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- **Minnesota Department of
Commerce**

Minnesota to Iowa 345 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line Advisory Task Force Report

PUC Docket No. ET6675/TL-12-1337

August 2013

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Introduction

On March 28, 2013, ITC Midwest LLC (ITCM, applicant) submitted a route permit application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) for the Minnesota to Iowa 345 kilovolt (kV) transmission line project (project). ITC Midwest is proposing to construct a 345 kV transmission line from its Lakefield Junction substation in Jackson County, east through Martin County to a new Huntley substation in Faribault County, before turning south to the Iowa border. The applicant has identified two route options for the project – Route A and Route B (See Appendix A).

At a Commission meeting on May 23, 2013, the Commission authorized an advisory task force (ATF) to assist Department of Commerce staff in determining the scope of the environmental impact statement (EIS) that will be prepared for the project. On that same day, the Department established an advisory task force for the project and charged the task force with (1) assisting in identifying specific impacts and issues of local concern that should be analyzed in the EIS, and (2) assisting in determining potential route and site alternatives that should be analyzed in the EIS (See Appendix B).

After soliciting local units of government (LGUs) to participate on the task force, the Department appointed nine persons representing nine LGUs to the Minnesota to Iowa ATF (See Appendix C).

Methodology

The Minnesota to Iowa ATF met three times – June 21, July 9, and July 23, 2013. The task force, through a facilitated process, discussed the proposed project and the charge given to the task force. Task force meetings were open to the public.

The first task of the ATF was to determine the impacts and issues that should be analyzed in the EIS for the project. This task was the focus for the first meeting. Task force members, through small and large group discussions, identified impacts and issues that should be analyzed for the project.

At the second meeting, task force members reviewed and prioritized the impacts and issues identified at the first meeting. Members were asked to vote as to which impacts and issues were most important. Task force members then took up the second part of their charge – identifying alternative routes and sites for the transmission line that might mitigate potential impacts of the project. The task force members broke into small “brainstorming” groups and identified alternative routes and route segments. The small groups then reported back to the entire task force.

At the third meeting, the task force reviewed the alternatives identified at the second meeting in the context of the impacts and issues discussed in meetings one and two. The task force listed pros and cons of each alternative. Clarifications, corrections, and variations on routes were

discussed. The task force discussed if there were any routes or route segments proposed by the ATF that the members wanted to remove from consideration. Two alternative routes were removed.

The task force's work was captured in meeting notes recorded on flip charts by the meeting facilitators. Meeting notes and supporting materials for all meetings are available online: <http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities//resource.html?Id=33203>

Impacts and Issues to Evaluate

Task force members identified impacts and issues by responding to the following question: “What impacts and issues should be analyzed by the Department of Commerce when it prepares the environmental impact statement (EIS) for the proposed Minnesota to Iowa transmission line project?” The task force identified and prioritized seven impacts and issues to be evaluated in the EIS (See Appendix D).

Impacts and issues identified were (listed in priority order):

- Property Owner Concerns
- Health Issues – Human and Animal
- Construction
- Planning for the Future
- Environmental
- Economic Drivers
- Communication

Identification and Review of Alternative Routes and Route Segments

The task force identified eight alternative routes for consideration in the EIS (See Appendix E). Task force members used their knowledge of the area and other resources in developing the alternative routes.

The task force reviewed the alternatives generated by the ATF and the applicant's proposed routes, and identified pros and cons for each. This exercise was not intended to be a detailed analysis of each route but rather to determine if a route was one that the task force wished to propose for consideration in the EIS. Pros and cons for each alternative (keyed to map names), are noted here:

Applicant Proposed Route A

Pros:

- Maximizes use of existing right-of-way
- Replaces H-frame poles with single poles
- Upgrades existing lines that will eventually need to be upgraded
- Appears to be shorter
- Least cost option
- Most direct
- Does not cross natural resources

Cons:

- Deviations from existing line are a problem (e.g., Fox Lake, Lake Charlotte)
- Deviation at 196th Ave. in Rutland Township
 - Affects more residences
 - Set back will possibly be in the right-of-way
- Airstrips
 - Lake Charlotte (section 18) in Rutland township
 - Fox lake (section 23) eliminates usability
- Deviation goes through farm fields
- New right away cannot overlap with MnDOT's right-away (along I-90)
- Crosses over I-90 three times – need to keep away from people to ensure safety

