

# ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

**Note to preparers:** This form and EAW Guidelines are available at the Environmental Quality Board's website at: <http://www.eqb.state.mn.us/EnvRevGuidanceDocuments.htm>. The Environmental Assessment Worksheet provides information about a project that may have the potential for significant environmental effects. The EAW is prepared by the Responsible Governmental Unit or its agents to determine whether an Environmental Impact Statement should be prepared. The project proposer must supply any reasonably accessible data for — but should not complete — the final worksheet. The complete question as well as the answer must be included if the EAW is prepared electronically.

**Note to reviewers:** Comments must be submitted to the RGU during the 30-day comment period following notice of the EAW in the *EQB Monitor*. Comments should address the accuracy and completeness of information, potential impacts that warrant further investigation and the need for an EIS.

1. **Project title** 161 kV Transmission Line Project from US Highway 14 to Rochester Public Utilities Westside Substation.

2. **Proposer**

Contact person Richard Hettwer, PE, MBA  
Title Manager of Power Delivery  
Address 500 1<sup>st</sup> Ave SW  
City, state, ZIP Rochester, MN 55902-3303  
Phone 507-285-0478  
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3. **RGU**

Contact person Roger Ihrke  
Title Zoning Administrator  
Address 4111 11<sup>th</sup> Ave SW, Rm 10  
City, state, ZIP Rochester, MN 55902  
Phone 507-529-0774  
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4. **Reason for EAW preparation** (check one)

EIS scoping  Mandatory EAW  Citizen petition  RGU discretion  Proposer volunteered

If EAW or EIS is mandatory give EQB rule category 4410.4300 subpart number 6 and subpart name: Transmission lines

5. **Project location** County: Olmsted Township: Cascade

W ½, SW ¼ Section 30 and NW ¼ Section 3 Township 107N Range 14W

Tax Parcel Numbers: 74.30.33.058098; 74.30.33.073600; 74.30.32.031163; 74.30.31.076162

**Attach each of the following to the EAW:**

- County map showing the general location of the project- Figure 1;
- U.S. Geological Survey 7.5 minute, 1:24,000 scale map indicating project boundaries (photocopy acceptable) – Figure 5;
- Site plan showing all significant project and natural features – Figures 2-4.

6. **Description**

a. Provide a project summary of 50 words or less to be published in the *EQB Monitor*.

The Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMMPA) is proposing to extend a 161 kV transmission line approximately 3,000 feet from its present transmission line along US Highway 14 north to a new substation being constructed by Rochester Public Utilities.

b. Give a complete description of the proposed project and related new construction. Attach additional sheets as necessary. Emphasize construction, operation methods and features that will cause physical

manipulation of the environment or will produce wastes. Include modifications to existing equipment or industrial processes and significant demolition, removal or remodeling of existing structures. Indicate the timing and duration of construction activities.

Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMMPA) is applying for a Conditional Use Permit through the Township Cooperative Planning Association for the construction of an approximately 3,000-foot 161 kV transmission line (proposed line). The proposed line would be located in Cascade Township, in Olmsted County, Minnesota (Figure 1). The proposed line would connect the existing 161 kV transmission line that runs along Highway 14 (owned by SMMPA) to the proposed Westside Substation, which will be owned by Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) (Figure 1). This proposed line is part of a larger transmission line project (Byron-Westside Project).

The Byron-Westside Project is needed to provide additional capacity to serve customers in the Rochester area. The Byron-Westside Project was also identified in the Regional Incremental Generation Outlet Study dated August 19, 2008 as one of three recommended transmission line projects to increase the future generation outlet capability in the Pleasant Valley Substation area. The Byron-Westside Project is listed in the 2009 Minnesota Biennial Transmission Projects Report in the Southeast Zone under Section 6.7.14.

An environmental assessment must be completed prior to acceptance of an application for a conditional use permit for this project. SMMPA has notified and received confirmation from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission that Cascade Township is the local unit of government for this project.

c. Explain the project purpose; if the project will be carried out by a governmental unit, explain the need for the project and identify its beneficiaries.

The purpose of the Byron-Westside Project is to provide additional electrical transmission capacity to serve customers in the Rochester area. Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMMPA) will carry out the project.

d. Are future stages of this development including development on any other property planned or likely to happen?  Yes  No  
If yes, briefly describe future stages, relationship to present project, timeline and plans for environmental review.

e. Is this project a subsequent stage of an earlier project?  Yes  No  
If yes, briefly describe the past development, timeline and any past environmental review.

7. Project magnitude data

Total project acreage: 4.82

Number of residential units: unattached 0                      attached 0                      maximum units per building

Commercial, industrial or institutional building area (gross floor space): total square feet 0

Indicate areas of specific uses (in square feet):

Office

Manufacturing

Retail

Other industrial

Warehouse

Institutional

Light industrial

Agricultural

Other commercial (specify)

Building height

If over 2 stories, compare to heights of nearby buildings

8. **Permits and approvals required.** List all known local, state and federal permits, approvals and financial assistance for the project. Include modifications of any existing permits, governmental review of plans and all direct and indirect forms of public financial assistance including bond guarantees, Tax Increment Financing and infrastructure. *All of these final decisions are prohibited until all appropriate environmental review has been completed. See Minnesota Rules, Chapter 4410.3100.*

<u>Unit of government</u>	<u>Type of application</u>	<u>Status</u>
Cascade Township	Conditional Use Permit	Pending Environmental Assessment

9. **Land use.** Describe current and recent past land use and development on the site and on adjacent lands. Discuss project compatibility with adjacent and nearby land uses. Indicate whether any potential conflicts involve environmental matters. Identify any potential environmental hazards due to past site uses, such as soil contamination or abandoned storage tanks, or proximity to nearby hazardous liquid or gas pipelines.

The proposed line will be within a seventy five foot easement running north from the present line along US Highway 14. First it will cross one hundred feet of the Dakota Minnesota and Eastern Railroad right-of way into a platted rural commercial development for an additional 824 feet and then continue north along a parcel of property presently owned by the City of Rochester. Within the commercial development it will pass over a temporary cul-de-sac at the end of 15<sup>th</sup> St. NW.

The easement will pass through two platted commercial lots within the commercial subdivision. Veit Disposal Systems operates a transfer station on one of the parcels and Grand Lux Storages operates a storage business on the other. Both lot owners have signed easement agreements with the applicant.

The proposed use lies within the 25 year Urban Service Area for the City of Rochester on the Olmsted County Land Use Plan Map. The extension is to service future growth for the City of Rochester and is consistent with the Olmsted County Land Use Plan.

There are no known environmental hazards within the vicinity of the proposed line. Based on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Tank Database (MPCA 2010), there are no underground storage tanks registered within the proposed right-of-way.

