



***International Falls
Land Port of Entry Improvements Study***
Final Environmental Impact Statement

International Falls, Koochiching County, MN
U.S. General Services Administration

GSA

September 2011

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Final Environmental Impact Statement

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The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) proposes to replace the existing International Falls Land Port of Entry (LPOE) at the Canadian border in International Falls, Koochiching County, Minnesota, with a new LPOE to improve safety, security, and functionality. The existing facilities are undersized and obsolete, and consequently incapable of allowing the federal agencies assigned to the LPOE to fulfill their respective missions. Five build alternatives were developed to satisfy the study purpose and needs and assessed by the GSA. The purpose of this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is to provide the GSA and the public with a full accounting of the environmental impacts to the natural, social, atmospheric, and transportation environments. The EIS serves as the primary document to facilitate review of the proposed action by federal, state, and local agencies and the general public. After careful consideration of the comments received on the DEIS, the GSA identified Alternative 10 as best satisfying the proposed action's purpose and programmatic needs and has the least impact on the human and natural environment. Alternative 10 is identified as the Preferred Alternative in the FEIS and in the ROD subject also to Congressional authorization and appropriation of availability of funds, GSA control of the site to complete archaeological investigations and continuity of the tenant agencies' Program of Requirements as they were understood at the time this study was completed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allison H. Azevedo".

Allison H. Azevedo, Regional Commissioner
GSA Public Buildings Service
Great Lakes Region

9/9/11

Date of Approval

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Summary

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) proposes to replace the existing land port of entry (LPOE) in International Falls, Minnesota along the U.S. – Canada border. The GSA, through its Land Port of Entry Program, assists the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP), a part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Federal Inspection Services (FIS) in the management of LPOE strategic planning, budgeting, design, and construction.



International Falls Land Port of Entry

International Falls is located on the international border between the U.S. and Canada in the northern portion of the state of Minnesota (exhibit S.1). The 24-hour LPOE serves as the crossing for both passenger vehicles and commercial vehicles, trains, buses, and pedestrians via the International Bridge over the Rainy River, connecting International Falls with the city of Fort Frances, Ontario. The International Falls LPOE is bounded by the Fort Frances-International Falls International Bridge (International Bridge) and the Rainy River to the north and east and the Boise Inc. paper mill complex to the south and west. The Minnesota, Dakota, & Western (MD&W) Railway borders the LPOE to the southeast and crosses the LPOE site. The LPOE consists of a single building and parking areas on 1.6-acres.

Project Overview

Proposed Action

The GSA proposes to replace the existing LPOE with a new LPOE which meets the mission needs of the CBP and other federal agencies and adheres to the design requirements of the GSA. The new LPOE would be designed in accordance with the modern requirements of the GSA and the FIS to provide a LPOE adequate for a minimum 20 years. The proposed action consists of the acquisition of property to meet the space requirements of the CBP and other federal agencies and the construction of new buildings and facilities (exhibit S.2).

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Exhibit S.1 – Location and Study Area Map



Exhibit S.2 – Components of the Proposed Action

<i>Buildings</i>	<i>Facilities</i>
Main operations	Commercial and passenger vehicle primary and secondary inspection lanes
Commercial vehicle inspection	Outbound inspection lane
Inbound pedestrian/rail processing	Bus lane
GRIT building or mobile unit for non intrusive inspection operations	Commercial unloading docks
Mobile non intrusive inspection garage	Passenger vehicle inspection bays
Trusted Traveler enrollment operations	Dedicated employee and visitor parking areas
Storage	Secure parking area
	Kennel
	Accommodations for a firing range

Purpose

The purpose of the proposed action is to improve the operational efficiency, safety, and security for federal agency personnel and cross-border travelers at International Falls, Minnesota. The specific objectives of the proposed action are to:

- increase vehicle and pedestrian processing efficiency and capacity
- reduce traffic queues and delay approaching the LPOE from both directions
- minimize conflict points among different types of traffic crossing the border (passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, trains, buses, and pedestrians)
- add a functional secondary inspection area for commercial vehicles
- accommodate future demands and new safety and security technologies and border initiatives

Need

The proposed project is needed because the existing GSA-owned facility has many problems and deficiencies, preventing the agencies operating at the LPOE from adequately fulfilling their respective missions. Specifically, the deficiencies at the LPOE fall into two broad categories:

Overall Site Layout Deficiencies – The existing International Falls LPOE occupies an approximately 1.6-acre parcel. The LPOE site is deficient in the number and location of primary and secondary inbound inspection areas, outbound inspection lane and area, parking and delivery areas, and building

setbacks required to meet current guidelines and satisfy the needs of the CBP and other federal agencies. The small size is inadequate to support the existing and future inspection operations and cannot be expanded because of the proximity of the adjacent land uses. The LPOE is situated in a heavily developed industrial area with no room for future expansion. The LPOE has inadequate queuing space and an inadequate number of lanes and area for all types of traffic. As a result, the LPOE is very congested during peak hours and traffic circulation is poor. Passenger and commercial vehicles referred for secondary inspection have extreme difficulty backing up in the parking lot due to the limited space available for turning and limited site distance. NEXUS equipment was installed at the LPOE, but the LPOE site lacks adequate space to provide a dedicated lane for vehicles using this technology and the building is deficient in its location and size.

Building Deficiencies - The existing LPOE building is a two-story masonry structure with a flat roof built in 1993 and has had a few alterations, including replacement of its exterior façade in 2005. The CBP and agencies housed within this building lack adequate office space and have no space for expansion. Additional problems with the existing main building are:

- More building space is needed to meet the CBP's and other agencies staffing requirements. The main building is approximately 10,000 square feet and approximately 17,000 square feet are required for efficient operations.
- The number of holding cells is inadequate. There are no gender-specific holding cells.
- The mechanical system is inadequate. The existing heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) system is not stabilized, creating hot and cold zones in the building.
- The existing electrical system is inadequate to support required technologies at the LPOE.

Scoping and Early Coordination

At the beginning of the study, scoping and early coordination letters were mailed to federal, state, and local agencies and special interest groups in accordance with the procedural provisions of National Environmental Policy

Act (NEPA) and the GSA's requirements and policies for early coordination. No key resources or issues of primary concern were identified.

Public participation was initiated early in the study to incorporate public comments and concerns into the development and analysis of the study purpose and needs, range of reasonable alternatives, potential resultant environmental impacts, and the development of conceptual mitigation measures.

During the identification, development, and preliminary screening of alternatives, the GSA coordinated with the CBP, Boise Inc., the MD&W Railway, and the city of International Falls. A LPOE subcommittee, consisting of representatives from the International Falls Chamber of Commerce, the city of International Falls, and Koochiching County, was formed and met with the GSA several times during the study.

The GSA held a public scoping meeting consisting of an informal open house and public comment period followed by a formal presentation and public comment period.

During the scoping process, the key issues of concern identified were the traffic queues in both directions at the LPOE, the potential impact to business in International Falls from the changes in travel patterns, the potential impact to pedestrians and the need to travel a further distance with several of the build alternatives, and aesthetics.

Alternatives

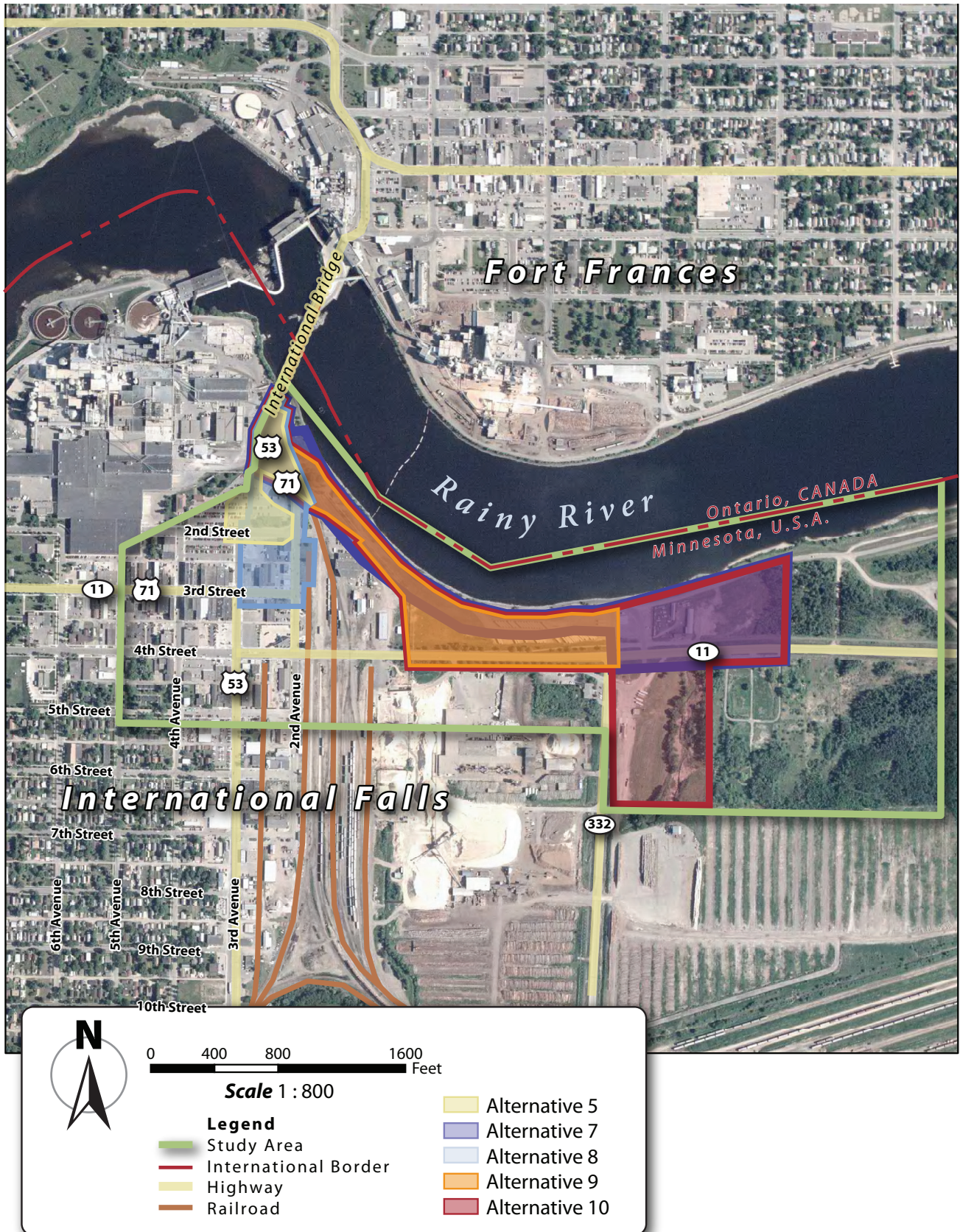
A no-build and five build alternatives (Alternatives 5 and 7 through 10) were retained from the LPOE Feasibility Study (Gensler, 2011) to satisfy the proposed action's purpose and needs and were analyzed in detail (exhibit S.3).

The build alternatives were conceptually designed to meet several key building, processing, and parking area requirements:

- a modern administration building within which operations are consolidated
- primary inspection areas for commercial vehicles, passenger vehicles, and buses
- secondary inspection areas for commercial vehicles, passenger vehicles, and buses
- a gamma ray inspection technology (GRIT) building or space for a mobile unit

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Exhibit S.3 – Alternatives Being Considered



- an adequate number and location of parking spaces
- adequate space to accommodate security measures

Each of the build alternatives was designed to follow the sequential circulation of traffic flow of LPOEs, which requires certain buildings be adjacent to one another. For instance, the primary inspection areas must precede the secondary inspection areas. Administration should be consolidated to the extent possible in one building. Parking for visitors and employees should be in proximity to the buildings they serve to be convenient, yet not so close that it creates a security risk.

The No-build Alternative

Under the no-build alternative, operation of the LPOE would continue at its existing location using the existing facilities. With the exception of minor repairs and upgrades to existing equipment, no new construction or demolition would take place at the LPOE. The no-build alternative does not satisfy the proposed action's purpose or needs because, without new construction, there would be no appreciable improvements to the current operating conditions.

Alternative 5

Alternative 5 would consist of demolishing the existing building, constructing new facilities at the existing LPOE, and expanding the LPOE to meet the required space standards and increased security requirements of the CBP. This alternative would consist of constructing the LPOE improvements on the existing 1.64-acre site and a four-acre site south of and contiguous to the existing LPOE between the International Bridge and 2nd Street. Commercial vehicles, passenger vehicles, buses, and pedestrians would enter and exit the LPOE at 2nd Avenue. Alternative 5 would only marginally satisfy the proposed action's purpose and needs because the building and site layout are not ideal, onsite traffic circulation is cumbersome, and security, while improved over existing conditions, would not fully meet the CBP's requirements.

Alternative 7

Alternative 7 would consist of demolishing the existing building, constructing new facilities at the existing LPOE, and expanding the LPOE to

meet the required space standards and increased security requirements of the CBP. This alternative would move the majority of the LPOE improvements and operations to a 17-acre site to the southeast of the existing LPOE between 4th Street and Rainy River. Commercial vehicles, passenger vehicles, buses, and pedestrians would enter and exit the LPOE on Highway 11. Alternative 7 would satisfy the proposed action's purpose and needs; however, the entrance and exit of the LPOE on Route 11 removes traffic from the central business district (CBD), creating a major concern for the citizens and business owners of International Falls that depend on passing traffic and tourism.

Alternative 8

Alternative 8 would consist of demolishing the existing building, constructing new facilities at the existing LPOE, and expanding the LPOE to meet the required space standards and increased security requirements of the CBP. This alternative would consist of constructing the LPOE improvements on the existing 1.64-acre site and 6.5-acre site south of and contiguous to the existing LPOE between the International Bridge and 3rd Street. Commercial vehicles, passenger vehicles, buses, and pedestrians would enter and exit the LPOE at 2nd Avenue. Alternative 8 would only marginally satisfy the proposed action's purpose and needs because the building and site layout are not ideal, and onsite traffic circulation is cumbersome. There is no room for expansion.

Alternative 9

Alternative 9 would consist of demolishing the existing building, constructing new facilities at the existing LPOE, and expanding the LPOE to meet the required space standards and increased security requirements of the CBP. This alternative would move the majority of the LPOE improvements and operations to a 12-acre site to the southeast of the existing LPOE between 4th Street and Rainy River. Commercial vehicles, passenger vehicles, buses, and pedestrians would enter and exit the LPOE on Highway 11 and 332. Alternative 9 would satisfy the proposed action's purpose and needs; however, the entrance and exit of the LPOE on Route 11 removes traffic from the CBD, creating a major concern for the citizens and business owners of International Falls that depend on passing traffic and tourism.

Alternative 10

Alternative 10 would consist of demolishing the existing building, constructing new facilities at the existing LPOE, and expanding the LPOE to meet the required space standards and increased security requirements of the CBP. This alternative would move the majority of the LPOE improvements and operations to a 15-acre site southeast of the existing site between 4th Street and Rainy River. Passenger vehicles, buses, and pedestrians would enter and exit the LPOE on Highway 53 and 2nd Street. Commercial vehicles would enter and exit the LPOE on Highway 11. Alternative 10 would satisfy the proposed action's purpose and needs. Passenger vehicles, buses, and pedestrians would enter and exit the LPOE at 2nd Avenue after passing through the CBD. Commercial vehicles would enter and exit the LPOE from Route 11 reducing traffic and noise in the CBD.

Affected Environment

The GSA developed a study area of approximately 190 acres that encompasses the range of reasonable alternatives, and performed a detailed analysis of the natural, social, and economic features of the study area (exhibit S.1). The study area covers not only the land that would be used for the build alternatives, but also the areas that would experience direct and indirect impacts from them.

Impacts to the Natural and Social Environment

While the no-build alternative would have no impacts to the natural and social environment, the construction of the build alternatives would generally have a small impact on the natural and social environment of International Falls. The build alternatives would result in minor changes or impacts to surface water, floodplains, wetlands, traffic, land use, lighting, hazardous substances, and indirect economic impacts. In each case, the changes would not be significant, with the possible exception of indirect impacts on local businesses with Alternatives 7 and 9.

Surface Waters, Floodplains, and Wetlands

The no-build alternative, Alternative 5, and Alternative 8 would not impact surface waters, floodplains, and wetlands. Alternatives 7, 9, and 10 may result in a direct impact to the Rainy River and the floodplains of the Rainy

River through the construction of piers supporting the access road, at its closest point, to the river. If required, the piers would be located along the bank of the Rainy River and may directly impact approximately 0.1 acre of the river. Alternative 10 would impact less than 0.1 acre of First Creek from the construction of the road from the replacement of the truck storage lot to Highway 11. If Alternatives 7, 9, or 10 would result in a direct impact to the Rainy River or First Creek, the GSA would submit the Minnesota Local/State/Federal Application Form for Water/Wetland Projects to the Local Government Unit, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in accordance with the Minnesota Wetlands Conservation Act, Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA).

A Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) may be required depending on the type of permit issued by the USACE for impacts to Waters of the U.S.

The build alternatives would result in a minor impact to the quality and quantity of the Rainy River. Stormwater runoff in urban areas is one of the leading sources of water pollution in the United States. Under Section 438 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, Congress required federal agencies to provide national leadership to reduce water quality problems from stormwater runoff. Section 438 specifically calls for projects “...involving a federal facility with a footprint that exceeds 5,000 square feet shall use site planning, design, construction, and maintenance strategies for the property to maintain or restore, to the maximum extent technically feasible, the predevelopment hydrology of the property with regard to the temperature, rate, volume, and duration of flow.”

The preferred alternative would be developed in compliance with Section 438 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. During final design of the preferred alternative, the GSA would further analyze opportunities to maintain and restore pre-development hydrology. Additionally, the GSA would consider green infrastructure and low impact development practices such as reducing impervious surfaces, using vegetated swales and revegetation, protection and restoration of the riparian shoreline of Rainy River, and using porous pavements.

The GSA would develop a spill prevention, control, and countermeasures plan for the preferred alternative during final design.

Implementation of the build alternatives would require a MPCA National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)/State Disposal System (SDS) Construction Stormwater General Permit and may require an Industrial stormwater permit. Stormwater permitting, as necessary, would be completed subsequent to the Record of Decision (ROD) and prior to construction.

Traffic

The no-build alternative, Alternative 5, and Alternative 8 would not impact traffic volumes and patterns. With Alternatives 7 and 9, commercial and passenger vehicle traffic would enter and exit the LPOE from Highway 11 via a new signalized intersection. For Alternative 7, this intersection would be approximately 1,000 feet to the east of Highway 332; for Alternative 9, this intersection would connect with existing Highway 332. Alternatives 7 and 9 would improve the transportation deficiencies associated with the existing LPOE by providing additional queuing space and removing vehicles from city streets; this includes removing passenger vehicles and buses from the CBD of International Falls. Alternatives 7 and 9 would result in a slight increase in commercial and passenger vehicle traffic along Highway 11 between the entrance/exit to the LPOE and Highway 53.

With Alternative 10, passenger vehicles and buses would enter and exit the LPOE using the existing travel pattern along 2nd Avenue, while commercial vehicles would use a new entrance/exit along Highway 11 at Highway 332. Alternative 10 would provide all of the transportation advantages of Alternatives 7 and 9 without removing passenger vehicles and buses from the CBD of International Falls. Alternative 10 would also reduce the overall growth in travel demand along Highway 11 by limiting direct increases to only commercial vehicles. It also eliminates conflicts between commercial vehicle inspections and railway operations and reduces the conflicts involving passenger vehicles and bus traffic.

The no-build alternative, Alternative 5, and Alternative 8 would not provide substantial improvement in conflicts between railway operations and inspection activities, as they would essentially retain the existing travel patterns. Alternatives 7 and 9 would allow for the complete separation of railway operations and LPOE activities, while Alternative 10 would eliminate railway and commercial traffic conflicts and greatly reduce conflicts for passenger vehicles and bus traffic.

The no-build alternative, Alternative 5, and Alternative 8 would not impact pedestrians and bicyclists. With Alternatives 7 and 9, pedestrian and bicyclists would enter and exit the LPOE from Highway 11 via a new signalized intersection. For Alternative 7, this intersection would be approximately 1,000 feet to the east of Highway 332; for Alternative 9, this intersection would connect with existing Highway 332. If traveling to or from the east, Alternatives 7 and 9 would likely remove pedestrian and bicyclists from the CBD of International Falls. If traveling to or from the west, Alternatives 7 and 9 would require pedestrian and bicyclists to travel an additional 4,000 and 6,000 feet, respectively, when compared to the no-build alternative.

With Alternative 10, pedestrian and bicyclists would enter and exit the LPOE using the existing travel pattern along 2nd Avenue and would not remove them from the CBD of International Falls. As presently designed, Alternative 10 would require pedestrians and bicyclists to travel an additional 3,500 feet, within the LPOE, when compared to the no-build alternative. If identified as the preferred alternative, during final design, the GSA would further analyze opportunities to shorten the additional length of travel required for pedestrians.

Land Use

The no-build alternative would not impact land use. The build alternatives would result in impacts to existing and future land uses through the acquisition of property and the conversion of a variety of existing land uses to government use.

Alternative 5 would require the acquisition and conversion of approximately four acres of a portion of a Boise Inc. owned parking lot to the north of 2nd Street to government use.

Converting this parking lot to government use would require relocating these parking spaces to another location in International Falls further to the south, west, or east of the Boise Inc. paper mill, impacting the ability of these employees to get to work.

Alternative 7, 9, and 10 would require the acquisition and conversion of approximately 17, 12, and 15 acres of property owned by Boise Inc. to the south and east of the paper mill along the Rainy River and used as a temporary storage lot for commercial vehicles. The portion of the study area owned by Boise Inc. along the Rainy River used as a temporary storage lot for commercial vehicles is not vital to Boise Inc.'s paper mill operations and

they have indicated a willingness to store commercial vehicles nearby to the south across Highway 11.

Alternatives 7, 9, and 10 would impact the operations of Duty Free America. For purchase at the Duty Free America by people traveling to Canada, employees of Duty Free America would be required to drive approximately one mile to stock additional merchandise for customers at the outbound pick up location before departing the U.S. Alternative 9 would require the relocation of a portion of the Boise Inc. overhead pneumatic chip line.

Alternative 8 would require the acquisition and conversion of approximately 6.5 acres of commercial use to government use and require the acquisition and displacement of four businesses: Border Bob's, the Duty Free America Store and Gas Station, Pet Parlor Grooming, and Borderland Insurance. Border Bob's merchandise and the Duty Free America Store and Gas Station are dependent on passing traffic. It is likely that the Duty Free America Store and Gas Station and Border Bob's Merchandise could be relocated in the immediate area, such as to the area to the south and east along the Rainy River used by Boise Inc. for the temporary storage for commercial vehicles. However, this area is further removed from the LPOE and would likely result in a loss of business to both. Also, Alternative 8 would require the acquisition and conversion of a portion of a Boise Inc. owned parking lot to the north of 2nd Street to government use, having similar impacts as Alternative 5.



A portion of the Boise Inc. parking lot which would be displaced by Alternatives 5 and 8

Lighting

The build alternatives would introduce new lighting to the study area. Lighting quality is an important consideration in the planning and design of LPOEs; insufficient lighting or glare can inhibit accurate assessment of vehicles and persons and cause fatigue. Lighting needs to be sufficient to allow accurate identification of vehicle color and passenger identification. The safety of inspection personnel is a concern especially during twilight or darkness. Lighting placement, fixtures, and levels for the preferred alterna-

tive would be designed in accordance with the requirements of the CBP to provide sufficient lighting to intended areas and reduce the amount of light to unintended areas. The details of the lighting plan would be developed by the GSA during final design of the preferred alternative.

Hazardous Substances

The build alternatives would create a small increase in the amount of hazardous substances currently generated or used in the study area. The construction of a GRIT facility or mobile unit has the potential to result in impacts from a slight increase in hazardous substances or materials. Operation and maintenance of non-intrusive inspection units has little potential impact from hazardous materials and substances. Refueling of a mobile GRIT would follow legal requirements for storage, handling, use, and disposal of hazardous materials and substances. Hazardous materials generated would be collected and disposed in accordance with federal and state regulations.

Indirect Economic Impacts

Alternatives 7 and 9 would provide inbound and outbound travelers with an opportunity to avoid the CBD potentially resulting in an adverse indirect economic impact to businesses in the CBD. The businesses most affected by the changes in travel patterns are those along 2nd Avenue, 3rd Avenue, 2nd Street and 3rd Street that are dependent upon passing traffic as a source of customers, although most business in proximity to the LPOE could be impacted. For both inbound and outbound traffic, proper signage directing visitors to the CBD would minimize the potential adverse indirect economic impact to businesses in the CBD.

Circulation of the DEIS and Identification of the Preferred Alternative

The GSA announced the availability of the DEIS for the International Falls LPOE Improvements Study on January 14, 2010 (section 5.3). A 45-day comment period immediately followed, during which the GSA invited Federal, State and local agencies, organizations and individuals to submit comments on the DEIS.

A public hearing was held at the Rainy River Community College on January 27, 2010 and a transcript of the hearing was prepared. Two attendees

offered substantive comments during the public hearing. The public hearing was preceded by an open house to allow attendees to view plans of the build alternatives in detail, review the DEIS and discuss its content with the GSA, and ask questions.

The GSA received eight comment letters and one comment e-mail (section 5.3).

After careful consideration of the comments received on the DEIS, the GSA identified Alternative 10 as best satisfying the proposed action's purpose and programmatic needs and has the least impact on the human and natural environment. Alternative 10 is identified as the Preferred Alternative in the FEIS and in the ROD subject also to Congressional authorization and appropriation of availability of funds, GSA control of the site to complete archaeological investigations and continuity of the tenant agencies' Program of Requirements as they were understood at the time this study was completed. (exhibit S.4).

Alternatives 5 and 8 only marginally satisfied the proposed action's purpose and needs because the buildings and site layout were not ideal, onsite traffic circulation was cumbersome, and security, while improved over the existing conditions, would not fully meet the FIS's requirements.

Alternatives 7 and 9 would satisfy the proposed action's purpose and needs; however, the entrance and exit of the LPOE on Route 11 removes POV traffic from the CBD, creating a major concern and possible economic hardship for the citizens and business owners of International Falls that depend on passing traffic and tourism.

Alternative 10 was identified as the preferred alternative because it was the only alternative that fully satisfied the proposed action's purpose and needs with the least adverse impact to the human environment. Alternative 10 is also the environmentally preferable alternative. According to the NEPA, the environmentally preferable alternative is the alternative "that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment; [and]...best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources" (CEQ, 1981).

Commitments

In support of the development of Alternative 10 as the preferred alternative, during final design, the GSA has made the following commitments:

Exhibit S.4 – Alternative 10

International Falls Alternative 10 Legend

- A** Main Building
- B** Non-Commercial Primary (5 Lanes)
- C** Non-Commercial Secondary (10 Lanes)
- D** Bus Lane
- E** Relocated Duty Free Building
- F** CBP Parking
- G** Visitor Parking
- H** Commercial Primary (1 Lane)
- I** Commercial Building
- J** NII Operations (Permanent)
- K** Secure Corridor
- L** Exit Control
- M** Commercial Dock (2 Bays)
- N** Kennel
- O** Firing Range
- P** Outbound Inspections
- Q** Trusted Traveler Enrollment Operations
- R** Inbound Pedestrian/Rail Processing
- S** Secure Parking
- T** Non Commercial Bays
- U** Satellite Rail Processing
- V** Toll Booth
- W** Chip Line Support Building Relocation
- X** MD&W Railroad Building
- Y** Non-Commercial LPOE Entry/Exit
- Z** Commercial LPOE Entry/Exit



1. In response to Presidential Executive Order (EO) 13123, “Greening the Government through Efficient Energy Management,” and other federal mandates, and as a matter of agency policy, the GSA is committed to incorporating the principles of sustainable design as seamlessly as possible in its building projects. Sustainable design principles include the ability to: optimize site potential; minimize non-renewable energy consumption; use environmentally preferable products; protect and conserve water; enhance indoor environmental quality; and optimize operational and maintenance practices. As a means of evaluating and measuring the GSA’s green building achievements, new construction projects and substantial renovations must be certified through the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System of the U.S. Green Building Council. The Green Building Council is a private non-profit trade organization funded by the building industry. Projects are encouraged to exceed basic LEED green building certification and achieve the LEED Gold certification rating. LEED certification consists of a set of prerequisites and credits with specific requirements for obtaining points to become a certified green building (GSA, 2009). For the new LPOE at International Falls, the GSA is committed to achieving a Gold Certification Rating.
2. The GSA is proposing to further reduce idling emissions and promote energy conservation and efficiency during operation of the LPOE, by promoting the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) SmartWay program through posting and distributing literature. The SmartWay program and brand identifies products and services that reduce transportation-related emissions. Providing literature to people at the LPOE could result in air quality and/or greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions improvements and energy conservation and efficiency, while maintaining or improving current levels of other emissions and/or pollutants (EPA, 2009).
3. The preferred alternative would be developed in compliance with Section 438 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. During final design of the preferred alternative, the GSA would further analyze opportunities to maintain and restore pre-development hydrology. Additionally, the GSA would consider green infrastructure and low impact development practices such as reducing impervious

surfaces, using vegetated swales and revegetation, protection and restoration of the riparian shoreline of Rainy River, and using porous pavements.

4. The GSA would develop a spill prevention, control, and countermeasures plan for the preferred alternative during final design.
5. The GSA would further analyze opportunities to protect and restore the natural shoreline of the Rainy River during final design of the preferred alternative.
6. Prior to the start of construction, the GSA would inspect the site of the preferred alternative for invasive plant species. If invasive plant species are present on the site of the preferred alternative, the GSA would develop and implement a plan to control the potential spreading of invasive plant species prior to the start of construction.
7. Once the GSA has purchased the site of the preferred alternative, the GSA would perform a Phase I archaeological survey, including historical archaeology, on the site of the preferred alternative and continue coordination with the MN SHPO office in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
8. The GSA would further analyze opportunities to shorten the additional length of travel required for pedestrians during final design of the preferred alternative.
9. The GSA would consult and work with Mn/DOT, Koochiching County, and the City of International Falls on work impacting state and local roads during final design of the preferred alternative.
10. The GSA would incorporate railroad crossing controls for non-commercial vehicles into the design of the preferred alternative at the new rail crossing.
11. Prior to the demolition of the existing LPOE, an inspection of the buildings to be demolished by an asbestos certified contractor / consultant would need to be performed and the “Notification of Intent to Perform a Demolition” form would need to be completed and filed with the MPCA. Additionally, any hazardous waste items such as mercury switches, light ballasts containing PCBs, lead paint, fluorescent lights, and paint cans need to be removed and properly disposed.

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Glossary

annual average daily traffic (AADT) – The total yearly volume in both directions of travel divided by the number of days in the year.

archaeological sites – Places in which past peoples left physical evidence of their occupation. Archaeological sites may include ruins and foundations of historic-era buildings and structures, or surface ruins and/or underground deposits of Native American occupation debris such as artifacts, food remains (shells and bones), and former dwelling structures. Important archaeological sites can qualify as “historic properties.”

attainment area – A geographic area in which levels of a criteria air pollutant meet the health-based primary standard (i.e., National Ambient Air Quality Standard) for the pollutant. Attainment areas are defined using federal pollutant limits set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

best management practices (BMPs) – Techniques and measures employed during and after construction to treat surface runoff and protect receiving water quality.

land port of entry (LPOE) – Also known as a border station, is the facility that provides controlled entry into or departure from the U.S. for persons and materials.

carbon dioxide equivalency – A quantity that describes, for a given mixture and amount of greenhouse gas, the amount of CO₂ that would have the same global warming potential, when measured over a specified timescale (generally, 100 years).

criteria pollutants – Six pollutants for which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has established national ambient air quality standards to protect human health, as required by the 1970 amendments to the

Clean Air Act. These pollutants include ozone, carbon monoxide, total suspended particulates, sulfur dioxide, lead, and nitrogen oxide.

CEQ Regulations – Directives issued by the Federal Council on Environmental Quality, published in 40 CFR 1500-1508, which governs the implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act and the development and issuance of environmental policy and procedure for federal actions by public agencies. The regulations contain definitions, spell out applicability and responsibilities, and mandate certain processes and procedures for state agencies with programs that use federal aid funds.

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Contamination and Liability Information System (CERCLIS) List – CERCLIS sites are those where serious hazards exist or have existed which are threats to health; the highest priority are placed on the National Priority List.

cultural resources – Historic properties, archaeological sites, Native American cultural resources, cultural institutions, ways of life, culturally valued viewsheds, places of cultural association, and other valued places and social institutions.

cumulative effects – The impact on the environment that results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency (federal or nonfederal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions that take place over a period of time.

direct impacts – The immediate effects on the social, economic, and physical environment caused by the construction and operation of a highway; these impacts are usually experienced within the right-of-way or in the immediate vicinity of the highway or other project element.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) – The document prepared by the U.S. General Services Administration in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-

1508). These regulations require that the DEIS evaluate all reasonable alternatives considered; discuss the reasons that alternatives have been eliminated from detailed study; and summarize the studies, reviews, consultations, and coordination required by environmental laws and Executive Orders.

endangered species – Any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

environment – The complex of social, natural, and cultural conditions that are present in the physical surroundings.

Environmental assessment (EA) – A document prepared for federal actions that are not categorical exclusions and that do not clearly require preparation of an EIS. An EA provides the analysis and documentation to determine if an EIS or a Finding of No Significant Impact should be prepared.

environmental justice – A set of principles that federal agencies are required to consider in analyses performed under the National Environmental Policy Act, as established by Executive Order 12898, which provides that “each federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations.”

Federal Inspection Services (FIS) – FIS include: Customs and Border Protection (Department of Homeland Security)-expedite the processing and legitimate goods travelers, and conduct agricultural plant health and safety inspections while defending the border against those who would do us harm; Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (Department of Agriculture)-concerned with importation of plants and animals that may pose a threat to U.S. agriculture, and the purity of food products; Food and Drug Administration (Department of Health and Human Services)-concerned with the importation of pharmaceuticals, packaged and processed food products, electronic devices that emit radiation;

Fish and Wildlife Services (Department of Interior)-concerned with the importation live or dead animal products that may be threatened or endangered species; Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (Transportation Department)-more prevalent along the southern border, and usually administered by the state police, FMCSA is concerned with vehicle safety and roadworthiness, and driver compliance with safety regulations, such as hours of services.

Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) – The document prepared after circulation of a DEIS (or Supplemental DEIS) and consideration of comments received. The National Environmental Policy Act regulations (23 CFR Part 771.125) require that the FEIS identify a preferred alternative, evaluate all reasonable alternatives considered, discuss and respond to substantive comments on the FEIS, summarize public involvement, and describe the mitigation measures that would be incorporated into the proposed action.

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) – A document by a federal agency that briefly presents the reasons why an action, not otherwise excluded (§ 1508.4), will not have a significant effect on the human environment and, therefore, for which an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. It will include the environmental assessment or a summary of it and will note any other environmental documents related to it (§ 1501.7(a)(5)). If the assessment is included, the finding need not repeat any of the discussion in the assessment but may incorporate it by reference.

Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) – Foreign Trade Zones were created in the U.S. to provide special customs procedures to U.S. firms engaged in international trade-related activities. These procedures were aimed to offset customs advantages available to overseas producers who compete with domestic industry. Businesses locating in an FTZ can take advantage of a number of financial and timesaving benefits including duty deferral, duty reduction, and streamlined distribution.

Gamma Ray Inspection Technology (GRIT) – A truck-mounted, non-intrusive gamma ray imaging system that produces radio-graphic images of the contents of trucks, containers, cargo, and passenger vehicles.

U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) – The General Services Administration provides workplaces by constructing, managing, and preserving government buildings and by leasing and managing commercial real estate. The GSA's acquisition solutions offer private sector professional services, equipment, supplies, telecommunications, and information technology to government organizations and the military.

greenhouse gases (GHGs) – Gases that allow sunlight to enter the atmosphere freely. When sunlight strikes the Earth's surface, some of it is re-radiated back towards space as infrared radiation (heat). Greenhouse gases absorb this infrared radiation and trap the heat in the atmosphere.

hazardous substance – Byproducts of society that can pose a substantial or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly managed. Hazardous substances possess at least one of four characteristics (ignitability, corrosivity, reactivity, or toxicity) or appears on special lists prepared by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency available in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 40, Part 261.

historic properties – Places that are eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, or local landmarks. These properties can include districts, sites, buildings, structures, objects, and landscapes significant in American history, prehistory, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Historic properties can also include traditional cultural properties.

International Joint Commission (IJC) – Formed under the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909, the International Joint Commission (IJC) was formed to prevent and resolve disputes over the use of the waters shared by Canada and the U.S. and to settle other transboundary issues. The IJC cast as a quasi-judicial body by deciding on applications for projects, such as dams, diversions or bridges that would affect the natural level or

flow of boundary waters, or dams on transboundary streams that would raise the level across the boundary in the upstream county. The IJC is also routinely focused on transboundary water quality and air quality concerns, as well as issues related to the development and use of shared water resources.

National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) – The prescribed level of pollutants in the outside air that cannot be exceeded during a specified time in a specified geographic area.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – An act signed into law on January 1, 1970. Section 102 of the Act sets the requirements for and outlines the contents of environmental impact statements that are to accompany every recommendation or report on proposals for legislation and other major federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

National Priority List (NPL) – The list of national priorities among the known releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants throughout the U.S. and its territories.

National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) – The nation’s official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, this register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect historic and archeological resources. Properties listed in the register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. The NRHP is administered by the National Park Service, which is part of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) – A program administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for mapping and classifying wetland resources in the U.S..

Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) – Equipment based on technologies such as low-energy X-ray or low-energy gamma radiation sources to “see” into cargo containers and identify potential contraband.

palustrine – The group of vegetated wetlands traditionally called by names such as marsh, swamp, bog, fen, and prairie. Palustrine wetlands may be situated shoreward of lakes, river channels, or estuaries; on river floodplains; in isolated catchments; or on slopes.

palustrine forested wetlands (PFO) – Palustrine wetlands dominated by trees, commonly referred to as a swamp.

palustrine emergent wetlands (PEM) – Palustrine wetlands dominated by herbaceous species, typically cattails, sedges, and grasses, and commonly referred to as a marsh.

palustrine scrub-shrub wetland (PSS) – Palustrine wetlands dominated by shrubs.

particulate matter – Fine liquid or solid particles, such as dust, smoke, mist, fumes, or smog, which are found in air or emissions.

physiographic province – A landform, region, or area delineated according to similar terrain that has been shaped by a common geologic history. Each province defines a region in which relief, landforms, and geology are significantly different from that of the adjoining and nearby regions. The boundary between each province is determined by a major change in topography and geology.

Record of Decision (ROD) – The document, prepared by the General Services Administration, that presents the basis for the federal agency action, summarizes any mitigation measures to be incorporated. No federal agency action may be undertaken until a ROD has been signed. A ROD is prepared no sooner than 30 days after the public release of the FEIS.

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) CORRACTS or

Non-CORRACTS List – RCRA CORRACTS facilities are those facilities which treat, store, and/or dispose of hazardous substances on-site and at which corrective remedial action is underway, as defined and regulated by RCRA. The RCRA non-CORRACTS facilities list are those facilities on which treatment, storage, and/or disposal of hazardous substances take place and at which corrective remedial action has not been required by Environmental Protection Agency.

secondary (or indirect) impacts – The impacts that are caused by the project and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable; secondary impacts may include induced changes to land use patterns, population density or growth rate, and related effects on natural systems, including ecosystems.

threatened species – Any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

Acronyms

AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic
APE	Area of Potential Effect
BMP	Best Management Practice
BOD	Biological Oxygen Demand
CAAA	1990 Clean Air Act Amendments
CALM	Consolidated Assessment and Listing Methodology
CBD	Central Business District
CBP	Bureau of Customs and Border Protection
CERCLIS	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Contamination and Liability Information System
CWA	Clean Water Act
CWI	County Well Index
dB	Decibels
dba	“A” - Weighted Sound Level
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EISA	Energy Independence and Security Act
EO	Executive Order
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FEIS	final environmental impact statement
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIS	Federal Inspection Services
FTZ	Foreign-Trade Zones
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GPM	Gallons per Minute
GRIT	Gamma Ray Inspection
GSA	U. S. General Services Administration
HVAC	Heating, Ventilating, and Air Conditioning
IJC	International Joint Commission
IRLBC	International Rainy Lake Board of Control
IRRWPB	International Rainy River Water Pollution Board
JOBZ	Job Opportunity Business Zones
KEDA	Koochiching Economic Development Authority
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
Leq.	Steady State Sound Level

International Falls Land Port of Entry Improvements Study

LPOE	Land Port of Entry
MD&W	Minnesota, Dakota, & Western
MDNR	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
MMtCO_{2e}	Carbon Dioxide Equivalence
Mn/DOT	Minnesota Department of Transportation
MPCA	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NCHRP	National Cooperative Highway Research Program
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NII	Non-Intrusive Inspection
NOI	Notice of Intent
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPL	National Priority List
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWI	National Wetland Inventory
OAQPS	Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
ROD	Record of Decision
RPM	Radiation Portal Monitor
SDS	State Disposal System
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SWPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
TSS	Total Suspended Solids
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Chapter 1

Purpose and Need

The U. S. General Services Administration (GSA), through its Land Port of Entry Program, assists the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP), a component of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Federal Inspection Services (FIS) in the management of land port of entry (LPOE) construction, including strategic planning, budgeting, and design guidance. The GSA works to enhance the security and safety of borders of the U.S. by developing solutions to meet the needs of the FIS. The action evaluated in this environmental impact statement (EIS) is the proposed replacement of the existing LPOE at International Falls, Minnesota on the U.S./Canada border.

