

PUBLIC INPUT HEARING

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 Little Missouri) FHWA-ND-EIS-18-02-D
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 River Crossing) 02-04(001), PCN 16970
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TRANSCRIPT

OF

PUBLIC INPUT HEARING

JULY 23, 2018

5:35 p.m.

TAKEN AT: MEDORA COMMUNITY CENTER
465 Pacific Avenue
Medora, North Dakota

HEARING OFFICERS: JEN TURNBOW
TROY RIPPLINGER

REPORTED BY: ELIZABETH H. LUNDQUIST

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1 A P P E A R A N C E S
2
3
4 **PRESENTERS:**
5 **JEN TURNBOW**
6 **TROY RIPPLINGER**
7
8
9
10 **PUBLIC COMMENTERS:**
11 **STEVE KLYM**
12 **JEFF IVERSON**
13 **PAT RUMMEL**
14 **DAVID KEAGLE**
15 **SANDY SHORT**
16 **KYLE SHOCKLEY**
17 **JAN SWENSON**
18 **DOUG MOSSER**
19 **ALLEN RICHARD**
20 **DOUG ELLISON**
21 **PETE WIRTZFELD**
22 **JULIE REIS**
23
24
25

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1 WHEREUPON,
2 the following proceedings were had at
3 5:33 p.m., to wit:
4 **JIM ARTHAUD:** I'd like to welcome
5 everybody to the Billings County EIS presentation.
6 My name is Jim Arthaud. I'm chairman of the
7 Billings County Commission.
8 This is a process that we've been having
9 ongoing since 2006. I'm not going to sit up here
10 and talk much about it.
11 Jen Turnbow with KLJ, who has lead the
12 project, is going to take over from here. She's
13 going to introduce some of the agency people that
14 are here.
15 And then, when we're done with the
16 presentation, everybody will have the opportunity
17 to ask questions or voice opinions.
18 And we'll all be available for -- at the
19 end of the presentation, so bear with us and have
20 some patience, and we'll try to answer everybody's
21 questions.
22 **JEN TURNBOW:** All right. Thanks, Jim.
23 Welcome. Thank you all for taking time out of
24 your days for the Little Missouri River Crossing
25 EIS Project.

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1 **PRIVATE COMMENTERS:**
2 **JOHN HILD**
3 **DON FULTON**
4 **BYRON RICHARD**
5 **WES OBRIGEWITCH**
6 **MICHAEL HEISER**
7 **JAMES CANT**
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1 My name is Jen Turnbow. I am the
2 project manager for the project, and we also have
3 other representatives here from KLJ.
4 We have Ashley Ross and Troy Ripplinger;
5 Mikayla Boche, located there by the door; and
6 Justin Hyndman, also in the back.
7 And we have representatives here from
8 the North Dakota Department of Transportation, as
9 well as the Federal Highway Administration, as
10 well.
11 So with that, we'll get started, and
12 Troy and I will be giving the presentation today.
13 And just as everyone, kind of, saw as you walked
14 in, we have a court reporter here today.
15 And just a few housekeeping items is
16 that, if you could, state your name for the court
17 reporter for the transcript for the public
18 hearings prior to asking a question or a comment.
19 We'd greatly appreciate that.
20 With that, some objectives for the
21 public hearing tonight is we're going to talk
22 about the -- we're going to talk a little bit
23 about the project and the purpose and need; as
24 well as discussing the preferred alternative for
25 the project; and the next steps for the project.

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1 And on the screen and in your handouts,
 2 there is a public participation survey, and this
 3 is an optional survey.
 4 The DOT encourages everyone to fill that
 5 survey out, and you can leave that with us tonight
 6 in the basket on the sign-in table.
 7 Or else, you can also mail those in, as
 8 well. But it's just for the DOT and for their
 9 Civil Rights Department.
 10 So it, kind of, just goes through some
 11 of those housekeeping items and, again, the
 12 objectives for the public hearing. We'll go
 13 through those again.
 14 And one thing that I would like to just
 15 talk about before we get started is the public
 16 hearing and the reason why it was rescheduled.
 17 And basically, Federal Highway
 18 Administration: We need to put the notice of
 19 availability for the draft environmental impact
 20 statement into the Federal Register, and that was
 21 delayed.
 22 And with that delay, then, in order to
 23 have all the proper timing requirements for both
 24 the public comment period on the draft EIS as well
 25 as the public hearings, we need certain days in

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1 that timing period.
 2 And so, therefore, the public hearings
 3 had to be rescheduled. And we greatly apologize
 4 for any inconvenience that has caused anyone, but
 5 that was the reason.
 6 So we'll just start with -- about the
 7 project. This project is an environmental impact
 8 statement.
 9 And the lead federal agencies are
 10 Federal Highway Administration, the North Dakota
 11 Department of Transportation, and Billings County.
 12 And we have two cooperating agencies:
 13 The U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Army Corps of
 14 Engineers.
 15 And the project is to build a bridge and
 16 connecting roadways within Billings County, and
 17 the roadway would be a gravel roadway and 35 miles
 18 an hour.
 19 So I'll talk a little bit about the
 20 purpose and need for the project. And the purpose
 21 of the project is to provide the public with a
 22 safe, efficient, and reliable connection, and this
 23 project revolves around the internal system
 24 linkage within Billings County.
 25 So it's to have a reliable connection

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1 across the Little Missouri River, and to serve the
 2 east and west river and to connect those; and
 3 also, to utilize the existing transportation
 4 network that is in the county and upgrade the
 5 existing roadways. And this would accommodate a
 6 variety of vehicles and users in the county.
 7 So the need for the project has gone
 8 back to the 1930s. And again, it was documented
 9 in the '70s.
 10 In the 1980s, they also did an
 11 environmental assessment for this project, so the
 12 need has gone back that far.
 13 And basically, the need revolves around
 14 having that reliable connection over the Little
 15 Missouri River, connecting that internal system
 16 linkage in the county; and having that reliability
 17 for farm-to-market access, for local traffic,
 18 emergency services, and other users such as
 19 agriculture, oil and gas, and recreation and
 20 tourism.
 21 And the need has stemmed and the county
 22 has proposed this crossing to help out with all of
 23 those things for many, many years.
 24 So this is a graphic that shows,
 25 basically, all of the fords in Billings County.

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1 And basically, there are private fords along the
 2 river, and there is one public ford.
 3 And so, currently, users are driving
 4 through the river after they gain private
 5 landowner permission, and that's how they're
 6 getting across; or else, they're driving,
 7 basically, 70 miles around.
 8 There is a bridge in Medora -- the I-94
 9 bridges -- and then, the other bridge on the
 10 Little Missouri River is the Long X Bridge on
 11 Highway 85.
 12 And so, without this connection, users
 13 drive approximately 70 miles around; or, if they
 14 can gain access and the river conditions allow,
 15 they use the private fords or the one public ford
 16 in northern Billings County.
 17 Throughout this process, there were a
 18 lot of questions about traffic and what kind of
 19 traffic would use this roadway, along with: Would
 20 traffic increase with the proposed bridge and
 21 roadway?
 22 Basically, this project is not expected
 23 or intended to generate a substantial increase in
 24 traffic.
 25 Most of the major roadways in the county

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1 generate about 100 to 200 vehicles per day. And
 2 with this crossing, that same thing is
 3 anticipated.
 4 The local users and some of that local
 5 traffic will probably be redistributed through
 6 with the bridge.
 7 And so, the North Dakota DOT, for the
 8 rural areas, uses an increase of about
 9 2.5 percent.
 10 And then, with another 1 percentage,
 11 basically, we're at an additional 3.5 percent, so
 12 you'd still be around that 100 to 200 vehicles per
 13 day that would use the bridge.
 14 And the question that gets asked a lot
 15 of times is: With that low population and low
 16 users, you know, why would the bridge be built?
 17 And in North Dakota -- especially in
 18 rural areas that we're all familiar with -- there
 19 are some times where the DOT and the local
 20 counties and cities have to build bridges and
 21 build roads for one or two users for that
 22 farm-to-market access.
 23 Our state is rural in nature, and we do
 24 this sort of thing for any users and for that
 25 farm-to-market; and also for emergency services,