Applicant Proposed Route B

Pros:

- Does not impact airstrips
- Goes around Fox lake
- Doesn't cross I-90 until Iowa

Cons:

- Establishes all new right-of-way
- Will affect less residences in some areas, but will affect more as a whole
- Intercepts wildlife management areas on northwest side of Fox lake
- Goes through farm fields
- Doesn't address future upgrades
- Adds another line in the area

ATF Route Option 1

Assumption: The line is placed on the south side of 140th St. (County Hwy. 40)

Pros:

- Will be on the existing right-away
- On land that is not being farmed (old railroad right-of-way)
- Uses the existing line

Cons:

- Intercepts two wildlife management areas (WMAs)
 - Goes directly through Four Corners WMA
 - Flight pattern of geese
- Near two houses on 140th St.

ATF Route Alternative 1A

Pros:

- Saves money
- Solves Hilgendorf airstrip problem (section 23)

Cons:

- Intercepts wildlife management areas

ATF Route Alternative 2

Pros:

- Utilizes existing route
- Avoids airstrip (section 23)
- Avoids Assembly of God church (Sherburn)
- Avoids using new farmland right-of-way

Cons:

- Department of Natural Resources (DNR) position – apparently unwilling to allow an additional transmission line circuit across Fox Lake.

ATF Route Alternative 3

Pros:

- Maximizes use of existing right-of-way
- Eliminates two I-90 crossings
- Eliminates Assembly of God church issue
- Eliminates possible impacts to geese flyway

Cons:

- Airstrip problem (section 23)
- Fields in sections 35, 26, 23, half of 14, and part of 2 (west side of Fox Lake)

ATF Route Alternative 3A

Pros:

- Follows existing 69 kV line on the north side of I-90
- Less poles
- Eliminates airstrip problems
- Doesn't cross any new fields, or crosses minimally

Cons:

- Residences could be impacted
- Goes through one wildlife management area (Krahmer WMA)
- New right away cannot overlap with MnDOT's right-away along I-90

ATF Route Alternative 4

Pros:

- Avoids homes
 - Ten homes in close proximity to applicant's proposed route A
- Less miles of new line
- Uses existing right-of-way

Cons:

- Residences
 - There are two homes fairly near the existing 161 kV line.
- Crosses Lake Charlotte and the DNR is apparently unwilling to allow an additional transmission line circuit across Lake Charlotte
- Still impacts airstrip (section 18)

ATF Route Alternative 5

Pros:

- Utilizes existing 69 kV line
- Avoids Lake Charlotte

Cons:

- Doesn't solve airstrip problem
- Still has an impact to residences along 196th Ave.

ATF Route Alternative 5A

Pros:

- Avoids Hwy. 15
- Avoids building sites and residences close to road west of Lake Charlotte
- Avoids airstrip

Cons:

(None)

Conclusions

- 1. Study all of the route alternatives identified by the task force.** A good amount of effort and thought went into the creation of the task force's alternative routes and route segments. The task force recommends eight alternatives to be carried forward in the EIS process with the pros and cons identified by the task force.
- 2. All impacts and issues identified by the task force are important.** The impacts and issues identified by the task force are all important and should be evaluated in the EIS. The prioritization of impacts and issues performed by the task force may be helpful in guiding Department staff in the development of the EIS, but is not intended to diminish the importance of all impacts and issues raised and discussed by the task force.