Chapter 1 details the underlying purpose and need to which the project sponsors are responding in studying the alternatives in Chapter 2. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the decision-makers and decision-making process and provides a foundation for the remainder of the document.

1.1 Background

The City of International Falls, Minnesota is located in northern Koochiching County along the Rainy River, which serves as the international boundary between the U.S. and the Canadian province of Ontario. International Falls is the county seat of Koochiching County, with a population of approximately 6,200 (exhibit 1.1).

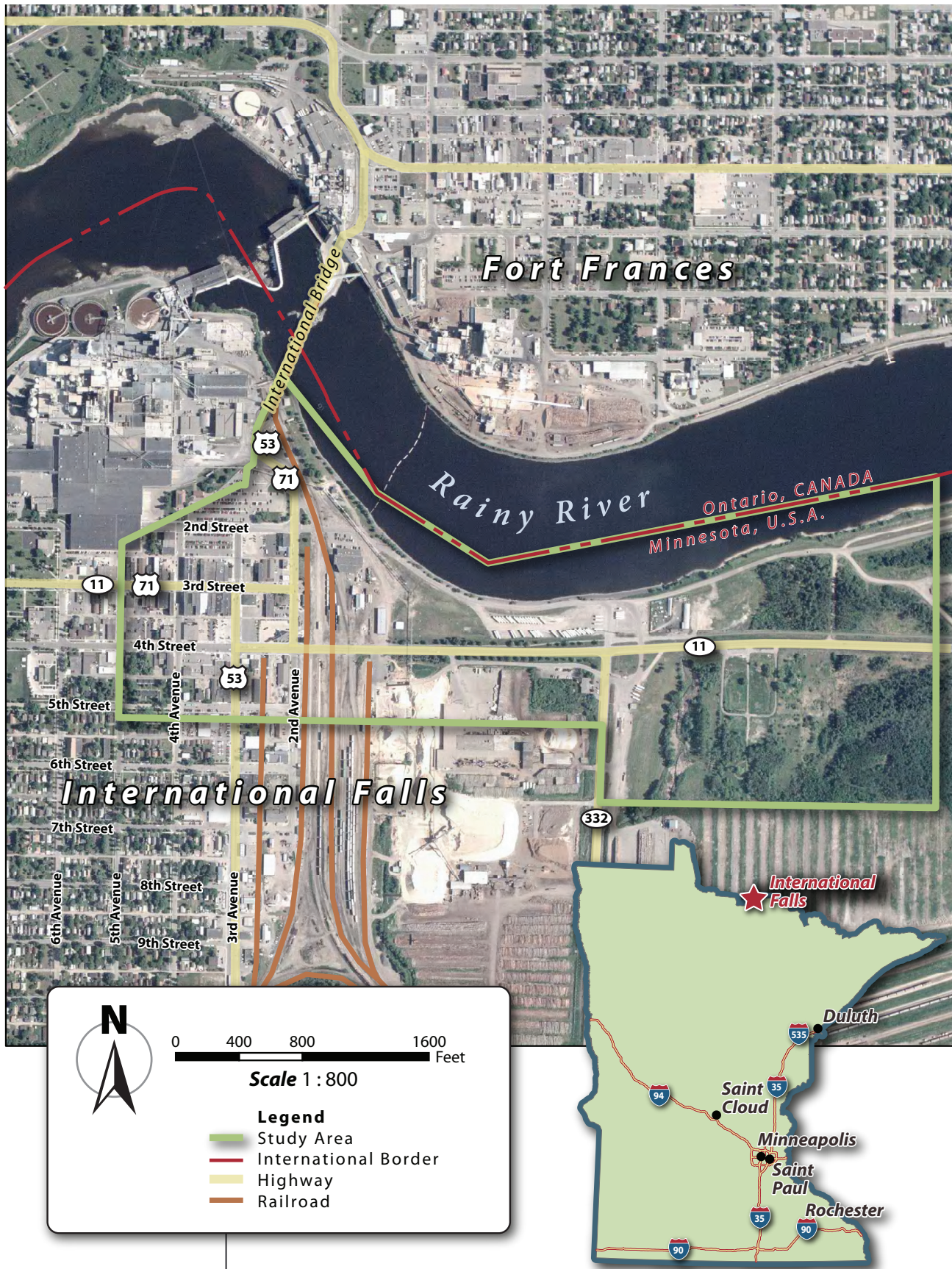
The International Falls LPOE is bounded by the Fort Frances-International Falls International Bridge (International Bridge) and the Rainy River to the north and east and the Boise Inc. paper mill complex to the south and west. The Minnesota, Dakota, & Western (MD&W) Railway borders the LPOE to the southeast and crosses the LPOE site.

The GSA-owned LPOE at International Falls was built in 1993 and its exterior façade was replaced in 2005. It is open 24-hours per day, seven days per week, and serves as a crossing for passenger (also referred to as non-commercial) and commercial vehicles, trains, buses, and pedestrians via the International Bridge over the Rainy River.

The International Bridge consists of two bridges immediately adjacent to one another – a concrete bridge for passenger vehicle traffic and an adjacent metal bridge shared by rail and commercial vehicle traffic. Pedestrians enter the LPOE from a sidewalk located on the west side of the metal span of the International Bridge. The bridge is owned jointly by Boise Inc. and Abitibi

1 · International Falls Land Port of Entry Improvements Study

Exhibit 1.1 – Location and Study Area Map



What is a land port of entry?

A land port of entry (LPOE) is a facility that provides controlled entry into or departure from the U.S. for persons and materials. It houses the CBP and other federal agencies responsible for the enforcement of federal laws pertaining to inspections of persons and materials. The LPOE consists of the land, the buildings, and the roadways and parking lots that it occupies. The facility serves as a point of contact for travelers entering or leaving the country for the purposes of enforcement; prevention of illegal aliens from entering the country; collection of revenues; prevention of injurious plants, animal pests, human and animal diseases from entering the country; examination of export documents; registration of valuable articles temporarily taken out of the country; and commercial transactions.

Consolidated, which operate paper mills on the U.S. and Canadian sides of the river.

The buildings and facilities at the existing LPOE consist of:

- a 10,000 square foot main operations building
- two primary and two secondary passenger vehicle inspection lanes
- one primary commercial vehicle inspection lane
- a mobile gamma-ray inspection shed
- public restrooms
- a secure storage shed
- a duty-free shop
- a toll booth
- a visitor parking lot (employee parking is provided offsite in the Boise Inc. paper mill lot to the south of the main building)

1.2 Project Initiation

On December 4, 2009, the GSA issued a draft feasibility study (Gensler, 2009) examining the conditions of the existing LPOE and the existing and future needs of the CBP and other inspection agencies. The results of the feasibility study confirmed the existing building, although well maintained, does not meet the GSA's minimum requirements for LPOEs and provides only a small percentage of the total building area and land required to meet the needs of the CBP and other agencies (exhibit 1.2).

The existing LPOE also suffers from a variety of basic deficiencies that inhibit the ability of the CBP and other agencies to provide safe and efficient processing of vehicle and pedestrian traffic. These issues consist of:

Exhibit 1.2 – Existing and Required Facilities

LPOE Component	Existing	Required
Main operations building	10,010 sq. ft.	17,270 sq. ft.
Primary passenger vehicle inspection lanes	2	4
Secondary passenger vehicle inspection lanes	2	10
Passenger vehicle bays	1	2
Primary Commercial vehicle inspection lanes	1	2
Commercial vehicle docks	0	2
Primary bus inspection lanes	0	0
Primary pedestrian inspection lanes	1	1
Outbound inspection lane	0	1

Source: Gensler, 2009

- poor LPOE site circulation and layout
- inadequate space to process inbound commercial and passenger vehicles especially secondary inspections of large commercial vehicles
- insufficient space to process outbound vehicle and pedestrian traffic
- lack of dedicated employee parking spaces
- deficient exterior lighting
- concerns related to security measures (equipment, fencing, building setbacks, etc.)

1.3 Proposed Action

The GSA proposes to replace the existing LPOE with a new LPOE which meets the mission needs of the CBP and other federal agencies and adheres to the design requirements of the GSA. The new LPOE would be designed in accordance with the modern requirements of the GSA and the FIS to provide a LPOE adequate for a minimum 20 years. The proposed action consists of the acquisition of property to meet the space requirements of the CBP and other federal agencies and the construction of new buildings and facilities (exhibit 1.3).

In response to Presidential Executive Order (EO) 13123 “Greening the Government through Efficient Energy Management,” and other federal mandates, and as a matter of agency policy, the GSA is committed to incorporating the principles of sustainable design as seamlessly as possible in its building projects. Sustainable design principles include the ability to: optimize site potential; minimize non-renewable energy consumption; use environmentally preferable products; protect and conserve water; enhance

Exhibit 1.3 – Components of the Proposed Action

Buildings	Facilities
Main operations	Commercial and passenger vehicle primary and secondary inspection lanes
Commercial vehicle inspection	Outbound inspection lane
Inbound pedestrian/rail processing	Bus lane
GRIT building or mobile unit for non intrusive inspection operations	Commercial vehicle unloading docks
Mobile non intrusive inspection garage	Passenger vehicle inspection bays
Trusted Traveler enrollment operations	Dedicated employee and visitor parking areas
Storage	Secure parking area
	Kennel
	Accommodations for a firing range

indoor environmental quality; and optimize operational and maintenance practices.

As a means of evaluating and measuring the GSA’s green building achievements, new construction projects and substantial renovations must be certified through the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System of the U.S. Green Building Council. The Green Building Council is a private non-profit trade organization funded by the building industry. Projects are encouraged to exceed basic LEED green building certification and achieve the LEED Gold certification rating. LEED certification consists of a set of prerequisites and credits with specific requirements for obtaining points to become a certified green building (GSA, 2009). For the new LPOE at International Falls, the GSA is committed to achieving a Gold Certification Rating (Gensler, 2011).

1.4 Purpose

The purpose of the proposed action is to improve the operational efficiency, safety, and security for federal agency personnel and cross-border travelers at International Falls, Minnesota. The specific objectives of the proposed action are to:

- increase vehicle and pedestrian processing efficiency and capacity
- reduce traffic queues and delay approaching the LPOE from both directions
- minimize conflict points among different types of traffic crossing the border (passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, trains, buses, and pedestrians)

- add a functional secondary inspection area for commercial vehicles
- accommodate future demands and new safety and security technologies and border initiatives

1.5 Needs

Typically, medium-sized LPOEs are situated on a minimum of 20 acres. The existing GSA-owned facility has many problems and deficiencies, preventing the agencies operating at the LPOE from adequately fulfilling their respective missions. Specifically, the deficiencies at the LPOE fall into two broad categories:

- deficiencies in the overall site layout
- the existing building's condition are substandard

1.5.1 Overall Site Layout Deficiencies

The existing International Falls LPOE occupies an approximately 1.6-acre parcel.

The LPOE site is deficient in the number and location of primary and secondary inbound inspection areas, outbound inspection lane and area, parking and delivery areas, and building setbacks required to meet current guidelines and satisfy the needs of the CBP and other federal agencies.

The LPOE site has substantial physical limitations. The small size is inadequate to support the existing and future inspection operations and cannot be expanded because of the proximity of the adjacent land uses. The LPOE is situated in a heavily developed industrial area with no room for future expansion. The LPOE has inadequate queuing space and an inadequate number of lanes and area for all types of traffic. As a result, the LPOE is very congested during peak hours and traffic circulation is both poor and confusing to some drivers unfamiliar with the LPOE. Passenger and commercial vehicles referred for secondary inspection have extreme difficulty backing up in the parking lot due to the limited space available for turning

What is NEXUS?

NEXUS is a program that allows pre-approved low risk travelers to enjoy a simplified border crossing process. NEXUS pass holders can use dedicated lanes at border crossings, reducing their waiting time.

and limited site distance. NEXUS equipment was installed at the LPOE, but the LPOE site lacks adequate space to provide a dedicated lane for vehicles using this technology and the building is deficient in its location and size.

The LPOE is heavily congested during peak hours and traffic circulation is poor. On average, approximately 70 commercial vehicles, 1,300 passenger vehicles, 40 pedestrians, 12 trains, and one bus cross the border daily at International Falls (exhibit 1.4). Commercial vehicle crossings are generally consistent throughout the year, with a slight increase from January through June in comparison to the remainder of the year. Passenger vehicle crossings peak during the summer months, generally between May and September. The peak period for pedestrian crossings is June through August. The volume of rail crossings is fairly consistent on a monthly basis throughout the year. Bus traffic crossings are highest during the June through August period (exhibits 1.5 – 1.8).

Even though future projections of the primary inspections to be performed show a slight downward trend (except for a slight increase in pedestrian, railroad and bus traffic) in comparison to existing volumes, the numbers of vehicles being inspected are experiencing high wait times due to the deficiencies in the LPOE site and operations.

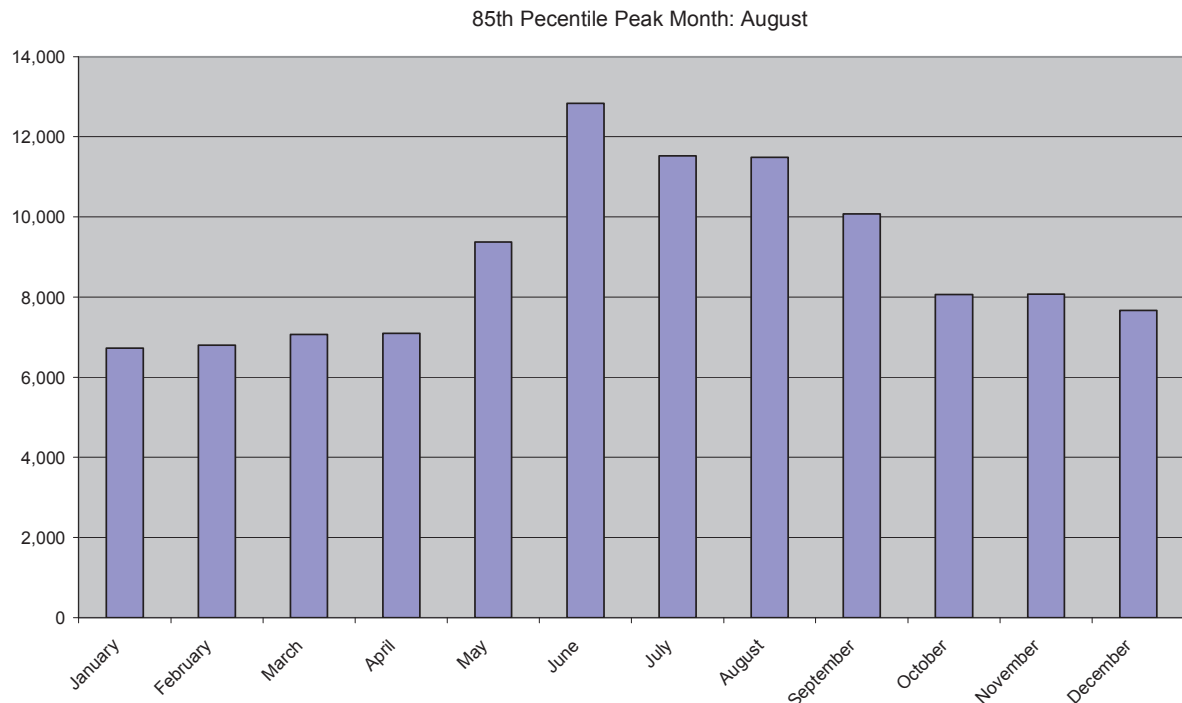
Exhibit 1.4 – Historical and Projected Primary Inspections at International Falls LPOE

<i>Year</i>	<i>Commercial Vehicles</i>	<i>Personal Vehicles</i>	<i>Pedestrians</i>	<i>Trains</i>	<i>Buses</i>
Historical Primary Inspections					
2000	41,206	460,654	26,456	3,456	373
2001	36,113	462,478	27,287	3,650	312
2002	39,609	414,056	24,175	3,662	277
2003	33,519	449,035	27,623	3,928	295
2004	31,719	426,188	28,180	3,720	253
2005	29,685	394,178	24,497	3,980	285
2006	23,783	404,019	20,440	4,259	297
2007	22,623	440,717	14,238	4,026	257
2008	25,322	471,701	15,113	4,136	256
Projected Primary Inspections					
2010	26,821	391,356	26,054	4,218	279
2015	25,560	382,315	26,386	4,325	277
2020	24,299	373,275	26,718	4,434	274
2025	23,038	364,235	27,050	4,546	272

Sources: 2000-2008 – BTS, 2009, 2010-2025 – Gensler, 2011

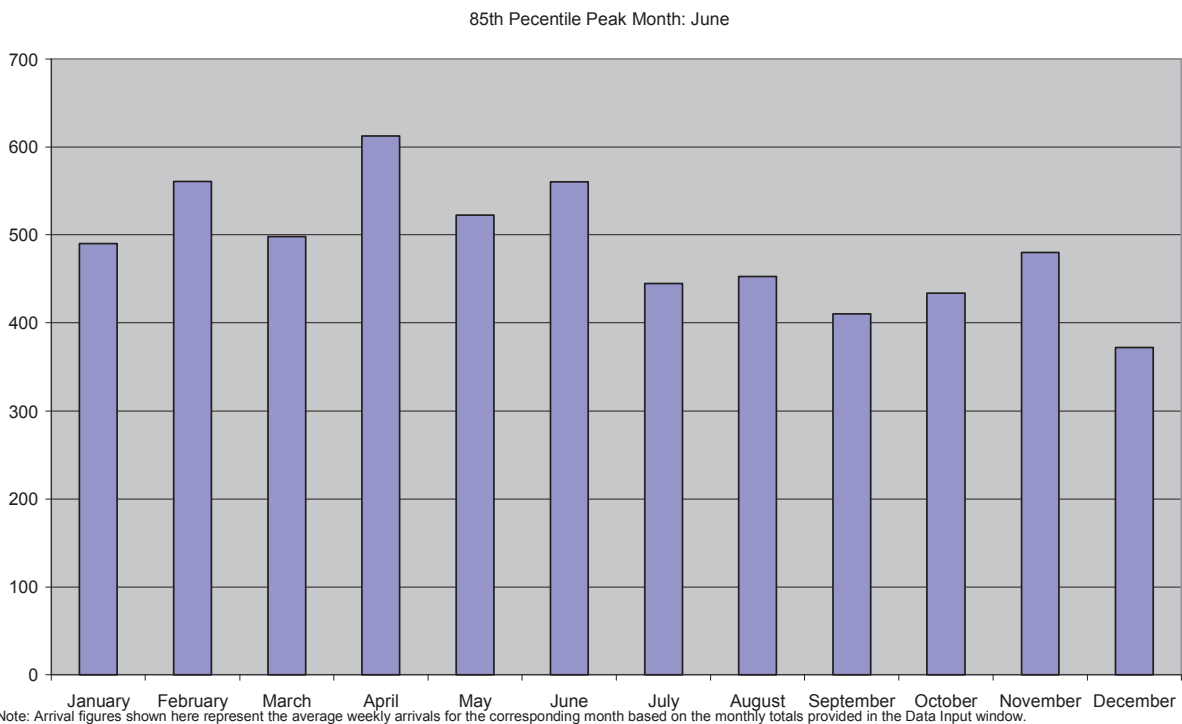
1 • International Falls Land Port of Entry Improvements Study

Exhibit 1.5 – International Falls passenger vehicle Monthly Week Arrivals

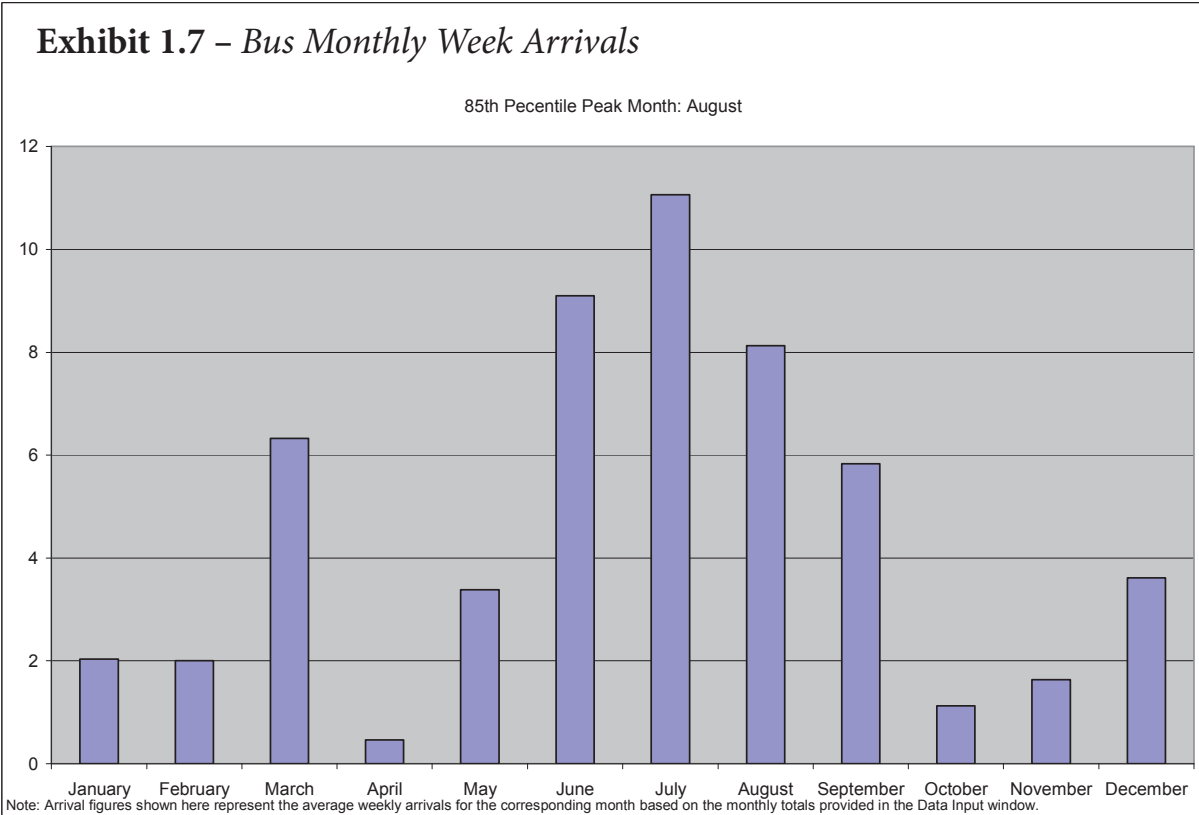


Source: Gensler, 2011

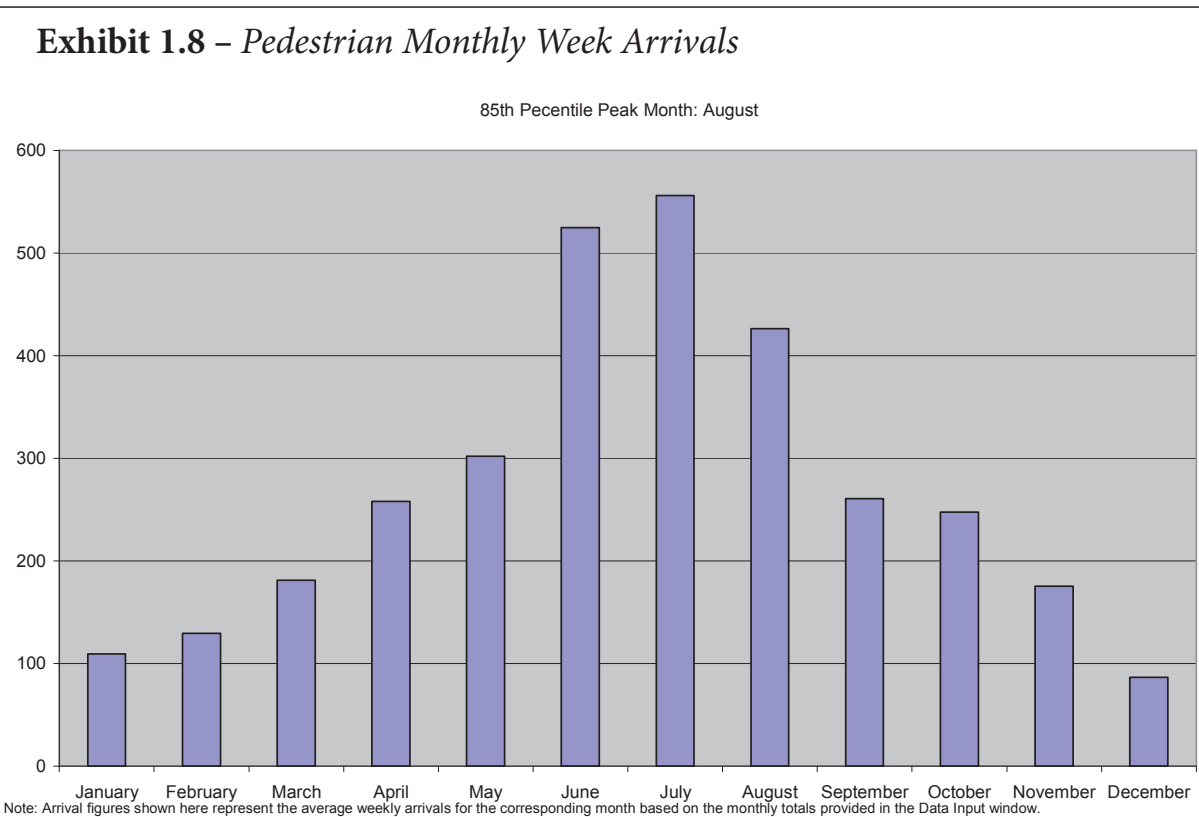
Exhibit 1.6 – Commercial Vehicle Monthly Week Arrivals



Source: Gensler, 2011



Source: Gensler, 2011



Source: Gensler, 2011

The traffic congestion and high wait times are particularly evident on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings and afternoons, when traffic routinely backs up for approximately one mile over the International Bridge in both directions. The problem is worse in the summer months from May to September.

This congestion is caused by the inadequate queuing space and an inadequate number of lanes. Medium-sized LPOEs normally operate with four primary passenger vehicle lanes, 10 secondary passenger vehicle lanes, two primary commercial vehicle lanes, a secondary commercial vehicle lot, and one outbound lane. The LPOE has only two primary passenger vehicle lanes, two secondary passenger vehicle lanes, one primary commercial vehicle lane, and no commercial vehicle lot. As a result, vehicles queue on the bridge in both directions due to the limited number of lanes for primary and secondary inspection. In particular, if more than one truck enters the U.S. for inspection, truck traffic backs up onto the International Bridge, blocking the movement of all vehicles and creating traffic congestion.

Adding to poor traffic circulation is the proximity of the primary inspection booth to the MD&W Railway tracks. The tracks perpendicularly cross the vehicle primary inspection lanes between the southern end of the bridge and the primary inspection booths. When a train stops for processing or for paper mill operations, vehicle lanes are blocked, creating traffic congestion. Approximately 12 trains cross the bridge per day creating congestion and train crossings are expected to increase from approximately 4,136 in 2008 to 4,546 in 2025. There are no facilities to inspect impounded rail containers onsite. Officers must travel offsite to conduct detailed inspections, resulting in operational deficiencies. Additionally, accidents at the LPOE have occurred when drivers did not heed the bells for the trains.

The most significant operational deficiency of the existing LPOE site is the lack of space available to accommodate the inspection of commercial vehicles since there is only one primary commercial vehicle lane and no commercial vehicle area for secondary inspections. Commercial vehicle drivers must pull past the primary inspection booth and enter the Gamma Ray Inspection building for secondary inspection and processing. Since there is no secondary commercial inspection area or lot for parking, only one truck can be processed at a time, and others must wait on the International Bridge. Additionally, because of the short distance between the Radiation Portal Monitors (RPMs) and the inspection booth, trucks waiting



The MD&W Railway crossing the inspection lanes.



Inbound traffic to the LPOE from the Canadian border.

in the lane during processing could set off the RPM alarms. Because there is no commercial dock or building to offload and inspect trucks, secondary inspections occur in the Gamma Ray Inspection building south of the primary inspection area. The quality of the inspections is hindered by the lack of facilities. Other commercial facilities the LPOE site does not have are kennels and adequate Gamma Ray Inspection Technology (GRIT) for Non-Intrusive Inspections (NIIs). The LPOE is in an industrial area and the area is extremely noisy, further compromising the ability of personnel to communicate with one another, as well as travelers.

Site and building security are of great concern at LPOEs and the International Falls LPOE suffers from a variety of security deficiencies. The LPOE building is not designed to prevent a high-speed approach and strike by a vehicle. The LPOE site has inadequate traffic control mechanisms (e.g., gates, signage, and pavement markings) with no further opportunities for improvement. There is no vehicle impound lot. Seized vehicles are typically kept in an unsecured area onsite, in the secondary inspection garage, or at a local car dealership creating a security hazard. Lighting of the LPOE site does not meet the criteria for the locations and types of light fixtures. There are an inadequate number of exterior lighting fixtures on the LPOE site to properly illuminate all operational areas.



Deficiencies exist in the commercial vehicle inspection facility.

There is insufficient onsite parking to accommodate LPOE employees, visitors, and delivery vehicles. Employee parking is provided offsite in the Boise Inc. paper mill lot south of the main building. The site is only partially surrounded by a fence on the west.

1.5.2 Condition of the Building

The existing LPOE building is a two-story masonry structure with a flat roof built in 1993 and has had a few alterations, including replacement of its exterior façade in 2005. The CBP and agencies housed within this building lack adequate office space and have no space for expansion.

Additional problems with the existing main building are:

- More building space is needed to meet the CBP's and other agencies staffing requirements. The main building is approximately 10,000 square feet and approximately 17,000 square feet are required for efficient operations.
- The number of holding cells is inadequate. There are no gender-specific holding cells.
- The mechanical system is inadequate. The existing heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) system is not stabilized, creating hot and cold zones in the building.
- The existing electrical system is inadequate to support required technologies at the LPOE.

1.6 Federal Decisions and Actions

The GSA is the lead federal agency for this proposed action. The GSA, with input from the public and other federal and state agencies, would decide the future action to take in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The NEPA requires federal agencies to consider the potential impacts to the natural and human environment from their actions as part of their decision-making process, and disclose the potential impacts in a document that is circulated for public review. The NEPA process is intended to help public officials make decisions based on an understanding of the environmental consequences and to take actions that protect, restore, and enhance the environment (40 CFR Part 1500.1).

1.7 Purpose of this EIS

The purpose of this EIS is to provide the GSA and the public with a full accounting of the potential environmental impacts of the alternatives developed for meeting the proposed action's purpose and needs. The EIS serves as the primary document to facilitate review of the proposed action by federal, state and local agencies and the public. The EIS is intended to provide a full and fair discussion of the potential significant environmental impacts from the proposed action and inform decision makers and the public of reasonable alternatives that would avoid or minimize adverse impacts or enhance the quality of the human environment (40 CFR Part 1502.1). An EIS must briefly discuss the purpose and need for the proposed action, the range of alternatives considered, the resultant environmental impacts from the proposed action, and the agencies and people consulted during the planning of the proposed action. The ultimate objective of this EIS is to identify a solution that furthers the proposed action's purpose, satisfies the needs of the proposed action, and minimizes adverse environmental and social impacts at an affordable cost.

The EIS is first circulated publicly as a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Following publication of the DEIS, a public hearing is held to solicit additional public input into the planning and decision-making process. Additional public input is accepted during a comment period following publication of the DEIS. Comments from other federal agencies, state agencies, and the public are used to assist the GSA in identifying and further developing the preferred alternative that would be further described in a publicly-circulated Final EIS (FEIS) (exhibit 1.9).

Publication of the FEIS would be followed by the GSA issuing a record of decision (ROD) explaining the rationale for choosing the preferred alternative and the funding, construction, operation and monitoring of the preferred alternative. The ROD would:

- State what the decision was.
- Identify all alternatives considered by the agency in reaching its decision, specifying the alternative or alternatives which were considered to be environmentally preferable. An agency may discuss preferences among alternatives based on relevant factors including economic and technical considerations and agency statutory missions. An agency shall identify and discuss all such factors including any essential con-

siderations of national policy that were balanced by the agency in making its decision and state how those considerations entered into its decision.

- State whether all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the alternative selected have been adopted, and if not, why they were not. A monitoring and enforcement program shall be adopted and summarized where applicable for any mitigation (40 CFR Part 1505.2).

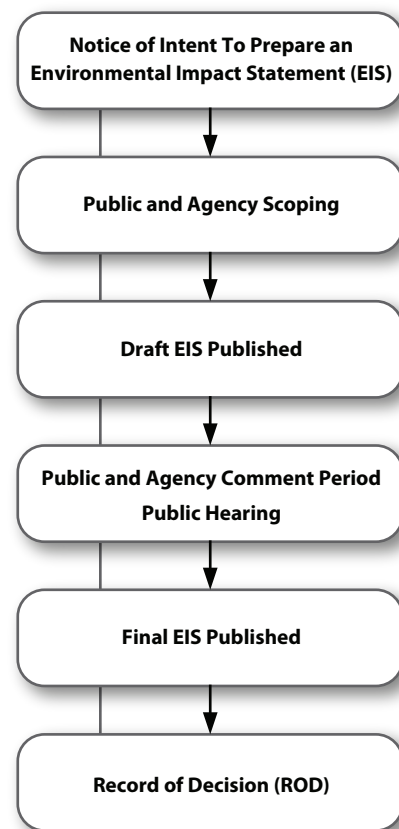
1.8 Scope of this Environmental Analysis

Public participation is integral to the preparation of an EIS. This section summarizes the issues and concerns that were identified during the public scoping process. Scoping is a process for determining the range of issues to be addressed in an EIS and for identifying significant issues associated with the alternatives (40 CFR Part 1501.7). The objectives of the scoping process are to notify interested persons – other federal, state, and local agencies, tribes, and other groups – about the alternatives being considered, solicit comments about environmental issues, alternatives, and other items of interest, and consider those comments in the preparation of the EIS.

Scoping for the EIS began with the GSA issuing its notice of intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS, which was published in the *Federal Register* on August 27, 2009. The NOI invited individuals, organizations, and agencies to submit comments concerning the scope of the EIS. The comment period officially ended on October 11, 2009 and the GSA considered the comments received in defining the scope of the analysis performed and documented in the EIS.

A public scoping meeting was held on September 15, 2009 in International Falls. The public scoping meeting consisted of an open house and plans display, presentation, and time for public comments and questions to be considered in the planning of the proposed action and preparation of the EIS. Approximately 15 people attended the open house in the afternoon and 25 people attended the presentation and comment period in the evening (exhibit 1.10).

Exhibit 1.9 – EIS Process



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Exhibit 1.10 – Issues Identification and Tracking

<i>Issue or Concern</i>	<i>Addressed in Particular Section of the DEIS</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Traffic through downtown International Falls is essential to avoid a loss of business from the tourist industry.	2.2 Alternatives Retained for Detailed Evaluation; 4.16.1 Secondary Impacts	With Alternatives 5, 8, and 10, traffic would enter and exit the LPOE in the CBD in International Falls, with the exception of the commercial traffic with Alternative 10, which would enter the LPOE to the immediate east of the CBD. With Alternatives 7 and 9, traffic would enter and exit the LPOE to the immediate east of the CBD.
Address the limitations in the International Bridge when developing and designing alternatives to assure the alternatives would accommodate a new bridge if constructed in the future.	Comment Noted	The International Bridge is privately owned and improvements to the international bridge are beyond the scope of this project. The build alternatives considered for the proposed action move the LPOE further to the south providing additional space adjacent to the International Bridge.
A lane for local traffic should be included in the design of the build alternatives.	2.2 Alternatives Retained for Further Development	The build alternatives have proposed the required number of primary and secondary inspection lanes to accommodate the number of existing and projected border crossings. The build alternatives would benefit both local and regional traffic.
Reduce traffic queues and delay approaching the LPOE.	2.2 Alternatives Retained for Further Detailed Evaluation	The build alternatives would reduce the traffic queues and delays approaching the LPOE. Alternatives 7, 9, and 10 provide an additional approximately ½ mile for queuing over the no-build alternative and alternatives 5 and 8.
Alternatives should be pedestrian friendly, including bicyclists.	4.7.2 Pedestrians	The build alternatives have been developed to improve the efficiency of traffic crossing the border, including pedestrians and bicyclists.
Address aesthetics for Canadians on the north side of Rainy River facing the LPOE.	4.8 Land Use	The build alternatives would have an overall beneficial effect on the visual environment in the study area. The architectural characteristics of the build alternatives would be developed during final design.
Reduce conflict points with rail crossings	4.7.4 Railroads	The alternatives reduce the number and locations of conflict points with the MD&W Railway.
The Duty Free Shop would need to take a longer path to drop off purchases for pickup.	4.7.2 Pedestrians	With Alternatives 7, 9 and 10, the Duty Free Shop would need to take a longer path to drop off purchases for pickup. The GSA is aware of this concern and would consider opportunities to mitigate this impact during final design.
Consider noise and vibration from industrial plants on both sides of the Rainy River.	Comment Noted	The noise and vibration from the industry in the study area was considered in the planning of the build alternatives. The build alternatives move the LPOE further away from the dominant noise sources in the area and would result in a quieter LPOE than the existing conditions and no-build alternative.
The no-build alternative would allow our tax money to be spent elsewhere while in the recession.	2.2.1 The No-Build Alternative	The no-build alternative would not meet the purpose and needs of the project.
Consider the potential impacts to air quality, wetlands, and environmental justice	4.5 Air Quality; 4.2.4 Wetlands; 4.12 Minority and Disadvantaged Populations	The no-build and build alternatives would not impact air quality, wetlands, or low income and minority populations afforded consideration and protection under the Executive Order on environmental justice.

<i>Issue or Concern</i>	<i>Addressed in Particular Section of the DEIS</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Address runoff from impervious surfaces into Rainy River	4.2.1 Surface Waters	Section 438 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA) specifically calls for projects "...involving a federal facility with a footprint that exceeds 5,000 square feet shall use site planning, design, construction, and maintenance strategies for the property to maintain or restore, to the maximum extent technically feasible, the predevelopment hydrology of the property with regard to the temperature, rate, volume, and duration of flow."

1.9 Applicable Regulations, Executive Order, and Required Permits and Approvals

Many statutes and EOs apply to the proposed action and were considered during the planning and conceptual design of the proposed action and preparation of this EIS (exhibit 1.11).

If a build alternative would result in a direct impact to the Rainy River or First Creek, the GSA would submit the Minnesota Local/State/Federal Application Form for Water/Wetland Projects to the Local Government Unit, the MDNR, and the USACE in accordance with the Minnesota Wetlands Conservation Act, Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, and Section 404 of the CWA.

A Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the MPCA may be required depending on the type of permit issued by the USACE for impacts to Waters of the U.S.

A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System / State Disposal System (NPDES / SDS) Construction Stormwater Permit is required from the MPCA for disturbance of one acre or more of land.

Prior to the demolition of the existing LPOE, an inspection of the buildings to be demolished by a asbestos certified contractor / consultant would need to be performed and the "Notification of Intent to Perform a Demolition" form would need to be completed and filed with the MPCA. Additionally, any hazardous waste items such as mercury switches, light ballasts containing PCBs, lead paint, florescent lights, and paint cans need to be removed and properly disposed. The MPCA encourages the use of building deconstruction techniques that reuse and recycle materials and materials that cannot be recycled or reused must be disposed at a MPCA permitted demolition landfill, a municipal solid waste landfill, or an industrial landfill.

