



**In the Matter of the Route Permit
Application for a 345 kV Transmission
Line from Brookings County, South
Dakota to Hampton, Minnesota.**

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
SCOPING DECISION DOCUMENT
PUC Docket No. ET2/TL-08-1474**

The above matter has come before the Director of the Office of Energy Security (OES) for a decision on the Scope of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to be prepared on the Great River Energy and Xcel Energy (applicants) route permit application before the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) for a proposed transmission line between Brookings County, South Dakota, and Hampton, Minnesota, under the full permitting process (Minnesota Rules 7849.5200 to 7849.5340).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicants propose to construct and operate a 345 kilovolt (kV) transmission line, approximately 237 miles long, beginning at the state's western border near Hendricks, Minnesota, and ending south of the Twin Cities metro area near Hampton, Minnesota. The applicants have proposed two possible routes for the transmission line, a preferred route and an alternate route. These routes would cross portions of the following counties: Lincoln, Lyon, Yellow Medicine, Chippewa, Redwood, Brown, Renville, Sibley, Le Sueur, Scott, Rice, and Dakota. The project would also include the construction of four new substations and the expansion of four existing substations. New substations include the Hazel Creek substation near Granite Falls, the Helena substation near New Prague, the Cedar Mountain substation near Franklin, and the Hampton substation near Hampton (Figures 1 to 5).

The applicants are requesting a 1,000 foot wide route width for the majority of the proposed project. The maximum route width of 1.25 miles is requested for the areas where new substations are proposed and a number of other locations along the route to facilitate system interconnection and address river crossing areas and/or environmental and land use concerns.

The applicants propose using single-structure steel poles which would require a 150-foot right-of-way. A 100-foot right-of-way would be required for the route segment connecting to the Cedar Mountain substation near Franklin, Minnesota. There may also be some limited situations along the route where specialty structures (H-frames or triple circuit structures) may be required. A right-of-way up to 180 feet in width would be required in these instances.

Proposed construction of the transmission line would begin in 2011 with completion by 2013.

PROJECT PURPOSE

As indicated by the applicants in the route permit application, the project has been designed to improve the reliability of the bulk electric system serving Minnesota and portions of neighboring states and would also serve to meet infrastructure additions that have been deemed needed to meet the forecasted growth in demand of several thousand megawatts over the course of the next decade.

The applicants also indicate the project would enhance customer service capabilities in western Minnesota and the southern suburbs of the Twin Cities. Moreover, the project would provide renewable resource generation outlet capability of approximately 700 megawatts from the Buffalo Ridge area in southwest Minnesota. Detailed information regarding the purpose and need for this transmission project is provided in the May 22, 2009, Order issued by the Commission granting Certificates of Need for the CapX 345 kV Transmission Projects, Docket No. ET-2, E-002, et al./CN-06-1115 (<https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/edockets/searchDocuments.do?method=showDocketsSearch&showEdocket=true>).

REGULATORY BACKGROUND

The applicants filed a route permit application on December 29, 2008, under the full permitting process of the Power Plant Siting Act (Minnesota Statute 216E). The application was accepted as complete by the Commission on January 29, 2009. Under the full permitting process the Commission has one year from the date the application was accepted as complete to make a decision on the route permit.

SCOPING PROCESS

Route permit applications for high voltage transmission lines are subject to environmental review in accordance with Minnesota Rules 7849.5200 to 7849.5340 (full permitting process). Scoping is the first step in the permitting process after application acceptance. The scoping process has two primary purposes, to ensure that the public has a chance to participate in determining what routes and issues to study in the EIS, and to help focus the EIS on the most important issues surrounding the route permit decision.

OES staff collected and reviewed comments on the scope of the EIS by convening two advisory task forces, holding public scoping meetings throughout the proposed project area, and accepting written comments from March 30, 2009, through April 30, 2009. This scope identifies potential human/environmental issues and project route or substation site alternatives that will be addressed in the EIS. The scope also presents a tentative schedule of the environmental review process.

Advisory Task Forces

Two geographically-based advisory task forces (ATFs) were established by the OES, the Lake Marion to Hampton ATF and the Minnesota River Crossings to New Prague ATF. The ATFs were each charged with: (1) identifying local site or route specific impacts and issues of local concern, and (2) identifying alternative transmission line routes or substation locations in their respective area of concern that may maximize positive impacts and minimize or avoid negative impacts of the project. The task forces each met three times between March and April 2009. The recommendations of the ATFs have been considered during the preparation of this scope and can be found in their respective reports. The ATF reports are available at <http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=19860>.

Public Scoping Meetings

Twelve public information meetings were conducted by the OES between March 30 to April 9, 2009, at nine different locations that included the cities of Marshall, Hendricks, Granite Falls, Redwood Falls, Gaylord, Henderson, New Prague, Lakeville, and Cannon Falls. Approximately 1,065 people attended the twelve public meetings, according to the meeting sign-in sheets. The scoping meetings provided the public an opportunity to learn about the proposed project and the route permitting process, review the route permit application, and ask questions and submit comments. A court reporter was present at each of the public meetings and transcribed questions asked and comments made by the public as well as responses from the OES and the applicants.

Public Comments

A public comment period beginning the day of the first public scoping meeting and ending on April 30, 2009, provided the public an additional opportunity to submit comments and alternative routes to be considered for the scope of the EIS. A total of 999 comments were received by the close of the comment period which included 801 written or emailed comments and 198 oral comments from the public scoping meetings. There was also approximately 827 form letter/postcards from the Watt Munisotaram Temple indicating opposition to the line near their Temple.

All of the written and oral comments submitted at the scoping meetings along with comments received by mail and email were reviewed and entered into a database. Each comment was evaluated for issues or concerns that should be considered for detailed evaluation in the EIS and were classified based on the major topics of the comments. Table 1 below summarizes the major issues raised in these comments, as well as the relative frequency the issue was raised.

Table 1. Major Issues Raised During Public Scoping Period

Issue	Number of Times Issue Mentioned	Percentage of Major Issues
Health/EMF	428	43%
Property Value/Compensation	369	37%
Specific Route Selection (Suggested Alternatives)	297	30%
Proximity to Homes	294	29%
Other*	228	23%
General Route Selection (Support or Non-Support of Proposed Routes)	174	17%
Rare or Unique Species	138	14%
Aesthetics	133	13%
Stray Voltage	83	8%
Trees/Wind Breaks	45	5%
TV/Radio/GPS	41	4%
Noise	37	4%

*Other included issues related to: data in route permit application, general opposition to the project, project need, and easement negotiation process, among others.

The public suggested over 297 route alternatives to the applicants' proposed routes through comment. Of the 297 route alternative suggestions 197 of them were comments expressing opposition or preference for the applicants' preferred route, alternative route, or no project at all. This left 100 remaining route alternatives that were divided into those that fell within the applicants' requested route width and those that fell outside the requested route width. After further refinement and removal of missed duplicates, 26 alternatives fell within the requested route width and were categorized as alignment alternatives (an "alignment alternative" in this case means a suggested change in the applicants' proposed transmission centerline, such as a shift from one side of a roadway to the other, but where the line would still be located within the original route width) and 74 alternatives fell outside the requested route width and were categorized as route alternatives. Alternative routes recommended by the ATFs were also included in this review.

The task force meeting reports and scoping meeting comment reports, as well as each individual comment (letter or email) are available on the project website maintained by the Commission at: <http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=19860>.

MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED

Having reviewed the matter, consulted with OES Energy Facility Permitting staff, and in accordance with Minnesota Rule 7849.5300, I hereby make the following Scoping Decision.

The applicants' route permit application describes their route analysis and contains the information required by Minnesota Rule 7894.5220, subp. 2, as determined by the Commission. The EIS will summarize the process the applicants' used to identify, evaluate, and select the routes. The EIS will also verify and supplement information provided in the route permit application and will incorporate the information by reference as appropriate.

The EIS on the proposed Brookings to Hampton 345 kV transmission line project will address and provide information on the following matters:

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Project Description
- B. Purpose of the Transmission Line
- C. Project Location
- D. Route Description
- E. Route Width
- F. Rights-of-Way
- G. Project Cost

II. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- A. Certificate of Need
- B. Route Permit
- C. Environmental Review Process

III. ENGINEERING AND OPERATION DESIGN

- A. Transmission Line Conductors
- B. Transmission Line Structures
- C. Substations

IV. CONSTRUCTION

- A. Transmission Line and Structures
- B. Substations
- C. Property/Right-of-Way Acquisition
- D. Cleanup and Restoration
- E. Damage Compensation
- F. Maintenance
- G. Underground Options

V. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT, POTENTIAL IMPACTS, AND MITIGATIVE MEASURES

The EIS will include a discussion of the human and environmental resources potentially impacted by the project and its alternatives. Potential impacts, both positive and negative, of the proposed project and each alternative considered will be described. Based on the impacts identified, the EIS will describe mitigative measures that could reasonably be implemented to reduce or eliminate the identified impacts.

- A. Environmental Setting
- B. Socioeconomic Setting
- C. Human Settlement
 - 1. Noise
 - 2. Aesthetics
 - 3. Proximity to Structures
 - a. Homes and Farmsteads (including farming related structures such as silos, grain bins, etc.)
 - b. Businesses
 - c. Schools/Daycares
 - d. Hospitals
 - e. Cemeteries
 - 4. Displacement
 - 5. Tree Groves/Windbreaks
 - 6. Existing Utilities (pipelines, propane tanks, septic systems)
 - 7. Domestic Water Well Installation/Maintenance
- D. Public Health and Safety
 - 1. Electric and Magnetic Fields
 - 2. Implantable Medical Devices
 - 3. Stray Voltage
 - 4. Explosives/Fireworks
- E. Recreation
 - 1. Parks (city, county, state, and federal)
 - 2. Golf Courses
 - 3. Trails
- F. Transportation and Public Services
 - 1. Emergency Services
 - 2. Airports
 - 3. Highways and Roads (including scenic highways/byways and rest stops)

- G. Interference
 - 1. Radio and Television (digital and satellite)
 - 2. Internet
 - 3. Cellular Phone
 - 4. GPS-Based Agriculture Navigation Systems
- H. Archaeological and Historic Resources
- I. Zoning and Compatibility/Federal, State and Local Government Planning
- J. Land-Based Economies
 - 1. Agriculture
 - a. Prime Farmland
 - b. Organic Farms
 - c. Livestock
 - d. Aerial Crop Spraying/Dusting
 - e. Bee Keeping/Bee Colonies
 - 2. Forestry
 - 3. Mining
- K. Property Values
 - 1. Residential
 - 2. Industrial
 - 3. Agriculture
- L. Air Quality (As it pertains specifically to this transmission line project only.)
- M. Natural Resources
 - 1. Surface Water
 - a. Lakes
 - b. Surface Flows
 - 2. Groundwater
 - 3. Wetlands
 - 4. Floodplains
 - 5. State Wildlife Management Areas/Scientific Natural Areas
 - 6. National Wildlife Refuge/Waterfowl Production Areas
 - 7. Forests
- N. Flora
- O. Fauna
- P. Rare and Unique Natural Resources/Critical Habitat

VI. ALTERNATIVE ROUTES TO BE EVALUATED IN EIS

The EIS will identify and evaluate alternative routes and route segments to the proposed project. Nine of the 21 ATF identified routes and 38 of the 71 alternative routes suggest through public comment will be evaluated in the EIS and are presented below and illustrated in Figures 6 to 16.

Brown County

P-BRN-001 (Prahl) – Approximately 0.5 miles south of 280th Street on Terrance Avenue head east cross-country approximately 1 mile to 330th Avenue. Head north along 330th approximately 0.25 miles and go east cross-country 0.25 miles and then north 0.25 miles connecting with the preferred route. This alternative is intended to maximize the distance between existing homes and the transmission line.

P-BRN-002 (Prahl) – Approximately 0.5 miles south of 280th Street on Terrance Avenue head east cross-country to 325th Avenue and proceed north connecting with the preferred route. This alternative is intended to maximize the distance between existing homes and the transmission line and is a variation of P-BRN-001.

P-BRN-003 (Prahl) – Approximately 0.5 miles south of 280th Street on Terrance Avenue head east cross-country to 320th Avenue and proceed north following along 320th to where it forks and proceed north cross-country 0.5 miles north then 0.25 miles west to 420th Street connecting with the preferred route. This alternative is intended to maximize the distance between existing homes and the transmission line.

P-BRN-004 (Prahl) – Approximately 0.5 miles south of 330th Street on Terrance Avenue head east cross-country to 330th Avenue and follow 330th Avenue north for approximately 1 mile and turn east cross-country to 325th Avenue. Follow 325th Avenue north where it connects with the preferred route. This alternative is intended to maximize the distance between existing homes and the transmission line and is a variation of P-BRN-001 and P-BRN-002.

P-BRN-005 (Prahl) – Approximately 0.5 miles south of 330th Street on Terrance Avenue head east cross-country to 330 Avenue and follow 330th Avenue north for approximately 1.25 miles then go east cross-country 0.25 miles and then north 0.25 miles connecting with the preferred route. This alternative is intended to maximize the distance between existing homes and the transmission line and is a variation of P-BRN-001, P-BRN-002, and P-BRN-004.

Dakota County

P-DAK-002 (Kaufenberg) – Follow Interstate 35 north from where the preferred and alternative routes meet, crossing Interstate 35 east to 215th Street West. Proceed east along 215th Street to Hamburg Avenue and follow it north to Lakeville Boulevard. Proceed east on Lakeville Boulevard then south on Denmark Avenue to 225th Street West where it would head southeast cross-country 0.5 miles and then north-northwest 0.3 miles connecting with the preferred route. This alternative seeks to avoid existing residences on 240th Street West and reduce the amount of cross-country route.

