



U.S. HIGHWAY 85

Public Hearing

I-94 Interchange to Watford City Bypass (McKenzie County Road 30)

Project 9-085(085)075 PCN 20046 ♦ Stark, Billings and McKenzie Counties, North Dakota

When?

May 29, 2018:
5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (MDT)
Belfield Memorial Hall
107 2nd Avenue NE
Belfield, ND

May 30, 2018:
5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (MDT)
Billings County Rural Fire Hall
12811 20th Street Southwest
Fairfield, ND

May 31, 2018:
5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (CDT)
Watford City City Hall
213 2nd Street Northeast
Watford City, ND



What is the project?

The North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is proposing to expand approximately 62 miles of US Highway 85 to four lanes (with flexible design options to avoid or minimize impacts) and rehabilitate or replace the historic Long X Bridge over the Little Missouri River. The proposed project has three cooperating agencies: the National Park Service (NPS), US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and US Forest Service (USFS).

Where is the project located?

The project extends from the Interstate 94 (I-94) Interchange to the Watford City Bypass (McKenzie County Road 30). The project occurs within Stark, Billings, and McKenzie counties, North Dakota (Figure 1).

What is the purpose of the Public Hearing?

The purpose of the Public Hearing is to gather comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the recommended Preferred Alternative for the US Highway 85 project.

What is the purpose and need for the project?

The purpose of the project is to address the various needs that have been identified by the general public as well as federal, state, and local agencies. These needs include the following:

- » Social Demands and Economic Development
- » System Linkage/Connectivity
- » Safety
- » Capacity/Traffic Volumes
- » Transportation Demand/Roadway Classification
- » Slope Instability and Landslides
- » Ecological Connectivity

What project alternatives and options have been studied?

A full range of reasonable alternatives were developed and screened for consistency with several criteria including existing reports, the project's purpose and need, design standards, and known constraints within the project corridor. Two build alternatives (Alternatives B and C) and options for Fairfield, the North Dakota Highway 200 (ND-200)/US Highway 85 intersection, and the Long X Bridge were carried forward for analysis in the Draft EIS. In addition, a No Action Alternative (Alternative A) was analyzed in the Draft EIS as a baseline against which the impacts of potential build alternatives and options could be evaluated.

What is the recommended Preferred Alternative?

After considering all of the potential alternatives, collaborating with the public and cooperating and participating agencies, and conducting engineering and environmental studies for the project, the NDDOT and FHWA have recommended that the Preferred Alternative include a combination of the following:

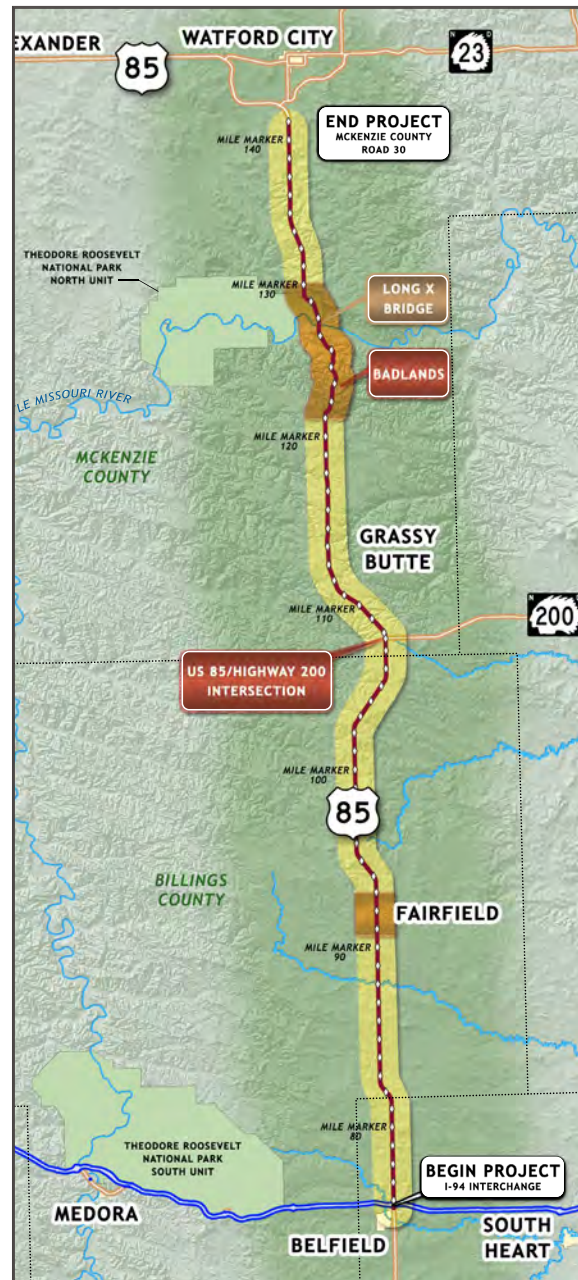


Figure 1. Project Location

- » **Alternative B: Divided Depressed.** Expand the existing roadway to a divided, four-lane section with a depressed, center median in all areas of the project corridor except Fairfield, the Badlands, and near Watford City. Alternative B would include the Badlands and Watford City typical sections, wildlife crossing system, trail, and infrastructure modification.
- » **Option FF-1.** Expand the existing roadway through Fairfield to a four-lane, urban section with reduced speeds.
- » **Option INT-2.** Construct a multi-lane roundabout at the ND-200/US Highway 85 intersection.
- » **Option LX-3.** Replace the Long X Bridge with a new four-lane bridge.

Roadway Alternative

ALTERNATIVE B: DIVIDED DEPRESSED. Expand a majority of the highway to a divided, four-lane section with a depressed, center median (70 mile-per-hour (mph) speed limit) (Figure 2).

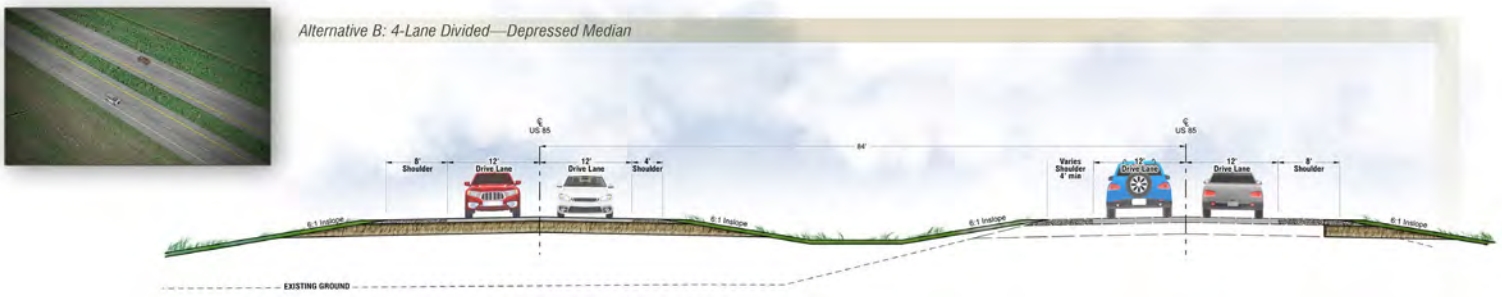


Figure 2. Four-Lane Divided—Depressed Median

Alternative B would also include the following:

- » **I-94 Interchange Restriping.** At the I-94 interchange, restriping would be required to tie the two-lane typical section south of the interchange into the new four-lane typical section north of the interchange (Figure 3).