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Exhibit 1.11 – Applicable Statutes and Executive Orders

<i>Law or Executive Order</i>	<i>Requirements</i>	<i>Implications and Resulting Actions</i>
American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA)	To respect the practice of traditional American Indian religions, including access to religious sites and use of ceremonial items.	Identify potentially concerned tribes and, consult with them during NEPA analyses.
Archeological and Historical Preservation Act (AHPA)	Requires federal agencies to identify and recover data from archeological sites threatened by their actions	Conduct surveys, identify archeological sites, consult with specialists and others during NEPA process and fund data recovery
Archeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA)	Requires permits and provides for civil and criminal penalties for disturbing archeological resources on federal and tribal land without a permit	Archeologists performing investigations on federal or Indian land must meet permit requirements (43 CFR 7; also 36 CFR 79, and 43 CFR 3)
Architectural Barriers Act	Requires public buildings to be accessible to persons with disabilities	Consider accessibility issues and the environmental impact of accessibility solutions during the NEPA process
Clean Air Act (CAA)	Requires agencies to comply with state air quality standards set in State Implementation Plans (SIPs)	Review SIPs, measure current air quality, project potential changes, seek alternatives that meet standards during the NEPA process (40 CFR 50)
Clean Water Act (CWA)	Requires a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for actions affecting “Waters of the U.S.”	Identify potentially affected waters, consult with Corps during the NEPA and permitting processes, explore alternatives to avoid and minimize adverse impacts (33 CFR 320-330; 40 CFR 35, 116, 117, 122, 124, 125,131,133, 220, 401, 403)
Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (CZMA)	Addresses actions affecting coastal zone, and requires federal actions be consistent with state CZM plans	Review state CZM plans and pursue alternatives that are consistent with it (15 CFR 930)
Community Environmental Response Facilitation Act	Requires identification of uncontaminated property and disclosure of information on possible hazards	Investigations into the possible hazards and remediation studies
Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)	Requires reporting of releases and clean-up of hazardous substances	Investigations into the possible hazards and remediation studies (40 CFR 373; 41 CFR 101-47)
Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA)	Requires federal agencies to provide national leadership to reduce water quality problems from stormwater runoff. Section 438 specifically calls for projects “...involving a federal facility with a footprint that exceeds 5,000 square feet shall use site planning, design, construction, and maintenance strategies for the property to maintain or restore, to the maximum extent technically feasible, the predevelopment hydrology of the property with regard to the temperature, rate, volume, and duration of flow.”	Further analyze opportunities to maintain and restore pre-development hydrology.
Endangered Species Act (ESA)	Requires consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and / or National Marine Fisheries Service to ensure actions do not jeopardize threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat	Analyze impacts on fish, wildlife, plants, habitats; ecosystem analysis, consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and / or National Marine Fisheries Service where potential impacts exists (50 CFR 402)

Law or Executive Order	Requirements	Implications and Resulting Actions
Environmental Quality Improvement Act	National policy for enhancement of environmental quality, assigns primary responsibility to state and local governments	Underscores the need for quality NEPA process and analysis and environmentally sensitive decisions, consultation with state and local governments
Farmlands Protection Policy Act	Establishes criteria for identifying and considering the effects of federal actions on the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses	Identify potentially affected prime farmland, soils of statewide importance and unique soils and explore alternatives to minimize impacts. (7 CFR 658; see also 7 CFR 657 [Prime Farmlands])
Federal Facility Compliance Act	Requires federal facilities comply with state and local environmental laws and federal environmental laws	Ascertain applicable state and local laws and apply during the NEPA process and alternative selection
Federal Property and Administrative Services Act	Assigns the GSA responsibility for acquiring and using federally owned and leased office buildings and space	Conduct review on real estate transactions during the NEPA process (41 CFR 101)
Federal Records Act	Controls maintenance and disposal of government documents with historical value	Identify potentially affected documents (e.g., in buildings being disposed of) and address during the NEPA process (36 CFR 1222, 1228, 1230, 1232, 1234, 1236, and 1238)
Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act	Requires consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on actions affecting stream modifications.	Study potential impacts on streams and consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Flood Disaster Protection Act	Prohibits some federal actions in areas subject to flood hazards	Delineate floodplains and seek alternatives that do not promote floodplain development and flooding (See EO 11988 and EO 11990)
Historic Monuments Preservation Act	Authorizes the GSA to convey to local public bodies National Register of Historic Places' properties appropriate for historic monuments	Such transfers can be useful mitigation measures
Historic Sites Act	Establishes National Historic Landmark (NHL) program and policy to preserve sites, buildings and objects significant in history	Consider impacts on NHLs (36 CFR 65)
National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)	Requires federal agencies to consider and document environmental impacts during planning and disclose them in a public document	Consider impacts on the quality of the human environment and guided by national policy (40 CFR 1500-1508)
National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)	Requires federal agencies to identify historic properties potentially affected by their actions and to consult with State Historic Preservation Officer and others about alternatives, the effects, and mitigation.	Conduct surveys to identify historic properties, determine potential effects, consult others and execute and implement agreements (36 CFR 800.; also 36 CFR 60, 61, 65, 68)
Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)	Requires consultation with Indian tribes and the repatriation of human remains, cultural items, and other items. Requires development and implementation of a Plan of Action for treatment.	Identify culturally affiliated Tribes or groups, consult with them, seek to develop plans of action, document the results during the NEPA process and implement as mitigation (43 CFR 10)
Public Buildings Act	Provides the GSA a mandate to acquire and manage lands and buildings	Actions under the Act require compliance with NEPA
Public Buildings Amendments of 1972	Permits the GSA to enter into purchase contracts to acquire space	Actions under the Amendments require compliance with NEPA

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<i>Law or Executive Order</i>	<i>Requirements</i>	<i>Implications and Resulting Actions</i>
Public Buildings Cooperative Use Act	Requires GSA to give priority to the use of historic buildings to meet government space needs.	Actions under the Act require compliance with NEPA, identify historic buildings and consider uses
Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)	Regulates hazardous and solid waste, and underground storage tanks.	Investigations into the possible hazards and remediation studies (40 CFR 260-281).
Rural Development Act	Directs federal agencies to site their facilities in such a way as to support appropriate rural development	Consider requirements when identifying alternatives
Safe Drinking Water Act	Sets standards for drinking water quality and regulates activities affecting drinking water supplies	Analyze existing water quality and potential impacts on it (40 CFR 141)
Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA)	Requires plans for cleanup of contaminated sites, and disclosure to public of hazardous materials and processes	Investigations into the possible hazards and remediation studies (40 CFR 373)
Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA)	Regulates chemical substances, including PCBs and asbestos	Consideration during the NEPA process (40 CFR 761)
Treasure Trove	The GSA may enter into contracts for recovery and distribution of "treasure" in which the U.S. has an interest	Contracts are subject to compliance with NEPA
Wild and Scenic Rivers Act	Requires Federal agencies to review actions for impacts of wild and scenic rivers	Consider impacts on wild and scenic rivers during the NEPA process and alternatives analysis
EO 11514 Protection and Enhancement of Environmental Quality	Requires agencies to monitor, evaluate, and control activities to protect and enhance the quality of the environment	Underscores the need for quality analyses during the NEPA process and monitoring of mitigation measures
EO 11593 Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment	Requires agencies to identify, evaluate and protect historic properties	Same requirements as National Historic Preservation Act
EO 11988 Floodplain Management	Requires federal agencies to evaluate the potential impacts of actions in a floodplain and consider alternatives to avoid adverse impacts	Delineate floodplains and consider the impacts on floodplain values and potential development of floodplains Consider alternatives to impacting floodplains
EO 11990 Protection of Wetlands	Requires agencies to minimize destruction, loss or degradation of wetlands	Delineate wetlands and consider alternatives that avoid and minimize impacts to wetlands and mitigation to minimize impacts
EO 12088 Federal Compliance with Pollution Control Standards	To prevent, control and abate environmental pollution from federal facilities and activities	Investigations into the possible hazards and remediation studies
EO 12072 Federal Space Management	Requires the GSA to meet certain criteria, including consideration of socio-economic, environmental, and cultural criteria	Consider socioeconomic, cultural effects and impacts on natural and built environment during analysis of urban real estate transactions
EO 12372 Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs	To provide for review of its actions by state and local elected officials	Consult with state and local governments during the NEPA process
EO 12898 Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations	Requires federal agencies to identify and address any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations	Conduct social impact analyses, identify potentially affected populations, involve them during the NEPA process, make adjustments in public involvement to accommodate them, seek alternatives that avoid disproportionately adverse impacts.

<i>Law or Executive Order</i>	<i>Requirements</i>	<i>Implications and Resulting Actions</i>
EO 13006 Locating Federal Facilities on Historic Properties in our Nations Central Cities	Requires federal agencies to give priority to the use of historic buildings in historic districts in central business areas	Identify historic buildings in central business areas, analyze their use potential, consider as priority alternatives during the NEPA process
EO 13007 Indian sacred sites	Requires federal agencies to avoid where possible impeding access to, or physically damaging, Indian sacred sites	Consult with Indian Tribes during the NEPA process to identify possible impact and respect confidentiality of information on sacred sites
EO 13166 Involving Access to Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	Requires federal agencies to improve access to federally conducted and federally assisted programs and activities for persons who, as a result of national origin, are limited in their English proficiency	Conduct social impact analyses, to identify if LEP populations are present and, if so, take reasonable steps in public involvement activities to make project information more accessible to LEP populations
EO 13175: Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments	Requires federal agencies to conduct regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with tribal officials	Conduct regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with tribal officials in the development of Federal policies that have tribal implications, to strengthen the United States government-to-government relationships with Indian tribes, and to reduce the imposition of unfunded mandates upon Indian tribes
GSA Order ADM 1095.1F, Environmental Considerations in Decision-making, 19 October 1999	This order establishes policy and assigns responsibility for implementing NEPA, its implementing regulations, and related laws, executive orders, and regulations in the decision-making processes of the GSA	In decision-making, the GSA would attend carefully to policy set forth in Section 101 of NEPA, the GSA would ensure that its actions protect and improve the quality of the human environment, including the built and social environments of the nation's urban areas

1.10 Remainder of this Document

The following chapters in this EIS consist of:

- Chapter 2 presents the alternatives analysis. It introduces the range of reasonable alternatives developed to meet the proposed action's purpose and needs. It identifies those alternatives retained or dismissed from more detailed study and the reasons for their retention or dismissal.
- Chapter 3 is an inventory of the affected environment. It describes the physical, biological, and socioeconomic environments of the area affected by the alternatives retained for further consideration.
- Chapter 4 provides a scientific and analytic discussion of the potential environmental consequences and potential mitigation measures resulting from the alternatives retained for detailed study. The discussion includes the environmental impacts of the alternatives; the adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the proposed action is implemented; the relationship between short-term uses of the human environment and the maintenance and enhancement of

long-term productivity; and any irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources that would be involved in the proposed action if it is implemented (40 CFR Part 1502.16).

- Chapter 5 summarizes the coordination and consultation activities performed for this proposed action among the federal, state, and local agencies and the public.
- Chapter 6 lists the preparers and their qualifications.
- Chapter 7 lists the recipients of the EIS.
- Chapter 8 presents the references used in the preparation of this EIS.
- Chapter 9 is an index.

Chapter 2

Alternatives Analysis

The GSA identified, developed, and analyzed the no-build alternative and 10 preliminary or conceptual build alternatives that could potentially satisfy the proposed action's purpose and needs. In developing and analyzing alternatives, the GSA consulted with regulatory and resource agencies at the federal and state levels, local officials, industry, and the public. During the preparation of the feasibility study, five build alternatives were considered and dismissed because they did not meet the needs and requirements of the FIS and the GSA. The results of the feasibility study were five build alternatives warranted further consideration, analysis, and public involvement and agency coordination (Gensler, 2011).

Chapter 2 presents the alternatives analysis. It introduces the range of reasonable alternatives developed to meet the proposed action's purpose and needs.

2.1 Identification and Development of Alternatives

At the request of the CBP, the GSA commissioned a feasibility study that evaluated the existing LPOE's deficiencies and proposed alternatives to remedy them. The feasibility study considered extending the existing LPOE east and south in areas bordered by the Rainy River, the Boise Inc. paper mill, and 2nd Avenue and 4th Street. A total of 10 preliminary build alternatives were examined during the course of the feasibility study.

While the build alternatives differ in location, size, and layout, they have several characteristics in common. Ideally, a LPOE requires a large, uninterrupted, and relatively flat property adjacent to the border. Expansion of the existing LPOE in directions other than parallel to the river would require displacing existing businesses and compromising the efficiency and effectiveness of other businesses.

The build alternatives were conceptually designed to meet several key building, processing, and parking area requirements:

- a modern administration building within which operations are consolidated
- primary inspection areas for commercial vehicles, passenger vehicles, and buses

- secondary inspection areas for commercial vehicles, passenger vehicles, and buses
- a GRIT building or space for a mobile unit
- an adequate number and location of parking spaces
- adequate space to accommodate security measures

Each of the build alternatives was designed to follow the sequential circulation of traffic flow of LPOEs, which requires certain buildings be adjacent to one another. For instance, the primary inspection areas must precede the secondary inspection areas. Administration should be consolidated to the extent possible in one building. Parking for visitors and employees should be in proximity to the buildings they serve to be convenient, yet not so close that it creates a security risk.

2.2 Alternatives Retained for Detailed Evaluation

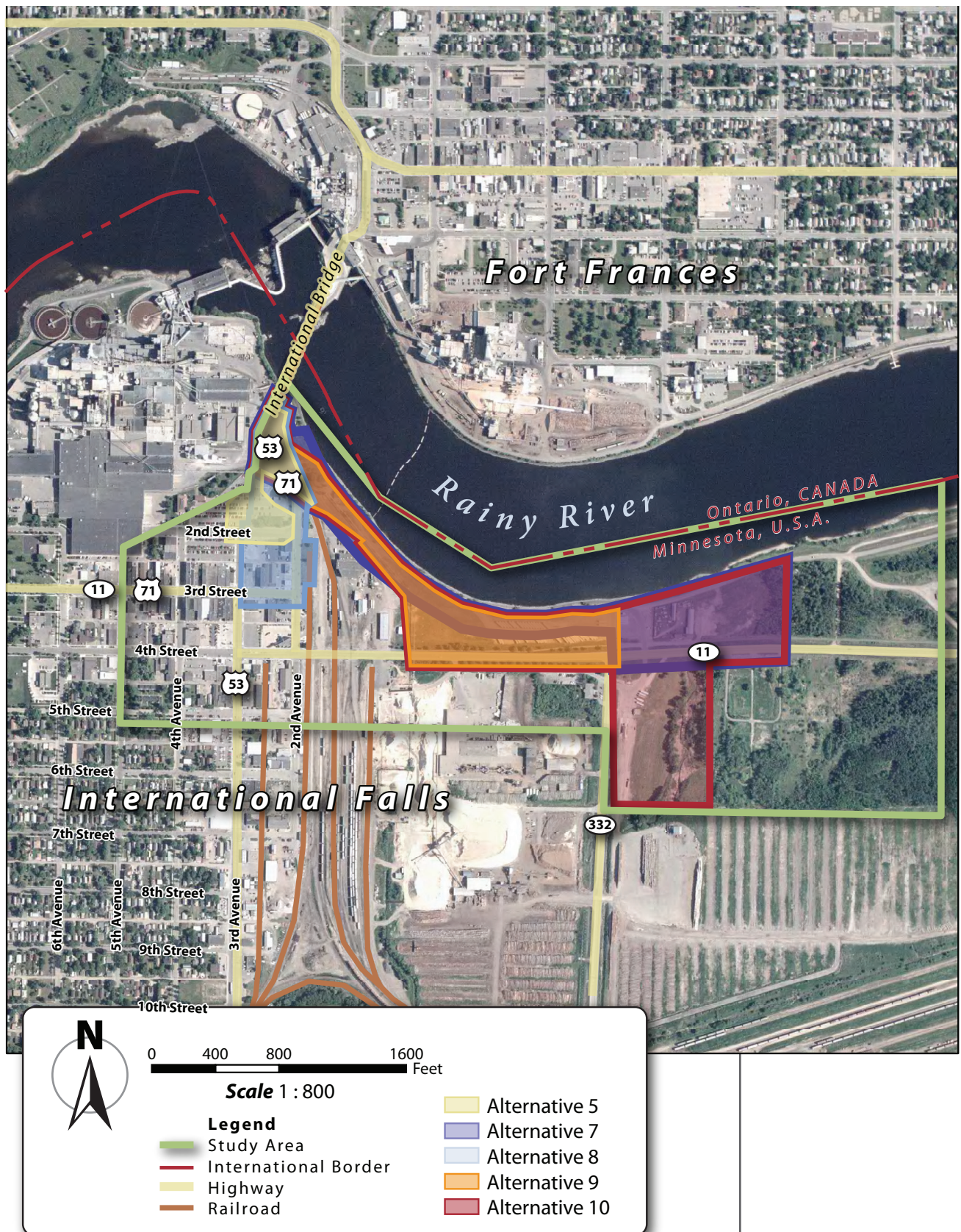
A no-build and five build alternatives (Alternatives 5 and 7 through 10) were retained from the feasibility study to satisfy the proposed action's purpose and needs and were analyzed in detail (exhibit 2.1).

2.2.1 The No-Build Alternative

Under the no-build alternative, operation of the LPOE would continue at its existing location using the existing facilities. With the exception of minor repairs and upgrades to existing equipment, no new construction or demolition would take place at the LPOE. No new inspection lanes or facilities would be built. This alternative would not require the acquisition of property.

The no-build alternative does not satisfy the proposed action's purpose or needs because, without new construction, there would be no appreciable improvements to the current operating conditions. The CBP and other federal agencies' staff would continue to operate with inadequate space to properly perform their duties and carry out their agency's missions. The processing of commercial vehicles would continue to be arduous. The small size and configuration of the LPOE would continue to impair operating efficiency. The queuing of traffic to and from Canada would not only remain, but would likely increase over the next 20 years. Outbound inspection of vehicles and

Exhibit 2.1 – Build Alternatives Retained for Further Evaluation



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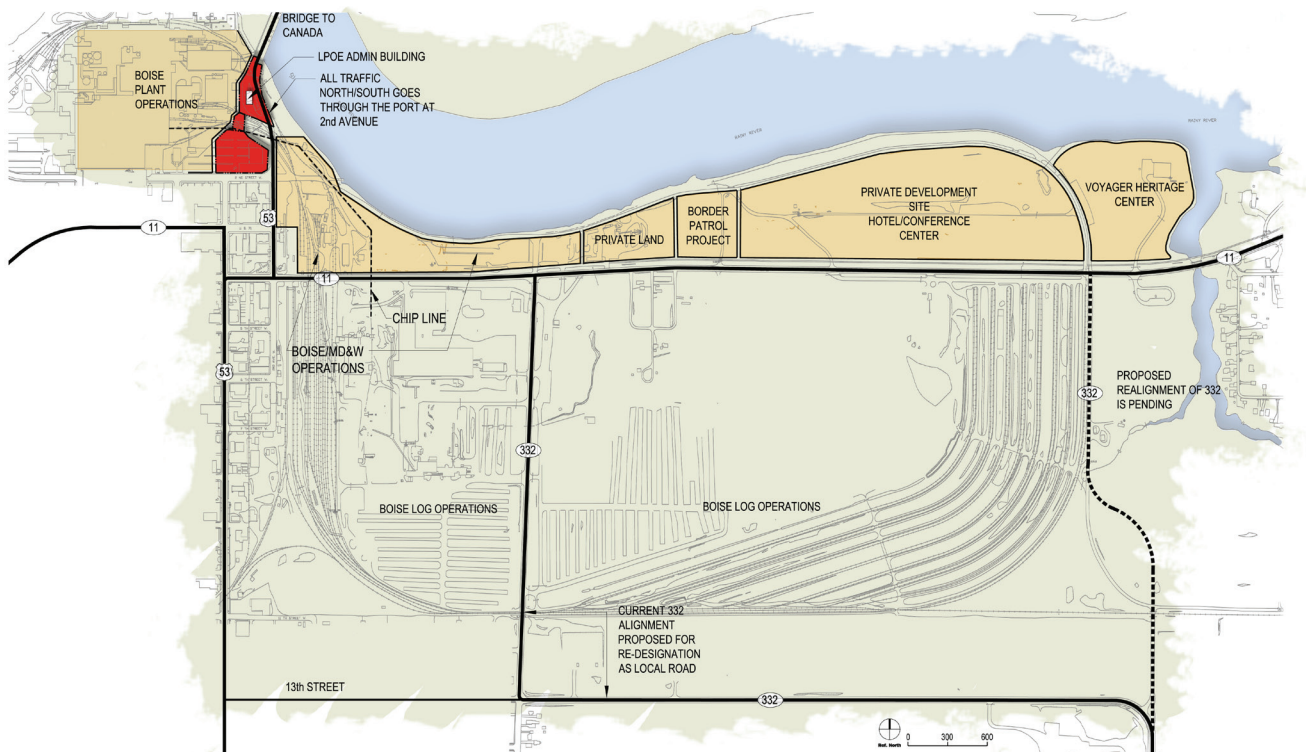
pedestrians would continue to be difficult and hazardous for staff. Security would not meet the FIS standards.

The no-build alternative was retained for further consideration and detailed analysis, and its consequences were fully developed to allow equal comparison to the build alternatives and to help decision-makers and the public understand the ramifications of taking no action.

2.2.2 Alternative 5

Alternative 5 would consist of demolishing the existing building, constructing new facilities at the existing LPOE, and expanding the LPOE to meet the required space standards and increased security requirements of the CBP. This alternative would consist of constructing the LPOE improvements on the existing 1.64-acre site and a four-acre site south of and contiguous to the existing LPOE between the International Bridge and 2nd Street (exhibit 2.2). Improvements would consist of the construction of a new main building, four primary passenger vehicle and six secondary passenger vehicle lanes, two primary commercial vehicle lanes, a commercial building, a passenger vehicle bay, two commercial bays, a kennel, and parking facilities.

Exhibit 2.2 – Alternative 5 Traffic Pattern



Source: Gensler, 2011

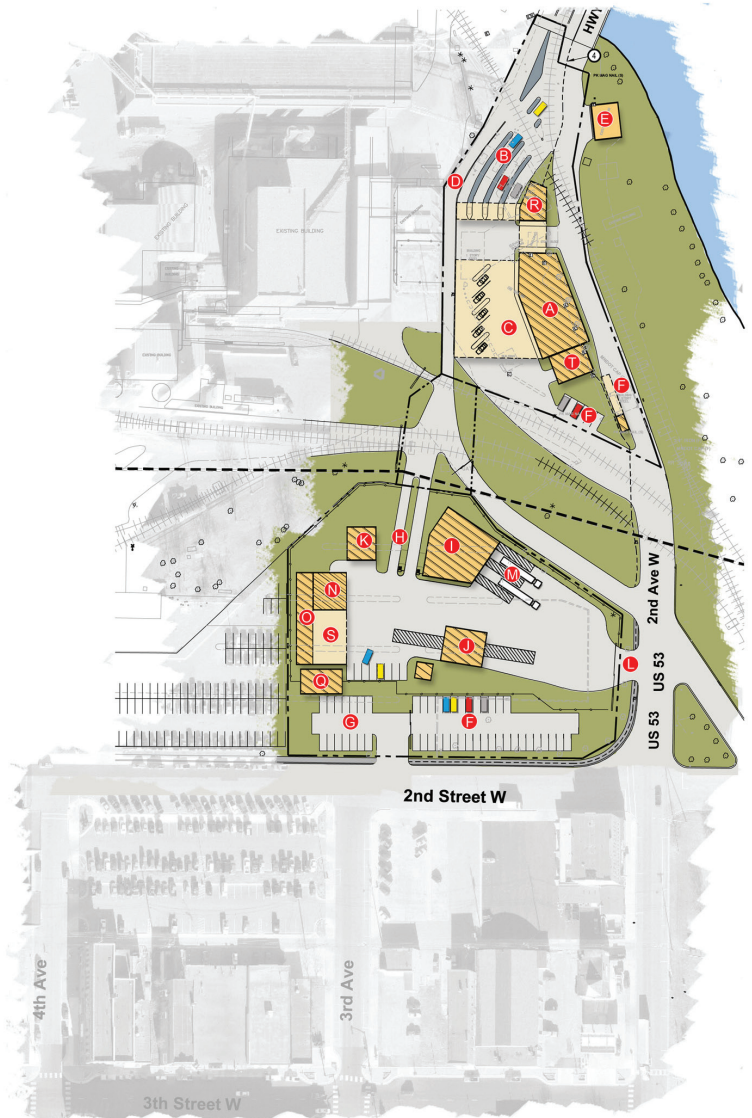
Commercial vehicles, passenger vehicles, buses, and pedestrians would enter and exit the LPOE at 2nd Avenue. The existing site would be used for passenger vehicle and pedestrian inspection. The main building, passenger vehicle primary and secondary inspection lanes, the garage, and an out-bound booth would be replaced on the existing site. The proposed four-acre site would be acquired for the use of commercial primary and secondary inspection lanes, a NEXUS enrollment center and a kennel (exhibit 2.3).

Passenger vehicles are also referred to as non-commercial vehicles or POVs - passenger operated vehicles.

A commercial vehicle is a type of vehicle used for transporting either goods or passengers.

Exhibit 2.3 – Alternative 5

- A** Main Building
- B** Non-Commercial Primary (4 Lanes)
- C** Non- Commercial Secondary (6 Lanes)
- D** Pass Through Commercial Drive
- E** Existing Duty Free Building
- F** CBP Parking
- G** Visitor Parking
- H** Commercial Primary (2 Lanes)
- I** Commercial Building
- J** NII Operations (Mobile)
- K** Mobile NII Vehicle Garage
- L** Commercial Exit Control
- M** Commercial Dock (2 Bays)
- N** Kennel
- O** Firing Range
- P** Outbound Inspections
- Q** Trusted Traveler Enrollment Operations
- R** Inbound Pedestrian
- S** Secure Parking
- T** Non Commercial Bays



Source: Gensler, 2011

Alternative 5 has the advantages of improving commercial vehicle queuing space; maintaining the existing traffic patterns through the CBD; maximizing the use of existing land, minimizing land acquisition; and keeping rail and pedestrian processing within the main building. However, the compact layout of Alternative 5 results in four disadvantages. It does not provide adequate space for the required components of modern LPOEs; it does not resolve all traffic conflicts; the queue for passenger vehicles would still back onto the rail lines and the International Bridge; and maneuvering of commercial vehicles exiting onto 2nd Avenue would be less than optimal.

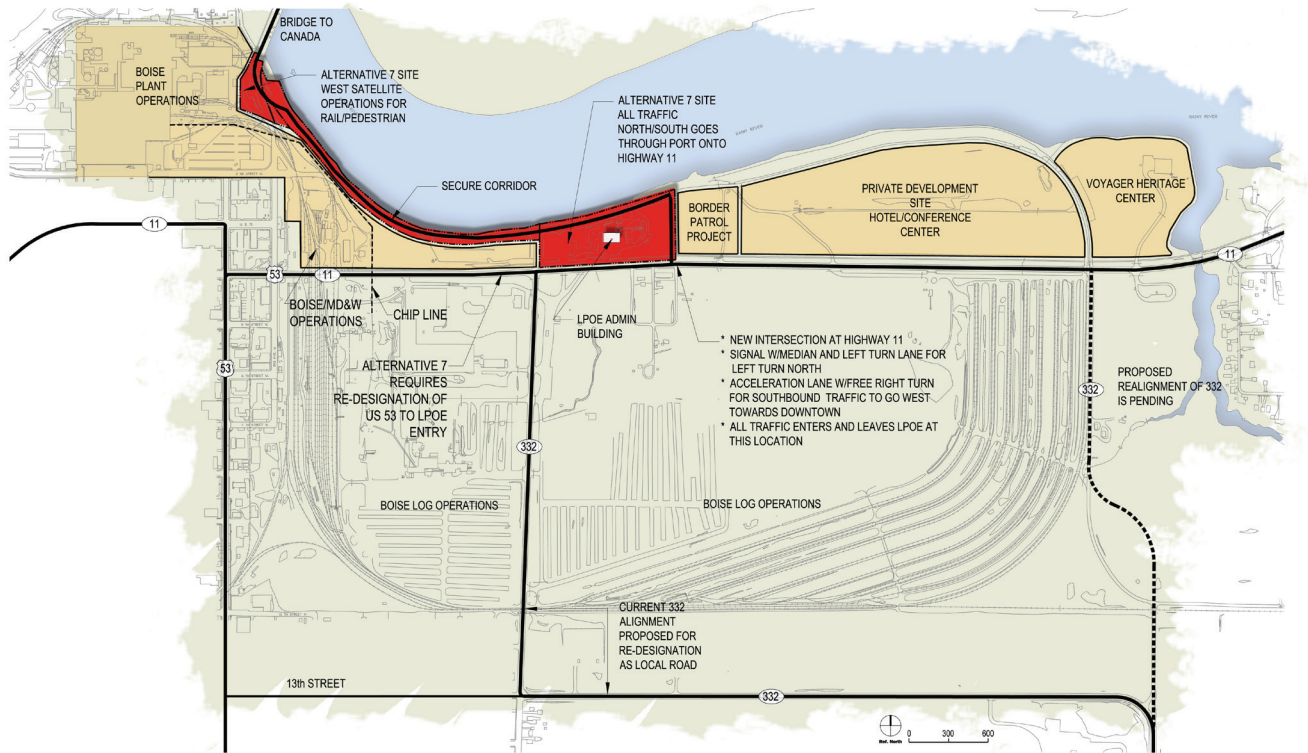
Alternative 5 would only marginally satisfy the proposed action's purpose and needs because the building and site layout are not ideal, onsite traffic circulation is cumbersome, and security, while improved over existing conditions, would not fully meet the FIS's requirements. There is no room for future expansion, if needed.

2.2.3 Alternative 7

Alternative 7 would consist of demolishing the existing building, constructing new facilities at the existing LPOE, and expanding the LPOE to meet the required space standards and increased security requirements of the FIS. This alternative would move the majority of the LPOE improvements and operations to a 17-acre site to the southeast of the existing LPOE between 4th Street and Rainy River (exhibit 2.4). Limited satellite operations for pedestrian and rail processing on the existing 1.64-acre site may be maintained during the peak travel times. The improvements would consist of the construction of a new main building, five primary passenger vehicle and ten secondary passenger vehicle lanes, a bus lane, one primary commercial vehicle lane, a commercial building, a passenger vehicle bay, two commercial bays, a kennel, a storage building, and parking facilities.

Commercial vehicles, passenger vehicles, buses, and pedestrians would enter and exit the LPOE on Highway 11, where a new intersection with a signal, a left turning lane, and a right turning lane would be constructed. The existing site would be used for pedestrian and rail inspections. The main building, passenger vehicle primary and secondary inspection lanes, commercial vehicle primary and secondary inspection lanes, a NEXUS enrollment center, an outbound booth, and other components of the LPOE would be constructed (exhibit 2.5).

Exhibit 2.4 – Alternative 7 Traffic Pattern



Source: Gensler, 2011

Alternative 7 has the advantages of providing space for all components of the LPOE improving queuing space; removing queuing of passenger and commercial vehicles on the International Bridge; improving traffic conditions by removing rail and commercial vehicle conflicts; avoiding traffic congestion in the CBD; providing space for a separate bus inspection lane; and providing land for future expansion. However, the overall layout of Alternative 7 results in four disadvantages. It requires inspection operations from two separate facilities and locations; the site separates traffic to and from the CBD; it does not maximize the use of the existing LPOE; and it must maintain a secure road between the LPOE and the International Bridge.

Alternative 7 would satisfy the proposed action’s purpose and needs; however, the entrance and exit of the LPOE on Route 11 removes traffic from the CBD, creating a major concern for the citizens and business owners of International Falls that depend on passing traffic and tourism.

Exhibit 2.5 – Alternative 7



Source: Gensler, 2011

2.2.4 Alternative 8

Alternative 8 would consist of demolishing the existing building, constructing new facilities at the existing LPOE, and expanding the LPOE to meet the required space standards and increased security requirements of the FIS. This alternative would consist of constructing the LPOE improvements on the existing 1.64-acre site and a 6.5-acre site south of and contiguous to the existing LPOE between the International Bridge and 3rd Street (exhibit 2.6). The improvements would consist of the construction of a new main building, five primary passenger vehicle and ten secondary passenger vehicle lanes, a bus lane, one primary commercial lane, a commercial building, a passenger vehicle bay, two commercial bays, a kennel, a storage building, and parking facilities.

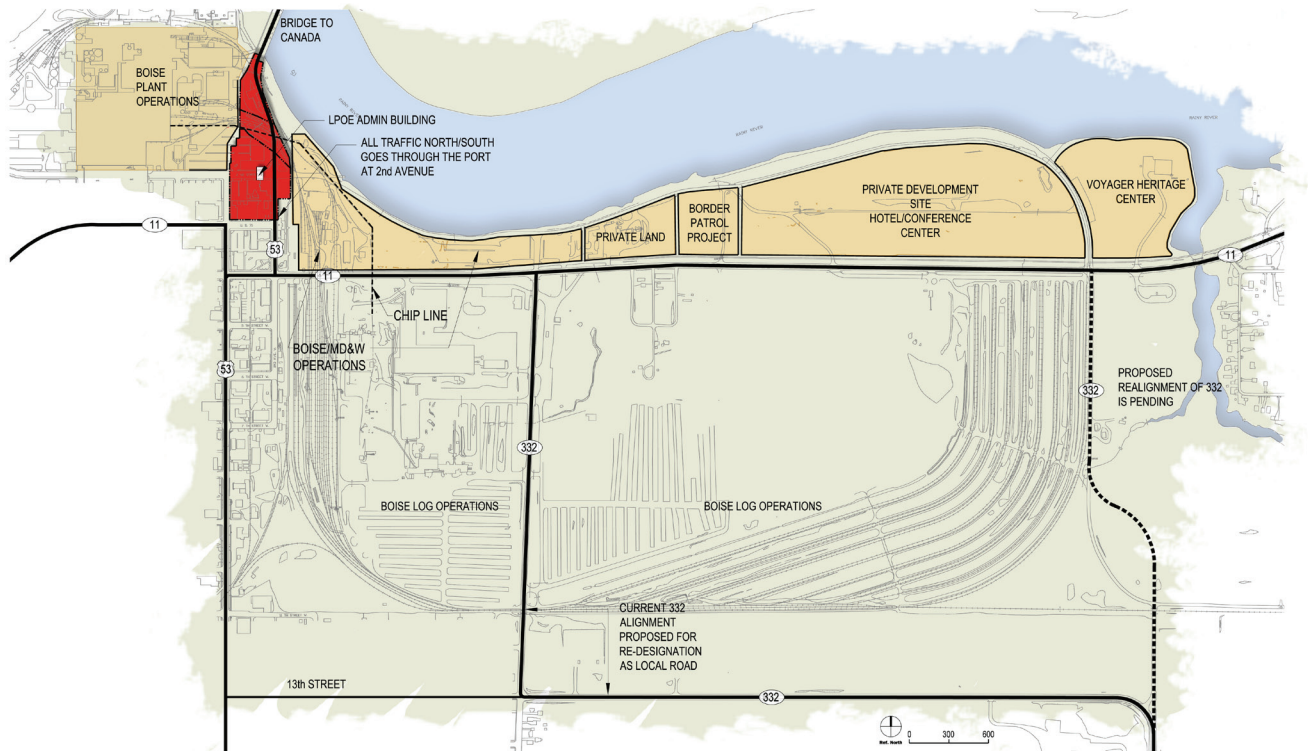
Commercial vehicles, passenger vehicles, buses, and pedestrians would enter and exit the LPOE at 2nd Avenue. The existing site would be used for pedestrian and rail inspections. The main building, passenger vehicle primary and secondary inspection lanes, commercial vehicle primary and secondary inspection lanes, a NEXUS enrollment center, an outbound booth,

and other components of the LPOE would be constructed on the new site (exhibit 2.7).

Alternative 8 has the advantages of providing space for the needed components; maintaining the existing traffic patterns through the CBD; moderately improving queuing; improving some traffic conflicts; and providing space for a separate bus inspection lane. However, the layout of Alternative 8 results in three disadvantages. Rail traffic would still be a source of conflict with other modes; it does not maximize the use of the existing LPOE; and it does not eliminate the conflicts with commercial vehicles.

Alternative 8 would only marginally satisfy the proposed action’s purpose and needs because the building and site layout are not ideal, and onsite traffic circulation is cumbersome. There is no room for expansion.

Exhibit 2.6 – Alternative 8 Traffic Pattern

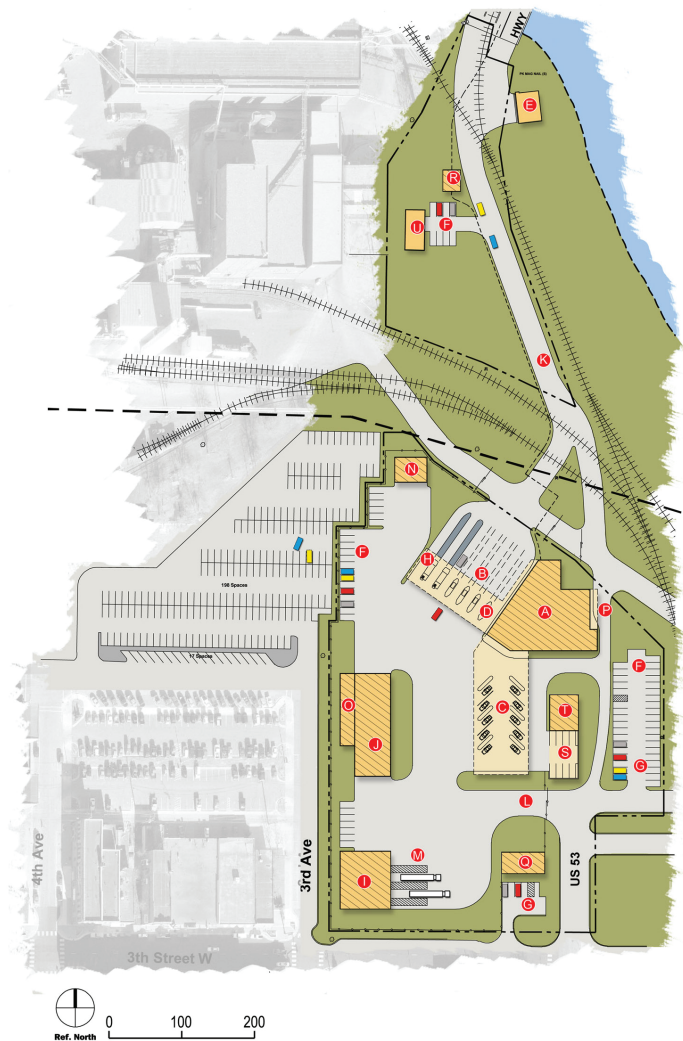


Source: Gensler, 2011

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Exhibit 2.7 – Alternative 8

- A Main Building
- B Non-Commercial Primary (5 Lanes)
- C Non-Commercial Secondary (10 Lanes)
- D Bus Lane
- E Existing Duty Free Building
- F CBP Parking
- G Visitor Parking
- H Commercial Primary (1 Lane)
- I Commercial Building
- J NII Operations (Permanent)
- K Secure Vehicle Corridor
- L Exit Control
- M Commercial Dock (2 Bays)
- N Kennel
- O Firing Range
- P Outbound Inspections
- Q Trusted Traveler Enrollment Operations
- R Inbound Pedestrian/Rail Processing
- S Secure Parking
- T Non Commercial Bays
- U Storage Building



Source: Gensler, 2011

2.2.5 Alternative 9

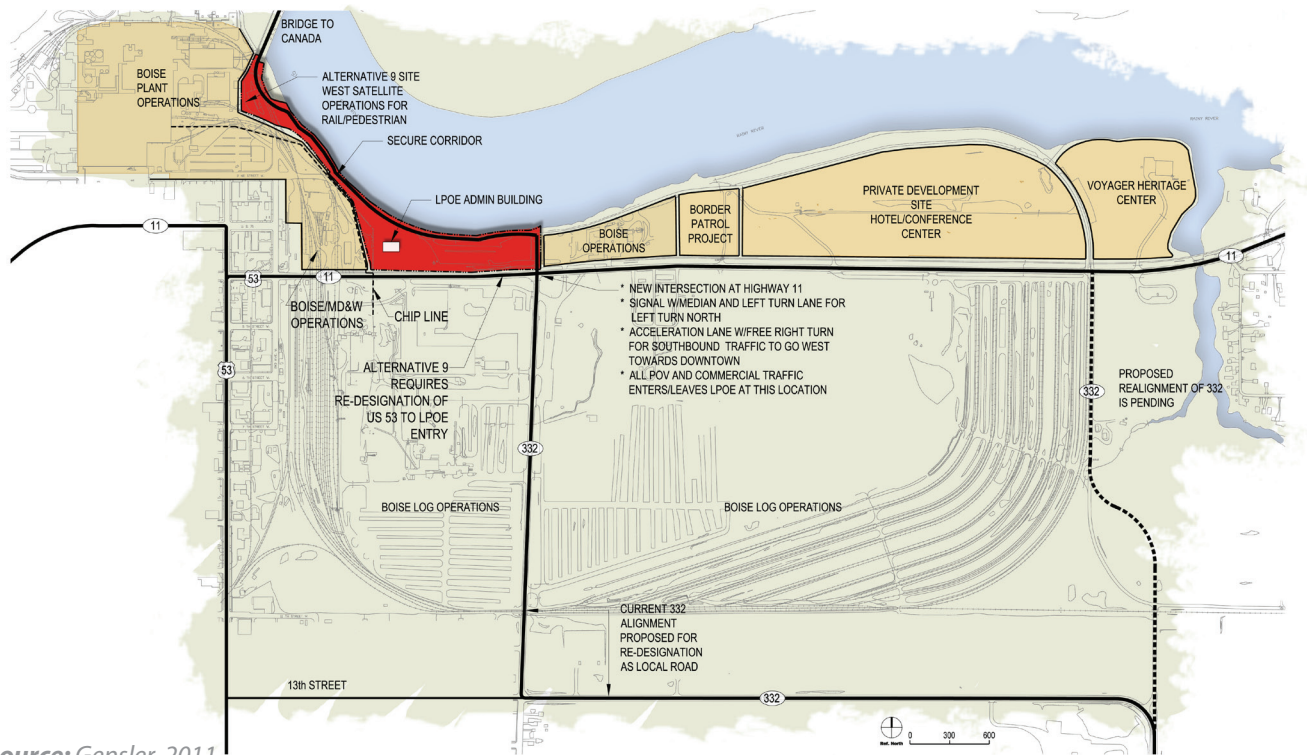
Alternative 9 would consist of demolishing the existing building, constructing new facilities at the existing LPOE, and expanding the LPOE to meet the required space standards and increased security requirements of the FIS. This alternative would move the majority of the LPOE improvements and operations to a 12-acre site to the southeast of the existing LPOE between 4th Street and Rainy River (exhibit 2.8). Limited satellite operations for pedestrian and rail processing on the existing 1.64-acre site may be maintained during peak travel times. The improvements would consist of the construction of a new main building, five primary passenger vehicle and ten secondary passenger vehicle lanes, a bus lane, one primary commercial

vehicle lane, a commercial building, a passenger vehicle bay, two commercial bays, a kennel, a storage building, and parking facilities.

