

Chapter Twenty-four
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

BUREAU OF DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENT MANUAL

Chapter Twenty-four
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

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Chapter Twenty-four

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

Chapter 24 discusses procedures for preparing and processing Environmental Assessments.

24-1 GENERAL

The CEQ regulations in 40 CFR 1508.9 state that an Environmental Assessment (EA) is a concise public document that serves to:

- briefly provide sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), and
- facilitate preparation of an EIS when one is necessary.

The FHWA regulation in 23 CFR 771.119 states that an EA will be prepared for each action that is not a Categorical Exclusion (CE) and that does not clearly require preparation of an EIS, or where FHWA believes an EA would assist in determining the need for an EIS.

It is important to remember that the decision to prepare an EA is project-specific and should be based on a number of factors including, but not limited to, the context and intensity of anticipated environmental impacts and the level of public interest in the project. IDOT and FHWA will jointly determine those projects for which an EA will be prepared.

24-1.01 Applicability

24-1.01(a) EA

References: 40 CFR 1501.3 “When to Prepare an Environmental Assessment”
40 CFR 1501.4(b) “Whether to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement”
23 CFR 771.115(c) “Definition of Class III (EA) Action”
23 CFR 771.119(a) “When to Prepare an Environmental Assessment”
CEQ Q&A, Question 40 “Mitigation of Significant Impacts – Appropriateness of EA”

In general, as stated in the cited references, an EA will be prepared for all actions in which the significance of the environmental impact is not clearly established. Those resources or features of a proposed project that have the potential to cause a significant environmental impact should be discussed with FHWA.

In general, proposed actions that include several indicators of “unusual circumstances” or have the potential for public controversy on environmental grounds may be candidates for preparation

of an EA. If, after discussing a proposed project, IDOT and FHWA determine it has no potential for significant impacts, the basis for the determination will be documented in the project file and the project should be processed as a CE.

24-1.01(b) FONSI

References: 40 CFR 1501.4(e) "When to Prepare a FONSI"
23 CFR 771.119(g) "FONSI Recommendation"
23 CFR 771.121(a) "When to Prepare a FONSI"

The CEQ regulations in 40 CFR 1508.13 define a FONSI as a document by a Federal agency that briefly presents the reasons why an action, not otherwise excluded, will not have a significant impact on the human environment and for which an EIS therefore will not be prepared.

As stated in the cited references, a FONSI will be prepared for all actions for which the EA does not identify a significant impact to the environment.

24-1.02 EA/FONSI Validity

References: Section 22-3.15 "Ensuring Validity of Environmental and Design Documents"

Approvals for projects processed with an Environmental Assessment/FONSI generally may be considered valid for a period of three years from the date of issuance by the FHWA. This provision is subject to the requirements for ensuring the validity of environmental and design documents as stated in Section 22-3.15. If major steps to advance the action (e.g., authority to undertake final design; authority to acquire a significant portion of the right-of-way; or approval of plans, specifications, and estimates) have not occurred within this time frame, a written evaluation should be prepared. Before undertaking a written evaluation, the district should discuss the project and its history with BDE and FHWA.

The written evaluation should be in the format of an abbreviated Environmental Assessment and shall address the presence or absence of significant changes in:

- the proposed action,
- the affected environment,
- the anticipated impacts, and
- proposed mitigation measures.

Preparation of the written evaluation and review by BDE and FHWA should follow the normal procedures used in preparing Environmental Assessments (see Section 24-2). Based on the re-evaluation of the EA, the district, in conjunction with BDE and FHWA, will determine whether changes in the project or new information warrant additional public involvement.

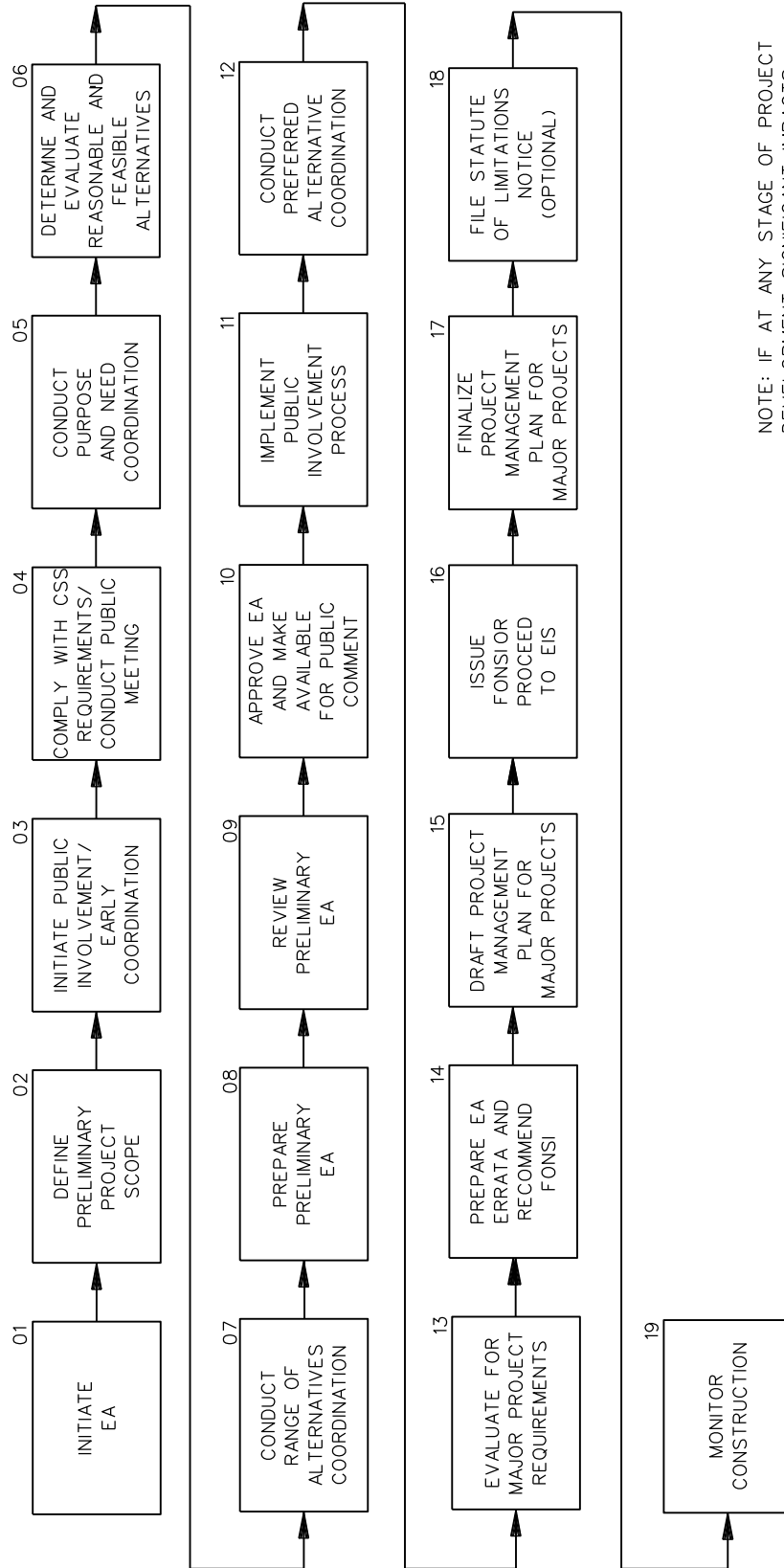
BDE will send a copy of the final version of the written evaluation to the FHWA Division Office with a request for FHWA concurrence that the FONSI remains valid.

If significant changes have occurred, a new EA or other appropriate environmental document should be prepared and processed in accordance with current requirements. If any significant environmental impacts are identified, preparation of an EIS should be initiated. Coordination with interested or affected agencies or individuals should be undertaken as necessary; the results should be summarized and documented in any written evaluation, EA, or EIS prepared.

24-2 THE EA PROCESS

Figure 24-2.A presents a flowchart, which graphically illustrates the general process for an action processed with an Environmental Assessment. This is followed by a brief description of each activity within the flowchart. The user of Figure 24-2.A should consider the following:

1. Lines of Communication. The rigid application of the flowchart would lead to predetermined, precise points at which communication occurs between units. This is neither realistic nor desirable. Communication between units must be continuous. This will result in fewer problems and fewer “surprises” in the process.
2. Lead Agency. Figure 24-2.A assumes that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the lead agency for FHWA-funded projects. If another Federal agency is the lead agency, other procedures may be required.
3. Application. Figure 24-2.A applies to all EA projects involving State highways regardless of the source of funding.
4. References. Some of the references in the Activity descriptions are to 40 CFR 1500 excerpts which are specifically applicable to actions processed with an Environmental Impact Statement. Although not explicit in the Federal regulation, these references are also applicable to Environmental Assessments.
5. EIS. If at any stage of the EA process significant impacts are identified, it will be necessary to prepare an EIS (see Chapter 25).
6. Sequencing/Duration. Figure 24-2.B presents a bar chart for the EA process that provides approximate relative sequencing and duration for each activity within the process.



NOTE: IF AT ANY STAGE OF PROJECT DEVELOPMENT SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS ARE IDENTIFIED, PREPARE AN EIS.