P-DAK-004 (Rother) – Approximately 0.5 miles west of U.S. Highway 52 (Coates Boulevard) the route would head north cross-country approximately 0.25 miles then turn east for 0.5 miles to Coates Boulevard. This alternative was suggested to avoid bisecting agricultural land and instead follow property/section lines.

P-DAK-005 (Multiple) – Approximately 0.5 miles east of Blaine Avenue the route would turn north from 220th Street cross-country for approximately 0.5 miles then east 0.5 miles to Blaine Avenue. Proceed north along Blaine Avenue approximately 0.2 miles and head east cross-country for approximately 2 miles to 215th Street East and on to Coates Boulevard. This alternative seeks to avoid the Hampton Woods area, the Watt Munisotaram Buddhist Temple and residences along 220th Street East.

P-DAK-006 (Multiple) - Interstate 35 north from where the preferred and alternative routes meet, crossing Interstate 35 east to 215th Street West. Proceed east along 215th Street to Flagstaff Avenue. The route would continue east cross-country approximately 1 mile then turn south 1.5 miles, briefly running along Essex Avenue eventually turning east for 1.2 miles connecting with the preferred route. This alternative seeks to avoid existing residences on 240th Street West and reduce the amount of cross-country route.

P-DAK-007 (Mertens) – From the alternative route at Interstate 35 and 57th Street West head east cross-country approximately 3 miles to 307th Street West. Continue along 307th Street to Eveleth Avenue and east cross-country approximately 1 mile and northeast following along an existing rail line and 69 kV transmission line for approximately 7 miles to 240th Street West connecting with the preferred route. This alternative utilizes an existing 69 kV right-of-way and railroad, may impact fewer homes, and may be a more direct and shorter route.

P-DAK-009 (Lake Marion to Hampton – ATF [NW Alt 2]) – From preferred route follow Pillsbury Avenue north to 215th Street West. Head east along 215th Street to Cedar Avenue and continue east cross-country for approximately 0.5 miles then southeast 1.8 miles and again east approximately 1 mile to 220th Street West. Proceed down 220th Street to Denmark Avenue and head south along Denmark veering southeast cross-country at 225th Street West connecting with the preferred route. This alternative is a variation of P-DAK-006 which also seeks to avoid existing residences on 240th Street West and reduce the amount of cross-country route.

P-DAK-010 (Lake Marion to Hampton – ATF [Buddhist Temple]) – Approximately 0.5 miles east of Blaine Avenue the route would turn north from 220th Street cross-country for approximately 0.5 miles then east 0.5 miles to Blaine Avenue and continue east cross-country for approximately 2 miles to 215th Street East and on to U.S. Highway 52 (Coates Boulevard). This alternative is a variation of P-DAK-005 and also seeks to avoid the Hampton Woods area, the Watt Munisotaram Buddhist Temple and residences along 220th Street East.

A-DAK-002 (Lake Marion to Hampton – ATF [NE Alt 3 “right-angle” and NW Alt 1C]) – From Northfield Boulevard east along County Highway (CH) 86 (280th Street East) then north on Fischer Avenue to U.S. Highway 52. Route continues north cross-country terminating just north of Northfield Boulevard. This alternative seeks to avoid the city of Hampton and reduce number of potentially impacted homes.

A-DAK-003 (Lake Marion to Hampton – ATF [NE Alt 3 “diagonal”]) – Travel east from alternate route at Hampton Boulevard/240th Street East to U.S. Highway 52. Head north on U.S. Highway 52 to CH 47 (Northfield Boulevard) continuing northeast along CH 47 approximately 0.75 miles and terminating. This alternative seeks to avoid the city of Hampton and reduce number of potentially impacted homes.

A-DAK-004 (Gerber) – From just north of Lewiston Boulevard head northeast cross-country 240th Street East. Head north from 240th Street East cross-country to CH 47 (Northfield Boulevard). This alternative seeks to avoid the city of Hampton.

A-DAK-005 (Kaufenberg) – From Interstate 35 head east along 280th Street E/W connecting with alternative route at CH 47 (Northfield Boulevard). This alternative may utilize more existing roads and reduce approximately 6 miles of cross-country route bisecting agricultural land.

Le Sueur County

P-LES-002 (Binczik) - From 320th Street proceed north along 241st to Street 302nd Street and turn east following 302nd to CH 32 and connecting with the preferred route. This alternative seeks to reduce transmission line proliferation in the area (other lines exist) and would follow along existing roads.

A-LES-001 (Schmidt) – Connect with alternative route approximately 0.5 miles north of 310th Street and proceed east cross-country to Le Sueur Avenue. Follow Le Sueur Avenue south to 70th Street West connecting with the alternative route. This alternative may reduce the impacts to homes within 300 feet of the transmission centerline from 6 homes to 1 home.

A-LES-002 (Hoy) – Follow 210th Street north from the intersection of 300th Street and 210th Street. At approximately 0.75 miles turn east cross-country for approximately 0.75 miles and turn southeast connecting with alternative at 300th Street. The alternative seeks to avoid residence/daycare on 300th Street.

B-LES-001 (ATF – Henderson [NE Alt 2]) - From preferred route head north along 265th Avenue, west on CH 28, north on 271st Avenue to West 280th Street. Proceed east on 280th to German Road and head north on German Road for approximately 1 mile then continuing cross-country 1.3 miles reconnecting with German Road and ultimately the alternative route. This alternative appears to utilize more existing right-way and seeks to avoid existing residences, and an airfield.

B-LES-002 (ATF – Henderson [NE Alt 5]) – From the alternative route on CH 28 near Township Highway 30 head northeast following along existing 345 kV transmission line to West 270th Street connecting with the preferred route. This alternative may reduce transmission line proliferation by utilizing an existing 345 kV transmission line right-of-way.

B-LES-005 (Meyer) – From the preferred route follow U.S. Highway 169 northeast from just south of Dopyy Lane to German Road connecting with the alternative route. This alternative seeks to utilize U.S. Highway 169 as a route connecting the preferred to the alternative reducing some of the need for new right-of-way and impacts to homes.

B-LES-006 (Multiple) - From the preferred route on 320th Street head north on 265th Avenue for 1 mile to CH 28. Head west on CH 28, north on 271st Avenue, east on West 280th Street, and north on German Road ultimately connecting to the alternate route. A variation of B-LES-001, B-LES-003, and B-LES-004.

B-LES-007 (Davis) - Follow preferred route from river crossing to CH 32 and head north to County Road (CR) 157. Proceed east on CR 157 and north on CR 121 connecting with alternate route. Proposed by the Scott County Board. This alternative may avoid conflicts with the preferred route along CH 2 as identified in the Scott County 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update, such as future public right-of-way expansion.

B-LES-008 (ATF – Henderson [NE Alt 4]) – From the preferred at 221st Avenue head east along CH 28 to 141st Avenue connecting with the alternative route. This alternative follows a county road/established right-of-way and may avoid impacts to dairy farms, day cares, and wetlands, and may also reduce the amount of route that goes cross-country.

B-LES-009 (Anonymous) – From preferred route follow CH 32 (Hickory Boulevard) north to approximately 0.5 miles north of West 280th Street and continue north cross-country to West 260th Street. Turn east continuing cross-country for approximately 4 miles connecting with the preferred route at West 260th Street. This alternative seeks to reduce potential impacts to homes and avoid a pyrotechnics plant.

B-LES-011 (Anonymous) – Approximately 0.25 miles north of 302nd Street head east cross-country from CH 32 for approximately 1 mile connecting with the alternative route at 300th Street. Follow 300th Street to 181st Avenue and turn north following 181st north connecting with the preferred at West 260th Street. This alternative may follow more existing roads than the segment it is meant to replace.

Lincoln County

P-LNC-001 (Sterzinger) - From CR 134 go north on CH 8. Then east cross-country to 340th Street continue east cross-country to Lyon Lincoln Road. This alternative appears to follow more existing roads and would impact a similar number of homes when compared to the segment it is meant to replace.

Lyon County

P-LYN-001 (Grandview Township) - From 330th proceed north along CR 8. At 340th Street head east cross-country for approximately 1 mile to 340th Street following 340th to Lyon Lincoln Road and continue east cross-country connecting to the preferred route at 340th Street. This alternative seeks to reduce potential impacts to homes.

A-LYN-001 (Prins) – From alternative route proceed south on CH 9 to 240th Street. Head east on 240th Street to 310th Avenue and head north on 310th connecting with the alternative route. This alternative avoids bisecting agriculture property and appears to follow an existing road.

A-LYN-002 (Maeyaert) – Head north on 170th Avenue from the intersection of 260th Street and 170th. Continue on 170th Avenue to CH 19. Proceed east on CH 19 for approximately 3.5 miles turning south cross-country for approximately 1.5 miles then east for approximately 1.25 miles and east-southeast approximately 0.75 miles crossing CH 23, finally turning south and connecting with the alternative route. This alternative appears to follow section lines where the alternative does not and provides an alternative Redwood River crossing and avoids a golf course and residential area. This alternative segment was originally looked at by the applicants.

A-LYN-003 (City of Lynd) – Same as Alternative A-LYN-002 except after crossing CH 23 the route would continue in an east-southeast direction to 320th Avenue and follow 320th south connecting with the alternative route. The alternative may avoid new future residential developments north of the city of Lind, and encroachment of Savannah Oaks Golf Course. The alternate is also outside Lind city limits and may avoid disturbing a heavily wooded area near the Redwood River.

B-LYN-001 (Multiple) – From the preferred route follow State Highway 23 north. This alternative may minimize impacts to agriculture land, potentially impact fewer homes, and would follow existing State Highway 23 to Granite Falls.

Redwood County

P-RDW-001 (Zwaschka) – From 290th Street at Crown Avenue head south cross-country to State Highway 19. Proceed east along State Highway 19 connecting with the preferred route at Dayton Avenue. This alternative seeks to avoid residences.

A-RDW-001 (Prins) – Route would turn east from CH 7 approximately ¼ mile north of 350th Street and head cross-country for approximately 0.5 miles and turn north connecting with the alternative route. This alternative may avoid bisecting agricultural property owned by one entity by moving to a shared property line.

Renville County

P-RVL-001 (Multiple) - From the preferred route at 420th Street follow 640th Avenue east (road changes to 300th Street) continue east to 571st Avenue connecting with the preferred route. This alternative was initially evaluated by the applicants and may reduce the length of the route by approximately 4 miles impacting a similar amount of homes as the segment it is meant to replace.

P-RVL-003 (Hoffbeck) - From 420th Street follow State Highway 19 east to 460th Street where the route would head north cross-country to 660th Avenue connecting with the preferred route. The alternative seeks to reduce transmission line proliferation in the area (other lines exist) and appears to follow along existing roads and railroad.

Rice County

A-RIC-001 (Lake Marion to Hampton – ATF [NE Alt 2]) – From alternative route at 141st Avenue continue cross-country approximately 1.5 miles to Leaf Trail. Follow Leaf Trail southeast to 60th Street West. Take 60th east to CH 19 connecting to the alternative route. This alternative may reduce impacts to homes and avoid future growth of the city of Lonsdale.

A-RIC-003 (Sirek) - From 57th Street West continue north along Elmore Avenue to 50th Street West. At 50th Street turn east cross-country to Interstate 35 connecting with the alternative route. This alternative is intended to avoid homes along 57th Street West.

Scott County

P-SCT-001 (Zweber) – From the preferred route at Jonquil Avenue follow East 250th Street east to Texas Avenue. Follow Texas Avenue north connecting with the preferred route. This alternative may avoid bisecting agricultural land and follow existing roads in its entirety.

P-SCT-002 (Multiple) - From West 270th Street and Aberdeen Avenue head east cross-country approximately 1 mile to Delmar Avenue and proceed north along Delmar to West 260th Street connecting with the preferred route. This alternative may reduce potential impacts to homes on Aberdeen Avenue and West 260th Street.

P-SCT-003 (Lake Marion to Hampton – ATF [NW Alt 3]) – From the preferred route at 245th Street East and Pillsbury Avenue head east along 245th Avenue to Dodd Boulevard connecting with the preferred route. This alternative may impact fewer homes, appears to follow existing roads, reduce cross-country routing, and may be shorter and more direct than the segment it is meant to replace.

P-SCT-007 (Johnson) - From the preferred route at Jonquil Ave and East 260th Street head east along 260th (CH 2) through Elko New Market to Interstate 35. This alternative would utilize an existing county highway and may be a shorter and more direct route.

Sibley County

P-SIB-001 (Kahle) - From the preferred route at CH 13 head east cross-country 3 miles to CH 9. Head north on CH 9 to 310th Street and go east to 391st Avenue and continue east 0.5 miles, south 0.25 miles, then east 1 mile to 375th Lane and head south to 316th Street connecting with the preferred route. This alternative is similar to applicants route segment, and appears to potentially impact fewer homes.

P-SIB-002 (Multiple) - From the preferred route at 324th Street head south cross-country 0.75 miles to U.S. Highway 169. Go east on U.S. Highway 169 across the Minnesota River and rejoin the preferred just east of the river. This alternative seeks to utilize existing Minnesota River crossing (U.S. Highway 169).

P-SIB-003 (Hildebrandt) - From the preferred route head south along State Highway 22 turning east on 320th Street and following 320th to CH 13 connecting with the preferred route. This alternative may avoid bisecting agricultural land and appears to follow existing roads.

Yellow Medicine County

B-YEL-001 (Multiple) – From the preferred route at 520th Street, take the alternative route north along State Highway 23. This route alternative appears to utilize State Highway 23 to connect the applicants' preferred route to their alternative route.

