



Willmar Wye Public Open House #4 and Public Hearing

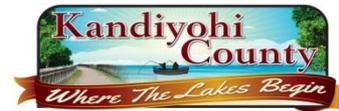
February 23, 2017

Agenda

Time	Topic
5:00 pm	Open House Opportunity for the public to ask questions of project staff
5:30-6:00 pm or later	Public Hearing Welcome and overview of project and environmental findings Opportunity for the public to comment on environmental document findings
6:00 pm or later – 7:00 pm	Open House Opportunity for the public to ask questions of project staff

Project Summary

- The Willmar Rail Connector and Industrial Park Access Project (Willmar Wye) will provide:
 - a direct connection between the Marshall and Morris Subdivisions of the BNSF rail network
 - improved access to Willmar's industrial park
- Partner agencies:

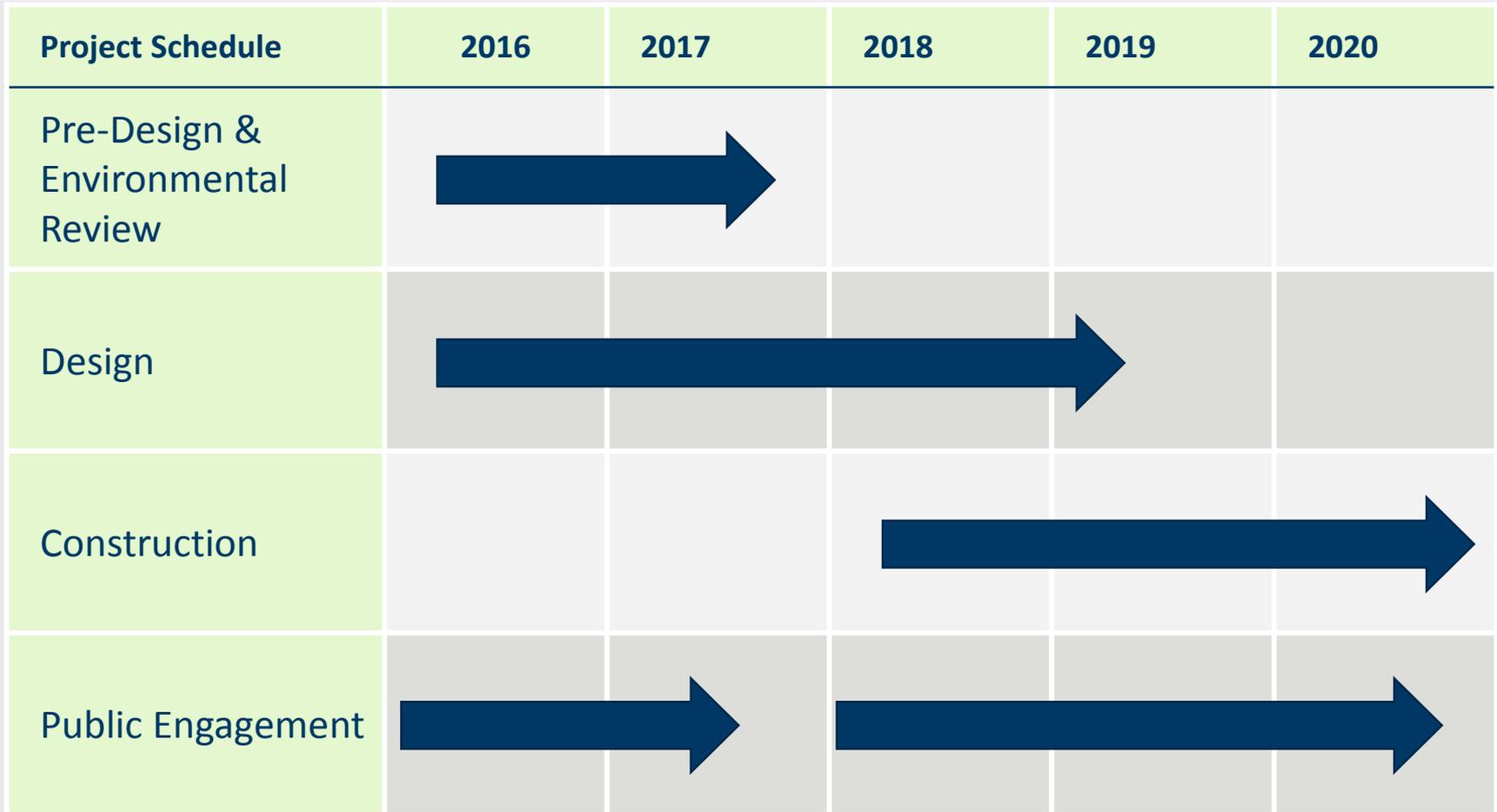


Public Engagement

- Open house meetings
- Community presentations
- Focus groups
- Pop-up events – farmer’s market, county fair
- Targeted meetings
- Radio interviews
- One-on-one property owner meetings
- Public Hearing (tonight)