PROCESS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (FHWA Lead Agency)

Figure 24-2.A

Act. No.	Activity Title	Sequencing and Duration
01	Initiate EA	→
02	Define Preliminary Project Scope	█ Modify as necessary as project develops
03	Initiate Public Involvement/Early Coordination	█ Continue Coordination
04	Comply with CSS Requirements/Conduct Public Meeting	█
05	Conduct Purpose and Need Coordination	█
06	Determine and Evaluate Reasonable and Feasible Alternatives	█ █
07	Conduct Range of Alternatives Coordination	█
08	Prepare Preliminary EA	█
09	Review Preliminary EA	█
10	Approve EA and Make Available for Public Comment	█
11	Implement Public Involvement Process	█ Ongoing Public Involvement
12	Conduct Preferred Alternative Coordination	█
13	Evaluate for Major Project Requirements	█
14	Prepare EA Errata and Recommend FONSI	█
15	Draft Project Management Plan for Major Projects	█
16	Issue FONSI or Proceed to EIS	█
17	Finalize Project Management Plan for Major Projects	█
18	File Statute of Limitations Notice (Optional)	█
19	Monitor Construction	█

Key:
 █ Primary Activity
 Ongoing As Needed
 ◆ Public Hearing, if Held

SEQUENCING/DURATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Figure 24-2.B

EA Process

Activity Title: Initiate EA

Activity No.: 01

Responsible Unit: District/BDE/FHWA

Activity Description:

The district should discuss the rationale for preparing an EA with BDE and FHWA at a coordination meeting. *Note: It is strongly recommended that the processing of proposed projects be discussed with BDE and FHWA prior to advertising the projects on the Professional Transportation Bulletin.* After receiving concurrence from FHWA in the decision to prepare an EA for a project, the district will initiate the EA process by compiling pertinent information from the data gathering and field review activities that provided the basis for the preliminary determination of impacts. Information compiled will include the following, as appropriate:

- results of the preliminary field check of the project location;
- results of biological, cultural, and special waste surveys (BDE);
- appropriate information from State and Federal environmental databases and reports;
- planning reports or studies;
- letters/correspondence on the project;
- traffic data;
- documentation on any public or private meetings;
- statistical data documenting need for improvement;
- Maintenance Management Information System (MMIS) data;
- appropriate information from engineering and Department databases;
- verification that the project is included in the applicable Transportation Improvement Program/State Transportation Improvement Program;
- existing right-of-way information; and
- information and decisions from the planning/programming process.

EA Process

Activity Title: Initiate EA
Activity No.: 01 (*Continued*)
Responsible Unit: District/BDE/FHWA

Activity Description:

The information will address applicable issues and potential impact areas from those discussed in Section 24-3.02(e) "Environmental Resources, Impacts and Mitigation," which include the following:

- social/economic,
- agricultural,
- cultural,
- air quality,
- noise,
- natural resources,
- water resourced and aquatic habitats,
- groundwater,
- floodplains,
- wetlands,
- special waste,
- special lands,
- section 4(f),
- permits/certifications required, and
- other issues.

References:

- 40 CFR 1501.2 "Early Application of NEPA"
- 40 CFR 1501.3 "When to Prepare an Environmental Assessment"
- 23 CFR 771.115(c) "Definition of Class III (EA) Action"
- Section 22-3.06 "Proposed Action"
- Section 24-1 "General"
- Chapter 26 "Special Environmental Analyses"
- Chapter 27 "Environmental Surveys"
- *AASHTO Practitioner's Handbook 01 – Maintaining a Project File and Preparing an Administrative Record for a NEPA Study*, July 2006

EA Process

Activity Title: Define Preliminary Project Scope

Activity No.: 02

Responsible Unit: District/BDE/Office of Planning and Programming/FHWA

Activity Description:

The district and BDE will coordinate with other responsible units in evaluating project objectives based on consideration of the data collected in Activity 01 and will accomplish the following:

- prepare purpose and need statement,
- identify community and agency concerns,
- ensure logical termini and independent utility,
- identify cost constraints,
- evaluate alternative modes of transportation, and
- inventory and evaluate preliminary construction alternatives.

References:

- 40 CFR 1500.1(b) "Environmental Information for Decision-Making"
- 23 CFR 771.111 "Early Coordination and Public Involvement"
- Paragraph II.B. of FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A "Purpose of and Need for Action"
- Paragraph II.C. of FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A "Alternatives"
- Section 22-6.01 "Purpose and Need"
- Section 22-6.03 "Logical Termini"
- Section 22-4 "Concurrent NEPA/404 Processes"
- *Collaboration in NEPA – A Handbook for NEPA Practitioners, Council on Environmental Quality, October 2007*

EA Process

Activity Title: Initiate Public Involvement/Early Coordination

Activity No.: 03

Responsible Unit: District/BDE/FHWA

Activity Description:

Public involvement and interagency coordination are important activities within the EA process and may be used to identify project needs, resources and potential impacts.

1. Public Involvement.

- a. CSS Process. If the project is subject to the IDOT Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) requirements, a Stakeholder Involvement Plan (SIP) must be prepared and submitted to BDE and FHWA for review and comment. Further details on the CSS process are provided in Chapter 19.
- b. Non-CSS Process. If the project is not subject to the CSS requirements, a public informational meeting should be conducted, as appropriate (see Activity 04).

2. Interagency Coordination.

- a. Cooperating Agencies. These are Federal or State agencies that have jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved with a project. On a typical project, these may include the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), US Coast Guard (USCG), Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), and Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA). The need for cooperating agency involvement will be determined by BDE/FHWA in consultation with the district.
- b. NEPA/404 Merger Process. If it is anticipated that an individual Section 404 permit will be required, the decision to develop the project using the NEPA/404 merger process will be jointly made by IDOT and FHWA. FHWA will contact the USCOE, USEPA, USFWS, and USCG to determine their interest in coordinating the project through the process. After consultation with the Federal signatory agencies, if it is determined the project is not sufficiently complex to warrant the additional coordination and handling, the project will not be taken through the merger process. If the agencies determine the project warrants coordination through the merger process, the steps for the process are added to the project schedule. The IDNR, IEPA, and IDOA are also invited to participate in the process, where appropriate.
- c. Consulting Parties. BDE, in consultation with FHWA, identifies and invites appropriate entities to participate as consulting parties in the Section 106 process. The entities may include the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), Indian Tribes, representatives of local governments, and individuals and organizations with a demonstrated interest in the project. Section 26-5, Activity 05 provides further details on the identification and invitation procedures.

EA Process

Activity Title: Initiate Public Involvement/Early Coordination

Activity No.: 03 (*Continued*)

Responsible Unit: District/BDE/FHWA

Activity Description:

- d. FHWA Time Frames Agreement. The purpose of the time frames agreement is to provide for good project management, timeliness, and accountability. Time frame negotiations should typically occur in conjunction with IDOT/FHWA coordination meetings. The meeting minutes will document the approval of the time frames for the project by the appropriate FHWA and IDOT district personnel. FHWA will monitor all milestone dates. FHWA and IDOT will provide a copy of the time frames to the involved environmental review and permitting agencies.
- e. Environmental Survey Coordination. BDE will provide the district the results of preliminary coordination with IDNR, USFWS, the National Park Service (NPS), and the SHPO through the environmental survey process.

References:

- 40 CFR 1500.1(b) "Environmental Information for Decisionmaking"
- 40 CFR 1500.2(d) "Public Involvement"
- 40 CFR 1500.5(b) "Interagency Cooperation"
- 40 CFR 1501.1(b) "Interagency Cooperation"
- 40 CFR 1501.6 "Cooperating Agencies"
- 40 CFR 1508.5 "Definition of Cooperating Agency"
- 23 CFR 771.109(c)(3) "Local Public Agencies as Cooperating Agencies"
- 23 CFR 771.111 "Early Coordination and Public Involvement"
- 23 CFR 771.111(d) "Requesting Agencies to Become Cooperating Agencies"
- 23 CFR 771.119(b) "Early Coordination/Scoping"
- CEQ Q&A, Question 9 "Approvals from Other Agencies"
- CEQ Q&A, Questions 14a, 14b, and 14c "Roles of Lead and Cooperating Agencies, Resolution of Disputes"
- Section 22-5 "Coordination"
- Chapter 19 "Public Involvement Guidelines"
- BDE Information Memorandum 92-3 "FHWA Guidance on Cooperating Agencies"
- *Collaboration in NEPA – A Handbook for NEPA Practitioners, Council on Environmental Quality, October 2007*

[date]

[address]

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Illinois Department of Transportation is initiating the information gathering phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvement of US Route 45 from Harrisburg to Eldorado. Because the project may affect your area of expertise, your facilities, or your activities or programs, we are seeking your comments on this project.

The study area for the project begins at a point west of Harrisburg along the new Illinois Route 13 and extends to the intersection of US Route 45 with Illinois Route 142 in Eldorado (see Figure 1). The estimated length of the project is 8.6 miles (13.8 km).

Existing US Route 45 is a north/south route that runs along the eastern edge of Harrisburg to Eldorado. The existing route includes two traffic lanes with aggregate-paved shoulders. Pavement width is generally 24 ft (7.2 m). Access is uncontrolled, contributing to high crash rates in areas of commercial development.

The proposed action is to reconstruct US Route 45 between Eldorado and Harrisburg from a point on new Illinois Route 13 west of Harrisburg to US Route 45. The project would be designed as a rural, four-lane expressway. The typical cross section for this facility type includes two roadways 24 ft (7.2 m) wide separated by a 50 ft (15 m) wide median. The project would be partially access-controlled. No direct commercial access would be allowed to the facility. The proposed project would be designated as Federal Aid Route 332.

Alternatives to be considered include a no-action alternative, reconstruction of the existing two-lane facility, and dualizing the existing facility (i.e., constructing a parallel roadway).

We look forward to your response to this request. If you have any questions regarding the preparation of the EA or would like to discuss the project in more detail, please contact (*name*) at this office (phone: _____, fax: _____).

Sincerely,

[Name]
Regional Engineer

292jhs

SAMPLE COORDINATION LETTER

Figure 24-2.C

[Agency Address]

Subject: [Project identification information: route, location/termini, counties, project number]

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Federal Highway Administration in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Transportation has initiated studies for an Environmental Assessment for [FAP/Illinois/U.S.] Route ____ in _____ County/ies, Illinois. Your agency was invited to attend a scoping meeting for the project on _____.¹ Because the project [will almost certainly require a Section 404 permit and because of your agency's legal jurisdiction over such permits] [may affect fish and wildlife habitat and because of your agency's special expertise], we are requesting your agency to be a cooperating agency.

[FAP/Illinois/U.S.] Route ____ is . . . [describe project location and need, alternatives under consideration, potential environmental impacts, etc.].

Your agency's involvement should entail those areas under its jurisdiction and no direct writing or analysis will be necessary for the preparation of the document.² To maximize interagency cooperation, we will do the following:

1. invite you to Coordination Meetings;
2. consult with you on any relevant technical studies that will be required;
3. organize joint field reviews with you;
4. provide you with project information, including study results;
5. encourage your agency to use the aforementioned documents to express your views on subjects within your jurisdiction or expertise; and
6. include information in the project environmental documents that cooperating agencies may need to discharge National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) responsibilities and any other requirements regarding jurisdictional approvals, permits, licenses, or clearances.

