in this correspondence, the signature below indicates our agency's agreement with the description of the property as presented in this request and our agreement that the impacts of the proposed action, including consideration of proposed mitigation, as described in this request, will not adversely affect the activities, features and attributes that are important to the resource.

We also understand that this information is being presented to FHWA for its consideration in determining if a de minimis process may apply to this Section 4(f) property. If so, a copy of this request letter, signed by FHWA and submitted to our agency, will serve as FHWA's notice to the OWJ of its intent make a de minimis determination, conditioned on results of public notice and comment period.

Lastly, we understand that following the comment period, our agency will be advised of FHWA's final determination regarding de minimis, in consideration of any subsequent alternative development and public comment. If FHWA makes a final de minimis determination, our agency will be asked to confirm our agreement statement above, in consideration of public comment and any additional pertinent information.


Official with Jurisdiction
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

02/06/2020
Date

If after consideration of the information presented in this letter, FHWA intends make a de minimis determination, conditioned upon consideration of any comments received during the required 30-day public comment period, please indicate by signature below. It is our understanding that FHWA will transmit of copy of this signed letter to the OWJ as notice of FHWA's intent to make a de minimis finding.

It is anticipated this De Minimis Request will be placed on public notice for a 30-day public comment period. The de minimis process, including correspondence related to FHWA's intent to make a de minimis determination, comments received on the notice of FHWA's intent to make a de minimis determination, FHWA's final de minimis determination, and the OWJ's final concurrence will be reported in the Categorical Exclusion document.

Sincerely,

Forrest Hasty

Digitally signed by Forrest Hasty
Date: 2020.02.06 16:17:55 -06'00'

Forrest Hasty, P.E.
MnDOT Project Manager
MnDOT District 7

FHWA Intent to Make a De Minimis Determination conditioned on results of public notice and comment period:

FHWA Engineer *Abigail Lunsberg* Date *2/7/20*

Attachments: MndNR pamphlet, Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail
DNR Permanent Easement Acquisition Map Sheets 1 – 4

CC: Deb Moynihan, MnDOT Office of Environmental Stewardship
Derek Hilding, Attorney, Division of Land and Minerals, MnDNR
Craig Beckman, Area 4C Supervisor, MnDNR Manager of the Section 4f Resource
Peter Leete, MnDNR – MnDOT Liaison

MAP EXPLANATION

Trail

— Paved (Asphalt)