Figure 3. I-94 Interchange

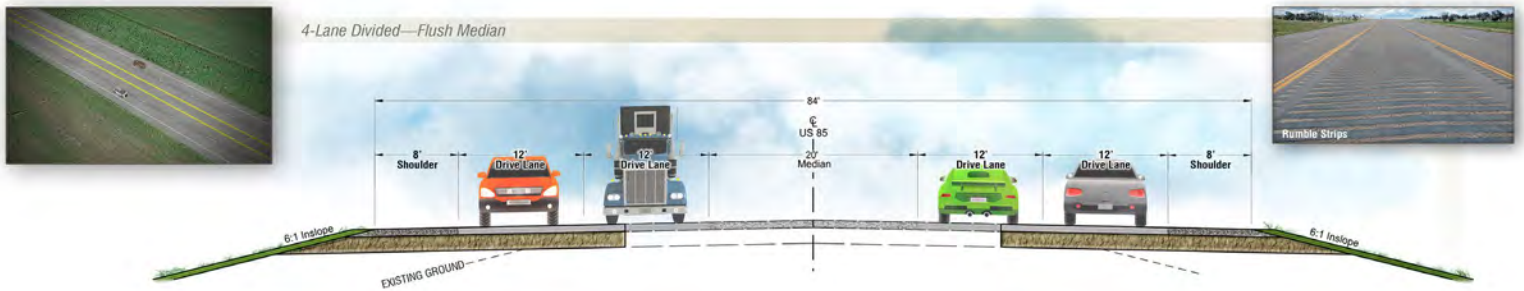


Figure 4. Four-Lane Divided—Flush Median

- » **Badlands Typical Sections.** Through the Badlands segment of the project corridor, the typical section would consist of a four-lane section with a 20-foot-wide, flush center median south of the Long X Bridge (65 mph) (Figure 4), transitioning to a typical section with a 12-foot-wide, flush, center median north of the Long X Bridge (60 mph). Flexible design options, such as retaining walls and varying median widths, would also be incorporated. This would minimize environmental and socioeconomic impacts on the Badlands and the Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP)—North Unit.
- » **Watford City Typical Section.** Nearing Watford City, the typical section would consist of a four-lane section with a 20-foot-wide, flush center median, which would be offset 40 feet west of the existing US Highway 85 centerline (65 mph). This would minimize impacts on existing infrastructure and tie in to the Watford City Bypass typical section.
- » **Wildlife Crossing System.** Construction of three wildlife crossings (two new underpasses plus the Long X Bridge) within the Badlands. The wildlife crossings are intended to function as a system in conjunction with wildlife fencing, gates and guards, and jump-outs (Figure 5 and Figure 6).
- » **Trail.** Construction of an 8.9-mile-long, 8-foot-wide, asphalt-paved pedestrian/bicyclist trail (i.e., shared-use path) with potential trailheads, along the east side of US Highway 85 from the planned Watford City trail system to McKenzie County Road 34 (Figure 7).