VII. REJECTED ALTERNATIVE ROUTES

Twelve of the alternative routes suggested by the ATFs (NW Alternative 1A, NW Alternative 1B, NW Alternative 3, SE Alternative 2, SE Alternative 3, SW Alternative 2, SW Alternative 5, I-90 to I-35, I-29 to I94, I-90 to U.S. 52, I-90 to MN 56, and U.S. 14 to I-90, as delineated in the ATF reports) and 33 of the alternative routes suggested through public comment will be described in the EIS, but will not be considered for further study or evaluation in the EIS. The route segments were rejected as they either did not meet the stated need of the project as defined in the Certificate of Need (CapX 345 kV Transmission Projects, Docket No. ET-2, E-002, et al./CN-06-1115), had more impacts relative to the criteria used by the Commission in route permit determinations as defined in Minnesota Statue 216E.03, subd. 7., or were incomplete in their description and/or depiction.

The following seven rejected routes are not described in the list below and were rejected because they specifically did not meet the stated need of the project as defined in the Certificate of Need (CapX 345 kV Transmission Projects, Docket No. ET-2, E-002, et al./CN-06-1115): SE Alternative 2, SE Alternative 3, I-90 to I-35, I-29 to I94, I-90 to U.S. 52, I-90 to MN 56, and U.S. 14 to I-90.

Brown County

P-BRN-006 (Prah) – From the preferred route head south from Terrance Avenue to 260th Street and go west along 260th to 320th Avenue proceed north following along 320th and terminates. This was an incomplete route alternative.

Dakota County

P-DAK-001 (Multiple) – Connect with preferred route at Pillsbury Avenue and 245th Street East and head east along 245th for approximately 0.3 miles before turning southeast and cross-country one-tenth mile then east 0.5 miles and northeast approximately 0.75 miles then turning east-northeast along the east side of Dodd Boulevard connecting with the preferred route at 240th Street West. This alternative heads cross-country bisecting properties in a diagonal fashion. This alternative has more impacts relative to the criteria considered by the Commission in route permit decisions than the route segment it is attempting to replace.

P-DAK-003 (Braun) – From north of 240th Street at preferred route head east cross-country to Audrey Street and terminate. This alternative heads cross country bisecting properties in a diagonal fashion and would impact a large wetland complex. This was an incomplete route alternative.

P-DAK-008 (Braun) – Approximately 0.9 miles north of 240th Street West, head east cross-country and along 307th Street West from the preferred route for approximately 1.8 miles to Biscayne Avenue West and follow Biscayne north to 230th Street West connecting with the preferred route. This alternative would run cross-country not following section or property lines bisecting properties and would also run through a fairly large wooded area. This alternative has more impacts relative to the criteria considered by the Commission in route permit decisions than the route segment it is attempting to replace.

A-DAK-001 (Lake Marion to Hampton – ATF [NW Alt 1A]) – From Interstate 35 head east cross-country to CR 90 (307th Street). Continue east on 307th Street to an existing 69 kV line and follow line northeast connecting with alternate route near Danbury Avenue. This alternative would run cross-country not following section or property lines bisecting properties. The alternative has more impacts relative to the criteria considered by the Commission in route permit decisions than the route segment it is attempting to replace.

B-DAK-001 (Mertens) – From 220th Street East approximately 0.6 miles east of Collier Court head south cross-country approximately 5.5 miles then east 3.5 miles to Fischer Avenue, follow Fischer north to U.S. Highway 52. From U.S. Highway 52 head north cross-country approximately 4 miles to termination. This alternative does not meet the stated need of the project as defined in the Certificate of Need.

Le Sueur County

P-LES-001 (ATF – Henderson [SW Alt 5]) – From preferred route east of 320th Street follow State Highway 28 northeast to CR 155 and take CR 155 southeast to 320th Street connecting with the preferred route. No reason provided as to why this alternative should be included in scope. This alternative has more impacts relative to the criteria considered by the Commission in route permit decisions than the route segment it is attempting to replace.

B-LES-010 (Malecha) – From preferred route, continue east along CH 28 (320th Street) to CH 31 and turn south continuing cross-country to State Highway 99. Proceed east on State Highway 99 to CR 137 and follow CR 137 north to CH 28, connecting with the alternative route. This alternative adds considerable length to project, impacts more homes, and impacts more wetlands than the segment that it is attempting to replace.

Lyon County

P-LYN-002 (Markell) – From 340th Street follow 190th Avenue north turning east and following 350th Street to 220th Avenue. Continue east cross-country approximately 1.5 miles re-connecting with 350th Street and continuing to 265th Street. The route continues east cross-country for another 0.5 miles re-connecting with 350th Street finally connecting to the preferred route. This alternative would negatively impact windbreaks/tree groves, would impact just as many homes, and would span a large wetland complex. This alternative has more negative impacts than the route segment it is intended to replace.

P-LYN-003 (Engels) – Just northwest of 340th Street head southeast along State Highway 68 turning south at 190th Avenue following 190th to 310th Street. Follow 310th Street east with a couple of 0.5 miles sections of cross-country to 280th Avenue connecting to the preferred route. No reason provided as to why this alternative should be included in scope. This alternative would run cross-country not following section or property lines and bisecting properties, includes more cross-country routing, impacts windbreaks/tree groves, and more impacts to homes. This alternative has more impacts relative to the criteria considered by the Commission in route permit decisions than the route segment it is attempting to replace.

P-LYN-004 (Markell) – From preferred route at 340th Street head north on 180th Avenue and east along 350th Street terminating at CH 23. This alternative would run through a large wetland complex and is incomplete in its description and depiction.

P-LYN-005 (Markell) - From approximately 0.2 miles west of State Highway 68 proceed south cross-country approximately 0.9 miles to 170th Avenue and south to 320th Street. Proceed east along 320th Street crossing State Highway 68 and heading 0.5 miles through the north portion of the city of Ghent to 280th Avenue connecting with the preferred route. A slight variation of P-LYN-002.

P-LYN-006 (Grandview Township) - From 330th Street follow Lyon Lincoln County Road south following an existing 69 kV line. At approximately 1.5 miles proceed east approximately 5 miles cross-country to 160th Avenue and head south to 300th Street and head east on 300th finally connecting with the preferred route at 280th Avenue. This alternative would run cross-country not following section or property lines bisecting properties. The alternative has more impacts relative to the criteria considered by the Commission in route permit decisions than the route segment it is attempting to replace.

Nicollet County

P-NCL-001 (Multiple) – From preferred route continue east from 340th Street heading cross-country through Minnesota River Valley for approximately 4.25 miles connecting again at 340th Street and following the road east approximately 15 miles with numerous cross-country segments including crossing over Clear Lake finally meeting up with 571st Avenue and heading north connecting with preferred route. A large majority of this alternate route runs cross-country and bisects a number of properties and would cross over Clear Lake (a public water). The alternative has more impacts relative to the criteria considered by the Commission in route permit decisions than the route segment it is attempting to replace.

Renville County

P-RVL-002 (Forst) - From 420th Street follow 630th Avenue east to 430th Street and continue east cross-country 2 miles connecting with 630th again and head east (1 mile cross-country between 465th Street and CH 4). At 520th Street turn north and follow to 300th Street and head east to 651st Avenue. Follow 651st south approximately 1 mile and head east cross-country for 1.75 miles to 310th Street, following 310th east to 611th Avenue where route again heads cross-country 4 miles connecting to the preferred route. This alternative adds more length of cross-country routing that would bisect single-owner agricultural land. This alternative has more impacts relative to the criteria considered by the Commission in route permit decisions than the route segment it is attempting to replace.

Rice County

A-RIC-004 (Jones) – Connects to alternate route at Interstate 35 just south of 45th Street West and heads north cross-country approximately 3 miles to 270th East Street where it terminates. A large majority of this alternative route runs cross-country and bisects a number of properties. The alternative has more impacts relative to the criteria considered by the Commission in route permit decisions than the route segment it is attempting to replace. The alternative was also incomplete in its description and depiction.

A-RIC-005 (Malz) – From 141st Avenue head northeast cross-country to CH 6 (45th Street West). Follow CH 6 to the point where the road veers south (Kannebec Avenue) and continue east cross-country approximately 3 miles to CR 96 (Halstad Avenue) and follow Halstad south connecting to the alternative route. A large majority of the alternate route runs cross-country and bi-sects a number of properties. This alternative has more impacts relative to the criteria considered by the Commission in route permit decisions than the route segment it is attempting to replace.

Scott County

P-SCT-004 (ATF – Henderson [NW Alt 3]) - From West 270th Street and Aberdeen Avenue head northeast cross-country approximately 1.1 mile to Delmar Avenue and proceed north along Delmar to West 260th Street connecting with the preferred route. This alternative heads cross-country bisecting properties in a diagonal fashion. This alternative has more impacts relative to the criteria considered by the Commission in route permit decisions than the route segment it is attempting to replace.

P-SCT-005 (Nytes) – At a point on West 270th Street approximately 0.3 miles west of Aberdeen head southeast cross-country 0.1 mile, east 0.25 miles, northeast 0.25 miles, then east 0.75 miles to Delmar Avenue. Head north along Delmar connecting with the preferred route at West 260th Street. A slight variation of P-SCT-004.

P-SCT-006 (Nytes) - At a point on West 270th Street approximately 0.3 miles west of Aberdeen head southeast cross-country 0.1 mile, east 0.25 miles, northeast 0.25 miles, then east 0.75 miles to West 270th Street. Follow 270th east to Naylor Avenue and go northeast cross country approximately 0.25 miles then head north approximately 0.9 miles to West 260th Street connecting with the preferred route. A slight variation of P-SCT-004 and P-SCT-005.

P-SCT-008 (Lake Marion to Hampton – ATF [SW Alt 2]) - From CH 2 (East 260th Street) go north on Langford Avenue approximately 4 miles then go east on CH 8 (220th Street East) for approximately 10 miles. Continue east on CH 70 to Interstate 35 and continue south along Interstate 35 connecting with the preferred and alternative route. This alternative would impact many more homes/properties, add considerable length to route, cross or come very near many Minnesota Department of Natural Resources public waters. This alternative has more impacts relative to the criteria considered by the Commission in route permit decisions than the route segment it is attempting to replace.

A-SCT-001 (Lake Marion to Hampton – ATF [NW Alt 1B]) - Follow existing 115 kV transmission line north from 57th Street West connecting with the proposed/alternative route just north of 245th Street East. This alternative route would have the lake Marion substation moved south. This alternative does not meet the stated need of the project as defined in the Certificate of Need.

B-SCT-001 (Multiple) – Approximately 0.3 miles north of West 263rd Avenue on Fabor Avenue from the alternate route head east cross-country 3 miles connecting with the preferred route at West 260th Street. A large majority of this alternate route runs cross-country and bisects a number of properties. This alternative has more impacts relative to the criteria considered by the Commission in route permit decisions than the route segment it is attempting to replace.

Yellow Medicine County

B-YEL-002 (West) - From the alternate route at 290th Avenue to State Highway 23 then north along Highway 23 to 200th Avenue. This was an incomplete route alternative.

VIII. ALIGNMENT ALTERNATIVES

The EIS will evaluate a total of 26 alignment alternatives suggested in comments. These are alternatives that fell within the applicants' requested route widths and generally entail site specific concerns such as building on one side of the road or the other, avoiding tree groves, and avoiding recreational areas or environmentally sensitive areas.

IX. REQUIRED PERMITS AND APPROVALS

The EIS will include a list of permits that will be required for the project.

X. ISSUES OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THE EIS

The following issues will not be considered or evaluated in the EIS:

1. Any route or substation alternatives not specifically identified in this scoping decision
2. Questions of need, including size, type, and timing; questions of alternative system configurations; or questions of voltage.
3. The no-build option regarding the high voltage transmission line.
4. The impacts of specific energy sources, such as carbon outputs from coal-generated facilities.
5. Policy issues surrounding whether utilities or local-government should be liable for the cost to relocate utility poles when roadways are widened.
6. The manner in which land owners are paid for transmission rights of way easements, as that is outside the jurisdiction of Public Utilities Commission.

XI. SCHEDULE

Following is the anticipated schedule:

October 2009 – Draft EIS available.

October and November 2009 – Draft EIS public meetings.