The Karst Feature Inventory Database (University of Minnesota and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources 2003) indicates that no areas of karst have been documented within one mile of the proposed line. In addition, the Olmsted County Interactive GIS Mapping website (Olmsted County 2010) does not report any sinkholes within the vicinity of the proposed line.

10. **Cover types.** Estimate the acreage of the site with each of the following cover types before and after development:

	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>		<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>
Types 1-8 wetlands			Lawn/landscaping	1.48	1.48
Wooded/forest			Impervious surfaces		
Brush/Grassland			Stormwater Pond		
Cropland	3.32	3.32	Other (describe)		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.8</b>			

If Before and After totals are not equal, explain why:

11. **Fish, wildlife and ecologically sensitive resources**  
a. Identify fish and wildlife resources and habitats on or near the site and describe how they would be affected by the project. Describe any measures to be taken to minimize or avoid impacts.

Barr Engineering provided the following data. The landscape surrounding the proposed route is primarily agricultural and industrial, therefore; the construction of the proposed line is not likely to impact sensitive biological resources. There are no biologically significant areas such as Minnesota

County Biological Survey native plant communities, Scientific and Natural Areas, Sites of Biodiversity Significance, or wildlife management areas within 500 feet of the proposed route (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR) 1980, 1986, 1987, and 2006). In order to determine whether threatened or endangered species have been documented within and around the proposed route, Barr queried the MnDNR Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS) database (MnDNR 2009) on March 2, 2010. Barr maintains a license agreement with the MnDNR which allows access to the locations of documented occurrences of listed species and rare biological resources (License Number LA-501). In order to protect listed species, exact locations of species are not shown on Figure 2.

Within one mile of the proposed route, the NHIS database identified three rare resources; these include the state-threatened timber rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*); the rattlesnake-master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*), a state-special concern vascular plant; and a rare ecological/geological feature, a Sedimentary Unit or Sequence (Ordovician) (Figure 2). No federally listed threatened or endangered species have been documented within one mile of the proposed route.

The ideal habitat of the timber rattlesnake consists of forested bluffs, south-facing rock outcrops, and bluff prairies, particularly in the Mississippi River Valley (MnDNR 2010a). The rattlesnake-master prefers upland prairies on well-drained soils (MnDNR 2010b). The landscape surrounding the proposed route is relatively flat and agricultural/industrial; therefore it is not likely that suitable habitat would be present for the timber rattlesnake or the rattlesnake-master. Because of this, it is not likely that the proposed route would impact timber rattlesnake or rattlesnake-master individuals or populations. The Sedimentary Unit or Sequence would not be impacted by the proposed route, as this ecological/geological feature is located over three-quarters of a mile from the proposed route.

b. Are any state-listed (endangered, threatened or special concern) species, rare plant communities or other sensitive ecological resources on or near the site?  Yes  No  
If yes, describe the resource and how it would be affected by the project. Describe any measures that will be taken to minimize or avoid adverse impacts. Provide the license agreement number (LA-501) and/or Division of Ecological Resources contact number (ERDB ) from which the data were obtained and attach the response letter from the DNR Division of Ecological Resources. Indicate if any additional survey work has been conducted within the site and describe the results.

Barr queried the MnDNR Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS) database (MnDNR 2009) on March 2, 2010. Barr maintains a license agreement with the MnDNR which allows access to the locations of documented occurrences of listed species and rare biological resources (License Number LA-501). The NHIS database identified the area as part of the habitat for the timber rattlesnake, however there were no known observations within or near the project area. The ideal habitat of the timber rattlesnake consists of forested bluffs, south-facing rock outcrops, and bluff prairies, particularly in the Mississippi River Valley (MnDNR 2010a). The landscape surrounding the proposed route is relatively flat and agricultural/industrial; therefore it is not likely that suitable habitat would be present for the timber rattlesnake. Because of this, it is not likely that the proposed route would impact the timber rattlesnake.

12. **Physical impacts on water resources.** Will the project involve the physical or hydrologic alteration — dredging, filling, stream diversion, outfall structure, diking, and impoundment — of any surface waters such as a lake, pond, wetland, stream or drainage ditch?  Yes  No  
If yes, identify water resource affected and give the DNR Public Waters Inventory number(s) if the water resources affected are on the PWI: \_\_\_\_\_ Describe alternatives considered and proposed mitigation measures to minimize impacts.
13. **Water use.** Will the project involve installation or abandonment of any water wells, connection to or changes in any public water supply or appropriation of any ground or surface water (including dewatering)?  Yes  No  
If yes, as applicable, give location and purpose of any new wells; public supply affected, changes to be made, and water quantities to be used; the source, duration, quantity and purpose of any

appropriations; and unique well numbers and DNR appropriation permit numbers, if known. Identify any existing and new wells on the site map. If there are no wells known on site, explain methodology used to determine.

Impacts to groundwater resources are not anticipated from construction or operation of the proposed line. There are no wells located within the proposed route (Figure 3). The six poles that would be installed for the proposed line would only be approximately 11 feet deep.

14. **Water-related land use management district.** Does any part of the project involve a shoreland zoning district, a delineated 100-year flood plain, or a state or federally designated wild or scenic river land use district?  Yes  No  
If yes, identify the district and discuss project compatibility with district land use restrictions.

Water resources within the vicinity of the proposed route are shown on Figure 3. The proposed route will have two stream crossings, one of which is a MnDNR Public Water Inventory (PWI) stream (Figure 3). Both streams will be spanned, which will avoid the need for placement of any transmission line structures (poles) within them. Because of this, impacts to streams are not anticipated from construction or operation of the proposed route. However, Ulteig (on behalf of SMMPA) will apply for a License to Cross Public Lands and Waters in order to obtain permission to cross the unnamed PWI that flows through the proposed route.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has not conducted detailed floodplain mapping within the portion of Olmsted County where the proposed route is located. The Olmsted County Interactive GIS Mapping website (Olmsted County 2010) was used to assess the presence of floodplain and/or hydric soils within the proposed route (Figure 3). With the exception of a small portion of the proposed route, just east of 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW, the majority of the proposed route is located on the following mapped floodplain soils: Sawmill Silty Clay Loam, Radford Silt Loam, and Arenzville Silt Loam (Figure 3) (United States Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service 1980). Only the northernmost ~900 feet of the proposed route would be located on mapped hydric soil: the Sawmill Silty Clay Loam (Figure 3). The Olmsted County Interactive GIS Mapping website (Olmsted County 2010) was also used to identify the flooding frequency of soils mapped within the proposed route (Figure 3). Frequent flooding is typically associated with both the Sawmill Silty Clay Loam and the Arenzville Silt Loam and only occasional flooding is associated with the Radford Silt Loam (Figure 3). Three of the six poles that would be installed for this project will be placed in mapped floodplain and hydric soil (Figure 3), two poles will be placed in mapped floodplain soil that is not hydric, and one pole will be placed in upland soil (Figure 3). It is anticipated that the placement of poles in floodplain soils will have an insignificant impact on flood levels.