Figure 5. Wildlife Crossings

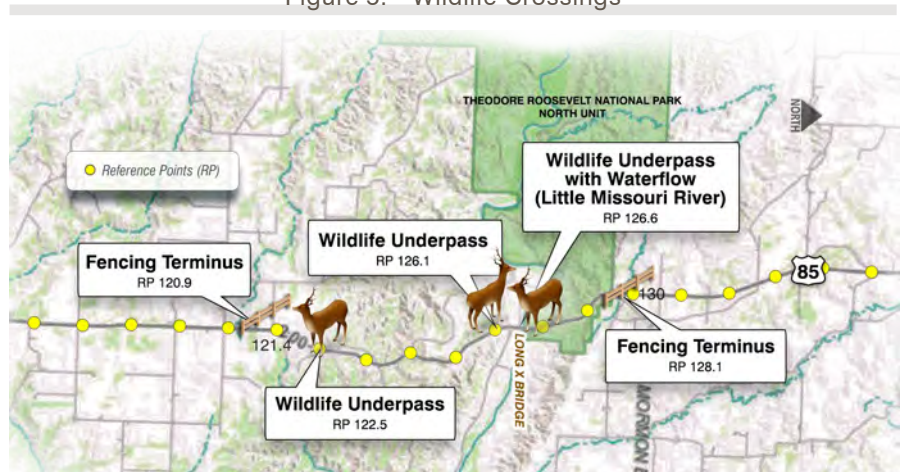


Figure 6. Simulation of Wildlife Underpass at RP 122.5

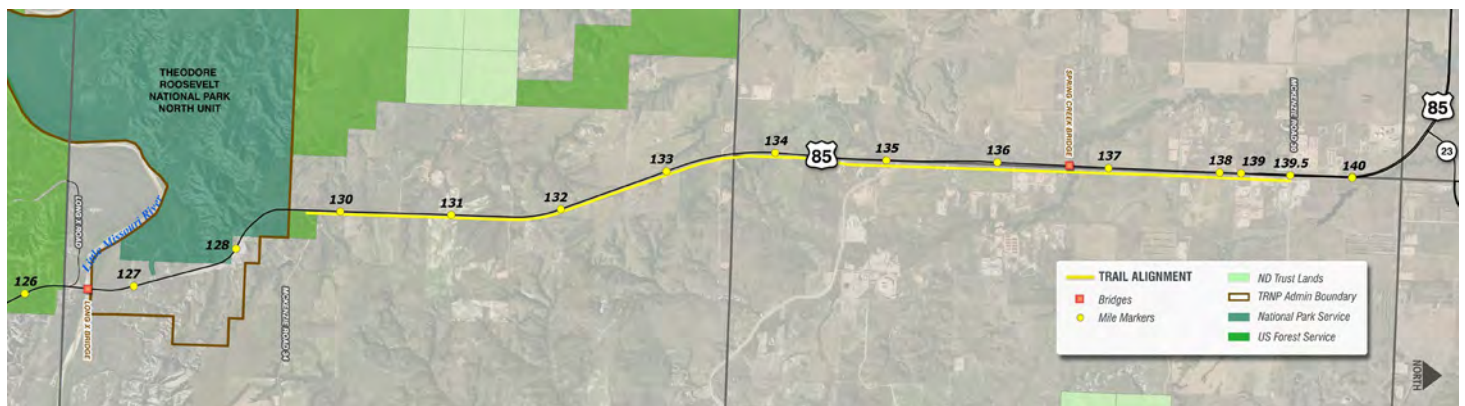


Figure 7. Trail Alignment

- » **Infrastructure Modification.** Replacement, extension, and/or upgrades to bridges, culverts, cattle passes, scenic overlooks, access points, truck inspection sites, Intelligent Transportation Systems, and lighting.

Fairfield

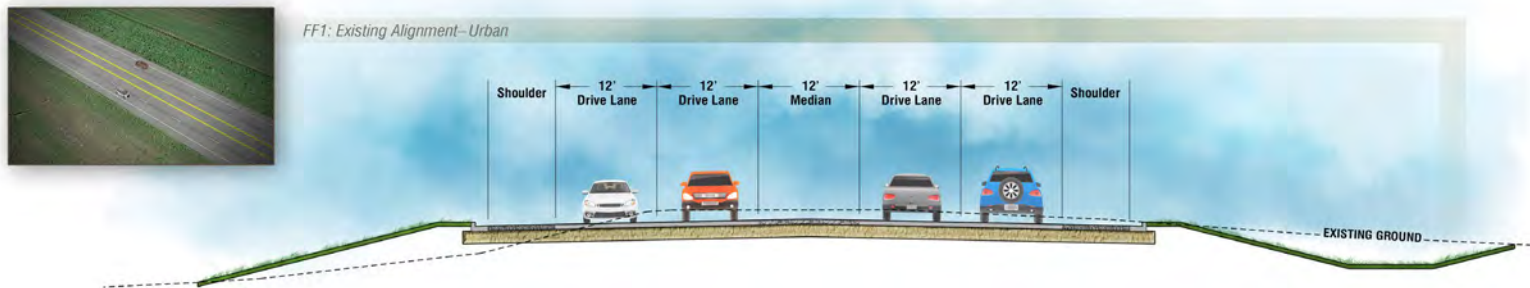


Figure 8. **Option FF-1:** Urban, four-lane section through Fairfield on existing alignment (45 mph)

ND-200/US Highway 85 Intersection



Figure 9. **Option INT-2:** Reconstruct to a multi-lane roundabout configuration

Long X Bridge



Figure 10. **Option LX-3:** Remove (i.e., demolition or adoption) the existing Long X Bridge and construct a new four-lane bridge to the east

What right-of-way (ROW) acquisition would be required?

Acquisition of real property from private ownership would follow the regulations and procedures identified in the NDDOT Right-of-Way Acquisition Procedures Manual and outlined in Title II and Title III of the *Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970*, including amendments. Fair and equitable treatment would be provided to individuals that may have their property acquired by the project, including compensation for parcels deemed too small or inconvenient to utilize for their current use (e.g., agriculture) during the ROW acquisition process. Acquisition of easements from publicly owned property would follow the procedures of the applicable land management agency (i.e., USFS or NPS).

Permanent ROW/Easement on Private and Federal Lands

Alternative/Option	Permanent ROW Required – Private (acres)	Permanent Easement Required – Federal (acres)		Total (acres)
		USFS	NPS	
Alternative B	761.1	73.6	9.4*	844.1
Option FF-1	20.6	—	—	20.6
Option INT-1	2.6	—	—	2.6
Option LX-3	9.4	1.7	—	11.1
TOTAL	793.7	75.3	9.4	878.4

*A new Highway Easement Deed would be issued for the same 9.4-acre area as the existing Deed, plus an additional 0.2 acres impacted by a recent, unrelated, landslide repair project (9.6-acre total).

