Appendix D.1

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program, Box 25
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-40__
Phone: (651) 259-5107 Fax: (651) 296-1811 E-mail: sarah.hoffmann@dnr.state.mn.us

RECEIVED
MAR 20 2006
HDR Engineering, Inc.

March 16, 2006

Ms. Angela Piner
HDR Engineering, Inc.
6190 Golden Hills Drive
Minneapolis, MN 55416

Re: Request for Natural Heritage information for vicinity of proposed Cannon Falls Substation and Transmission Line Construction

NHNRP Contact #: ERDB 20060689

County	Township (N)	Range (W)	Section(s)
Dakota	113	18	35 & 36
Dakota	113	17	31
Goodhue	112	18	1, 2, & 11-14
Goodhue	112	17	6 & 7

Dear Ms. Piner,

The Minnesota Natural Heritage database has been reviewed to determine if any known locations of rare plant or animal species or other significant natural features would be impacted by the proposed substation and transmission line project. Based on this review, it appears that the only features that could potentially be impacted by the project are the dry sand-gravel prairie native plant community and the Kitten-tails (*Besseya bullii*) located in the southwest corner of the study area. Provided this area can be avoided, we don't have any concerns with the project. If avoidance of this area will not be possible, please contact me again to discuss the endangered species permitting process.

The Natural Heritage database is maintained by the Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program, a unit within the Division of Ecological Services, Department of Natural Resources. It is continually updated as new information becomes available, and is the most complete source of data on Minnesota's rare or otherwise significant species, native plant communities, and other natural features. Its purpose is to foster better understanding and protection of these features.

Because our information is not based on a comprehensive inventory, there may be rare or otherwise significant natural features in the state that are not represented in the database. A county-by-county survey of rare natural features is now underway, and has been completed for Dakota and Goodhue Counties. Our information about native plant communities is, therefore, quite thorough for those counties. However, because survey work for rare plants and animals is less exhaustive, and because there has not been an on-site survey of all areas of each county, ecologically significant features for which we have no records may exist on the project area.

Please be aware that review by the Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program focuses only on *rare natural features*. It does not constitute review or approval by the Department of Natural Resources as a whole. If you require further information on the environmental review process for other natural resource-related issues, you may contact your Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologists, Todd Kolander at (507) 359-6073 for Goodhue County or Wayne Barstad at (651) 772-7940 for Dakota County.

An invoice in the amount of $66.00 will be mailed to you under separate cover within several weeks of the date of this letter. You are being billed for map and database search and staff scientist review. Thank you for consulting us on this matter, and for your interest in preserving Minnesota's rare natural resources.

Sincerely,

Sarah Hoffmann

Sarah D. Hoffmann
Endangered Species Environmental Review Coordinator

Minnesota Department of Transportation

Metropolitan District
Waters Edge
1500 West County Road B-2
Roseville MN 55113-3174

RECEIVED
MAR 24 2006
HDR Engineering

March 20, 2006

HDR Engineering, Inc.
Angela Piner, Environmental Scientist
6190 Golden Hills Drive
Minneapolis, MN 55416

Dear Ms Piner:

Thank you for the letter dated February 20, 2006 regarding the expansion of the existing Cannon Falls Transmission Substation. Mn/DOT Metro District has the following comments:

1. It doesn't appear that the substation is on or abuts current Mn/DOT right of way. Therefore, there are no comments about the property of the substation.
2. Power lines connecting to the substation and crossing or using Mn/DOT right of way must follow both permitting policies and the accommodation policy. At this point in time there appears to be no special circumstances with either a permit or the accommodation of these power lines. Please note that just south of the study area is the line between Metro District and District 6 (Rochester).
3. Permits Any use of or work within or affecting Mn/DOT right of way requires a permit. Permit forms are available from Mn/DOT's utility website at www.dot.state.mn.us/tecsup/utility . Please direct any questions regarding permit requirements to Buck Craig (651-582-1447) of Mn/DOT's Metro Permits Section.
4. Traffic The increased development resulting from the proposed substation will have a significant impact on the safety and capacity of Mn/DOT's transportation infrastructure. In order to identify potential adverse impacts resulting from the proposed development, Mn/DOT would like to review any traffic information that has been developed. Please submit available traffic information to: Tod Sherman (651-582-1548), Mn/DOT's Program Management Section, 1500 West County Road B-2, Roseville, MN 55113