¹ Include this sentence as applicable and appropriate.

² If the agency has not already received a copy of FHWA's guidance on cooperating agencies, a copy should be enclosed.

**FORMAT EXAMPLE
(Cooperating Agency Request Letter)**

Figure 24-2.D

You have the right to expect that the EA will enable you to discharge your jurisdictional responsibilities. Likewise, you have the obligation to tell us if, at any point in the process, your needs are not being met. We expect that at the end of the process, the EA will satisfy NEPA requirements including those related to project alternatives, environmental consequences, and mitigation. Further, we intend to utilize the EA and our subsequent decision statement as our decision-making documents and as the basis for the permit application.³

We look forward to your response to this request and your involvement as a cooperating agency on this project. If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail the project or our agencies' respective roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the EA, please contact _____.

Sincerely, _____ |

Name of IDOT Regional Engineer _____ |

cc: Bureau of Design and Environment
FHWA Division Office

³ Delete this paragraph in requests to agencies having special expertise.

**FORMAT EXAMPLE
(Cooperating Agency Request Letter)**

**Figure 24-2.D
(Continued)**

EA Process

Activity Title: Comply with CSS Requirements/Conduct Public Meeting

Activity No.: 04

Responsible Unit: District

Activity Description:

If the project is subject to the CSS requirements, the CSS guidance and procedures in Chapter 19 must be followed.

If the project is not subject to CSS, the district will conduct a public informational meeting, as appropriate, to inform the public of the project and elicit their input. Information presented at the meeting will include items such as the following:

- project location;
- project description;
- project purpose and need;
- preliminary alternatives under study and their environmental impacts;
- identification of alternatives with wetlands involvement, floodplain encroachments, and/or Section 4(f) involvement; and
- tentative project schedule.

The district will structure the meeting to provide a scoping process for the project. Scoping is a process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed in the EA and for identifying potential significant issues related to the proposed action. Scoping is intended to focus the study effort on issues that are significant and avoid the collection of needless detailed information on insignificant issues. The district will fully document the information and results obtained from the public meeting.

References:

- 40 CFR 1501.7 "Scoping"
- 23 CFR 771.119(b) "Early Coordination"
- "Background" Section of FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A
- CEQ Q&A, Question 13 "Scoping and EAs"
- Section 22-5 "Coordination"
- BLE Information Memorandum 9-81 "CEQ Scoping Guidance"
- *Collaboration in NEPA – A Handbook for NEPA Practitioners, Council on Environmental Quality, October 2007*

EA Process

Activity Title: Conduct Purpose and Need Coordination

Activity No.: 05

Responsible Unit: District/FHWA/BDE

Activity Description:

For projects subject to the Statewide Implementation Agreement for Concurrent NEPA/404 Processes, the district, FHWA, and BDE accomplish coordination and meetings necessary to obtain concurrence from the signatory agencies on the purpose and need statement, in accordance with the Agreement.

The district, in cooperation with FHWA and BDE, documents the decision on purpose and need and the considerations involved in the decision.

References:

- Section 22-4 "Concurrent NEPA/404 Processes"

EA Process

Activity Title: Determine and Evaluate Reasonable Alternatives

Activity No.: 06

Responsible Unit: District

Activity Description:

From the preliminary alternatives under study, the district will work with BDE and FHWA to identify those that are reasonable and representative of the spectrum of alternatives that satisfy the project purpose and need. For all project, the district will afford the public opportunity to provide input in determining the range of reasonable alternatives to be retained for further analysis. For projects covered by the NEPA/404 merger process, the district also will afford appropriate regulatory and resource agencies opportunity for input on the range of reasonable alternatives to be retained for further analysis.

The determination of the reasonable alternatives for in-depth evaluation is an evolutionary process that includes the following steps:

- perform an evaluation of the potential impacts of each of the preliminary alternatives,
- incorporate input from agencies and/or public involvement activities in the decision-making process,
- evaluate the overall reasonableness of each alternative,
- ensure that each reasonable alternative satisfies the project purpose and need,
- identify the reasonable alternatives for in-depth study, and
- document in the project file the reason or reasons for eliminating preliminary alternatives from further study.

Avoidance alternatives must be identified and discussed for projects involving potential effects on wetlands, floodplains, and/or resources subject to Section 4(f).

The evaluation will focus on providing a clear basis for selection of the alternatives to be advanced for study in the EA. The evaluation will include environmental, social, economic, right-of-way, and engineering analyses for each reasonable alternative. At least one "build" alternative and the "no build" alternative will be addressed in the EA. Reasonable alternatives that were dismissed will be documented in the EA with an explanation of the reason(s) they were eliminated.

References:

- 40 CFR 1502.14 "Alternatives Including the Proposed Action"
- 40 CFR 1502.16 "Environmental Consequences"
- 23 CFR 771.111(e) "Coordination with Affected States and Federal Land Management Entities"
- 23 CFR 771.111(f) "Logical Termini, Independent Utility, Effect on Other Projects"
- 23 CFR 771.111(h) "Public Involvement"
- CEQ Q&A, Questions 1, 2, and 3 "Identification and Evaluation of Alternatives"
- Paragraph II.C. of FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A "Alternatives"
- Section 22-3.09 "Selection of Preferred Alternative"
- Section 22-4 "Concurrent NEPA/404 Processes"
- Section 22-6.03 "Logical Termini"
- *Collaboration in NEPA – A Handbook for NEPA Practitioners, Council on Environmental Quality, October 2007*

EA Process

Activity Title: Conduct Range of Alternatives Coordination

Activity No.: 07

Responsible Unit: District/FHWA/BDE

Activity Description:

For projects subject to the Statewide Implementation Agreement for Concurrent NEPA/404 Processes, the district, FHWA, and BDE accomplish coordination and meetings necessary to obtain concurrence from the signatory agencies on the alternatives to be carried forward, in accordance with the Agreement.

The district, in cooperation with FHWA and BDE, documents the decision on range of alternatives and the considerations involved in the decision.

References:

- Section 22-4 "Concurrent NEPA/404 Processes"

EA Process

Activity Title: Prepare Preliminary EA

Activity No.: 08

Responsible Unit: District

Activity Description:

The district will consider the following items in preparing the preliminary EA:

- preliminary engineering information,
- safety information and traffic data,
- information received in response to environmental survey requests,
- information from Federal and State environmental databases and reports,
- preliminary compliance documentation,
- hydrologic information, and
- results of coordination with Federal and State agencies and the public.

The preliminary EA will include the following components:

- Cover;
- Title/approval page;
- Table of contents (not required for template format EA);
- Summary of project impacts, mitigation measures, and contractor responsibilities;
- Description of proposed project, including project location map;
- Description of project purpose and need;
- Description of alternatives, including indication of the preferred alternative, as appropriate;
- Discussion of alternatives eliminated and reasons for elimination;
- Description of affected environment, environmental impacts (direct, and indirect and cumulative, as applicable), and mitigation measures addressing applicable issues and impact areas discussed in Section 24-3.02(e) "Environmental Resources, Impacts and Mitigation," which include the following:

+ socio-economic ,	+ floodplains,
+ agricultural,	+ wetlands,
+ cultural,	+ special waste,
+ air quality,	+ special lands,
+ noise,	+ Section 4(f),
+ natural resources,	+ permits/certifications required, and
+ water resources and aquatic habitats,	+ other issues.
+ groundwater,	
- Results of agency coordination and public involvement; and
- Appendices (e.g., compliance letters, AD 1006 Form, floodplain and regulatory floodway maps, air quality compliance documentation, summary results of NEPA/404 Merger Process).

References:

- 23 CFR 771.119(a) "Preparation of EA"
- Section II of FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A "Preparation of EA"
- Section 24-3 "Format and Content of EA"
- Chapter 26 "Special Environmental Analyses"

EA Process

Activity Title: Review Preliminary EA

Activity No.: 09

Responsible Unit: District/BDE/Office of Chief Council/FHWA

Activity Description:

The following process will apply to the review of the preliminary EA:

- The district will submit copies of the preliminary EA to BDE. See Figure 24-2.E for the appropriate number of copies.
- BDE will review and evaluate the preliminary EA and will notify the district of any required revisions, if necessary, before proceeding with further reviews.
- The Office of IDOT Chief Counsel will be afforded a three-week period for providing comment. If the Office of IDOT Chief Counsel provides comments, BDE will advise the district, if necessary, so the EA can be revised before proceeding with further reviews.
- After BDE ensures the EA has been revised to respond to comments from BDE and the Office of IDOT Chief Counsel, the district will submit the preliminary EA to the FHWA Illinois Division Office through BDE for review and evaluation.
- The comments of the FHWA on the preliminary EA will be transmitted to the district through BDE.
- The district will ensure a disposition of comments is prepared and submitted to FHWA, through BDE, with the revised EA (Activity 10).

EA Process

Activity Title: Approve EA and Make Available for Public Comment

Activity No.: 10

Responsible Unit: District/BDE/FHWA

Activity Description:

The following process will apply to the preparation and processing of the EA for approval to make available for public review. See Figure 24-2.E for the appropriate number of copies for each step.

- The district will revise the preliminary EA (Activity 09) and will submit the appropriate number of revised copies of the EA and Cover Sheet to BDE when the document is ready for approval for public release. See Figure 24-2.E. The Engineer of Design and Environment will sign the cover sheet for IDOT.
- BDE will submit two copies of the EA to the FHWA Division Office.
- If in agreement with its scope and content, the FHWA Division Office will sign both Cover Sheets of the EA and return one signed copy of the Cover Sheet to BDE.
- BDE will then return a signed cover sheet to the district.
- The EA will be made available for public inspection at the applicable district and the FHWA Division Office and on the IDOT website.
- If the EA includes an individual Section 4(f) Evaluation or is subject to the agreement on Concurrent NEPA/404 Processes, the document also must be provided to the appropriate agencies. See Figure 24-2.F for information on the agencies and number of copies to be provided.
- The district will provide notice of availability of the EA, briefly describing the project and its impacts (particularly any impacts involving wetlands, floodplains, Section 4(f) resources, and business/residential relocations), in accordance with 23 CFR 771.119.