Commercial vehicles, passenger vehicles, buses, and pedestrians would enter and exit the LPOE on Highway 11 and 332, where a new intersection with a signal, a left turning lane, and a right turning lane would be constructed. The existing LPOE would be used for pedestrian and rail inspections. The main building, passenger vehicle primary and secondary inspection lanes, commercial primary and secondary inspection lanes, a NEXUS enrollment center, an outbound booth, and other components of the LPOE would be constructed on the new site (exhibit 2.9).

Alternative 9 has the advantages of providing space for the required components improving queuing space; removing queuing of passenger and commercial vehicles on the International Bridge; improving traffic conditions by removing conflicts with the railroad and commercial vehicles, avoiding traffic congestion in the CBD; providing space for a separate bus inspection lane; and providing land for future expansion. However, the overall layout of Alternative 9 results in four disadvantages. It requires operations from two separate facilities and locations; the site separates traffic to and from the

Exhibit 2.8 – Alternative 9 Traffic Pattern



Source: Gensler, 2011

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Exhibit 2.9 – Alternative 9



Source: Gensler, 2011

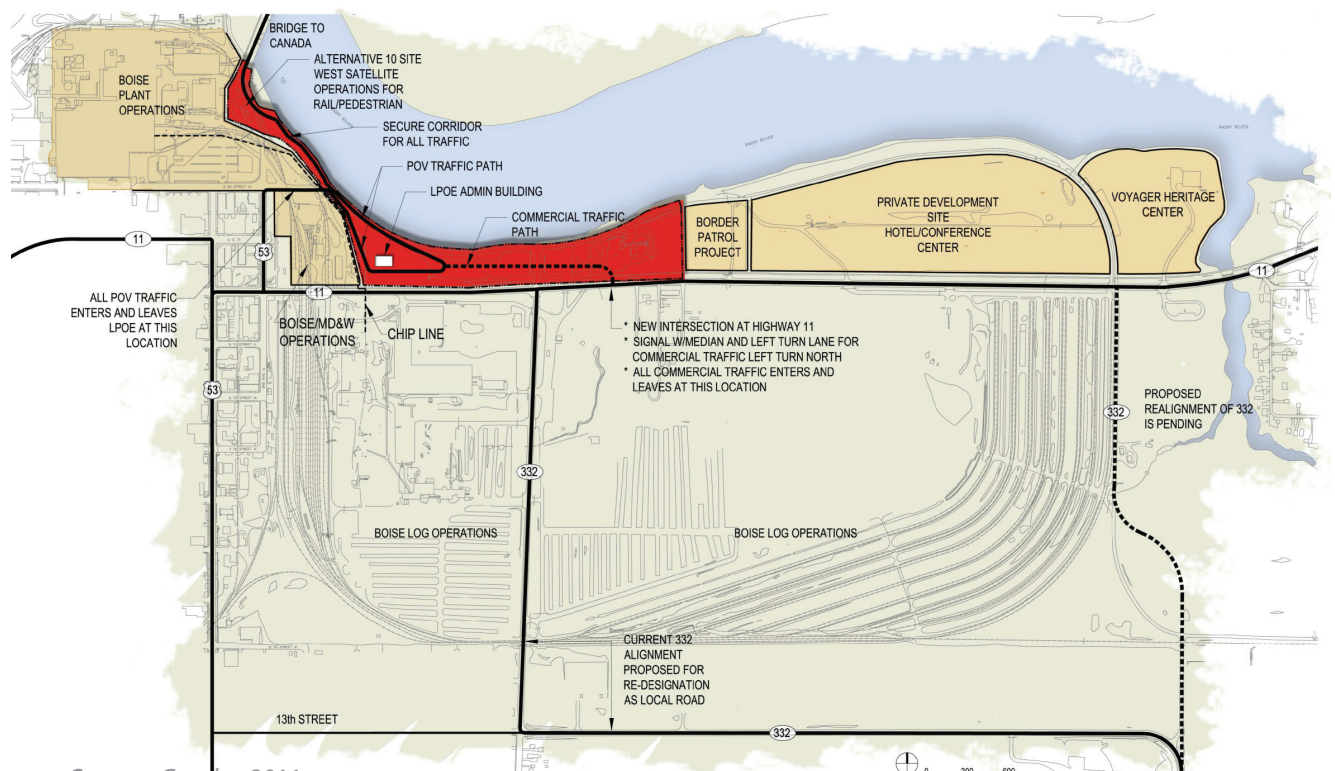
CBD; it does not maximize the use of existing LPOE; and it must maintain a secure road between the LPOE and the International Bridge.

Alternative 9 would satisfy the proposed action’s purpose and needs; however, the entrance and exit of the LPOE on Route 11 removes traffic from the CBD, creating a major concern for the citizens and business owners of International Falls that depend on passing traffic and tourism.

2.2.6 Alternative 10

Alternative 10 would consist of demolishing the existing building, constructing new facilities at the existing LPOE, and expanding the LPOE to meet the required space standards and increased security requirements of the FIS. This alternative would move the majority of the LPOE improvements and operations to a 15-acre site southeast of the existing site between 4th Street and Rainy River. Limited satellite operations for pedestrian and rail processing on the existing 1.64-acre site may be maintained during peak travel times (exhibit 2.10). The improvements would consist of the construction of a new main building, five primary passenger vehicle and ten secondary passenger vehicle lanes, a bus lane, one primary commercial vehicle

Exhibit 2.10 – Alternative 10 Traffic Pattern



Source: Gensler, 2011

lane, a commercial building, a passenger vehicle bay, two commercial bays, a kennel, a storage building, and parking facilities.

Passenger vehicles, buses, and pedestrians would enter and exit the LPOE on Highway 53 and 2nd Street, where existing site would be used for pedestrian and rail inspections. Commercial vehicles would enter and exit the LPOE on Highway 11 where a new intersection with a signal, a left turning lane, and a right turning lane would be constructed. The main building, passenger vehicle primary and secondary inspection lanes, commercial primary and secondary inspection lanes, a NEXUS enrollment center, an outbound booth, and other components of the LPOE would be constructed on the new site (exhibit 2.11).

Alternative 10 includes a paved parking lot for Boise, Inc. to park their trailers south of Highway 11 and east of Highway 332.

Alternative 10 has the advantages of providing space for the required components improving queuing space; removing queuing of passenger and commercial vehicles on International Bridge; improving traffic conditions by removing most rail and commercial vehicle conflicts, avoiding traffic congestion in the CBD; providing space for a separate bus inspection lane; and providing land for future expansion. However, the overall layout of Alternative 10 results in one disadvantage; it requires operations from two separate facilities and locations.

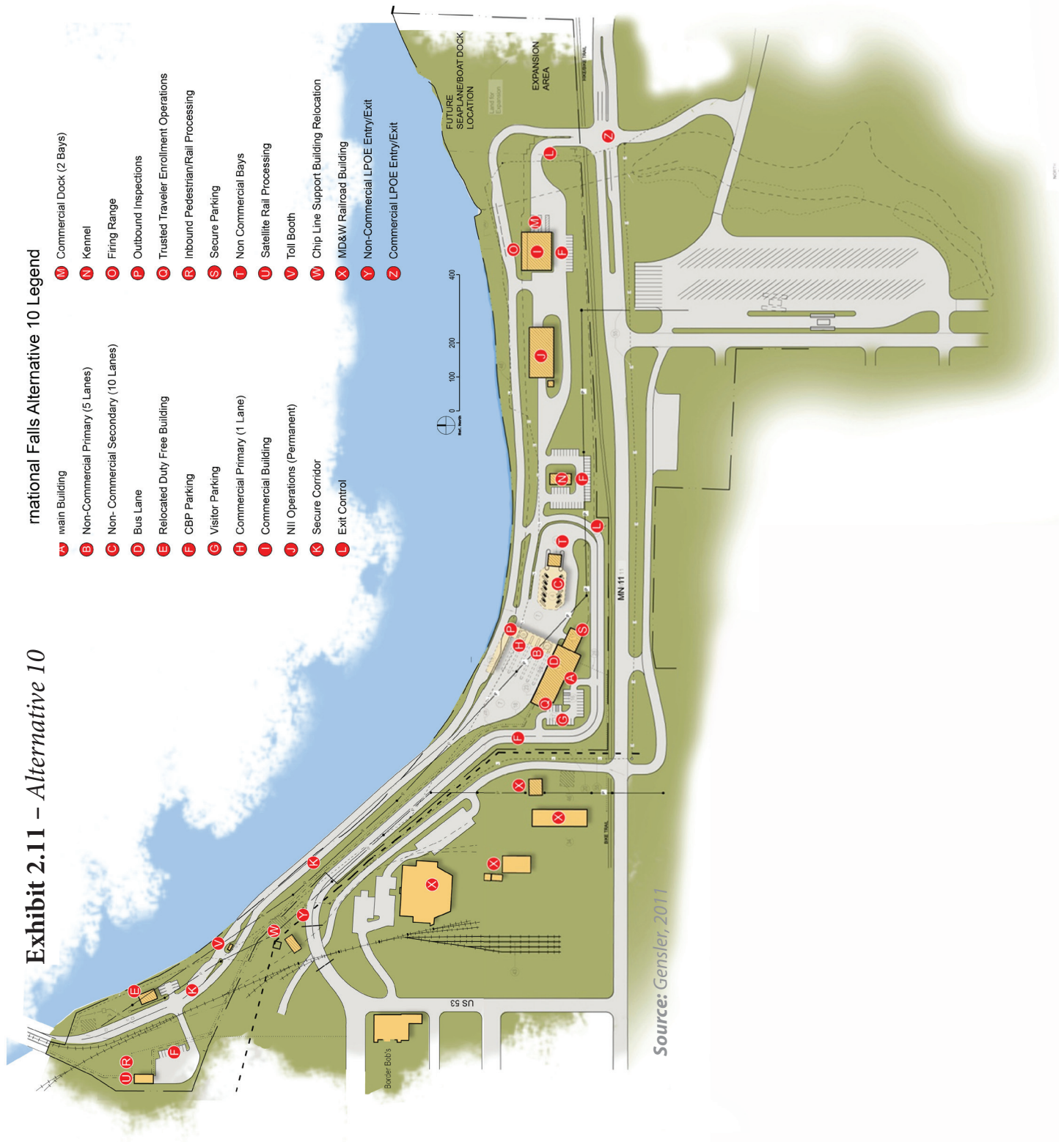
Alternative 10 would satisfy the proposed action's purpose and needs. Passenger vehicles, buses, and pedestrians would enter and exit the LPOE at 2nd Avenue after passing through the CBD. Commercial vehicles would enter and exit the LPOE from Route 11 reducing traffic and noise in the CBD.

2.3 Identification of the GSA's Preferred Alternative

The GSA announced the availability of the DEIS for the International Falls LPOE Improvements Study on January 14, 2010 (section 5.3). A 45-day comment period immediately followed, during which the GSA invited Federal, State and local agencies, organizations and individuals to submit comments on the DEIS.

A public hearing was held at the Rainy River Community College on January 27, 2010 and a transcript of the hearing was prepared. Two attendees offered substantive comments during the public hearing. The public hearing was preceded by an open house to allow attendees to view plans of the build

Exhibit 2.11 – Alternative 10



alternatives in detail, review the DEIS and discuss its content with the GSA, and ask questions.

The GSA received eight comment letters and one comment e-mail (section 5.3).

After careful consideration of the comments received on the DEIS, the GSA identified Alternative 10 as best satisfying the proposed action's purpose and programmatic needs and has the least impact on the human and natural environment. Alternative 10 is identified as the Preferred Alternative in the FEIS and in the ROD subject also to Congressional authorization and appropriation of availability of funds, GSA control of the site to complete archaeological investigations and continuity of the tenant agencies' Program of Requirements as they were understood at the time this study was completed.

Alternatives 5 and 8 only marginally satisfied the proposed action's purpose and needs because the buildings and site layout were not ideal, onsite traffic circulation was cumbersome, and security, while improved over the existing conditions, would not fully meet the FIS's requirements.

Alternatives 7 and 9 would satisfy the proposed action's purpose and needs; however, the entrance and exit of the LPOE on Highway 11 removes POV traffic from the CBD, creating a major concern and possible economic hardship for the citizens and business owners of International Falls that depend on passing traffic and tourism.

Alternative 10 was identified as the preferred alternative because it was the only alternative that fully satisfied the proposed action's purpose and needs with the least adverse impact to the human environment. Alternative 10 is also the environmentally preferable alternative. According to the NEPA, the environmentally preferable alternative is the alternative "that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment; [and]...best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources" (CEQ, 1981).

Henceforth, Alternative 10 is referred to as the preferred alternative.

Chapter 3

Affected Environment

The GSA developed a study area of approximately 190 acres that encompasses the range of reasonable alternatives, and performed a detailed analysis of the natural, social, and economic features of the study area (exhibit 1.1). The study area covers not only the land that would be used for the build alternatives, but also the areas that would experience direct and indirect impacts from them.

Chapter 3 is an inventory of the affected environment. It succinctly describes the physical, biological, social, and economic environments of the area to be affected by the alternatives. (40 CFR part 1502.16).

3.1 Physical Geography and Geology

The physical geography or physiography of an area is a description of the physical features of the natural landscape. The physical geography and geology of the study area may influence the alternatives development and selection process as natural landforms and geologic features may determine the extent of environmental features and engineering constraints and feasibility.

3.1.1 Physical Geography

The study area is in the Western Lake Section of the Central Lowland Physiographic Province of the Interior Plains (NRCS, 2009). The general slope and drainage of the study area is toward the north into the Rainy River. Along the northern portion of the study area, steep slopes define the floodway of the Rainy River (FEMA, 2009). The elevation of the study area is approximately 1,120 feet.

The average annual precipitation in this area is 20 to 29 inches (50.8 to 73.6 centimeters). About 68 percent of the annual precipitation falls as rain during the 5-month growing season (May through September), and about 20 percent falls as snow (approximately 64 inches). The average annual temperature is 36 to 41 degrees Fahrenheit (2 to 5 degrees Celsius). The freeze-free period averages about 135 days and ranges from 115 to 150 days (NRCS, 2009).

3.1.2 Geology

The geology of the study area is dominated by glacial and fluvial landforms developed during the Pleistocene and Holocene Epochs (MGS, 1983). The area is covered mostly by silty and clayey lacustrine sediments and lake-

modified glacial till. Thickness of the deposits is highly variable, ranging between 50 feet and 150 feet near the river to less than 30 feet further inland. Crystalline metamorphic rocks underlie the glacial deposits (NRCS, 2009). The bedrock of International Falls consists of undivided metasedimentary rocks, including greywacke, slate, local units of conglomerate, arenite, graphitic slate, fine-grained felsic volcanogenic and volcanoclastic rocks and their metamorphic equivalents, and mafic metavolcanic rocks (MGS, 1996).

3.2 Water Resources

3.2.1 Surface Waters

The study area is in the Rainy River watershed. The Rainy River is approximately 85 miles in length and forms part of the U.S.-Canada border separating northern Minnesota and northwestern Ontario. The river flows generally west to northwest to the Lake of the Woods. The drainage basin encompasses a total area of 27,114 square miles, of which 41 percent is in Minnesota and 59 percent is in Ontario. The river ultimately drains through to the Hudson Bay (MPCA, 2001). The river is used for hydroelectric generation and as a public drinking water source for International Falls. A small, perennial tributary, First Creek, is south of Highway 11 and approximately 450 feet east of Highway 332.

The International Rainy River Water Pollution Board (IRRWPB) and the International Rainy Lake Board of Control (IRLBC) are part of the International Joint Commission (IJC), which cooperate to manage the Rainy River to protect them for the benefit of today's citizens and future generations.

Water quality standards in Minnesota are both numeric and narrative, defining the acceptable conditions for the protection of their uses. Minnesota identifies seven beneficial uses for which surface waters are protected (exhibit 3.1).

The benefit use classifications 1, 2Bd, and 3 have been designated in association with the Rainy River in the study area (MPCA, 2008). A numeric water quality standard is a safe concentration of a pollutant in water, associated with a specific beneficial use (exhibit 3.2). Ideally, if the standard is not exceeded, the use would be protected.

The water quality of the Rainy River at the International Bridge in International Falls meets these standards (exhibit 3.3). Point source discharges to the Rainy River from municipal and industrial sources have remained relatively constant from a loadings perspective and would remain fairly

Exhibit 3.1 – Beneficial Use Classes for Surface Waters

Use Class	Beneficial Use
1	Drinking water
2	Aquatic life and recreation
2A	Cold water fisheries, trout waters
2Bd	Cool and warm water fisheries, in addition these waters are protected as a source of drinking waters
2B	Cool and warm water fisheries (not protected for drinking water)
2C	Indigenous fish and associated aquatic community
2D	Wetlands
3	Industrial use and cooling
4A	Agricultural use, irrigation
4B	Agricultural use, livestock, and wildlife watering
5	Aesthetics and navigation
6	Other uses
7	Limited resource value waters (not fully protected for aquatic life due to lack of water, lack of habitat or extensive physical alterations)

Source: MPCA, 2007

Exhibit 3.2 – Selected Water Quality Standards

Substance or Characteristic	Designated Uses		
	Drinking (1B)	Cool and warm water fisheries (2Bd)	Industrial Use and Cooling (3A)
Dissolved oxygen (mg/L)	-	5.0 (daily minimum)	-
pH - Standard Units	6.5-8.5	6.5-9.0	6.5-8.5
Temperature (F)	-	86° F*	-
E. Coli (orgs/100 ml)	-	126	-
Fecal coli form (orgs/100 ml)	-	200	-
Nitrogen (mg/L)	10	-	-
Turbidity (NTU)	5 / 25	25	-
Sulfates (mg/L)		10	10
Mercury (ug/L)	2	0.0069	-

**Note: 5°F above natural in streams and 3°F above natural in lakes, based on monthly average of the maximum daily temperatures, except in no case shall it exceed the daily average temperature of 86°F.*

Source: MAR, Chapter 7050, section 220

steady at current levels in the foreseeable future. The decreases in loading for conventional parameters, such as biological oxygen demand (BOD) and total suspended solids (TSS), from the 1960s to the early 1980s are the direct result of remedial measures undertaken by industry and municipalities (International Rainy River Water Pollution Board, International Rainy Lake Board, 2008).

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Exhibit 3.3 – Average Annual Water Quality at Rainy River International Bridge at International Falls, 2008

	<i>Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L)</i>	<i>pH</i>	<i>E. Coli (orgs/100 ml)</i>	<i>Fecal Coliform (orgs/100 ml)</i>	<i>Nitrogen (mg/L)</i>	<i>Turbidity (NTU)</i>	<i>Sulfates (mg/L)</i>
2008	8.9	7.4	6	0	0.07	3.2	3.4
2007	9.6	7.9	4	0	0.06	9	2.8
2006	9	7.9	7	0	NA	13.9	NA
2005	9.4	7.5	12	0	0.07	9.3	NA
2004	13.1	8.6	4	Present (<Quantitation Limits (QL))	0.06	7	NA
2003	8.4	7.6	5	6	0.07	8.8	NA

Source: MPCA, 2009c

The Clean Water Act (CWA) requires the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to assess the water quality of waters of Minnesota. Waters determined to be not meeting the water quality standards are defined as “impaired.” Minnesota defines impaired as “... a water-body that does not meet applicable water quality standards or fully support applicable beneficial uses, due in whole or in part to water pollution from point or nonpoint sources, or any combination thereof...” (MPCA, 2007). Impaired waters are listed in the 305(b) Report and the 303(d) List. Listing a water-body triggers a response on the part of the MPCA to address the causes and sources of the impairment through a process called a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) analysis. In 2004, Minnesota implemented the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Consolidated Assessment and Listing Methodology (CALM), integrating the 305(b) Report and the 303(d) List of impaired waters. Under the CALM system, the Rainy River in the study area is designated as category 4A. This category designation signifies that the water resource is fully supporting aquatic life and aquatic recreation uses, but does not support aquatic consumption due to continued elevated levels of mercury found in fish tissue (MPCA, 2008). However, the long-term trends for physical and chemical parameters, except for nitrogen, indicate improving water quality.

Stormwater runoff in urban areas is one of the leading sources of water pollution in the United States. Under Section 438 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA), Congress required federal agencies to provide national leadership to reduce water quality problems from stormwater runoff. Section 438 specifically calls for projects “...involving a federal facility with a footprint that exceeds 5,000 square feet shall use site

planning, design, construction, and maintenance strategies for the property to maintain or restore, to the maximum extent technically feasible, the pre-development hydrology of the property with regard to the temperature, rate, volume, and duration of flow.”

3.2.2 Groundwater

The study area is located in the Arrowhead Groundwater Province which is characterized by Precambrian crystalline rocks exposed at the surface or blanketed by thin layers (less than 30 feet) of glacial sediments. The crystalline metamorphic and igneous rocks are generally the principal aquifer in this province (MDNR, 2001). In the International Falls area, where thicker deposits of glacial sediments are present, groundwater is available from both the glacial sediments and the underlying crystalline bedrock (Ericson et al, 1976).

Within the glacial sediments, sand and gravel deposits are the primary source of groundwater to water supply wells. The thickness and lateral extent of these deposits is highly variable. Reported well depths in the glacial sediments range between 12 and 165 feet with yields of eight to 70 gallons per minute (gpm) (Ericson et al, 1976).

Water movement in the bedrock is primarily through secondary openings, such as joints, fractures, and faults. Because these openings are largely insignificant below depths of 300 to 500 feet, the availability of water is similarly limited to this depth. Reported well depths in the bedrock range between 80 and 380 feet and well yields range from <0.1 to 12 gpm (Ericson et al, 1976).

The groundwater is generally a calcium bicarbonate type and is hard to very hard. Areas with thick glacial deposits generally have high concentrations of dissolved solids, iron, and manganese, which often exceed the recommended limits for domestic consumption (Ericson et al, 1976).

There are no public or private water supply wells in the study area. A search of the on-line Minnesota County Well Index (CWI) identified three industrial supply wells located approximately 1,000 feet southwest of the LPOE. The wells range in depth from 115 feet to 157 feet and are completed at the base of the glacial sediments (MGS and MDH, 2009).

3.2.3 Floodplains

Federal protection of floodplains is afforded by EO 11988, “Floodplain Management,” and by implementation of federal regulations under 44 CFR 9.10. These regulations direct federal agencies to undertake actions to avoid impacts on floodplain areas by structures built in flood-prone areas. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has primary responsibility for identifying flood-prone areas.

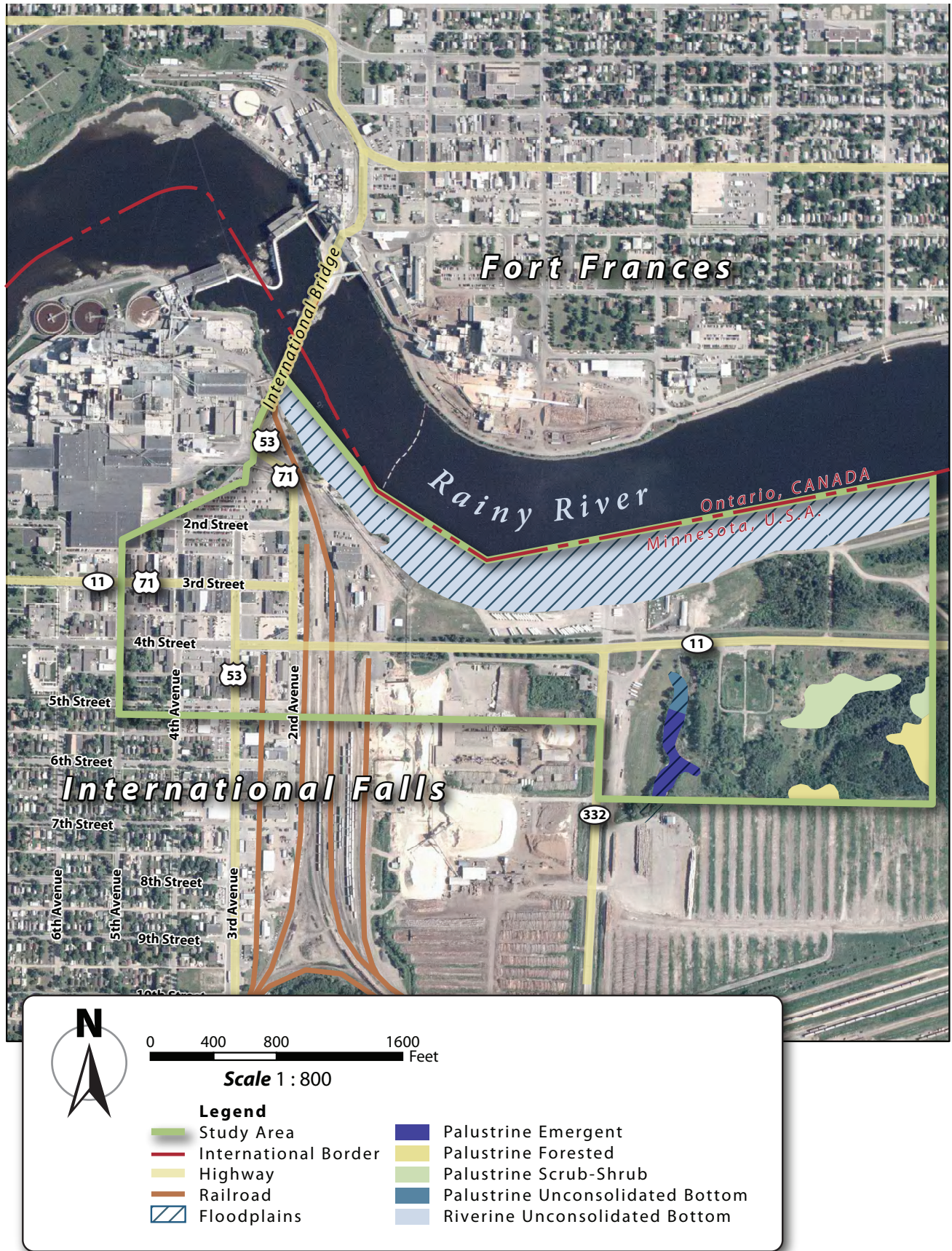
According to the FEMA, the northern portion of the study area along the Rainy River is prone to inundation by a 100-year flood (i.e., a flood with a probability of occurring one time in 100 hundred years) (exhibit 3.4). FEMA maps indicate that the 100-year flood is contained within the banks along the portion of the Rainy River within the study area (FEMA, 2009). Approximately 36 acres of FEMA-designated 100-year floodplains are in the study area; 34 acres are along the Rainy River and two acres are to the south of Highway 11 along First Creek.

3.2.4 Wetlands

Wetlands are transitional areas between terrestrial and aquatic systems which are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater with a frequency and duration sufficient to support and, under normal circumstances, do support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas. A three-parameter approach is used for identification of wetlands that includes the presence of hydrophytic (water-loving) vegetation, wetland hydrology, and hydric soils (soils subject to saturation/inundation). All three parameters must be present, under normal circumstances, for an area to be designated as a wetland.

The National Wetland Inventory (NWI) is a program administered by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) for mapping and classifying wetlands in the U.S. The USFWS has classified the Rainy River as a riverine, unconsolidated bottom, permanently flooded wetland (approximately 34 acres). Riverine systems include freshwater wetland and deepwater habitats contained within a channel. Approximately eight acres of palustrine wetlands were identified on the NWI mapping to the south of Highway 11 along First Creek. These palustrine wetlands consisted of emergent persistent wetlands (approximately 1.7 acres), forested wetlands (approximately 2.6 acres),

Exhibit 3.4 – Floodplains and Wetlands



scrub-shrub wetlands (approximately 3 acres), and unconsolidated bottom wetlands (approximately 0.5 acre) (exhibit 3.4) (MDNR, 2003).

3.2.5 Wild and Scenic Rivers

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System was created from the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1271, et seq.) of 1968 to preserve certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations. River segments designated by Congress or the U.S. Department of the Interior are classified as wild river areas, scenic river areas, or recreational river areas.

The Minnesota Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Minnesota Statutes 103F.315) of 1973 established a state wild and scenic rivers program, administered by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), to preserve and protect rivers in Minnesota with outstanding natural, scenic, scientific, historic, cultural and recreational values.

There are no federal- or state-designated wild or scenic rivers within the study area (MDNR, 2009a).

3.3 Vegetation and Wildlife Habitat

Ecoregions denote areas of general similarity in ecosystems and in the type, quality, and quantity of environmental resources. The study area is included within the Northern Minnesota Forest Lake Plains ecoregion, generally characterized as flat to gently sloping plains with extensive wetlands, some forest land and several eroded river channels. This ecoregion is part of the larger Laurentian Mixed Forest ecological region. Major forest species in the study area region are black spruce, cedar, tamarack, aspen and pine.

The majority of the study area is developed and only sparsely vegetated; approximately 30 acres of the study area are forested and eight acres are emergent, shrub-scrub, and forested wetlands.

3.4 Threatened and Endangered Species

3.4.1 Federal Threatened and Endangered Species

The U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended, provides protection for those species that are listed as endangered or threatened under the ESA. The ESA grants the USFWS prime responsibility in administering the species designations and protections granted under the Act. “Endangered” means that a species is in danger of extinction throughout all or a

significant portion of its range. “Threatened” means that a species is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future.

According to the USFWS, the Canada lynx is listed as threatened in the county of Koochiching (USFWS, 2009). On February 25, 2009, the USFWS published a revised designation of critical habitat for the Canada Lynx. This revised designation included a portion of Koochiching County which includes the study area as part of the Unit 2 Canada Lynx critical habitat area. Critical habitat is defined in section 3 of the ESA as: (i) The specific areas within the geographical area occupied by a species, at the time it is listed in accordance with the Act, on which are found those physical or biological features (a) Essential to the conservation of the species and (b) That may require special management considerations or protection. Critical habitat receives protection under section 7 of the ESA through the prohibition against Federal agencies carrying out, funding, or authorizing the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat.

Canada lynx are primarily found in upland forests dominated by dense stands of red pine (*Pinus resinosa*) and white pine (*P. strobus*) mixed with aspen (*Populus spp.*), paper birch (*Betula papyrifera*), spruce, balsam fir (*A. balsamifera*) and jack pine (*P. banksiana*). Lynx populations are largely tied to the presence of snowshoe hare, their major food source, which also favor stands of conifers with dense understory vegetation. Since the study area does not contain dense upland forests, the Canada lynx would not likely occur in the study area.

Effective September 16, 2009, the Gray Wolf was reinstated as a threatened species throughout Minnesota. Additionally, critical habitat areas for the Gray Wolf were also reinstated, although those designations do not include the study area.

Preferred Gray wolf habitat in Minnesota is forest or a mix of forest and agricultural land cover. The Gray wolf is a very adaptable species that can typically survive wherever abundant wild prey is available. As the study area is an urban area with sparse forest lands and minimal wildlife habitat to support abundant levels of potential prey, the Gray wolf would not likely occur in the study area.

3.4.2 State Threatened and Endangered Species

In the state of Minnesota, “endangered” is defined if the species is threatened with extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

“Threatened” is defined if the species is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range. “Species of special concern” is defined as if it is extremely uncommon in this state, or has unique or highly specific habitat requirements and deserves careful monitoring of its status.

According to the MDNR, there are no endangered species, one threatened species and ten species of special concern potentially occurring in the Rainy River-Manitou watershed, which includes the study area (exhibit 3.5) (MDNR, 2009b).

The state-threatened Laurentian tiger beetle prefers openings in northern coniferous forest, and more specifically in abandoned gravel and sand pits, undisturbed corners of active gravel and sand pits, sand and gravel roads, and sparsely vegetated rock outcrops. Their preferred upland forest habitat typically consists of canopy species such as pines, spruce, balsam fir, aspen, paper birch and northern pin oak. As the study area is predominantly an urban area with sparse forest lands, the Laurentian tiger beetle would not likely occur in the study area.

Exhibit 3.5 – Minnesota’s Endangered, Threatened, and Species of Special Concern in Rainy River-Manitou Watershed

Common Name	Scientific Name	Group	Status
Laurentian Tiger Beetle	Cidindela denikei	insect	threatened
A Caddisfly	Hydroptila novicola	insect	special concern
A Caddisfly	Oxyethira itascae	insect	special concern
Bald Eagle	Haliaeetus leucocephalus	bird	special concern
Bog Rush	Juncus stygius var. americanus	vascular plant	special concern
Creek Heelsplitter	Lasmigona compressa	mussel	special concern
English Sundew	Drosera anglica	vascular plant	special concern
Felwort	Gentianella amarella ssp. acuta	vascular plant	special concern
Lake Sturgeon	Acipenser fulvescens	fish	special concern
Linear-leaved Sundew	Drosera linearis	vascular plant	special concern
Northern Brook Lamprey	Ichthyomyzon fossor	fish	special concern

Source: MDNR, 2009b

3.5 Air Quality

The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) require that a proposed action not cause any new violation of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), or increase the frequency or severity of any existing violations, or delay attainment of a NAAQS. The EPA Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards (OAQPS) has set NAAQS for six principal pollut-

ants, which are called “criteria” pollutants: carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter (2.5 and 10), ozone, and sulfur dioxide.

Minnesota’s air quality is generally good and has been improving for most pollutants. Minnesota has been in compliance with all NAAQS since 2002, and is designated as being in attainment for all pollutants (MPCA, 2009a).

Activities in Minnesota accounted for approximately 157 million metric tons of gross carbon dioxide equivalence (MMtCO₂e) emissions in 2005, an amount equal to 2.2 percent of total U.S. gross greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (exhibit 3.6). The principal sources of GHG emission in 2005 are electricity use and transportation. GHG emissions are expected to climb to approximately 200 MMtCO₂e by 2025, reaching 68 percent above 1990 levels (CCS, 2008).

Exhibit 3.6 – Minnesota GHG Emissions by Sector*

Sector	2005 MMtCO₂e	2005 Percent	2025 MMtCO₂e	2025 Percent
Electricity	54.1	34%	79.3	39.4%
Transportation	37.2	24%	39.8	20%
Residential/Commercial/ Industrial Fuel Use	32	20%	40.5	20%
Agriculture	21.7	14%	26	13%
Waste	4.96	3.2%	4.58	2.5%
Forests	3.3	2.1%	3.3	1.6%
Fossil Fuel Industry	2.25	1.4%	4.07	2%
Industrial Process	1.56	1%	2.95	1.5%
Total	157.07	100%	200.5	100%

**Note: Totals may not equal exact sum of subtotals shown due to rounding.*

Source: CCS, 2008

The Next Generation Energy Act of 2007 was passed proposing strategies to increase renewable energy use, increase energy conservation and decrease carbon emissions from Minnesota. The Act set GHG emission reduction goals, to reduce statewide GHG emissions across all sectors at least 15 percent below 2005 levels by 2015, at least 30 percent below 2005 levels by 2025, and at least 80 percent below 2005 levels by 2050.

Minnesota has begun to take actions to control GHG emissions while conserving energy and promoting the development and use of renewable energy sources. With only nine out of 40 of these actions analyzed (other actions were not analyzed because they were enabling policies or their data were not readily available to quantify their reductions), the GHG emission reduction projected to be achieved is a reduction of approximately 38

MMtCO₂e in 2025, or 19 percent, totaling approximately 163 MMtCO₂e compared to 200 MMtCO₂e (exhibit 3.7) (CCS, 2008).

Exhibit 3.7 – 2025 Projected GHG Emissions (MMtCO₂e)
Associated with Recent Actions in Minnesota

Sector	W/O Actions	With Actions	Reduction
Residential, Commercial, Industrial	40.5	25	15.5
Energy Supply	79.3	58.5	20.8
Transportation and Land Use	39.8	38.3	1.5
Other Sectors	40.9	-	-
Total	200.5	162.7	37.8

Source: CCS, 2008

3.6 Noise

Noise in the study area is dominantly derived from the operations of the Boise Inc. paper mill and supporting activities such as materials movement (i.e., wood chip lines) and commercial truck traffic. Other sources of noise are the Abitibi Papermill in Fort Frances, operations and vehicle movements at the LPOE, and MD&W Railway.

Sound levels are measured in decibels (dB), with an “A”- weighted sound level (dBA) for environmental noise typically used to approximate the response from noise for a typical human hearing capability. The steady state sound level (Leq) is used to describe the calculated average sound energy over a measurement period, considering all of the consistent background levels and periodic peak noise events.

Noise levels in the vicinity of 92-96 dBA Leq can be typically generated within paper and pulp mills (WHO, 2001). Developed urban areas typically have noise levels in the range of 72 dBA Leq (FHWA, 1980).

The MD&W Railway traverses the LPOE to service the Boise mill, and crossing the International Bridge, to service the Abitibi mill. The train makes an average of four to eight crossings per day moving freight cars between the mills and marshalling yards either delivering raw material to or taking finished product away from either plant. The trains consist of a locomotive and a few cars. The train movements are “on demand”, driven by plant production, because there is no storage track capacity within the mills to establish a schedule. Depending on mill activities, the length of the train and the number of crossings is sometimes higher.

The movement of trains through the congested site is a potential safety hazard to the traveling public and employees and visitors at the LPOE. Oc-

asionally, trains have struck automobiles and transport trucks that did not properly clear the unprotected (i.e., no gates) grade crossings.

In compliance with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Rail Safety Act of 2008 for statutory warning compliance, and the State of Minnesota statutes regulating railroad operations, a train is required to sound its horn as it approaches a grade crossing with 2 long, 1 short, and 1 long horn blast until the train is into the crossing. Although past practices may have been inconsistent, the MD&W is enforcing compliance with this rule because of liabilities and severe penalties under the advisement of state and federal rail inspection and safety agencies.

The FRA regulations further specify minimum testing requirements for train horns to be in compliance with safety regulations. To be in compliance, the horn sound level must be measured at 96dBA – 104dBA, at a point 15 feet in the air, 100 feet behind and 150 feet ahead of the horn.