Appendices

A – Project Overview Map

B – Advisory Task Force Charge

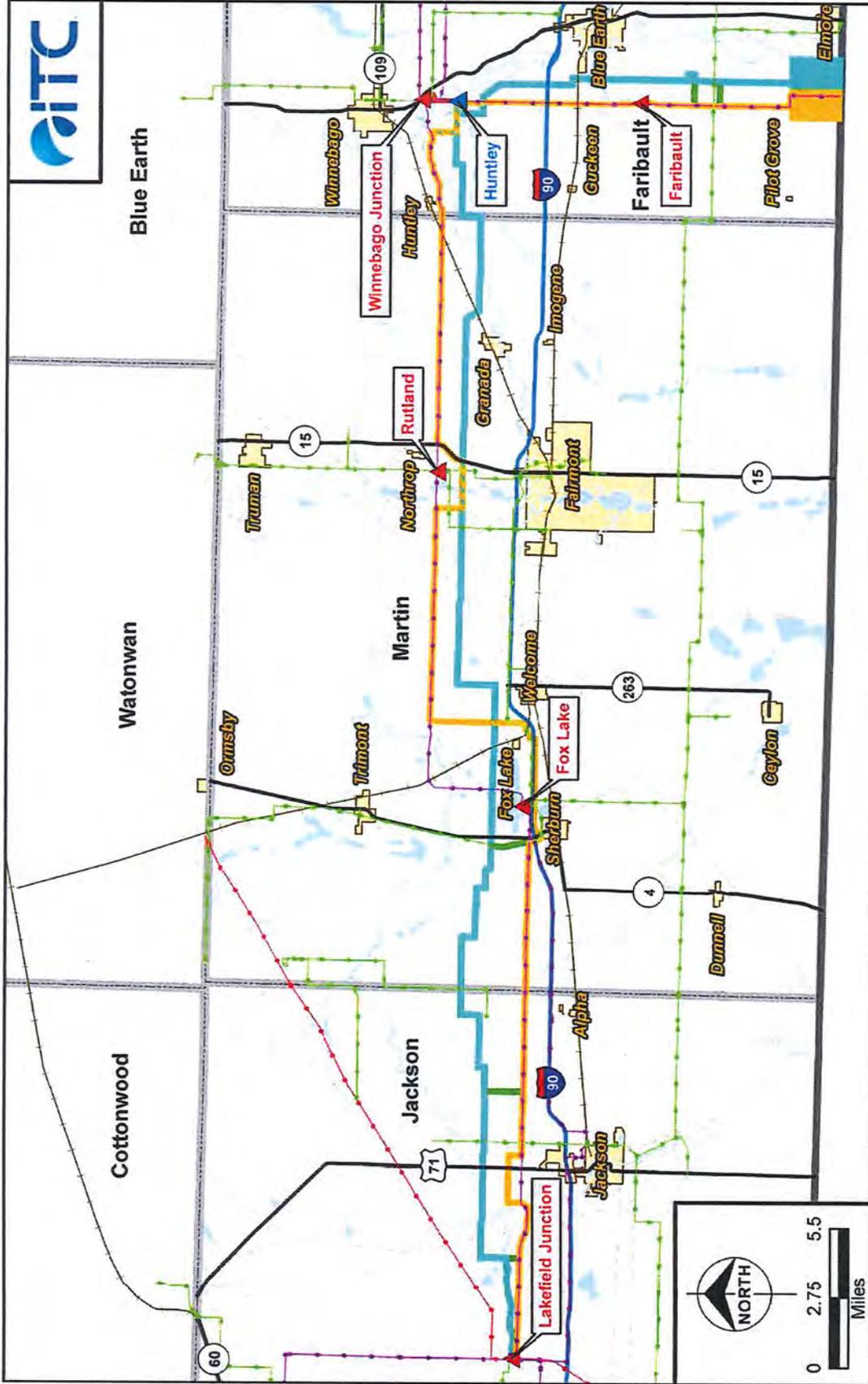
C – ATF Members Notice of Appointment

D – Impacts and Issues Table

E – Maps of Alternatives Identified by ATF

Appendix A – Project Overview Map

Project Overview Map



Blue Earth

Watonwan

Cottonwood

Martin

Jackson

ITC Midwest
Minnesota-Iowa
345 kV Transmission Project
Route Overview

Map Locator



- City
- County Boundary
- State Boundary
- Existing Substation
- Proposed Substation
- Existing 69 kV Lines
- Existing 161 kV Lines
- Existing 345 kV Lines
- Route A
- Route B
- Connector Segment
- Associated Facilities
- Railroad
- Existing Pipeline



Appendix B – Advisory Task Force Charge



In the Matter of ITC Midwest, LLC's Route Permit Application for the Minnesota to Iowa 345 kV Transmission Line Project and Associated Facilities in Jackson, Martin, and Faribault Counties

**Advisory Task Force
Authorization and Charge
PUC Docket No. ET6675/TL-12-1337**

ADVISORY TASK FORCE AUTHORIZATION, CHARGE, AND ORDER

The above-noted matter has come before the Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Commerce (Department) for a decision on the appointment of an advisory task force (ATF) to advise the Public Utilities Commission (Commission) on ITC Midwest, LLC's (ITCM) route permit application for the proposed Minnesota to Iowa 345 kV transmission line project and associated facilities.