If a public hearing will be held, the EA will be available at the public hearing and for a minimum of 15 days in advance of the public hearing.

References:

- 23 CFR 771.119(c) "FHWA Approval"
- 23 CFR 771.119(d) "Public Availability"
- 23 CFR 771.119(e) "EA Availability for Public Hearing"
- 23 CFR 771.119(f) "Availability Notice When Public Hearing Not Held"
- 23 CFR 771.119(h) "Public Availability with Respect to FONSI for Class I Action"
- CEQ Q&A, Question 38 "Public Availability of EA"
- Section 22-4 "Concurrent NEPA/404 Processes"
- Section 24-3 "Format and Content of EA"
- Section 26-2 "Section 4(f) Evaluations"

Document	Entity	No. of Copies*
Preliminary EA	District to BDE BDE to FHWA	Contact BDE 2
Original Signature Pages	District to BDE	2
EA with no Section 4(f) or with Programmatic Section 4(f)	District to BDE	4
	BDE to FHWA Division Office	1
EA with Individual Section 4(f) Evaluation	District to BDE	5
	BDE to FHWA Division Office	2

* The numbers indicated for BDE/FHWA apply to the processing of paper documents or EAs provided on compact disc (CD). For processing of documents via the Internet or Local Area Network, only one copy of the electronic document needs to be provided.

COPIES FOR BDE/FHWA PROCESSING

Figure 24-2.E

EA with Individual Section 4(f) Evaluation:	
US Department of the Interior	12 copies
Officials having jurisdiction over Section 4(f) resource(s)	1 each
US Department of Agriculture (<i>if required</i>)	1 copy
US Department of Housing and Urban Development (<i>if required</i>)	1 copy
EA with Individual Section 404 Permit (Subject to Concurrent NEPA/404 Processes):	
US Army Corps of Engineers	1 copy
US Environmental Protection Agency	2 copies
US Fish and Wildlife Service (division office)	1 copy
US Coast Guard	1 copy
Illinois Department of Natural Resources	1 copy
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency	1 copy

Note: The numbers indicated in the above table generally apply for EAs provided as paper documents or on CD. The US Department of the Interior (USDOI) has indicated that when documents are submitted on CD or via the Internet, or when they are posted for review on an Internet website, they still require a minimum of one paper copy of the documents for their official file. The USEPA has advised that it requires two copies of documents provided in paper format but only one copy of documents provided on CD. For transmittals via the Internet, only one copy of the electronic document needs to be provided to review agencies (with USDOI also receiving one paper copy). For documents available for review on the IDOT website, only the URL for the website needs to be provided to the review agencies (with USDOI also receiving one paper copy).

BDE may be contacted to verify the number of copies necessary for processing to FHWA or to outside agencies pursuant to Section 4(f) requirements or the Concurrent NEPA/404 Processes.

COPIES FOR OUTSIDE AGENCIES FOR SECTION 4(f) OR CONCURRENT NEPA/404 REVIEW

Figure 24-2.F

EA Process

Activity Title: Implement Public Involvement Process

Activity No.: 11

Responsible Unit: District

Activity Description:

Public involvement is a critical element of the EA process. Chapter 19 and the cited references discuss the public involvement requirements for public hearings and public information meetings.

For a project that the Regional Engineer has determined will use the principles of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS), the public involvement process should commence once the project is assigned to the project study group. The project study group shall use the Stakeholder Involvement Process (SIP) as outlined in Sections 19-3.01(a) and 19-3.01(b) to conduct public involvement for CSS projects.

The district will evaluate all comments on the EA and/or Section 4(f) Evaluation, where applicable (from public involvement or agency reviews), and will prepare responses to these comments as determined by the district (in consultation with BDE/FHWA, if appropriate). Possible responses include:

- modifying alternatives including the proposed action;
- developing and evaluating alternatives not previously given serious consideration;
- supplementing, improving, or modifying analyses;
- making factual corrections; or
- explaining why the comments do not warrant further agency response, citing the sources, authorities, or reasons support that position and, if possible, indicating those circumstances that would trigger reappraisal or further response.

It is neither necessary nor appropriate to respond to all comments by letter.

References:

- 40 CFR 1500.2(d) "Policy Encouraging Public Involvement"
- 40 CFR 1503 "Commenting"
- 40 CFR 1506.6 "Public Involvement Requirements"
- 23 CFR 771.111(h) "Public Involvement Requirements"
- 23 CFR 771.119(e) "Public Hearing Held"
- 23 CFR 771.119(f) "Public Hearing Not Held"
- 23 CFR 771.119(g) "Documentation of Comments and Responses"
- CEQ Q&A, Question 14c "Commenting Responsibility of Cooperating Agencies"
- CEQ Q&A, Question 14d "Lead Agency Response to Cooperating Agency's Comments"
- CEQ Q&A, Question 29 "Responses to Comments"
- CEQ Q&A, Question 38 "Public Availability of EA"
- Chapter 19 "Public Involvement Guidelines"
- *Collaboration in NEPA – A Handbook for NEPA Practitioners, Council on Environmental Quality, October 2007*

EA Process

Activity Title: Conduct Preferred Alternative Coordination

Activity No.: 12

Responsible Unit: District/FHWA/BDE

Activity Description:

For projects subject to the Statewide Implementation Agreement for Concurrent NEPA/404 Processes, the district, FHWA, and BDE accomplish coordination and meetings necessary to obtain concurrence from the signatory agencies on the preferred alternative, in accordance with the Agreement.

The district, in cooperation with FHWA and BDE, documents the decision on the preferred alternative and the considerations involved in the decision.

References:

- Section 22-4 "Concurrent NEPA/404 Processes"

EA Process

Activity Title: Evaluate for Major Project Requirements

Activity No.: 13

Responsible Unit: District/FHWA/BDE

Activity Description:

After the decision on the preferred alternative, the district, in cooperation with FHWA and BDE, determines if the total estimated project cost is greater than \$500 million, which will make the project subject to the Major Project requirements.

If the total estimated project cost is not greater than \$500 million, and FHWA does not otherwise designate the action as a Major Project, the district documents that the project is not subject to the Major Project requirements and proceeds to the next activity.

If the total estimated project cost is greater than \$500 million, or if FHWA otherwise designates the action as a Major Project, the district determines if the project can be divided into operationally independent phases of work. If it cannot, the district documents that determination and proceeds to the next activity. If the project can be divided into operationally independent phases of work, the district prepares documentation of the basis for that determination and submits it to BDE for coordination with FHWA for approval.

If any of the operationally independent phases of work have a total estimated cost greater than \$500 million, the district coordinates with BDE and FHWA to schedule and complete an independent cost estimate review.

References:

- Chapter 20 "Requirements for Major Projects"
- FHWA *Major Projects Guidance*, January 19, 2007
- FHWA *Major Project Program Cost Estimating Guidance*, January 2007

EA Process

Activity Title: Prepare EA Errata and Recommend FONSI

Activity No.: 14

Responsible Unit: District/BDE/FHWA

Activity Description:

Following the public availability period, the district will prepare an Errata to the EA (or revise the EA) to (1) reflect changes in the proposed action or mitigation measures resulting from comments received on the EA or at the public hearing, if one is held, and the effect of the changes; (2) include any necessary findings, agreements, or determinations (e.g., for compliance with wetlands requirements, Section 106, Section 4(f)); and (3) incorporate pertinent comments received on the EA and the responses to those comments. If the district determines the recommended alternative will have no significant impacts, the district will prepare a draft FONSI. The following process will apply to the EA Errata and draft FONSI:

- The district will submit the EA Errata and draft FONSI to BDE.
- BDE will review and evaluate the two documents and will notify the district of any required revisions, if necessary, before forwarding the items to FHWA.
- After the district has incorporated any necessary changes, the EA Errata and draft FONSI will be submitted to the FHWA Illinois Division Office through BDE.
- The FHWA comments on the EA Errata and draft FONSI will be transmitted to the district through BDE.
- After the district has incorporated any necessary changes, the EA Errata and recommended FONSI will be submitted to the FHWA through BDE. If the EA involves an individual Section 4(f) Evaluation, the district also must send the EA Errata and final Section 4(f) Evaluation to the USDOT at the same time they are submitted to BDE. Consistent with USDOT policy, the submittal may be handled in one of the following ways: seven paper copies; one paper copy and six copies on CD; or one paper copy and one electronic document submitted via the Internet.

References:

- 23 CFR 771.119(g) "Basis for FONSI"
- Paragraph II.H. of FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A "EA Errata"
- Section III of FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A "Procedures for EA Errata and FONSI"
- CEQ Q&A, Question 37a "Level of Detail in FONSI"
- Section 22-4 "Concurrent NEPA/404 Processes"
- Chapter 26 "Special Environmental Analyses"

EA Process

Activity Title: Draft Project Management Plan for Major Projects

Activity No.: 15

Responsible Unit: District/FHWA/BDE

Activity Description:

For projects subject to the Major Project requirements the district prepares a draft Project Management Plan in accordance with the guidance in Section 20-1, addressing the following topics, at a minimum:

- Project Description and Scope of Work;
- Goals and Objectives;
- Project Organizational Chart, Roles, and Responsibilities;
- Project Phases;
- Procurement and Contract Management;
- Cost, Budget, and Schedule;
- Project Reporting and Tracking;
- Internal and Stakeholder Communications;
- Project Management Controls;
- Design Quality Assurance/Quality Control;
- Construction Quality Assurance/Quality Control;
- Environmental Monitoring;
- Right-of-Way;
- Safety and Security;
- Traffic Management;
- Project Communications (Media and Public Information);
- Civil Rights Program;
- Closeout Plan;
- Project Documentation; and
- Appendices.

The district coordinates the draft Project Management Plan with BDE for submittal to FHWA prior to issuance of the FONSI. FHWA reviews the draft Project Management Plan and provides comments.

References:

- Chapter 20 "Requirements for Major Projects"
- FHWA *Project Management Plan Guidance*, February 2007
- FHWA *Project Management Plan Guidance Questions*
- FHWA *Major Project Guidance*, January 17, 2007

EA Process

Activity Title: Issue FONSI or Proceed to EIS

Activity No.: 16

Responsible Unit: FHWA/District

Activity Description:

If FHWA approves the FONSI, the district will send a notice of availability of the FONSI to Federal, State, and local government agencies that asked to be informed, provided comments on the EA, or that otherwise would have an interest in the undertaking. The FONSI also will be posted on the IDOT website.