Impacts to groundwater resources are not anticipated from construction or operation of the proposed line. There are no wells located within the proposed route (Figure 3). The six poles that would be installed for the proposed line would only be approximately 11 feet deep.

According to the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) (United States Fish and Wildlife Service 1977), there are no wetlands within at least 1,500 feet of the proposed route.

15. **Water surface use.** Will the project change the number or type of watercraft on any water body?  
 Yes  No

If yes, indicate the current and projected watercraft usage and discuss any potential overcrowding or conflicts with other uses.

16. **Erosion and sedimentation.** Give the acreage to be graded or excavated and the cubic yards of soil to be moved:  
acres 0; cubic yards 64. Describe any steep slopes or highly erodible soils and identify them on the site map. Describe any erosion and sedimentation control measures to be used during and after project construction.

There are no steep slopes identified within the project area (using the one-meter Digital Elevation Model (DEM) for Olmstead County, Southeast Minnesota Lidar Project, MnDNR, 2008).

The soil series in the project area are identified as Not Highly Erodible Land (NHEL) (USDA/NRCS eFOTG Section II, Olmstead County Soil Data).

Construction of the proposed project will require temporary disturbances to soil, with six poles placed for the approximately 3,000-foot long proposed line (Figure 3). However, Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be used during and after construction in order to minimize the potential for impacts to water resources. If water sources are located downslope from the pole locations and soil piles, BMPs, such as silt fences and/or straw bales would be used to prevent erosion and the potential for sediment to enter any water resources.

**17. Water quality: surface water runoff**

a. Compare the quantity and quality of site runoff before and after the project. Describe permanent controls to manage or treat runoff. Describe any stormwater pollution prevention plans.

There should be no comparable differences in surface water quality from the site once the poles are in place and the temporary erosion control measures are removed. Water should be able to move freely around the poles.

b. Identify routes and receiving water bodies for runoff from the site; include major downstream water bodies as well as the immediate receiving waters. Estimate impact runoff on the quality of receiving waters.

Surface water run off from this area flows south and east into an unnamed tributary of Cascade Creek. Cascade Creek flows into the Zumbro River and then onto the Mississippi River. If Best Management Practices (BMPs) are used during construction and reseeding takes place, there should be no significant impacts on water quality.

**18. Water quality: wastewaters**

a. Describe sources, composition and quantities of all sanitary, municipal and industrial wastewater produced or treated at the site.

During construction portable toilets will be provided for workers, otherwise no wastewaters should be generated from the site once work is complete.

b. Describe waste treatment methods or pollution prevention efforts and give estimates of composition after treatment. Identify receiving waters, including major downstream water bodies (identifying any impaired waters), and estimate the discharge impact on the quality of receiving waters. If the project involves on-site sewage systems, discuss the suitability of site conditions for such systems.

See 18a.

c. If wastes will be discharged into a publicly owned treatment facility, identify the facility, describe any pretreatment provisions and discuss the facility's ability to handle the volume and composition of wastes, identifying any improvements necessary.

Wastes from the portable toilets will be taken to a municipal wastewater treatment facility.

**19. Geologic hazards and soil conditions**

a. Approximate depth (in feet) to ground water: 25-28 feet to bedrock: 72-82 feet.

Depth to bedrock and the ground water was determined using wells near the project area identified in the County Well Index (Minnesota Geological Survey).

Describe any of the following geologic site hazards to ground water and also identify them on the site map: sinkholes, shallow limestone formations or karst conditions. Describe measures to avoid or minimize environmental problems due to any of these hazards.

There are no sinkholes, shallow limestone formations or karst conditions located within or near the project area. See Question 9.

b. Describe the soils on the site, giving NRCS (SCS) classifications, if known. Discuss soil texture and potential for groundwater contamination from wastes or chemicals spread or spilled onto the soils. Discuss any mitigation measures to prevent such contamination.

The soils within the project area include Arenzville Silt Loam (Typic Udifluvents, coarse-silty, mixed, nonacid, mesic), Radford Silt Loam (Fluvaquentic Hapludolls, fine-silty, mixed, mesic), and Sawmill Silty Clay Loam (Cumulic Endoaquolls, fine-silty, mixed, mesic) (USDA-NRCS 1980). The drainage classes for these soils range from moderately well drained to poorly drained. These fine textured soils (silt and clay) have reduced permeability, therefore, the potential for groundwater contamination is low. Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be used during and after construction in order to minimize the potential for groundwater contamination.

**20. Solid wastes, hazardous wastes, storage tanks**

a. Describe types, amounts and compositions of solid or hazardous wastes, including solid animal manure, sludge and ash, produced during construction and operation. Identify method and location of disposal. For projects generating municipal solid waste, indicate if there is a source separation plan; describe how the project will be modified for recycling. If hazardous waste is generated, indicate if there is a hazardous waste minimization plan and routine hazardous waste reduction assessments.

N/A

b. Identify any toxic or hazardous materials to be used or present at the site and identify measures to be used to prevent them from contaminating groundwater. If the use of toxic or hazardous materials will lead to a regulated waste, discharge or emission, discuss any alternatives considered to minimize or eliminate the waste, discharge or emission.

N/A

c. Indicate the number, location, size and use of any above or below ground tanks to store petroleum products or other materials, except water. Describe any emergency response containment plans.

N/A

**21. Traffic. Parking spaces added: 0**

Existing spaces (if project involves expansion): 0

Estimated total average daily traffic generated: 0

Estimated maximum peak hour traffic generated and time of occurrence: 0

Indicate source of trip generation rates used in the estimates. 0

*If the peak hour traffic generated exceeds 250 vehicles or the total daily trips exceeds 2,500, a traffic impact study must be prepared as part of the EAW. Using the format and procedures described in the Minnesota Department of Transportation's Traffic Impact Study Guidance (available at: <http://www.oim.dot.state.mn.us/access/pdfs/Chapter%205.pdf>) or a similar local guidance, provide an estimate of the impact on traffic congestion on affected roads and describe any traffic improvements necessary. The analysis must discuss the project's impact on the regional transportation system.*

Traffic movement during construction would be minimal. Most of the project will take place on the easement. During the actual placing of the transmission line, coordination with the railroad will take place to prevent any interruption of rail service.

Construction of the proposed line would not likely affect traffic. Approximately six vehicles (one material handler, one crane, two bucket trucks, and a few pick-up trucks) would be used to complete the construction; however it is unlikely that all six vehicles would be present on site at the same time. Access would be made primarily from 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW and SMMPA would seek approval from Cascade Township to drive along the existing easement.