As authorized by the Commission, the Deputy Commissioner is establishing an advisory task force to assist in identifying impacts and route alternatives to be evaluated in the environmental impact statement (EIS) to be prepared by the Department for the proposed project.

ATF members will be solicited from the following governmental units:¹

- RDCs: Southwest Regional Development Commission, Region Nine
Development Commission
- Counties: Jackson, Martin, Faribault
- City: Sherburn
- Townships: Belmont, Des Moines, Hunter, Enterprise, Wisconsin, Center Creek, Fox Lake, Elm Creek, Fraser, Jay, Manyaska, Rutland, Jo Daviess, Elmore, Pilot Grove, Verona

Based on this solicitation, the ATF will consist of up to 20 members.

As authorized by the Commission, the Department herein charges ATF members to:

1. Assist in identifying specific impacts and issues of local concern that should be analyzed in the EIS that will be prepared for the proposed project;
2. Assist in determining potential route and site alternatives that should be analyzed in the EIS.

ATF members will be expected to participate in up to three meetings and to assist Department staff with the development of a summary of the task force's work. The Department anticipates that it will engage staff from the Minnesota Office of Management and Budget to facilitate ATF meetings.

¹ See Minnesota Statute 216E.08, Subd. 1.

The advisory task force will expire upon issuance of the EIS scoping decision for the project by the Deputy Commissioner of the Department.

THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MAKES THE FOLLOWING ORDER:

WHEREAS, ITC Midwest, LLC, submitted an application for a route permit for the Minnesota to Iowa 345 kV transmission line project and associated facilities on March 28, 2013; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statute 216E.08 provides for the establishment of an advisory task force (ATF) to assist the Commission in carrying out its duties; and

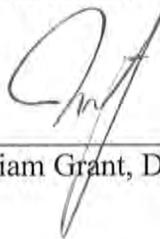
WHEREAS, at its regularly scheduled meeting on May 23, 2013, the Commission authorized the Department to establish an ATF and develop a structure and charge for the ATF; and

WHEREAS, Minn. Stat. 216E.08 establishes that an ATF comprise at least one representative from each regional development commission, county, and municipal corporation, and at least one town board member from each county in which a route is proposed to be located;

THEREFORE, the Department herein establishes an advisory task force for the Minnesota to Iowa 345 kV transmission line project and associated facilities, authorizes Department staff to appoint members of the task force, and adopts the above determination with regard to its structure and charge.

Signed this 23rd day of May 2013

STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



William Grant, Deputy Commissioner

Appendix C – ATF Members Notice of Appointment



STATE OF MINNESOTA
Department of Commerce



Issued: June 24, 2013

**NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT FOR THE
MINNESOTA TO IOWA ADVISORY TASK FORCE**

**In the Matter of the Application by ITC Midwest LLC for a Route Permit for the
Minnesota to Iowa 345 kV Transmission Line Project in
Jackson, Martin, and Faribault Counties, Minnesota**

PUC Docket Number: ET6675/TL-12-1337

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Department of Commerce (Department) has appointed the following individuals to serve as members of the Minnesota to Iowa advisory task force (ATF) for the proposed Minnesota to Iowa 345 kV transmission line project. Additional or replacement appointments may be made as necessary.

Name	Representing	Email Address
Steven Flohrs	Martin County	steve.flohrs@co.martin.mn.us
Andy Geiger	Jackson County	andy.geiger@co.jackson.mn.us
Tom Warmka	Faribault County	tjwarmka@bevcomm.net
Richard Peterson	Southwest Regional Development Commission	mrcorn@yourstarnet.net
Philip Schafer	Region Nine Development Commission	phil.schafer@agcocorp.com
Jeff Ross	City of Sherburn	jprdj@hotmail.com
Wanda Patsche	Fraser Township	wpatsche@gmail.com
Roxane Wedel	Rutland Township	drwedel@yourstarnet.net
Terry Savidge	Manyaska Township	tsavidge@frontiernet.net

The ATF will assist the Department in developing the scope of the environmental impact statement that will be prepared for the project.