If it is determined the project involves one or more significant impacts, FHWA will not approve a FONSI. In this case, the district coordinates with BDE and FHWA to initiate the process for preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (see Chapter 25).

References:

- 23 CFR 771.113(a) "Timing of Administration Activities for FONSI"
- 23 CFR 771.121(a) "FHWA Review and Issuance of FONSI"
- 23 CFR 771.121(b) "Notice of Availability"
- 23 CFR 771.121(c) "FONSIs of Other Agencies"
- Section III of FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A "Procedures for EA Errata and FONSI"
- Paragraph IV.B. of FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A "Distribution of FONSI"
- CEQ Q&A, Questions 37b and 38 "Public Availability of FONSI"
- *Collaboration in NEPA – A Handbook for NEPA Practitioners, Council on Environmental Quality, October 2007*

EA Process

Activity Title: Finalize Project Management Plan for Major Projects

Activity No.: 17

Responsible Unit: District/FHWA/BDE

Activity Description:

For projects subject to the Major Project requirements, the district revises the draft Project Management Plan to respond to FHWA comments. The district coordinates the final Project Management Plan with BDE for submittal to FHWA within 90 days of the date the FONSI is issued.

References:

- Chapter 20 "Requirements for Major Projects"
- FHWA *Project Management Plan Guidance*, February 2007
- FHWA *Project Management Plan Guidance Questions*
- FHWA *Major Project Guidance*, January 17, 2007

EA Process

Activity Title: File Statute of Limitations Notice (Optional)

Activity No.: 18

Responsible Unit: District/BDE/FHWA

Activity Description:

If IDOT and FHWA determine the project is an appropriate candidate for filing a Statute of Limitations (SOL) Notice per 23 USC 139(l), the district will submit an electronic draft SOL Notice for BDE and FHWA review. FHWA will coordinate the draft SOL Notice for review by FHWA legal counsel, as appropriate.

FHWA will have the SOL Notice published in the *Federal Register*. FHWA will provide BDE a copy of the final SOL Notice and a copy of the transmittal letter to the *Federal Register*. BDE will provide the information to the district.

References:

- 23 USC 139(l) "Limitations on Claims"
- FHWA SAFETEA-LU *Environmental Review Process Final Guidance*, Section 3. "Statute of Limitations"

EA Process

Activity Title: Monitor Construction

Activity No.: 19

Responsible Unit: District

Activity Description:

In accordance with Departmental Policy D&E-19, as required, district environmental representatives will attend preconstruction conferences for projects involving environmental commitments or environmental mitigation measures. If needed, district staff can request BDE staff to attend preconstruction conferences.

During the implementation phase of the project, the district will monitor construction activities to ensure that the contractor complies with the provisions of the construction contract documents concerning:

- permit obligations,
- environmental commitments, and
- environmental mitigation measures.

References:

- 40 CFR 1505.3 "Implementing Mitigation"
- 23 CFR 771.109 (b) "Responsibility for Implementing Mitigation"
- CEQ Q&A, Question 39 "Enforceability of Mitigation Measures in EA and FONSI"
- *AASHTO Practitioner's Handbook 04 – Tracking Compliance with Environmental Commitments/Use of Environmental Monitors*, November 2006
- *Collaboration in NEPA – A Handbook for NEPA Practitioners*, Council on Environmental Quality, October 2007
- Departmental Policy D&E-19 "Follow-Through on Project Commitments"

24-3 FORMAT AND CONTENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

24-3.01 General

References: 40 CFR 1500.1 "Purpose"
40 CFR 1500.4 "Reducing Paperwork"
40 CFR 1502.8 "Clarity of Writing"
Section II of FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A "Format and Content of EA"
CEQ Q&A, Question 36a "Purpose of EA, Length, and Level of Detail"
Section 22-2 "Environmental Documentation"
Synthesis of Data Needs for EA and EIS Documentation – A Blueprint for NEPA Document Content, prepared at the request of AASHTO, January 2005
Improving the Quality of Environmental Documents, Joint AASHTO/ACEC Committee in Cooperation with FHWA, May 2006
Reader-Friendly Document Tool Kit, Washington State Department of Transportation, June 2008

The purpose of an EA is to determine whether or not a proposed project will cause a significant impact on the environment. The *CEQ Regulations* in 1508.27 provide guidance for determining the significance of environmental impacts. The format and content of an EA are intended to ensure that the document will provide sufficient evidence and analysis to determine whether to prepare an EIS or FONSI. As provided in 40 CFR 1500.1(b), "...NEPA documents must concentrate on the issues that are truly significant to the action in question, rather than amassing needless detail." Every effort must be made to present the information as concisely and clearly as possible. The EA should summarize background data and analyses. In-depth analyses of environmental concerns (e.g., wetlands delineations, traffic noise modeling) should be referenced in the text.

Apply the following approaches in the preparation of an EA:

- Tell the story of the project in a way that the reader can easily understand the purpose of and need for the proposed action. Describe the way in which each alternative will or will not meet the project goals.
- Keep the document as brief as possible, using clear, concise writing; an easy to follow format with effective graphics, including photos or other visual elements, along with maps, charts, and tables. Use inset text boxes to highlight key concepts or regulations.
- Discuss the issues and impacts in proportion to their potential to result in significant impacts.
- Consider the use of section headings phrased as questions to help make the document more "reader-friendly"; e.g., "Why is this project needed?"
- Ensure that the document meets all legal requirements in a way that is easy to follow for regulators and technical reviewers.

24-3.02 Choice of Formats

There are two recommended formats for an EA;

- traditional EA
- abbreviated EA.

The traditional EA is appropriate for projects that are larger in scope and have the potential for complex environmental impacts, such as a major roadway expansion or a new alignment for an existing bridge and are similar to an EIS in analysis, content, and format.

The abbreviated EA (form BDE 2401) is a concise public document that meets the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) minimum requirements and is appropriate for projects with limited alternatives such as intersection/ interchange improvements, add lanes projects or bridge replacements. The abbreviated EA is accessible via forms management on-line and features a “fill-in” sequence of environmental issue areas.

The choice of format type should be made based on consultations with BDE and FHWA and the format will be greatly influenced by the level of impacts due to the scope of the project. It should be noted that NEPA does not distinguish between these two types of EAs and selecting an abbreviated EA is strictly the result of Department’s efforts to streamline the decision-making process with the FHWA.

The guidance in the following sections applies for purposes of either format type.

24-3.02(a) Organization of the EA

While similar in organization, a traditional EA and an abbreviated EA differ somewhat in the format.

24-3.02(a)1 A traditional EA is generally organized in the following manner:

- Cover Sheet;
- Table of Contents;
- Introduction;
- Purpose and Need;
- Alternatives;
- Environmental Resources, Impacts, and Mitigation;
- Comments and Coordination; and
- Appendices.

24-3.02(a)2 An Abbreviated EA (BDE 2401) is organized in the following manner:

- Cover Sheet;
- Introduction & Purpose and Need;
- Affected Environment Table;
- Alternatives;
- Impacts, Documentation, and Mitigation;
- Comments and Coordination; and
- Appendices

24-3.02(b) Cover Sheet

Reference: Paragraph II.A. of FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A "Cover Sheet Format"

Figure 24-3.A presents the Cover Sheet for an EA. The Engineer of Design and Environment and the FHWA representative will sign the Cover Sheet.

(Route, Termini, City or County, and State)

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Submitted Pursuant to 42 USC 4332 (2)(c)
by the

U. S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

and

Illinois Department of Transportation

Cooperating Agencies

(Include List Here, as applicable)

Date of Approval

For IDOT

Date of Approval

For FHWA

The following persons may be contacted for additional information concerning this document:

(Name)
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
3250 Executive Park Drive
Springfield, Illinois 62703
Telephone: 217-492-4640

(Name, office address, and phone number
of IDOT Regional Engineer)

A one-paragraph abstract of the EA indicating project type, length, etc. Describe quantifiable environmental impacts (e.g., number of acres of wetlands affected, acres of agricultural impacts, number of displacements).

EA COVER SHEET

Figure 24-3.A

24-3.02(c) Purpose and Need

References: Paragraph II.B. of FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A “Purpose of and Need for Action”
Section 22-6.01 “Purpose and Need”
AASHTO Practitioner’s Handbook 07 – Defining the Purpose and Need and Determining the Range of Alternatives for Transportation Projects, August 2007

This Section should concisely and completely explain the problem(s) the proposed action is intended to address and establish that the project is necessary. Data should be included in summary form.

24-3.02(d) Alternatives

References: 40 CFR 1502.14 “Objectives of Alternatives Discussion”
Paragraph II.C. of FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A “Alternatives”
CEQ Q&A, Questions 1, 3, 4, and 5 “Identification and Evaluation of Alternatives”
CEQ Q&A, Question 7 “Relationship Between Alternatives and Environmental Consequences Sections”
AASHTO Practitioner’s Handbook 07 – Defining the Purpose and Need and Determining the Range of Alternatives for Transportation Projects, August 2007

This Section should:

- identify the preliminary alternatives developed for the project;
- explain the methods used for screening alternatives;
- summarize the results of screening processes, including the reasons for eliminating any alternatives from consideration;
- identify and discuss avoidance alternatives for potential effects on wetlands, floodplains and Section 4(f) resources;
- describe each of the alternatives carried forward for detailed study, including the “no action” alternative; and
- explain how the “build” alternatives carried forward achieve the project’s purpose and need.

Each alternative should be presented at a comparable level of detail and referenced to an exhibit. The principal features of each alternative (e.g., major design aspects such as access control, pavement/shoulder width, and interchanges) should be identified. The discussion should provide only the level of detail necessary for understanding the relationship between the “Purpose and Need” for the project and the proposed alternatives.

Any alternative that was studied and eliminated from further consideration should be described in a brief paragraph, including the reason(s) it is no longer being considered. Supporting

information should be quantified as practical so that reviewers can understand the basis for its elimination.