22. **Vehicle-related air emissions.** Estimate the effect of the project's traffic generation on air quality, including carbon monoxide levels. Discuss the effect of traffic improvements or other mitigation measures on air quality impacts.

There will not be any stationary sources of air emissions associated with the construction or operation of the proposed line. Emissions from trucks and other equipment utilized during construction are expected to be minor and temporary.

23. **Stationary source air emissions.** Describe the type, sources, quantities and compositions of any emissions from stationary sources of air emissions such as boilers, exhaust stacks or fugitive dust sources. Include any hazardous air pollutants (consult *EAW Guidelines* for a listing) and any greenhouse gases (such as carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide) and ozone-depleting chemicals (chloro-fluorocarbons, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons or sulfur hexafluoride). Also describe any proposed pollution prevention techniques and proposed air pollution control devices. Describe the impacts on air quality.

N/A

24. **Odors, noise and dust.** Will the project generate odors, noise or dust during construction or during operation?  Yes  No  
If yes, describe sources, characteristics, duration, quantities or intensity and any proposed measures to mitigate adverse impacts. Also identify locations of nearby sensitive receptors and estimate impacts on them. Discuss potential impacts on human health or quality of life. (Note: fugitive dust generated by operations may be discussed at item 23 instead of here.)

See 22

25. **Nearby resources.** Are any of the following resources on or in proximity to the site?

Archaeological, historical or architectural resources?  Yes  No

Prime or unique farmlands or land within an agricultural preserve?  Yes  No

Designated parks, recreation areas or trails?  Yes  No

Scenic views and vistas?  Yes  No

Other unique resources?  Yes  No

If yes, describe the resource and identify any project-related impacts on the resource. Describe any measures to minimize or avoid adverse impacts.

26. **Visual impacts.** Will the project create adverse visual impacts during construction or operation? Such as glare from intense lights, lights visible in wilderness areas and large visible plumes from cooling towers or exhaust stacks?  Yes  No

If yes, explain.

27. **Compatibility with plans and land use regulations.** Is the project subject to an adopted local comprehensive plan, land use plan or regulation, or other applicable land use, water, or resource management plan of a local, regional, state or federal agency?  Yes  No.  
If yes, describe the plan, discuss its compatibility with the project and explain how any conflicts will be resolved. If no, explain.

The proposal is consistent with the Olmsted County Land Use Plan.

28. **Impact on infrastructure and public services.** Will new or expanded utilities, roads, other infrastructure or public services be required to serve the project?  Yes  No.  
If yes, describe the new or additional infrastructure or services needed. (Note: any infrastructure that is a connected action with respect to the project must be assessed in the EAW; see *EAW Guidelines* for details.)

This proposal is a part of the expansion of a public utility.

29. **Cumulative potential effects.** Minnesota Rule part 4410.1700, subpart 7, item B requires that the RGU consider the "cumulative potential effects of related or anticipated future projects" when determining the need for an environmental impact statement.  
Identify any past, present or reasonably foreseeable future projects that may interact with the project described in this EAW in such a way as to cause cumulative potential effects. (Such future projects would be those that are actually planned or for which a basis of expectation has been laid.)  
Describe the nature of the cumulative potential effects and summarize any other available information relevant to determining whether there is potential for significant environmental effects due to these cumulative effects (*or discuss each cumulative potential effect under appropriate item(s) elsewhere on this form*)

There are no residences located within the vicinity of the proposed route (Figure 4). Impacts from the proposed line on noise, odors, or dust are expected to be minimal and temporary. These impacts would likely occur during construction activities and would occur during daytime work hours only. It is estimated that construction of the proposed line would take approximately two to three weeks to complete. Once construction activities are completed, the noise, odor, and dust levels within the vicinity of the proposed route would return to their original background levels. Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be used to minimize dust levels. Debris accumulated during construction of the proposed line would be hauled to an approved disposal site.

As previously discussed, the proposed route is located within an area with industrial buildings and agricultural fields. With the exception of pole structures, the proposed line will not likely interfere with environmental corridors or open space.

Although the proposed line would be constructed in an agricultural area, with soils designated as Prime Farmland (Figure 4), the proposed route will include an existing 40-foot wide easement and the acquisition of an additional 38 feet of easement on adjacent industrial/agricultural land. Because of this, impacts to agricultural resources would be minimal. Agricultural uses will most likely be discontinued in the future because the area of the proposed development is located within the 25 Year Urban Service Area for the City of Rochester on the Olmsted County Land Use Plan Map. As mentioned in Section 1.0, the proposed line is part of a larger transmission line project (Byron-Westside Project) designed to provide additional community service reliability and to support generation outlet capability in the area.

30. **Other potential environmental impacts.** If the project may cause any adverse environmental impacts not addressed by items 1 to 28, identify and discuss them here, along with any proposed mitigation.

Potential impacts to environmentally sensitive lands, such as wetlands, floodplains, sinkholes, and native plant communities are discussed in previous sections. There are no areas of forested cover along the entire route, so forest resources will not be impacted. In addition, no bluffland or slopes greater than 18 percent would be impacted by the proposed project, as the landscape surrounding the proposed line is relatively flat so these resources are not present. The location of the proposed route is on the Gray Drift Pleistocene/Pre-Wisconsinan geologic feature (Land Management Information Center et al. 1985). Aside from the unique geological feature mentioned above in Questions 9 and 11, which would not be impacted by the proposed project, there do not appear to be any additional unique geologic resources within the vicinity of the proposed transmission line (University of Minnesota-Duluth et al. 2003).

It is anticipated that the proposed route would not impact cultural resources. On February 22, 2010, Barr requested information from the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding the presence of cultural resources (archaeological and historical) within the vicinity of the proposed transmission line. According to SHPO, no archaeological resources are present within the proposed route. However, SHPO reports the presence of historical resources within the area surrounding the proposed route; with the nearest historical resource located approximately 600 feet from the northernmost portion of the proposed route (Figure 4). All of the historical resources recorded within the vicinity of the proposed route are classified as farmsteads. Because the proposed route includes an existing easement and an adjacent industrial/agricultural land easement, impacts to these farmsteads are not anticipated.

31. **Summary of issues.** *Do not complete this section if the EAW is being done for EIS scoping; instead, address relevant issues in the draft Scoping Decision document, which must accompany the EAW.*

List any impacts and issues identified above that may require further investigation before the project is begun. Discuss any alternatives or mitigative measures that have been or may be considered for these impacts and issues, including those that have been or may be ordered as permit conditions.

A public comment period will be announced by publication in the Rochester Post Bulletin for the EAW and a public hearing will be duly held for the Conditional Use Permit by Cascade Township. Any addition mitigative measures will be addressed during that process.