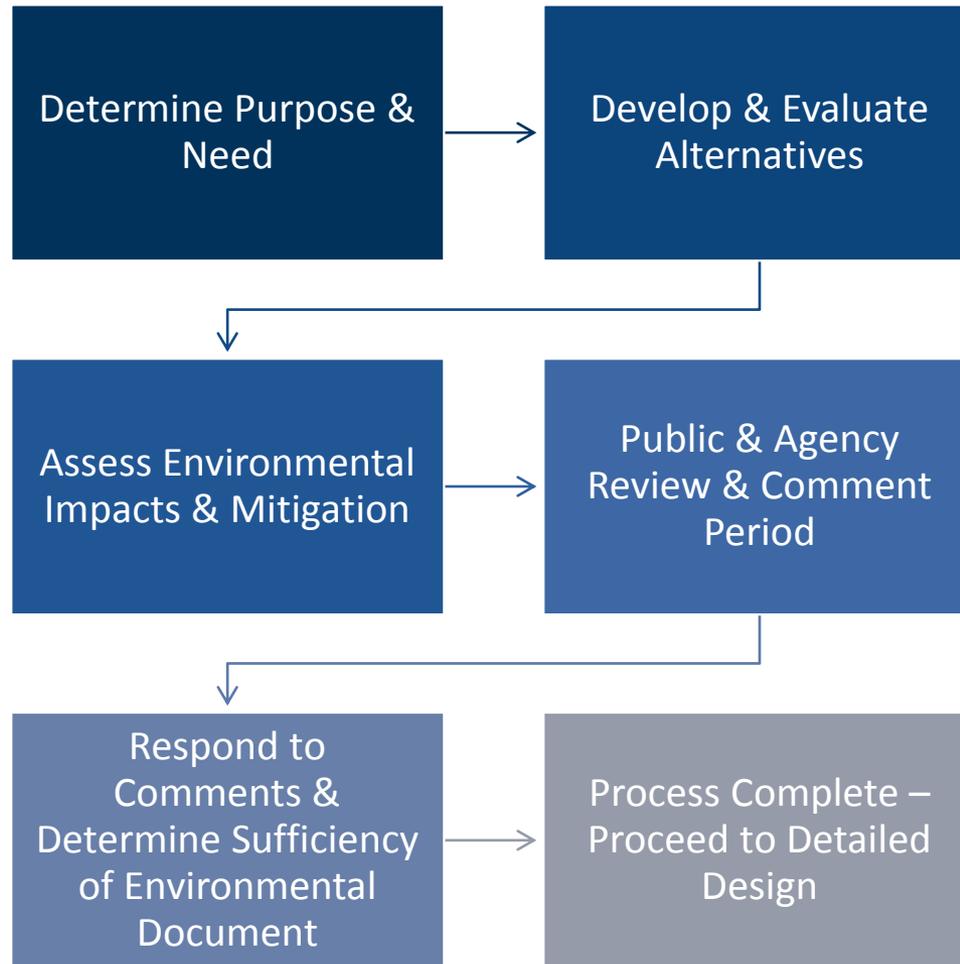
Schedule



Upcoming & Major Milestones

Milestone	Date
EA/EAW 30-day public comment period	February 6 - March 8
Public Hearing	February 23
Municipal Consent	Spring 2017
Agreements	Summer 2017
Bid (design-build) letting	December 2017
Start of construction	Spring 2018
Project completion	Fall 2020

Environmental Review Process



Project Purpose

- Improve rail operation efficiency in Willmar Terminal
- Facilitate movement of north-south rail freight through Willmar
- Reduce the number of train trips that cause lengthy traffic delays to at-grade rail crossings in Willmar
- Provide rail access to the Willmar Industrial Park to promote economic development
- Improve quality of life within the City of Willmar

Project Needs

- Improve regional railroad operations due to lack of direct north-south railroad connection through Willmar
- Reduce freight rail traffic fluctuations that can result in congestion/stacking on the railway subdivisions
- Enhance national network operations and opportunities to avoid bottlenecks
- Improve railroad operations in the Willmar Terminal
- Reduce delays at existing at-grade railroad crossings
- Enhance safety at existing at-grade railroad crossings
- Promote economic development
- Enhance quality of life within Willmar