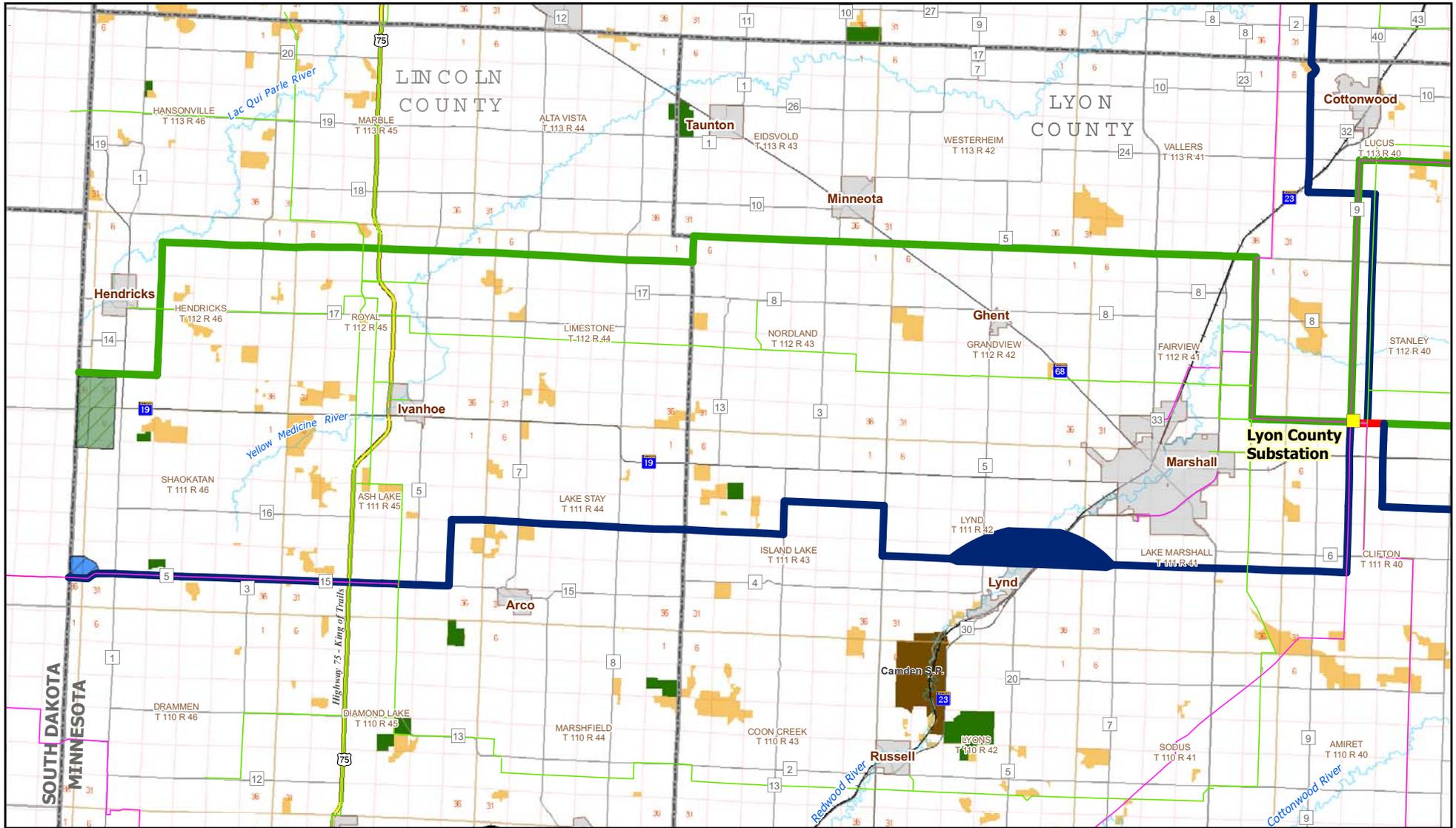
January 2010 – Final EIS available.

Signed this 30 day of June, 2009

STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
OFFICE OF ENERGY SECURITY



William Glahn, Director



- Project Substations
- Preferred Substation Area
- Alternate Substation Area
- City
- ~ Scenic Byway

- Transmission Lines**
- 69 kV - Existing
 - 115 kV - Existing
 - 230 kV - Existing
 - 345 kV - Existing

- Routes**
- Preferred
 - Alternate
 - Both Preferred & Alternate

- Tribal Lands
- MN SNA
- MN WMA
- USFWS WPA

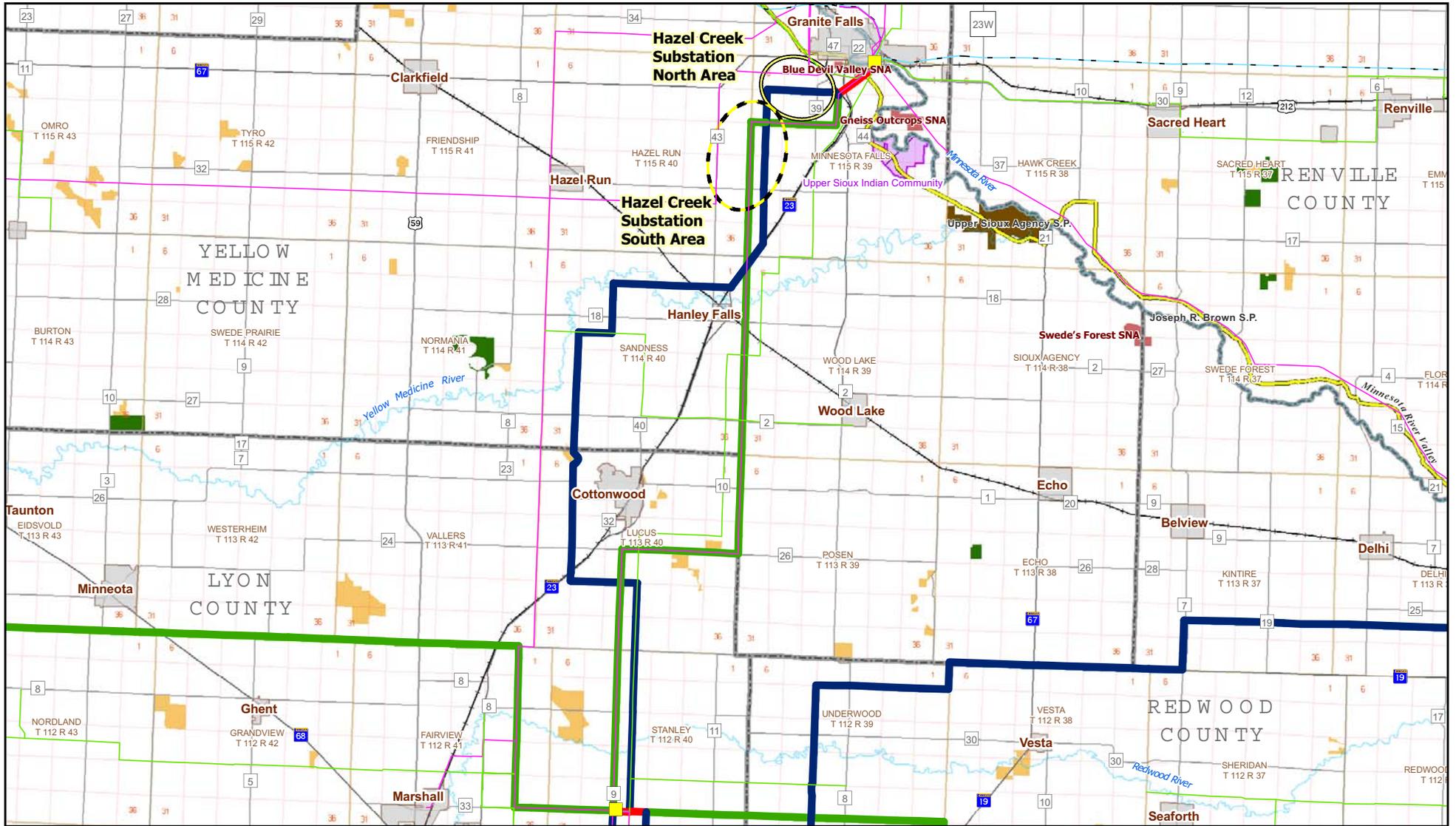
- Alternate Route Segments at Minnesota/South Dakota Border Crossing Area**
- Preferred Route
 - Alternate Route



Figure 1 - Overview Map

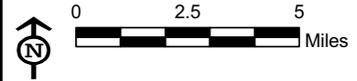
Brookings - Hampton
345 kV Transmission Line
Docket ET2/TL-08-1474

Source: Great River Energy and Northern States Power. Application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for a Route Permit for the Brookings County - Hampton 345 kV Transmission Line Project. Docket ET2/TL-08-1474. December 29, 2008



- | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| Project Substations | Transmission Lines | Routes | Tribal Lands |
| Preferred Substation Area | 69 kV - Existing | Preferred | MN SNA |
| Alternate Substation Area | 115 kV - Existing | Alternate | MN WMA |
| City | 230 kV - Existing | Both Preferred & Alternate | USFWS WPA |
| Scenic Byway | 345 kV - Existing | | |

Figure 2 - Overview Map



Brookings - Hampton
345 kV Transmission Line
Docket ET2/TL-08-1474

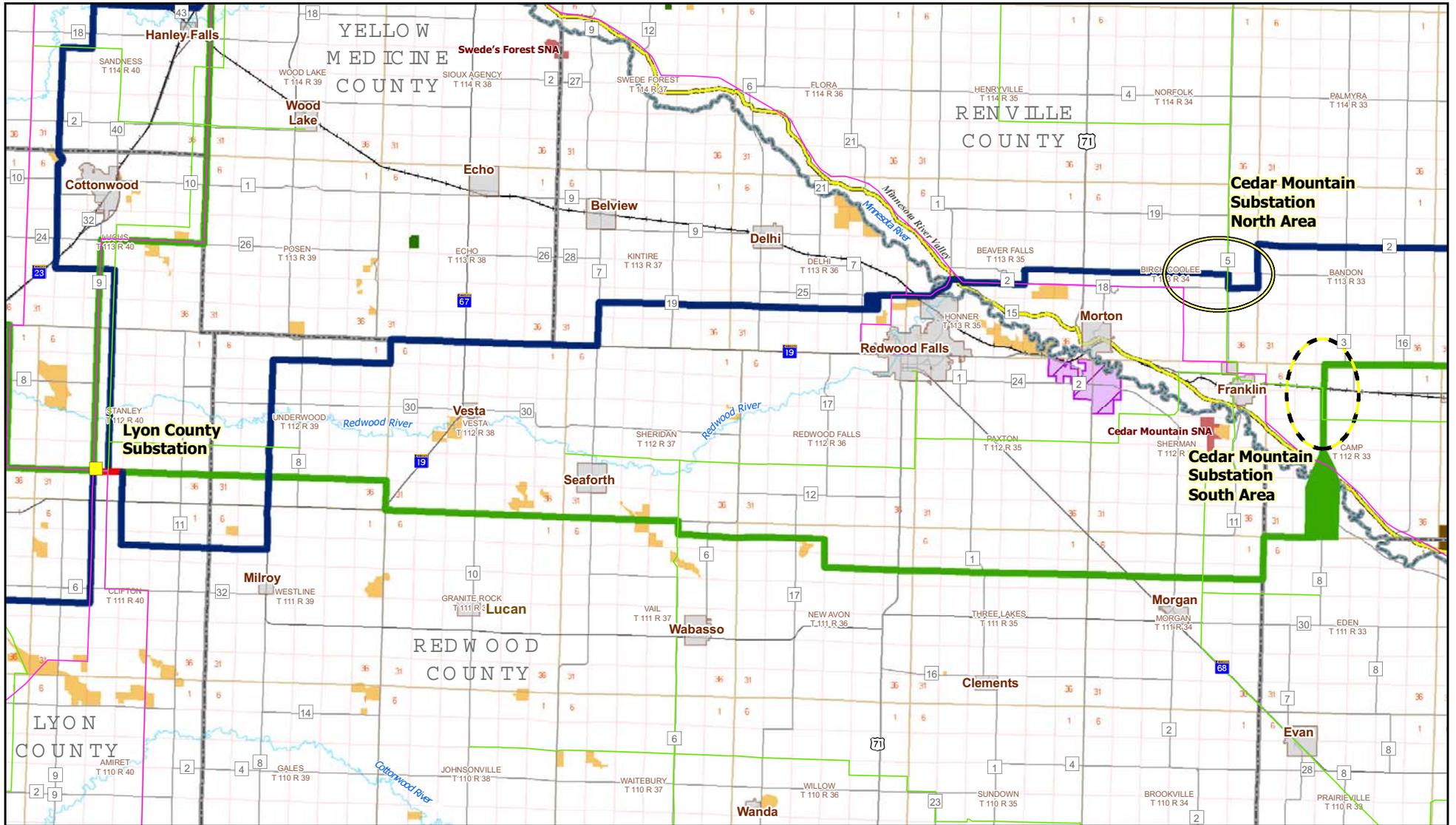
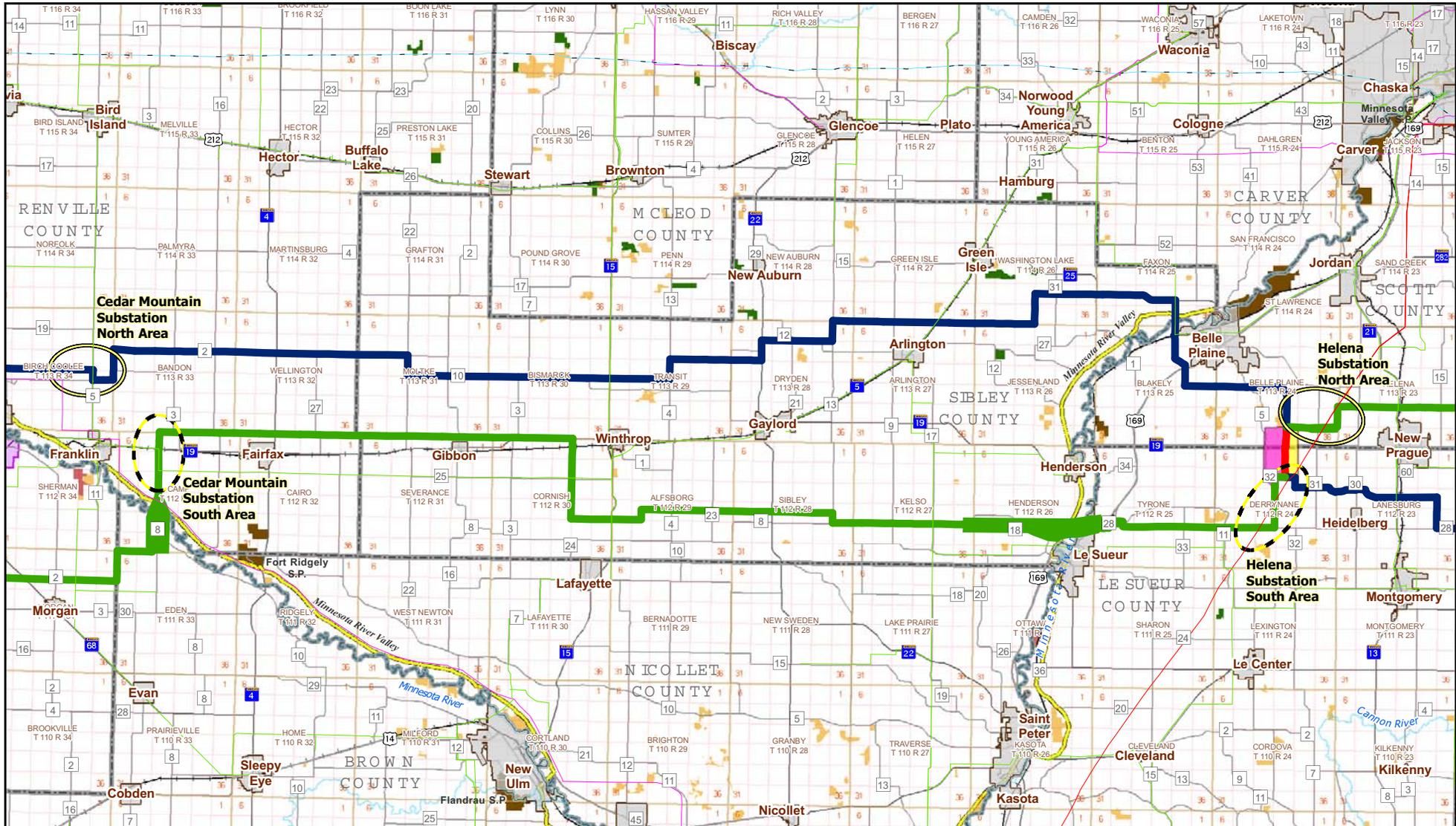