**RGU CERTIFICATION.** *(The Environmental Quality Board will only accept SIGNED Environmental Assessment Worksheets for public notice in the EQB Monitor.)*

**I hereby certify that:**

- The information contained in this document is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge.
- The EAW describes the complete project; there are no other projects, stages or components other than those described in this document, which are related to the project as connected actions or phased actions, as defined at Minnesota Rules, parts 4410.0200, subparts 9b and 60, respectively.
- Copies of this EAW are being sent to the entire EQB distribution list.

Signature

*Regan P. Inke*

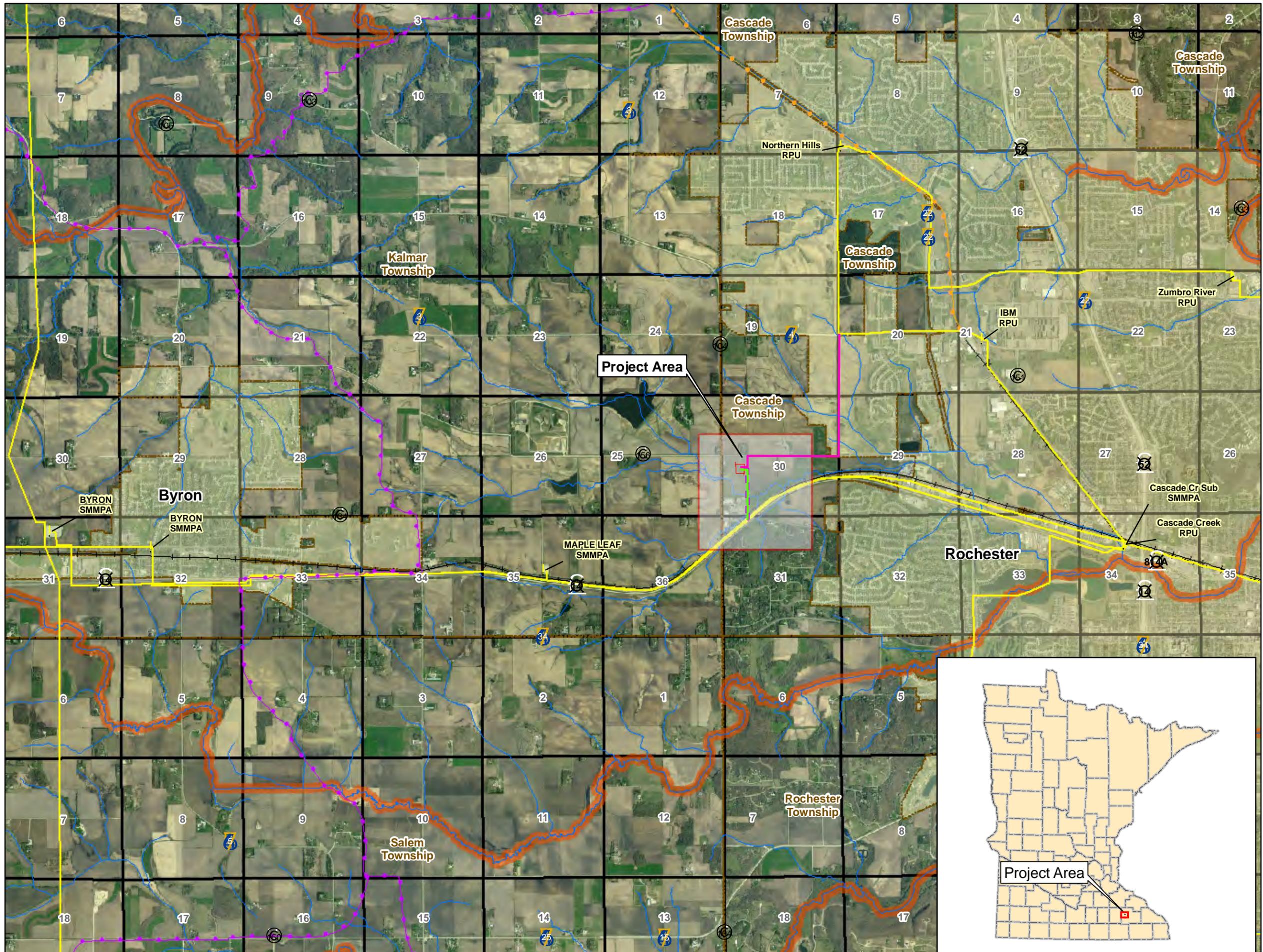
Date

*5/10/10*

Title

*Adm.*

**Environmental Assessment Worksheet** was prepared by the staff of the Environmental Quality Board at the Minnesota Department of Administration, Office of Geographic and Demographic Analysis. For additional information, worksheets or for *EAW Guidelines*, contact: Environmental Quality Board, 658 Cedar St., St. Paul, MN 55155, 651-201-2492, or <http://www.eqb.state.mn.us>



- Project Area
- Townships
- City Boundaries
- Sections
- Existing Transmission Line
- Proposed 161 kV (SMMPA)
- Proposed 161 kV (RPU)
- Proposed Easement (Approximate)
- Proposed Substation Boundary (Approximate)
- Stream/River
- TMDL (Impaired) Streams
- Existing Substation
- State (DNR) Trail
- Snowmobile Trail
- Railroads