Sincerely,

Terry Zoller
Metro District Construction Engineer

Cc: Kristi Sebastian, Dakota County
Lynn Maratzka, Dakota

Appendix D.7

GOODHUE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Gregory Isakson, P.E.
Public Works Director
County Engineer

2140 Pioneer Road
P.O. Box 404
Red Wing, MN 55066
PHONE 651.385.3025
FAX 651.388.8437
www.co.goodhue.mn.us

HIGHWAYS ◆ PARKS ◆ RECYCLING ◆ SOLID WASTE ◆ HHW

RECEIVED
APR 04 2006
HDR Engineering, Inc.

March 31, 2006

HDR Engineering Inc
Angela Piner
Environmental Scientist
6190 Golden Hills Drive
Minneapolis MN 55416

RE: Cannon Falls Tap 115 kV Transmission Line Construction, G405 Substation Construction and Expansion of the Existing Cannon Falls Transmission Substation

Dear Ms. Piner,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Cannon Falls Tap Project proposed expansion plan sheets. We would like to see the new lines run with existing lines where ever possible. Another suggestion would be to contact Dakota County Parks regarding the Cannon Falls Substation Expansion, if you have not already done so.

Sincerely,

Greg Isakson, P.E.
Public Works Director/County Engineer

Appendix D.6

Appendix D.5

Piner, Angela

From: Moratzka, Lynn [LYNN.MORATZKA@CO.DAKOTA.MN.US]
Sent: Wednesday, March 15, 2006 4:33 PM
To: Piner, Angela
Subject: FW: Clarification of County Comment (3-15-2006)

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Red

> To: Angela Piner, Environmental Scientist, HDR Engineering, Inc.
>
> RE: Cannon Falls Tap 115kV Transmission Line Construction, G405
> Substation Construction and Expansion of the Cannon Falls Transmission
> Substation
>
> This email is in reply to your email (of 3-XX-06) regarding the County's comment about the proposed new 161kV/115kV Substation (G405 Substation).
>
> Our letter of March 6th included a comment based on the mistaken understanding that the new substation would be located on Xcel property near the existing Cannon Falls Substation at Lake Byllesby. After talking with you, we now understand that the new substation would be located on the property for the site of the new power plant in the Cannon Falls Industrial Park.
>
> Based on this information, we wish to withdraw our comment about the G405 Substation.
>
> Thank you

Dakota COUNTY

RECEIVED
MAR 08 2006
HDR Engineering, Inc.

Office of Planning
Lynn G. Moratzka, AICP
Planning Manager

Dakota County
Western Service Center
14955 Galaxie Avenue
Apple Valley, MN 55124

952.891.7030
Fax 952.891.7031
www.co.dakota.mn.us

March 6, 2006

Angela Piner
Environmental Scientist
HDR Engineering, Inc.
6190 Golden Hills Drive
Minneapolis, MN 55416

RE: Cannon Falls Tap 115kV Transmission Line Construction, G405 Substation Construction and Expansion of the Cannon Falls Transmission Substation

Dear Ms. Piner:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed projects prior to Xcel Energy's filing of a Route Permit Application with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) in March of 2006.

County staff in the Physical Development Division have reviewed your letter and attached map. Our comments are attached to this letter.

We look forward to working with you as these projects go forward.

If you have any questions, please call me at (952) 891-7033.

Sincerely,

Lynn Moratzka

Lynn Moratzka, Manager
Office of Planning

Encl

c: Joseph A. Harris, Dakota County Commissioner – District 1
Brandt Richardson, County Administrator
Greg Konat, Director, Physical Development Division
Phyllis Hanson, Manager, Metropolitan Council

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DAKOTA COUNTY COMMENTS: Xcel Energy's Proposed Construction of Two 115kV Power Transmission Lines and Expansion of the Cannon Falls Transmission Substation.