Information about the proposed project can be found on the Department's website: <http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/Docket.html?Id=33080>, and at: <http://www.itc-holdings.com/itc-midwest/projects/>. Questions about the task force should be directed to Ray Kirsch (651-296-7588 [651-539-1841 after July 1, 2013], raymond.kirsch@state.mn.us), Department of Commerce, 85 7th Place East, Suite 500, St. Paul, MN 55101.

Appendix D – Impacts and Issues Table

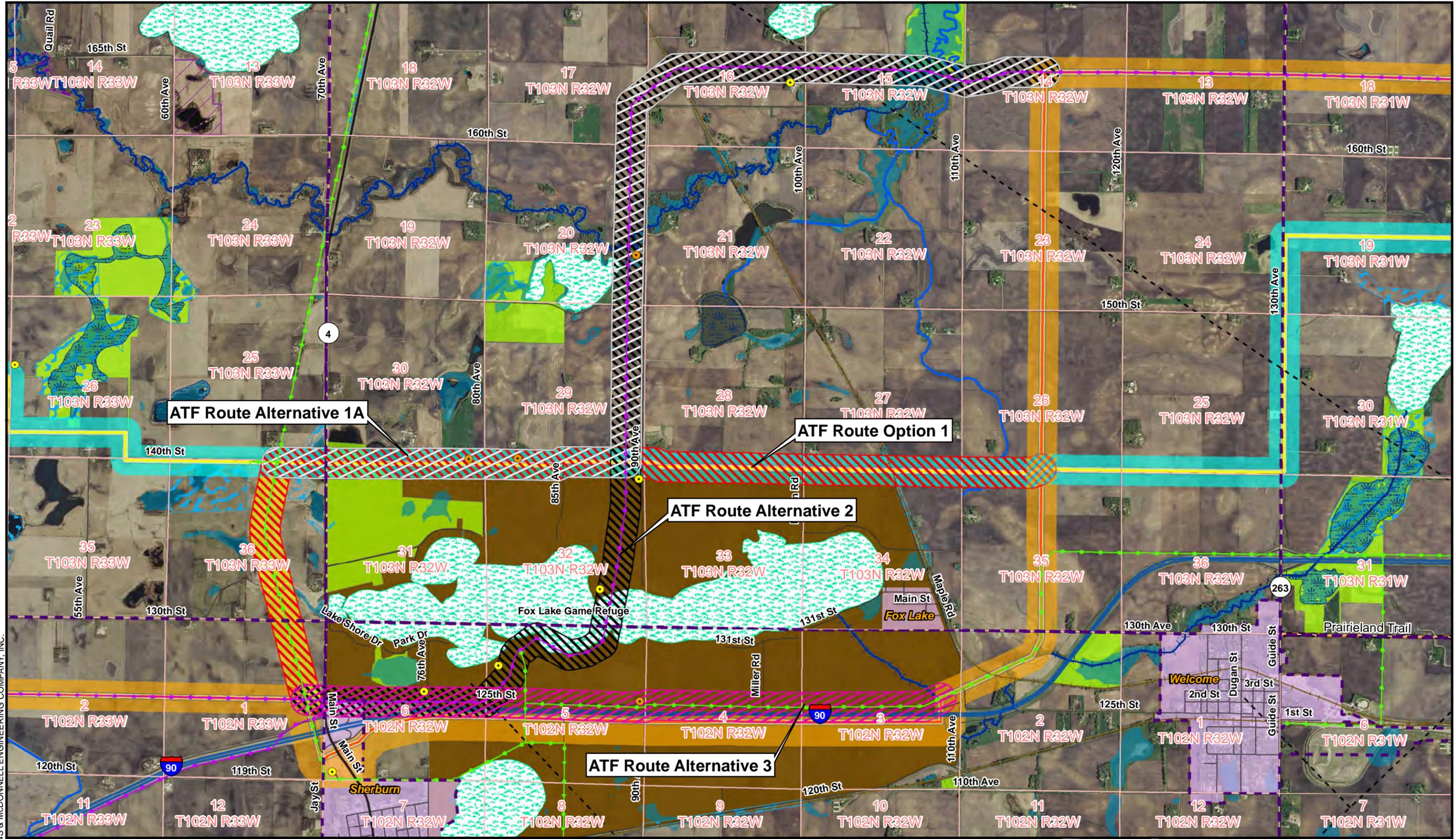
Minnesota to Iowa Advisory Task Force

Identification of Impacts and Issues – *What impacts and issues should be analyzed by the Department of Commerce when it prepares the environmental impact statement (EIS) for the proposed Minnesota to Iowa transmission line project?*