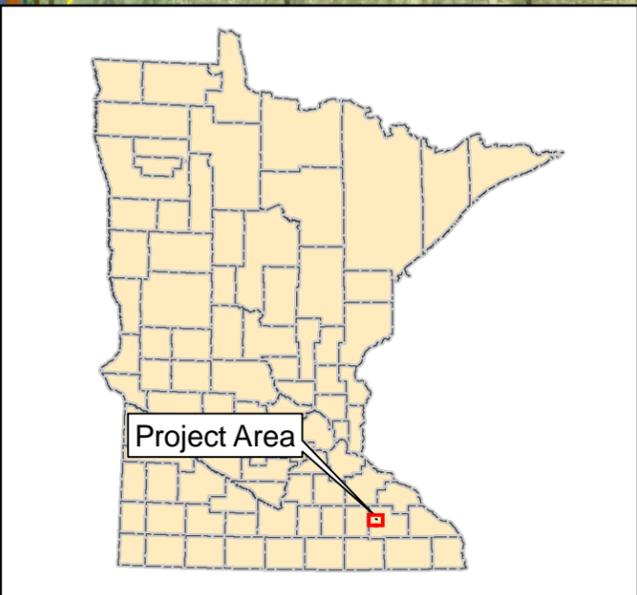
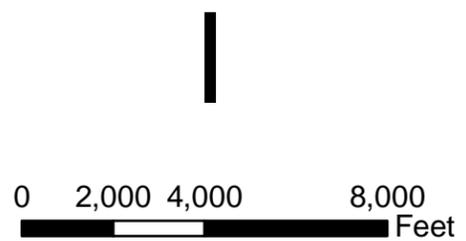
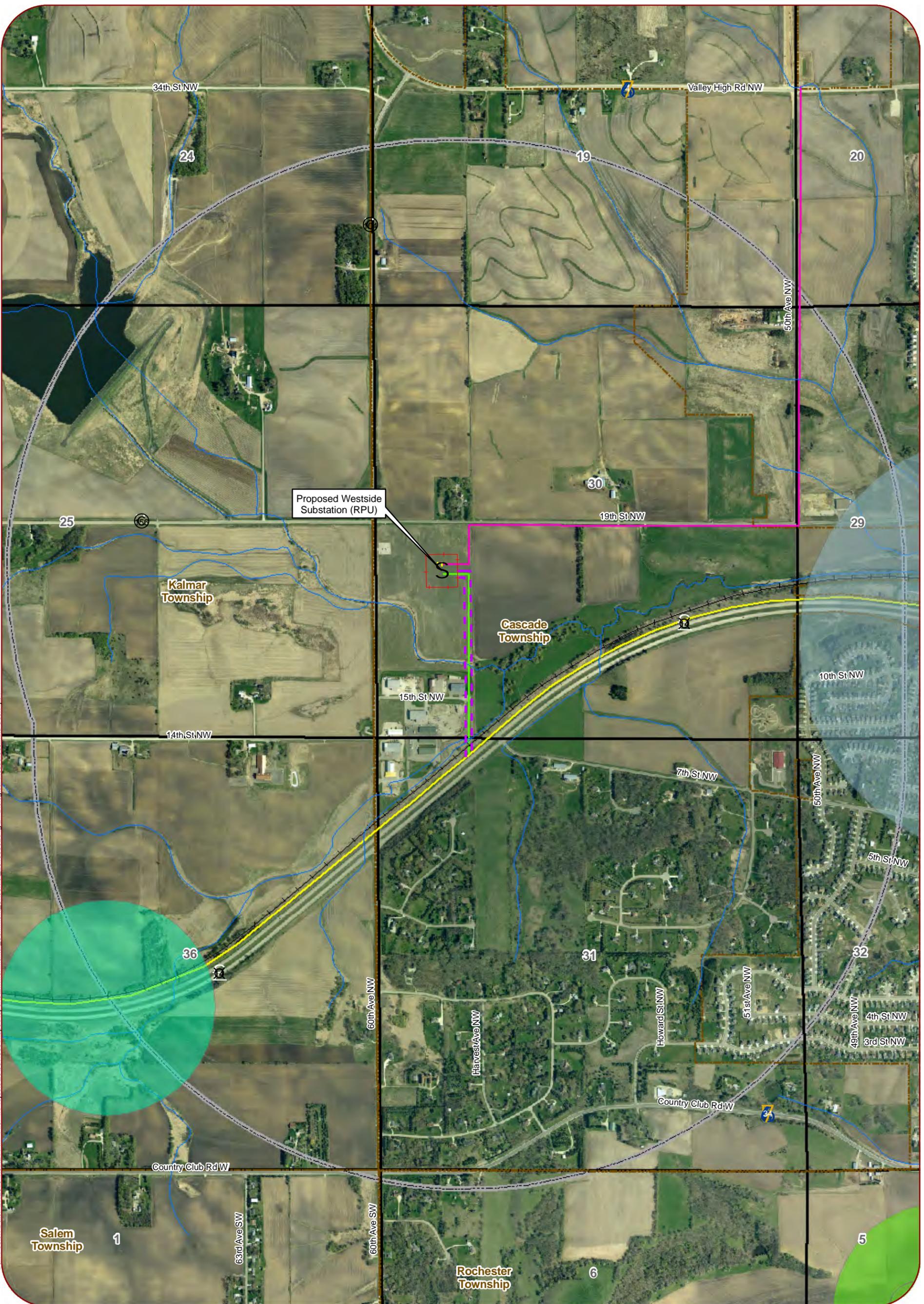


Figure - 1  
**PROJECT LOCATION**  
 Byron-Westside Project  
 SMMPA  
 Olmsted County, MN

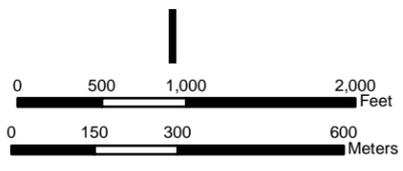
Barr Footer: Date: 4/7/2010 1:07:24 PM File: I:\Projects\231551009\Maps\Reports\Environmental Comment Checklist\_20100302\Fig 2 - Biological Resources.mxd User: jlb4



2009 Aerial Photo

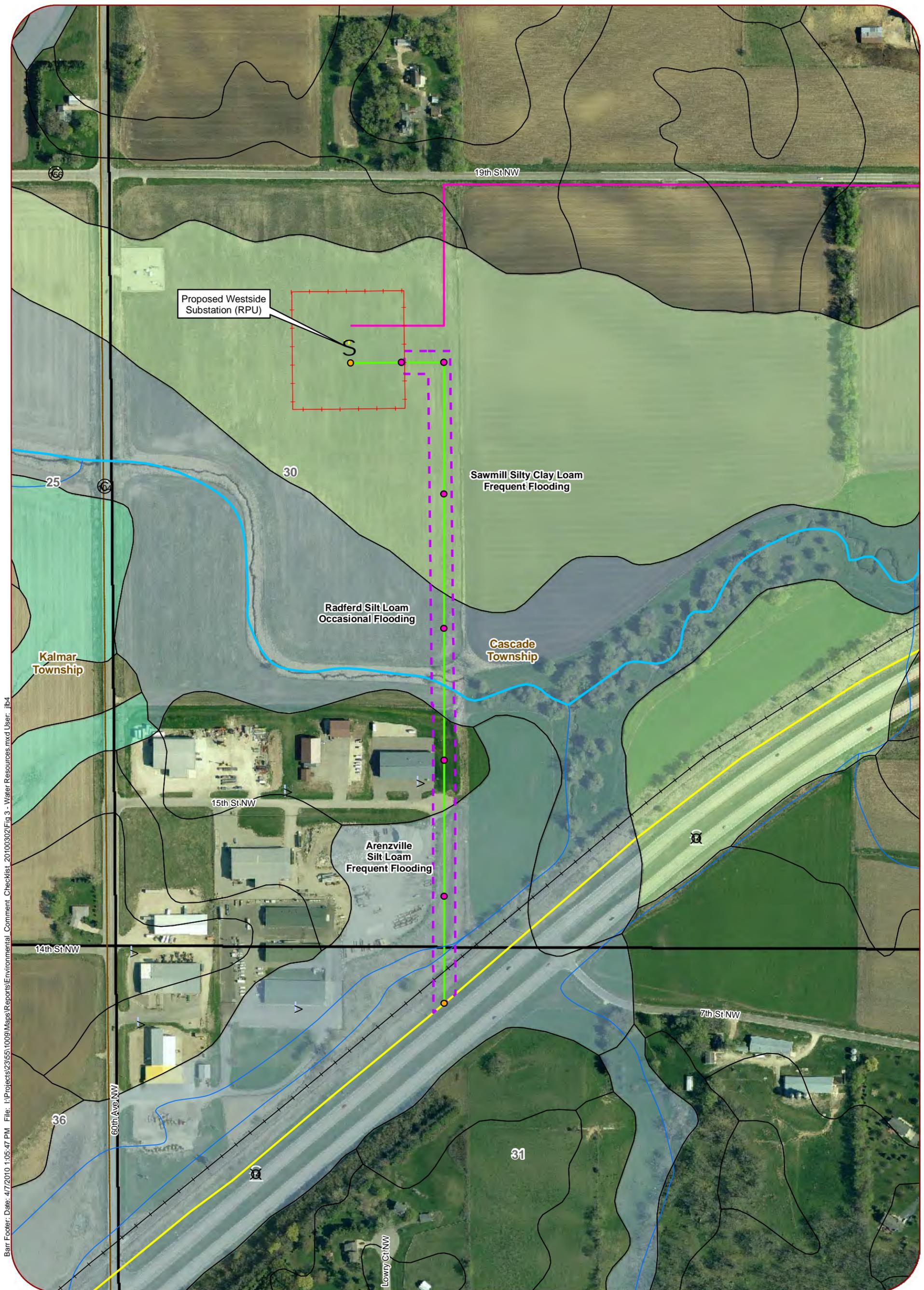
- Existing 161 kV (SMMPA)
- Proposed 161 kV (SMMPA)
- Proposed 161 kV (RPU)
- Proposed Easement (Approximate)
- Proposed Substation Boundary (Approximate)
- Proposed Substation (Approximate)
- 1 mile buffer
- Existing Substation
- Townships
- Sections
- +— Railroads
- Stream/River