On July 28, 2010, a Customs and Border Protection occupational health inspector recorded sound levels as trains were passing (exhibits 3.8, 3.9, 3.10)

Exhibit 3.10 – Daily Permissible Exposure Levels Cited by The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

Hours per Day	Sound Level:
8	90 dBA
6	92 dBA
4	95 dBA
3	97 dBA
2	100 dBA
1.5	102 dBA
1	105 dBA
.5	110 dBA
.25 or less	115 dBA

Exhibit 3.8 – Sound Levels in the Study Area

Measurement Location:	Sound Level:
Outdoors at Commercial Primary Inspection	101 dBA
Outdoors at Outbound Inspection	97 dBA
Outdoors at Non-commercial Primary Inspection (north)	116 dBA
Outdoors at Non-commercial Primary Inspection (south)	117 dBA
Indoors at Main Building	74 dBA

Exhibit 3.9 – Noise Levels

Environmental Noise:	Sound Level:
Weakest sound heard	0 dBA
Whisper quiet library	30 dBA
Normal conversation (3-5 feet)	60-70 dBA
Telephone dial tone	80 dBA
City traffic (inside car)	85 dBA
Train whistle at 500 feet, truck traffic	90 dBA
Subway train at 200 feet	95 dBA
Level at which sustained exposure may result in hearing loss	90 – 95 dBA
Power mower at 3 feet	107 dBA
Snowmobile, motorcycle	100 dBA
Power saw at 3 feet	110 dBA
Sand blasting, loud rock concert	115 dBA
Pain begins	125 dBA
Pneumatic riveter at 4 feet	125 dBA
Loudest recommended exposure with hearing protection - Even short term exposure can cause permanent damage	140 dBA
Jet engine at 100 feet, gun blast	140 dBA
Death of hearing tissue	180 dBA
Loudest sound possible	194 dBA

According to the FRA, a flagman guarding the crossing is not practical. A request for a “Quiet Zone” must be submitted to the FRA for further investigation. This process can be quite lengthy and must propose an engineered solution (e.g., grade separation, flashing lights and crossing gates, etc.). Given the layout of roads and tracks, and other site constraints, a quiet zone is not practical.

3.7 Transportation

3.7.1 Vehicular Traffic

Major roadways in the study area are the International Bridge, Highway 53, Highway 11, Highway 71, Highway 332 and a series of urban collector and local streets.

The International Bridge is a 1,000-foot long, two-span structure comprised of a concrete span used exclusively by passenger vehicles and buses and a metal span used by train, commercial vehicles, and bicycle and pedestrian traffic. The original western metal span was dedicated in 1908 while the eastern concrete span was completed in 1979. The structure is jointly owned by the Boise Inc. and Abitibi Consolidated paper companies. Overall average traffic volumes and truck volumes across the bridge have generally declined since the year 2000.

Highway 53 is the main north-south route into International Falls which connects directly with the existing LPOE and the International Bridge. Highway 53 enters the city on the south side and proceeds north as 2nd Avenue, until the intersection with 11th Street where Highway 53 transitions to 3rd Avenue. Highway 53 continues north along 3rd Avenue until it reaches 4th Street, where the roadway designation turns east for one block and north onto 2nd Avenue and proceeds to the LPOE. Highway 53 is designated as a principal arterial through the study area. Traffic volumes along Highway 53 entering the city (between 4th and 11th Streets) have been consistent over the past decade, however Highway 53 traffic volumes north of Highway 11 destined for the LPOE have been decreasing. Accordingly, commercial vehicle traffic volumes along Highway 53 have shown the same trend.

Highway 11 in the study area is an east-west route connecting International Falls with Rainier and other points east. Highway 11 is designated as a minor arterial between Highway 53 and Highway 332, and as a rural major collector to the east of Highway 332. Overall average annual daily traffic (AADT) and commercial vehicle AADT volumes have been steadily

increasing along Highway 11 east of International Falls over the past decade (exhibit 3.11).

Exhibit 3.11 – Average Annual Daily Traffic Volumes

<i>Roadway Segment</i>	<i>2000 AADT</i>	<i>2002 AADT</i>	<i>2004 AADT</i>	<i>2008 AADT</i>	<i>% change in AADT 2000-2008</i>
International Bridge	3,900	3,250	3,150	3,450	- 11.5%
Highway 53 (2 nd Avenue) north of Highway 11	5,600	4,350	3,900	4,500	- 19.6%
Highway 53 (3 rd Avenue) between 4 th Street and 11 th Street	8,500	9,100	10,100	8,600	+ 1.2%
Highway 11 east of 2 nd Avenue	4,800	5,200	5,600	5,400	+ 12.5%
Highway 71 (3 rd Street) between 2 nd Avenue and 3 rd Avenue	2,450	2,650	2,650	2,950	+ 20.4%
Highway 71 (3 rd Street) @ 5 th Avenue	6,400	7,500	5,800	6,200	- 3.1%
4 th Street between 2 nd Avenue and 3 rd Avenue	9,000	8,500	5,100	5,200	- 42.2%
3 rd Avenue between 3 rd Street and 4 th Street	5,700	5,100	4,900	4,700	- 17.5%
Highway 332 between Highway 11 and 13 th Street	2,850	2,350	2,500	2,200	- 22.8%

Source: MnDOT, Office of Transportation Data & Analysis, 2009
Note: No highway traffic counts were taken in the year 2006.

Highway 71 is an important east-west principal arterial route on the western side of the city which generally parallels the Rainy River and follows 3rd Street into downtown International Falls. Overall AADT volumes are generally increasing between 2nd and 3rd Avenues in the vicinity of the LPOE, while decreasing along Highway 71 to the west. Commercial vehicle traffic volumes have seen the reverse pattern, with volumes increasing in the western portion of the city and decreasing in the vicinity of the LPOE.

Highway 332 is a north-south road designated as a local street but serving an important function as a major truck route between Boise Inc. industrial facilities east of the LPOE. This is evident in the growth in heavy commercial AADT (HCAADT) between 2000 and 2008 of almost 62 percent (exhibit 3.12).

Other locally important streets in the study area are 3rd Avenue, 2nd Street and 4th Street, providing access to commercial and personal service enterprises south and west of the Boise Inc. facilities and the LPOE.

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Exhibit 3.12 – Heavy Commercial Annual Average Daily Traffic Volumes

<i>Roadway Segment</i>	<i>2000 HCAADT</i>	<i>2002 HCAADT</i>	<i>2004 HCAADT</i>	<i>2008 HCAADT</i>	<i>% change in HCAADT 2000-2008</i>
International Bridge	210	100	90	100	- 52.4%
Highway 53 (2 nd Avenue) north of Highway 11	310	160	160	135	- 56.4%
Highway 53 (3 rd Avenue) between 4 th Street and 11 th Street	300	680	980	500	+ 66.6%
Highway 11 east of 2 nd Avenue	160	140	190	180	+ 12.5%
Highway 71 (3 rd Street) between 2 nd Avenue and 3 rd Avenue	170	190	170	120	- 29.4%
Highway 71 (3 rd Street) @ 5 th Avenue	190	470	450	250	+ 31.6%
4 th Street between 2 nd Avenue and 3 rd Avenue	210	340	150	160	- 23.8%
3 rd Avenue between 3 rd Street and 4 th Street	230	440	520	274	+ 19.1%
Highway 332 between Highway 11 and 13 th Street	340	430	520	550	+ 61.8%

Source: MnDOT, Office of Transportation Data & Analysis, 2009

Note: No highway traffic counts were taken in the year 2006. Heavy commercial traffic = all vehicles with at least two axles and at least six tires.

3.7.2 Railroads

The MD&W Railway serves the papermaking industry between International Falls and Fort Frances by providing rail service between the Boise Inc. and Abitibi Consolidated paper mills across the International Bridge. The railway switches pulpwood, chemicals and other raw materials used in the papermaking process and removes finished paper products for interchange to other distribution railroads. The railway consists of four route miles of track and four locomotives, with a car and locomotive shop in International Falls. In 2005, the railway handled approximately 11,800 carloads of materials (Minnesota Regional Railroads Association, 2006).

3.7.3 Transit

Available transit services in International Falls include local private taxi service through City Cab and on-demand public transit service via Arrowhead Transit, a service managed by the Arrowhead Economic Opportu-

nity Agency covering seven counties in northeastern Minnesota including Koochiching (Mn/DOT, Office of Transit, 2008).

3.7.4 Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation

Sidewalks to accommodate pedestrian travel in the study area are generally found in the developed portion of International Falls to the south and west of the existing LPOE. Dedicated sidewalks are provided approaching and departing from the LPOE which connect with 2nd Avenue. Bicyclists typically use local streets and the Rainy Lake Bicycle Trail, a dedicated 11-mile path between International Falls and Rainer, for travel within the study area.

3.8 Land Use

The study area is in the urban center of International Falls. The study area contains a mix of industrial, commercial, residential, government land, forested land, shrubs, open water, and barren land (exhibit 3.13). Urban development is the dominant land use in the study area, encompassing approximately 67 acres (35 percent). Approximately 40 acres (21 percent) is barren land, 34 acres (18 percent) is open water (the Rainy River), and 51 acres (26 percent) is forested land and shrubs. The majority of the forested land and shrubs is to the south of Highway 11.

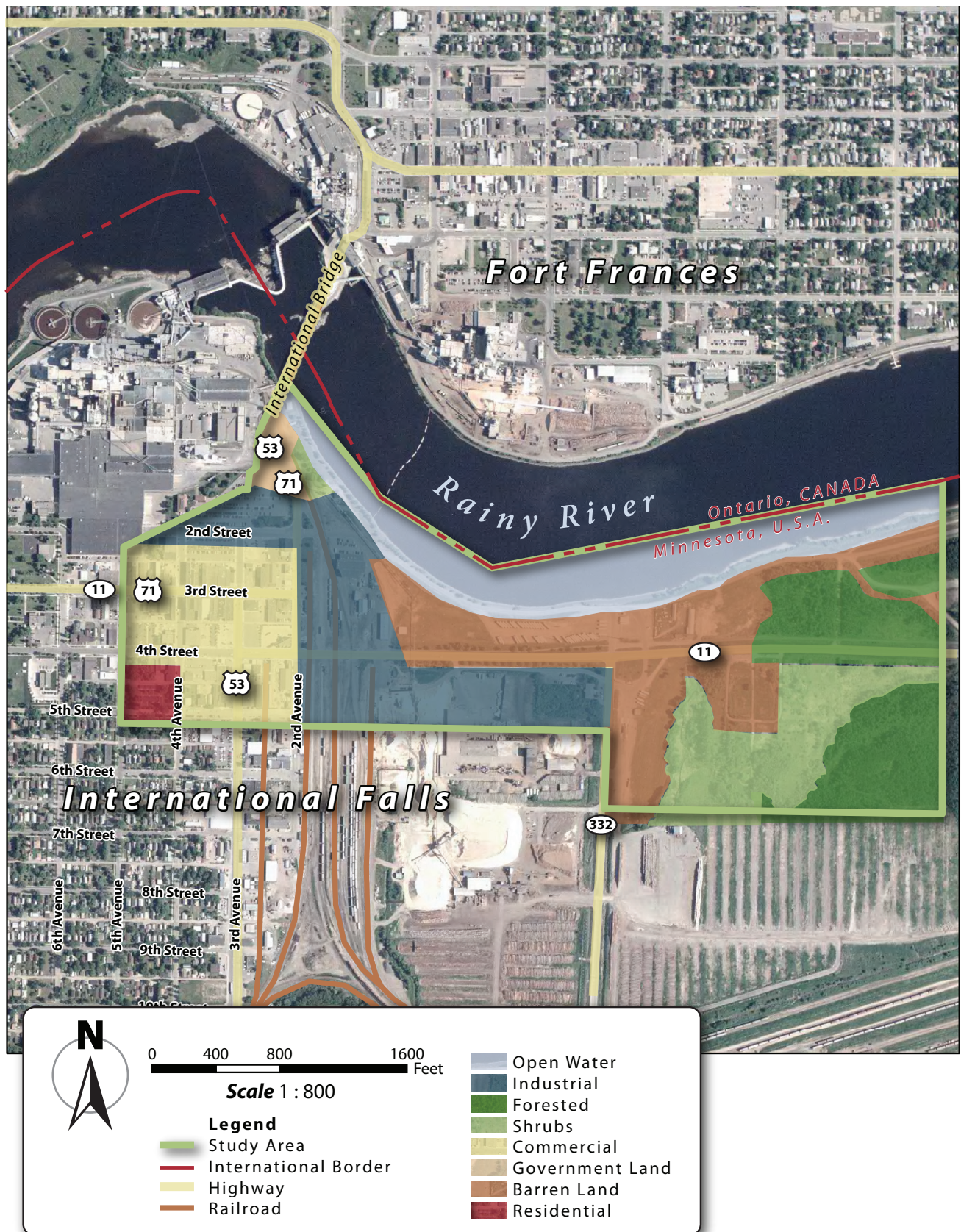
The land use adjacent to the LPOE is industrial. The Boise Inc. pulp and paper mill is the owner of the property surrounding the LPOE. The primary plant facilities are located to the west with parking lots to the south. A railcar switching station is located approximately 1,000 feet to the southeast, with an ancillary pulpwood processing facility located another 1,000 feet to the southeast, along Highway 11.

Other adjacent properties consist of the International Falls Convention and Visitor's Bureau, located at 301 Second Avenue directly across the street from the Chamber of Commerce. There is a lot used by Boise Inc. for commercial trailer storage between the Rainy River and Highway 11 East, approximately 0.4 mile to the southeast from the LPOE. East of this lot is undeveloped open grass and scattered trees and shrubs.

The utilities in the study area consist of electric, telephone, sewer, and water.

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Exhibit 3.13 – Land Use



Lighting in the study area consists of small street lamps located along Route 11 and from nearby commercial and industrial facilities. Boise Inc. produces the largest amount of light in the study area.

The visual environment of the study area consists predominantly of industrial facilities, commercial facilities, the Rainy River, and open space with minimum vegetation.

The study area is zoned for manufacturing uses, and commercial uses, except for the land bordering the Rainy River, which is zoned as a resource protection zone governed by International Falls' shoreland management overlay district section found in the city's zoning ordinance. Shorelands of International Falls are designated as a shoreland overlay district, which is aimed to protect environmental resources or safeguard natural hazard areas. Additional land use restrictions apply in these areas. The purpose of the manufacturing zones is to create industrial areas to accommodate a wide variety of industry which may operate to their maximum advantage. The purpose of the commercial zone is to establish suitable areas within the city for the location and/or expansion of businesses providing retail goods and services to the traveling public. Uses would be primarily highway oriented, or be clustered shopping areas, all with a means of safe ingress and egress to abutting highways (International Falls Code of Ordinances, Chapter 11, Section 25, 2008).

3.9 Community Characteristics and Resources

3.9.1 Population and Demographics

Koochiching County is predominantly rural, accounting for less than one percent of the state's population (13,251 of 5,220,393 persons) but approximately 3.6 percent of the state's total land area (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). The city of International Falls is the largest city (6,283 persons) in Koochiching County, with almost half of the county's population (exhibit 3.14).

There are approximately 1,045 persons residing within one mile of the study area (EDR, 2009b).

From 1970 through 2008, the population of International Falls decreased by approximately 2.4 percent, while Koochiching County's overall population had a decrease of approximately 20.1 percent. In contrast, the population of Minnesota grew by approximately 37.2 percent over the same time period.

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Exhibit 3.14 – Population and Percent Change

Population	1970	1980	1990	2000	2008 Estimate
International Falls	6,439	5,611	8,325	6,703	6,283
Koochiching County	17,131	17,571	16,299	14,355	13,251
Minnesota	3,806,103	4,075,970	4,375,099	4,919,479	5,220,393
Population Change	1970-1980	1980-1990	1990-2000	2000-2008	1970-2008
International Falls	-12.9%	48.4%	-19.5%	-6.3%	-2.4%
Koochiching County	2.6%	-7.2%	-11.9%	-4.6%	-20.1%
Minnesota	7.1%	7.3%	12.4%	6.1%	37.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; Minnesota State Demographic Center, 2007a, 2007b

The population of International Falls and Koochiching County is projected to continue declining through 2035, while Minnesota’s population is expected to increase (exhibit 3.15) (Minnesota State Demographic Center, 2007a, 2007b).

Approximately 52 percent of International Falls’ population is female. In Koochiching County and the state, the populations are approximately 50 percent female (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

The age distribution of a population is a key factor which can affect population growth and the type of services required for residents. The median age of International Falls residents and Koochiching County residents is 40.5 years, and 41.5, which are substantially older than the state (35.4 years), and the nation (36.4 years) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

Exhibit 3.15 – Population Projections

Population	2008 Estimate	2015 Projection	2020 Projection	2025 Projection	2030 Projection	2035 Projection
International Falls	6,283	6,100	5,941	5,807	5,567	5,396
Koochiching County	13,690	13,520	13,400	13,330	13,150	12,980
Minnesota	5,220,393	5,709,700	5,943,240	6,135,060	6,297,950	6,446,270
Percent Change	2008-2015	2015-2020	2020-2025	2025-2030	2030-2035	2008-2035
International Falls	-2.9%	-2.6%	-2.3%	-4.1%	-3.1%	-14.1%
Koochiching County	-1.2%	-0.9%	-0.5%	-1.4%	-1.3%	-5.2%
Minnesota	9.4%	4.1%	3.2%	2.7%	2.4%	23.5%

Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center, 2007a, 2007b

3.9.2 Community Characteristics and Conditions

The statewide levels of educational attainment are higher than the attainment levels in Koochiching County and International Falls. The percentages of people who have completed high school or the equivalent are the same for International Falls and Koochiching County, but both lag behind the state level. The percentages of persons who have earned college or graduate de-

grees are substantially lower in International Falls and Koochiching County than in the state (exhibit 3.16).

International Falls’ per capita incomes was approximately 46 percent below the state average in 2008 (exhibit 3.17). However, International Falls’ residents are only approximately 8.5 percent below Koochiching County. Median household incomes in International Falls are substantially lower at approximately 20 percent below Koochiching County’s level 37 percent below Minnesota’s level (exhibit 3.17).

Exhibit 3.16 – Educational Attainment by Percentage of Population, 2000

	<i>High School Diploma/ Equivalency</i>	<i>Bachelor/Associate Degree</i>	<i>Graduate/Professional Degree</i>
International Falls	81.9%	13.1%	5.3%
Koochiching County	81.9%	15.1%	5.0%
Minnesota	87.9%	27.4%	8.3%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Exhibit 3.17 – Income Levels

	<i>Per Capita Income</i>	<i>Median Household Income</i>
International Falls (2008)	\$22,005	\$34,600
Koochiching County (2008)	\$24,041	\$43,167
Minnesota (2007)	\$41,034	\$55,664

Source: Northland Connection, 2009; Minnesota State Demographic Center, 2008; USDA, 2009

In 2000, International Falls contained a total of approximately 3,264 housing units, of which 90.7 percent were occupied (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Koochiching County had a total of 7,719 housing units, of which only 78.2 percent were occupied. The total housing units that are occupied for 2008 are 2,699 for International Falls, 5,866 for Koochiching County, and 2,141,830 for Minnesota (Northland Connection, 2009).

Single family homes are the dominant housing type in International Falls, Koochiching County, and Minnesota, followed by mobile homes, in which International Falls and Koochiching County have a higher percentage than Minnesota (exhibit 3.18) (U.S. Census, 2000).

Median owner-occupied home values in International Falls (\$57,200) are lower than median home values in Koochiching County (\$65,400) and substantially lower than Minnesota (\$122,400). The median housing prices for 2008 increased in International Falls (\$62,500), Koochiching County (\$69,900), and Minnesota (\$190,000) (U.S. Census, 2000; Minnesota State Demographic Center, 2009; Northland Connection, 2009).

Exhibit 3.18 – Housing Units by Structure Types, 2000

	<i>International Falls</i>	<i>Koochiching County</i>	<i>Minnesota</i>
1 Unit Detached	68.3%	76.3%	67.8%
1 Unit Attached	1.3%	0.9%	5.2%
2 Units	3.5%	2.1%	3.0%
3 or 4 Units	4.2%	2.1%	2.3%
5 to 9 Units	3.5%	1.7%	2.4%
10 to 19 Units	2.6%	1.6%	3.8%
20 or More Units	7.5%	3.5%	10.7%
Mobile Home	9.1%	11.8%	4.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

3.9.3 Community Facilities and Services

There are no community facilities in the study area.

The International Falls School District consists of three schools that serve approximately 1,350 students in grades pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. Falls High School contains grades seven through 12, Falls Elementary School contains grades three through six, and West End Elementary School is located in the west wing of Falls High School with students in grades first through second. The District's preschool programs for both regular and special education are in the Falls High School building (International Falls School District, 2009). St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is a private school housing approximately 100 students, grades pre-kindergarten through eighth. The Rainy River Community College is in International Falls and serves approximately 400 students.

The International Falls Fire Department has 28 firefighters, with five full-time firemen and 23 volunteers. The department serves International Falls, Ranier, and the outlying areas. An ambulance service is housed in the Municipal Building. The police department serves approximately 6,500 residents, but that number increases dramatically during the summer months due to tourism, increased international commerce through the LPOE, and returning residents who winter in warmer climates. The International Falls Police Department has nine full-time personnel, including a Chief of Police, Administrative Assistant, four Shift Commanders (Sergeants), and six patrol officers. Twelve fully licensed part-time officers supplement the ranks (City of International Falls, 2009).

The International Falls Department of Public Works contain an engineering department, zoning department, wetlands department, street department, water and sewer department, all at the Municipal Building, and a

water treatment plant, located on Highway 11 (City of International Falls, 2009).

Falls Memorial Hospital offers diagnostic and therapeutic services, rehabilitation services, urgent care and a physician-staffed emergency room 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The International Falls Clinic is part of the St. Mary's Duluth Clinic Health System offering one of the most specialized and comprehensive healthcare systems in Minnesota (International Falls Chamber of Commerce, 2009).

3.9.4 Parks and Recreation Facilities

Parks in the study area consist of the International Falls-owned Burlington Park which is located adjacent to the former Northern Pacific railroad depot, approximately 1,000 feet south of the LPOE. It consists of small brick and landscaped area with picnic tables, and has six poles topped with flags representing the related interests between the U.S. and Canada. The Pat Roche Memorial Boat Landing is located along Highway 11 East and Pat Roche Drive on the Rainy River. It consists of asphalt and concrete plank boat launch, fishing pier, picnic shelter and parking lot. The boat landing is also a sea plane dock and CBP port (City of International Falls, 2009).

The Rainy Lake Bike Trail begins at the International Falls Convention Center and Visitor's Bureau parking lot at the corner of Second and Third Streets. The 11-mile long paved bike trail follows Highway 11 through residential and industrial areas for two miles before coming to the village of Rainier, where it continues on through more rural areas to the Thunderbird Lodge at Voyageur's National Park (RainyLake.org, 2009).

3.9.5 Employment and Industry Trends

More than half of the residents 16 years and older in International Falls, Koochiching County and Minnesota were in the labor force in 2000. International Falls had a total labor force of approximately 3,101 persons or 57.6 percent of persons 16 years and older, and Koochiching County and Minnesota had a substantially higher labor force of approximately 60.5 and 71.2 percent. However, according to the Minnesota State Demographic Center, the number of residents in the labor force 16 years and older is decreasing for the state and Koochiching County. The estimates for 2008 for Minnesota and Koochiching County are 58 percent and 70 percent. This is likely evident in International Falls.

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In 2000, the unemployment rate in International Falls was 4.2 percent. This rate was higher than Koochiching County (3.4 percent) and the state (2.1 percent) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000) According to the State Department of Employment and Economic Development, the unemployment rates for June 2009 in Koochiching County are 9.9 percent and 8.4 percent for the state of Minnesota. This increase in unemployment rates is likely evident in International Falls.

The majority of residents in the labor force in International Falls are employed in educational services and healthcare, retail trade, manufacturing, and arts/entertainment (exhibit 3.19). However, most of the residents in Koochiching County work in the manufacturing industry and educational services and healthcare. Additionally, most of Minnesota's residents work in educational services and healthcare and manufacturing.

The leading employer in International Falls is Boise Inc., located directly to the west of the LPOE. Boise Inc. employs approximately 830 residents. Other major employers are the International Falls Public Schools, United Healthcare, and Rainy Lake Medical Center (Northland Connection, 2009).

Koochiching County was granted a General Purpose Trade Zone by the Foreign Trade Zones Board in November of 2003. Foreign-Trade Zones (FTZs) were created in the U.S. to provide special customs procedures to

Exhibit 3.19 – Employment by Industry, 2008

	<i>International Falls</i>	<i>Koochiching County</i>	<i>Minnesota</i>
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing/Hunting/Mining	5%	4%	2%
Construction	7%	6%	7%
Manufacturing	10%	23%	14%
Wholesale Trade	3%	1%	4%
Retail Trade	12%	13%	12%
Transportation and Warehousing/Utilities	7%	5%	5%
Information	2%	2%	2%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	5%	6%	8%
Professional/Scientific/Technical	3%	2%	9%
Management of Companies/Enterprises	0%	0%	NA
Administrative and Support/Waste Management Services	2%	1%	NA
Educational Services and Healthcare	25%	20%	23%
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation/Food Services	10%	7%	8%
Public Administration	5%	5%	4%
Other Services	5%	4%	3%

Source: U.S. Census, 2009; Northland Connection, 2009

Note: Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding

U.S. firms engaged in international trade-related activities. These procedures were aimed to offset customs advantages available to overseas producers who compete with domestic industry. Businesses locating in an FTZ can take advantage of a number of financial and timesaving benefits including duty deferral, duty reduction, and streamlined distribution. There are 256 General-Purpose Zones and 538 Subzones in the U.S. - 3 General-Purpose Zones in Minnesota (KEDA, 2009a).

The LPOE into the U.S. for the Canadian National rail from the Vancouver to Chicago route is Ranier, Minnesota - three miles east of International Falls. Based on this increased rail traffic and the shift in the type of cargo and the country of origin, the Koochiching Economic Development Authority (KEDA) has positioned itself for this opportunity by creating a FTZ and a 90-acre business park immediately south of Ranier adjacent to the Canadian National main line. The KEDA developed a site plan that accommodates warehousing opportunities for companies that use the FTZ and the central location of International Falls to support distribution and logistics operations.

The General Purpose Zone is a federal designation and encompasses over 700 acres in three locations - 1 acre at the International Falls-Koochiching County Airport; 700 acres 3 miles east of International Falls in the KEDA Business Park; and 8 acres of the International Falls Business Park at 22nd Street and Highway 53 in International Falls. Forty-eight acres of the FTZ - part of the acreage east of International Falls and including the entire International Falls Business Park - are also designated as Job Opportunity Business Zones (JOBZ), providing a unique opportunity to take advantage of both programs.

The JOBZ program is a state program created in 2004 to stimulate development in rural areas by establishing zones where qualified businesses can locate and be exempt from paying specific local and state taxes for a period of 12 years. Koochiching County was granted four JOBZ Subzones totaling 128 acres, 40 acres of which are in the KEDA Business Park three miles east of International Falls, and eight acres of the International Falls Business Park. The JOBZ Program provides a number of tax benefits to qualified businesses including state and local sales and use taxes, property taxes, motor vehicle sales taxes, corporate taxes, as well as job credits (KEDA, 2009b).

3.10 Cultural Resources

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) ensures that federal agencies consider cultural resources, defined as any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure or object eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, in their proposed programs, projects, and actions prior to initiation.

Section 106 of the NHPA of 1966, as amended, requires that federal actions be reviewed for their impact on potentially significant historic resources. The term historic includes architectural and archeological resources. A significant historic resource is one that is either listed or determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Section 110 of NHPA outlines the review criteria for historic properties determined to be National Historic Landmarks – an elevated designation that indicates the property is of national importance – and that may be adversely affected by a federal action.

3.10.1 Native American Resources

There are no Indian Tribal Nations near the study area or in International Falls (Indian Affairs Council, 2009).

3.10.2 Historic Resources

The viewshed of the study area consists of a mix of industrial, commercial, residential, government land, forested land, shrubs, open water, and barren land (section 3.8).

There are no sites within the study area listed on the NRHP (NPS, 2009).

One structure in International Falls has been determined eligible for the NRHP. The Minnesota & Ontario Paper Company Office, also known as the Boise Cascade Paper Group Engineering East, at 2nd Street and 4th Avenue was nominated to the NRHP in 1982 but was not listed due to owner opposition. The entire Boise Inc. paper mill complex to the north and east along the Rainy River was determined to be not eligible for inclusion on the NRHP due to loss of integrity as a result of extensive expansion and changes during the period of eligibility (Kellner, April 2011).

The Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred that no other resources should be considered potentially eligible for listing on the NRHP (MN SHPO, May 2011).

3.10.3 Archaeological Resources

Based on a review of the Minnesota SHPO archaeological database, no known archaeological resources are known to exist within the boundaries of the alternatives. Coordination with the Minnesota SHPO archaeology staff confirmed that no known archeological resources are present within the area of the alternatives and that the potential for intact resources in the study area is questionable due to the history of extensive development in International Falls.

Previous site surveys of the area in the vicinity of the alternatives were conducted to determine the potential for intact archaeological resources. These surveys were completed for the proposed construction of a CBP Border Patrol office facility (exhibit 2.1).

In July of 2007, a Phase I archaeological survey was conducted within the eastern-most portion of the study area. The Phase I work at this site included shovel testing and a walkover survey. It was noted that the western portion of this parcel was the site of the former Boise Ready Mix cement plant and had been extensively disturbed, including substantial grading and the removal of top soil and replacement with gravel. Shovel tests were focused on the less disturbed areas to the east; however no pre-Contact, Contact, or post-Contact resources were recovered. The overall result of the Phase I work at this site concluded that, based on the absence of evidence for archaeological resources and extensive disturbance, that a finding of No Historic Properties Affected was recommended (Mulholland, July 2007).

An additional Phase I survey was completed in September of 2007 for a site to the east of the area surveyed in July of 2007. This work consisted of a walkover survey of the site. Results of the survey indicated evidence of extensive disturbance from trenching, road and railroad construction, and leveling and filling of land for a log landing site. Based on the absence of indications of pre-Contact and Contact archaeological sites and the lack of intact structural remnants, a No Historic Properties Affected determination was recommended (Mulholland, September 2007).

In August of 2009, the Minnesota SHPO concurred with the findings of No Historic Properties Affected associated with the CBP Border Patrol office complex (SHPO, 2009).

A literature search for the study area was performed to determine if recorded archaeological sites were present in the study area and the probability that any unknown sites may be present in the Area of Potential Effect

(APE). No known archaeological sites were identified in the study area. The literature search concluded that a moderate to strong probability existed for the presence of intact archaeological resources along the Rainy River and field testing should be performed to determine if unknown sites may be present in the APE (Mulholland and Mulholland, April 2010). The Minnesota SHPO concurred with this conclusion (MN SHPO, July 2010).

Prior to performing the field testing to determine if previously unknown sites may be present in the APE, a landowner denied permission to test their property. The GSA coordinated with the SHPOs office and the SHPO concluded that the archaeological survey could be postponed until the GSA purchased the site of the preferred alternative. According to the SHPO, postponing the archaeological survey would not foreclose design alternatives and provided flexibility to move site improvements to avoid or minimize effects to potential archaeological sites (MN SHPO, November 2010).

3.11 Uncontrolled Petroleum and Hazardous Substances

A database search for locations identified as hazardous substance sites in the study area was conducted. There are no sites on the National Priority List (NPL), or the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Contamination and Liability Information System (CERCLIS) list (EDR, 2009). In addition, there are no sites on the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) CORRACTS or non-CORRACTS list (EDR, 2009).

According to the MPCA Leak Site Database, 13 storage tank leaks have occurred in the study area and seven have occurred adjacent to the study area (exhibit 3.20) (MPCA, 2010).

3.12 Minority and Disadvantaged Populations

Environmental Justice is defined by the EPA's Office of Environmental Justice as "...the fair and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. Fair treatment means that no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group should bear a disproportionate share of the negative consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commer-

Exhibit 3.20 – Hazardous Substances

<i>Storage Tanks Leak Sites in the Study Area</i>			
<i>Leak No.</i>	<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Status</i>
423	JET #23312	301 4th St. & Hwy 53	Closed October 1, 1992
2114	Rex Service Station	4th St. & Hwy. 53	Closed July 29, 1993
2618	Utility Development	Hwy 11 E.	Closed September 24, 1991
3026	Winery	3rd St. & 3rd Ave.	Closed October 17, 1996
4538	Butch's Amoco	401 3rd Ave.	Closed September 27, 1996
7571	Former People's Plus	Hwys. 11 & 71	Closed May 6, 1999
8829	Falls Redi Mix	Hwy 11 E.	Closed September 29, 2006
8914	Former Conoco #23312	301 4th St.	Closed July 15, 1996
10696	Northern National Bank	419 3rd St.	Closed October 6, 1997
10730	AMMEX Tax and Duty Free	226 1/2 2nd Ave.	Closed July 23, 1998
12064	Northstar Publishing Company	500 3rd St. E.	Closed October 9, 2000
14220	Salvation Army Thrift Store	413 4th Ave.	Closed December 9, 2002
15432	Duty Free America	226 2nd Ave.	Closed March 29, 2007
<i>Storage Tanks Leak Sites Adjacent to the Study Area</i>			
<i>Leak No.</i>	<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Status</i>
4103	Grays Amoco Service	520 3rd St.	Closed May 23, 1996
9143	Intersavings Bank	519 3rd Ave.	Closed March 17, 1997
9332	Boise Cascade Woodchipper Hoist	Hwy 11 E.	Closed July 9, 1996
10869	Grays Amoco Service	520 3rd St.	Closed December 4, 1997
12841	Bulk Plant	516 2nd Ave.	Closed December 16, 2002
3218	Gateway Trading Post	Hwy 11 E.	Closed June 15, 2000
2117	Mn Dept. of Transportation	516 2nd Ave.	Closed July 9, 1997

cial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies.”

Racially, International Falls is not diverse; approximately four percent of the population consisted of minority persons in 2000. Minorities comprise the following approximate percentages of population: Black or African American, 0.3 percent; American Indian or Alaska Native, 2.6 percent; Asian, 0.2 percent; Native Hawaiian, 0.1 percent; Other Race, 0.1 percent; and Two or More Races, 1.5 percent. In addition, a total of 1.5 percent of the population defined themselves as belonging to two or more races (U.S. Census Bureau 2000).

The number of residents living below the poverty level in International Falls (14.5 percent) was higher than the county average (12.1 percent) and significantly higher than the state average (7.9 percent) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

EO 13045 (Protection of Children) requires each federal agency to identify and assess environmental health risks and safety risks that may disproportionately affect children, and ensure that its policies, programs, activities, and standards address disproportionate risks to children that result from environmental health risks or safety risks. Approximately 4.5 percent of the population in International Falls is five years old or less and 24 percent are younger than 18 years (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Potential issues for protection of children arise when an action is near residential areas or schools. There are no schools or residential areas in the study area.

EO 13166 (Limited English Proficiency) (LEP) requires federal agencies to ensure that they take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access for LEP individuals. In 2000, the percentage of people in International Falls who speak a language at home other than English was approximately three percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

Chapter 4

Environmental Consequences

This section identifies the potential environmental consequences associated with the no-build alternative and construction and operation of the build and preferred alternatives for satisfying the purpose and needs of the proposed action. The potential impacts — both beneficial and adverse — are identified, and where possible, quantified through studies of the natural, social, and economic environments. Potential impacts consist of direct impacts, indirect or secondary impacts (i.e., impacts occurring later in time or physically removed from the direct impacts), and cumulative impacts (the impact when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions) of the no-build, build, and preferred alternatives.

4.1 Physical Geography and Geology

4.1.1 Physical Geography

The no-build, build, and preferred alternatives would not substantially alter the physical geography of the study area. No major grading or change in the profile or elevation of land within the study area would occur from the construction and operation of the build and preferred alternatives.

4.1.2 Geology

The no-build, build, and preferred alternatives would not impact the geology of the study area. No engineering constraints to construction are posed by the bedrock geology.

4.2 Water Resources

4.2.1 Surface Waters

The no-build alternative would not impact surface waters.

The build and preferred alternatives would not result in discernable impacts to the quality of surface waters in the study area. The Rainy River currently meets Minnesota water quality standards and implementation of a build or the preferred alternative would not result in a change in the water quality designation of the river.

Chapter 4 is a discussion of consequences and potential mitigation measures resulting from the alternatives retained for detailed study. It describes the impacts of the alternatives; the adverse effects that cannot be avoided if implemented; the relationship between short-term uses of the human environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity; and any irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources that would result if an alternative is implemented (40 CFR part 1502.16)

Alternatives 7, 9, and the preferred alternative may result in a direct impact to the Rainy River through the construction of piers supporting the access road, at its closest point, to the river. If required, the piers would be located along the bank of the Rainy River and may directly impact approximately 0.1 acre of the river. The specific characteristics and locations of piers along the Rainy River, if required, would be developed during final design of the preferred alternative.

The preferred alternative would impact less than 0.1 acre of First Creek from the construction of the road from the replacement truck storage lot to Highway 11.

During final design of the preferred alternative, the GSA would further analyze opportunities to protect and restore the natural shoreline of the Rainy River.

If Alternatives 7, 9, or the preferred alternative would result in a direct impact to the Rainy River or First Creek, a permit or approval would be required from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the MDNR.

The USACE provides oversight and regulates activities in the nation's waters. In accordance with Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, a USACE permit is required for work in, over or under a Navigable Water of the U.S. Water bodies have been designated as Navigable Waters of the U.S. based on their past, present, or potential use for transportation for interstate commerce.

The USACE regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S., including wetlands, in accordance with the CWA. Section 404 of the CWA requires a permit from the USACE for the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S., unless the activity is exempt from Section 404 regulation (e.g., certain farming and forestry activities). Under Section 404, no discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. may be permitted if: (1) a practicable alternative exists that is less damaging to the aquatic environment or (2) the nation's waters would be significantly degraded. To apply for a permit, the applicant must show that the project has, to the extent practicable:

- taken steps to avoid wetland impacts
- minimized potential impacts on wetlands
- provided compensation for remaining unavoidable impacts

The MDNR provides oversight and regulates activities in the nation's waters, at the state level.

If Alternatives 7, 9, or the preferred alternative would result in a direct impact to the Rainy River or First Creek, the GSA would submit the Minnesota Local/State/Federal Application Form for Water/Wetland Projects to the Local Government Unit, the MDNR, and the USACE in accordance with the Minnesota Wetlands Conservation Act, Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, and Section 404 of the CWA.

A Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the MPCA may be required depending on the type of permit issued by the USACE for impacts to Waters of the U.S.

A NPDES / SDS Construction Stormwater Permit is required from the MPCA for disturbance of one acre or more of land.

The GSA would fully develop the stormwater management facilities for the preferred alternative during final design. During final design of the preferred alternative, the GSA would consider the sequential order of buildings and functions and circulation of traffic within the LPOE and the opportunities to maintain and restore pre-development hydrology.

The build and preferred alternatives would be developed in compliance with Section 438 of the EISA of 2007. During final design of the preferred alternative, the GSA would further analyze opportunities to maintain and restore pre-development hydrology. Additionally, the GSA would consider green infrastructure and low impact development practices such as reducing impervious surfaces, using vegetated swales and revegetation, protection and restoration of the riparian shoreline of Rainy River, and using porous pavements.

The GSA would develop a spill prevention, control, and countermeasures plan for the preferred alternative during final design.

4.2.2 Groundwater

The no-build, build, and preferred alternatives would not impact groundwater. Public water service for the LPOE improvements would be provided by the City of International Falls, which derives its municipal supply from the Rainy River; no additional groundwater withdrawals would occur with implementation of the proposed action.

4.2.3 Floodplains

EO 11988, Floodplain Management, directs federal agencies to avoid, to the extent possible, long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains, and to avoid direct and indirect support of floodplain development whenever there is a practicable alternative. In addition, the GSA's Order ADM 1095.6, Consideration of Floodplains in Decision Making, also prohibits construction within the floodplain unless there is no practicable alternative.

In accordance with EO 11988, impacts on floodplains and floodplain encroachments were considered for the no-build and build alternatives. Encroachments are considered significant under EO 11988 if at least one of the following factors is applicable:

- it has a significant effect on natural and/or beneficial floodplain values
- it would increase the risk of flooding that could result in the loss of life or property
- it would significantly impact or otherwise disrupt vital services, facilities, or travel routes

The no-build alternative and Alternatives 5 and 8 would not impact floodplains.

Alternatives 7, 9, and the preferred alternative may result in a direct impact to the floodplain of the Rainy River through the construction of piers supporting the access road, at its closest point, to the river. If required, the piers would be located along the bank of the Rainy River and may directly impact approximately 0.1 acre of the floodplain of the river. The specific characteristics and locations of piers along the Rainy River, if required, would be developed during final design of the preferred alternative. The preferred alternative would impact less than 0.1 acre of floodplains of First Creek from the construction of the road from the replacement truck storage lot to Highway 11.

4.2.4 Wetlands

The CWA (33 U.S.C. 1344) is the primary federal law regulating wetlands and waters. The CWA regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S., including wetlands. Waters of the U.S. consist of navigable waters, interstate waters, territorial seas, and other waters that may be used in interstate or foreign commerce. Section 404 of the CWA establishes a

regulatory program that prohibits the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. if a practicable alternative exists that is less damaging to the aquatic environment or if the nation's waters would be significantly degraded.