24-3.02(e) Environmental Resources, Impacts, and Mitigation

References: 40 CFR 1502.15 "Affected Environment"
40 CFR 1502.16 "Environmental Consequences"
40 CFR 1508.8 "Direct and Indirect Effects"
Paragraph II.D. of FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A "Impacts"
CEQ Q&A, Question 7 "Relationship Between Alternatives and Environmental Consequences Sections"
Chapter 26 "Special Environmental Analyses"
Chapter 27 "Environmental Surveys"

24-3.02(e)1 *General*

The results of the environmental analyses for the proposed action should be summarized in the Environmental Resources, Impacts, and Mitigation Section. For each environmental resource category in which the project will have an impact, the discussion should address (1) existing conditions, (2) the probable impacts of the alternative(s) (including direct impacts and foreseeable indirect and/or cumulative impacts, as applicable), (3) measures to minimize harm, and (4) (where appropriate) the mitigation proposed. The discussion should provide sufficient information to enable the reader to evaluate the significance of the impacts. The guidance provided in many of the following sections establishes thresholds for what might constitute a significant impact.

An exception to this organization is the discussion on the "no-action" alternative. This discussion should relate to the project's purpose and need and address the consequences of no action (e.g., crashes, economic development, air quality).

Sensitive resources in the project area, including those that may be subject to specific compliance requirements (e.g., historic sites, Section 4(f) lands, wetlands), should be inventoried; see Chapters 26 and 27. An "environmental inventory map" should be used to identify these sensitive resources. Numbered symbols for each sensitive resource, keyed to an explanatory table, should be used to denote the location of the resources relative to the alternatives. A clear photograph(s) should be provided for sensitive resources (e.g., historic structures, wetlands). For resources subject to specific compliance requirements, the EA must contain information on the results of coordination with the agency or agencies with jurisdiction over the resources and/or responsible for administering the compliance requirements.

The discussion of environmental resource categories in the following sections indicates the basic information necessary for addressing each subject, regardless of the format chosen (traditional or template). The Environmental Resources, Impacts, and Mitigation Section should begin with the following paragraph:

The project area was inventoried for environmental resources. The environmental inventory map (Figure ____) identifies all sensitive cultural, natural, physical, and socio-economic resources, and special waste sites in the study area. Resources potentially impacted by the proposed action or that require discussion pursuant to applicable laws and regulations are addressed in this Section.

The following sections discuss the issues and resources that should be evaluated on projects for which an EA is appropriate. The discussions include references to Chapter 26 of the *BDE Manual*, where appropriate to provide more detail on the analysis of specific issues and the information to include in the EA. Issues and resources determined not to be involved with a proposed project can be addressed in the EA by listing the applicable subject headings in a brief paragraph indicating that evaluation of the project's area of potential effects determined that the following environmental issues/resources are not involved. If a project involves an issue or resource not addressed in the subsections below, BDE should be contacted for guidance, as necessary. All analyses and discussions concerning environmental impacts should be supported by appropriate environmental studies.

24-3.02(e)2 *Social/Economic*

The *BDE Community Impact Assessment Manual*, available on the IDOT website, includes guidance to address each of the following topics.

The following applies to the Social/Economic discussion:

1. Community Characteristics and Cohesion. Describe the project area community(ies) and neighborhood(s), including name and population. Discuss the potential for dividing or isolating communities or neighborhoods.
2. Title VI and Other Protected Groups. Consider the potential for impacts to ethnic, racial, or religious minorities or elderly/disabled groups. If it is concluded that none of these groups will be affected by the proposed project, include the following statement:

Groups of ethnic, racial or religious minorities or elderly or disabled people are not present within the area the project will affect. No groups of individuals have been or will be excluded from participation in public involvement activities, denied the benefit of the project or subjected to discrimination in any way on the basis of race, color, age, national origin, disability, or religion.

3. Environmental Justice. Executive Order 12898 "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations" requires a heightened sensitivity for the needs and concerns of minority and/or low-income* groups during project planning. If a Federally funded project will affect either or both of these groups, a determination of whether there may be "disproportionately high and adverse effects"*** should be made. The requirements of the Executive Order can be met with the identification of low-income and/or minority groups (approximate number and

location) within a community who may be affected by a proposed project and the assessment of any disproportionately high impacts. Projects located within minority and/or low-income communities may require intensified public involvement activities to ensure local participation. The consideration of a full range of mitigation measures to reduce the adverse impacts is very important in these cases.

* *“Low-income status” should be determined by examining and reporting the US Census data for the project area community residents. In addition to reporting the Census income data, typically for a family of four, the annual Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines for a family of four (published in the Federal Register) should be included.*

** *“Disproportionately high and adverse impacts” are those that make some individuals or groups better off at the expense of minorities or low-income residents or communities. It has also been defined as an inequity resulting from a proposed action on a group protected under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The impacts should be weighed on a case-by-case basis because some projects will affect only minorities or low-income groups. If disproportionately high impacts are expected, it is necessary to demonstrate that the project will fulfill a substantial need and that measures to avoid or reduce the adverse impact are not practicable or would have other high adverse social, economic, or environmental impacts that are more severe or include costs of extraordinary magnitude. Offsetting mitigation and enhancement measures (including those developed during the public participation process) or any offsetting benefits that will accrue to the minority or low-income populations will be considered in any case of disproportionately high and adverse impacts.*

4. Public Facilities and Services. Determine the way in which the proposed project will affect community access, including pedestrian access to facilities (e.g., places of worship, schools, libraries, hospitals) or services (e.g., fire, police, ambulance). Public facilities in the project area should be described and shown on an exhibit.
5. Change in Travel Patterns. Describe whether traffic patterns will change after completion of the proposed project. Determine if this project will provide new access or eliminate access to an area. If yes, a discussion of anticipated impacts should be included. The assessment of travel pattern impacts should include all potential travel, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and persons with disabilities.

Where projects involve changes in access due to road closures, traffic detours, etc., the analysis and assessment of impacts should summarize:

- changes in neighborhood travel patterns;
- disruptive effects of traffic detours;

- “barrier” effects related to change in access for police, fire, and/or health services; and
 - economic impacts on transportation-sensitive commercial or industrial activities.
6. Relocations (Business and Residential). If relocations are involved, estimate the number and describe the types of buildings to be removed, including residential, commercial, and agricultural. The availability of replacement property in the project vicinity and the need for any special advisory services should be identified.

The discussion on relocation impacts should include the following:

- a statement that the provisions of the “Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended” and the *IDOT Land Acquisition Procedures Manual* will be followed. *Note: This statement is needed whenever land must be acquired for any purpose;*
 - a commitment to “provide housing of last resort, if necessary”; and
 - a statement that the housing resources are available to all relocatees without discrimination.
7. Economic Impacts. Discuss businesses within the project area in general terms. Discuss the potential for impacts to businesses, including revenue (sales tax loss), access changes, or parking loss. Major employers within the project area should be listed for larger projects that may have regional economic implications. If businesses are displaced, the number of people employed at each should be estimated. The necessity for conducting any of these assessments should be determined by the nature of the projected impact in the area of the proposed project.
8. Land Use. Describe existing and planned land use adjacent to the roadway facility and indicate whether the proposed project is consistent with local/regional land use plans. Also discuss the effect of the proposed action on existing or planned land use in the community.
9. Growth and Economic Development. Describe the potential for economic growth in the area independent of the action and discuss the potential for economic development in the area as it relates to the proposed roadway. If no growth is expected as a result of the project, a statement that the build alternative will enhance the area’s economic stability may be included.
10. Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities. Discuss the current and anticipated bicycle and pedestrian usage, consistency with local plans and facilities that exist in the area, and proposed measures to accommodate anticipated usage and local plans to avoid or reduce adverse impacts to the facility(ies) and its users. If the project will cause disruption or permanent changes in pedestrian or bicycle access, provide a brief description of the effects. See Chapter 17.

24-3.02(e)3 *Agricultural*

Reference: Section 26-10 "Evaluations of Farmland Conversion Impacts"

The following pertains to the discussion of agricultural resources:

1. Farmland and Soils Identification. In all cases, identify the total amount of farmland and estimate the amount of prime and important farmland to be converted to non-agricultural use.
2. Protected Agricultural Areas. Identify any protected Agricultural Areas. These areas are registered with the counties and are overseen by the Department of Agriculture. Property enrolled in an Agricultural Area must remain in agricultural use for at least 10 years.
3. Coordination. Determine if coordination is required with the US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and/or the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA). If coordination is required, indicate the agency and the basis for coordination. If coordination with the NRCS is required, include a copy of the completed Form AD-1006 as an exhibit. If coordination is not required, explain why.
4. Impacts. Summarize the results of the evaluation of farmland impacts and the results of coordination. Where possible, use tables and exhibits to illustrate impacts. The taking of a farm residence or known tax loss from right-of-way purchased should be discussed under the Social/Economic topic.
5. Erodible Soils. Based on the soil type and class information tabulated for Form AD-1006, discuss erodibility of the soils and methods likely to be used to control erosion.

24-3.02(e)4 *Cultural*

References: Section 26-2 "Section 4(f) Evaluations"
Section 26-5 "Historic Act Compliance Documentation"

The following applies to the discussion of Cultural Resources:

1. Archaeological Sites. If the project was signed-off by BDE, identify the date and use the language from the BDE memorandum to explain why.

Based on the cultural resources survey results, determine if there are any potentially significant resources found to be in the project area. If no, identify the date of the State Historic Preservation Officer's (SHPO) sign-off and note that this completes the coordination process. If yes, note the type and number of resources, the nature of further field work required, and the date notified.

If the sites were avoided or cleared during the Phase II field evaluation, identify the date of the SHPO sign-off and note that this completes the Section 106 process. If sites were

not avoided or cleared, Phase III excavation (data recovery) is required. A Finding of No Historic Properties Affected, a Finding of No Adverse Effect, or a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) should be included in the EA, and commitments to conduct archaeological field work after right-of-way purchase should be noted.