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1 as well.
 2 So one of the needs and one of the
 3 driving forces for the project is emergency
 4 services.
 5 And there are five fire districts within
 6 the study area, and the Billings County Rural Fire
 7 Protection District covers 1,500 square miles in
 8 three main locations, and that's Fryburg;
 9 Fairfield; and Medora.
 10 And Medora is the command center for the
 11 county, and there are mutual aid agreements with
 12 the other counties and the surrounding communities
 13 that lend assistance for emergency services.
 14 And one of the stories that the
 15 emergency management officer had told us is that,
 16 when there is a call for emergency services and
 17 that caller isn't sure what side of the river
 18 they're on, they go down to the river.
 19 And then, one of the team members has to
 20 get out and walk across the river to see if it's
 21 safe or not.
 22 And then, they determine whether or not
 23 they have to either drive around or if they can
 24 ford the river to answer that emergency call,
 25 whether that's fire or ambulance or any of the

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1 sort.
 2 And so, the main need for the project
 3 with emergency services is to improve that overall
 4 response time within the county.
 5 And so, with that, that is one of the
 6 main driving forces of the project, is emergency
 7 services.
 8 The other is industry. And when we talk
 9 about industry, we talk about recreation and
 10 tourism; we talk about agriculture; and we talk
 11 about the oil and gas industry.
 12 For agriculture, it's one of the main
 13 industries in the county, and we have ranchers
 14 that have land on either side of the river.
 15 And it's for that local and reliable
 16 access so the farmers and ranchers aren't driving
 17 70 to 100 miles around to feed their cattle. It's
 18 having that reliable crossing across the Little
 19 Missouri River.
 20 For oil and gas, Billings County
 21 historically has had a lot of oil and gas
 22 development.
 23 And it is more of a historical field,
 24 meaning that a lot of it is already built up. And
 25 so, we do have -- in the oil and gas industry, you

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1 have to maintain that oilfield.
 2 And so, there are definitely users for
 3 maintenance of those oil and gas wells and that
 4 type of thing within the county.
 5 And so, the oil and gas community would
 6 definitely use the river crossing for maintenance,
 7 as well.
 8 And civil recreation and tourism: There
 9 are many public lands throughout this area. You
 10 have the Elkhorn Ranch Unit of Theodore Roosevelt
 11 National Park; the Elkhorn Ranchlands that are
 12 managed by the U.S. Forest Service; there's the
 13 Maah Daah Hey Trail.
 14 We also have Medora, which is a tourism
 15 draw, as well; and we have Little Missouri
 16 National Grasslands; and we also have hunters that
 17 use the area and hikers, and that type of thing.
 18 And so, with all of these recreation and
 19 tourists coming into the area, that reliable river
 20 crossing will help all of those users, as well.
 21 (Whereupon, an audio-visual clip plays.)
 22 JEN TURNBOW: The video is basically
 23 just to showcase the purpose and need for the
 24 project.
 25 So we're just going to walk through a

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1 little bit, sort of, the history and how we got to
 2 where we are today.
 3 And with that, in 2006, the notice of
 4 intent was first published in the Federal Register
 5 for this environmental impact statement.
 6 And during that time, you can see the
 7 study area, and it encompassed the south unit of
 8 Theodore Roosevelt National Park.
 9 And as we went to the scoping meetings
 10 with the public and the agencies, it was very
 11 apparent that we needed to change that study area
 12 and exclude Theodore Roosevelt National Park.
 13 And so, then, in 2008, we listened to
 14 the comments from both the agencies and the
 15 public, and that study area was moved so it was
 16 outside of the south unit of Theodore Roosevelt
 17 National Park.
 18 And then, in 2008, we held alternatives
 19 public workshops, and we presented our initial
 20 alternatives.
 21 At that time, the public had
 22 commented -- and the agencies -- on wanting an
 23 expanded study area, along with seeing more
 24 alternatives.
 25 And so, we did that. Fed Highway

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1 expanded the study area to include both Billings
 2 and McKenzie Counties.
 3 And so, the study area included,
 4 basically, between the north and the south unit of
 5 Theodore Roosevelt National Park. It also
 6 excluded the Elkhorn Ranch unit of Theodore
 7 Roosevelt National Park.
 8 And then, a new notice of intent was
 9 published in the Federal Register in 2010; and
 10 then, we also had alternatives public workshops in
 11 2012 with those alternatives.
 12 And through this process, I just wanted
 13 to touch on, when this study area was expanded, we
 14 did have alternatives that were in McKenzie
 15 County.
 16 And through a state attorney's opinion,
 17 it was decided that Billings County cannot fund a
 18 project in McKenzie County.
 19 And therefore, in the draft EIS, you'll
 20 see all of the alternatives that were eliminated
 21 from further study. McKenzie County's were.
 22 And you'll also see the alternatives
 23 that are carried forward. And in the EIS, we have
 24 Alternative A.
 25 We also have Alternative K, Options 1,

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1 2, and 3; and then, we also have the no-build
 2 alternative, as well.
 3 And we're going to talk at the public
 4 hearing regarding just the preferred
 5 alternative -- which is Alternative K, Option 1 --
 6 and we will also talk about those proposed
 7 impacts.
 8 However, I just wanted to note that, in
 9 the draft EIS, all of the alternatives --
 10 Alternative A, Alternative K, Option 1, 2, and
 11 3 -- are studied, and that can all be found in the
 12 draft EIS. So with that, Troy is going to discuss
 13 the preferred alternative.
 14 TROY RIPPLINGER: So as Jen stated, you
 15 know, we had quite a large study area when we were
 16 looking at developing alternatives.
 17 We were looking at routes in McKenzie
 18 County; and then, of course, in Billings County,
 19 through this region.
 20 And, you know, as all of you are aware,
 21 this is Badlands terrain. And so, we looked at
 22 alternatives.
 23 There's a finite amount of areas where
 24 we could look at getting alternatives down the
 25 river, and that's, basically, where the existing

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1 road system is today.
 2 So as you can see, as Jen mentioned, for
 3 the draft EIS, we studied, basically, four
 4 different alternatives: Alternative A; and then,
 5 Alternative K, Options 1, 2, and 3; with the
 6 no-build as Alternative L.
 7 I'm just going to focus this evening on
 8 Alternative K, Option 1, which is the preferred
 9 alternative.
 10 So Alternative K, Option 1: It starts
 11 on the west side by Belle Lake Road, and it
 12 eventually crosses the river and connects up with
 13 East River Road.
 14 The length of this alternative is
 15 approximately 8.3 miles. In the EIS, we talk
 16 about that about two miles of the route will be on
 17 new construction or new alignment.
 18 And that two miles: It really refers to
 19 some of the curves we have to realign; some of the
 20 areas we have to straighten out.
 21 But generally, when you get down to the
 22 river, it's about a mile of new road that crosses
 23 the river.
 24 As it traverses across the area here,
 25 approximately -- I'm just going to use round

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1 numbers, but approximately 50 percent --
 2 approximately 50 percent of the route is on --
 3 crosses U.S. Forest Service property.
 4 About 40 percent is on private; and
 5 then, the last 10 percent is on North Dakota
 6 Department of Trust lands.
 7 You'll notice that, on the west end, we
 8 do have an expanded study area, and that's
 9 primarily, during final design, to give us some
 10 flexibility on re-aligning the intersection at
 11 more of a 90-degree angle where we intersect with
 12 Belle Lake Road.
 13 We also have an expanded area as we get
 14 down into the river bottom. And again, the reason
 15 for that is because we haven't completed the final
 16 survey and haven't done the final design, so we
 17 want some flexibility in being able to locate that
 18 bridge crossing and be able to move it north or
 19 south.
 20 In addition, the county wanted to have
 21 the opportunity to work with the local landowners;
 22 that, if we could move that to accommodate them,
 23 we would be able to do that.
 24 As far as the type of roadway that it's
 25 going to be, it's going to be a standard county