- MN DNR Natural Heritage**
- Botanical\*
  - Ecological
  - Zoological\*\*



**Figure 2**  
**BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**  
 Byron-Westside  
 SMMPA  
 Olmsted County, MN

\*No sites of biological significance were found within 500 feet of the proposed route.  
 \*\*All of Olmsted County is listed in the MndNR Natural Heritage database for *Crotalus horridus* (Timber Rattlesnake).



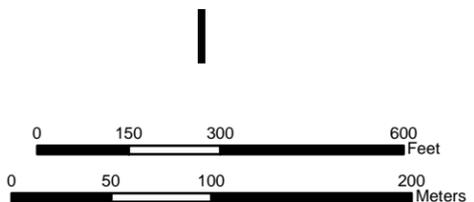
Barr Footer: Date: 4/7/2010 1:05:47 PM File: I:\Projects\23551009\Maps\Reports\Environmental Comment Checklist\_20100302\Fig 3 - Water Resources.mxd User: jlb4

2009 Aerial Photo

- Existing 161 kV (SMMPA)
- Proposed 161 kV (SMMPA)
- Proposed 161 kV (RPU)
- Proposed Easement (Approximate)
- Proposed Substation Boundary (Approximate)
- S Proposed Substation (Approximate)
- Existing Substation
- Proposed Tie-Ins (Approximate)
- Proposed Pole Locations (Approximate)

- Townships
- Sections
- +— Railroads
- ~ PWI Streams
- ~ TMDL (Impaired) Streams
- ~ Stream/River
- Wetlands (NWI)\*
- > Well - County Well Index

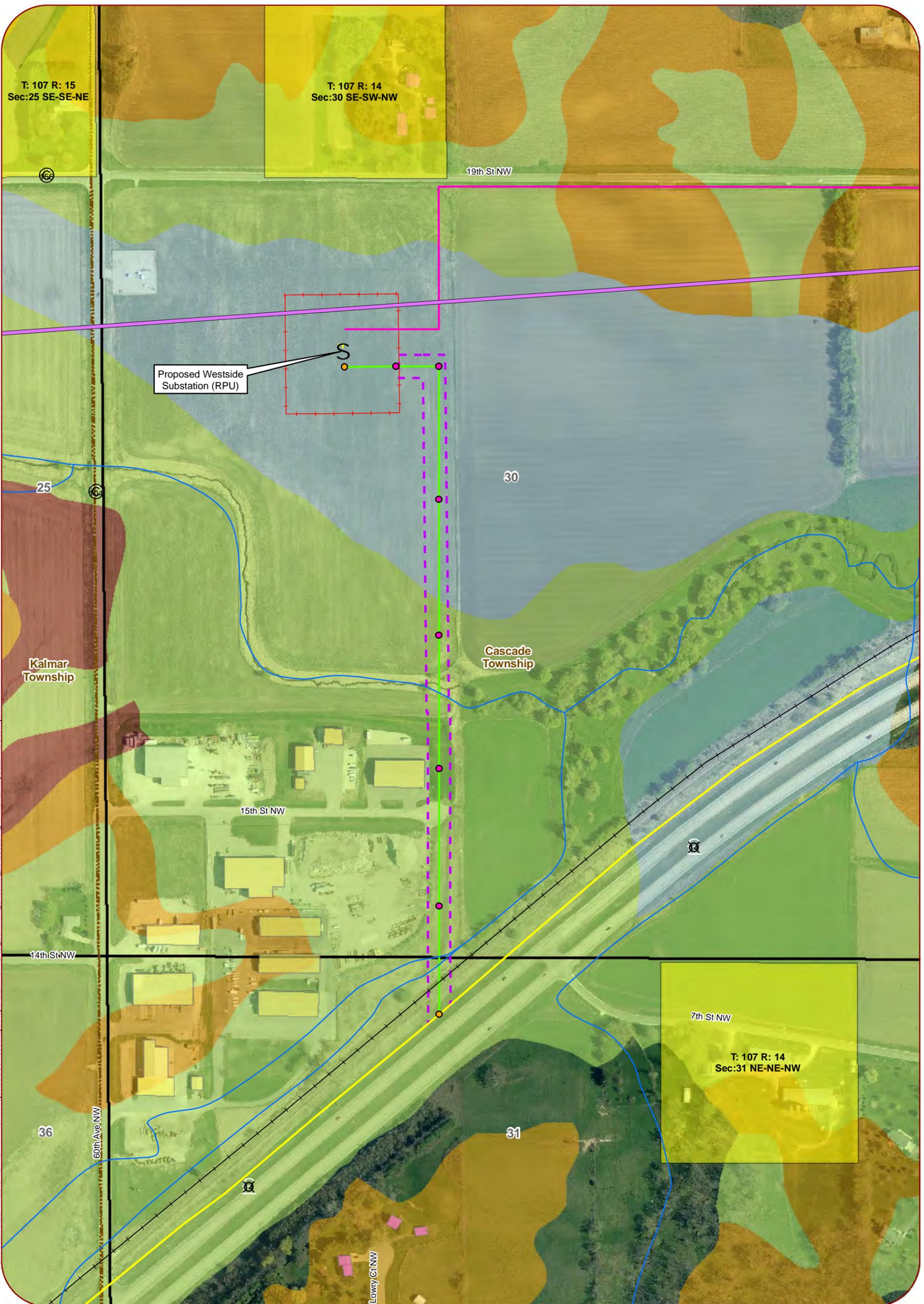
- Hydric Soil**
- Hydric Soils
  - Floodplain Soils, not hydric
  - Floodplain Soil, hydric



**Figure 3**  
**WATER RESOURCES**  
**Byron-Westside**  
**SMMPA**  
**Olmsted County, MN**

\*No NWI wetlands were found within 500 feet of the proposed route.