Alternatives Considered

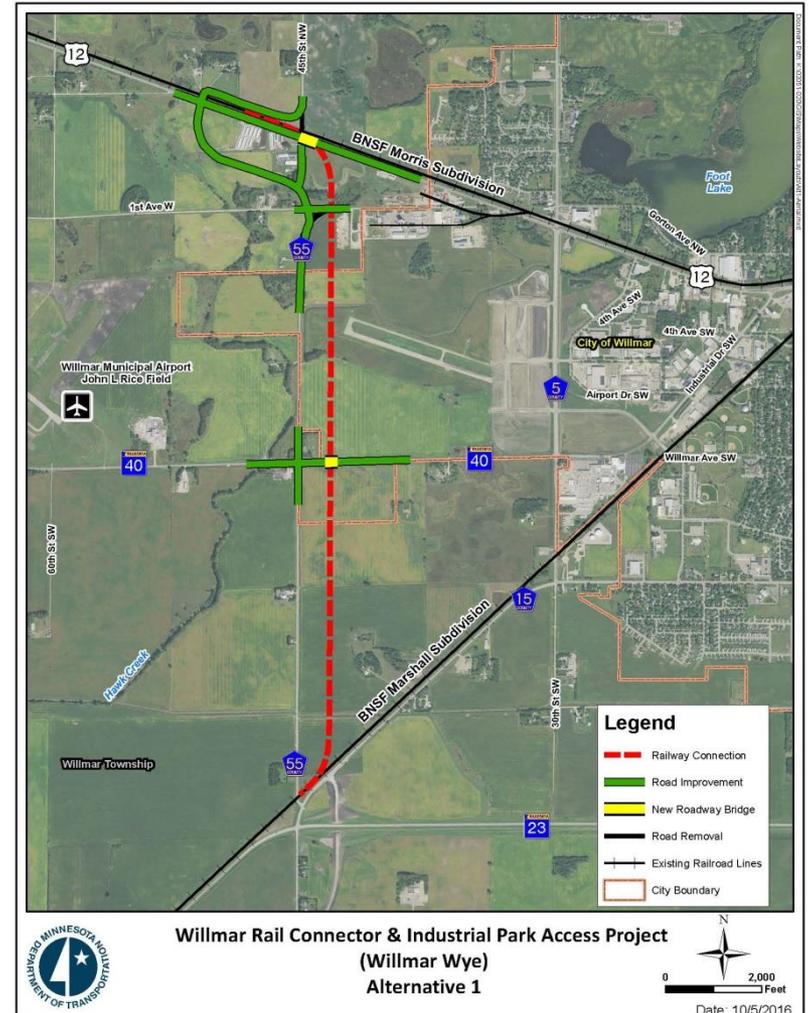
- No Build Alternative
- Railway Alternatives
 - MnDOT right of way (west)
 - Loop track (east)
 - East of CSAH 55 (recommended) approximately 2.8 miles of new track
- Hwy 12 Alternatives
 - Existing alignment
 - New alignment (recommended) approximately 2.5 miles of new alignment

Alternatives Considered (cont.)

- Hwy 40 Sub-Options
 - Grade separated from the railway (recommended)
 - At-grade roadway crossing
 - Close roadway at rail line
- CSAH 55/1st Ave. Sub-Options
 - At-grade roadway crossing with quadrant interchange at Hwy 12/CSAH 55
 - Close roadway at rail line and new access road (recommended)
 - Close roadway at rail line