Figure 3 - Overview Map

	Project Substations	69 kV - Existing	Preferred	Tribal Lands
	Preferred Substation Area	115 kV - Existing	Alternate	MN WMA
	Alternate Substation Area	230 kV - Existing	Both Preferred & Alternate	MN State Park
	City	345 kV - Existing		MN SNA
	Scenic Byway			USFWS WPA

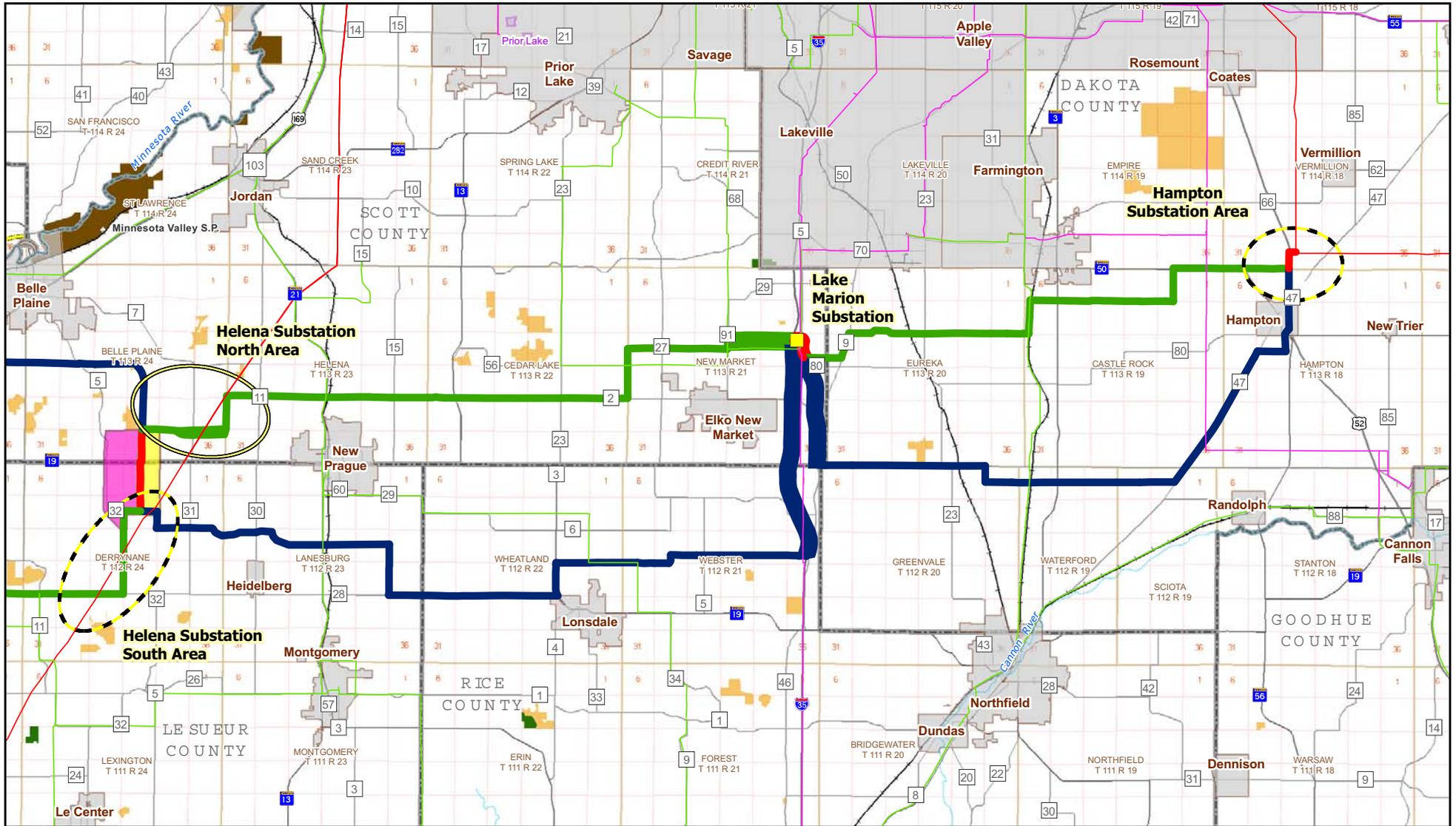
Brookings - Hampton
345 kV Transmission Line
Docket ET2/TL-08-1474

Source: Great River Energy and Northern States Power. Application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for a Route Permit for the Brookings County - Hampton 345 kV Transmission Line Project. Docket ET2/TL-08-1474. December 29, 2008



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Substations Preferred Substation Area Alternate Substation Area City Scenic Byway 	<p>Transmission Lines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 69 kV - Existing 115 kV - Existing 230 kV - Existing 345 kV - Existing 	<p>Routes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preferred Alternate Both Preferred & Alternate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tribal Lands MN WMA MN State Park MN SNA USFWS WPA 	<p>Alternate Route Segments in the Belle Plaine Area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> West Route East Route 	<p>Figure 4 - Overview Map</p> <p>Brookings - Hampton 345 kV Transmission Line Docket ET2/TL-08-1474</p>
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Source: Great River Energy and Northern States Power. Application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for a Route Permit for the Brookings County - Hampton 345 kV Transmission Line Project. Docket ET2/TL-08-1474. December 29, 2008



- | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|--|
| Project Substations | Transmission Lines | Routes | Tribal Lands | Alternate Route Segments in the Belle Plaine Area |
| Preferred Substation Area | 69 kV - Existing | Preferred | MN SNA | West Route |
| Alternate Substation Area | 115 kV - Existing | Alternate | MN State Park | East Route |
| City | 230 kV - Existing | Both Preferred & Alternate | MN WMA | |
| Scenic Byway | 345 kV - Existing | | USFWS WPA | |

Figure 5 - Overview Map

Brookings - Hampton
345 kV Transmission Line
Docket ET2/TL-08-1474

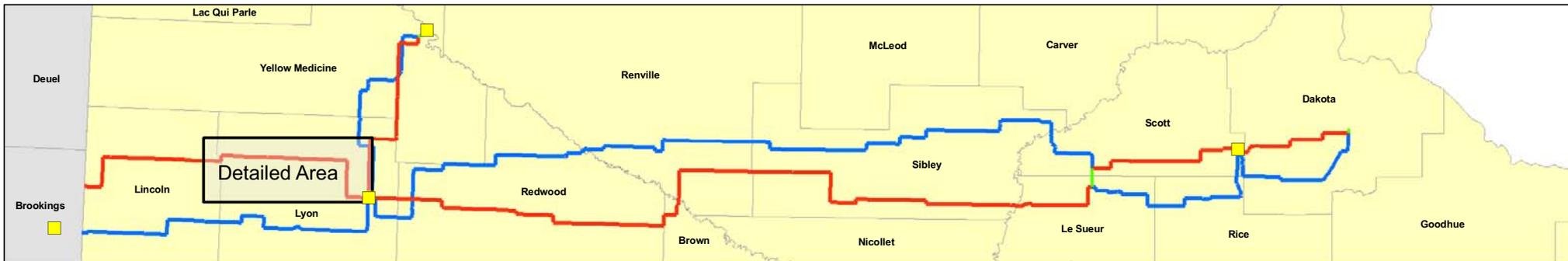
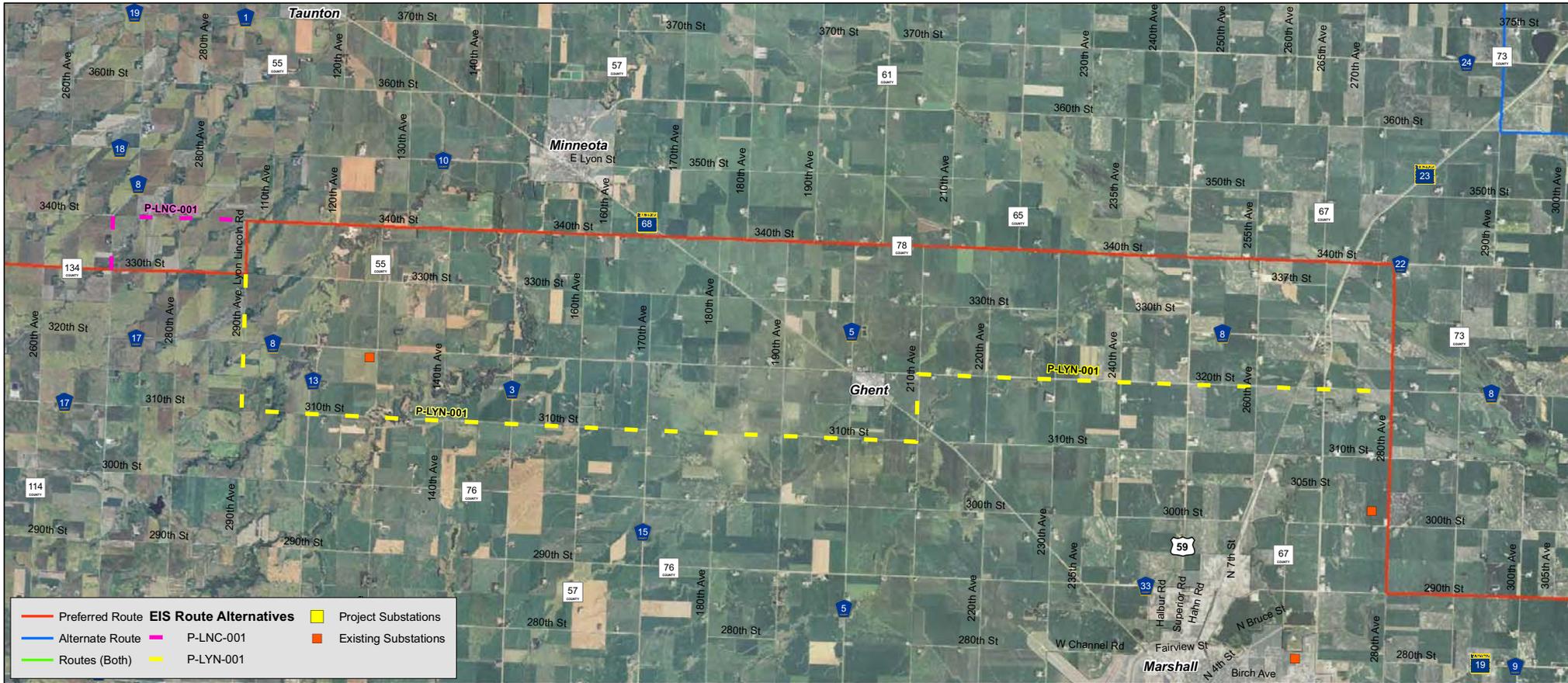
Source: Great River Energy and Northern States Power. Application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for a Route Permit for the Brookings County - Hampton 345 kV Transmission Line Project. Docket ET2/TL-08-1474. December 29, 2008

0 0.5 1 2 Miles



Route Alternatives: P-LNC-001, P-LYN-001
Brookings County to Hampton - 345kV Transmission Line