New 161 kV/115kV Substation (G405 Substation

Your letter of 2-20-2006 indicates that the new substation "will be located on the power plant property". County staff presume that the property in question is one of the two land parcels located near the existing Cannon Falls Transmission Substation by the dam on Lake Byllesby. County staff request that more detailed information about the new substation and a site map showing its location be included in the route permit application that will be filed with the PUC.

New 115 kV Power Transmission Lines

County staff understand that State rules require that Xcel Energy follow existing road right-of-ways or existing power transmission line easements when proposing to route and construct new lines. County staff suggest that the two new lines could be placed in the CSAH 86 road right-of-way, in the segment located between the east County line and US 52 to the west.

For the construction of new power transmission lines in County road right-of-way, Xcel Energy must apply for a County permit and include plan sheets that show the route of the two lines.

The County prefers that each line be as close to the edge of the County road right-of-way line as possible. This may require the company to get easements for any overhang of the tower arms into the road right-of-way.

If future improvements to the County road require expansion of the road right-of-way, the power line may need to be relocated at the owner's expense.

Expansion of the Existing Cannon Falls Transmission Substation

County staff request that more detailed information about the expansion of the substation and a map that shows its location be included in the route permit application to be filed with the PUC.

The County would like more information about the location and dimensions of the proposed expansion of the existing fence to the northwest.

The expansion of the substation cannot interfere with operation of the dam at Lake Byllesby. Coordination of this project with North American Hydro will be necessary, to avoid any long-term shut down of the substation that could adversely impact the generation of electricity at the dam.

The Dakota County Parks Department operates a maintenance shop out of a building that is located near the substation property. The Parks Department will need to have continued access to the shop during construction activity (minor, short-term interruptions would be acceptable if the County was notified prior to their occurrence and could adjust its operations accordingly).

Appendix D.3

April 7, 2006

Mr. Dennis Gimmestad
Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office
345 Kellogg Boulevard West
St. Paul, MN 55102-1906

RE: Cannon Falls Tap 115 kV Transmission Line Construction, G405 Substation Construction and Expansion of the Existing Cannon Falls Transmission Substation

Dear Mr. Gimmestad:

Thank you for reviewing the proposed project area for the Cannon Falls Transmission Line Project near Cannon Falls, Minnesota. We would like to formally respond to the recommendations made in your letter to Ms. Angela Piner of HDR Engineering, dated March 23, 2006.

Project recommendations from SHPO included an archaeological survey of the proposed project area unless documentation was provided to confirm that the area was previously surveyed or disturbed. Our initial letter to you covered a large study area since route selection for the transmission line had not begun. Since that time, the transmission line route has been selected and project boundaries have significantly decreased. The proposed transmission line route now follows existing County Road 86 and County Road 85; an area considered previously disturbed by road construction. A small portion of the proposed transmission line crosses over cultivated fields that appear to have a very low potential for containing significant cultural resources in an undisturbed context. In addition to agricultural disturbance, these areas are also greater than 500 feet from a water source and are on landforms that are not conducive for identifying cultural materials.

An additional project component includes the site of the proposed Colvill Substation, which is within the boundaries of the Cannon Falls Energy Center. A letter from the SHPO dated July 20, 2004 (SHPO Number: 2004-2589; see attached), stated that a survey of the proposed Cannon Falls Energy Center would be unnecessary due to low potential and the lack of archaeological properties in the area. We agree and suggest that a survey of the Colvill Substation is not needed.

Finally, proposed construction activities at the existing Cannon Falls Transmission Substation include the expansion of an existing fence. Photo documentation of the site (attached photos 1-2) illustrates the great amount of disturbance near the substation. These photos illustrate the disturbance near the existing fence line, by revealing a large berm between the fence and the road and the proximity of the fence to the road edge and ditch.

HDR Engineering, Inc.
6190 Golden Hills Drive
Minneapolis, MN 55416-1567
Phone: (763) 591-5400
Fax: (763) 591-5413
www.hdrinc.com

Also, the background of the photo illustrates another large berm created during the construction of the dam. The expansion of the fence will cause minimal ground disturbance, in an area previously disrupted by construction.