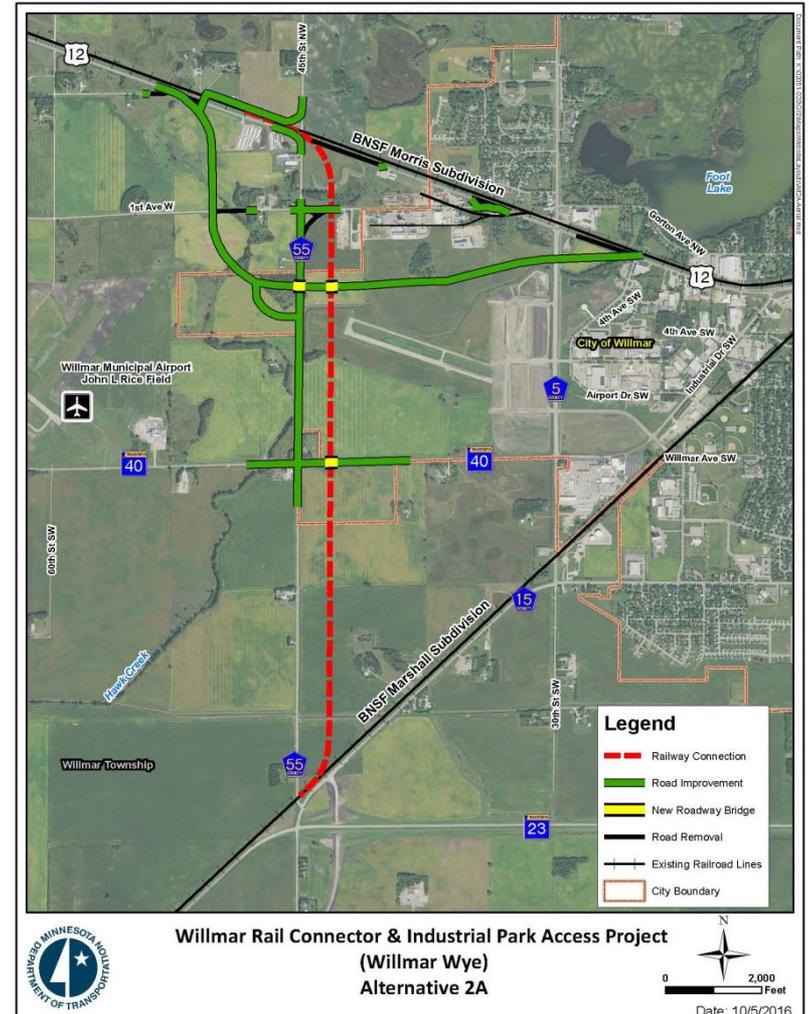
Alternative 1

- Hwy 12 stays on current location
- Long skewed bridge
- High (30-ft) retaining walls
- Realignment of 45th Street
- 2.8 miles of new railway
- Conversion of private railroad crossing to public crossing



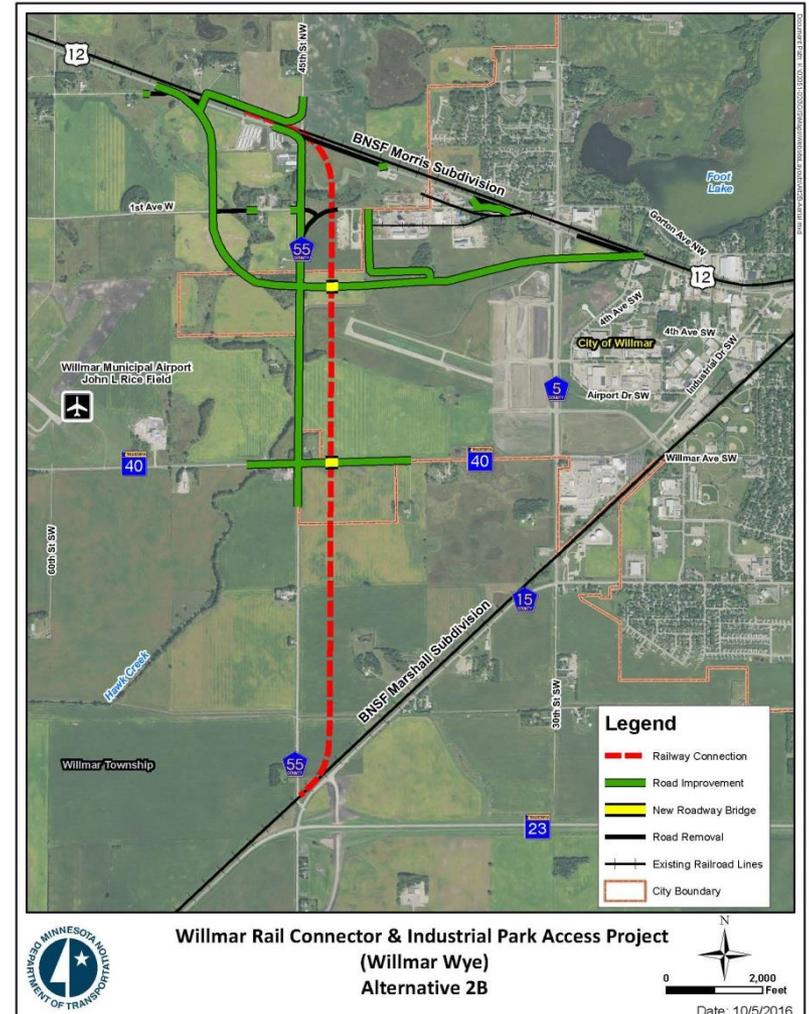
Alternative 2A

- Realign Hwy 12 (approx. 2.5 miles)
- Includes shorter simpler bridge
- Eliminates high retaining walls
- Includes 1st Ave. at-grade rail crossing
- Realignment of 45th Street
- 2.8 miles of new railway
- Conversion of private railroad crossing to public crossing