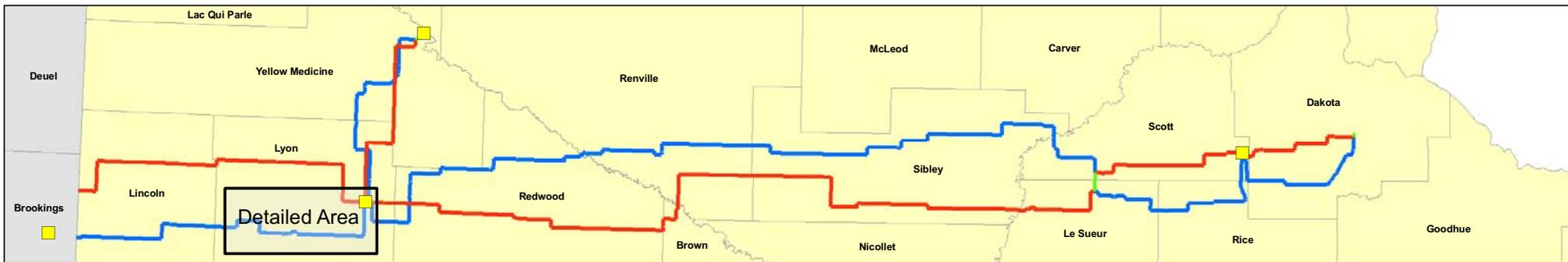
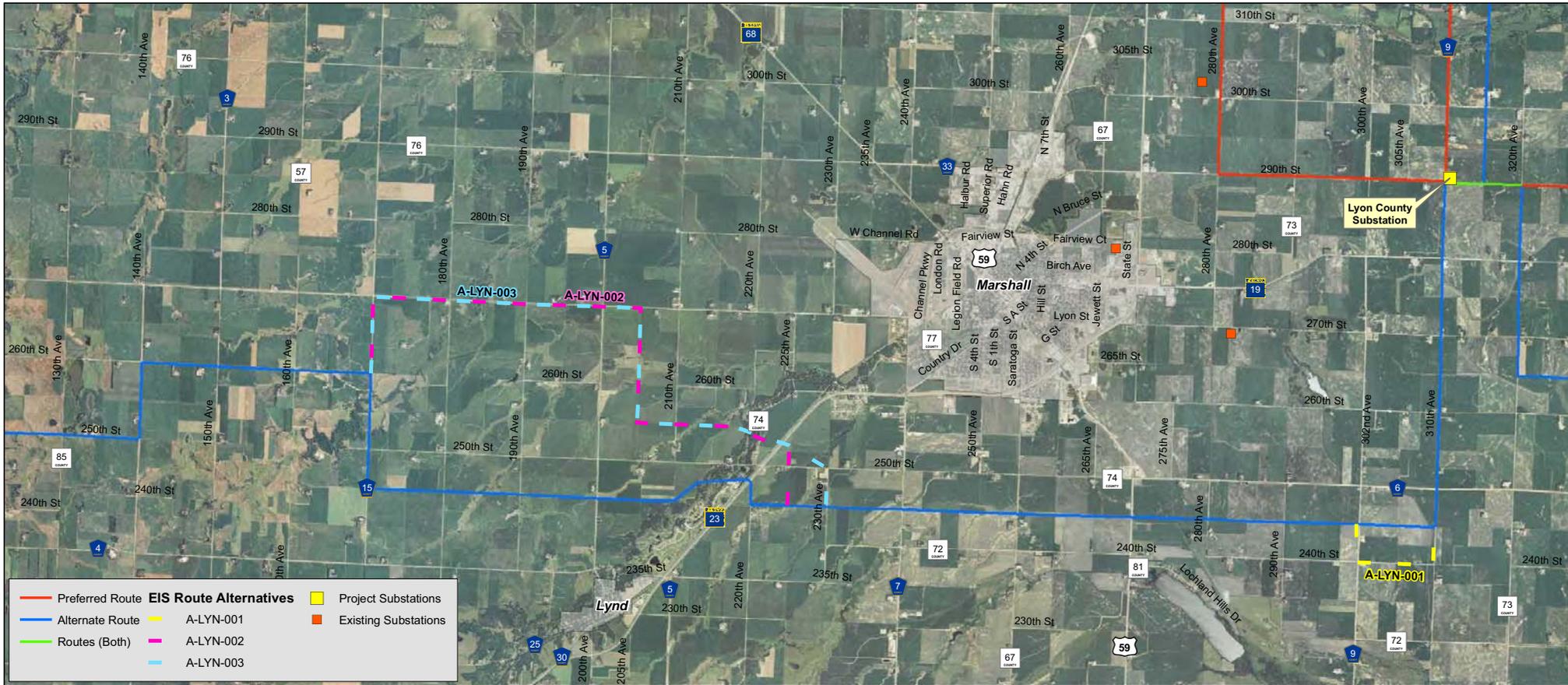
Figure 6





Route Alternatives: A-LYN-001, A-LYN-002, A-LYN-003
Brookings County to Hampton - 345kV Transmission Line

Figure 7

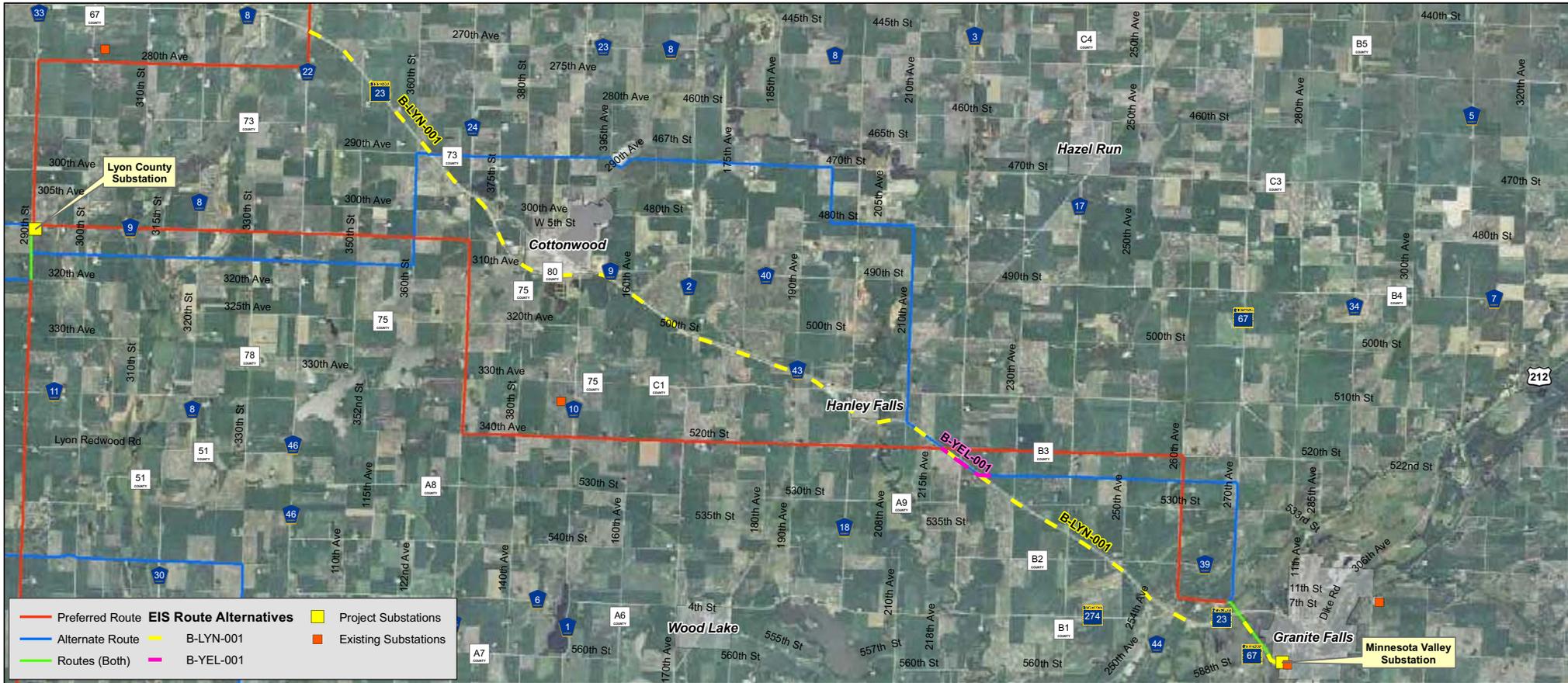


0 0.5 1 2 Miles



Route Alternatives: B-LYN-001, B-YEL-001
Brookings County to Hampton - 345kV Transmission Line

Figure 8

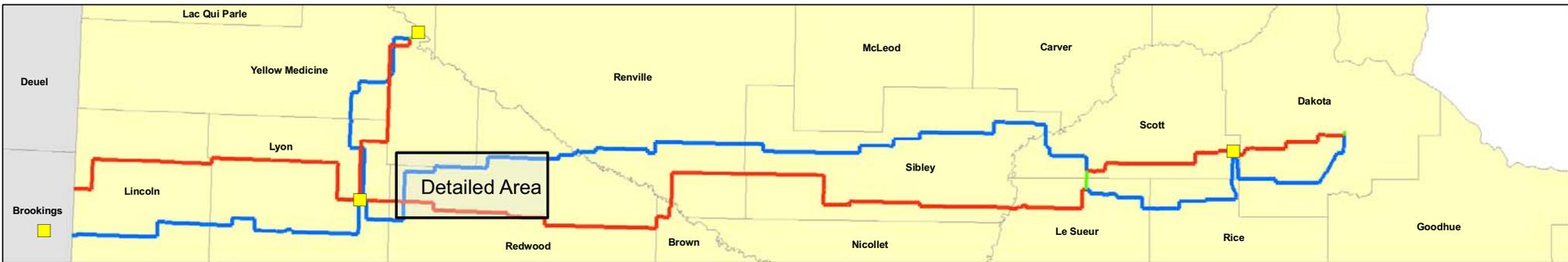
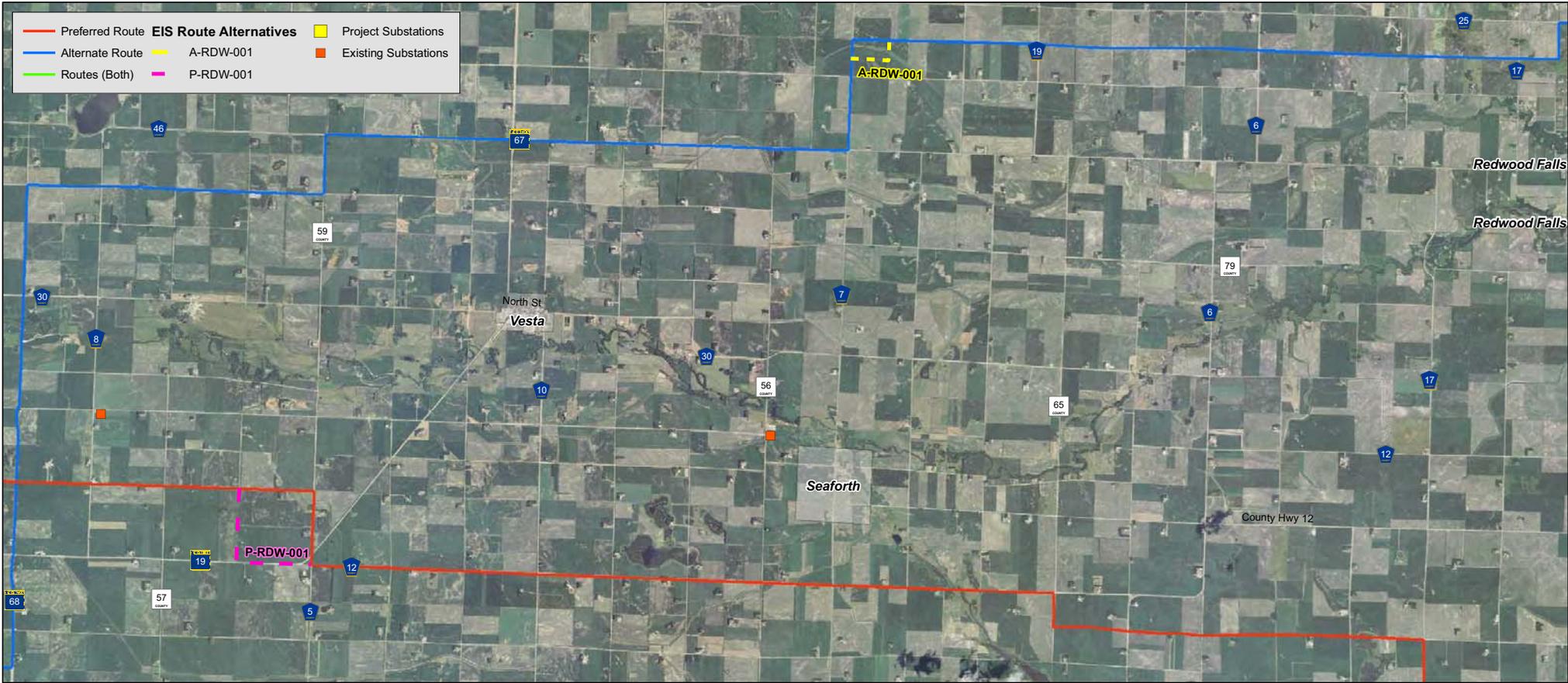


0 0.5 1 2 Miles



Route Alternatives: A-RDW-001, P-RDW-001
Brookings County to Hampton - 345kV Transmission Line