- - - - - Natural Surface

Facilities

P Parking **A** Campground

PA Picnic/Rest Area

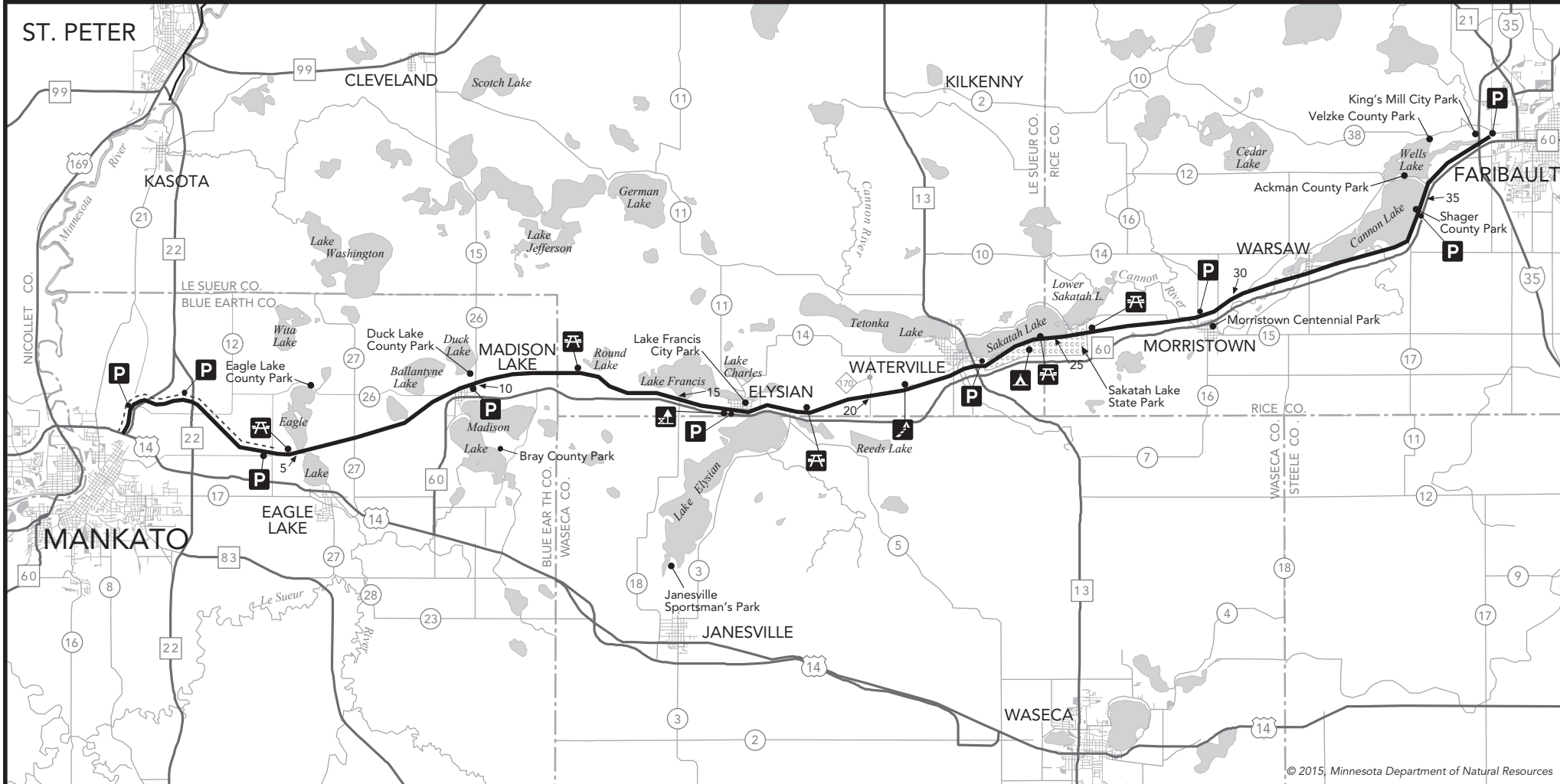
A Primitive Campsite

AR Wayside Rest/Facilities



Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail Blue Earth, Le Sueur & Rice Counties

Faribault	5.7	8.7	13.0	14.7	21.5	29.0	39.0
Warsaw		3.0	7.0	9.0	15.7	23.2	33.2
Morristown			4.2	6.0	12.7	20.2	30.2
Sakatah Lake State Park				1.7	8.5	16.0	26.0
Waterville					6.0	13.5	23.5
Elysian						7.5	17.5
Madison Lake							10.0
Mankato							



PARKING AVAILABLE:

** Do not leave valuables in your vehicle.*

- MANKATO - North on Co. Rd. 57 (Riverfront Drive) to Lime Valley Road, 1/4 Mile North.
- MANKATO - North on State Hwy 22.
- EAGLE LAKE - West on State Hwy 14 to Co. Rd. 86 - 1 Mile North.
- MADISON LAKE - State Hwy 60 to Main St., 3 blocks North on Main St.
- ELYSIAN - Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail Wayside Rest Area.
- WATERVILLE - State Hwy 60 to State Hwy 13 - 1/4 mile North on 13.
- MORRISTOWN - State Hwy 60 to Co. Rd. 16, West on State Hwy 60 - 1/4 Mile.
- Shager Co. Park - on State Hwy 60.
- FARIBAULT - State Hwy 60 & Co. Rd. 21, North on Co. Rd. 21 - 1/2 Mile.

Share the Trail with Others:

- Stay on designated trail.
- Keep right so others can pass.
- Keep all pets on leash/Dispose of pet waste.
- Obey traffic signs and rules.
- Pack out all garbage and litter
- Respect adjoining landowners rights and privacy.
- Warn other trail users when passing by giving an audible signal. Some horses may be spooked by quiet bikers or in-line skaters. Let them know you are passing.
- Overnight camping and campfires are permitted only on designated campsites. Do not leave campfires unattended.
- Enjoy the beauty of wild plants & animals, but leave them undisturbed for all to enjoy
- Trail users are legally responsible for obeying the rules and regulations provided in *Minnesota Rules*, 6100.3000.