Alternative 2B (Recommended Alternative)

- Realign Hwy 12 (approx. 2.5 miles)
- Shorter simpler bridge
- Eliminates high retaining walls
- Eliminates 1st Ave. at-grade rail crossing
- Provides an access road to 1st Ave.
- Realignment of 45th Street
- 2.8 miles of new railway



Summary of EA/EAW Findings

Land Use

- Disturbs approximately 137 acres of land
- Avoids Airport Runway Protection Zones
- Land Conversion:
 - Former airport site (city-owned land)
 - Farmland: approx. 93 acres (including city and BNSF owned land)
- Consistent with city and county comprehensive plans for future growth and economic development

Summary of EA/EAW Findings Water Resources

- 29.5 acres increase in impervious surfaces
- Approx. 11 acres of water resources (wetlands, creeks, ditches) impacted
- Approximately 4.0 acres of Army Corps of Engineers jurisdictional resources impacted
- Approximately 2.9 acres of floodplain impacted
- Wells will be sealed

Summary of EA/EAW Findings Water Resources (cont.)

- Culvert replacement or extensions along Hawk Creek (County Ditch 10), County Ditch 12, County Ditch 46, and unnamed tributary east of CSAH 55
- Use of filtration basins and ditch checks to accommodate new stormwater runoff and meet Minnesota Pollution Control Agency requirements

Summary of EA/EAW Findings Fish & Wildlife Resources

- Majority of project area previously disturbed, drained and used for agriculture
- Native prairie remnants and federal wildlife lands outside of project area
- Poweshiek Skipperling butterfly, Regal Fritillary butterfly and Small White Lady's-Slipper flower, and Northern Long-Eared bat identified near the project area, but not anticipated to be impacted by project
- Use of native prairie grasses to prevent spreading of evasive species and enhance remnant prairies

Summary of EA/EAW Findings

Section 4(f) Resources

- BNSF Morris Subdivision identified as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places
- Project will tie into Morris Subdivision – “No Adverse Effect”
- Recreational trail along CSAH 5 will need to be replaced at new Hwy 12/CSAH 55 intersection
- Temporary occupancy – trail will remain open or detour route provided during construction

Summary of EA/EAW Findings Roadway and Access

- Roadway changes:
 - Realigned Hwy 12
 - Closure of 1st Ave/CSAH 55 at new railroad
 - 1st Avenue west of CSAH 55
 - Realigned 45th Street to Hwy 12
 - New access road to 1st Ave businesses from new Hwy 12
- New Hwy 12 would divert traffic away from some businesses
- Improved traffic and safety operations near Willmar Terminal

Summary of EA/EAW Findings

1st Avenue Closure

- Federal Highway Administration and Federal Railroad Administration do not support creation of new at-grade railroad crossings
- Had to demonstrate that proposed action would create a significant burden from existing conditions



Summary of EA/EAW Findings

1st Avenue Closure

- Several factors considered including safety, travel time, economic impacts, jurisdictional issues
- Similar safety benefits for all three sub-options
- Travel distance/time analysis did not demonstrate significant burden
 - Approximately 0.4 miles of additional distance and 1.4 minutes of travel time compared to existing conditions for trips between 1st Avenue and 19th Ave/CSAH 55 (recommended alternative)
 - Approximately 0.9 miles of additional distance and 1.6 minutes of travel time compared to existing conditions for trips between 1st Avenue and TH 12/New 45th Street intersection (recommended alternative)
- FHWA and FRA determination that the new access road provides a reasonable alternative to the closure of 1st Avenue

Summary of EA/EAW Findings

Right of Way Impacts

- Right of way impacts:
 - Permanent Easements/ROW: approx. 293 acres
 - Approx. 118 acres owned by partner agencies (City, BNSF)
 - Remaining approx. 175 acres privately owned
 - Temporary Easements: 19 acres
 - Removal of two homes at Hwy 40/CSAH 55 intersection and relocation of one home at Hwy 40/CSAH 55 intersection

Summary of EA/EAW Findings Noise and Vibration

- Studied roadway noise and train noise/vibration for recommended alternative
- Traffic noise barriers not found to be feasible and reasonable
- Train horn use at realigned 45th Street public at-grade crossing
- Noise barriers are not feasible for mitigating noise receptors near at-grade crossings

Summary of EA/EAW Findings Noise and Vibration (Cont.)