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1 why we would want to possibly build the bridge in
 2 sections first and then do a separate project
 3 grading out the rest of the existing roads at a
 4 later time.
 5 As far as the bridge crossing, the
 6 proposed structure would be a standard county
 7 bridge structure.
 8 It would be approximately 600 feet long.
 9 It would be a four-span structure, so there would
 10 be two abutments; and then, there would be two
 11 piers that would be in the river channel.
 12 And this rendering here is just an
 13 example of what the bridge structure would look
 14 like.
 15 As far as construction of the bridge,
 16 the piers and the abutments would be supported by
 17 driven pile, so it would be pile-driven down to
 18 solid footings.
 19 There would also be the likelihood that
 20 a bypass for a temporary work bridge would be
 21 constructed, so there would be a causeway, more
 22 than likely, out to where the piers are.
 23 You can see Crawford ends (phonetic)
 24 would be, probably, constructed in the river with
 25 the causeways so the contractor can get their

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1 gravel road that you can see anywhere in Billings
 2 County.
 3 It's going to have a 28-foot graded road
 4 top; a 24-foot travel surface. It's going to be a
 5 gravel roadway. It's going to have a standard
 6 county section: Four points, slopes, and ditches.
 7 It would also be designed for a
 8 35-mile-an-hour design speed, and it will be
 9 signed for 35 miles an hour, as well.
 10 As far as during construction and what
 11 would happen during construction, we would
 12 maintain traffic on the existing roads during
 13 construction with the use of flaggers.
 14 As far as drainage structures, the
 15 culverts -- box culverts would be constructed.
 16 Half of the time, required, some of them require
 17 bypass and bypass traffic around as they're being
 18 constructed.
 19 We anticipate the construction timeframe
 20 to be one construction season, or approximately
 21 seven months.
 22 And then, we do anticipate that this
 23 would be constructed all as one project, but there
 24 would be the opportunity to phase the construction
 25 if funding reasons, or if there's other reasons

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1 equipment out and work in those locations. The
 2 river flow, though, would be maintained at all
 3 times.
 4 And then, the timeframe: Again, we
 5 anticipate it would be one construction season.
 6 But if weather or something came up, allow up to
 7 two construction seasons as a possibility.
 8 JEN TURNBOW: All right. We're going to
 9 discuss the potential impacts for the preferred
 10 alternative.
 11 And one of the items I just wanted to
 12 point out is, in the draft EIS, Troy had mentioned
 13 those expanded study areas.
 14 And in those expanded study areas for
 15 Alternative K, Option 1, we do quantify the
 16 impacts of the worst-case scenario.
 17 So basically, as final design happens
 18 and those alignment -- that alignment is refined,
 19 those impacts will not rise to that worst-case
 20 scenario, but we did that for quantification
 21 purposes in the draft EIS.
 22 So with that, we'll talk about land use.
 23 And for the preferred alternative, there are
 24 permanent easements and temporary construction
 25 easements that will be needed.

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1 And the permanent easements will be from
 2 the U.S. Forest Service as well as the North
 3 Dakota Department of Trust and private land, as
 4 well.
 5 And for social impacts, under the
 6 Federal Highway Administration, we have to
 7 quantify and look at social impacts.
 8 So those social impacts are impacts on
 9 schools and businesses, churches, residences, and
 10 travel patterns.
 11 And basically, with that internal system
 12 linkage and having a reliable crossing, it would
 13 improve that emergency response time.
 14 It would also be beneficial to schools
 15 churches and businesses, and it would improve the
 16 efficiency and the reliability of that whole
 17 network.
 18 There would also be fewer vehicles that
 19 are actually fording the Little Missouri River, as
 20 well.
 21 And there would be a temporary impact on
 22 the Maah Daah Hey Trail during construction, but
 23 the trail would also remain open during
 24 construction.
 25 And then, for water resources, for

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1 were talking about the overall viewshed,
 2 especially with the proximity to the Elkhorn Ranch
 3 unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park and the
 4 Elkhorn Ranchlands, along with the National
 5 Historic District; and also, some of those
 6 potential noise impacts.
 7 And so, we worked in coordination with
 8 the State Historic Preservation Office; the
 9 Federal Highway Administration; the North Dakota
 10 DOT; the National Park Service; the National Trust
 11 for Historic Preservation; the U.S. Forest
 12 Service; and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and
 13 we did some viewshed analysis along with a spread
 14 analysis for noise.
 15 And walking through that process with
 16 all of those agencies I just mentioned, we looked
 17 at low, mid-, and high elevations at certain
 18 points within the Elkhorn Ranchlands; Theodore
 19 Roosevelt National Park; the Elkhorn Ranch unit;
 20 and the National Historic District, and we took
 21 photographs and simulations for the visual.
 22 And through that process and through --
 23 we'll get to some of the simulations, but I just
 24 wanted to -- the question that always gets asked
 25 when we start talking about viewshed and potential

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1 wetlands of jurisdiction under the United States,
 2 there would be some temporary impacts as well as
 3 some permanent impacts with the bridge.
 4 And then, in 2007, this project was the
 5 last project, actually, to go forward and present
 6 to the Little Missouri Scenic Commission.
 7 And then, it did not convene for many
 8 years. And it just reconvened this year -- or,
 9 late last year.
 10 And we will be presenting at that time
 11 in August to the Little Missouri State Scenic
 12 Commission.
 13 In 2007, I think, in the minutes, they
 14 did approve -- or, they didn't have an issue with
 15 this crossing. And so, we will present again in
 16 August to that commission, as well.
 17 For cultural resources, all of the
 18 alternatives that were carried forward were looked
 19 at for cultural resources, and the North Dakota
 20 State Historic Preservation Office has concurred
 21 with the "no historic properties affected"
 22 determination.
 23 And through all of our public process
 24 and the public meetings that we held, along with
 25 all of the agency coordination, some of the themes

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1 noise impacts is: What is the distance from the
 2 National Historic District?
 3 And what is the distance between the
 4 Elkhorn Ranch unit of Theodore Roosevelt National
 5 Park?
 6 So we have all the alternatives listed
 7 out here, and Alternative K, Option 1 is
 8 approximately two miles away, as the crow flies,
 9 from the National Historic District at the closest
 10 point to that alternative.
 11 And from the Elkhorn Ranch unit of
 12 Theodore Roosevelt National Park, we are about
 13 three to four miles away from that unit of the
 14 park.
 15 And so, through all the coordination
 16 that we did with all the agencies, we did the
 17 simulations.
 18 And you can see this is just, kind of, a
 19 graphic that we have as an example. This shows a
 20 viewpoint from the National Historic District, and
 21 the bridge would be about 2.2 miles away.
 22 And we did this for many, many different
 23 points, and they are all in the draft
 24 environmental impact statement.
 25 And we also did a digital elevation

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1 model, as well. And basically, the difference
 2 between the visual simulations and that elevation
 3 model is the elevation model takes a point from
 4 many of these locations, and it doesn't take into
 5 regard terrain or vegetation.
 6 So it shows, like, if you had an open
 7 plain line of sight, what you would see and how
 8 far you would see it.
 9 And the simulations do take into
 10 consideration that terrain and that vegetation.
 11 So that's the difference between the two different
 12 studies that we did.
 13 And I'm going to learn my lesson here,
 14 and this is an example of that digital elevation
 15 model for the viewshed.
 16 So with that, we have a video. And
 17 before I click, I can actually introduce it this
 18 time, so my apologies for the first one.
 19 This is actually taken at the Elkhorn
 20 Ranch unit. Our visual analyst was out in the
 21 Elkhorn Ranch, and he was taking photos for the
 22 viewshed analysis.
 23 And you can see part of Blacktail Road,
 24 which is an existing road here in Billings County.
 25 It's a federal aid route, and it's very