For more information or copies of this or other state trail maps, please contact the DNR Information Center:

DNR Information Center
500 Lafayette Road
Saint Paul, MN 55155-4040
(651) 296-6157 (metro area)
1-888-MINNDNR [646-6367] (MN toll free)
TDD(651) 296-5484 (metro area)
1-800-657-3929 (toll free)

Minnesota Department of Tourism
100 Metro Square
121 7th Place East
Saint Paul, MN 55101-2112
(651) 296-5029 (metro area)
1-800-657-3700 (toll free)

Minnesota Bikeway Maps
Minnesota Department of Transportation
395 John Ireland Boulevard
Room 110
Saint Paul, MN 55155
(651) 296-2216



This trail requires a permit for anyone snowmobiling or horseback riding. For more information about the Snowmobile State Trail Sticker or the Horse Pass, please call the DNR Info Center at 1-888-MINNDNR or check the website at mndnr.gov

Printed on recycled paper with a minimum of 30% post-consumer material.



This information is available in alternative format upon request

You can also check out our website at:
mndnr.gov/state_trails

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Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail

Blue Earth, LeSueur & Rice Counties

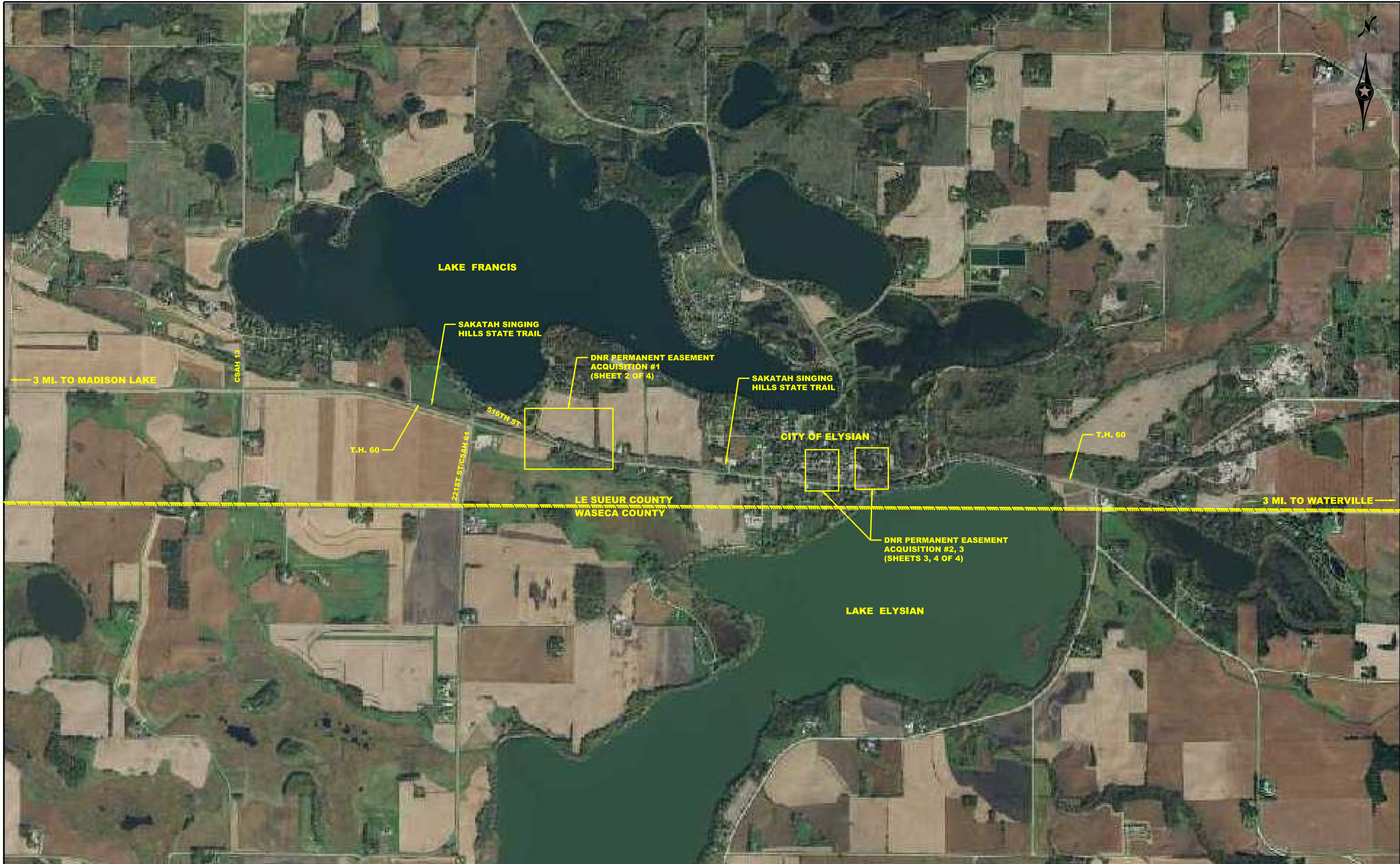


The Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail is a 39 mile multiple-use trail which has been developed on an abandoned railroad grade. The trail lies in the transition zone between what was once the "Big Woods" and the vast prairies. Remnants of these plant communities can still be found scattered throughout what is now cultivated land.

The trail has been developed for bicycling, in-line skating, horseback riding, hiking, and snowmobiling.

The trail begins near State Hwy 14 and joins the Minnesota River Trail in Mankato and ends east of Interstate 35 in Faribault (trail users will need to use the signed route on city streets through Waterville). The Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail provides an asphalt treadway. A treadway for horse back riding is completed from Lime Valley Road to County Road 12 bridge.

Sakatah Lake State Park is along the trail, and provides a separate bicycling campground, picnic grounds, boat access, and additional hiking trails. There are several other lakes and public parks within an easy ride of the trail.



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12224 NICOLLET AVENUE
BURNSVILLE, MINNESOTA 55337
Phone: (952) 890-0509
Email: burnsville@bolton-menk.com
www.bolton-menk.com

REV.	BY	DATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAN, SPECIFICATION, OR REPORT WAS PREPARED BY ME OR UNDER MY DIRECT SUPERVISION AND THAT I AM A DULY LICENSED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA.