	Communication	Planning for the future	Environmental	Health Issues – Human & Animal	Economic Drivers	Property Owner Concerns	Construction
Number of Votes	0	4	2	5	2	10	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication issues Interruption of communication and GPS from power lines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correct size of transmission line to address future needs, wind energy and other energy sources Needed for added wind power Possibility of future expansion, needs Needed for rural growth and development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure to investigate impact on endangered vegetation Lake impacts: too close to lakes on the routes proposed (e.g., Kiester Lake) Destruction of wooded areas with easements Route proximity to wetlands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stray voltage for residents Health issues from stray voltage for both people and animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost factor of project Location or colocation possibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Least impact to adjacent land and land owner Impact on land owner-operator Least disruption for farmers/owners; drainage issues from pole placement, crop spraying aerial Follow property lines – do not go through middle of farmer’s fields, consider family owned farm acres Route proximity to: homes, wetlands, farmland, visual Residence proximity: play areas, front yards Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreements with local governments for road use and repair of any damage Construction: damage and repair Perpetual easement repair

Appendix E – Maps of Alternatives Identified by ATF

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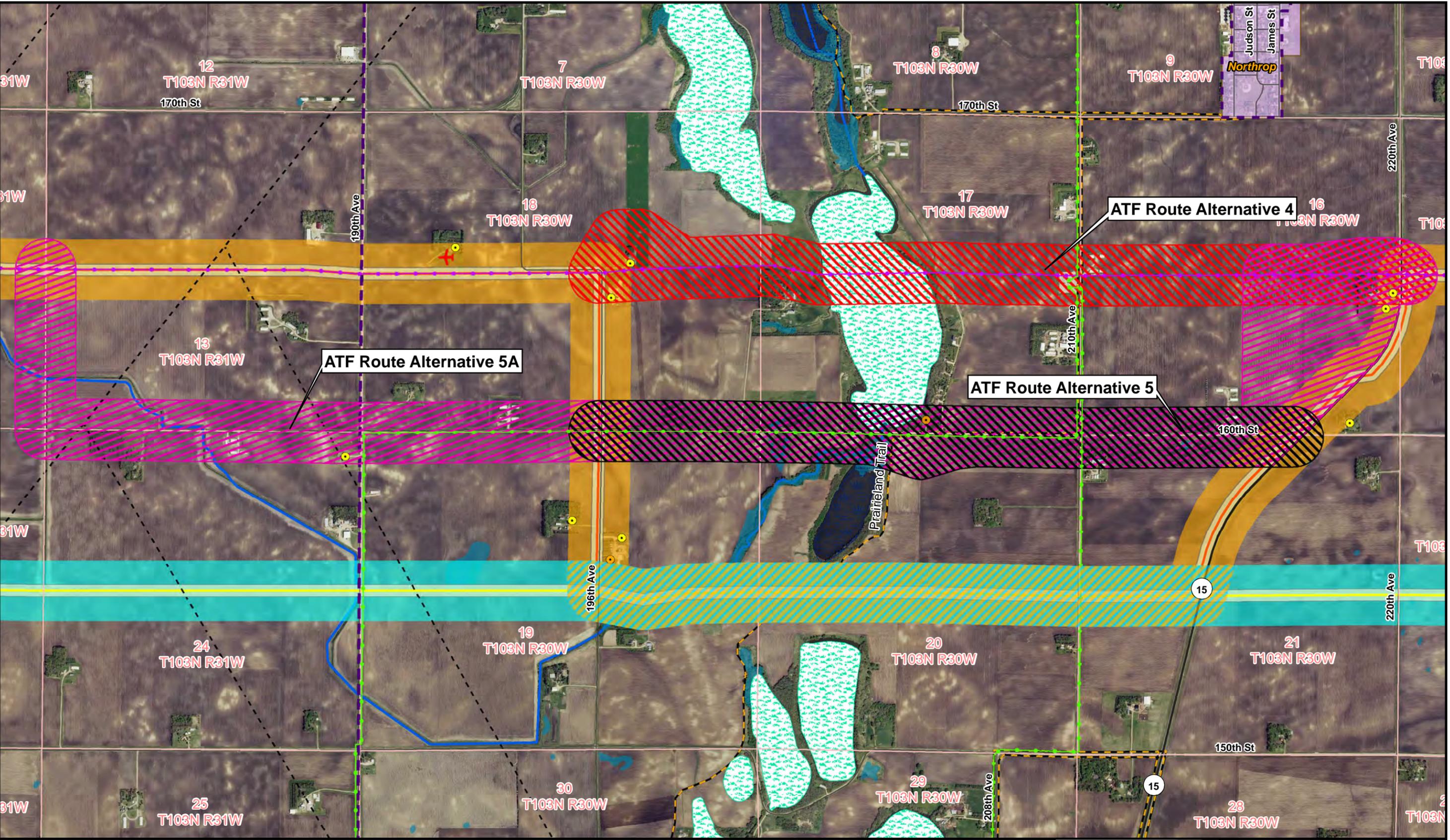
	ATF Route Option 1	Application ROW	Existing 161 kV Lines	State Game Refuge	MCBS Sites Below	Existing Pipeline
	ATF Route Alternative 1A	Route A	City	Existing 345 kV Lines	WPA	Railroad
	ATF Route Alternative 2	Route B	Civil Township	WRP	MCBS Sites Moderate	Home 0-75ft
	ATF Route Alternative 3	Connector Segment	Township Sections	PWI Stream	MCBS Sites High	Home 75-150ft
	Route A - Application Alignment	Route A and B Combined Segment	State Park or WMA	PWI Water Basin	MCBS Sites Outstanding	Home 150-300ft
	Route B - Application Alignment	Existing 69 kV Lines	PWI Water Wetland	Impaired Stream	Home 300-500ft	