2. Historic Bridges. Determine if the project will affect a bridge listed in the Illinois Historic Bridge Survey. If not, coordination for compliance with Section 106 on historic bridges is not required, and this should be stated in the EA. If the project will affect a bridge on the Illinois Historic Bridge Survey (e.g., by rehabilitating, closing, moving, removing the bridge), documentation of compliance with Section 106 will be required. Refer to BDE Technical Environmental Memorandum P-1-99 for details. For an “adverse effect” finding, identify the date of final signature of a Memorandum of Agreement and provide a brief summary of the mitigation required. The MOA must be included in the Appendix to the EA. If the project will adversely affect the historic integrity of a bridge on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (i.e., the factors that qualified it for eligibility), compliance with Section 4(f) also is required.
3. Historic Districts and Buildings. The district is required to take photographs (black-and-white or color) of buildings over 50 years old and buildings of uncertain age located on property in or adjacent to the proposed project. The photos should be submitted to BDE. If BDE or the SHPO determines that no significant buildings will be impacted, the date of the sign-off should be noted in the EA.

If BDE or the SHPO determine that significant buildings or historic districts may be affected, based on review of the photographs submitted or the results of cultural resource surveys, the Section 106 process, starting with SHPO coordination, must be initiated through BDE (see Section 26-5). The EA should include descriptions of the potentially affected districts and/or buildings and should document the results of the Section 106 process. If more than one site will be affected, the information should be presented as illustrated in Figure 24-3.B.

Depending upon the results of the Section 106 process, the documentation may address the basis for a finding of no historic properties affected, the basis for approval of a finding of no adverse effect or, for an adverse effect finding, it may include of a copy of the approved MOA (in the EA Appendix) and a brief summary of the effects and associated mitigation in the body of the EA.

24-3.02(e)5 *Air Quality*

Reference: Section 26-11 “Air Quality Conformity Documentation”
Section 26-12 “Transportation Conformity Project-Level Qualitative Hot-Spot Analysis in PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ Nonattainment and Maintenance Areas”
Section 26-13 “Mobile Source Air Toxics”
Section 26-14 “Microscale Analysis”
Carbon Monoxide Screen for Intersection Modeling Air Quality Manual

Resource (keyed to map)		NRHP Status	Basis for National Register	Impacts	Effect
No.	Name				
1	Jones house	Eligible	First settler in Illinois	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 ft (3.0 m) of right-of-way from edge of property • See noise receptor #1 for noise effects 	No adverse effect

NRHP-ELIGIBLE RESOURCES

Figure 24-3.B

The following applies to the Air Quality discussion in the EA:

1. Air Quality Conformity. A determination must be made as to whether the highway project is located wholly or partially in a portion of the State classified by the USEPA as a nonattainment or maintenance area for any of the six criteria pollutants (40 CFR Part 81). The determination on project conformity should be made and documented in accordance with the procedures in Section 26-11.

For projects in PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ nonattainment and/or maintenance areas, a project-level qualitative hot-spot analysis for transportation conformity may be required. Refer to Section 26-12 for guidance on applicability of the analysis requirement and procedures for conducting and documenting the qualitative hot-spot analysis.

2. Microscale Analysis. Proposed projects must be evaluated to determine if a microscale carbon monoxide (CO) analysis is required. The determination and, as applicable, the results of the analysis, should be documented in accordance with the procedures in Section 26-14.
3. Mobile Source Air Toxics. See Section 26-13 for guidance on analysis and documentation procedures for addressing Mobile Source Air Toxics.
4. Construction-Related Particulate Matter. Include wording similar to the following to address construction-related particulate matter air quality impacts:

Demolition and construction activities can result in short-term increases in fugitive dust and equipment-related particulate emissions in and around the project area. (Equipment-related particulate emissions can be minimized if the equipment is well maintained.) The potential air quality impacts will be short-term, occurring only while demolition and construction work is in progress and local conditions are appropriate.

The potential for fugitive dust emissions typically is associated with building demolition, ground clearing, site preparation, grading, stockpiling of materials, on-site movement of equipment, and transportation of

materials. The potential is greatest during dry periods, periods of intense construction activity, and during high wind conditions.

The Department's Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction include provisions on dust control. Under these provisions, dust and airborne dirt generated by construction activities will be controlled through dust control procedures or a specific dust control plan, when warranted. The contractor and the Department will meet to review the nature and extent of dust-generating activities and will cooperatively develop specific types of control techniques appropriate to the specific situation. Techniques that may warrant consideration include measures such as minimizing track-out of soil onto nearby publicly-traveled roads, reducing speed on unpaved roads, covering haul vehicles, and applying chemical dust suppressants or water to exposed surfaces, particularly those on which construction vehicles travel. With the application of appropriate measures to limit dust emissions during construction, this project will not cause any significant, short-term particulate matter air quality impacts.

24-3.02(e)6 *Noise*

References: Section 26-6 "Noise Analyses"
IDOT Highway Traffic Noise Assessment Manual

Traffic noise analyses shall be conducted in accordance with Section 26-6 "Noise Analyses" of this BDE Manual. The *IDOT Highway Traffic Noise Assessment Manual* has been prepared to provide guidance on how to implement the policy for IDOT projects or projects being reviewed by IDOT. The guidance manual provides information to be included in the environmental documentation.

24-3.02(e)7 *Natural Resources*

The following applies to the Natural Resources discussion in the EA:

1. Upland Plant Communities.

References: Section 26-16 "Tree/Vegetation Assessments"
Section 26-17 "Invasive Species"

Include a discussion or table indicating the number of acres (ha) of each cover type that would be modified by the project (e.g., that would become paved areas or maintained right-of-way).

Describe forested blocks of trees of 20 acres (8 ha) or more based on dominant species, relative age, and quality. Briefly summarize project impacts (acreages (hectares)) and results of coordination with Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR).

Briefly describe dominant species and health of trees occurring as landscape elements in urban settings. Indicate the number of these trees to be removed (based on an actual count or an estimate based on a sample), and discuss plans for providing replacement tree plantings.

Identify prairie areas by dominant species, the presence of species having indices of conservatism greater than seven and types of disturbance, and discuss plans for providing prairie replacement.

Briefly discuss the likely effects of the project on the introduction or spread of invasive species during construction and/or as a result of project maintenance. Identify invasive species for the project area and briefly describe their potential effects on sensitive resources (e.g., adjacent natural areas, nature preserves, parks or forest preserves). Describe measures used to control invasive species during project construction and maintenance.

2. Wildlife Resources.

References: Section 26-14 "Migratory Birds"
Section 26-15 "Wildlife Resources"

Identify and briefly describe important wildlife habitats and habitats suitable for area-sensitive migratory birds and depict the habitats on an environmental inventory map for the project location. Identify and discuss wildlife species that are addressed in *The Illinois Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan & Strategy* (Illinois Wildlife Action Plan) as "Species in Greatest Need of Conservation for Illinois." Environmental commitments and mitigation should conform to the recommendations in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan, to the fullest extent practical.

Identify on an environmental inventory map sections of roadway that have the potential for increased animal-vehicle collisions. Briefly discuss measures for incorporation in the project to reduce the incidence of these types of collisions.

3. Threatened and Endangered Species.

References: Section 26-9 "Threatened and Endangered Species/Natural Area Impact Assessments"
Chapter 27 "Environmental Surveys"

- a. Federally Listed Species. Document the results of coordination with US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and other survey and evaluation activities (e.g., biological surveys, database searches) regarding the determination of whether or not listed or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat occur in the area the proposed project potentially may affect.

If coordination with USFWS and other survey and evaluation activities result in a determination that protected species and/or habitat do not occur in the area the project may affect, document the basis for the "no effect" determination.

If protected species or habitats are known or likely to occur in the project action area, identify each species, its status (i.e., threatened, endangered, proposed), its habitat preferences, and the occurrence of habitat in the project area. Document the results of coordination with USFWS for evaluating the project's potential impact on each protected species and/or habitat (e.g., "no effect"; "may affect, not likely to adversely affect"; or "may affect, likely to adversely affect").

In the case of a finding of "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" or "may affect, likely to adversely affect," summarize the following information from the biological assessment:

- species distribution, habitat needs, and other biological requirements;
- affected areas of the proposed project;
- possible impacts, including opinions of recognized experts on the species involved;
- measures to avoid or minimize adverse impacts; and
- results of consultation with USFWS.

If the results of the biological assessment and/or formal consultation indicate the preferred alternative could jeopardize the continued existence of a listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat, include a copy of the biological opinion from USFWS in the EA Appendix and summarize the steps taken, including alternatives or measures evaluated and consultations conducted, to resolve the project's conflicts with the species and/or habitat.

- b. State-Listed Species. In response to submittal of an Environmental Survey Request, BDE will provide the district the results of the EcoCAT submittal to IDNR. BDE will implement any recommendations by IDNR or BDE for biological surveys. Include information identifying each involved species, its status, and its habitat, similar to the presentation of information for Federally listed species. Discuss potential project impacts to the species and describe alternatives to avoid, minimize, or compensate for the impacts. Reference the applicable compliance documentation (e.g., Detailed Action Report, Biological Opinion, Incidental Take Authorization, as applicable) and include the documentation in the EA Appendix.

4. State Designated Lands.

References: Section 26-9 "Threatened and Endangered Species/Natural Area Impact Assessments"
Chapter 27 "Environmental Surveys"

State Designated Lands include Illinois Natural Areas, Land and Water Reserves and Nature Preserves. Indicate the name of each potentially affected State Designated Land in the project area, its size (acres/hectares), ownership (public or private) and the features that are the basis for its significance (i.e., "Element Occurrence"). Also, show the location of each potentially affected site on an environmental inventory map.

Impacts to Illinois Natural Areas and Land and Water Reserves should be avoided to the extent practical. If impacts cannot be avoided, identify the acreage (hectares) to be taken by the project and the effects on the Element Occurrence of the State Designated Land. Identify any environmental commitments and/or mitigation associated with the impacts to the State Designated Land. Summarize the results of coordination with IDNR and the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (for Land and Water Reserves) and include copies of correspondence with these entities in the Comments and Coordination section of the EA.

Illinois Statutes in 525 ILCS 30, afford dedicated Nature Preserves a high level of protection from conversion to other uses. The statutes include the following language:

Areas dedicated as nature preserves are hereby declared to be put to their highest, best and most important use for the public benefit. They shall be protected, managed and used in the manner provided by rules. They may not be taken under power of eminent domain or by other means for any other use except another public use and, except upon approval of the Commission, the Governor and any public owner of a dedicated interest therein after a finding by the Commission of the existence of an imperative and unavoidable public necessity for such other public use, and upon such terms and conditions as the Commission may determine, except as may otherwise be provided in the instrument of dedication.