ENGINEER SIGNATURE 1

ENGINEER
LIC. NO. 12345 DATE **--**----

DESIGNED ***
DRAWN ***
CHECKED ***

S.P. 4006-35
PROJECT NAME
DNR PERMANENT EASEMENT ACQUISITION MAP

SHEET
1
OF
4

LEGEND

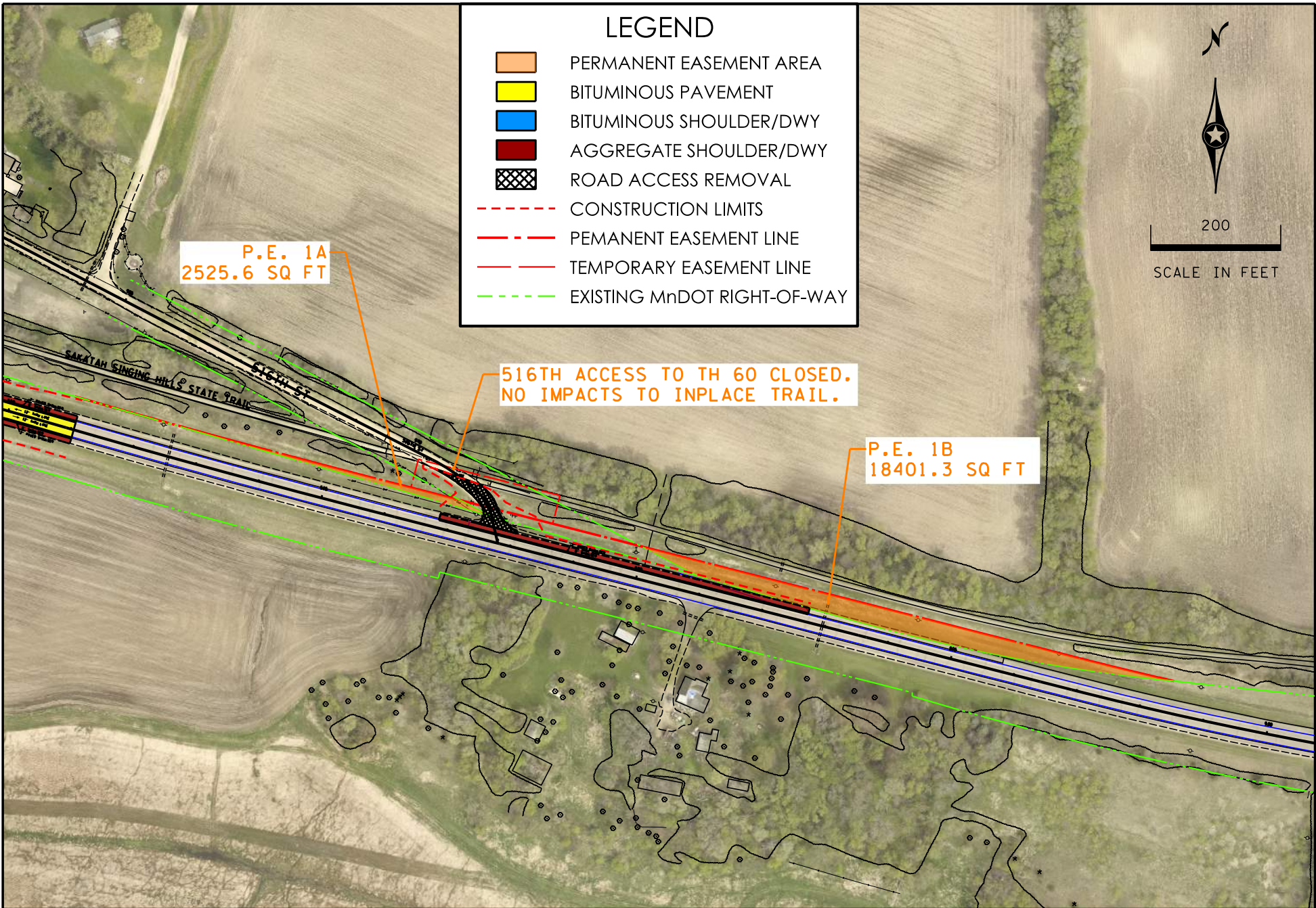
- PERMANENT EASEMENT AREA
- BITUMINOUS PAVEMENT
- BITUMINOUS SHOULDER/DWY
- AGGREGATE SHOULDER/DWY
- ROAD ACCESS REMOVAL
- CONSTRUCTION LIMITS
- PERMANENT EASEMENT LINE
- TEMPORARY EASEMENT LINE
- EXISTING MnDOT RIGHT-OF-WAY



P.E. 1A
2525.6 SQ FT

516TH ACCESS TO TH 60 CLOSED.
NO IMPACTS TO INPLACE TRAIL.

P.E. 1B
18401.3 SQ FT



SP 4006-35 TH 60 LAKE CONNECTION PROJECT

DNR PERMANENT EASEMENT ACQUISITION #1

SHEET 2 OF 4

LEGEND

- PERMANENT EASEMENT AREA
- BITUMINOUS PAVEMENT
- BITUMINOUS SHOULDER/DWY
- AGGREGATE SHOULDER/DWY
- ROAD ACCESS REMOVAL
- CONSTRUCTION LIMITS
- PERMANENT EASEMENT LINE
- TEMPORARY EASEMENT LINE
- EXISTING MnDOT RIGHT-OF-WAY