Jackson
Martin

ITC Midwest
Minnesota to Iowa
345 kV Transmission Line Project

Proposed Route Alternatives
Advisory Task Force
Map Sheet 1 of 3

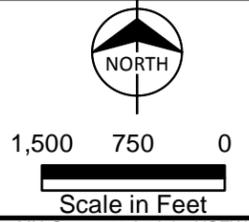
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ATF Route Alternative 4

ATF Route Alternative 5A

ATF Route Alternative 5



- | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| ATF Route Alternative 4 | Route A | Existing 161 kV Lines | State Game Refuge | MCBS Sites | Existing Pipeline |
| ATF Route Alternative 5 | Route B | Existing 345 kV Lines | WPA | Below | Railroad |
| ATF Route Alternative 5A | Connector Segment | City | WRP | Moderate | Home 0-75ft |
| Route A - Application Alignment | Connector Segment - ROW | Civil Township | PWI Stream | High | Home 75-150ft |
| Route B - Application Alignment | Route A and B Combined Segment | Township Sections | PWI Water Basin | Outstanding | Home 150-300ft |
| Application ROW | Existing 69 kV Lines | State Park or WMA | PWI Water Wetland | Private Landing Strip | Home 300-500ft |

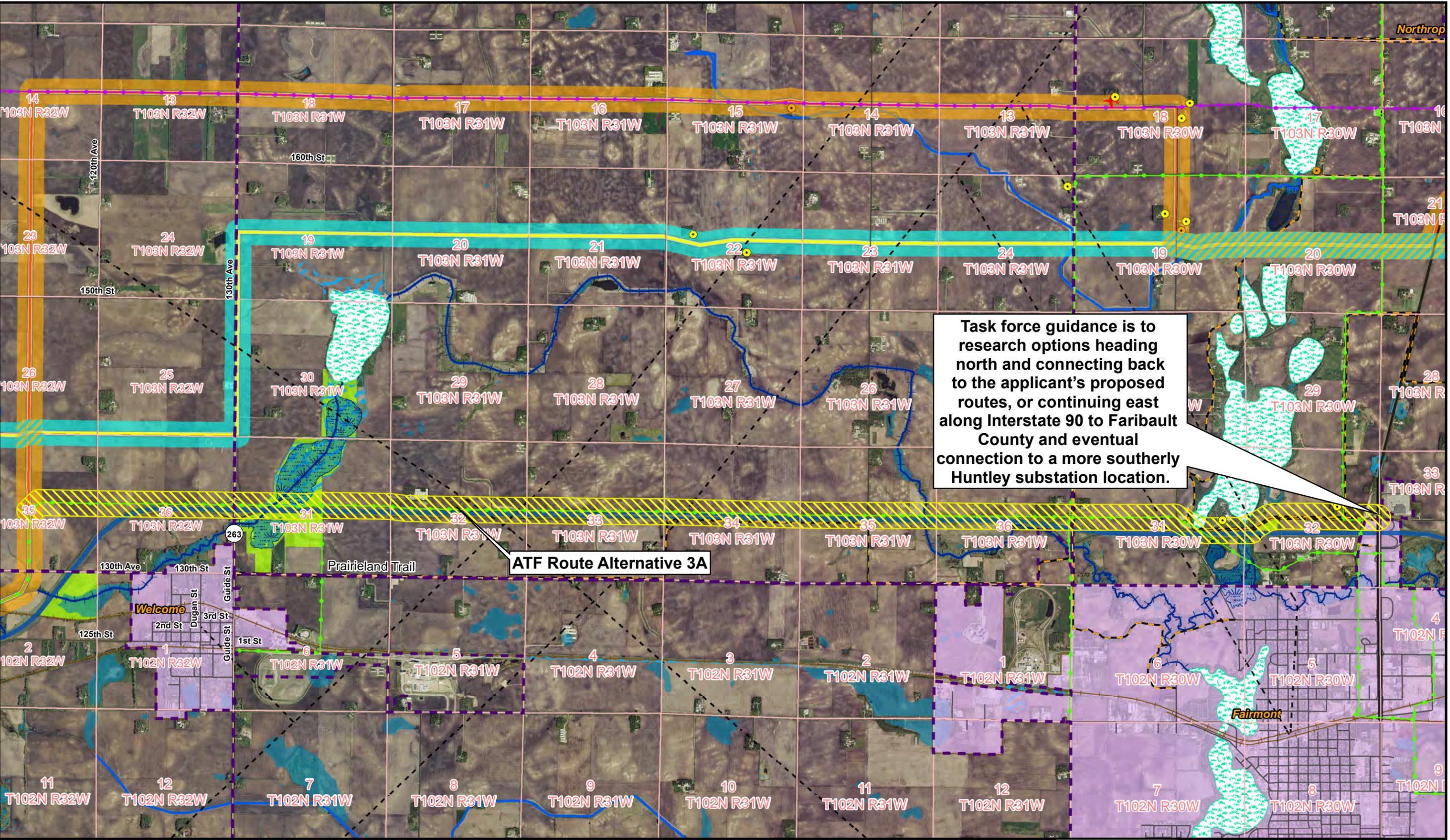


ITC Midwest
 Minnesota to Iowa
 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Proposed Route Alternative
 Advisory Task Force
 Map Sheet 2 of 3