EO 11990 also regulates the activities of federal agencies potentially impacting wetlands. Essentially, this EO states that a federal agency cannot undertake or provide assistance for new construction located in wetlands unless the head of the agency finds: 1) that there is no practicable alternative to the construction and 2) the proposed project includes all practicable measures to minimize harm.

The no-build alternative and Alternatives 5 and 8 would not impact wetlands.

Alternatives 7, 9, and the preferred alternative may result in a direct impact to the Rainy River through the construction of piers supporting the access road, at its closest point, to the river. If required, the piers would be located along the bank of the Rainy River and may directly impact approximately 0.1 acre of the river. The specific characteristics and locations of piers along the Rainy River, if required, would be developed during final design of the preferred alternative.

The preferred alternative would impact less than 0.1 acre of First Creek from the construction of the road from the replacement truck storage lot to Highway 11.

4.2.5 Wild and Scenic Rivers

The no-build, build, and preferred alternatives would not impact federal or state designated wild or scenic rivers.

4.3 Vegetation and Wildlife Habitat

The no-build alternative and Alternatives 5 and 8 would not impact vegetation or wildlife habitat in the study area.

Alternatives 7, 9, and the preferred alternative would impact barren land and areas of grass, some of which are mowed and maintained, between the Rainy River and south of Highway 11 and east of Highway 332. The preferred alternative would impact less than 0.1 acre of existing forest lands south of highway 11 from the construction of the road from the replacement truck storage lot to Highway 11.

Prior to the start of construction, the GSA would inspect the site of the preferred alternative for invasive plant species. If invasive plant species are present on the site of the preferred alternative, the GSA would develop and implement a plan to control the potential spreading of invasive plant species prior to the start of construction.

4.4 Threatened and Endangered Species

4.4.1 Federal Threatened and Endangered Species

The no-build, build, and preferred alternatives would not impact federal threatened or endangered species.

4.4.2 State Threatened and Endangered Species

The no-build alternative would not impact state threatened or endangered species.

Given that limited disturbance may actually create habitat for the Laurentian tiger beetle, the only threat to this species may be clearcutting large areas. As the build and preferred alternatives are in urban areas with sparse forest lands, the Laurentian tiger beetle would not likely be impacted.

4.5 Air Quality

The no-build alternative would continue to negatively impact air quality.

The build and preferred alternatives provide additional land area and queuing space for traffic than the existing LPOE. Overall, the build and preferred alternatives may result in a slight positive impact on air quality as the proposed action would increase inspections and throughput capacity, decrease queuing time for vehicles entering and exiting the U.S. thereby decreasing vehicle emissions.

Alternatives 5 and 8 are proposed adjacent to the existing LPOE and no discernable change in air quality would result for employees at the LPOE. Alternatives 7, 9, and the preferred alternative are approximately 1/2 mile east of the existing LPOE and the Boise Inc. stacks and may result in an improvement in air quality for the employees at the LPOE.

To further reduce idling emissions and promote energy conservation and efficiency during operation of the LPOE, the EPA's SmartWay program would be promoted through posting and distributing literature. The SmartWay program and brand identifies products and services that reduce transportation-related emissions. Providing literature to people at the LPOE

could result in an air quality and/or GHG emissions improvements and energy conservation and efficiency, while maintaining or improving current levels of other emissions and/or pollutants (EPA, 2009).

4.6 Noise

The no-build alternative would not impact existing noise levels in the study area.

Under Alternatives 5 and 8, noise levels would be the same as those experienced under the no-build alternative as the majority of LPOE operations and traffic would still be adjacent to the existing LPOE and industries.

Alternatives 7, 9, and the preferred alternative would not add to the existing noise levels in the study area, but would shift some noise from the LPOE operations further east along the Rainy River. This area to the east and south is an industrial area impacted by Boise Inc. and the MD&W Railway operations and does not contain any sensitive residential or commercial noise receptors. The area proposed for Alternatives 7, 9, and the preferred alternative, while still within city's industrial zone, is quieter than the existing LPOE, providing some improvement for inspection personnel assigned to the LPOE.

4.7 Transportation

4.7.1 Vehicle Traffic

The no-build alternative would not impact traffic. Overall traffic volumes in the study area have been generally declining over the past decade, with the exception of Highway 11 and Highway 71 which have seen a steady increase in traffic but still have generally low traffic volumes (see section 3.7.1). Future LPOE crossing projections show a continued decline in truck (-14 percent), passenger vehicles (-6.9 percent), and bus (-6.9 percent) traffic between 2010 and 2025 (see section 1.5.1).

Alternatives 5 and 8 would not change the existing traffic volumes and patterns from the existing conditions and these alternatives would not alleviate queuing of commercial and passenger vehicles over the International Bridge during peak travel times and would not reduce conflicts with the MD&W Railway.

With Alternatives 7 and 9, commercial and passenger vehicle traffic would enter and exit the LPOE from Highway 11 via a new signalized intersection. For Alternative 7, this intersection would be approximately 1,000 feet to the

east of Highway 332; for Alternative 9, this intersection would connect with existing Highway 332. Alternatives 7 and 9 would improve the transportation deficiencies associated with the existing LPOE by providing additional queuing space and removing vehicles from city streets; this includes removing passenger vehicles and buses from the CBD of International Falls. Alternatives 7 and 9 would result in a slight increase in commercial and passenger vehicle traffic along Highway 11 between the entrance/exit to the LPOE and Highway 53.

With the preferred alternative, passenger vehicles and buses would enter and exit the LPOE using the existing travel pattern along 2nd Avenue, while commercial vehicles would use a new entrance/exit along Highway 11 at Highway 332. The preferred alternative would provide all of the transportation advantages of Alternatives 7 and 9 without removing passenger vehicles and buses from the CBD of International Falls. The preferred alternative would also reduce the overall growth in travel demand along Highway 11 by limiting direct increases to only commercial vehicles. It also eliminates conflicts between commercial vehicle inspections and railway operations and reduces the conflicts involving passenger vehicles and bus traffic.

The GSA would consult and work with Mn/DOT, Koochiching County, and the City of International Falls on work impacting state and local roads during final design of the preferred alternative.

4.7.2 Railroads

The no-build alternative would not reduce or improve the conflicts between the MD&W Railway and other vehicles and inspection operations. The numbers of train crossings are expected to increase seven percent between 2010 and 2025.

Alternatives 5 and 8 would not provide substantial improvement in conflicts between railway operations and other vehicles and inspection activities, as they would essentially retain the existing travel patterns.

Alternatives 7 and 9 would allow for the complete separation of railway operations and LPOE activities.

The preferred alternative would eliminate railway and commercial vehicle conflicts and greatly reduce the number of conflicts for passenger vehicles and buses.

4.7.3 Transit

The no-build, build, and preferred alternatives would not impact transit service.

4.7.4 Pedestrians and Bicyclists

The no-build alternative and Alternatives 5 and 8 would not impact pedestrians and bicyclists as the existing travel patterns would be unchanged.

With Alternatives 7 and 9, pedestrians and bicyclists would enter and exit the LPOE from Highway 11 via a new signalized intersection. For Alternative 7, this intersection would be approximately 1,000 feet to the east of Highway 332; for Alternative 9, this intersection would connect with existing Highway 332. If traveling to or from the east, Alternatives 7 and 9 would likely remove pedestrians and bicyclists from the CBD of International Falls. If traveling to or from the west, Alternatives 7 and 9 would require pedestrian and bicyclists to travel an additional 4,000 and 6,000 feet, respectively, when compared to the no-build alternative.

With the preferred alternative, pedestrians and bicyclists would enter and exit the LPOE using the existing travel pattern along 2nd Avenue and would not remove them from the CBD of International Falls. As presently designed, the preferred alternative would require pedestrians and bicyclists to travel an additional 3,500 feet, within the LPOE, when compared to the no-build alternative. The GSA would further analyze opportunities to shorten the additional length of travel required for pedestrians during final design of the preferred alternative.

The preferred alternative would increase the commercial traffic crossing the Rainy Lake Bicycle Trail on the north side of Highway 11.

4.8 Land Use

The no-build alternative would not impact land use. The existing LPOE would continue operations at its existing location and no acquisition of additional property or expansion would occur.

The build and preferred alternatives would result in impacts to existing and future land uses through the acquisition of property and the conversion of a variety of existing land uses to government use.

Alternative 5 would require the acquisition and conversion of approximately four acres of a portion of a Boise Inc. owned parking lot to the north of 2nd Street to government use. The portion of this secured lot that would

need to be acquired provides parking for approximately 200 vehicles and employees. Converting this parking lot to government use would require relocating these parking spaces to another location in International Falls further to the south, west, or east of the Boise Inc. paper mill, impacting the ability of these employees to get to work. No vacant land suitable for a replacement parking lot exists in proximity to the Boise Inc. paper mill. One possible location for replacement parking would be property owned by Boise Inc. to the south and east of the paper mill along the Rainy River and used as a temporary storage lot for commercial vehicles. This location is approximately one-half mile from the paper mill. Depending upon the location of the replacement parking lot, a shuttle service between the parking lot and the paper mill may be required. It is likely that some employees would choose to park on the city streets in the CBD, impacting the ability of customers to patronize businesses.

Alternative 7 would require the acquisition and conversion of approximately 17 acres of property owned by Boise Inc. to the south and east of the paper mill along the Rainy River and used as a temporary storage lot for commercial vehicles. The portion of the study area owned by Boise Inc. along the Rainy River used as a temporary storage lot for commercial vehicles is not vital to Boise Inc. 's paper mill operations and they have indicated that they are willing to temporarily store the commercial vehicles to the nearby south across Highway 11.

Alternative 7 would impact the operations of Duty Free America. Employees of Duty Free America typically walk between the Duty Free America Store and Gas Station and the outbound pickup location approximately six times per day for meals and breaks; there are no restrooms in the outbound pickup location. To restock the outbound pickup location with purchases for travelers to Canada, employees of Duty Free America would be required to drive approximately one mile; the outbound pickup location is typically restocked about five times per week in the winter and 20 times per week in the summer (Swenson, 2010).

Alternative 8 would require the acquisition and conversion of approximately 6.5 acres of commercial use to government use and require the acquisition and displacement of four businesses: Border Bob's, the Duty Free America Store and Gas Station, Pet Parlor Grooming, and Borderland Insurance. Alternative 8 would require the acquisition and conversion of a portion of a Boise Inc. owned parking lot to the north of 2nd Street to govern-

ment use. The portion of this secured lot that would need to be acquired provides parking for approximately 100 vehicles and employees. Converting this parking lot to government use would require relocating these parking spaces to another location in International Falls further to the south, west, or east of the Boise Inc. paper mill, impacting the ability of these employees to get to work, similar to Alternative 5.

Two of these businesses – Border Bob’s merchandise and the Duty Free America Store and Gas Station – are dependent on passing traffic. It is likely that the Duty Free America Store and Gas Station and Border Bob’s Merchandise could be relocated in the immediate area, such as to the area to the south and east of the along the Rainy River used by Boise Inc. for the temporary storage for commercial vehicles; However, this area is further removed from the LPOE and would likely result in a loss of business to both. Pet Parlor Grooming and Borderland Insurance are not as dependent upon passing traffic for their source of customers and could be relocated in the immediate area.

Alternative 9 would require the acquisition and conversion of approximately 12 acres of industrial and commercial property to government use. Alternative 9 would result in the same impacts to Boise Inc. and the Duty Free America Store and Gas Station as Alternative 7. In addition to those impacts described in Alternative 7, Alternative 9 would require the relocation of a portion of the Boise Inc. overhead pneumatic chip line.

The preferred alternative would require the acquisition and conversion of approximately 15 acres of industrial property to government use. The preferred alternative would result in the same impacts to Boise Inc. and the Duty-Free America Store and Gas Station as Alternatives 7 and 9.

Property to be acquired by the GSA would be acquired pursuant to the procedures set forth in the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 as amended, 42 U.S.C. 4601 and the regulations for implementing the act contained in 49 CFR Part 24. Under the regulations, property owners have the right to a fair appraisal of their property and the right to be present during the appraisal. The GSA would offer, in writing, the fair market value for the property or portion of property to be acquired. The GSA cannot take action to force or coerce a property owner into taking its offer. When an agreement is reached, and the necessary paperwork completed, the GSA would pay the property owner for the property or portion of property acquired. The GSA would also pay inci-

dental expenses such as recording fees and transfer taxes, and other similar expenses necessary for the transaction.

Additionally, the GSA would assist property owners in relocation. The GSA would provide a relocation councilor to interview the property owner to determine the property owner's needs and estimate the time needed to move to a new location. The GSA would provide a notice of at least 90 days before the people using the property would need to move. The GSA would reimburse moving costs and some additional expenses.

The build and preferred alternatives would introduce new lighting to the study area. Lighting quality is an important consideration in the planning and design of LPOEs; insufficient lighting or glare can inhibit accurate assessment of vehicles and persons and cause fatigue. Lighting needs to be sufficient to allow accurate identification of vehicle color and passenger identification. The safety of inspection personnel is a concern especially during twilight or darkness. Lighting placement, fixtures, and levels for the preferred alternative would be designed in accordance with the requirements of the CBP to provide sufficient lighting to intended areas and reduce the amount of light to unintended areas. The details of the lighting plan would be developed by the GSA during final design of the preferred alternative.

The build and preferred alternatives would have an overall beneficial impact to the visual environment of the study area. The existing LPOE buildings would be replaced with new buildings. The architecture of the exterior build alternatives would be consistent with the study area and region. The architectural characteristics of the preferred alternative would be developed during final design.

Alternatives 7, 9, and the preferred alternative would result in a beneficial impact to the visual environment in the eastern portion of the study area between the Rainy River and Highway 11. The commercial vehicles temporarily stored on the property would be removed and, overall, a greater portion of the Rainy River may be visible from Highway 11.

The perimeter of the build and preferred alternatives would be fenced to provide for increased security of the inspection operations and safety of personnel assigned to the LPOE. The specific characteristics and appearance of the perimeter fencing would be developed during final design of the preferred alternative.

4.9 Community Characteristics and Resources

4.9.1 Population, Demographics, and Labor Force

The no-build, build, and preferred alternatives would not impact the population, demographics, or the labor force of the study area. The no-build, build, and preferred alternatives would not require substantial changes in staffing levels that would impact the area's population and demographics.

4.9.2 Community Characteristics and Conditions

The no-build, build, and preferred alternatives would not impact community characteristics and conditions.

4.9.3 Community Facilities and Services

The no-build alternative would not impact community facilities and services.

The build and preferred alternatives would result in a positive impact to community services. The build and preferred alternatives would substantially reduce traffic queues that extend across International Bridge, improving the ability of emergency services to respond in times of need.

4.9.4 Parks and Recreation Facilities

The no-build, build, and preferred alternatives would not impact parks and recreation facilities.

4.9.5 Employment and Industry Trends

The no-build, build, and preferred alternatives would not impact employment and industry trends.

Construction of the preferred alternative would result in a short-term stimulus of the area through the creation of direct and indirect employment and purchase of local goods and services. Direct employment consists of workers employed at the construction site, and indirect employment consists of offsite construction workers (e.g., administrative, clerical) and workers in construction supply industries (e.g., steel, cements products).

4.10 Cultural Resources

4.10.1 Native American Resources

The no-build, build, and preferred alternatives would not impact Native American Resources.

4.10.2 Historic Resources

The no-build alternative would have no effect on the Minnesota & Ontario Paper Company. The preferred alternative would have no adverse effect on the Minnesota & Ontario Paper Company Building (MN SHPO, July 2011).

4.10.3 Archaeological Resources

The no-build alternative and Alternatives 5 and 8 would have no effect on archaeological resources.

For Alternatives 7, 9, and the preferred alternative, the potential effect to archaeological resources is unknown because a landowner denied permission to test their property. The GSA coordinated with the SHPOs office and the SHPO concluded that the archaeological survey, could be postponed until the GSA purchased the site of the preferred alternative. According to the SHPO, postponing the archaeological survey would not foreclose design alternatives and provided flexibility to move site improvements to avoid or minimize effects to potential archaeological sites (MN SHPO, November 2010).

4.11 Uncontrolled Petroleum and Hazardous Substances

The no-build alternative would not impact uncontrolled petroleum or hazardous substances.

The build and preferred alternatives would create a small increase in the amount of hazardous substances currently generated or used in the study area. The construction of a GRIT facility or mobile unit has the potential to result in impacts from a slight increase in hazardous substances or materials. Operation and maintenance of non-intrusive inspection units has little potential impact from hazardous materials and substances. Refueling of a mobile GRIT would follow legal requirements for storage, handling, use, and disposal of hazardous materials and substances. Hazardous materials generated would be collected and disposed in accordance with federal and

state regulations. Construction activities would follow legal requirements for storage, handling use, and disposal of hazardous materials and substances.

The CBP prepared a programmatic environmental assessment on the effects to human health from radiation emission from inspection equipment. It concluded that: As promulgated by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in Title 10 CFR Part 20, the maximum permissible level of radiation dose to the general public in unrestricted areas is 100 mrem (100,000 μ rem) per year. The CBP has chosen this same radiation dose standard as the maximum permissible level for Customs Inspectors. Based upon the CBP's chosen criterion of 2000 hours per year as the time of exposure, neither Customs Inspectors nor the general public would experience a dose greater than 0.05 mrem (50 μ rem) per hour above natural and man-made background radiation. The radiation dose from GRIT facilities would be limited to no more than 0.05 mrem (50 μ rem) per hour through the establishment of radiation safety exclusion zones (CBP, 2010). The CBP further concluded that use of non-intrusive inspection units would not significantly impact physical, cultural, or socioeconomic environments.

The GSA would develop a spill prevention, control, and countermeasures plan for the preferred alternative during final design.

Prior to the demolition of the existing LPOE, an inspection of the buildings to be demolished by an asbestos certified contractor / consultant would need to be performed and the "Notification of Intent to Perform a Demolition" form would need to be completed and filed with the MPCA. Additionally, any hazardous waste items such as mercury switches, light ballasts containing PCBs, lead paint, florescent lights, and paint cans need to be removed and properly disposed. The MPCA encourages the use of building deconstruction techniques that reuse and recycle materials and materials that cannot be recycled or reused must be disposed at a MPCA permitted demolition landfill, a municipal solid waste landfill, or an industrial landfill.

4.12 Minority and Disadvantaged Populations

The no-build, build, and preferred alternatives would not impact minority or disadvantaged populations.

4.13 Construction Impacts

The build and preferred alternatives would result in minor, short-term impacts to the study area during construction. Short-term impacts are increased traffic around the construction area, additional noise, construction vehicle emissions, and possible minor traffic delays or obstructions.

The existing LPOE would remain in operation during construction and safety and security maintained at all times.

The build and preferred alternatives would result in a short-term stimulus of the local economy through the creation of jobs and purchase of local goods and services.

4.14 Relationship between Short-Term Uses of the Human Environment and Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity

The no-build alternative would not have short-term uses of the environment that would result in impacts.

The build and preferred alternatives would result in short-term uses of the environment. Short-term uses of the human environment would occur during construction. Construction of the preferred alternative would require a staging area, stockpiling area, roadway construction, and temporary traffic increase around the construction areas. Additional short-term impacts would be: air quality degradation from increased emissions from construction vehicles and activities, noise impacts, other socioeconomic and community impacts from construction vehicles (possible roadway obstructions or minor traffic detours), and wastes from construction.

The proposed action is undertaken with consideration of the current and future requirements for border security. The projected benefits from additional security and the improved operational efficiency provided by the preferred alternative outweigh the local short-term impacts and use of resources. The proposed action is consistent with the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity for the study area and region.

4.15 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

Implementation of the build and preferred alternatives involves a commitment of a range of natural, physical, human, and fiscal resources. Land used in the construction of the preferred alternative is considered an irre-

versible commitment during the time period that the land is used. However, if a greater need arises for use of the land or if a LPOE is no longer needed, the land can be converted to another use. There is no reason to believe such a conversion would be necessary or desirable.

Fossil fuels, labor, and construction materials such as cement, aggregate, and bituminous material would be expended during construction. Additionally, labor and natural resources would be used in the fabrication and preparation of construction materials. These materials are generally not retrievable. However, they are not in short supply and their use would not have an adverse effect upon continued availability of these resources. Construction would require a one-time expenditure of federal funds which are not retrievable.

The commitment of these resources is based on the concept that residents in the immediate area, state, and region would benefit by the improved security and the operational efficiency of the preferred alternative. These benefits would consist of improved accessibility and safety, savings in time, and greater availability of quality services which are anticipated to outweigh the commitment of these resources.

4.16 Secondary and Cumulative Impacts

4.16.1 Secondary Impacts

Secondary impacts are defined as those that are "...caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects may include growth-inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems" (40 CFR 1508.8b).

Induced development may include a variety of alterations such as changes in land use, economic vitality, property value, or population density. The potential for secondary impacts to occur is determined in part by local land use and development planning objectives and the physical location of a proposed action.

The build and preferred alternatives are proposed within the industrial and commercial zones of International Falls on developed and previously disturbed property. The proposed action would replace the existing LPOE within the same general area as the existing LPOE and would not cause changes to traffic composition or volume. Therefore, the proposed action

would not likely induce new development to the area, although regional cross-border travelers may be more inclined to visit the area with improved operations and transit time at the LPOE. No secondary impacts to the natural environment, other than those described as construction impacts, are anticipated.

Businesses in International Falls expressed concern about the potential indirect economic impacts to the CBD resulting from the changes in travel patterns with Alternatives 7 and 9. In general, there is wide-spread perception that Alternatives 7 and 9 would provide cross-border travelers, particularly those destined for Canada, an opportunity to “bypass” the CBD, threatening the economic health of International Falls and businesses dependent upon passing traffic for customers.

The effect of bypasses on communities has been a subject of interest and study since the 1950s. These studies have relied on a combination of employment trend data and business interviews to assess whether business activity in the CBDs of small and medium-size towns and cities declined after a new highway allowed through traffic to bypass that area.

The National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) commissioned a study to review information on the potential indirect economic impacts of bypasses on businesses. More than 190 publications were reviewed, dating from 1950 onward (although most of the publications were produced prior to 1990). Study methods used in the reports range from judgments gathered in unstructured interviews and mail surveys of local opinion to sophisticated statistical data analyses on population, retail sales, land values, and other factors.

Much of the analysis was performed in terms of specific size communities (exhibit 4.1). For all communities, overall sales declined in bypassed communities in 13 percent or less of the cases reviewed. In addition, in each size community, the average sales growth in bypassed communities exceeded the average sales growth in control communities.

There is a distinction in the response of smaller communities compared to larger communities. Forty-eight percent of communities under 5,000 persons experienced slower sales growth than the comparable control community. In contrast, less than 30 percent of the larger size communities experienced less growth in the bypassed community than the control area.

A comparison of sales growth among traffic-serving businesses versus all businesses along the bypassed communities indicates that sales declined at

Exhibit 4.1 – Sales Growth of Bypassed Communities vs. Control Area

	Population Ranges			
	Less than 5,000	5,000 to 10,000	10,000 and greater	All
Cases where sales at bypassed community businesses declined:				
Number (#/out of #)	4/34	2/22	2/16	8/72
Percent	12%	9%	13%	11%
<i>Average percent increase in sales:</i>				
Bypassed area	5.8%	6.1%	3.2%	
Control Area	2.8%	3.3%	2.3%	
Cases where growth in control area exceeded growth in bypassed community:				
Number (#/out of #)	10/21	4/14	4/15	18/50
Percent	48%	29%	27%	36%

Source: NCHRP, 1996

traffic-serving businesses in 24 percent of the cases in areas with less than 5,000 persons (exhibit 4.2). The highest percentage of cases where sales at traffic-serving businesses declined (33 percent) was found in the largest communities. A similar pattern is true for sales at businesses that were bypassed; the highest percentage of such cases (33 percent) was found among the largest communities, while the smallest percentage (17 percent) was found in the smallest communities.

Overall, sales declined at traffic-serving businesses in 18 out of 65 cases (28 percent) and sales among all businesses along the bypassed community declined in five out of 29 cases (17 percent). Stated conversely, sales along

Exhibit 4.2 – Sales Growth Along Bypassed Route: Traffic-Serving vs. All Businesses

	Population Ranges			
	Less than 5,000	5,000 to 10,000	10,000 and greater	All
Cases where sales at traffic-serving businesses declined:				
Number (#/out of #)	6/25	7/25	5/15	18/65
Percent	24%	28%	33%	28%
Cases where sales at all old-route businesses declined:				
Number (#/out of #)	2/12	2/9	1/8	
Percent	17%	22%	33%	
<i>Average percent increase in sales:</i>				
Traffic-serving Businesses	2.7%	4.7%	0.3%	
All Businesses	5.1%	3.8%	2.9%	
Cases where growth for all businesses exceeded growth for traffic-serving:				
Number (#/out of #)	9/10	5/8	6/8	20/26
Percent	90%	63%	75%	77%

Source: NCHRP, 1996

the bypassed communities stayed the same or increased in the majority of cases.

For each size community, the average annual sales growth among traffic-serving businesses was positive. For communities with 5,000 to 10,000 persons, average sales growth among traffic-serving businesses exceeded average sales growth for all business along the bypassed area. In the smaller and larger size communities, average sales growth at traffic-serving businesses was considerably lower than for all businesses, supporting the fact that a bypass has the greatest effect on traffic-serving businesses (NCHRP, 1996).

Other studies include two Oklahoma studies of more than 14 communities (Comer and Finchum, 2001; 2003), an Iowa study in which data were collected over a 20-year period (Clapp et. al, 2001), and a Kentucky study of 21 bypassed towns (Thompson et. al, 2001).

Comer and Finchum (2001) examined economic impacts on 14 bypassed Oklahoma towns, ranging in population from 732 to 13,000. Based on an analysis of sales tax data, the impacts varied according to the nature of the business. In the study, three different types of businesses were identified that showed distinct levels of impact: traffic dependant businesses (such as restaurants and gas stations); traffic related businesses (such as downtown shops and professional services); and non-traffic related businesses (such as factories and mines). The conclusions of the study indicate that the size and overall economic strength of the town is a principal factor in whether or not a town suffers economically as a result of a bypass. The smaller the town, typically one with a population under 2,500, the more negative the economic impacts. In the case of medium (populations of between 2,500 and 7,500 people) and large (populations over 7,500 people) towns, it was found that where there were negative economic impacts associated with a bypass, the impacts were not as severe.

In a subsequent study, Comer and Finchum (2003) identified the impacts from bypasses in more rural areas using data from Oklahoma towns ranging in population from 2,500 to 25,000. The study provided insight into the long-term effects of a bypass, as most towns examined had bypasses constructed prior to 1990. Incorporating economic (income growth rate) and demographic (race, home ownership and age) variables, the study concluded that income growth rates are statistically lower in bypassed communities compared to non-bypassed communities.

Clapp et al. (2003) used 20 years of data in a study on the effects on retail sales in bypassed Iowa towns. In the study, three towns that were to be bypassed were compared with six towns that were bypassed in the 1980s and that were of comparable structure, size and distance from metropolitan centers. All the towns examined had a rural, farm-based economy. Based on the experience of the communities that were bypassed, the presence of an active economic development agency in the community and the ability of the town to attract new businesses to the area were identified as factors that helped the bypassed towns adjust to the changes and remain economically vibrant.

Thompson et al. (2001) examined communities in Kentucky and matched 21 bypass routes in eight counties that were bypassed with eight counties of similar demographic and economic structure that had not been bypassed. The study analyzed economic data from the five years previous to the bypass and the five years after completion of the bypass to make comparisons between the matched counties. Factors that were compared included: 1) total employment growth rates; 2) retail sales growth rates; and 3) retail employment growth rates. The study found on average, the total employment growth rates of bypassed counties five years after the bypass were 0.27 percent less than the counties that were not bypassed, although this was not statistically significant. It was found that retail sales growth was higher in counties before the construction of the bypass; retail services grew more slowly after the bypass.

There were no statistically significant changes in retail employment growth rates. However, the study did find that the opening of a bypass did have a negative impact on retail sales.

All of the studies reported that the effects of a highway bypass are not as devastating as first feared by communities and that, in most cases, there is little to no significant long-term economic effects. In general, an initial decrease in businesses was experienced immediately after an opening of a bypass, followed by a recovery in sales once the area and travelers adjusted to change. The larger and more tourist-oriented communities were most likely to enjoy positive impacts. The studies agreed that the strength of the town's economy before the bypass is of vital importance to the impacts the town would experience. All of the studies showed the importance of active leadership and planning. Increased signage on the new route indicating the

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variety of shops and services in bypassed area has proven to lower the short-term economic impacts that bypassed areas may experience.

According to the Mn/DOT, state departments of transportation and academic institutions agree that the impact of alternative routes outside of existing downtown areas depends largely on the underlying economic conditions in the community (Mn/DOT, 2007).

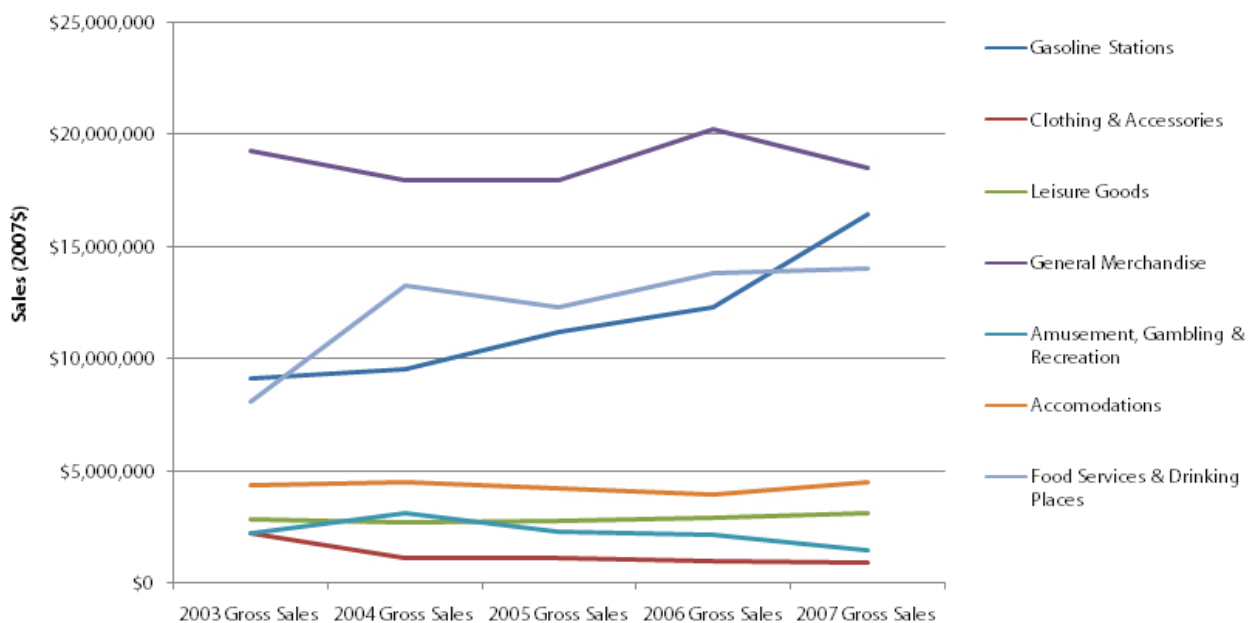
Tourist services and tourist retail businesses represent approximately 41 percent of the estimated market value in International Falls. These services and businesses are experiencing a steady rate or a slight increase from 2003 through 2007 (exhibit 4.3) (MDR, 2009).

The no-build alternative would not result in an adverse indirect economic impact to the CBD of International Falls as no changes to travel patterns or traffic volumes would occur. During peak travel periods and long traffic queues (both inbound and outbound), cross-border travelers may opt to avoid patronizing the CBD.

Alternatives 5 and 8 would not result in an adverse indirect economic impact to the CBD. With improved operations at the LPOE and shorter traffic queues, cross-border travelers may be more inclined to patronize the CBD.

Alternatives 7 and 9 would provide inbound and outbound travelers with an opportunity to avoid the CBD potentially resulting in an adverse indirect economic impact to businesses in the CBD. The businesses most affected

Exhibit 4.3 – Business Gross Sales Volume, by Sector 2003-2007



Source: MDR, 2009

by the changes in travel patterns are those that are dependent upon passing traffic as a source of customers along 2nd Avenue, 3rd Avenue, 2nd Street and 3rd Street, although most business in proximity to the LPOE could be impacted.

When separated into inbound and outbound traffic, a greater opportunity to bypass the CBD and potential indirect economic impact would exist for outbound traffic than inbound traffic with Alternatives 7 and 9, as the entrance and exit to the LPOE would be on Highway 11 to the nearby east of the CBD. Outbound traffic from the east would approach and enter the LPOE before reaching the CBD. A portion of the CBD would be visible to inbound traffic when entering the LPOE providing additional time to decide whether to stop in the CBD. For both inbound and outbound traffic, proper signage directing visitors to the CBD would minimize the potential adverse indirect economic impact to businesses in the CBD.

The preferred alternative could result in a slight positive indirect economic impact to businesses in the CBD over the no-build alternative and Alternatives 5 and 8 because of the increased throughput capacity. With the preferred alternative, the entrance and exit to the LPOE would be at the intersection of 2nd Avenue and 2nd Street. For inbound traffic, a portion of the CBD would be visible for a longer period of time, depending upon the length of the traffic queue and travel speed, when entering the LPOE providing additional time to decide whether to stop in the CBD.

4.16.2 Cumulative Impacts

The consideration of cumulative effects consists of an assessment of the total effect on a resource, ecosystem or community from past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions which have altered the quantity, quality or context of those resources within a broad geographic scope. Cumulative effects are defined as "...the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions." Cumulative effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time" (40 CFR 1508.7). Cumulative effects consider the aggregate effects of past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions on the quality, quantity or characterization of a particular resource.

The intent of the cumulative effects analysis is to determine the magnitude and significance of cumulative effects, both beneficial and adverse, and to determine the contribution of the proposed action to those aggregate effects. Contributions to cumulative effects from the build and preferred alternatives on the resource would be limited to those derived from the direct and secondary or indirect impacts of the proposed action. Because the proposed action would not result in a significant direct or indirect impact to resources, the cumulative effects analysis for the proposed action was limited to climate change, as climate is the only resource that would experience cumulative effects. No other resources were considered in the analysis of cumulative effects.

The city of International Falls had a substantial increase in population during the 1980s. The population increased 48 percent during this decade, from a population of 5,611 to 8,325. Prior to and following this decade, the population of International Falls had been decreasing. The year 1980 was used as the timeframe for the consideration of past actions. The year 2035 was the limit of the future time frame for reasonably foreseeable future actions.

The study area used for the analysis of potential cumulative effects was approximately 1,000 acres. The study area consisted of the Rainy River to the north, Second Creek to the east, the Second Creek minor watershed boundary to the south, and Highway 53 to the west. The boundary to the north, east, and south were used because of their natural landscapes. Highway 53 was used because development to the west of the highway began in the late 1800s and was essentially completed, with the exception of minor infill development, prior to 1980.

Development in International Falls has been slow. Since the 1990 census, the population has decreased from 8,325 persons to 6,283 persons and the number of housing units in the city has been slowly decreasing (3,306 in 1990 to 3,264 in 2000) (U.S. Census, 2000). Within the area analyzed for potential cumulative effects, no past or present actions were identified.

While the population of International Falls is projected to continue to decrease approximately 14 percent by 2035, reasonably foreseeable future actions exist, in addition to the build and preferred alternatives (exhibit 2.2):

The Voyageur Heritage Center and National Park Headquarters is a \$20.5 million project proposed between the Rainy River and Highway 11 and to the west of Second Creek. The project is an effort to increase awareness of

the voyageurs' route and fur trade with the Native peoples of the north. A 10,000-square foot heritage center would be constructed on a 10-acre site, including an amphitheatre, trails, outdoor exhibits, and boat landing for river-based programs.

To the immediate west of the Voyageur Heritage Center and National Park Headquarters, there is a plan to develop the AmericInn Lodge and Suites. This private development consists of a conference center, a restaurant, a pool, a fitness center, an outdoor pool, tennis courts, and a marina.

To the immediate west of the AmericInn Lodge and Suites, the U.S. Border Patrol is constructing a facility to replace their existing facility in International Falls. The U.S. Border Patrol facility consists of office and garage spaces, parking, helicopter pad, boat ramp and dock, trails, and access roads.

Koochiching County has proposed relocating the northern portion of Highway 332 approximately one mile to the east of its current location re-routing Highway 332 to the FTZ, which was officially supported by the City of International Falls.

Climate change is likely to continue as human activity in the form of GHG emissions is warming the planet in ways that would have impacts on natural resources, energy use, ecosystems, economic activity, and potentially quality of life. The aggregated effect of the reasonably foreseeable future actions would not contribute to the cumulative effects of climate change as these actions are small in scope.

The no-build, build, and preferred alternatives would not impact GHG. The build and preferred alternatives may result in a slight positive effect on air quality as the proposed action would decrease queuing times for vehicles entering the U.S. thereby decreasing idling emissions.

To further reduce idling emissions and promote energy conservation and efficiency during operation of the LPOE, the EPA's SmartWay program would be promoted through posting and distributing literature. The SmartWay program and brand identifies products and services that reduce transportation-related emissions. Providing literature to people at the LPOE could result in an air quality and/or GHG emissions improvements and energy conservation and efficiency, while maintaining or improving current levels of other emissions and/or pollutants (EPA, 2009).

Chapter 5

Coordination and Consultation

Public participation is integral to the preparation of an EIS. Scoping is a process for determining the range of issues to be addressed in an EIS and for identifying significant issues associated with the alternatives (40 CFR Part 1501.7). The objectives of the scoping process are to notify interested persons – other federal, state, and local agencies, tribes, and other groups – about the alternatives being considered, solicit comments about environmental issues, alternatives, and other items of interest, and consider those comments in the preparation of the EIS.

5.1 Scoping and Early Coordination

At the beginning of the study, scoping and early coordination letters were mailed to 47 federal, state, and local agencies and special interest groups in accordance with the procedural provisions of NEPA and the GSA's requirements and policies for early coordination. Letters, accompanied by a map of the study area, description of the purpose and needs, and an outline of the study, were mailed in September to notify them of the study to be performed, request specific information, and encourage participation in the study by identifying areas of initial concern (exhibit 5.1). No key resources or issues of primary concern were identified.

Exhibit 5.1 – Summary of Scoping Letters and Responses Received

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Information Requested</i>	<i>Information Received</i>
Congressional		
Congressman James Oberstar	General letter requesting comments	no information received
U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar	General letter requesting comments	no information received
U.S. Senator Al Franken	General letter requesting comments	no information received
State Elected Officials		
State Representative Tom Anzelc	General letter requesting comments	no information received
State Senator Tom Saxhaug	General letter requesting comments	no information received
Federal		
US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5	General letter requesting comments	Address wetlands and water quality; air quality; noise; environmental justice; cumulative impacts; pedestrian access; green building; and construction impacts

Chapter 5 summarizes the coordination and consultation activities performed for this study among the federal, state, and local agencies and the public.

Scoping. There shall be an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action. This process shall be termed "scoping" (40 CFR 1501.7).