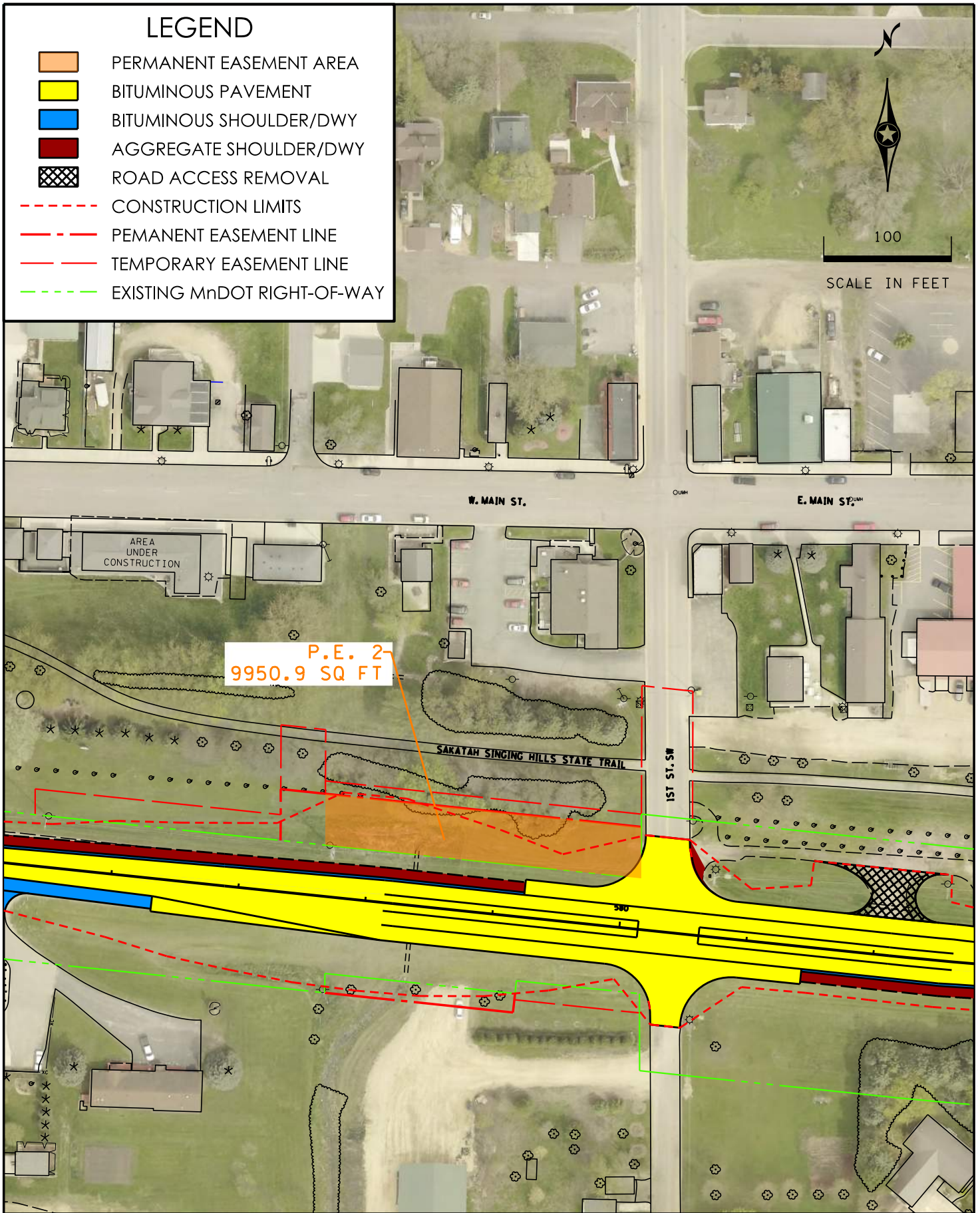
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SP 4006-35 TH 60 LAKE CONNECTION PROJECT

DNR PERMANENT EASEMENT ACQUISITION #2 SHEET 3 OF 4

LEGEND

- PERMANENT EASEMENT AREA
- BITUMINOUS PAVEMENT
- BITUMINOUS SHOULDER/DWY
- AGGREGATE SHOULDER/DWY
- CONCRETE MEDIAN
- CONSTRUCTION LIMITS
- PERMANENT EASEMENT LINE
- TEMPORARY EASEMENT LINE
- EXISTING MnDOT RIGHT-OF-WAY
- EXISTING ACCESS CONTROL