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1 well-traveled in the county.
 2 And as you can see -- I'll play the
 3 video -- and there's two buttes; and then, there's
 4 a flat spot. And please, kind of, look in that
 5 direction.
 6 (Whereupon, an visual clip plays.)
 7 JEN TURNBOW: All right. So this is
 8 Blacktail Road right here. And it's playing,
 9 right, Ashley? All right.
 10 ASHLEY ROSS: One more time.
 11 JEN TURNBOW: One more time. So if you
 12 can see right in this area, you can see a vehicle
 13 crossing Blacktail Road. And I believe this is
 14 about a mile and a half?
 15 TROY RIPPLINGER: A mile and a half.
 16 JEN TURNBOW: A mile and a half away.
 17 And this is a view taken from the Elkhorn Ranch
 18 unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.
 19 So we presented the viewshed analysis --
 20 and the noise, and we'll talk about the noise here
 21 in a second -- from the Elkhorn Ranchlands, the
 22 Elkhorn Ranch unit, and the National Historic
 23 District to all the agencies that I had mentioned
 24 before.
 25 And basically, the viewshed would not be

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1 altered and the view would not be diminished from
 2 these areas.
 3 And the ACHP also verbally agreed with
 4 the results of this analysis, both the noise and
 5 the viewshed.
 6 So going into noise: For the Federal
 7 Highway Administration, you need to do a traffic
 8 noise study for noise when you reconstruct certain
 9 roadways or when you have new roadways.
 10 And we worked really closely on this
 11 traffic noise study with the Federal Highway
 12 Administration and their headquarters, and the
 13 reason being is, typically, T and M isn't done for
 14 gravel roadways.
 15 And since this was a gravel roadway that
 16 will have a low mile-an-hour of 35 miles, we
 17 needed to work with headquarters to make sure that
 18 all of the traffic noise modeling went according
 19 to plan, and they helped us out with that.
 20 So basically, in a nutshell, there are
 21 no noise levels that approach, meet, or exceed for
 22 any of these land use categories with the Federal
 23 Highway Administration.
 24 And so, with the public comment and the
 25 agency concerns about additional noise spreading

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1 to these areas such as the Elkhorn Ranch unit and
 2 the Ranchlands and the National Historic District,
 3 we also did a spread analysis.
 4 And basically, the difference between
 5 the T and M model and the spread analysis is the
 6 spread, basically, has a point source and then how
 7 noise propagates from that one point source.
 8 And basically, what that showed is that,
 9 within 500 feet of the roadway, that's where most
 10 of the noise dissipates.
 11 And again, we have 100 to 200 vehicles
 12 per day on these roadways, and it has a
 13 35-mile-an-hour speed limit on gravel.
 14 And here's an example of some of the
 15 spread analysis, and all of these are listed in
 16 the draft environmental impact statement.
 17 So we'll move onto Section 4(F). And
 18 Section 4(F) of the United States Department of
 19 Transportation Act is probably one of the toughest
 20 environmental laws out there today.
 21 Section 4(F) protects recreation areas;
 22 parks; wildlife and waterfowl refuges; and
 23 historical sites, as well.
 24 And basically, if there is an
 25 alternative that is viable that does not have the

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1 use of a Section 4(F) property, that is typically
 2 the one that is preferred.
 3 So under Section 4(F), there are
 4 different uses, and that is permanent; temporary;
 5 and constructive.
 6 And a permanent use of a Section 4(F)
 7 property: So let's say you have a city park and
 8 you were constructing a roadway, and you would
 9 need additional easements from that city park.
 10 That would be considered a permanent use to a 4(F)
 11 property.
 12 For temporary use, if you had that same
 13 scenario where you had a city park and, maybe, you
 14 needed a construction easement from the city park
 15 to build that roadway, that would be a temporary
 16 use.
 17 And then, we have constructive use.
 18 Constructive use has no physical use to a
 19 property.
 20 It is something that is, maybe, like
 21 dust or noise that may substantially impair that
 22 use of that Section 4(F) property.
 23 And I'm going to explain constructive
 24 use just a little bit further. Since there is no
 25 physical use, it's sometimes a little bit hard to

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1 understand.
 2 So here is a graphic that the Federal
 3 Highway Administration typically uses. We
 4 modified it slightly.
 5 But basically, if you would have an
 6 amphitheater -- and here we are, situated in
 7 Medora with an open amphitheater that holds the
 8 Medora Musical.
 9 And let's say that you had this outdoor
 10 amphitheater and you had a two-lane roadway. And
 11 then, the project proposal comes in and,
 12 basically, wants to expand it to four lanes, and
 13 it abuts right next to that amphitheater.
 14 And while there might not be any
 15 permanent or temporary use, the noise impacts
 16 could substantially impair the use of that
 17 amphitheater, which basically means that it could
 18 no longer serve as an amphitheater.
 19 So what does all of this mean for this
 20 project? So we need to go through the study area
 21 and identify all of the Section 4(F) properties
 22 and then determine what that use is, and we do
 23 that with our Federal Highway partners and our
 24 North Dakota Department of Transportation
 25 partners.

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1 And so, we have quite a few 4(F)
 2 properties. One is the Maah Daah Hey Trail. And
 3 then, we, Fed Highway, and DOT also worked with
 4 the U.S. Forest Service to determine which
 5 management areas meet the test of 4(F).
 6 Not all Forest Service management areas
 7 meet that test. And so, we worked through that
 8 process with the U.S. Forest Service.
 9 And so, we also had areas that 4(F) does
 10 not apply, and one I'd like to highlight is the
 11 easements that Billings County currently has with
 12 the U.S. Forest Service, which are for
 13 transportation purposes currently. And so, those
 14 are not considered Section 4(F) properties.
 15 So as we go through this process, we
 16 have no use -- so no permanent, no temporary, no
 17 constructive use -- to the Elkhorn Ranchlands,
 18 Theodore Roosevelt National Park, the Elkhorn
 19 Ranch unit, or the National Historic District.
 20 One of the main reasons why
 21 Alternative K, Option 1 is identified as the
 22 preferred alternative is because there is no
 23 Section 4(F) use.
 24 So the Maah Daah Hey Trail currently
 25 crosses Alternative K, Option 1, but that is

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1 considered -- it's still going to remain open.
 2 It will still cross when the project --
 3 if the project is built. And so, that is
 4 considered having temporary occupancy with no use.
 5 So if there is a viable alternative
 6 under Section 4(F) that does not have a use of a
 7 Section 4(F) property, that usually leads it to
 8 being that preferred alternative.
 9 Some of the other reasons is it's the
 10 shortest length overall, and it has the lowest
 11 cost and the least amount of earthwork.
 12 So that's why I wanted to step through,
 13 sort of, that Section 4(F) process. So what are
 14 the next steps of the project?
 15 I'm going to talk a little bit about the
 16 cost for the bridge and the roadways, which is at
 17 \$11.2 million.
 18 And we do have utility relocation costs
 19 in the draft EIS. And there is a very large
 20 range, and we understand that that range is very
 21 large.
 22 And that's basically because, once final
 23 design comes into play, they will do everything
 24 that they can to not have that utility relocation
 25 and design around it.