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Organization	Information Requested	Information Received
National Park Service Midwest Regional Office	General letter requesting comments	no information received
US Fish and Wildlife Service	Federally-listed or proposed threatened or endangered species or known critical habitats in the study area	no information received
Natural Resources Conservation Service	Soils and other natural resource information	no information received
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	General letter requesting comments	no information received
Customs and Border Protection, Pembina	General letter requesting comments	no information received
Customs and Border Protection, International Falls Area Port	General letter requesting comments	no information received
Customs and Border Protection, Indianapolis Service Center	General letter requesting comments	no information received
Tribes		
Boise Forte Band of Chippewa	General letter requesting comments	no information received
State		
Office of the State Archaeologist	Information on known archaeological resources	no information received
Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources	General letter requesting comments	no information received
Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Minnesota Trade Office	General letter requesting comments	no information received
Minnesota Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program, MDNR	State-listed or proposed threatened or endangered species or known critical habitats in the study area	Identify the Lake Sturgeon as a state-listed fish of special concern
Minnesota Environmental Quality Board	General letter requesting comments	no information received
Minnesota Geological Survey	General geologic information	no information received
State Historic Preservation Office	Known historic resources	Looks forward to reviewing results of historical identification and review
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	General letter requesting comments	Address runoff from impervious surfaces into Rainy River
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Northeast Region	Previous studies of air quality in the region	no information received
Minnesota Department of Transportation	Roadway information and transportation concerns	Address with road ownerships, rail crossings, and queue time
Regional		
Arrowhead Regional Development Commission	General letter requesting comments	no information received
Regional Transportation Advisory Committee	Roadway information and transportation concerns	no information received
County		
Koochiching County Economic Development Authority	General letter requesting comments	no information received
Koochiching County Environmental Services Department	Information on relevant plans for riverfront development projects	no information received

Organization	Information Requested	Information Received
Koochiching County Soil and Water Conservation District	General letter requesting comments	no information received
Koochiching County Historical Society	Known historic resources	List of historic resources
Koochiching County Board	General letter requesting comments	The Koochiching County Board of Commissioners support Alternative 10
Local		
International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce	General letter requesting comments	The International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce and their members support Alternative 10
International Falls, Ranier and Rainy Lake Convention and Visitors Bureau	General letter requesting comments	no information received
City of International Falls, MN	General letter requesting comments	no information received
International Falls Fire Department	Public safety information	no information received
International Falls Police Department	Public safety information	no information received
International Falls Department of Public Works	Information on relevant plans for riverfront development projects	no information received
Canadian Contacts		
Town of Fort Frances	General letter requesting comments	no information received
Town of Fort Frances Planning Department	General letter requesting comments	no information received
Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce	General letter requesting comments	no information received
Ontario Provincial Parliament	General letter requesting comments	no information received
Canadian Parliament	General letter requesting comments	no information received
Other		
Minnesota, Dakota and Western Railway	General letter requesting comments	no information received
Boise Inc.	General letter requesting comments	no information received
Duty Free Americas	General letter requesting comments	Duty Free Americas support Alternatives 5 and 10 because they would have the least impact on their business and they oppose Alternatives 7 and 9 because they would have the most negative impact on their business
Border Bob's	General letter requesting comments	no information received
Wagner Construction	General letter requesting comments	no information received
Ultimate Development LLC	General letter requesting comments	no information received
Recreation Land Development LLC	General letter requesting comments	no information received
Meuchadim of Minnesota, LP	General letter requesting comments	no information received

5.2 Public Involvement

Public participation was initiated early in the study to incorporate public comments and concerns into the development and analysis of the study purpose and needs, range of reasonable alternatives, potential resultant environmental impacts, and the development of conceptual mitigation measures. Public participation continued throughout the study.

During the identification, development, and preliminary screening of alternatives, the GSA coordinated with the CBP, Boise Inc., the MD&W Railway, and the city of International Falls. A LPOE subcommittee, consisting of Representatives from the International Falls Chamber of Commerce, the city of International Falls, and Koochiching County was formed and met with the GSA several times during the study. Coordination with these entities continued during the detailed analysis of alternatives.

The Chamber of Commerce held a Brown Bag Luncheon, in which the GSA gave a presentation about the LPOE improvements project to approximately 55 people.

The GSA held a public scoping meeting on September 15, 2009. The meeting began with an informal open house and question and answer period followed by a formal presentation and public comment period. Approximately 15 people attended the open house and 25 people attended the presentation. The informal open house consisted of display boards with information pertaining to the scoping process, the NEPA process, the study purpose and needs, and a description of the five alternatives. The formal presentation consisted of a presentation and a public comment period. The presentation consisted of a discussion of the purpose and needs of the study, the NEPA process, the scoping process, the alternatives, and opportunities for input to the study.

During the scoping process, the key issues of concern identified were the traffic queues in both directions at the LPOE, the potential impact to business in International Falls from the changes in travel patterns, the potential impact to pedestrians and the need to travel a further distance with several of the build alternatives, and aesthetics (see section 1.8).

The International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce and their members, and Koochiching County's Board of Commissioners Letter of Resolution support Alternative 10 as the preferred alternative for the LPOE. Alternative 10 has the least impact on the community and preserves the footprint of the community.

5.3 Circulation of the DEIS and Responses to Substantive Comments Received on the DEIS

The CEQ's regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR Part 1503.1) require an agency that publishes a DEIS to:

- Obtain the comments of Federal agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise, and
- Request comments from:
 - » agencies at all levels of government authorized to develop and enforce environmental standards
 - » Indian tribes
 - » an agency that has requested EISs on actions of the kind proposed
 - » the public, including actively soliciting comments from those persons or organizations that may be interested or affected

Comments received can range from statements of support for, or opposition to, an agency's proposed action to detailed critiques of the DEIS's analyses and suggestions for new alternatives. Comments typically identify factual errors, omissions, areas of controversy, and provide new information.

An agency's focus in preparing the FEIS is the consideration of and responses to these comments. The comment-response process consists of all steps from receipt and consideration of comments through the preparation of responses and needed revisions to the EIS. An agency cannot complete the NEPA process until it has considered and responded to comments on the DEIS in the

What is a Substantive Comment?

A substantive comment is one which suggests the modifications of an alternative, suggests the development and evaluation of an alternative not previously considered, supplements, improves or modifies analyses, or corrects a factual error.

40 CFR 1503.4: Response to Comments

(a) An agency preparing a final environmental impact statement shall assess and consider comments both individually and collectively, and shall respond by one or more of the means listed below, stating its response in the final statement. Possible responses are to:

1. Modify alternatives including the proposed action.
2. Develop and evaluate alternatives not previously given serious consideration by the agency.
3. Supplement, improve, or modify its analyses.
4. Make factual corrections.
5. Explain why the comments do not warrant further agency response, citing the sources, authorities, or reasons which support the agency's position and, if appropriate, indicate those circumstances which would trigger agency reappraisal

FEIS. The comment-response process is intended to help make better and more informed decisions.

The GSA announced the availability of the DEIS for the International Falls LPOE Improvements Study on January 14, 2010. A 45-day comment period immediately followed, during which the GSA invited Federal, State and local agencies, organizations and individuals to submit comments on the DEIS (Appendix A).

A public hearing was held at the Rainy River Community College on January 27, 2010 and a transcript of the hearing was prepared. An advertisement for the public hearing appeared in International Falls' *The Daily Journal* on two occasions prior to the hearing and advertisements for the public hearing were placed at Boise, Inc. and other prominent locations. Two attendees offered substantive comments during the public hearing. The public hearing was preceded by an open house to allow attendees to view plans of the build alternatives in detail, review the DEIS and discuss its content with the GSA, and ask questions.

The GSA received eight comment letters and one comment e-mail.

The requirements for responding to comments received on DEISs are contained in 40 CFR 1503.4.

The comments received were reviewed, substantive comments were identified, and each was assigned a unique tracking number (e.g., comment 1-1 is the first substantive comment in the first letter). The substantive comments and responses are summarized in Appendix A.

The GSA provided an opportunity to tribes that may have an interest in the study area and study to provide comments; as of the printing of this FEIS, no comments have been received. Should one or more tribes provide comments in the future, the GSA would promptly respond to answer questions and work to address potential concerns with the Preferred Alternative.

Chapter 6

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The following people were responsible for preparing this FEIS:

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This FEIS was distributed to federal, state, and local agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise, and agencies, tribes, and local entities, that may be interested in the proposed action.

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Chapter 8

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Chapter 9

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Appendix A

*Responses to Substantive Comments Received on the
Draft Environmental Impact Statement*

Responses to Substantive Comments

Received on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement

The CEQ's regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR Part 1503.1) require an agency that publishes a DEIS to:

- Obtain the comments of Federal agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise, and
- Request comments from:
 - » agencies at all levels of government authorized to develop and enforce environmental standards
 - » Indian tribes
 - » an agency that has requested EISs on actions of the kind proposed
 - » the public, including actively soliciting comments from those persons or organizations that may be interested or affected

Comments received can range from statements of support for, or opposition to, an agency's proposed action to detailed critiques of the DEIS's analyses and suggestions for new alternatives. Comments typically identify factual errors, omissions, areas of controversy, and provide new information.

An agency's focus in preparing the FEIS is the consideration of and responses to these comments. The comment-response process consists of all steps from receipt and consideration of comments through the preparation of responses and needed revisions to the EIS. An agency cannot complete the NEPA process until it has considered and responded to comments on the DEIS in the FEIS. The comment-response process is intended to help make better and more informed decisions.

The GSA announced the availability of the DEIS for the International Falls LPOE Improvements Study on January 14, 2010. A 45-day comment period immediately followed, during which the GSA invited Federal, State and local agencies, organizations and individuals to submit comments on the DEIS.

A public hearing was held at the Rainy River Community College on January 27, 2010 and a transcript of the hearing was prepared (Attachment A). An advertisement for the public hearing appeared in International Falls' The Daily Journal on two occasions prior to the hearing and advertisements for the public hearing were placed at Boise, Inc. and other prominent locations. Two attendees offered substantive comments during the public hearing. The public hearing was preceded by an open house to allow attendees to view plans of the build alternatives in detail, review the DEIS and discuss its content with the GSA, and ask questions.

The GSA received eight comment letters and one comment e-mail (Attachment B).

The requirements for responding to comments received on DEISs are contained in 40 CFR 1503.4.

The comments received were reviewed, substantive comments were identified, and each was assigned a unique tracking number (e.g., comment 1-1 is the first substantive comment in the first letter). The substantive comments and responses are summarized.

What is a Substantive Comment?

A substantive comment is one which suggests the modifications of an alternative, suggests the development and evaluation of an alternative not previously considered, supplements, improves or modifies analyses, or corrects a factual error.

40 CFR 1503.4: Response to Comments

- a. An agency preparing a final environmental impact statement shall assess and consider comments both individually and collectively, and shall respond by one or more of the means listed below, stating its response in the final statement. Possible responses are to:
 1. Modify alternatives including the proposed action.
 2. Develop and evaluate alternatives not previously given serious consideration by the agency.
 3. Supplement, improve, or modify its analyses.
 4. Make factual corrections.
 5. Explain why the comments do not warrant further agency response, citing the sources, authorities, or reasons which support the agency's position and, if appropriate, indicate those circumstances which would trigger agency reappraisal or further response.
- b. All substantive comments received on the draft statement (or summaries thereof where the response has been exceptionally voluminous), should be attached to the final statement whether or not the comment is thought to merit individual discussion by the agency in the text of the statement.
- c. If changes in response to comments are minor and are confined to the responses described in paragraphs (a)(4) and (5) of this section, agencies may write them on errata sheets and attach them to the statement instead of rewriting the draft statement. In such cases only the comments, the responses, and the changes and not the final statement need be circulated (Sec. 1502.19). The entire document with a new cover sheet shall be filed as the final statement.

Responses to Substantive Comments Received on the DEIS • 8

Public Hearing

Terry Randolph - transcript p. 21

Comment T-1: Alternative 10 has roughly 3,500 extra feet to walk . . . before physically getting to the bridge

References the DEIS in section: 2.2.3, 2.2.5, and 2.2.6

Response: Comment noted. During final design of the preferred alternative, the GSA would further analyze opportunities to shorten the additional length of travel required for pedestrians.

Chris Swenson - transcript p. 24

Comment T-2: Customers traveling by foot to the duty-free store will have to travel roughly 3,500 extra feet.

References the DEIS in section: 2.2.3, 2.2.5, and 2.2.6

Response: Comment noted. During final design of the preferred alternative, the GSA would further analyze opportunities to shorten the additional length of travel required for pedestrians.

Written Comments

Letter 1: Environmental Protection Agency, February 22, 2010

Comment 1-1 Prior to identifying a preferred alternative, assess each alternative's potential for providing adequate management and treatment of storm water runoff and hazardous materials that may be inadvertently released during project operation.

References the DEIS in section: 2.2, 4.2.1, and 4.11

Response: Comment noted. Stormwater runoff in urban areas is one of the leading sources of water pollution in the United States. Under Section 438 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA), Congress required federal agencies to provide national leadership to reduce water quality problems from stormwater runoff. Section 438 specifically calls for projects "...involving a federal facility with a footprint that exceeds 5,000 square feet shall use site planning, design, construction, and maintenance strategies for the property to maintain or restore, to the maximum extent technically feasible, the predevelopment hydrology of the property with regard to the temperature, rate, volume, and duration of flow." The preferred alternative would be developed in compliance with Section 438 of the EISA of 2007. During final design of the preferred alternative, the GSA would further analyze opportunities to maintain and restore pre-development hydrology. Additionally, the GSA would consider green infrastructure and low impact development practices such as reducing impervious surfaces, using vegetated swales and revegetation, protection and restoration of the riparian shoreline of Rainy River, and using porous pavements. The GSA would develop a spill prevention, control, and countermeasures plan for the preferred alternative during final design.

Comment 1-2 If necessary, . . . consider modifying a build alternative's LPOE components and layout to accommodate adequate storm water and hazardous materials management and treatment components.

References the DEIS in section: 2.2, 4.2.1, and 4.11

Response: Comment noted. Each building within the LPOE serves a specific purpose and function. Each of the build alternatives were designed to follow the required sequential circulation of traffic flow at LPOEs, which requires certain buildings be adjacent to one another and in a particular order. The GSA would fully develop the stormwater management facilities for the preferred alternative during final design. The final design of the preferred alternative, the GSA would consider the sequential order of buildings and functions and circulation of traffic within the LPOE and the opportunities to maintain and restore pre-development hydrology.

8 · International Falls Land Port of Entry Improvements Study

Letter 3: International Joint Commission, March 1, 2010

Comment 3-1 The GSA may wish to take note of reports on the use of green infrastructure to minimize the possibility or intensity of adverse environmental effects.

References the DEIS in section: 1.3

Response: Comment noted. For the preferred alternative, the GSA aspires to a LEED Gold Certification rating. Additionally, the GSA would consider green infrastructure and low impact development practices such as reducing impervious surfaces, using vegetated swales and revegetation, protection and restoration of the riparian shoreline of Rainy River, and using porous pavements.

Letter 4: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, March 5, 2010

Comment 4-1 The percentage of impervious surface needs to be determined for each alternative to assist in determining which alternative should be carried forward.

References the DEIS in section: 2.2 and 4.2.1

Response: Alternative 10 was identified as the preferred alternative because it was the only alternative that fully satisfied the proposed action's purpose and needs with the least adverse impact to the human environment. Alternatives 5 and 8 only marginally satisfied the proposed action's purpose and needs because the buildings and site layout were not ideal, onsite traffic circulation was cumbersome, and security, while improved over the existing conditions, would not fully meet the FIS's requirements. Alternatives 7 and 9 would satisfy the proposed action's purpose and needs; however, the entrance and exit of the LPOE on Route 11 removes traffic from the CBD, creating a major concern and possible economic hardship for the citizens and business owners of International Falls that depend on passing traffic and tourism. The preferred alternative would be developed in compliance with Section 438 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. During final design of the preferred alternative, the GSA would further analyze opportunities to maintain and restore pre-development hydrology. Additionally, the GSA would consider green infrastructure and low impact development practices such as reducing impervious surfaces, using vegetated swales and revegetation, protection and restoration of the riparian shoreline of Rainy River, and using porous pavements.

Comment 4-2 The project developers should retain as much of the "natural" character of the shoreline as possible. Depending on the site chosen, there could be an opportunity to "restore" a natural shoreline and use creative ways to manage runoff from impervious surface.

References the DEIS in section: 2.2 and 4.2.1

Response: Comment noted. During final design of the preferred alternative, the GSA would further analyze opportunities to protect and restore the natural shoreline of the Rainy River. Additionally, the GSA would consider green infrastructure and low impact development practices such as reducing impervious surfaces, using vegetated swales and revegetation, protection and restoration of the riparian shoreline of Rainy River, and using porous pavements.

Comment 4-3 Any new infrastructure developed adjacent to the Rainy River should include appropriate riparian buffers and measures to deal with runoff from impervious surfaces.

References the DEIS in section: 2.2 and 4.2.1

Response: Comment noted. During final design of the preferred alternative, the GSA would further analyze opportunities to protect and restore the natural shoreline of the Rainy River. Additionally, the GSA would consider green infrastructure and low impact development practices such as reducing impervious surfaces, using vegetated swales and revegetation, protection and restoration of the riparian shoreline of Rainy River, and using porous pavements.

Responses to Substantive Comments Received on the DEIS • 8

Comment 4-4 Onsite inspections for invasive species should be done prior to construction; proper measures to control their spread should be part of the plan.

References the DEIS in section: 4.3

Response: Comment noted. Prior to the start of construction, the GSA would inspect the site of the preferred alternative for invasive plant species. If invasive plant species are present on the site of the preferred alternative, the GSA would develop and implement a plan to control the potential spreading of invasive plant species prior to the start of construction.

Letter 5: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, March 2, 2010

Comment 5-1 A review of the MPCA Leak Site database identified approximately 13 tank release sites located within the project study area. The identified are:

<i>Minnesota Storage Tanks Leak Sites in the Study Area</i>			
<i>Leak No.</i>	<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Status</i>
423	JET #23312	301 4th St. & Hwy 53	Closed October 1, 1992
2114	Rex Service Station	4th St. & Hwy. 53	Closed July 29, 1993
2618	Utility Development	Hwy 11 E.	Closed September 24, 1991
3026	Winery	3rd St. & 3rd Ave.	Closed October 17, 1996
4538	Butch's Amoco	401 3rd Ave.	Closed September 27, 1996
7571	Former People's Plus	Hwys. 11 & 71	Closed May 6, 1999
8829	Falls Redi Mix	Hwy 11 E.	Closed September 29, 2006
8914	Former Conoco #23312	301 4th St.	Closed July 15, 1996
10696	Northern National Bank	419 3rd St.	Closed October 6, 1997
10730	AMMEX Tax and Duty Free	226 1/2 2nd Ave.	Closed July 23, 1998
12064	Northstar Publishing Company	500 3rd St. E.	Closed October 9, 2000
14220	Salvation Army Thrift Store	413 4th Ave.	Closed December 9, 2002
15432	Duty Free America	226 2nd Ave.	Closed March 29, 2007

References the DEIS in section: 3.11

Response: Comment noted. Section 3.11 and exhibit 3.17 were revised to include the list of tank release sites from the MPCA Leak Site database.

8 • International Falls Land Port of Entry Improvements Study

Comment 5-2 There are also identified tank release sites that are adjacent to the study area.

References the DEIS in section: 3.11

Response: Comment noted. Section 3.11 and exhibit 3.17 were revised to include the list of tank release sites adjacent to the study area from the MPCA Leak Site database. These sites are:

<i>Minnesota Storage Tanks Leak Sites Adjacent to the Study Area</i>			
<i>Leak No.</i>	<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Status</i>
4103	Grays Amoco Service	520 3rd St.	Closed May 23, 1996
9143	Intersavings Bank	519 3rd Ave.	Closed March 17, 1997
9332	Boise Cascade Woodchipper Hoist	Hwy 11 E.	Closed July 9, 1996
10869	Grays Amoco Service	520 3rd St.	Closed December 4, 1997
12841	Bulk Plant	516 2nd Ave.	Closed December 16, 2002
3218	Gateway Trading Post	Hwy 11 E.	Closed June 15, 2000
2117	Mn Dept. of Transportation	516 2nd Ave.	Closed July 9, 1997

Letter 6: Minnesota Department of Transportation, February 24, 2010

Comment 6-1 Mn/DOT can only support a signal system if it meets signal warrants identified in the Federal Manual.

References the DEIS in section: 2.2.3, 2.2.5, 2.2.6, 3.7.1, and 4.7.1

Response: Comment noted. The intersection must meet one or more “signal warrants”, explained in the Minnesota Manual On Uniform Traffic Control Devices, to warrant a signal; the satisfaction of a traffic signal warrant or warrants does not in itself require the installation of a traffic control signal.

The need for a signal would be determined during final design of the preferred alternative in coordination with the Mn/DOT, Koochiching County, and the city of International Falls.

Comment 6-2 It is suggested to terminate TH 53 at the point where the new non-commercial vehicle entrance leaves the existing TH 53 right-of-way. All Mn/DOT maintenance would end at that point.

References the DEIS in section: 2.2.3, 2.2.5, 2.2.6, 3.7.1, and 4.7.1

Response: Comment noted. The GSA acknowledges that agreements would be required for changes in the right-of-way for TH 53. The GSA will consult and work with Mn/DOT, Koochiching County, and the City of International Falls on all work impacting state and local roads during final design of the preferred alternative.

Comment 6-3 A multi-use trail on the north side of TH 11 road alignment is not shown on the site layouts and must be maintained.

References the DEIS in section: 3.7.4, 3.9.4, 4.7.4, and 4.9.4

Response: Comment noted. The integrity of the Rainy Lake Bike Trail would be maintained during and after the construction of the new LPOE.

Responses to Substantive Comments Received on the DEIS • 8

Comment 6-4	Mn/DOT suggests railroad crossing control be included at the new rail crossing location for non-commercial vehicles.
References the DEIS in section:	2.2.2, 2.2.4, and 2.2.6
Response:	Comment noted. The GSA would incorporate railroad crossing controls for non-commercial vehicles into the design of the preferred alternative at the new rail crossing.
Letter 7: Minnesota Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, February 2, 2010	
Comment 7-1	An archaeological survey, including historical archaeology, needs to be completed for this project. A research design should be provided and it should include inventory forms for the properties that are evaluated as part of the project.
References the DEIS in section:	3.10.3 and 4.10.3
Response:	Comment noted. The GSA has coordinated with the MN SHPO office. In its letter dated November 3, 2010, the MN SHPO stated that the archaeological survey, including historical archaeology, could be postponed until the GSA purchased the site of the preferred alternative. According to the MN SHPO, postponing the archaeological survey would not foreclose design alternatives and provided flexibility to move site improvements to avoid or minimize effects to potential archaeological sites.
Comment 7-2	Complete an evaluation of the Riverside Hotel.
References the DEIS in section:	3.10.2 and 4.10.2
Response:	Comment noted. The GSA completed the evaluation of the Riverside Hotel and it was determined not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The MN SHPO concurred with this determination in its letter dated May 10, 2011.
Comment 7-3	The report needs to acknowledge the Former Bronko Nagurski Gas Station and the 1973 remodeling of the gas station.
References the DEIS in section:	3.10 and 4.10.2
Response:	Comment noted. The GSA completed the evaluation of the of the former Bronko Nagurski Gas Station and the remodeling of the gas station in 1973 and was determined not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The MN SHPO concurred with this determination in its letter dated May 10, 2011.
Comment 7-4	Identify any indirect effects that would extend beyond each alternative pertaining to historical or archaeological resources. Identify any effects there are on the adjacent Boise paper mill.
References the DEIS in section:	3.10, 3.11, 4.10, and 4.10.2
Response:	Comment noted. The GSA reviewed the potential indirect effects of the preferred alternative and determined that it would have no effect on the Minnesota & Ontario Paper Company Building located on 2nd Street at 4th Avenue. The MN SHPO concurred with this determination in its letter dated July 22, 2011.
Letter 8: International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce, February 17, 2010	
Comment 8-1	Public concerns continue to linger over pedestrian/bicycle traffic and how they will be accommodated.
References the DEIS in section:	2.2.3, 2.2.5, and 2.2.6
Response:	Comment noted. During final design of the preferred alternative, the GSA would further analyze opportunities to shorten the additional length of travel required for pedestrians.

8 • International Falls Land Port of Entry Improvements Study

Letter 9: Richard D. Koeneman, February 3, 2010

Comment 9-1	Overall cost of all those smaller buildings is going to be substantial compared to one single building.
References the DEIS in section:	NA
Response:	Each building within the LPOE serves a specific purpose and function. Each of the build alternatives were designed to follow the required sequential circulation of traffic flow at LPOEs, which requires certain buildings be adjacent to one another and in a particular order.
Comment 9-2	Address air pollution from vehicle exhausts that will settle in the water.
References the DEIS in section:	4.5
Response:	Comment noted. Vehicle emissions include particulate matter some of which would be deposited in the Rainy River. Overall, the build alternatives may result in a slight positive impact on air quality as the proposed action would increase inspections and throughput capacity, decrease queuing time for vehicles entering and exiting the U.S. thereby decreasing vehicle emissions.
Comment 9-3	Vehicles close together means people are breathing fumes.
References the DEIS in section:	4.5
Response:	Comment noted. The build alternatives provide additional land area and queuing space for traffic than the existing LPOE. Overall, the build alternatives may result in a slight positive impact on air quality as the proposed action would increase inspections and throughput capacity, decrease queuing time for vehicles entering and exiting the U.S. thereby decreasing vehicle emissions.
Comment 9-4	Address the potential of leakage into the river.
References the DEIS in section:	4.2.1 and 4.11
Response:	The GSA would develop a spill prevention, control, and countermeasures plan for the preferred alternative during final design.
Comment 9-5	The proximity to the Boise stacks and the air pollution emitted has been documented and is unhealthy. Your own customs inspectors have complained about breathing those fumes.
References the DEIS in section:	NA
Response:	Comment noted. Alternatives 5 and 8 are proposed adjacent to the existing LPOE and no change in air quality would result for employees at the LPOE. Alternatives 7, 9, and 10 are approximately 1/2 mile east of the existing LPOE and the Boise stacks and may result in an improvement in air quality for the employees at the LPOE.
Comment 9-6	The traffic design in the alternatives is not a good smooth flow.
References the DEIS in section:	Chapter 2.0
Response:	Each building within the LPOE serves a specific purpose and function and the traffic design within each of the build alternatives was designed to provide additional queuing space, the separation of vehicles, and a smooth flow of traffic. Each of the build alternatives would represent a substantial improvement over the no build alternative.

Responses to Substantive Comments Received on the DEIS · 8

Comment 9-7	It would be in the taxpayers' best interest to locate the facility to the east coming off Highway 332 straight across the river into Canada.
References the DEIS in section:	Chapter 2.0
Response:	Comment noted. Planning for a new international crossing is a bi-national effort requiring the sponsorship of the executive levels of government on both sides of the border. That activity and commitment would have to be in place before GSA and the federal inspection services could begin planning for new facilities.
Letter 10: Allan and Myrna Meadows, January 31, 2010	
Comment 10-1	It is requested that provision be made to allow area residents living east of International Falls to also exit directly to Highway 11 East.
References the DEIS in section:	3.7.1, 4.7.1, 4.8, and 4.16.1
Response:	POVs would enter and exit the LPOE at the intersection of U.S. 53 and 2nd street to avoid removing traffic from the CBD and creating a major concern and possible economic hardship for the citizens and business owners of International Falls that depend on passing traffic and tourism.
Letter 11: Bob Neuenschwander, January 26, 2010	
Comment 11-1	On page S-12 and page 77 of the DEIS, it states "If acquired and displaced, the owner of Border Bob's merchandise has indicated that he would not seek to reestablish his business in the area..." This is false.
References the DEIS in section:	4.8
Response:	Comment noted. If acquired and displaced, the owner of Border Bob's merchandise has indicated that he would seek to reestablish his business in the area.

Attachment A

Public Hearing Transcript

1
2 TRANSCRIPT OF
3 Public Meeting
4 with the
5 U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
6 in regard to the
7 International Falls Land Port of Entry
8 Improvement Study
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12 held at the
13 RAINY RIVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE
14 International Falls, Minnesota
15 on January 27, 2010
16 Convening at 7:00 p.m.
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22 REPORTED BY:
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PRESENT:

Glenn Wittman, Regional NEPA Coordinator
General Services Administration
Great Lakes Region
230 S. Dearborn Street
Room 3600 (5PL)
Chicago, IL 60604

Bill Plumpton
Senior environmental scientist
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P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 MR. WITTMAN: Good evening. I'd like to
3 welcome everybody here tonight, the public hearing for
4 the International Falls Land Port of Entry Improvement
5 Study, which is also known as the draft Environmental
6 Impact Statement. I'd like to go through, first of
7 all, the purpose of the hearing, what it is and what
8 it isn't, and then I'll proceed with some
9 introductions and talk about the logistics briefly and
10 describe the study in a nutshell and the steps we've
11 gone through, and particularly the next steps. I
12 expect this meeting to be brief. We've allotted an
13 hour and a half, but I certainly don't expect it to go
14 nearly that long. We may be out of here in
15 45 minutes, depending on your comments.

16 The purpose of the public hearing is a
17 limited one tonight. It's not to have a lengthy
18 dialogue or any dialogue per se, although we will be
19 happy to answer questions off-line afterwards. It's
20 really the opportunity for us, GSA, to receive
21 comments on the draft Environmental Impact Statement.
22 That statement was -- it's called a statement. It's
23 an environmental impact analysis of the potential
24 effects that the port might have on the human
25 environment, and that includes physical, you know,

1 natural environmental impacts, as well as social,
2 economic impacts to the local community, whether it's
3 people or economy, whatever. So it includes all of
4 that. It's a planning document, is what the DIS is.
5 I want to make it clear that tonight's purpose isn't
6 to talk about a decision on what alternative has been
7 selected, although we've done an analysis of those
8 from an environmental perspective. It's really an
9 opportunity tonight for you to voice any comments and
10 for us to get them on the record.

11 We're here to, as I said, briefly review the
12 purpose and need for the study, summarize the
13 alternatives and to listen, not speak so much. And I
14 mentioned it's not a formal question and answer
15 session. It's more of a feedback session from you to
16 us.

17 I didn't introduce myself, but I'm Glenn
18 Wittman. I'm with the General Services Administration
19 or GSA in Chicago, Illinois. We cover the Great Lakes
20 region, which includes Illinois, Indiana, Michigan,
21 Ohio, Minnesota and Wisconsin. Also with me tonight
22 is the co-preparer of the study, Bill Plumpton, he's
23 with Gannett Fleming, Incorporated; they're
24 environmental planners and engineers. He happens to
25 be based near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and he and his

1 staff prepared much of the report in consultation of
2 course and coordination with GSA. So, that's the
3 introductions.

4 Is there anyone in the audience, perhaps an
5 elected official or dignitary that would like to
6 identify themselves? I don't see anyone. There are
7 some council people here and city people. Anyway, you
8 have that opportunity if you'd like to.

9 The logistics of tonight's meeting are pretty
10 simple. As you can see, we're recording a transcript
11 of the meeting so it will be the official record of
12 the meeting. It will be included, the paper copy will
13 be included in the draft version of this planning
14 document. So everything will be on the public record.
15 That's for transparency and all of that.

16 I must point out, after I give my spiel here
17 and summary, which will be about ten minutes worth,
18 you're free to come up and will be encouraged to come
19 up and make comments at the microphone or not. Bill
20 has passed around a sign-in sheet I believe or it's
21 going around; we'd appreciate it if everybody signs
22 that. Can everybody hear me okay? Okay. So that
23 takes care of that. Again, we want to accomplish our
24 purpose and use our time efficiently. So if you could
25 come up and be brief in your comments, be concise;

1 however, whatever you want to voice we'd like to hear.

2 I'll now talk a little bit, summarize, try to
3 make it brief but it may take a little bit; the
4 purpose of the study and why it's needed because I'm
5 sure everybody hasn't read the draft Environmental
6 Impact Statement. Let me say, this was published, as
7 it were -- it was made available as of January 14th.
8 It was published in what they call the Federal
9 Register, which you probably certainly didn't read,
10 but that's a requirement. It's a federal publication.
11 Then copies were distributed to the public library
12 here in I-Falls and various people that were in this
13 scoping meeting. At least 45 people got personal
14 copies of this, who made comments at the earlier
15 meeting. So it's out there for the public to see, and
16 it's just a draft.

17 The purpose of the study, to summarize a
18 little bit from the document so I won't misquote it;
19 the purpose of the study or the proposed action, as
20 it's called, the project, the proposed project is to
21 improve the operational efficiency, safety and
22 security for federal agency personnel and, of course,
23 cross border travelers at International Falls,
24 Minnesota's port. Some of the specific objectives of
25 that would be to increase vehicle and pedestrian

1 processing efficiency and capacity, reduce traffic
2 queues and delay approaching the port from both
3 directions; in other words, the queuing time, which I
4 know, I've heard, is somewhat of an issue at times
5 here. To minimize conflict points among different
6 types of traffic crossing the border; that is,
7 passenger vehicles, commercial trucks, trains, buses
8 and pedestrians. And add a functional and secondary
9 inspection area for commercial vehicles; there's a
10 strong need for that now. And also, lastly, to
11 accommodate future demands. We plan these study for
12 expansion obviously with future needs, CBP's, Custom
13 and Border Protection's future needs taken into
14 consideration for safety, security and technology
15 implementation.

16 As I said, the existing facility, as many of
17 you are probably aware, you may not know the exact
18 size, it's only a 1.6 acre parcel. Now, that's pretty
19 small as border stations go, not the smallest, but
20 fairly small. So there's a lot of things that have to
21 be done in that small size of parcel, and as I said,
22 there's a need for more space.

23 I'll say that back in September of this year
24 -- actually, this process, this Environmental Impact
25 Statement process started back last July, more or

1 less, mid-July, when Gannett Fleming came on board and
2 GSA began initiating meetings with the city, some of
3 the councilmen and the mayor and the Chamber of
4 Commerce and some others, just to brief them on what
5 the study was about, the planning. So it really
6 started then. Then on September 15th, I would say,
7 last year, last fall, is when we had our first meeting
8 here. It was called a scoping meeting. Some of you
9 were here, and we had it in this room, and at that
10 time we had these boards, but they weren't as fleshed
11 out as they are now, and we presented for the first
12 time some preliminary concepts and got your input on
13 just any concerns or issues you might have for this
14 planned expansion. So that began on September 15th.

15 Now we come to January, whatever it is, 27th,
16 and we've got a draft Environmental Impact Statement.
17 We would plan to complete this study after we receive
18 your comments and make revisions to any errors or
19 omissions, get it out by April at the latest, probably
20 March. There's a 45-day comment period. As I
21 mentioned, we got this draft out on the 14th of
22 January. From that date it would be roughly the 1st
23 of March. We actually extended it a little. March
24 5th is what we say. That's a little more than
25 45 days; so we'll receive all comments up to then,

1 we'll get them in this final document.

2 During the scoping process the key issues of
3 concern identified were the traffic queues in both
4 directions at the port from Canada and to Canada, the
5 potential impact of business in International Falls
6 from the potential change in travel patterns, the
7 potential impact to pedestrians and the need to travel
8 further distance with several of these proposed build
9 alternatives, and also there were some voices that
10 made comments about the aesthetics of the new
11 facility, but those were minor at the time.

12 A no-build alternative, that's what it's
13 called under Environmental Impact Statement; you
14 always compare your actions, your proposals, your
15 alternatives to what if you did nothing. So we looked
16 at the worst case if nothing was done years from now
17 and the port had to remain in its less than two-acre
18 size with new requirements, what impact would that
19 have against that no-build. Then we looked initially
20 at ten alternatives going back to 2008, when we
21 started, before this Environmental Impact Statement.
22 We started, the GSA started a feasibility study to
23 look at these program requirements, and we had
24 originally ten alternatives, five of which we -- at
25 that time, yes, we had just short of ten and we threw

1 out five of them after analyzing whether they would
2 possibly work; for various reasons they just weren't
3 practically viable. So we wound up at this point in
4 time, last September, with five viable alternatives,
5 which are on these boards tonight. Their numbers are
6 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10. That's why there's skipping
7 numbers. The others were dismissed early on. And
8 after we're through with this formal presentation,
9 some of you have already looked at them, but you're
10 free to go up there and look at them and come and ask
11 questions.

12 I guess I could refer back -- before I get
13 into summarizing any of the DIS and fielding
14 questions -- this is in the document. I'll kind of
15 read it verbatim, but so you get an idea. We don't
16 have a slide for this. But right now the existing
17 main operations building at the port is roughly
18 10,000 square feet, pretty close to 10,000 square
19 feet. There's two primary passenger vehicle
20 inspection lanes now, two secondary passenger vehicle
21 inspection lanes, one passenger vehicle bay, one
22 primary commercial vehicle inspection lane. There's
23 no commercial docks for inspecting or offloading
24 commercial vehicles, a loading dock, which a lot of
25 the newer ports have, there's none. There's no

1 primary inspection lanes for buses. There's one
2 pedestrian inspection lane, I think it's dual purpose,
3 and no outbound inspection lane at the current port.
4 The requirements now or what we propose the CBP
5 proposes is their need, what they would require in the
6 near future, in the next few years is a facility
7 approximately 17,000 square feet. So a 70 percent
8 larger facility, more or less, four primary vehicle
9 inspection lanes, ten versus two now, secondary
10 passenger vehicle inspection lanes, two primary
11 commercial lanes, two commercial vehicle docks, of
12 which there are none now, still no bus inspection
13 lane. They don't think, given your volume of buses,
14 they don't need an additional lane for that. And no
15 additional pedestrian inspection lane. But they also
16 need, lastly, an outbound inspection lane, because all
17 of you have been through the port many times, and
18 there's the conflict with the rails crossing and
19 traffic having to stop and cross, you know, from Boise
20 and from incoming and outgoing. So that's the
21 essential needs, programmatic needs.

22 I'd like to just mention, I guess we call it
23 a high level, very brief summary of the impacts,
24 switching to the statement now. What we concluded in
25 a nutshell, in a nutshell from this draft report is

1 that construction of any of these five build
2 alternatives would generally have a small impact on
3 the natural environment and the social environment of
4 International Falls; a small impact, one that really
5 isn't significant, with one exception, one or two
6 exceptions. The build alternatives would result in
7 minor changes or impacts to surface water, flood
8 plains and wetlands along the Rainy River primarily; a
9 small impact on traffic, land use, lighting and
10 historic resources; and also indirect economic impacts
11 to your business district south of the existing port.
12 In each case the changes would not be really
13 significant. In other words, they wouldn't be beyond
14 something that couldn't be mitigated or worked around
15 when we get to the actual design, with the possible
16 exception of the indirect impacts on local businesses.
17 As many people have voiced here, there's concern about
18 diverting passenger vehicles if the new port were
19 relocated down river, so to speak, from diverting
20 those passenger vehicles from the business district.
21 We understand that and one of our alternatives in
22 particular, Alternative 10, was designed to try to
23 minimize and even avoid those impacts.

24 So the purpose of the DIS is the document
25 that in accordance with, again some more government

1 acronyms here, NEPA, the National Environmental Policy
2 Act, that's what generates -- the National
3 Environmental Policy Act generates this document.
4 It's a planning document that is a concise analysis of
5 the physical, biological, social and economic impacts
6 to the natural and man-made environment for any
7 project, proposed federal project. It evaluates the
8 significance of those impacts and summarizes the
9 studies, consultations and coordination required by
10 other federal laws and executive orders. Really, the
11 purpose of it is to foster a dialogue, public
12 participation, it really is. That's why Congress, you
13 know, government enacted it over 30 years ago -- well,
14 40 years ago. This law has been in effect for 40
15 years last month or this month, the NEPA has, so
16 that's why we're doing this document. We're required
17 do it for a project of this nature.

18 Our next steps are to, as I said, close the
19 comment period on or about -- on March 5th, not about,
20 on March 5th, and a final EIS identifying the selected
21 alternative will be produced. That should be produced
22 by, what did I say, by April, around April. That will
23 identify the preferred alternative. Up to now we've
24 been trying to solicit comments. So in that document
25 we'll identify what the preferable alternative is.

1 After that the final step of the process for NEPA is
2 to issue a record of decision. That's signed by our
3 GSA regional administrator in Chicago, and it's really
4 the final piece that says on record this is GSA's
5 decision on where we prefer to build if the project
6 gets funded. I'll get to that next, actually. So
7 that's the process.

8 The schedule looks like -- and again, it's
9 not a fast track schedule. We wish it were a faster
10 process, but federal government funding has to go from
11 the GSA regional office, where all projects are
12 proposed; we do our best to fast track them. Then
13 they go to headquarters in Washington. After they've
14 been looked at in Washington, our central office
15 prioritizes them, you see; so it's ultimately central
16 office's call to look at all the regions' needs and
17 prioritize Port of Entry and other projects. So we
18 don't know how they will rank this project at this
19 time because that hasn't happened yet. We're doing
20 our best to get it high on the list, however. So the
21 earliest we would expect funding for design and site
22 acquisition, any property acquisition that would have
23 to be done, the earliest would be 2012, so we're
24 talking two years from now. That's an optimistic, yet
25 not an unrealistic estimation.

1 For construction to actually start, that's
2 another process to get funding, so we're looking at
3 four years from now; we're looking at another two
4 years. Roughly 2014 is when we could expect
5 construction to start, and that is usually -- not
6 usually -- it is pretty much a two-year process. It
7 took almost two years for the Warroad Port to get
8 built. It's about to open now, and it took the better
9 part of two years from groundbreaking to getting the
10 final product.

11 So that's enough talking by me. I hope that
12 painted the picture for you. I'm going to call on
13 Bill Plumpton to come up with me, and we're going to
14 throw the floor open to public comments. Don't be
15 shy. You don't have to come up to the mike; I think
16 there's so few of us, we can hear you, but your
17 comments will be for the record. I'll hand it off to
18 Bill here.

