City Council Introduction: **Monday**, August 6, 2001
City Council/County Board Joint Public Hearing
Wednesday, August 15, 2001, at 4:00 p.m. and
Wednesday, August 22, 2001, 3:00 p.m.

Bill No. 01R-207

FACTSHEET

TITLE: **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 94-63**, requested by the Director of Planning and the Director of Public Works and Utilities, to amend the Long Range Transportation Plan and other appropriate portions of the 1994 Lincoln/Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan, to reflect the inclusion of the ***East Far Beltway*** as a four lane freeway, generally between 134th and 148th Streets, from Highway 2 to Interstate 80.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial.

SPONSOR: Planning Department

BOARD/COMMITTEE: Planning Commission
Public Hearing: 07/11/01 and07/18/01
Administrative Action: 07/25/01

RECOMMENDATION: Denial (7-0: Hunter, Steward, Taylor, Newman, Duvall, Carlson and Schwinn voting 'yes'; Bayer and Krieser declaring a conflict of interest).

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. This Comprehensive Plan Amendment and the separate Comprehensive Plan Amendments for the South, East Middle and East Close beltway routes had public hearing before the Planning Commission at the same time. Public Hearings were held on July 11 and July 18, 2001. Administrative Action was held on July 25, 2001. The Minutes are found on p.001-029 of the "**Planning Commission Minutes and Exhibits**" which is submitted under separate cover and incorporated herein by reference.

2. The staff recommendation is a joint recommendation by the Planning Department and the Public Works and Utilities Department. A ***Summary of Recommendation*** on all four amendments is found on p.2-4.

3. The staff report on this Comprehensive Plan Amendment No. 94-63 is found on p.5-25. The staff recommendation to **deny** this Comprehensive Plan Amendment for the **East Far Beltway** is based upon the "Analysis" and "Conclusion" as set forth on p.5-12, concluding, in part, that the community has two alternatives to the East Far route which are superior in terms of transportation function and Comprehensive Plan implications. The East Far route would not serve the goals of the Comprehensive Plan as well as either of the other two east routes.

4. All correspondence, oral and written testimony and additional information submitted on all four beltway proposals is submitted under separate cover entitled ***Planning Commission Minutes and Exhibits*** and incorporated herein by reference.

5. On July 25, 2001, the Planning Commission voted 7-0 to recommend denial of ***Comprehensive Plan Amendment No. 94-63, East Far Beltway***. (See *Planning Commission Minutes and Exhibits,* p.22).

FACTSHEET PREPARED BY: Jean L. Walker

DATE: July 30, 2001

REVIEWED BY:_____

DATE: July 30, 2001

REFERENCE NUMBER: FS\CC\CPA94-63

Lincoln Public Works and Utilities Department
Lincoln-Lancaster Planning Department
Memorandum

TO: Mayor Don Wesely
City Council
County Board
Planning Commission

FROM: Allan Abbott, Public Works & Utilities
Kathleen Sellman, Planning

DATE: June 27, 2001

SUBJECT: ***Summary of Recommendation on the South and East Beltway Comprehensive Plan Amendments #94-62 through #94-65***

COPIES: Mark Bowen, Ann Harrell, Mayor's Office
Roger Figard, Virendra Singh, Kelly Sieckmeyer, Dennis Bartels, Public Works
Kent Morgan, Stephen Henrichsen, Mike Brienzo, Ed Zimmer, Planning

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The purpose of these Comprehensive Plan Amendments is not to determine the accuracy or merits of the Draft South and East Beltway Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), but is to determine if a particular Beltway is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. The South and East Beltway Study has undergone seven years of public input and extensive analysis. The public has reviewed and commented on the DEIS. These comments have been seriously reviewed and considered. The March 1, 2001 version of the DEIS concludes that "comparison of the four finalist beltway alternatives indicates that all of the alternatives will serve the project purpose and need, and all of the alternatives are considered feasible and cost-effective solutions."