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1 And so, that's why the range is so
 2 large. But we do have some utilities that will
 3 need to be relocated during design and
 4 construction.
 5 And so, where are we in the process?
 6 We're at the public hearings, and the draft EIS is
 7 out for public comment.
 8 And we're at the public hearings. We're
 9 taking all of your public comment here tonight.
 10 We'll also be in Bismarck on Thursday.
 11 That's another public hearing for this
 12 project. And so, we'll be taking all the public
 13 comment.
 14 And then, the next steps of the project
 15 will be to work on responding to all of those
 16 public comments.
 17 And then, the project will move to a
 18 final environmental impact statement and a record
 19 of decision, where the selected alternative will
 20 be identified.
 21 And so, with that, all of our comments
 22 are due by August 20th, and the draft EIS is
 23 available on the Billings County webpage.
 24 The North Dakota DOT also, on their
 25 webpage, has a link to the Billings County webpage

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1 to view the draft EIS.
 2 We also have the draft EIS at many
 3 different public viewing locations, and we are
 4 going to take comments tonight.
 5 We'll also have a basket that Mikayla's
 6 sitting at that you can leave your written
 7 comments here tonight, as well. And you can also
 8 e-mail those to lmr@kljeng.com.
 9 And so, with that, we can open up to
 10 public comment and questions. And just a
 11 reminder, Liz is our court reporter, and she's
 12 fantastic. She has done a lot of these public
 13 hearings.
 14 But if you could just remember to state
 15 your name for her, we would really appreciate
 16 that.
 17 And speak clearly and loudly so she can
 18 hear you, and we'll do our best to answer your
 19 questions, and we look forward to the public
 20 comments.
 21 STEVE KLYM: Steve Klym from Billings
 22 County, Fryburg. I feel this would be a great
 23 project for Billings County to have -- to have
 24 this bridge -- as mentioned, for the connection
 25 and connectivity and fire department, and even the

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1 oil industry and farm and ranch.
 2 JEN TURNBOW: Thank you. There's a lot
 3 of people in this room. Somebody else must have a
 4 comment or question.
 5 JEFF IVERSON: Jeff Iverson, County
 6 Rural Department. One of the things that I'd like
 7 to touch on is all three districts --
 8 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Could you use the mic,
 9 please?
 10 JEN TURNBOW: We may need to turn it on.
 11 JEFF IVERSON: Jeff Iverson with
 12 Billings County Rural Department. One of the
 13 things I'd like to just touch on as far as the
 14 road crews: They all ford the river.
 15 And District 3 uses the bridge in
 16 Medora, but the other two have had several
 17 instances where -- breaking through ice and taking
 18 sand and silt in the bearings and brakes and
 19 whatnot.
 20 We have about 20 miles of road
 21 approximately north of the interstate that we
 22 maintain on the west side of the river.
 23 So there's times, in the wintertime when
 24 there's a lot of snow, where they have trouble
 25 crossing.

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1 Or if it's a high river, where we have
 2 to come back through Medora, of course, and get
 3 around over there to service those roads and take
 4 care of it for them: For the people that farm and
 5 ranch over there; or the oil industry, also, that
 6 use those main roads.
 7 So that's one of the issues that the
 8 road department has, is the district down south
 9 would use the bridge in Medora, but the other two
 10 districts would greatly use the new bridge that's
 11 proposed.
 12 PAT RUMMEL: I'm Pat Rummel, Billings
 13 County Sheriff/emergency manager. So like was,
 14 kind of, in the video, the emergency services part
 15 of it, there's definitely a need for the bridge,
 16 especially with the increase in tourism; the Maah
 17 Daah Hey Trail; there's a lot of races and stuff
 18 coming up.
 19 And even with them calling 9-1-1: A lot
 20 of times, during Phase 2 of 9-1-1, we don't know
 21 if they're on the east side or west side of the
 22 river.
 23 There's many calls up there, whether it
 24 be fire; ambulance; accidents. Just the
 25 uncertainty of whether it's the east or the west

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1 takes a lot of resources to send people out on
 2 both sides. So it's definitely needed for the
 3 emergency services part.
 4 DAVID KEAGLE: David Keagle from
 5 Bismarck. I'm here on behalf of the Short family.
 6 The Short Ranch is -- I believe it occupies all of
 7 the private land in the preferred Alternative K.
 8 And the Shorts just don't feel that --
 9 they feel that the costs are outweighing the
 10 benefits here.
 11 You're talking about \$14.9 million to
 12 \$23.3 million for this project, \$11.2 million of
 13 it for right-of-way acquisition.
 14 In addition to that, you're going to
 15 have the severance damages that are created by the
 16 right-of-way.
 17 The Shorts have ranched that land for --
 18 well, since the beginning of the last century, and
 19 I imagine that it's going to diminish the value of
 20 their property significantly.
 21 If you bisect this ranch, you're going
 22 to have not only the costs of acquiring the
 23 roadway -- or, the right-of-way, but also the
 24 costs of all the impact that that's going to
 25 create.

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1 Just -- not only the impacts from the
 2 dust, et cetera, but just the decrease in property
 3 value.
 4 The ranch is prized for its solitude.
 5 And the benefits -- I just don't know. For
 6 instance, if you don't know if you're on the east
 7 side or the west side of the river, a bridge may
 8 not help you.
 9 You could go up the east side and still
 10 have to go back down and go across to the west
 11 side.
 12 And the same with the emergency
 13 services: With helicopters being available out of
 14 Dickinson and Williston and generally being
 15 surrounded by Beach, Sidney, and Watford, if
 16 people don't -- aren't sure where they are, I
 17 think there's an easier way to solve that problem
 18 than by building a bridge.
 19 And you mentioned something about this
 20 project been needed since the 1930s. That's when
 21 every road was gravel and single-lane, and
 22 Model Ts only traveled 35 miles per hour.
 23 With the availability of highways to the
 24 east, west, north, and south, a gravel road,
 25 single-lane, through the center is going to help a

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1 handful of people.
 2 And most of those people -- it's my
 3 experience that ranchers have trucks and tractors.
 4 The only time that this river is completely
 5 impassable, seasonally and intermittently, is in
 6 the spring. There just might be a better way to
 7 solve this problem.
 8 Recreational users plan their routes.
 9 They know which way they're going, so they're just
 10 going to use either 85 or 16 to get around it. We
 11 just question whether this is the best use of
 12 public dollars.
 13 And where the funding is coming from is
 14 another issue. I know that it hasn't been
 15 identified yet.
 16 But -- and this oilfield -- it should be
 17 recognized that there are industrial uses on both
 18 sides of the bridge.
 19 But that can be taken care of in a
 20 planning stage, where you can service the wells on
 21 the east side and then service the wells on the
 22 west side.
 23 We just don't think that the cost of
 24 acquiring 62 acres of permanent right-of-way and
 25 all of the damages that go with it and building

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1 two new miles of roads and all of those additional
 2 maintenance requirements are worth the limited
 3 benefits that this project is going to provide.
 4 Thanks.
 5 JEN TURNBOW: The hearing lasts until
 6 8:00, and, definitely, we'll take more public
 7 comments on the project.
 8 SANDY SHORT: I'm Sandy Short, and I was
 9 a little upset I was not notified sooner because I
 10 know this wasn't just planned in the last month.
 11 When was it planned?
 12 JEN TURNBOW: The public hearings?
 13 SANDY SHORT: Yeah.
 14 JEN TURNBOW: Basically, we plan them
 15 all on the -- kind of, the notice of availability
 16 dates because everything has to be timed, so we
 17 tried to get the word out as soon as we could.
 18 And we sent out postcards to all of the
 19 folks that have signed in at the previous
 20 meetings, along with the local landowners.
 21 And then, we also re-sent postcards out
 22 when the public hearing changed, as well. The
 23 North Dakota DOT also sent -- they issued the
 24 public service announcements.
 25 And with the rescheduling of public

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1 hearings, they sent those out even more than they
 2 traditionally do on other projects.
 3 And we also advertise on social media
 4 through the DOT, KLJ, Billings County, their
 5 Facebook and social media pages.
 6 And then, we also had it on the
 7 websites; and we advertised in all of the local
 8 county papers, as well. And then, we readvertised
 9 with the scheduling.
 10 So we did everything that we could to
 11 get the word out for both sets of public hearings:
 12 The first scheduled one; and then, when it was
 13 rescheduled due to that timing with the notice of
 14 availability in the Federal Register.
 15 KYLE SHOCKLEY: Kyle Shockley, Billings
 16 County Fire Chief; also, resident. I guess, for
 17 me, personally, it's quite obvious there is a need
 18 for a bridge.
 19 When we're putting people's lives at
 20 stake crossing an unpredictable river crossing, I
 21 don't know if you can really put an amount on
 22 that.
 23 Talking about other resources of
 24 helicopters coming in, as was just mentioned:
 25 That is not a guarantee that we have.