- Noise will occur during construction due to activities associated with bridge work, grading, etc. MnDOT is not required to follow local noise ordinances but will try to do so

Summary of EA/EAW Findings

Air Quality

- The project is not anticipated to have a major impact on air quality. Railway and roadway congestion in and near the Willmar Yard is anticipated to decrease, potentially having an air quality benefit

Summary of EA/EAW Findings

Visual

- The project will result in changes to the viewshed for highway motorists as well as residents in the area. Highway 12 will be on a different alignment and will now be adjacent to different properties than it is today. The project will also include bridges, so some of the highway may be more visible from different vantages than it had previously. The new railway alignment will also be a different view for some residents.

Summary of EA/EAW Findings Contamination/Regulated Waste

- No known contamination was identified. If discovered during construction, appropriate measures will be employed to remove soils.
- Removal and relocation of residential structures will likely require removal of regulated waste. MnDOT is contracting with a consultant to access properties and determine if regulated materials are on site. If present, removal will follow state and federal regulations.

Summary of EA/EAW Findings

Environmental Justice

- Environmental Justice populations are known to exist north of existing Hwy 12.
- Realignment of Hwy 12 will improve noise conditions for Environmental Justice populations.
- Environmental Justice populations are not expected to be disproportionately impacted as part of the project.

Summary of EA/EAW Findings Indirect and Cumulative Impacts

- Timing of development in and near industrial park could be faster than without the project
- Additional farmland will be removed from agricultural use (up to 300 acres)
- Additional wetlands will be filled and impacts to aquatic resources (ditches, etc.) will occur (up to 27 acres)
- Removal of historic building (hanger)

Summary of EA/EAW Findings Permits and Approvals Needed

- FHWA – federal highway administration
- FRA – federal railroad administration
- USCOE – US Army Corps of engineers
- FAA – federal aviation administration
- MPCA – Minnesota pollution control agency
- DNR – Minnesota department of natural resources
- City of Willmar
- Kandiyohi County
- BNSF
- MnDOT

Public Hearing



Public Hearing Procedures

If you would like to provide public verbal comments:

- Fill out the registration slip at the sign-in table and give it to MnDOT or consultant staff. There will be a corresponding number on the sheet – that will be the order in which you will be asked to speak.
- Sign-in at the podium to assist the court reporter in collecting correct spelling of names and documenting addresses.
- State your name and address at the start of your comments.
- Focus your comments related to the environmental document for this project.
- Please limit your comments to 5 minutes so that others have the opportunity to speak. If there are a large number of speakers, time may be limited to 3 minutes.

Public Hearing Procedures

If you would like to provide public verbal comments:

- Since this is a public hearing intended to collect comments, staff will not respond to questions during the hearing. Staff members will gladly speak with you if you have questions that you want to ask during the open house portion of the meeting.

Public Hearing Procedures

If you would like to provide comments:

- If you are uncomfortable speaking in front of a group, following the comments that are made by those speaking at the podium, there will be an opportunity to tell your comment to the court reporter off to the side. Comments will be documented similar to the ones given in front of the group.
- Sign-in at the table by the court report to assist the court reporter in collecting correct spelling of names and documenting addresses.
- State your name and address at the start of your comments.
- Focus your comments related to the environmental document for this project.
- Please limit your comments to 5 minutes so that others have the opportunity to speak. If there are a large number of speakers, time may be limited to 3 minutes.

Public Hearing Procedures

If you would like to provide written comments:

- If you are uncomfortable providing oral comments, written comments will also be accepted. Please fill out the comment form and return it this evening or via e-mail or mail. It will be considered as part of the public record.

Submitting Public Comments

- Public comments will be accepted until 4:00 p.m., March 8, 2017
- Submit public comments via:
 - Verbal testimony or written comments at tonight's hearing
 - Project's website: www.dot.state.mn.us/d8/willmarwye
 - U.S. Mail: Paul Rasmussen, MnDOT District 8, 2505 Transportation Road, Willmar, MN 56201-2207
 - E-mail: p.rasmussen@state.mn.us
 - Fax : 320-214-6305