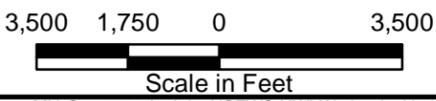
Source: MN Geo 2011 Aerials; USFWS NWI Wetlands; National Hydrography Dataset; National Flight Data Center; Minnesota DNR; Minnesota Geo GIS; Minnesota DOT; ITC; Burns & McDonnell.

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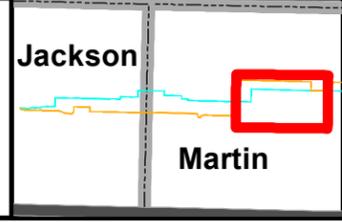


Task force guidance is to research options heading north and connecting back to the applicant's proposed routes, or continuing east along Interstate 90 to Faribault County and eventual connection to a more southerly Huntley substation location.

ATF Route Alternative 3A



ATF Route Alternative 3A	Connector Segment	Civil Township	PWI Stream	MCBS Sites	Home 0-75ft
Route A - Application Alignment	Route A and B Combined Segment	Township Sections	PWI Water Basin	Below	Home 75-150ft
Route B - Application Alignment	Existing 69 kV Lines	State Park or WMA	PWI Water Wetland	Moderate	Home 150-300ft
Application ROW	Existing 161 kV Lines	State Game Refuge	Impaired Stream	High	Home 300-500ft
Route A	Existing 345 kV Lines	WPA	Existing Pipeline	Outstanding	
Route B	City	WRP	Railroad		



ITC Midwest
 Minnesota to Iowa
 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Proposed Route Alternatives
 Advisory Task Force
 Map Sheet 3 of 3