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1 That's all based on weather and
 2 location. So -- and you can't land any planes out
 3 there. It just doesn't work.
 4 SANDY SHORT: How many calls have you
 5 had in the Badlands in the last five years?
 6 PAT RUMMEL: I guess I'll speak to that.
 7 We don't have an exact number as to how many. But
 8 a lot of times, it's not indicated also on the
 9 calls whether we're looking on the east or west
 10 side of the conflict. We haven't really
 11 documented that into the calls.
 12 But I guess the concern that we have,
 13 obviously, is the future: The increase of
 14 tourism.
 15 You know, with the Maah Daah Hey Trail
 16 and the amount that it's getting used, it's
 17 increasing every year.
 18 The ability to go up to the Elkhorn and
 19 all those places: We're just way more concerned
 20 about it in the future than we have in the past.
 21 We haven't documented the number.
 22 But definitely in the future, at some
 23 point, we're going to definitely need to get
 24 across there.
 25 And like he said, when we talked earlier

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1 about the helicopter thing, there's also the
 2 availability.
 3 We only have one helicopter that's based
 4 there. So, I mean, every little factor, they
 5 can't fly.
 6 And obviously, when stuff happens, when
 7 there's an accident in the Maah Daah Hey, it's not
 8 during clear weather conditions.
 9 It's raining or there's some adverse
 10 weather. So to rely on the helicopter is just not
 11 reasonable.
 12 JAN SWENSON: My name is Jan Swenson.
 13 I'm a staffer for the Badlands Conservation
 14 Alliance.
 15 I was really hoping to hear some stories
 16 that were going to convince me that the reason we
 17 needed this bridge was about safety or law
 18 enforcement, and I'm not hearing them.
 19 And I see this bridge as serving only a
 20 very select few, a very select few. I'm a
 21 tourist.
 22 I'm in recreations. I'm not the only
 23 one here that's from somewhere other than Billings
 24 County, and I don't see the need.
 25 I see convenience, but it's just

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1 20 miles more. You know, I live in Bismarck, and
 2 the nearest bridge south on the Big Missouri is
 3 113 miles.
 4 And the biggest bridge north on the Big
 5 Missouri is 45, and we've got it figured out. And
 6 so do you folks. You have been working with this
 7 for years and years and years.
 8 And if there was some specific need
 9 right now -- and I'm sorry, I won't take the Maah
 10 Daah Hey Trail as a reason to build a bridge
 11 because people who are looking at going to the
 12 Elkhorn or who are looking at using the Maah Daah
 13 Hey Trail aren't looking for the conveniences of
 14 home.
 15 They're looking for the experience of
 16 being in the Badlands, in that very special place
 17 that you folks all live.
 18 And if there's anybody that is going to
 19 be served by this bridge, with any definitivity,
 20 it is the oil companies that have wells on the
 21 east side of the river and that have wells on the
 22 west side of the river.
 23 And if you take the time to go to the
 24 North Dakota Oil and Gas Commission website and
 25 look at their map server, you can identify those

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1 two oil companies that will benefit from this
 2 bridge.
 3 And that doesn't mean that there won't
 4 be more in the future. But right now, it's just
 5 two.
 6 And that increase from -- that's
 7 2.5 percent and 1 percent because people are going
 8 to change, reassign their routes: It's about the
 9 oil and gas industry.
 10 And there is so much development across
 11 western North Dakota and so few places that we
 12 have the opportunity to protect to some degree
 13 what it is that we have all loved as North Dakota,
 14 and this is one of them.
 15 This is one of them. And for the little
 16 bit of gain, for the smile of a win on building a
 17 bridge, the loss has the potential to be huge.
 18 Oil and gas is going to get their oil
 19 and gas. Whether they have to go north-south
 20 before they go east-west or whatever, they're
 21 going to get their oil and gas.
 22 But maybe, if they have to think about
 23 it, if they have to plan for it, they will have a
 24 bit more respect for where it is that we live.
 25 And, geez Louise, I hope all of you recognize

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1 from it.
 2 Agriculture is going to benefit from it,
 3 too. Hunting will benefit from it. To me,
 4 tourism is the one that's going to benefit the
 5 most.
 6 It's going to be one of the nicest
 7 drives you'll ever see to go down and want to go
 8 through the park. They'll come from Sidney,
 9 Canada, or some of them areas.
 10 You can drive down that road, Blacktail
 11 Road, cross the river, and you'll end up in the
 12 north end of the park, so I think tourism is the
 13 one that's going to get the most advantage out of
 14 this deal.
 15 And as far as Billings County, as far as
 16 wearing the roads out, this bridge is going to
 17 cause the county to have way more maintenance on
 18 the roads because of all the driving.
 19 Right now, it takes about 100 miles to
 20 go from one end of the county all the way through
 21 Medora and back up to the other end.
 22 This would save on a lot of the county
 23 roads in town in the future. Maintenance is going
 24 to be higher, but hey, it'll help to make it
 25 cheaper. So that is why I'm for this bridge.

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1 where it is that you live, because there are a
 2 whole heck of a lot of people, including me, that
 3 wishes I could be you.
 4 DOUG MOSSER: I'm Doug Mosser. I own
 5 the ranch on the east side of the river, across
 6 from the Short Ranch.
 7 I guess I'm not opposed to a bridge;
 8 it's just where they're putting it. I think it's
 9 better served if they go the alternative route up
 10 north, further north, and split it between the
 11 Long X Bridge and Medora. Thank you.
 12 ALLEN RICHARD: My name is Allen
 13 Richard. I do live in Billings County, and I
 14 appreciate everything the county has to offer.
 15 We still have to look at Prewitt Cattle
 16 Company up there. Sidney is one of the biggest
 17 cattle buyers in the area.
 18 There's a lot of cattle and a lot of hay
 19 by Fairfield, the east side of Fairfield. This
 20 bridge would help move a lot of that commerce up
 21 there to the Sidney area, where they do buy a lot
 22 of hay.
 23 They have a big grain elevator up there.
 24 There would also be grain and other things. This
 25 isn't just the oilfield that's going to benefit

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1 DOUG ELLISON: I'm Doug Ellison, Medora
 2 resident, and my question is: If the private
 3 landowners decline to sell, would eminent domain
 4 be invoked?
 5 And I guess you don't have to answer
 6 right now. But if it is, I think that is -- that
 7 should be a very rare step for extraordinary
 8 circumstances.
 9 And I'm not sure this qualifies as an
 10 extraordinary circumstance to invoke eminent
 11 domain.
 12 PETE WIRTZFELD: I'm Pete Wirtzfeld,
 13 Golden Valley County Road Department. I guess,
 14 when I look at the big picture, I, kind of, was
 15 involved with a lot of road building in Billings
 16 County prior to working for Golden Valley County,
 17 so I have a lot of years of history and
 18 experience.
 19 This alternate is probably my least
 20 favorite of the ones, but we do need a bridge
 21 there.
 22 The impact to our county from oil
 23 revenues coming on the Billings County side of the
 24 river comes out 20 to 30 miles on our roads.
 25 And we don't have any revenue to cover