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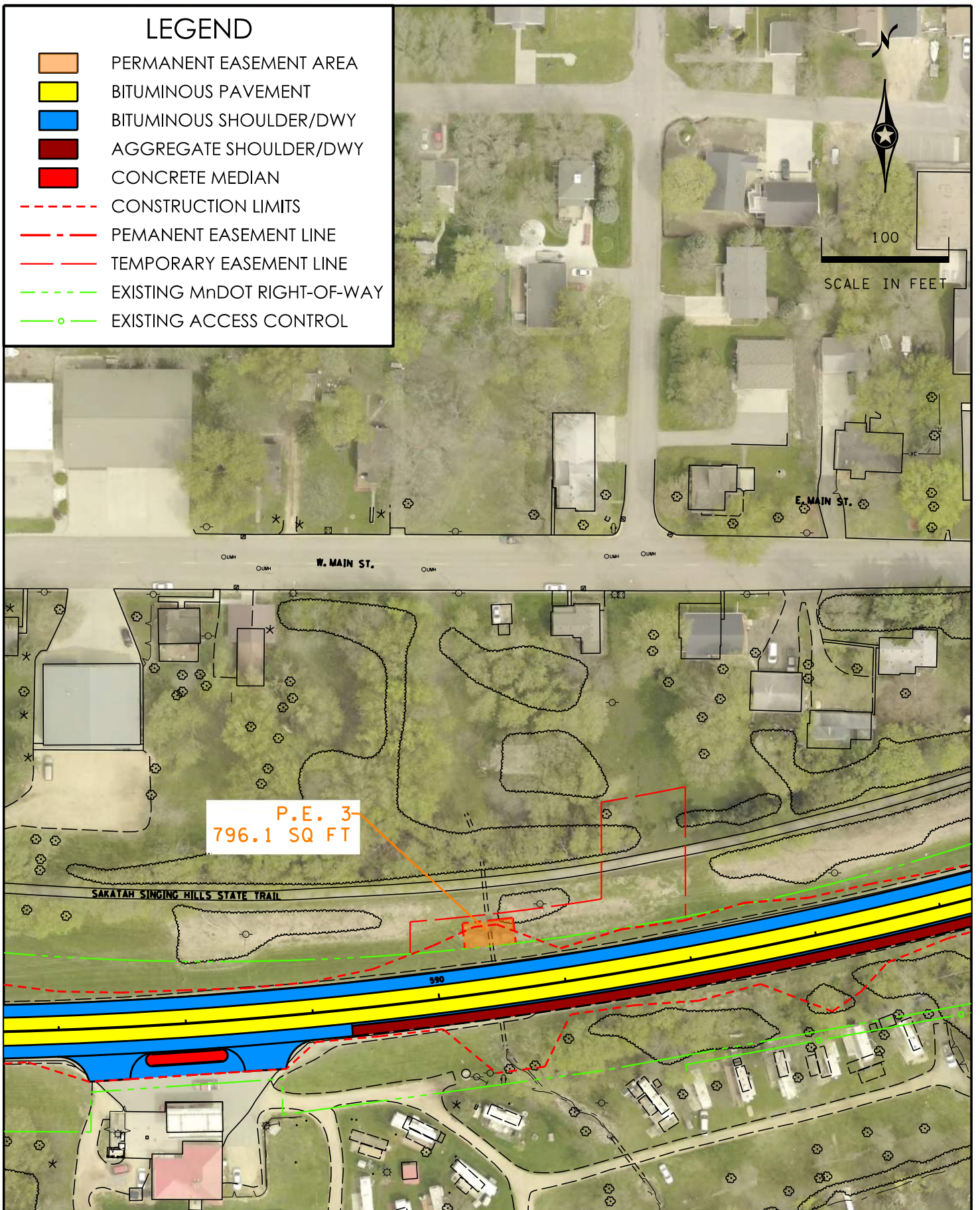
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SP 4006-35 TH 60 LAKE CONNECTION PROJECT

DNR PERMANENT EASEMENT ACQUISITION #3 SHEET 4 OF 4