In light of these provisions, every effort should be made to avoid impacts to dedicated Nature Preserves.

Use of land from significant, publicly-owned Illinois Nature Preserves, Land and Water Reserves and Natural Areas also may be subject to Section 4(f); see Section 26-2.

24-3.02(e)8 *Water Resources and Aquatic Habitats*

References: Section 26-18 "Water and Aquatic Resources"
Section 26-19 "Nationwide Rivers Inventory"
Section 26-20 "Impaired Waters/TMDLs"
Chapter 28 "Environmental Permits/Certifications"

Briefly describe all water resources that occur in the project area and indicate their location on an environmental inventory map. For each water body, indicate the width (bank-to-bank for linear features) or acreage (hectares) (for ponds, lakes), flow regime, substrate type, upstream watershed size, special designation(s), presence of woody riparian habitat, pools, riffles, runs,

vegetated shallows, fish, mussels, and aquatic macro invertebrates. Briefly describe project impacts on these features.

Describe the water quality for each water body using the narrative water quality standards in the current IEPA *Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303d List*. Identify water bodies that IEPA has listed as “Impaired” and indicate the cause(s) and source(s) of the impairment. Briefly describe anticipated project water quality impacts associated with construction, operation and maintenance of the roadway. For impaired waters, discuss whether the project will contribute to the cause(s) of the impairment.

Identify and briefly describe any “Outstanding Resource Waters” designated in accordance with 35 Ill. Adm. Code 303.205 and listed in 35 Ill. Adm. Code 303.206. These are waters in which new discharges of pollutants are prohibited. If the proposed project will involve an Outstanding Resource Water, list and briefly describe measures to be implemented to avoid introducing water pollution from the project into an Outstanding Resource Water.

Identify measures to minimize and mitigate anticipated impacts to aquatic and riparian habitat and summarize results of coordination with IDNR, USFWS, National Park Service, USEPA, and the Corps.

Indicate the type of Corps permit(s) anticipated for each water body crossing and identify water body crossings and permits requiring individual Section 401 Water Quality Certification.

24-3.02(e)9 *Groundwater*

Reference: Section 26-21 “Groundwater”

For the area the project will potentially affect, identify aquifers, aquifer recharge areas, groundwater class, groundwater quality, affected public and private drinking water wells, wellhead protection zones and sources of groundwater degradation. If the project will potentially impact groundwater resources or quality, discuss measures for avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating for these impacts.

24-3.02(e)10 *Floodplains*

Reference: Section 26-7 “Floodplains”

If available for the project area, use National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) maps to identify the 100-year floodplain. Describe the natural and beneficial floodplain values, regulatory floodways, types of existing floodplain encroachments, and support of base floodplain development. Summarize comments on floodplain issues received through public meetings and Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) processes, if applicable.

Discuss the project’s potential effects on floodplains, measures to minimize floodplain impacts and measures to avoid longitudinal encroachments and significant encroachments to the extent practical. If the project will affect a regulatory floodway, summarize the results of coordination

with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the local flood control agency regarding consistency of the project with the regulatory floodway requirements.

If the preferred alternative includes a significant encroachment, as defined in 23 CFR 650.105(q), include the following items in a separate section of the Finding of No Significant Impact titled "Only Practicable Alternative Finding":

- a reference to Executive Order 11988 and 23 CFR 650 Subpart A,
- the reasons why the proposed action must be located in the floodplain,
- the alternatives considered and why they were not practicable, and
- a statement indicating whether the action conforms to applicable State or local floodplain protection standards.

24-3.02(e)11 *Wetlands*

References: Section 26-8 "Wetlands"
Chapter 27 "Environmental Surveys"
Chapter 28 "Environmental Permits/Certifications"

Identify jurisdictional wetlands on an environmental inventory map of the project area and describe the wetland type, quality, and functions for each wetland. Discuss the project impacts on wetlands, including the importance of the affected wetlands and the severity of the impacts. (If the project will have a significant impact on wetlands, preparation of an EIS is required.) Provide a brief discussion of alternatives that would avoid the wetland impacts. If there are no practicable alternatives to construction in a wetland, include the following items in the Finding of No Significant Impact to support an "Only Practicable Alternative Finding":

- a reference to Executive Order 11990;
- an explanation why there are no practicable alternatives to the proposed action;
- an explanation why the proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to the wetlands; and
- a concluding statement that: *"Based upon the above considerations, it is determined that there is no practicable alternative to the proposed construction in wetlands and that the proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands that may result from such use."*

24-3.02(e)12 *Special Waste*

Reference: Section 27-2 "Special Waste Procedures"

In this section, summarize the results of application of the Special Waste Procedures to the proposed project. If special waste screening resulted in the determination that further action for special waste was not needed, briefly summarize the screening process and the basis for the determination. Include a copy of the signed Special Waste Assessment Screen/Survey Request Form in the EA Appendix.

If screening determined further action was needed and a Preliminary Environmental Site Assessment (PESA) was conducted, briefly discuss the basis for proceeding with a PESA and the PESA results.

If the PESA resulted in a finding of “No Recognized Environmental Condition” (REC), document that finding and include in the EA Appendix a copy of the memorandum from BDE transmitting the final PESA report. Do not include the final PESA report.

If the PESA resulted in a finding that the project involves one or more REC, briefly describe the REC(s) and further actions taken to respond, including the following, as applicable:

1. REC Avoided. Describe the avoidance measures.
2. REC Not Avoided But Determined Eligible to be Addressed During Construction as a Risk Managed Project (RMP). Summarize basis for RMP determination and measures to be implemented for the REC during construction.
3. REC Not Eligible to be Addressed as a RMP. Describe further studies conducted for the REC (e.g., Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI), Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS), Risk Assessment (RA)) and summarize the study results. Also, summarize the results of coordination with IEPA and describe the method(s) selected for addressing the REC(s) (i.e., the Remedial Action Plan).

24-3.02(e)13 *Special Lands*

References: Section 26-3 “Section 6(f) Conversion Request”
Section 26-4 “OSLAD Land Conversion Request”

The following applies to the Special Lands portion of the EA:

1. 6(f). Determine if the project will involve use of lands that have Land and Water Conservation (LAWCON) funds involved in their purchase or development (contact IDNR). If yes, describe the involvement and the replacement land and provide the date of the National Park Service approval of the Section 6(f) land conversion request.
2. Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Act Lands. If the project will involve use of lands that had OSLAD funds involved in their purchase or development, describe the involvement and the replacement land and indicate the date of IDNR approval of the OSLAD land conversion request.

24-3.02(e)14 *Section 4(f) Evaluation*

References: 23 CFR 774 “Parks, Recreation Areas, Wildlife and Waterfowl Refuges, and Historic Sites (Section 4(f))”
FHWA “Questions and Answers on the Application of the Section 4(f) *De Minimis* Impact Criteria”
FHWA “SAFETEA-LU: Section 6007 Questions and Answers on the Exemption of the Interstate System”
Paragraph II.G and Section IX of FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A “Section 4(f) Evaluation”
Section 26-2 “Section 4(f) Evaluations”
AASHTO Practitioner’s Handbook 11 *Complying with Section 4(f) of the US DOT Act*, May 2009

When Section 4(f) resources are involved, the EA should contain a separate heading entitled “Section 4(f) Evaluation.” This Section should not repeat information contained in the EA. Rather, information should be included by reference only.

If the project will involve use, including constructive use, of land from a significant publicly owned park, recreational area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or any land from a historic site of national, State, or local significance, a *de minimis* impact finding, or a programmatic or individual Section 4(f) Evaluation may be required (see Section 26-2). If temporary use of 4(f) land is involved and meets the conditions for exclusion from 4(f) applicability (see Appendix A, FHWA Section 4(f) Policy Paper, March 1, 2005), identify the use, document the response to each of the conditions, and indicate the date of FHWA concurrence that a 4(f) use does not apply.

24-3.02(e)15 *Permits/Certifications Required*

Reference: Chapter 28 “Environmental Permits/Certifications”

This section of the EA should list the permits and certifications required for the project and should reference the section(s) and subsection(s) where the related permit/certification issues are discussed.

24-3.02(e)16 *Other Issues*

Examples include:

- public involvement;
- NEPA/404 Merger Process;
- aesthetics (e.g., visual impacts) (see Section 59-6); and
- construction impacts.

Discuss these issues in the EA as appropriate (e.g., where visual impacts of the project have been identified as a concern through the coordination/public involvement process).

To the extent that the *IDOT Standard Specifications* or Recurring Special Provisions address measures for mitigating anticipated construction-related environmental impacts, these specifications and provisions should be noted as a part of the discussion. Examples include the specifications concerning:

- erosion control;
- protection of aboriginal records and antiquities;
- protection of streams, lakes, reservoirs, natural areas, wetlands, prairie areas, savannas, and threatened and endangered species;
- forest protection; and
- construction noise restrictions.

24-3.02(e)17 *Environmental Commitments and Mitigation*

An environmental commitment is a documented promise or obligation concerning an environmental issue made by a representative of IDOT to an entity outside the Department. Provide a brief description of each environmental commitment associated with the proposed project, including who made the commitment and to whom it was made.

Summarize mitigation measures to be provided for unavoidable adverse environmental impacts. If the EA results in a FONSI, include information about commitments and mitigation measures in the FONSI document.

24-3.02(e)18 *Comments and Coordination*

References: 40 CFR 1503 "Inviting and Responding to Comments"
Paragraph II.E. of FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A "Documentation of
Comments and Coordination"

In addition to the information in the cited references, this Section should include letters or other correspondence documenting final recommendations/findings (e.g., "no-effect" determination by the SHPO). This Section should not contain copies of non-essential internal memoranda, transmittals, or hearing transcripts.

24-3.02(e)19 *Appendices*

References: Paragraph II.F. of FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A "Objectives of
Appendices"
CEQ Q&A, Question 25 "Use of Appendices"

In most cases, appendices are not necessary. If necessary, appendices should include only analytical information and/or compliance documentation that is necessary to substantiate an analysis important to the document (e.g., a biological assessment for threatened or endangered species). Other information should be referenced only (i.e., identify the material and briefly describe its contents).