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1 that maintenance; we've just got the expense of
 2 it.
 3 When I look at the big picture, I think
 4 we missed a big opportunity as being opposing
 5 views.
 6 The Park Service brags about 300,000 or
 7 400,000 visitors to the north and the south unit
 8 annually, and there's no apparent impact.
 9 But yet, having a road within the
 10 Theodore Roosevelt Elkhorn Ranch is detrimental?
 11 I question that, you know.
 12 We missed an opportunity. We're talking
 13 about a four-lane corridor going Port to Plains
 14 from the Canadian border to down south.
 15 The northern half of that is going to be
 16 called the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway, and I
 17 think that'll go through someday.
 18 It makes sense to me to have an access
 19 to see that park. What are we preserving that
 20 park for?
 21 For the limited few that can make their
 22 way out there to see it? I think everybody
 23 deserves an opportunity to get there, and few
 24 people are going to adventure there. When that
 25 highway goes through, it's a great opportunity for

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1 tourism and growth.
 2 You know, we take Theodore Roosevelt out
 3 of context. We say he's a conservationist. Well,
 4 he was a sitting president when we divided two
 5 continents and put in the Panama Canal.
 6 I think, if he were here today, he was a
 7 progressive enough businessman, he would have
 8 wanted a bridge there. He could see the need for
 9 it.
 10 I think we're really missing a big
 11 opportunity when both sides could have worked
 12 together and found a really good solution that
 13 everybody could have benefited from.
 14 I don't know what we're preserving that
 15 for if nobody can go out there and see it. We're
 16 protecting something that -- you know, there's
 17 thousands of acres in the Badlands that's just as
 18 peaceful and quiet.
 19 Right now, there's roads that go within
 20 several miles or a mile and a half of it, and
 21 there's no impact or bother to people. The
 22 natural wooded draws shelter a lot of that sound
 23 barrier.
 24 You see big cities when they plan. They
 25 put up barrier walls, and they plant trees to void

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1 the noise.
 2 I've been down in the river bottoms many
 3 times myself, and a truck can drive right up on
 4 you, and you don't hear them.
 5 And we talk about a lot of impacts and
 6 why we couldn't build it there, and I think it was
 7 just an opportunity to stop the whole process.
 8 Well, I do recall many calls. People on
 9 horseback, not necessarily -- this was before the
 10 Maah Daah Hey.
 11 In the twenty years I've worked for the
 12 county, many calls come across the radio, and a
 13 lot of them are fire calls.
 14 And a lot of times, Golden Valley County
 15 responds because we can get there quicker on the
 16 west side of the river.
 17 And it's a necessary need. That Maah
 18 Daah Hey Trail: As time goes on, more and more
 19 people are going to be involved and in trouble out
 20 there.
 21 How do we put a value on somebody's life
 22 when they're needing help? It's not that they're
 23 lost; they're injured or hurt, and they need a
 24 response.
 25 We have a lot of people where we do

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1 cooperative firefighting and everything, and it
 2 takes Billings County a lot longer to respond on
 3 our side of the river.
 4 It's in their county. But sometimes,
 5 we're the first ones that get the call until we
 6 can decide, "Well, whose fire is it?"
 7 I think we're -- we could have worked
 8 together a lot better. We need a bridge across
 9 there.
 10 I think we had an opportunity to build
 11 it on public land. What makes more sense than
 12 building a public road than on public land?
 13 Why should the private sector bear the
 14 burden? I'm not in favor of the Short crossing.
 15 That's the least favorite alternate, from my point
 16 of view.
 17 Our roads were designed and built --
 18 that Blacktail Road -- to meet somewhere in
 19 between.
 20 Now, we built a road -- now, you got,
 21 kind of, a lost highway instead of a lost bridge,
 22 and everybody goes around and takes the long way
 23 around to get across that bridge.
 24 There were more direct routes that I
 25 think we could have worked together and made this

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1 work out a little bit better.
 2 With that being said, I guess I'm still
 3 really in favor of a crossing. It would save our
 4 county an immense -- a lot of money. Thank you.
 5 JEN TURNBOW: So again, with all of the
 6 comments -- written or e-mailed or tonight -- all
 7 the comments: We will be going through those.
 8 We will be responding to those comments,
 9 and we'll be putting those out for public
 10 consumption, as well, with responses.
 11 So I just wanted to make everyone aware
 12 of that. And then, all of the decisionmakers will
 13 be reviewing those comments, as well.
 14 So please -- you know, the public
 15 hearings are the opportunity to have input on the
 16 project and on the preferred alternative, along
 17 with the draft environmental impact statement.
 18 Liz will also be here for quite some
 19 time, so if people find it better that they want
 20 to give private comments, it will still be in the
 21 public transcript.
 22 So just so you understand that. But
 23 she'll definitely, you know, take one-on-one
 24 comments, as well.
 25 Any other comments? We will --

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1 representatives from KLJ, Billings County, North
 2 Dakota DOT, Federal Highway Administration will be
 3 here and happy to answer questions.
 4 I definitely don't want to rush this.
 5 So please, if anyone has any other comments, I'd
 6 like to hear them.
 7 JULIE REIS: My name is Julie Reis. I
 8 live in Fairfield. I'm a local rancher; community
 9 member up there; resident of Billings County for,
 10 pretty much, all of my life.
 11 I'm a member of the Billings County
 12 Rural Fire Department for 20 years. I also worked
 13 for the Park Service for 3 years about 15,
 14 20 years ago.
 15 The need for this bridge as a taxpayer:
 16 We have about three, four months of construction
 17 time in our county to work on the vast amount of
 18 roadways we have.
 19 The roads on the west side are just as
 20 important as the roads on the east side, and as
 21 Jeff Iverson talked about, our road crews in the
 22 north end of the county have to truck it all the
 23 way down to Medora and back up just to work on the
 24 roads on the west side.
 25 It's expensive on the equipment;

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1 expensive on the manhours; it's time we could save
 2 for our county. That's an economical perspective
 3 there.
 4 As far as fire and emergency, again, I
 5 agree with what the gentleman said. How do you
 6 put a value on somebody's life?
 7 And for the number of calls, we can sure
 8 go back and find numbers of calls going back
 9 20 years, if you like. I kept track of a lot of
 10 those calls.
 11 And if you don't know what it's like to
 12 hop in a rig or watch your spouse hop in a rig at
 13 1:00 o'clock in the morning to head out west and
 14 try to find a flare that somebody -- that looks
 15 like it's burning in the dark, and is it on one
 16 side of the river or the other side of the river?
 17 And that's all you hear: "Which side should we go
 18 up?"
 19 If you go up, you've got to go back
 20 down. You know, it's not an exact science. And
 21 you do that a number of times a year.
 22 Like I said, if you want numbers, it's
 23 the emergency management as far as fires and
 24 rescue.
 25 That helicopter's not always available,

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1 just like you were told. There's a lot of aspects
 2 that go into those emergency services.
 3 But to just say that the one time or
 4 twice that you might have a really serious
 5 incident -- how do you put a value on somebody's
 6 life when you could just get there across the
 7 river instead of having to worry about which end
 8 you're going to go? And it's way more than
 9 70 miles.
 10 And the tourism: You know, we know that
 11 there's many tourists in our county. They like
 12 the Grasslands, the Badlands.
 13 They're out there for hunting; they're
 14 out there for the bike riding and the horse
 15 riding.
 16 We've had horse accidents; bicyclists
 17 get lost; hunters get lost. Things like that
 18 happen.
 19 They happen on the river. We've had
 20 river rescues. You have to get that equipment
 21 over there, and you have to have the people to get
 22 there.
 23 And they're all volunteers, and they
 24 work their hearts out to help the people that not
 25 only live in our county, but the ones that come