HDR suggests that an archaeological survey for the project is not needed. We would like to resubmit the updated project corridor for your review and response.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Michael Madson
Cultural Resources Project Manager

Enclosures: Cannon Falls Substation Photos
Project Location Map
July 20, 2004 SHPO Letter

cc: Pam Rasmussen
Angela Piner

HDR Engineering, Inc.
6190 Golden Hills Drive
Minneapolis, MN 55416-1567
Phone: (763) 591-5400
Fax: (763) 591-5413
www.hdrinc.com

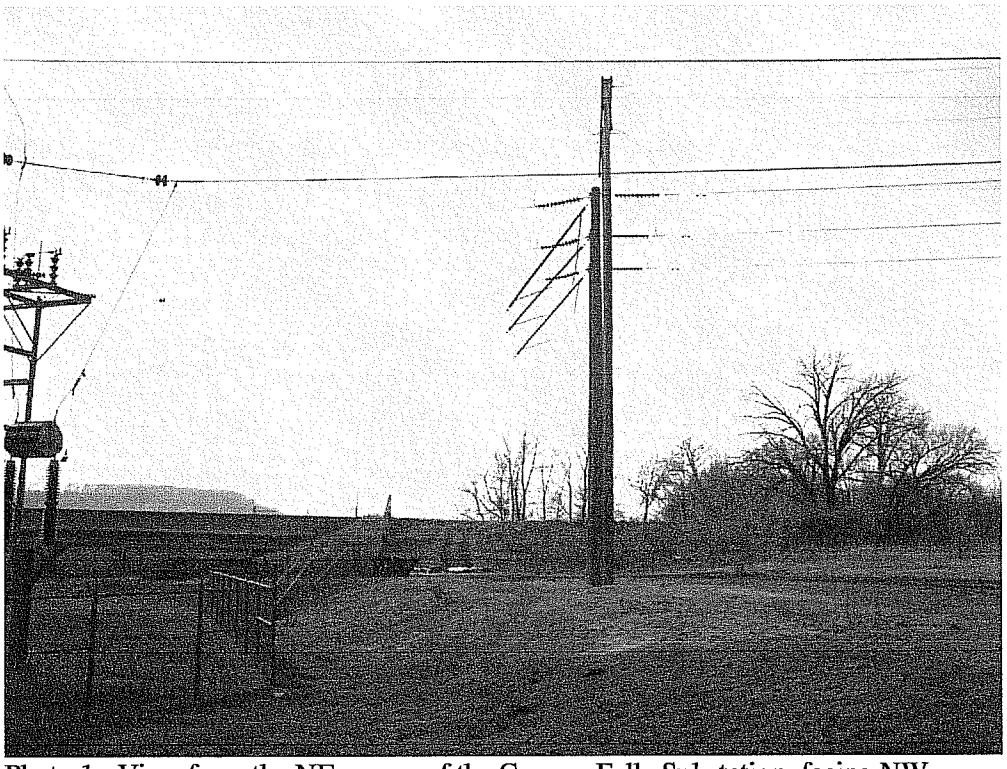


Photo 1. View from the NE corner of the Cannon Falls Substation, facing NW

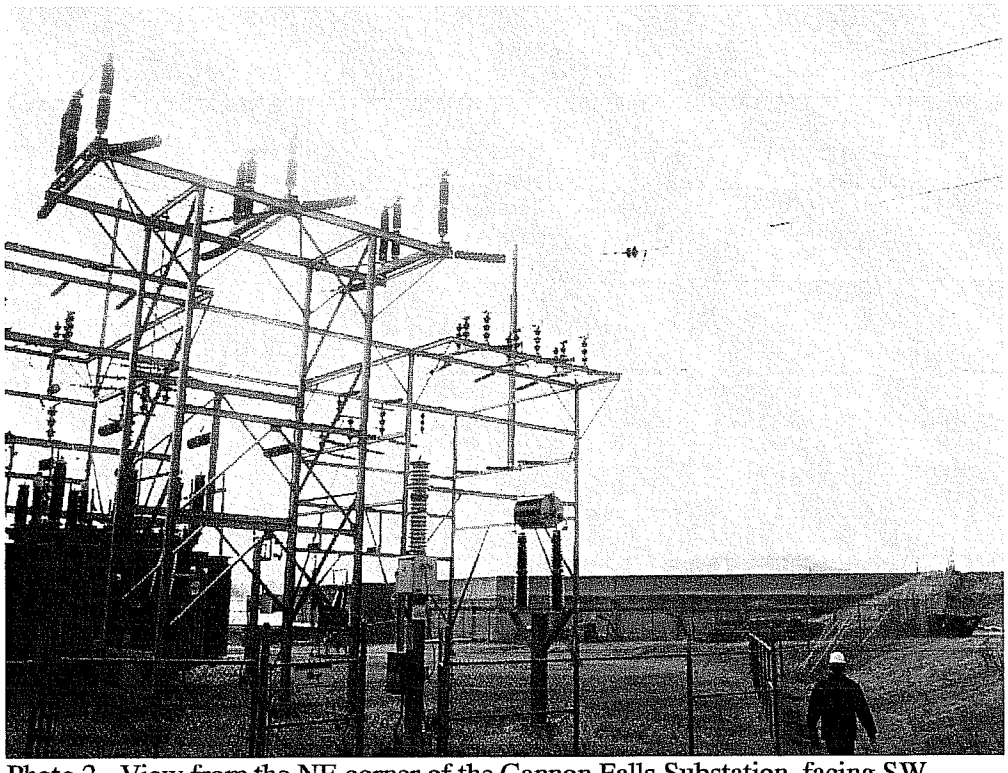


Photo 2. View from the NE corner of the Cannon Falls Substation, facing SW

Appendix D.3

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

July 20, 2004

Ms. Julie Spapperi
URS Corporation
One Continental Towers
1701 Golf Road, Suite 100
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008

RE: Proposed Cannon Falls Energy Center
T112 R17 S6 NW, Cannon Falls, Goodhue County
SHPO Number: 2004-2589

Dear Ms. Spapperi:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above project. It has been reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given the Minnesota Historical Society by the Minnesota Historic Sites Act and the Minnesota Field Archaeology Act.

Based on our review of the project information, we conclude that there are no properties listed on the National or State Registers of Historic Places, and no known or suspected archaeological properties in the area that will be affected by this project.