For the Comprehensive Plan, the function of the Beltway is broader and more complex than use for vehicular traffic alone. The current 1994 Comprehensive Plan has many goals, strategies and statements relating to the function and use of the Beltway, such as:

- *Provide for a long-range plan to develop early identification of bypass corridors and right-of-way retention.*

- *Proceed with development of the Beltway and Antelope Creek Trafficway projects.*

- *Complete implementation of the Beltway to complete a circumferential system for external to external truck traffic.*

- *Consider the development of new, major corridors such as the Beltway as linear open spaces as well as major highways, integrated into development and open space patterns in developing parts of Lincoln.*

- *Program trails development as part of the City's transportation capital program as well as its recreational effort. Include trails and linear parks in the development of new major transportation projects, such as Antelope Valley and the South and East Beltway…*

In addition, there are other relevant statements from the Comprehensive Plan for use in the analysis of the particular routes:

- *Provide for the mobility needs of the community through a balanced and efficient system of roads, trails and public transportation alternatives.*

- *Maintain and enhance an efficient network of roads and public ways that allows the movement of people and freight to all areas of the community, prioritized to meet the current and future needs, balancing environmental effects, safety concerns, cost effectiveness, urban design and relationships to other community goals.*

- *Preserve highly productive agricultural land for agrarian purposes, as well as allow rural, nonagricultural residences; protect ecological and historic sites in rural Lancaster County.*

- *Exercise stewardship by preserving, protecting and enhancing our historic resources for future generations.*

The **East Middle** Beltway route is the **best route** compared to East Close or East Far because:

- **Transportation Functions:** The East Middle route would aid in completing a circumferential roadway and provide a new truck route without the less efficient "backtracking" found in the East Close and East Far options. According to the DEIS, all three east beltway routes will be of limited value for internal traffic relief.

- The Comprehensive Plan encourages the development of trails, open space, utilities and alternative transportation modes along major transportation corridors. The East Middle route has the **greatest potential as a multi-use corridor** for trails, open space, utilities and other transportation alternatives, particularly compared to the other two routes. It could integrate well with a possible trail in Stevens Creek and then tie into trails along the South Beltway route to Wilderness Park trails. The potential as an open space corridor is significant given that it is within ½ mile of Stevens Creek for over a 6 mile stretch. The East Middle route also parallels an existing LES transmission line and 150 foot easement so this route could function as a joint utility and road corridor for over 8 miles. Highway 2 between 40th and 48th Streets is a good example of a multiple use corridor where there are transmission lines, a trail, open space, storm water corridor and roadway uses.

- **Comprehensive Plan Implications**: The goals of the Comprehensive Plan encourage protecting rural and urban neighborhoods, historic resources and preserving the environment. The amount of residential impact in the East Close route is unacceptable. The East Close has double the amount of noise and visual impacts than East Middle or East Far. The East Far route will adversely impact three historic resources. This impact can be avoided by choosing the East Middle route, which impacts only one historic site which is more than 1/4 mile from the route. The proposed East Middle route minimizes impact on natural resources in that it has relatively little impact on wetlands and on native prairie. East Middle has one major stream crossing, but it could be built in a manner to minimize the floodplain impact.
- All routes will impact some residents, their homes and farm land. Development of the beltway should not be taken lightly as the lives of people within the route and adjacent property will be significantly affected.

- The East Middle route has greater travel savings than East Far and is less expensive to build than East Close. The East Middle requires less paving of arterial streets leading to the beltway intersections than East

Far as well. East Close requires fewer miles of arterial street paving than East Middle, but East Middle may provide some cost savings as a multi-use corridor. The East Middle also uses 150 acres (approximately 1/4 of a square mile) less land than the other two routes.

The East Middle route is superior in terms of transportation function and Comprehensive Plan implications and would serve the goals of the Comprehensive Plan better than the other two routes. East Middle has about the same environmental impacts as East Far, but has fewer residential relocations, historic impacts, visual and noise impacts than East Far. It has fewer impacts in almost all categories than the East Close route.

The **East Middle Comprehensive Plan Amendment #94-64 should be approved** for inclusion in the Plan. The Comprehensive Plan amendments for East Far and East Close routes are not in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan and should be denied.

The **South Beltway route is in conformance with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan** in terms of the:

- **Transportation Functions:** The south route would aid in completing a circumferential roadway in the Lincoln area. This route is within ½ mile of the future service limit and would reduce the amount of through traffic that otherwise would be on Highway 2 and other arterial streets in the future urban area. The proposed route will provide an alternative truck route connection between US 77 and Highway 2, which is a goal of the Plan. The route has potential as a multi-use corridor for trails, open space, utilities and other transportation alternatives in the future.

- **Comprehensive Plan Implications**: the proposed route minimizes impact on natural resources in that it has relatively little impact on wetlands, no impact on native prairie, does not cross the existing boundaries of Wilderness Park, and could be built in a manner to minimize the floodplain impact. The Plan also encourages respect for existing residential areas and while the route will impact homes and a few businesses, every effort has been made to minimize this impact. The amount of impact is reasonable given the scale of the project.