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1 here to enjoy it.
 2 And we are glad to help those people.
 3 So to say that we're just worried about ourselves,
 4 no, we're not.
 5 I worked at the park. I actually gave
 6 guided tours up to that Theodore Roosevelt Elkhorn
 7 unit.
 8 And for all the people that said that
 9 they would like to go up there, there were a lot
 10 of people that said, "Oh, gravel road? Ugh, hard
 11 to get up there. I don't really want to drive
 12 that."
 13 So that is a good point. Do we want
 14 people to be able to access that? It's still
 15 pristine.
 16 There's lots of Badlands to enjoy. The
 17 impact up there right now, as far as traffic, when
 18 I would go up there, you hardly noticed it.
 19 But you have that opportunity to open
 20 the door for those people that might not otherwise
 21 go up there.
 22 Once a week, I did those tours, and I
 23 had, maybe, ten at most. Most of them turned it
 24 down because of how to get up there.
 25 So whether or not I agree with the exact

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1 location, I don't know. I do see on the map, and
 2 it's been there for years, with Blacktail Road
 3 meeting up with the road on the west side of that
 4 river.
 5 And it looks like that's -- that was the
 6 smartest option there because that's what the
 7 intention was.
 8 But don't question how to put a value on
 9 that compared to somebody's life. We may be
 10 rural, but we do see a lot of calls from the
 11 sheriff's department, fire, and emergency
 12 services. Thank you.
 13 JEN TURNBOW: Any other comments? Well,
 14 the project team, DOT, and Fed Highway will be
 15 here until 8:00 o'clock if you have questions or
 16 comments.
 17 And Liz will be here for a little while
 18 if you wanted to do private comments. But is
 19 there anyone else who would like to give public
 20 comment here tonight?
 21 All right. With that, we'll still have
 22 the open house until 8:00 o'clock. We'd love to
 23 answer your questions.
 24 We'd like to thank everyone for giving
 25 comment, for coming out tonight, and for taking

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1 time out of your day. So thank you very much.
 2 (Whereupon, the private comments began
 3 to be told to the court reporter at 6:52 p.m.)
 4 JOHN HILD: John Hild. I'm a resident
 5 of Billings County. I'm in favor of this bridge
 6 going in.
 7 I'm not sure that the site is the right
 8 one. But in the spring of the year, when that
 9 river goes out and it's huge, there's no getting
 10 across it.
 11 And it's so dangerous, you can't get
 12 across it. And then, even when the water recedes,
 13 you've got ice on either side of the banks, and
 14 you can't get through it, either.
 15 And I'm part of the fire department, as
 16 well, so I'm going on the basis, of, you know,
 17 search and rescue; that type of thing.
 18 Everybody that's out here speaking today
 19 is when it's nice and the river is low. But when
 20 that thing is roaring in February and March and
 21 people are out doing their work, that's when that
 22 bridge is really needed, too. Thank you.
 23 (Off the record.)
 24 DON FULTON: My name is Don Fulton. I
 25 am owner of a well servicing company business. We

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1 do multiple jobs on either side of the river.
 2 But it's such a long ways around to get
 3 to the other side, and it would cut a lot of wear
 4 and tear on the highways and roadways if there was
 5 a bridge across the river.
 6 Not only that, I'm a member of the
 7 Billings County Rural Fire Department, and we've
 8 had different calls on either side of the river to
 9 try to find out, in the middle of the night, what
 10 side of the river that the fire is on. It's been
 11 a multiple problem because it's such a long
 12 distance all the way around.
 13 Also, in the past, I've helped out with
 14 the Belfield ambulance. Same situation, you know.
 15 We've had calls on the other side of the river and
 16 then have to turn around and drive all the way to
 17 Medora and all the way around to get to the other
 18 side.
 19 Also, I could see where this would help
 20 the local people up there, moving different types
 21 of goods in and out for their own personal ranch
 22 opportunities, for them to have a shorter cut to
 23 the highway. I guess that's about all I have to
 24 say.
 25 (Off the record.)

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1 BYRON RICHARD: My name is Byron
 2 Richard, and I live by Belfield, but I have a
 3 large ranch property by Beach and also Sentinel
 4 Butte.
 5 That would be beneficial to have another
 6 access route to the east, which the Elkhorn Road
 7 offers. I think that's the Elkhorn Road, right?
 8 I'm pretty sure it is.
 9 The other advantage I see, too, is not
 10 only for essential services but for hired
 11 employees that are up on the properties north of
 12 Sentinel Butte to where we are.
 13 One property is 8 miles and the other
 14 one runs approximately 20 miles north. It helps
 15 not only with essential services; it also creates
 16 opportunity for the folks in environmentally
 17 sensitive areas to access aggregate from places
 18 outside of them sensitive areas, which could be
 19 brought across from the west over to the east,
 20 where it is deficient in the region of northern
 21 Billings County.
 22 Also, visiting with some of my
 23 neighbors, sometimes, it takes up to 70 miles to
 24 roundtrip to the south in order for them to get to
 25 Killdeer or Watford City, where they sometimes

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1 What else can I say about this?
 2 I guess, as far as any comments on the
 3 rescue end of it, we have had several calls on
 4 people being stranded in the river and having to
 5 come out and rescue them.
 6 Fires on the west side of the river that
 7 we have had to walk across the river in order to
 8 gain -- see if we have access to cross with our
 9 vehicles.
 10 Search and rescue: We've had numerous
 11 calls for people lost or stranded on the Maah Daah
 12 Hey Trail. I guess that's mostly my comments.
 13 Thank you.
 14 (Off the record.)
 15 MICHAEL HEISER: My name is Michael
 16 Heiser. I am a 20-year veteran of Billings County
 17 Rural Fire Department; 10 years as deputy chief at
 18 Fryburg.
 19 I am in favor of this bridge for
 20 connecting both sides of the county for both road
 21 crew and emergency services.
 22 (Off the record.)
 23 JAMES CANT: This is James Cant. I'm a
 24 district resident of Medora, and I've watched
 25 these people on the MS and everything else.

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1 have business or friends that they need -- or,
 2 places to be.
 3 It also would open up opportunity for
 4 livestock producers west of the river to go east
 5 to access feedstuffs -- or, feed supplies, I
 6 should say -- that are more conducive to the
 7 farming areas out east versus over to the west and
 8 then north of Beach. I think that will do it.
 9 Thank you.
 10 (Off the record.)
 11 WES OBRIGEWITCH: My name is Wes
 12 Obrigewitch. I guess, part of my comment is I am
 13 going on near a 20-year veteran of the Billings
 14 County Volunteer Fire Department, and I think the
 15 bridge would be an asset to our department for the
 16 emergency side of it: Fire, rescue, everything
 17 about it.
 18 I mean, it would cut off probably
 19 100 miles of travel time going to the north end of
 20 the county.
 21 I also am a rancher in the community. I
 22 have -- manage and lease and own land on both
 23 sides of the river.
 24 Access to these ranches: Travel time
 25 would be reduced by at least 100 miles or more.

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1 I know some of them, and I agree that
 2 this bridge would be a big asset to the ranchers
 3 and the public. I think that this would be a good
 4 deal.
 5 (Whereupon, the public input hearing
 6 concluded at 8:00 p.m.)
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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Elizabeth H. Lundquist, a general shorthand reporter, 51 Broadway, Suite 130, Fargo, North Dakota, do hereby certify that the foregoing sixty-six (66) pages of typewritten material constitute a full, true, and correct transcript of my original stenotype notes, as they purport to contain, of the public input hearing reported by me at the time and place hereinbefore mentioned.

Elizabeth H. Lundquist

Elizabeth H. Lundquist
51 Broadway
Suite 130
Fargo, North Dakota 58102



Dated this 13th day of August, 2018.

THE FOREGOING CERTIFICATION OF THIS TRANSCRIPT DOES NOT APPLY TO THE REPRODUCTION OF THE SAME BY ANY MEANS, UNLESS UNDER THE DIRECT CONTROL AND/OR DIRECTION OF THE CERTIFYING COURT REPORTER.

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