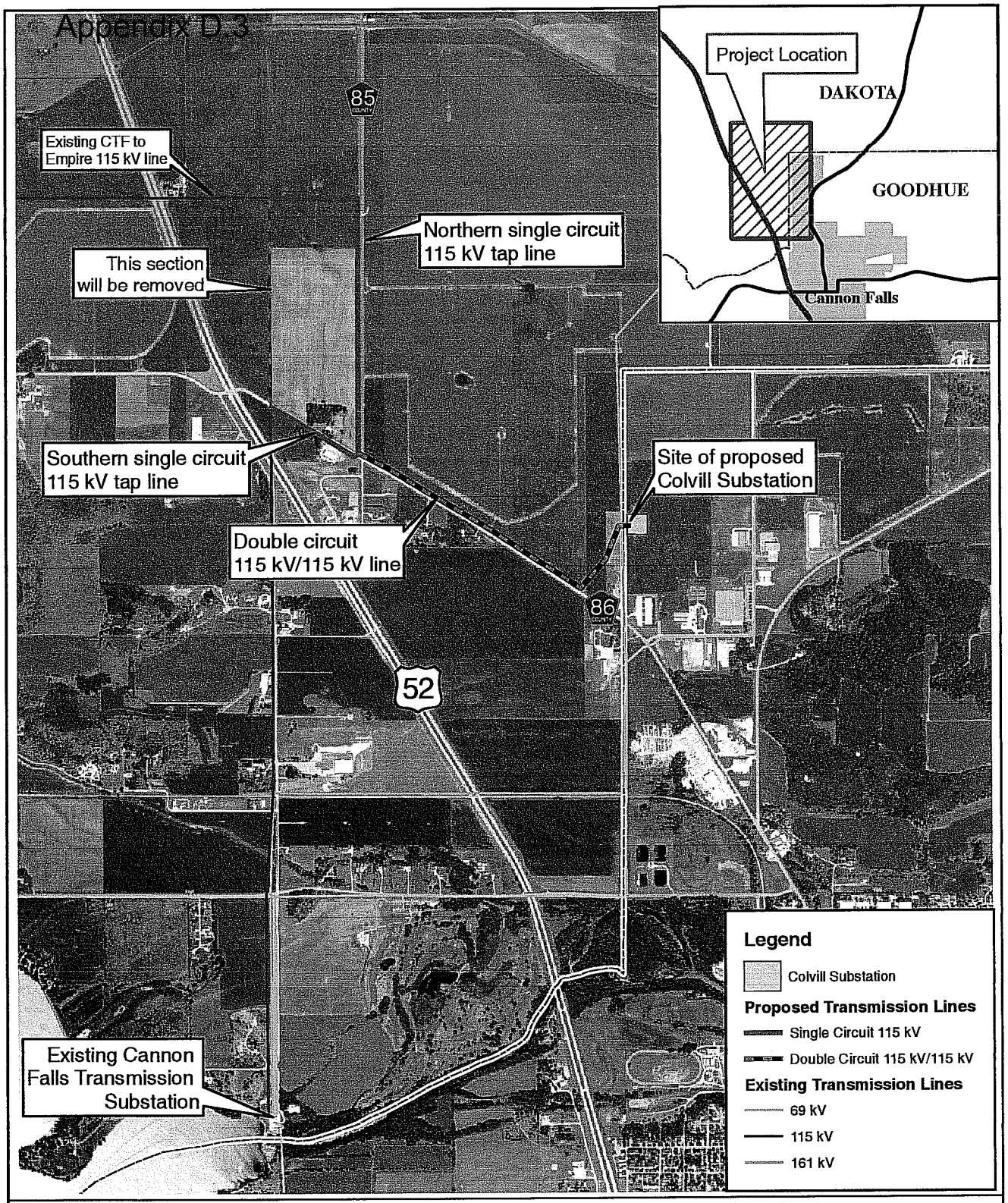
Please note that this comment letter does not address the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and 36CFR800, Procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation for the protection of historic properties. If this project is considered for federal assistance, or requires a federal permit or license, it should be submitted to our office with reference to the assisting federal agency.

Please contact Dennis Gimmestad at (651) 296-5462 if you have any questions regarding our review of this project.

Sincerely,

Britta L. Bloomberg
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

345 Kellogg Boulevard West / Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102-1906 / Telephone 651-296-6126



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Project Location Map
Cannon Falls 115 kV Tap Project
Cannon Falls, Minnesota

Xcel Energy
NORTHERN STATES POWER

Map Document: (\\mspe-gis\gisproj\gisproj\xcel\cannon_falls\map_docs\Landownermap_032806_aerial.mxd)
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Appendix D.2

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

RECEIVED
MAR 28 2006
HDR Engineering, Inc.

March 23, 2006

Ms. Angela Piner
HDR Engineering
6190 Golden Hills Drive
Minneapolis, MN 55416

RE: Cannon Falls Tap 115 kV Transmission Line, G405 Substation Construction and Expansion of the existing Cannon Falls Transmission Substation
Dakota and Goodhue Counties
SHPO Number: 2006-1341

Dear Ms. Piner:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above project. It has been reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given the Minnesota Historical Society by the Minnesota Historic Sites Act and the Minnesota Field Archaeology Act.

We believe that there is a good probability that unreported archaeological properties might be present in the project area. Therefore, we recommend that a survey of the area be completed. The survey must meet the requirements of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Identification and Evaluation, and should include an evaluation of National Register eligibility for any properties that are identified. For your information, we have enclosed a list of consultants who have expressed an interest in undertaking such surveys.