19 MR. PLUMPTON: People, thanks for coming out
20 and continuing to stay involved in your study. Yes,
21 this study belongs to the GSA, but it's as much your
22 study as it is theirs. So thank you again for coming
23 out. This is also your single greatest opportunity to
24 make your voices heard on this study and possibly
25 invoke some change as well. We're in our comment

1 period, Glenn; closes March 5th. You have really four
2 different ways to make your voices heard. Single best
3 way is to come on up tonight and give us your
4 comments, and we'll talk about commenting in a second.
5 Don't want to speak in public, that's okay. Feel free
6 to approach our stenographer in private afterwards.
7 Two other ways: We have some comment forms if you
8 prefer to fill those out, and then you can also mail a
9 letter to the General Services Administration, to
10 Glenn's attention before the close of the comment
11 period. You don't have to do all four ways. Any way
12 work and any way will get your comments conveyed and
13 they will be considered most seriously, Glenn, as the
14 GSA makes their final decision.

15 So let's talk about commenting for a second.
16 The General Services Administration is really looking
17 for a couple of different types of comments from you
18 guys this evening and during our comment period.
19 Number one, they're looking for factual errors in the
20 draft Environmental Impact Statement. They don't
21 profess to have all answers to all questions, and if
22 they said something that's not correct, they need to
23 know it. Secondly, the second type of comment they're
24 kind of seeking is, is there something left out, is
25 there an omission of important material that should be

1 in the EIS before a decision is made. Then the third
2 real type of comment that they're seeking, what are
3 your suggestions for how any of these alternatives can
4 be changed or adjusted or added to, to be quite frank,
5 to make a better project, because really what they
6 seek is a win-win situation for both the Customs and
7 Border Patrol, as well as the town of I-Falls and you
8 folks as well. So let me give you an example of the
9 kind of comment that I really want to tease out of
10 you. Hi, my name is Bill Plumpton and I'm from
11 International Falls, and I like alternative X. I
12 think alternative X best fixes the problems at the
13 port but does it in such a manner that it will have
14 the least impact to the City of I-Falls. And although
15 I like alternative X, I have some questions on it, I
16 have some concerns about it, and specifically my
17 questions and concerns revolve around some of the
18 pedestrian movements. That alternative, if I
19 understand it correctly, is going to require
20 pedestrians to travel a further distance than some of
21 the other alternatives. I think that could be a real
22 deterrent to some pedestrians back and forth across
23 the border; and GSA, during the design I'd like to see
24 what you can do to try and make some of those
25 pedestrian movements either a little smoother or a

1 little shorter or both. That's an example of the kind
2 of comment they want. They want to know what your
3 concerns are, why it's a concern, and if you have any
4 better ideas. Glenn, the process that you speak of is
5 one that is based on feedback. You guys are invested
6 in this study, you came out tonight to hear more, but
7 then also to make your voices heard. The GSA will
8 respond to you in their final Environmental Impact
9 Statement on what they've heard from you and how they
10 adjusted the alternatives in their thinking and
11 decision-making process. So your single greatest
12 change, to invoke some change, in our study is now.
13 That's it, unless there are any questions before we
14 get started as a group. We're ready to listen at this
15 point. Only one ground rule, our stenographer really
16 has to hear at all times so we may ask you to raise
17 your voice a little bit.

18 With that, unless anybody has a big question
19 on what we're trying to accomplish tonight, we're
20 ready to take comments and questions. Any big picture
21 question on what we're trying to achieve tonight? (No
22 response) Wonderful then. We're a small bunch.
23 Anybody who would like to go first? Councilman
24 Otterness.

25 MR. OTTERNESS: My name is Rod Otterness and

1 I'm here appearing on behalf of the City of
2 International Falls. I'd like to acknowledge
3 Councilmember Gail Rognerud in the audience, and
4 correct -- I am not a council member, I am the city
5 administrator. I'd also like to recognize
6 Commissioner Brian McBride, who along with the city
7 council and an active and engaged group of Chamber
8 members, including Bob Anderson, a member of the
9 chamber and also representing Boise, worked diligently
10 with GSA and their consultants prior to tonight's
11 hearing; and read just briefly to you the resolution
12 that the City of International Falls passed, which is
13 deemed Resolution 4609, which states, supporting,
14 quote, "Alternative Number 10 as the preferred
15 location for the new Port of Entry facility."
16 Skipping the whereases, "Now, therefore, be it
17 resolved the City of International Falls supports
18 Alternative 10 as the preferred location for the new
19 Port of Entry facility and requests that GSA include
20 this resolution in its Environmental Impact Study
21 being conducted for this new facility." That
22 resolution being offered by Council person Rognerud,
23 seconded by Ecklund and passed unanimously, and I will
24 offer you a certified copy of that resolution as I
25 conclude my comments.

1 I do want to point out, as noted in the draft
2 study, in excess of 400,000 personal vehicles cross
3 this bridge yearly, 25,000 commercial vehicles cross
4 this bridge, 15,000 pedestrians, 4,000 trains. As the
5 study clearly points out, there is congestion and
6 indeed safety and convenience problems associated with
7 the existing crossing.

8 We commend GSA and particularly Donald
9 Melcher for hearing the concerns of the local
10 community, and extending the efforts to include
11 Alternative 10 with the efforts of the county
12 commissioners, the chamber of commerce and the city
13 council. They arrived at what they believe is the
14 best solution, and clearly preferable to a no-build
15 alternative, which would leave this existing Land Port
16 of Entry with significant functional limitations and
17 indeed safety and congestion problems. Thank you.

18 MR. PLUMPTON: Thank you, Mr. Otterness.
19 Anyone else?

20 MR. RANDOLPH: Well, I won't come up. My
21 name is Terry Randolph and I'm a resident of the area
22 here. Bill basically stated my question earlier in
23 his supposition of a proposed question, pedestrian
24 traffic. The way it is now, you know, it's a fairly
25 decent walk to go across the bridge. With this

1 proposal 10, which I feel is also the best idea, as
2 pointed out to me, it's roughly 3500 extra feet to
3 walk down, come through customs or immigration and
4 back to the bridge before we physically get to the
5 bridge. And in weather like this and as Rod just
6 mentioned, the number was 15,000 pedestrians, that's
7 quite a number. I also realize that it would be up to
8 Customs and Immigration or Border Patrol to have a man
9 available or a person available to do the inspection
10 of the passage of a pedestrian. But that's my only
11 concern on this, that in weather like this I don't
12 think they would be too busy, but summertime, quite a
13 few people walk across the bridge rather than face the
14 traffic. Thank you.

15 MR. PLUMPTON: Thank you, Terry. Councilman
16 McBride.

17 COUNCILMAN McBRIDE: I'm Brian McBride,
18 Koochiching County Board of Commissioners. I'm here
19 to reiterate our support for resolution passed in the
20 fall of 2009 from the Board of Commissioners for Site
21 10. On behalf of Commissioner Lepper and myself, we'd
22 like to thank GSA and Don Melcher, the City of
23 International Falls, the Chamber of Commerce, Boise
24 Cascade, and local businesses, and I think I said the
25 Chamber of Commerce, for working on the subcommittee.

1 We really struggled looking at all the alternatives.
2 Site 10 came up and it was immediately embraced by our
3 subcommittee. GSA listened to our concerns, and we're
4 thankful. Again, on behalf of Koochiching County,
5 thank you.

6 MR. WITTMAN: Anyone else? No more comments?
7 Yes.

8 MS. BARNES: I'm Arden Barnes from Ranier.
9 These aren't anything pertaining to the facility, site
10 ten. I'm wondering about -- somebody should think
11 about where the new bridge is going. There will have
12 to be a new bridge someday and will this site be
13 adaptable to the construction of a new bridge wherever
14 it might go? Secondly, I'm a little concerned about
15 the traffic between the Burner Road and the second
16 creek. I don't know if that means anything to you
17 people, but for the locals it would. The traffic
18 that's going to be developed out there as a result of
19 the park, the Border Patrol, the customs, the logging
20 trucks coming from Canada, crossing the road to get to
21 the scale shack from the Canadian logging operations,
22 the big trucks coming in, all going to Canada on this
23 11E. The second creek to the Burner Road is going to
24 be quite a congested area, and I think there's going
25 to have to be lots of flashing lights and gates and

1 whatever, because when you count the roads that will
2 be developed by those various entities, I think there
3 will be eight or nine of them coming out, north and
4 south, whatever. And if 332 goes through up by the
5 second creek there, that's another one. These are
6 just things to think about, nothing with the plan.

7 MR. WITTMAN: Thank you, we'll take it under
8 consideration. Thank you.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROGNERUD: I'm Gail Rognerud
10 from the City of International Falls. Glenn, I just
11 have a question. When you're on a bicycle, are you
12 considered a pedestrian or would you go through with
13 the traffic?

14 MR. WITTMAN: That's a good question. I'm
15 not sure. I would think you would be pedestrian. I
16 shouldn't say I would think. I don't know. Does
17 anyone know? I could can find out and let you know.
18 We weren't asked that question before.

19 COUNCILMAN McBRIDE: One quick question in
20 response to what Mr. Randolph was questioning about
21 pedestrians. Now, there is a satellite station
22 planned in Site 10 or, I think, in Site 7, or
23 whatever, that pedestrians will clear customs
24 essentially where they clear now. They will not have
25 a 3500-foot walk around.

1 MR. WITTMAN: We need to clarify that a
2 little more. I know I was in on some of the meetings.
3 Done Melcher would know a better answer; he couldn't
4 be here tonight. There was talk at least seasonally
5 to free up -- the CBP was talking about freeing up a
6 man, particularly in the summer season, I think,
7 correct? That's when you have most of your pedestrian
8 traffic for weather reasons and others, to have
9 somebody up there, one man maybe or two, up at a
10 satellite presence there. That hasn't been decided as
11 to how that will happen. But we were talking to CBP
12 about it and how that could fly. So the answer is
13 yes, we're planning some sort of satellite presence
14 there. It's just not firmed up yet.

15 MS. SWENSON: I'm Chris Swenson, I work with
16 the duty-free store. The continued success of our
17 business is contingent upon being close to the traffic
18 that's going to Canada, and Alternative 10 does meet
19 that need. We do have some things that we look
20 forward to working out with everyone as far as how to
21 make our satellite crib location be viable and in the
22 best place that it needs to be. Pedestrian traffic is
23 also a concern for that because we do have a lot of
24 customers that are traveling by foot. So for them to
25 have to travel that extra 3500 feet, especially in

T.2

1 inclement weather, is not a very viable option for us.

2 MR. WITTMAN: We'll try to work that out.

3 MS. SWENSON: We do look forward to working
4 it out. So far it's looking good. Thank you.

5 MR. WITTMAN: Thank you for your comments.
6 Any other comments? If not -- speak now or forever
7 hold your peace. I want to thank you all for
8 attending and choosing to get involved. A lot of you,
9 particularly the county and city folks and really all
10 of you that show up, you're involved, and that's what
11 the NEPA process is about, that's what our planning
12 process is about. Believe me, we will take your
13 comments into serious consideration and try to work
14 out the best solution. So thank you, again.

15 I want to remind you that the comment period
16 closes on March 5th, if you want to make any
17 additional comments. Thank you.

18 (Hearing concluded at 7:40 p.m.)
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

Attachment B

Comment Letters and Correspondence



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

FEB 22 2010

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:

E-19J

Glenn Wittman
Regional Environmental Quality Advisor
Design & Construction Division
General Services Administration, Great Lakes Region
230 South Dearborn Street
Chicago, Illinois 60604-1696

Re: International Falls Land Port of Entry Improvements Study, Draft Environmental Impact Statement International Falls, Koochiching County, Minnesota. CEQ No.: 20100008

Dear Mr. Wittman:

In accordance with Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the above-referenced U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

GSA proposes to expand and replace the existing 1.6 acres Land Port of Entry (LPOE) with a new LPOE facility that meets the needs of the U.S. Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP), complies with GSA's design requirements, and provides safe and efficient inspection and processing of individuals, vehicles and freight at the border crossing between Fort Frances, Ontario, and International Falls, Minnesota.

The DEIS identifies and evaluates the No-Action and five action (build) alternatives (Alternatives 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10). All five action alternatives include the existing 1.6 acres LPOE site and range in size from 5.64 acres (Alternative 5) to 16.64 acres (Alternative 10). The action alternatives also vary in the number, type and layout of LPOE components (e.g., new main building, inspection lanes, parking lots, and access road). The DEIS-identified LPOE components for each alternative are depicted in site layout plans in DEIS Exhibits 2.3, 2.5, 2.7, 2.9 and 2.11. A preferred alternative is not identified. Based on our review of the DEIS, we rate all action alternatives "Environmental Concerns, Additional Information Needed" (EC-2). A summary of the rating system used in the evaluation of this document is enclosed. EPA's concern regards the potential for adverse impacts to water resources during project operation. Our specific concerns and recommendations follow.

The LPOE components of each build alternative will increase the impervious surface in the Rainy River watershed. Alternatives 7, 9 and 10 may result in direct impact to the Rainy River and its floodplain through the construction of piers to support a proposed access road. Storm water runoff from impervious surfaces, such the paved access road, and the inadvertent releases of hazardous

materials during project operation could adversely impact the water quality of the Rainy River and nearby wetlands. Road salt and vehicular fluids (such as motor oil, anti-freeze, and fuel) are among the constituents that could impact water quality. The DEIS contains little to no information regarding the proposed management and treatment of storm water run-off and inadvertent hazardous material releases during project operation. In addition, permanent storm water treatment components, such as detention basins, are not depicted in the build alternatives' site layout plans. To help insure that the water quality of the Rainy River and vegetated wetlands near the project area are not adversely impacted during project operation, EPA believes that additional information is needed.

1.1

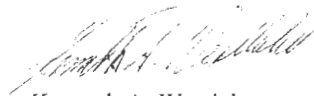
1.2

Prior to identifying a preferred alternative, we recommend GSA assess each alternative's potential for providing adequate management and treatment of storm water run-off and hazardous materials that may be inadvertently released during project operation. If necessary, we recommend GSA consider modifying a build alternative's LPOE components and layout to accommodate adequate storm water and hazardous materials management and treatment components. The results of this assessment and proposed treatment methods should be discussed in the Final EIS and treatment components identified on the alternatives' site layout plans.

We are pleased to see that the proposed project will be designed to incorporate elements of sustainable design. The DEIS identifies that GSA is committed to achieving a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Silver certification rating for the new LPOE at International Falls. In addition, we appreciate that GSA proposes to further reduce idling emissions and promote energy conservation and efficiency during operation of the LPOE, by promoting EPA's SmartWay Program through posting and distributing literature.

We look forward to reviewing the Final EIS (FEIS) for this proposal. If you have any questions, please contact Virginia Laszewski of my staff at (312) 886-7501 or at laszewski.virginia@epa.gov.

Sincerely,



Kenneth A. Westlake
Chief
NEPA Implementation Section
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

Enclosure: Summary of Rating Definitions

✓ cc: William Plumpton, Attention: GSA International Falls LPOE, Gannett Fleming, Inc.,
207 Senate Avenue, Camp Hill, PA 17011

SUMMARY OF RATING DEFINITIONS AND FOLLOWUP ACTIONS*

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE ACTION

LO—Lack of Objections

The EPA review has not identified any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the proposal. The review may have disclosed opportunities for application of mitigation measures that could be accomplished with no more than minor changes to the proposal.

EC—Environmental Concerns

The EPA review has identified environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. Corrective measures may require changes to the preferred alternative or application of mitigation measures that can reduce the environmental impact. EPA would like to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

EO—Environmental Objections

The EPA review has identified significant environmental impacts that must be avoided in order to provide adequate protection for the environment. Corrective measures may require substantial changes to the preferred alternative or consideration of some other project alternative (including the no action alternative or a new alternative). EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

EU—Environmentally Unsatisfactory

The EPA review has identified adverse environmental impacts that are of sufficient magnitude that they are unsatisfactory from the standpoint of public health or welfare or environmental quality. EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts. If the potential unsatisfactory impacts are not corrected at the final EIS stage, this proposal will be recommended for referral to the CEQ.

ADEQUACY OF THE IMPACT STATEMENT

Category 1—Adequate

EPA believes the draft EIS adequately sets forth the environmental impact(s) of the preferred alternative and those of the alternatives reasonably available to the project or action. No further analysis or data collection is necessary, but the reviewer may suggest the addition of clarifying language or information.

Category 2—Insufficient Information

The draft EIS does not contain sufficient information for EPA to fully assess environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment, or the EPA reviewer has identified new reasonably available alternatives that are within the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which could reduce the environmental impacts of the action. The identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussion should be included in the final EIS.

Category 3—Inadequate

EPA does not believe that the draft EIS adequately assesses potentially significant environmental impacts of the action, or the EPA reviewer has identified new, reasonably available alternatives that are outside of the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which should be analyzed in order to reduce the potentially significant environmental impacts. EPA believes that the identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussions are of such a magnitude that they should have full public review at a draft stage. EPA does not believe that the draft EIS is adequate for the purposes of the NEPA and/or Section 309 review, and thus should be formally revised and made available for public comment in a supplemental or revised draft EIS. On the basis of the potential significant impacts involved, this proposal could be a candidate for referral to the CEQ.

*From EPA Manual 1640 Policy and Procedures for the Review of Federal Actions Impacting the Environment.



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance
Custom House, Room 244
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106-2904



March 3, 2010

9043.1
ER 10/76

Mr. William Plumpton
Attention: GSA International Falls LPOE
Gannett Fleming, Inc.
207 Senate Avenue
Camp Hill, PA 17011

Dear Mr. Plumpton:

The U. S. Department of the Interior (Department) has no comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the International Falls Land Port of Entry Improvements Study in International Falls, Koochiching County, Minnesota.

Thank you for the opportunity for comment.

Sincerely,

Michael T. Chezik
Regional Environmental Officer



International Joint Commission United States and Canada

March 1, 2010

Mr. William Plumpton
Attn: GSA International Falls LPOE
Gannett Fleming, Inc.
207 Senate Avenue
Camp Hill, PA 17011

Re: Review of International Falls Land Port of Entry Improvements Study Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Plumpton:

I am writing in response to the letter received from Glenn Wittman offering the International Joint Commission (IJC) the opportunity to comment on the International Falls Land Port of Entry Improvements Study Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Under the *Boundary Waters Treaty* of 1909, the IJC reviews applications for uses, obstructions and diversions of boundary waters that affect the natural level or flow of waters across the international boundary between the United States and Canada. Applications for uses, obstructions, and diversions of boundary waters are submitted to the IJC by either the United States Department of State or Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, which determine whether an application to the IJC is necessary during their domestic permitting processes. The IJC has not received an application related to this project and, thus, is not in a position to provide comments.

We appreciate receiving the letter and EIS and will be referring them to our International Rainy River Water Pollution Board for its information. The Board was established by IJC to maintain continued supervision over water quality and quantity in the Rainy River.

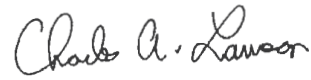
The EIS mentions that the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is evaluating the environmental impacts of the proposed project on surface water, floodplains, wetlands, along with impacts from hazardous substances and land use changes. The GSA may wish to take note of reports on the use of green infrastructure to minimize the possibility or intensity of adverse environmental effects. Examples of green infrastructure are referenced on page 25 of the IJC's 2009 Fourteenth Biennial Report (<http://www.ijc.org/php/publications/pdf/ID1631.pdf>) and

2401 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, 4th Floor, Washington, DC 20440
Telephone: 202.736.9000 Fax: 202.254.4564 Email: Commission@washington.ijc.org

include planting trees, using rain collecting barrels or roof gardens, constructing infiltration systems, and using permeable paving.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If further information is required, please contact Vic Serveiss, Environmental Advisor, who may be reached at: serveissv@washington.ijc.org or 202-736-9017.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles A. Lawson".

Charles A. Lawson
Secretary
United States Section

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

500 Lafayette Road • St. Paul, MN • 55155-40



March 5, 2010

William Plumpton
Attention: GSA International Falls LPOE
Gannet Fleming, Inc.
207 Senate Avenue
Camp Hill, PA 17011

Re: International Falls Land Port of Entry Draft EIS

Dear Mr. Plumpton:

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the International Falls Land Port of Entry Improvements project. The MDNR offers the following comments for your consideration.

Potential Effects on Aquatic Habitats and Fish and Wildlife

This part of the Rainy River has moderate slopes along the project area and several important rapids about one mile above the dam. With the relative paucity of lotic habitats in the Rainy Lake portion of the Rainy River above the dam, this section of the river attracts various aquatic species and provides important spawning habitat. The Rainy River provides important habitat for sensitive species such as lake sturgeon as well as popular game fish (e.g. walleye, northern pike, muskie). The upper Rainy River above the International Falls Dam is also a popular fishing area.

The physical site of the proposed project, including buildings, parking, roads, etc., would likely greatly increase amount of impervious surfaces along this portion of the river. Especially concerning is the secure corridor (as proposed for Alternatives 7, 9, and 10) that would be built very close to the Rainy River. The increases in impervious surfaces could produce a large increase in stormwater and pollution to the Rainy River during spring runoff and storm events. The percentage of impervious surface needs to be determined for each alternative to assist in determining which alternative should be carried forward.

Early Coordination (Contacts and Permits)

Public Waters Work Permit: It appears that several of the alternatives that have been carried forward would affect public waters of the State of Minnesota and may require a Public Waters Work Permit. The MDNR Water Permits Unit oversees the administration of the Public Waters Work Permit Program. This program regulates water development activities below the ordinary high water level (OHWL) in public waters and public waters wetlands. Examples of development activities addressed by this program include filling, excavation, shore protection, bridges and culverts, structures, docks, marinas, water level controls, dredging, and dams. MDNR wildlife and fisheries staff is involved in reviewing these permits.

Shoreland Management Rules: The MDNR Shoreland Management Program provides the backbone of statewide standards that local governmental units must adopt into their own land use controls to provide for the orderly development and protection of Minnesota's shorelands (both rivers and lakes). The current shoreland rules define the standards for stormwater management for local government reviews, approvals, and permit issuances. Stormwater management tasks include, most importantly, establishing: 1) thresholds for the amount of impervious surfaces in the shoreland zone, 2) appropriate setbacks from the river, 3) the best means of stormwater conveyance, appropriate techniques for erosion control, 4) soils stabilization and stormwater velocity minimization, and 5) appropriate technical guides for constructed

4.1

www.dnr.state.mn.us

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Mr. W. Plumpton
March 5, 2010
Page 2 of 2

stormwater facilities. The MDNR Area Hydrologists and Shoreland Management staff provides planning and zoning assistance to local governmental units. Shoreland means land located within the 300 feet of a river or stream, or the landward extent of a flood plain designated by ordinance on a river or stream, whichever is greater.

Additional information and early coordination with MDNR staff about future designs, the required permits, interpretation of the shoreland management rule, and the potential for mitigation of such developments can be obtained by contacting the MDNR Area Hydrologist at (218) 327-4106.

Opportunities for Mitigation

4.2

Erosion and sediment control during the construction phase can be a challenge for developers with short and sometimes wet summers. This stretch of the river has been heavily used and altered by industry and others over the years. The project developers should retain as much of the “natural” character of the shoreline as possible. Depending on the site chosen, there could be an opportunity to “restore” a natural shoreline and use creative ways to manage runoff from impervious surfaces (on site retention ponds, rain water gardens, etc.). Security concerns may not be compatible with a demonstration site; however, all efforts should be taken to showcase how to develop a shoreline in an environmentally sound manner.

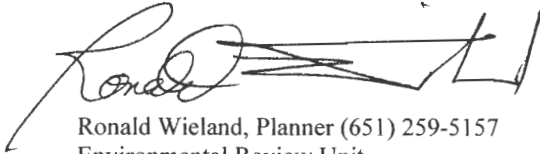
4.3

The Rainy River provides habitat for a number of different fish, including lake sturgeon. Any new infrastructure developed adjacent to the Rainy River should include appropriate riparian buffers and measures to deal with runoff from impervious surfaces. Onsite inspections for invasive species should also be done prior to construction; proper measures to control their spread should be a part of the plan.

4.4

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Draft EIS and for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,



Ronald Wieland, Planner (651) 259-5157
Environmental Review Unit
Division of Ecological Resources



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

520 Lafayette Road North | St. Paul, MN 55155-4194 | 651-296-6300 | 800-675-3843 | 651-282-5332 TTY | www.pca.state.mn.us

March 2, 2010

Mr. Glenn Wittman
Regional Environmental Quality Advisor
U.S. General Services Administration - Public Buildings Service
Design and Construction Division
230 South Dearborn Street, Room 3600
Chicago, IL 60604

RE: Draft EIS, Proposed Land Port of Entry, International Falls, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Wittman:

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Environmental Review Unit has reviewed the information in the Notice of Availability (NOA) for the proposed new land port of entry (LPOE) in International Falls, Koochiching County, Minnesota. Based on the information provided in the NOA, and with regard to matters for which the MPCA has regulatory or other interests, we have the following comments.

- In addition to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources authorities over state waters described on page 68 of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the MPCA has authority over waters within Minnesota that originates from Sections 401 & 402 of the Clean Water Act. The project may require a Section 401 Water Quality Certification determination from the MPCA depending upon the permitting mechanism by the United States Army Corps of Engineers for any impacts to wetlands or the Rainy River.
- A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System/State Disposal System (NPDES/SDS) Construction Stormwater Permit is required from the MPCA if any of the following apply: the project work will disturb one acre or more of land, less than one acre of soil if that activity is part of a "larger common plan of development or sale" that is greater than one acre, or less than one acre of soil, but the MPCA determines that the activity poses a risk to water resources. Information regarding the MPCA's Construction Stormwater Program can be found on the MPCA's Web site at: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/stormwater/stormwater-c.html>. Questions regarding Construction Stormwater Permit requirements should be directed to Larry Zdon at 651-757-2839.
- Page 63 of the Draft EIS states that there are three reported storage tank leak incidents in the study area. However, a review of the MPCA Leak Site database identified approximately 13 tank release sites located within the project study area. The identified sites are listed in the following table:

Leak No.	Site Name	Address	Status
423	JET #23312	301 4 th St & Hwy 53	Closed October 1, 1992
2114	Rex Service Station	4 th St & Hwy 53	Closed July 29, 1993
2618	Utility Development	Hwy 11 E.	Closed September 24, 1991
3026	Winery	3 rd St & 3 rd Ave E	Closed October 17, 1996
4538	Butch's Amoco	401 3 rd Ave	Closed September 27, 1996
7571	Former People's Plus	Hwys. 11 & 71	Closed May 6, 1999
8829	Falls Redi Mix	Hwy 11E	Closed September 29, 2006
8914	Former Conoco #23312	301 4 th St	Closed July 15, 1996
10696	Northern National Bank	419 3rd St	Closed October 6, 1997
10730	AMMEX Tax and Duty Free	226 1/2 2nd Ave	Closed July 23, 1998
12064	Northstar Publishing Co	500 3rd St E	Closed October 9, 2000
14220	Salvation Army Thrift Store	413 4th Ave	Closed December 9, 2002
15432	Duty Free America	226 2nd Ave	Closed March 29, 2007

5.2 |

In addition to the sites listed above, there are also identified sites that are adjacent to the study area. It should be assumed that petroleum contamination may be present in proximity to any of the identified sites. If petroleum contamination is encountered during future development work, MPCA staff should be notified immediately. For specific information regarding petroleum contamination that may remain at these leak sites, please call the Petroleum Remediation Program File Request Program at 651-757-2799 or 651-757-2309. The fact sheet, Managing Petroleum Contaminated Soil at Public Works Projects, has information to assist the city with this process, including how to identify potential sources of contamination. The fact sheet can be found at: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/publications/c-prp5-01.pdf>. If contamination is found, it must be reported immediately to the State Duty Officer at 651-649-5451 or 800-422-0798.

- The Notice of Environmental Review states that the existing LPOE building will be demolished. The demolition will require the City and/or their contractor to complete MPCA form titled "Notification of Intent to Perform a Demolition." The form can be found at: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/publications/w-sw4-21.pdf>. In order to complete the form, an inspection of building(s) by an asbestos certified contractor/consultant would be required. In addition, any hazardous waste items such as mercury switches, PCB ballasts, lead paint, florescent lights, and paint cans would have to be identified, removed, and disposed of properly. The form needs to be received by the MPCA at least ten days prior to commencement of demolition in order to allow for a pre-demolition inspection to be conducted after all potentially hazardous materials have been removed. The MPCA encourages building deconstruction techniques that allow for the reuse and recycling of building materials, which can reduce waste volumes and decrease hauling and disposal costs. The demolition materials that cannot be recycled or reused must be disposed of at a MPCA permitted demolition landfill, a municipal solid waste landfill, or an industrial landfill. In the event asbestos containing materials are discovered onsite, contact Derek Pemble at 651-757-2647.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this project. Please be aware that this letter does not constitute approval by the MPCA of any or all elements of the project for the purpose of pending or future permit action(s) by the MPCA. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the project proposer to secure any required permits and to comply with any requisite permit conditions. If you have any questions concerning our review of this environmental assessment, please contact me at 651-757-2746.

Sincerely,



Steven Sommer
Planner Principal
Environmental Review and Feedlot Section
Regional Division

SS:mbo

cc: William Plumpton, Gannett Fleming, Inc.
Craig Affeldt, MPCA, St. Paul
Larry Zdon, MPCA, St. Paul
Derek Pemble, MPCA, St. Paul
Tom Estabrooks, MPCA, Duluth
Suzanne Hanson, MPCA, Duluth



Minnesota Department of Transportation

1123 Mesaba Avenue
Duluth, MN 55811-2798
Office Tel: 218/ 725-2700
Fax: 218/ 725-2800

101 N. Hoover Road
Virginia, MN 55792-3412
Office Tel: 218/ 742-1100
Fax: 218/ 742-1086

February 24, 2010

Mr. William Plumpton
Gannett Fleming, Inc.
207 Senate Avenue
Camp Hill, PA 17011

Subject: GSA International Falls LPOE

Dear Mr. Plumpton:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the International Falls Port of Entry Improvements Study in International Falls, Koochiching County, Minnesota. This EIS was reviewed by Mn/DOT's District engineering staff and has resulted in some highway right-of-way and traffic related issues.

Our review indicates that Alternative 10 appears to be the preferred alternative, to which the following comments apply:

1. There is a statement that **there will be a signal** at the commercial vehicle entrance on TH 11. Mn/DOT can only support a signal system if it meets signal warrants identified in the Federal Manual. **6.1**

There will need to be a permit to construct the entrance on TH 11 and any associated turn lanes. At the time of the permit application, the geometric layout for the turn lanes will be reviewed. Also, the turn lanes must conform with the Mn/DOT road design manual.
2. It appears that a portion of the TH 53 highway right-of-way will no longer be needed for trunk highway purposes. We will need to have a discussion about disposition of the right-of-way. We suggest terminating TH 53 at the point where the new non-commercial vehicle entrance leaves the existing TH 53 right-of-way. All Mn/DOT maintenance responsibility would end at that point. **6.2**
3. There is a Koochiching County maintained multi-use trail on the north side of the TH 11 road alignment on the highway right-of-way. This trail is not shown on the site layouts and must be maintained. **6.3**
4. Mn/DOT suggests railroad crossing control be included at the new rail crossing location for non-commercial vehicles. **6.4**

Thank you for allowing Mn/DOT to review and comment on this project's Draft EIS. Please feel free to contact me at 218-725-2707 if you have questions, concerns, or need to coordinate future development activities for this project.

Sincerely,

Duane R. Hill, P.E.
Assistant District Engineer, Operations

cc: Brian Larson, Mike Tardy, Rob Ege, Walter Leu, Denny Johnson, Roberta Dwyer, Kevin Adolfs, Bob Wryk, Wayne Scheer, Bob Lavern, Gerry Larson

An equal opportunity employer



STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

February 2, 2010

Mr. William Plumpton
Attn: GSA International Falls LPOE
Gannett Fleming, Inc.
207 Senate Avenue
Camp Hill, PA 17011

RE: Construction of a New Land Port of Entry Facility, Vacate Existing Building
International Falls, Koochiching County
SHPO Number: 2009-3553

Dear Mr. Plumpton:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above project. It has been reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given the State Historic Preservation Officer by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36CFR800).

We have received and reviewed the survey report entitled "Historic Study of International Falls: Cultural Resources Survey of the Existing International Falls, Minnesota Land Port of Entry (LPOE)" prepared by Debra Kellner. We have the following comments:

7.1

- (1) We believe that an archaeological survey needs to be completed for this project. This survey should include historical archaeology.
- (2) Please provide a research design for the study referenced above. Please refer to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Archaeology and Historic Preservation: Guidelines for Identification. Please include inventory forms for the properties that are evaluated as part of the project.
- (3) The purpose of a survey/report is to identify properties in the area of potential effect (APE) and complete evaluations to determine their eligibility for the National Register. After this is completed, effects can be determined.

7.2

- (4) Page 10: Please complete the evaluation of the Riverside Hotel. The evaluation of the hotel needs to place the significance of the role the Riverside Hotel played in the International Falls' hotel industry. Noting that there is "some level of associated historical significance" is not sufficient. Considering the extent of remodeling, a careful assessment of the building's historic physical integrity is a critical part of the evaluation.
- (5) Page 11, Former Bronko (**not Bronco**) Nagurski Gas Station. Bronko Nagurski achieved fame as a professional football player in the 1930s, and he was treated as a local hero when he returned to International Falls. If a fan wanted to meet Bronko, very likely they visited him

at his gas station. The 1973 remodeling of the gas station is unfortunate, because it seemingly obliterated any physical vestiges of the gas station Bronko operated. Do historic photos suggest otherwise? The report needs to acknowledge the association, but also has to evaluate the property in light of the robust remodeling. This is very important because it will answer the question of whether the property meets the National Register Aspects of Integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling (see pages 44 and 45 in National Register Bulletin, "How to Apply National Register Criteria for Evaluation", and ultimately if the property meets National Register Criteria.

7.3

- (6) Apparently each alternative is an APE. Are there any indirect effects that would extend the APE? What is the difference between the APE's and the larger Study Area found in the "International Falls Land Port of Entry Improvements Study, Draft Environmental Impact Statement?" What, if any, effects are there on the adjacent Boise paper mill?

7.4

We look forward to working with you to complete this review. Please contact our Compliance Section at (651) 259-3455 with any questions or concerns regarding our review of this project.

Sincerely,



Britta L. Bloomberg
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

cc: Debra Kellner, Historical Consultant



International Falls Area
Chamber of Commerce

February 17, 2010

Mr. William Plumpton
Attention: GSA International Falls LPOE
Gannett Fleming, Inc.
P.O. Box 67100
Harrisburg, PA 17106-7100

Dear Mr. Plumpton:

The International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors has been following with great concern and interest the International Falls Land Port of Entry scoping process of the Environmental Impact Study (EIS). The board and our membership see the Port of Entry and its location as a critical component to a prospering community. We are also aware the EIS is nearing completion and public concerns continue to linger over pedestrian/bicycle traffic and how they will be accommodated.

For these reasons, the International Falls Area Chamber Commerce Board of Directors and its members want to go on record in support of Alternative Site 10 with comments/concerns on how pedestrian/bicycle traffic will be accommodated. We feel this site with the entrance and exit to the LPOE on 2nd Avenue will have the least impact on the community and will preserve the footprint of our community.

In closing, we support and applaud all of your efforts during the scoping process of the EIS and we thank you for the opportunity to support and voice our opinion on this important project.

Sincerely,

Betsy Jensen, President
On behalf of the Board of Directors
International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce

Cornerstone Of Our Community

301 Second Avenue • International Falls, MN 56649 • 218-283-9400 • 1-800-325-5766 • Fax: 218-283-3572
chamber@intfalls.org • www.ifallschamber.com

110 Riverview Blvd.
International Falls, MN 56649
February 3, 2010

Glenn Wittman
GSA Public Buildings Service
Design & Consultation Division
230 South Dearborn Street
MC5PCAE, Suite 3600
Chicago, IL 60604

Re: International Falls Border Protection Facility

Dear Sir;

After attending your informational meeting in International Falls, I would like to comment on your proposal:

- 1) In looking at some of your designs, I see all of these little buildings, each one separate. Overall cost of all those smaller buildings is going to be substantial compared to one single building like Pembina, North Dakota: maintenance, heating, cooling, construction, health, safety and tax dollars. | 9.1
- 2) Proximity of the project to the water's edge means pollution into the river. You can put all the drains you want but the drains still freeze in this area. You have air pollution from vehicle exhausts that will settle in the water; and tight conditions with vehicles close together means people are breathing fumes. You also have the potential of leakage into the river. The biggest thing of all is--the river never freezes over at that point. Wind funnels down the river creating a frigid, very hostile environment for anyone being outside. Finally, it means your heating costs are going to be very high. | 9.2
| 9.3
| 9.4
- 3) The proximity to the Boise stacks and the air pollution emitted has been documented and is unhealthy. Your own customs inspectors have complained about breathing those fumes. | 9.5
- 4) Traffic design is not a good smooth flow. There is going to be so much congestion with left hand turns and backups like you have now. That means extra law enforcement on weekends for traffic control. | 9.6
- 5) The old bridge presently used is outdated and structurally deficient as has been documented.

6) When you consider the money to be spent and upkeep of the design you have, it would be in the taxpayers better interest to locate that facility to the east coming off Hwy #332 straight across the river to Canada.

A. Construct a new six lane bridge. Footings on the bedrock would be excellent compared to the present one we have.

B. You could have all your customs facilities for truck, vehicle, and immigration in one spot.

C. Operating costs would be substantially cheaper, less pollution hazard, and safer air quality.

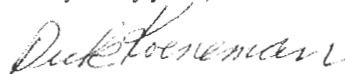
D. You could have Customs and Immigration for both countries in one building like they do in Montana and other places.

E. You would have more room and better working conditions than the present design.

I realize that this idea is not what the City of International Falls wants for traffic flows, but I believe the trade off of quicker access to the border and Canada would mean people *would* shop and stop *more* because the wait to get into Canada would be 90% less than it is now. The city project for Voyageurs National Park could be moved to the west without any trouble.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very kindly yours,



Richard D. Koeneman

2775 County Road 94
International Falls, MN 56649
January 31, 2010

Mr. Glenn Wittman
GSA Public Buildings Service
Design & Consultation Division
230 South Dearborn St.
MC 5PCAE, Suite 3600
Chicago, IL 60604

**Re.: Draft Environmental Impact Statement
International Falls Customs and Border Protection Facility**

Dear Mr. Wittman:

This is to comment upon proposed traffic flow patterns associated with the new Customs and Border Protection Facility planned for International Falls, Minnesota.

It is our understanding that passenger vehicles will exit the facility and pass through the central business district while commercial vehicles will exit onto Highway 11 East. We would like to request that provision be made to allow area residents living east of International Falls to also exit directly to Highway 11 East. The current border crossing has to be one of the most convoluted crossings in the country. The planned facility will only exacerbate this situation. We understand the International Falls business community's desire to funnel tourists through the downtown, but we would like the option to proceed straight home by the shortest, least convoluted route.

Sincerely,


Allan and Myrna Meadows

From: "Border Bob's" [borderbobs@frontiernet.net]
Sent: 01/26/2010 12:18 PM CST
To: Glenn Wittman
Subject: Corrections to Int'l Falls LPOE Improvements Study

Mr. William Plumpton
Attention: GSA International Falls LPOE
Gannett Fleming, Inc.
207 Senate Avenue
Camp Hill, PA 17011

January 26, 2010

Dear Mr. Plumpton:

I am in receipt of the International Falls Land Port of Entry Improvements Study and wish to convey my comments and correct the record regarding a few findings applicable to our business (Border Bob's) in International Falls.

I want to go on record that we have always been adamantly opposed to alternatives 7 and 9 as they would totally destroy the economic viability of the downtown area and would result in long term sustainable losses to the entire community.

11.1

In the months before Alternative 10 was developed, we consistently supported Alternative 5 and consistently stated that if Alternative 8 was to result, that Border Bob's would seek to purchase suitable land in the community and rebuild assuming proceeds from the sale of our property to the government provided sufficient funds to do so. On Page S-12 of your report, it states "If acquired and displaced, the owner of Border Bob's merchandise has indicated that he would not seek to reestablish his business in the area...". A similar comment is reflected on page 77. These comments are erroneous.

Alternative 10 resulted from meetings between the GSA and local government officials and some concerned citizens and business owners, myself included. Alternative 10 is a commendable effort on behalf of GSA to achieve the goals of their client at minimal impact to the community of International Falls. If for any reason Alternative 10 does not become the chosen alternative, we still adamantly oppose Alternatives 7 and 9, preferring instead either Alternative 5 or 8.

Finally, on Page 95, while it is true that we did not respond in writing to the general letter you sent, I did provide extensive remarks to our positions on all alternatives in the community meeting at Rainy River Community College and though it is my mistake, I felt that I had provided sufficient input via that meeting and I did not have additional comments to make.

We appreciate the efforts you are making on behalf of your clients and the sensitivity you have shown to all of the communities concerns. Please keep us informed going forward.

Respectfully,

Bob Neuenschwander
President, Border Bob's