Figure 9

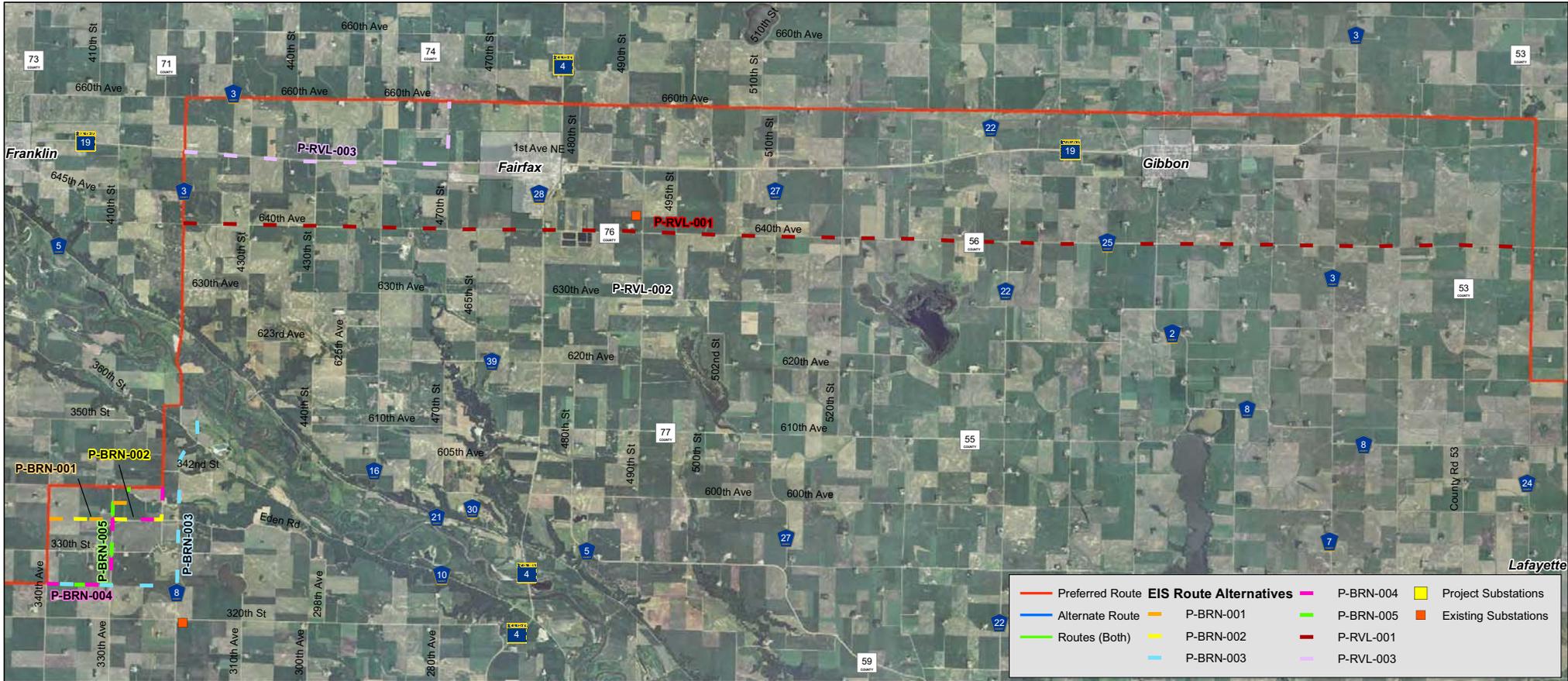


0 0.5 1 2 Miles

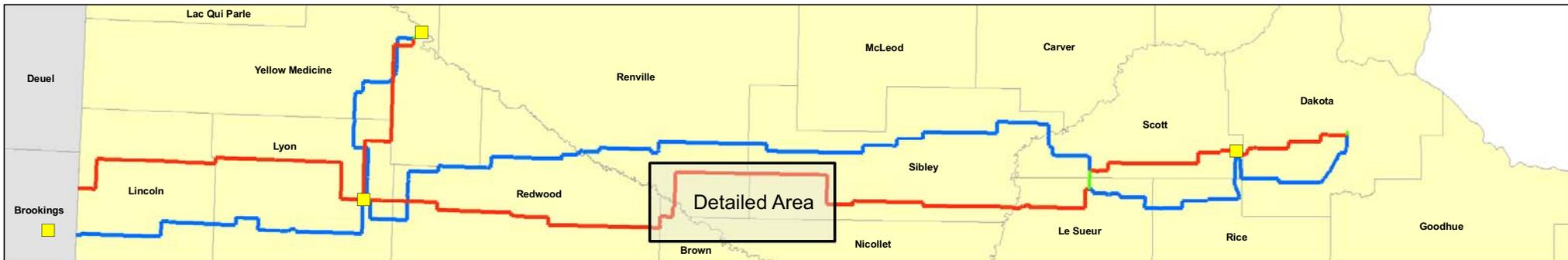


Route Alternatives: P-BRN-001, P-BRN-002, P-BRN-003, P-BRN-004, P-BRN-005, P-RVL-001, P-RVL-003
Brookings County to Hampton - 345kV Transmission Line

Figure 10



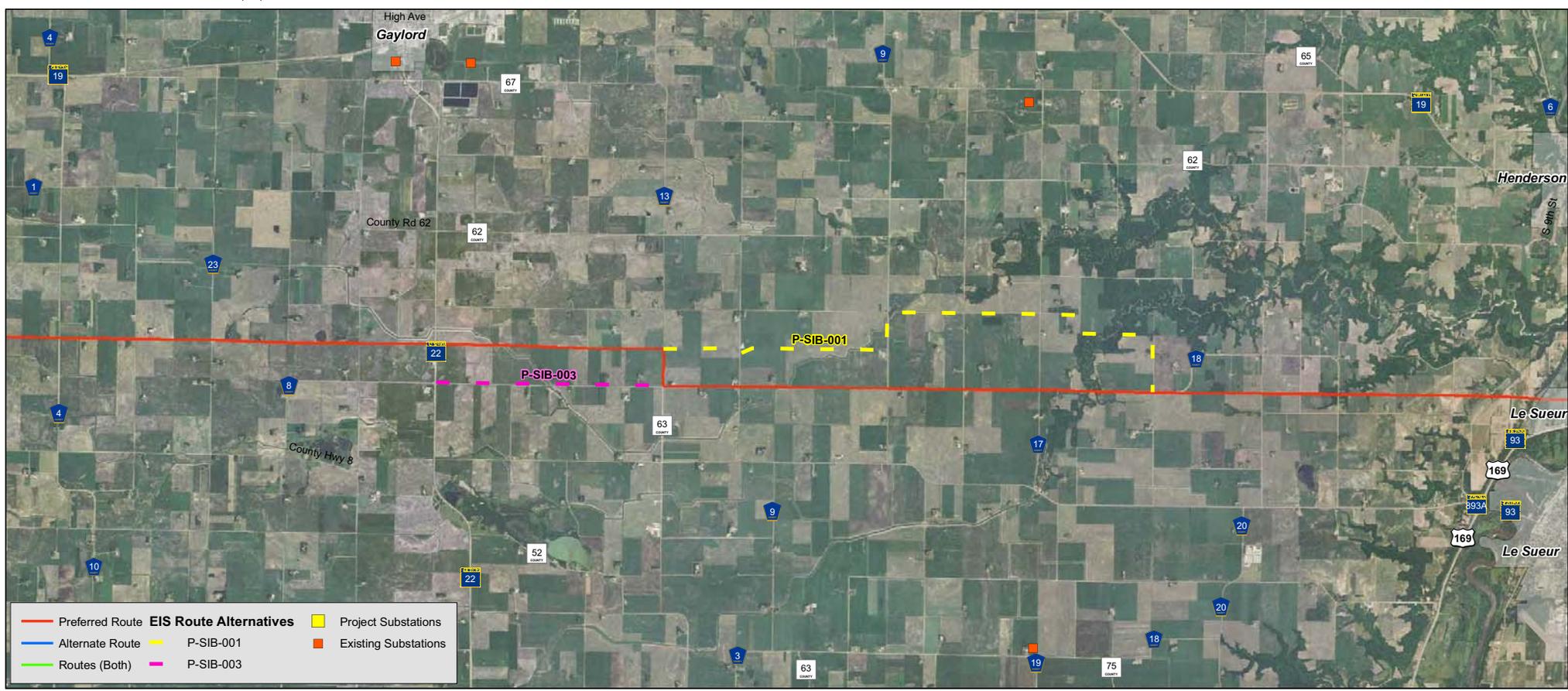
	Preferred Route		P-BRN-004		Project Substations
	Alternate Route		P-BRN-001		P-BRN-005
	Routes (Both)		P-BRN-002		P-RVL-001
	P-BRN-003		P-RVL-003		Existing Substations





Route Alternatives: P-SIB-001, P-SIB-003
Brookings County to Hampton - 345kV Transmission Line

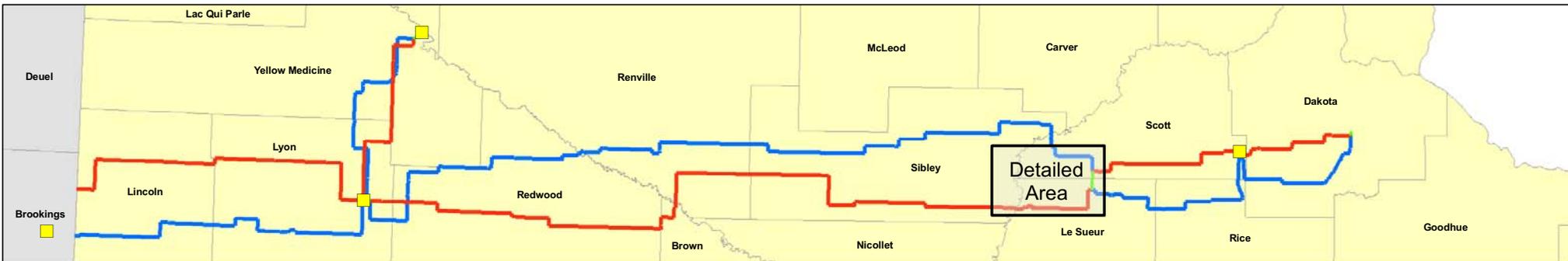
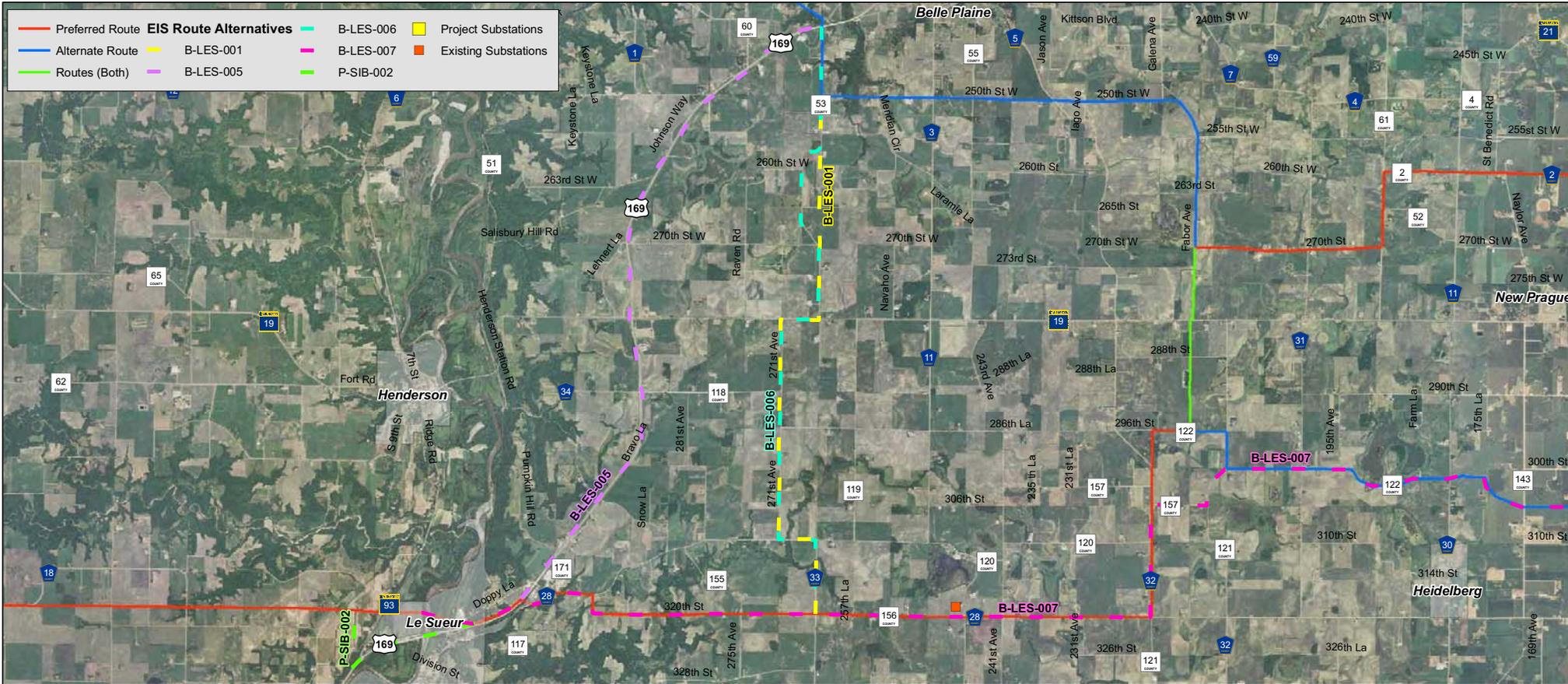
Figure 11





Route Alternatives: B-LES-001, B-LES-005, B-LES-006, B-LES-007, P-SIB-002
Brookings County to Hampton - 345kV Transmission Line