Barr Footer: Date: 4/7/2010 1:04:12 PM File: I:\Projects\2345\1009\Maps\Reports\Environmental Comment Checklist\_20100302\Fig 4 - Human Impacts.mxd User: jlb4

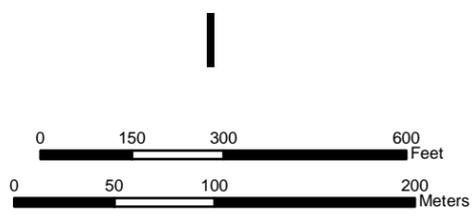


- Existing 161 kV (SMMPA)
- Proposed 161 kV (SMMPA)
- Proposed 161 kV (RPU)
- Proposed Easement (Approximate)
- Proposed Substation Boundary (Approximate)
- S Proposed Substation (Approximate)
- ! Existing Substation
- Proposed Tie-Ins (Approximate)
- Proposed Pole Locations (Approximate)

- Townships
- Sections
- Existing Pipeline
- Railroads
- Stream/River
- Historical Sites\*

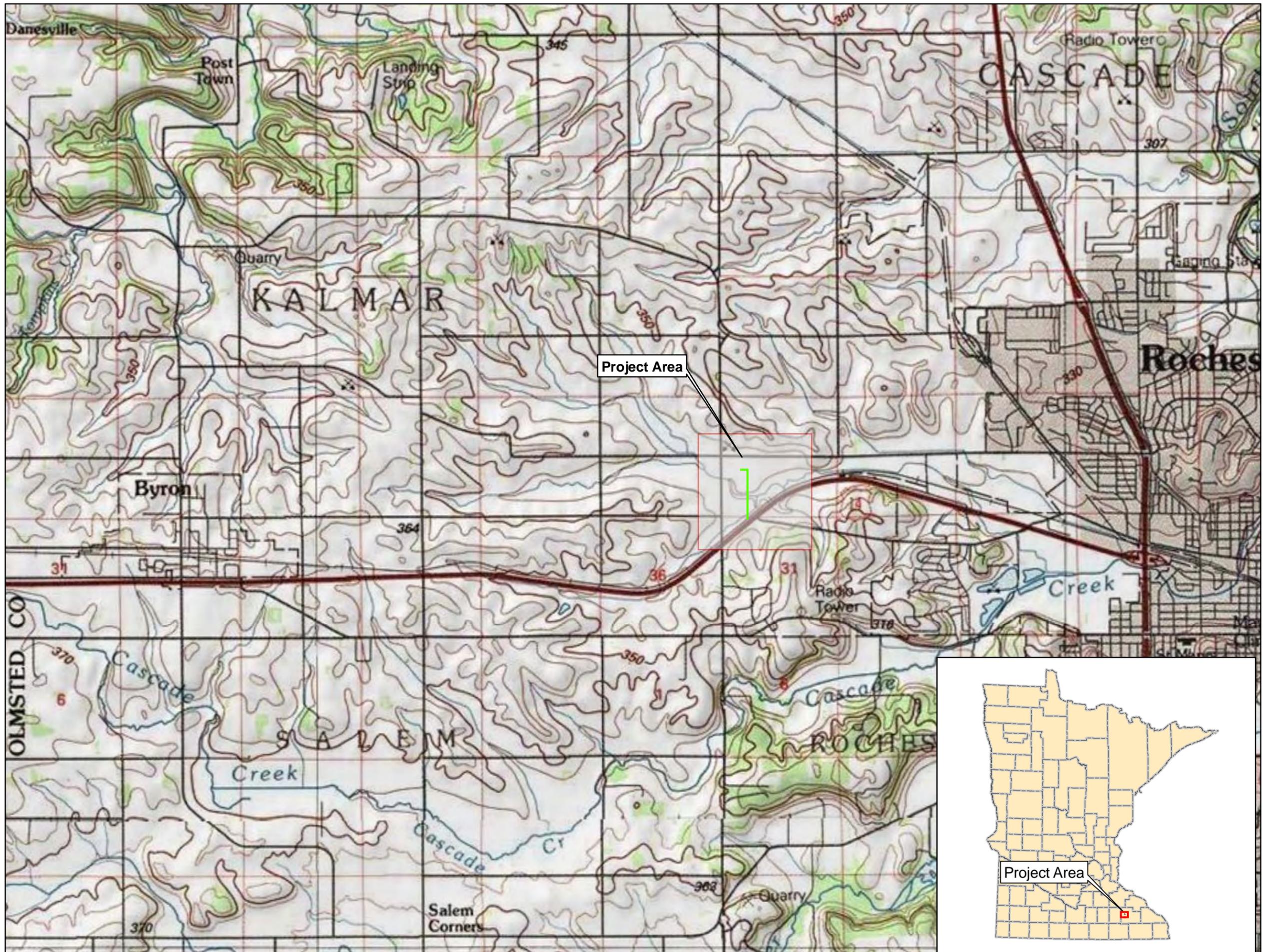
- Prime Farmland (SSURGO)**
- Prime farmland
  - Prime farmland if drained
  - Prime farmland if drained and either protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season
  - Farmland of statewide importance
- Structures (w/in 500 ft)**
- Industrial/Commercial/Garage
  - Residential

\*Exact locations of historical sites are not shown; sites are represented by quarter sections.



2009 Aerial Photo

**Figure 4**  
**HUMAN IMPACTS**  
 Byron-Westside  
 SMMPA  
 Olmsted County, MN



- Project Area
- Proposed 161 kV (SMMPA)

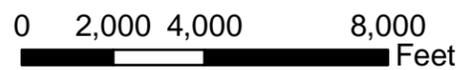


Figure - 5

USGS - 7.5 Minute Map  
 Byron-Westside Project  
 SMMPA  
 Olmsted County, MN