What impacts are associated with the project?

Potential impacts to various resource categories were analyzed and discussed in the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS, including project maps and other pertinent information, is available for public viewing at several locations (see list inset on right).

How much would the recommended Preferred Alternative cost?

Project Component	Cost
Alternative B	\$419 million
Option FF-1	\$12 million
Option INT-2	\$4 million
Option LX-3	\$36 million
Trail	\$1 million
Wildlife Crossing System	\$7 million
Total	\$479 million

- » **NDDOT Project Website:** <http://www.dot.nd.gov/projects/williston/US85194/>
- » **Belfield City Hall**, 208 Main Street North, Belfield, ND, (701) 575-4235
- » **Billings County Courthouse**, Auditor's Office, 495 4th Street, Medora, ND, (701) 623-4491
- » **Dickinson Area Public Library**, 139 West 3rd Street, Dickinson, ND, (701) 456-7700
- » **McKenzie County Courthouse**, 201 5th Street Northwest, Watford City, ND, (701) 444-3616
- » **McKenzie County Public Library**, 112 2nd Avenue Northeast, Watford City, ND, (701) 444-3785
- » **North Dakota State Library**, 604 East Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck, ND, (701) 328-4622
- » **NDDOT Central Office**, 608 East Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck, ND, (701) 328-2500
- » **NDDOT Dickinson District Office**, 1700 3rd Avenue West, Dickinson, ND, (701) 227-6500
- » **NDDOT Williston District Office**, 605 Dakota Parkway West, Williston, ND, (701) 774-2700
- » **Watford City City Hall**, 213 2nd Street Northeast, Watford City, ND, (701) 444-2533

What is the anticipated construction schedule?

The first priority that is scheduled for construction is the Long X Bridge, for which funding has been identified in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan. This project consists of replacing the Long X Bridge, constructing approximately 1 mile of approach roadways on each side of the bridge, and the construction of a bighorn sheep underpass. Construction is scheduled to begin in late 2018 and continue through 2019.

Funding has not been identified for any additional projects; however, after the Long X Bridge portion of the project is completed, the second priority would be constructing the roadway from the northern end of the corridor, Watford City Bypass (McKenzie County Road 30), to the ND-200/US Highway 85 intersection. The final priority would be constructing the roadway from the ND-200/US Highway 85 intersection to the I-94 interchange in Belfield. It is anticipated that actual construction projects would likely occur in 8- to 10-mile-long segments.



Figure 11. Project Construction Sequence

Will the Long X Bridge be made available for adoption?

The Long X Bridge is *Eligible* for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and would be adversely affected by construction of the Preferred Alternative. Therefore, the bridge must be made available for adoption prior to removal under the Bridge Adoption Program pursuant to 23 USC 144. One or more segments of the historic Long X Bridge are currently available for adoption until June 14, 2018. The Long X Bridge is available to any responsible state, local or private entity willing to take ownership of, relocate and preserve the Long X Bridge in a new location (preference will be given to public entities). The adopting party would be responsible for maintaining the bridge segment(s) and would assume all future legal and financial responsibility associated with the bridge.

In order to facilitate adoption, the NDDOT will fund the disassembly, loading and transport of one of the segments of the bridge within a 100-mile radius of its current location. The Long X Bridge is currently in use and would continue to be in service until a new bridge is constructed to replace it. Interested parties should contact Matt Linneman (NDDOT Project Manager). Contact information can be found below.

What are the next steps for the project?

At the end of the public comment period (June 25, 2018), the project team will review and consider all public comments received. This input will assist the FHWA and NDDOT in selecting the final Preferred Alternative. Upcoming milestones for the US Highway 85 project environmental review process include preparation of the Final EIS and Record of Decision. After the Record of Decision, funding, permits, and ROW would need to be acquired for the Long X Bridge Replacement Project.

How can comments on the Draft EIS be submitted?

Written comments on the Draft EIS can be submitted by mail, email, or via the project website. Comments must be submitted/mailed by **June 25, 2018**.

Mail

Matt Linneman, Project Manager
NDDOT
300 Airport Road
Bismarck, ND 58504-6005

Email

DOTUS85@nd.gov

Note "Public Hearing" in email subject heading

NDDOT Project Website

<http://www.dot.nd.gov/projects/williston/US85I94/>