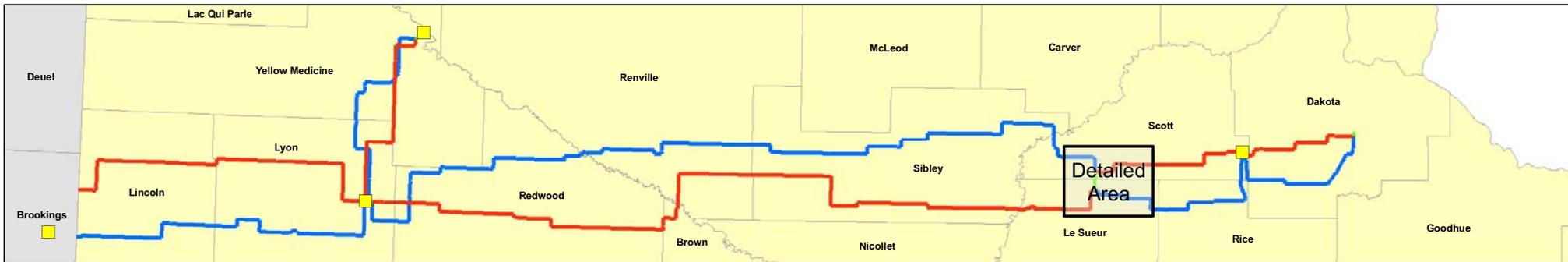
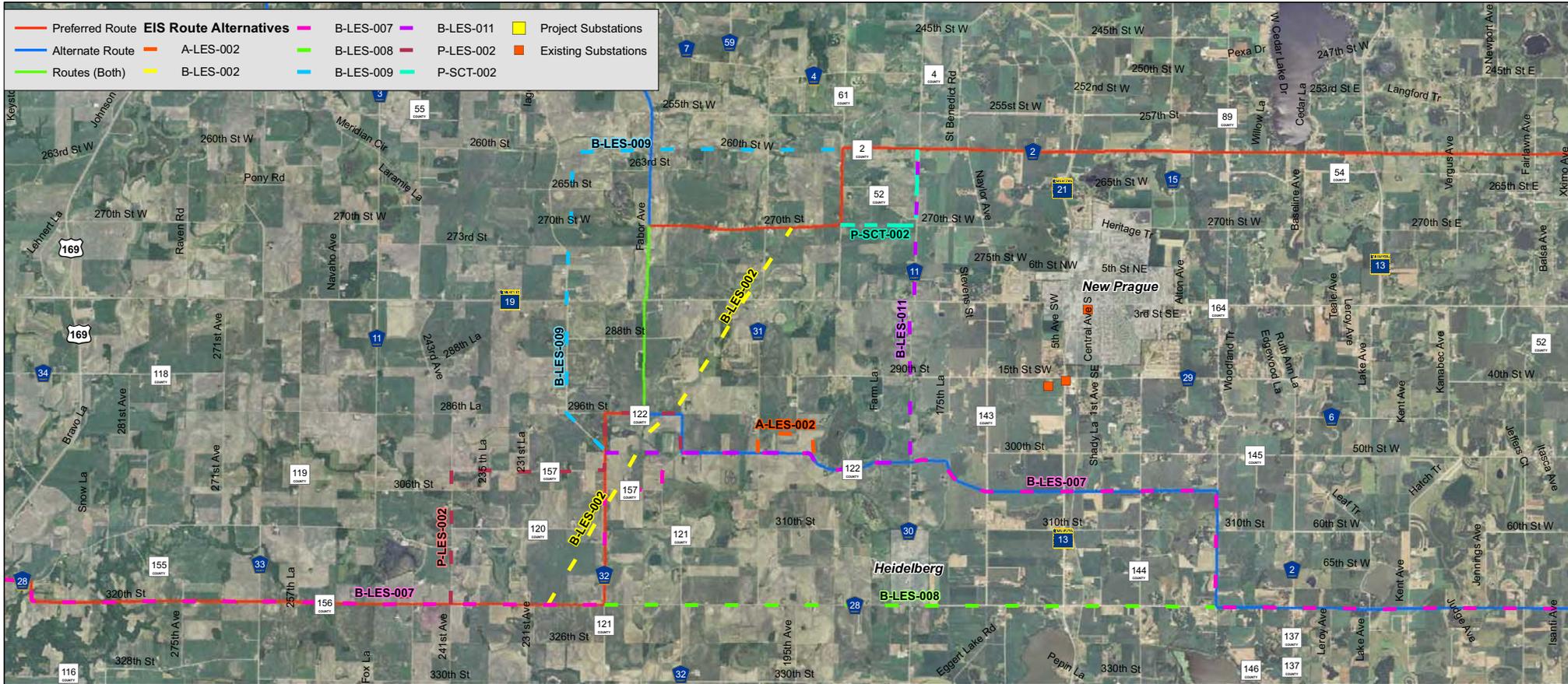
Figure 12





Route Alternatives: A-LES-002, B-LES-002, B-LES-007, B-LES-008, B-LES-009, B-LES-011, P-LES-002, P-SCT-002
Brookings County to Hampton - 345kV Transmission Line

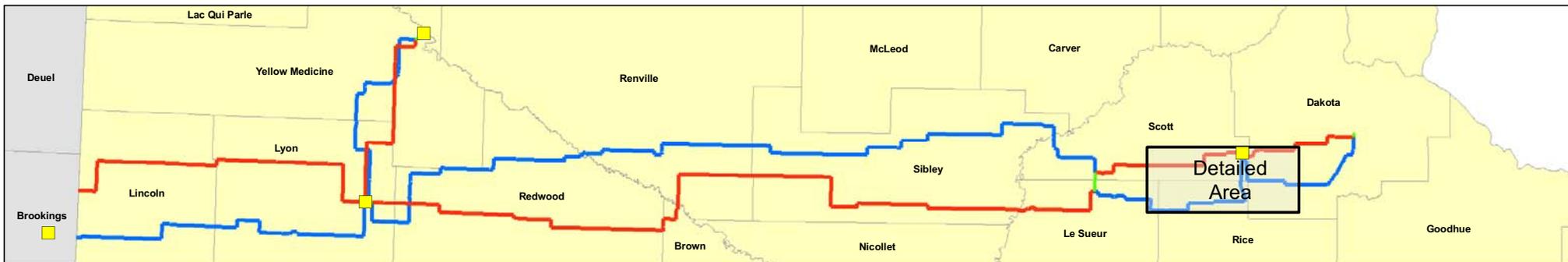
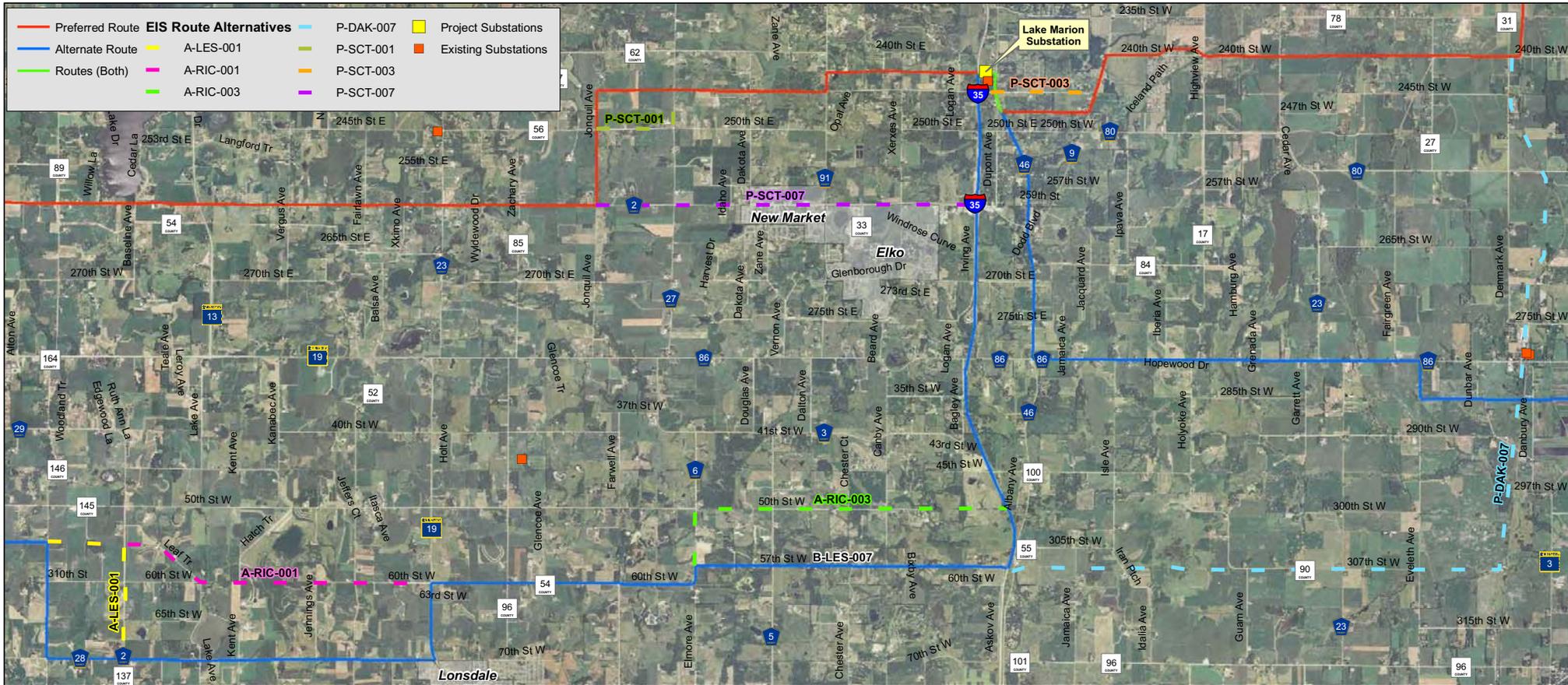
Figure 13





Route Alternatives: A-LES-001, A-RIC-001, A-RIC-003, P-DAK-007, P-SCT-001, P-SCT-003, P-SCT-007
Brookings County to Hampton - 345kV Transmission Line

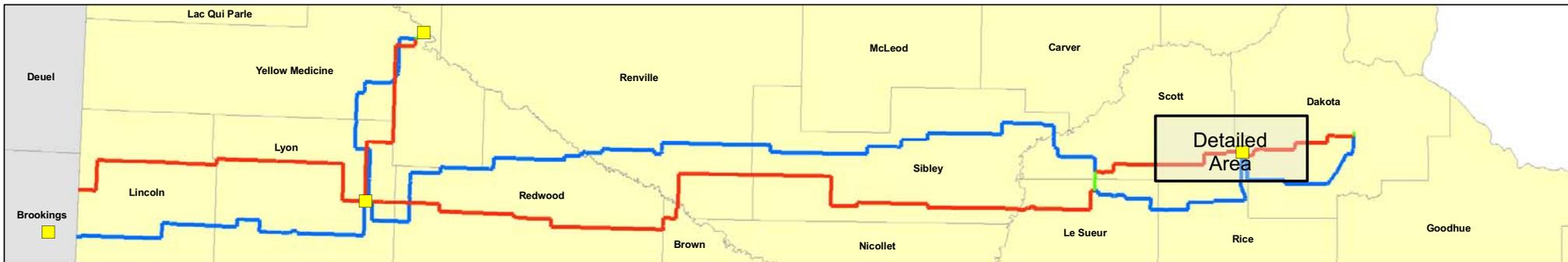
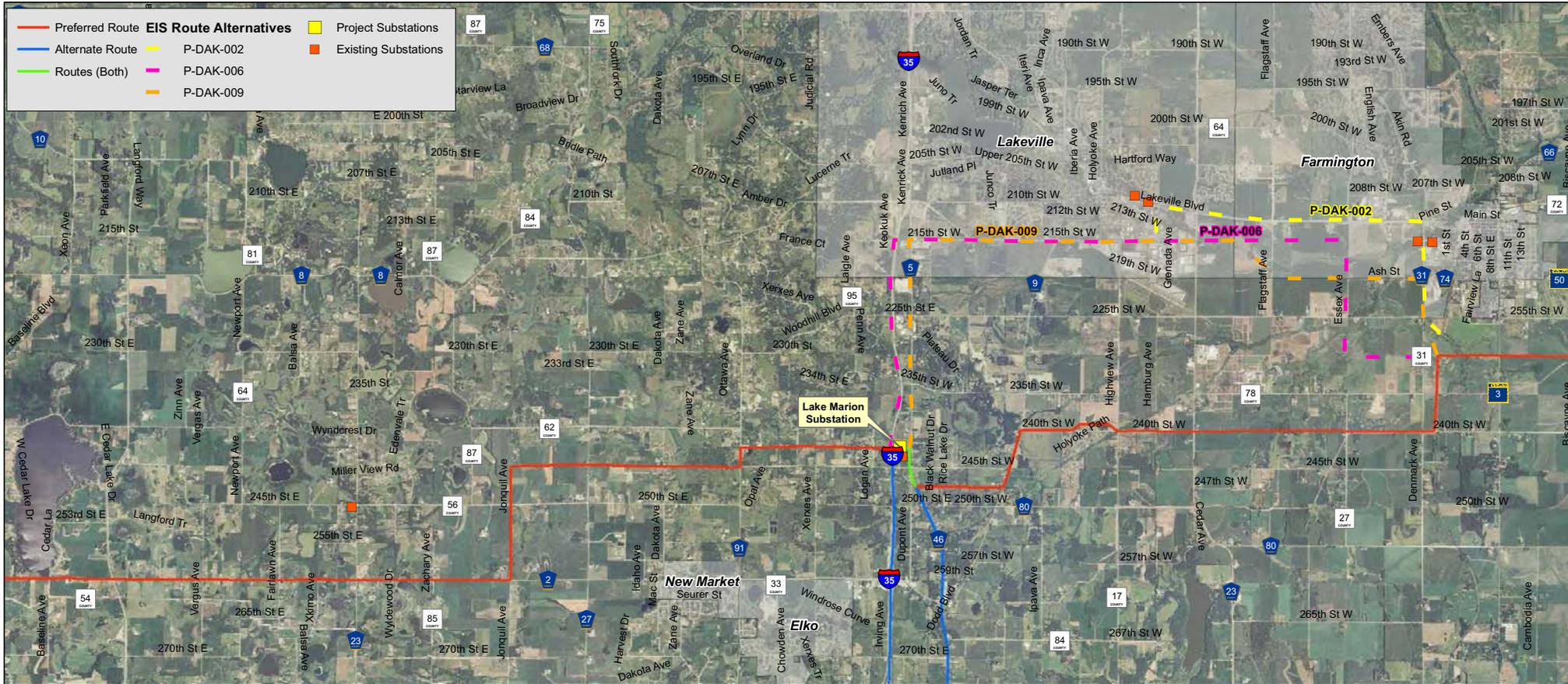
Figure 14





Route Alternatives: P-DAK-002, P-DAK-006, P-DAK-009
Brookings County to Hampton - 345kV Transmission Line

Figure 15





Route Alternatives: A-DAK-002, A-DAK-003, A-DAK-004, A-DAK-005, P-DAK-004, P-DAK-005, P-DAK-010
Brookings County to Hampton - 345kV Transmission Line

Figure 16