If the project area can be documented as previously disturbed or previously surveyed, we will re-evaluate the need for survey. Previously disturbed areas are those where the naturally occurring post-glacial soils and sediments have been recently removed. Any previous survey work must meet contemporary standards.

Please note that this comment letter does not address the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and 36CFR800, procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation for the protection of historic properties. If this project is considered for federal assistance, or requires a federal license or permit, it should be submitted to our office with reference to the appropriate federal agency.

If you have any questions on our review of this project, please contact me at (651) 296-5462.

Sincerely,

Kelly Gragg-Johnson

for Dennis A. Gimmestad
Government Programs and Compliance Officer

Enclosure: List of Consultants

April 12, 2006

Mr. Tod Sherman
Minnesota Department of Transportation
Program Management Section
1500 West County Road B-2
Roseville, MN 55113

RE: Cannon Falls Transmission Project

Dear Mr. Sherman:

HDR Engineering, Inc. (HDR), on behalf of Xcel Energy, contacted Mn/DOT's Metro District for comments regarding the Cannon Falls Transmission Project on February 20, 2006. Mr. Terry Zoller responded on March 20, 2006 to our inquiry. We would like to thank Mr. Zoller for his comments on the project and formally respond to Item 4 of his letter regarding traffic.

Mr. Zoller requested we contact you to review the traffic information that has been developed for the Project. Your response to our request indicated that Mn/DOT would like to review any traffic information that has been developed due to concerns that, "The increased development resulting from the proposed substation will have a significant impact on the safety and capacity of Mn/DOT's transportation infrastructure."

Our initial letter to you identified TH 52 within the Project study area. Since that time, the study area has been refined. The proposed routes for the proposed transmission line and substation (see attached map) will follow CSAH 85 and 86, and will not cross TH 52. Xcel Energy proposes to work with Dakota and Goodhue counties to address any traffic concerns that may arise during construction along these roads.

HDR Engineering, Inc.
6190 Golden Hills Drive
Minneapolis, MN 55416-1567
Phone: (763) 591-5400
Fax: (763) 591-5413
www.hdrinc.com

As described in our initial letter, this substation is being constructed for the Invenergy Power Plant. Xcel Energy does not have any plans to serve other energy loads from this substation. If there are concerns regarding Invenergy's Power Plant and impacts to traffic in the area, Xcel Energy assumes Invenergy has been working with Mn/DOT on this issue. If not, Xcel Energy can provide Mn/DOT a contact at Invenergy.

Finally, based on our knowledge of the traffic flow along CSAH 85 and 86, we believe the proposed substation and transmission will not have a significant impact on the safety and capacity of Mn/DOT's transportation infrastructure. HDR consulted the 2004 traffic volumes for Dakota County and the 2003 traffic volumes for Goodhue County for the Project. These maps identify the AADT on CSAH 86 as between 2,100 and 2,500 vehicles and 490 vehicles along CSAH 85. Following construction, there will be limited traffic to Xcel Energy's substation. It will consist primarily of maintenance staff inspecting the substation on a periodic basis.

Based on the traffic volumes along these roads, and the functional roadway capacity of roads of this type, HDR respectfully disagrees that the proposed substation and transmission infrastructure will cause significant impacts to the safety and capacity of Mn/DOT's transportation infrastructure. HDR suggests that no further studies are necessary to evaluate the potential impact of the project to the transportation infrastructure, as impacts are negligible.

Feel free to contact myself at (763) 591-5442 or Angela Piner at (763) 591-5478 if you have any further questions regarding the Cannon Falls Transmission Project.

Sincerely,
HDR Engineering, Inc.

