

G. Coordination

In April of 2006, the FHWA submitted a Notice of Intent to the *Federal Register* to adopt the 2003 Final Environmental Impact Statement that was written for the proposed South Lawrence Trafficway highway project. The EIS was prepared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Kansas City District, as part of a Section 404 Permit Application.

As part of the early coordination process, the FHWA sent to all the recipients of the Final EIS a letter informing them that the FHWA in cooperation with the Kansas Department of Transportation intends to adopt the Final EIS in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality's Regulations. The letter was dated April 6, 2006, and also informed the recipients the intent by FHWA to prepare and process an individual Section 4(f) Evaluation and then conclude the decision-making process with the preparation and approval of its own Record of Decision. A 45-day comment period was provided for comments concerning FHWA's intent to adopt the Final EIS and the comment period ended May 31, 2006.

On May 9, 2006, the FHWA and KDOT met with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in Washington D.C. to discuss the project status, and Section 106 requirements.

On June 20, 2006, Dr. Roger Boyd of Baker University led a field review of the Baker Wetlands for KDOT and FHWA personnel. Dr. Boyd discussed the history and features of the Baker Wetlands.

Public Review

The initial public review period for the Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation ran from November 14, 2006 to January 5, 2007. In addition, the FHWA granted a request for a longer review period, consequently extending the comment period to January 19, 2007.

A public open house concerning the Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation was held at the National Guard Armory in Lawrence on Thursday, December 14, 2006. Approximately 140 people attended the open house, which ran from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and was hosted by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) with assistance from KDOT as part of the FHWA's Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation process. Public meetings are not required for the process, but the FHWA wanted to inform people and get comments about the potential impacts of two alternative alignments on the historic nature of the Haskell Agricultural Farm Property (a portion of which includes land now known as the Baker Wetlands) and the William Meairs Farmstead, located south of the Wakarusa River.

Many visitors at the public open house expressed their preference for an alternative, some were concerned about how Native American heritage in the area would be affected, and some questioned the need for the Trafficway altogether. Guests also commented about potential impacts to the Baker Wetlands natural environment, although that was not the focus of the open house.

Summary of Comments

Forty-seven (47) written comments and 24 comments spoken to a court reporter were received during the public open house. The FHWA added these comments to the other comment forms and letters it received during the initial comment period and during the extension period, which ended on January 19, 2007, resulting in a total of 228 comments. In general, most of the comments regarded either approval of, or opposition to the alternatives presented in the Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation. A summary of the general nature of the comments is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 – Summary of Comments

General Comment	No. of Applicable Comments
Favor 32 nd Street B Alignment	120
Favor 42 nd Street A Alignment	52
Oppose alignment through the wetlands/HAFP	17
Favor No-Action Alternative	14
Build trafficway on another route	12
Build either alignment (32 nd B or 42 nd A)	8
Oppose 42 nd Street A Alignment	1
Concur with whatever HINU wants	1
Involve HINU if 32 nd Street alignment is chosen	1
Request extension of comment period	1
No comment / no concerns	1

Responses to substantive comments received during the public review period for the Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation are discussed in section H of this document.