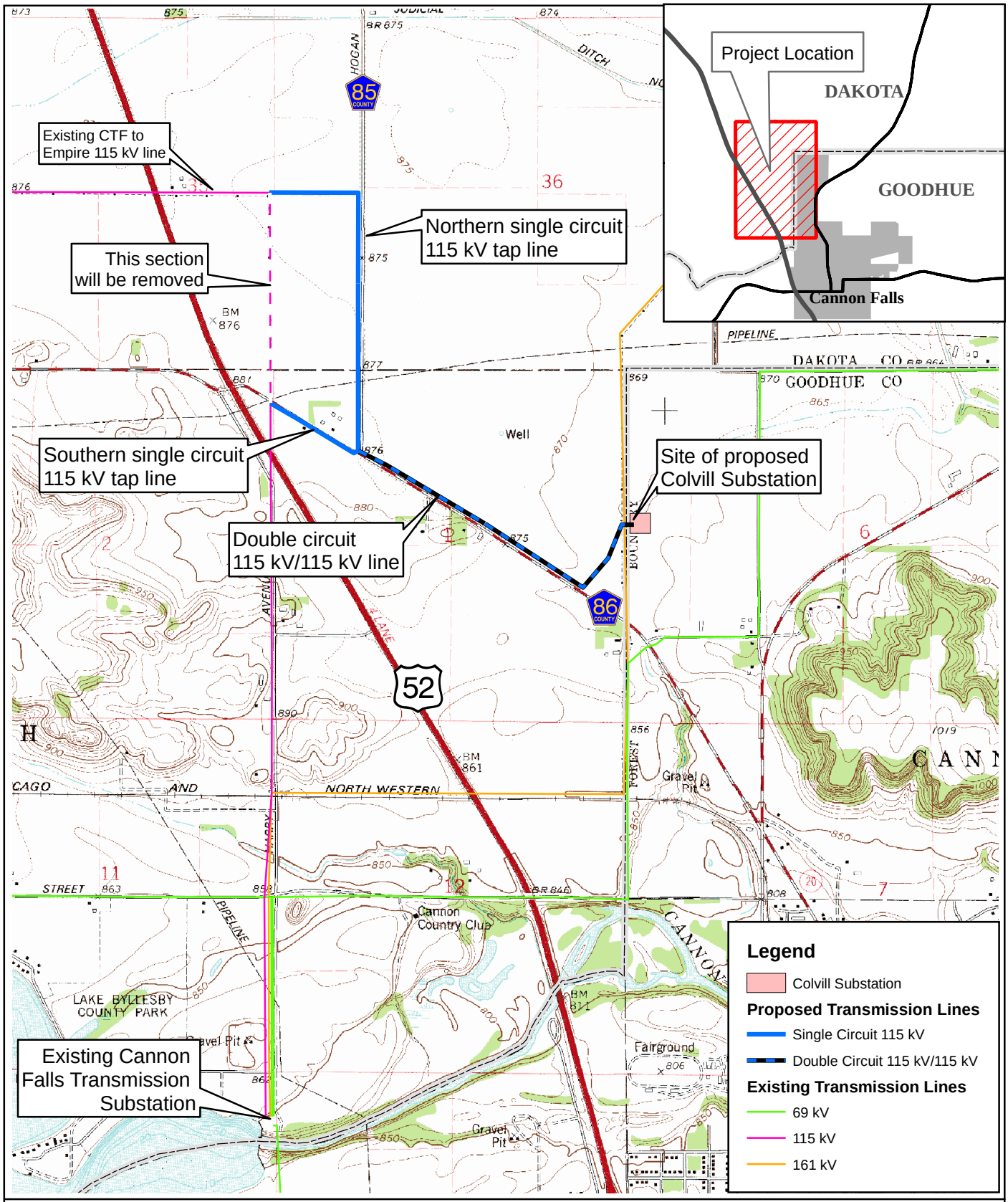
Michael Martinez

Mike Martinez, P.E.
Traffic Engineer

Angela Piner
Project Manager

Encl.

Cc: Pam Rasmussen, Xcel Energy
Terry Zoller, Metro District Construction Engineer



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Project Location Map
Cannon Falls 115 kV Tap Project
Cannon Falls, Minnesota

Xcel Energy
NORTHERN STATES POWER

Map Document: (N:\gisproj\xcel\cannon_falls\map_docs\mxd\route_permit\RoutePermit_app_b2.mxd)
3/28/2006 -- 5:21:03 PM

Appendix D.8