On the whole, the proposed South and East Middle Beltway Comprehensive Plan amendments are consistent with the spirit and intent of the adopted goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Care should be taken to respect the Plan's goals during the more detailed implementation activities for the beltway. Future South and East Middle Beltway related actions –such as the development of the new Comprehensive Plan, change of zone requests, and capital improvement projects – should reflect the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. The beltway is just one part of the community's plan – it should not dictate the direction or form of the community's development.

CITY OF LINCOLN PUBLIC WORKS AND UTILITIES
LINCOLN/LANCASTER COUNTY PLANNING
STAFF REPORT

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P.A.S.: Comprehensive Plan Amendment #94-63 **DATE:** June 22, 2001
East Far Beltway Revised July 18, 2001

PROPOSAL: By the Director of the Lincoln/ Lancaster County Planing Departments with the Director of the Public Works and Utilities Department to amend to the Long Range Transportation Plan and other appropriate portions of the 1994 Lincoln/ Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan to reflect the inclusion of the East Far Beltway as a four lane ~~limited access expressway~~ freeway, generally between 134th and 148th Street, from Highway 2 to Interstate 80.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

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REQUESTED ACTION: Review of the East Far beltway alignment as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan.

OTHER POTENTIAL EAST CORRIDORS: Comprehensive Plan#94-64 East Middle Beltway and #94-65 East Close Beltway route.

ANALYSIS:

1. This report will focus on only one potential beltway route – the **East Far** beltway.

2. The 1994 Lincoln/ Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan states on page 104:

   "A complete circumferential roadway system has been discussed formally in Lincoln for more than 30 years. The 1961 Comprehensive Plan identified Interstate 80 as the most important link in the circumferential route, supplemented by a system around the urban area."

3. The City of Lincoln, Lancaster County and the Nebraska Department of Roads (Study Team) have jointly conducted the *South and East Beltway Draft Environmental Impact Study* (DEIS), in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), to review the transportation, social, environmental and economic impacts of the potential beltway corridors. The DEIS was prepared to satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The roadway concepts that were analyzed included multiple alignment corridors and a "no build" roadway option.

4. The DEIS has been in process since 1995. In June 1997, the City Council, County Board and Planning Commission at a "Super Common" meeting recommended the elimination of the East Close route from further review in the South and East Beltway EIS. When meeting as the "Super Common" each body meets in an unofficial capacity for purposes of discussion and its actions are non binding.

5. On December 15, 1998 the City Council and County Board, at a special concurrent meeting, voted separately to consider only the East Far Route in the EIS.

6. Early in 1999 the Federal Highway Administration ruled that the EIS must consider all three east routes. Thus, the DEIS includes all three east routes.

7. Between March 23, 2001 and June 15, 2001 the DEIS has been available to the public for review and comment (See History in Appendix A). The Study Team has reviewed the comments on the DEIS and has concluded that the testimony did not reveal a significant social, environmental or economic impact of a nature to change the recommendation that all four corridors (one in south, three in east) meet the purpose and need of the Study.

8. Since March 1996, the South and East Study Corridor in the Comprehensive Plan has remained unchanged. The South Study corridor is from Yankee Hill Road to ½ mile south of Bennet Road. The East Study corridor is generally from 98th to ½ mile east of 148th Street.)

9. The purpose of this Comprehensive Plan Amendment is to review a beltway route for its conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. In particular, this analysis will focus on how the proposed route meets the transportation functions of the Plan and its Comprehensive Plan implications. This Comprehensive Plan Amendment will use information in the DEIS as a reference -- the purpose of this report is **not** to review and comment on the DEIS itself.

Transportation Functions

10. In the DEIS, the purpose and need of the beltway was identified (see Appendix B.) The DEIS concludes that "comparison of the four finalist beltway alternatives indicates that all of the alternatives will serve the project purpose and need, and all of the alternatives are considered feasible and cost-effective solutions."

11. However, in terms of the Comprehensive Plan, the function of the Beltway is broader and more complex. The current 1994 Comprehensive Plan has many goals, strategies and statements relating to the function and use of the Beltway (see Appendix C). In general, the primary functions of the proposed Beltway as identified in the current Comprehensive Plan are as follows:

    A. **Complete Circumferential Transportation System:** by linking Interstate 80 (I-80) on the north and Highway 77 on the west. The Comprehensive Plan states:

        - *Carry out feasibility and corridor studies and a preliminary environmental assessment for the South and East Beltway within the next five years.*

        - *Proceed with development of the Beltway and Antelope Creek Trafficway projects.*

    B. **Internal Traffic Relief**: reduce traffic on internal streets, such as Highway 2 or 84th Street, and reduce the amount of traffic passing through Lincoln on the way to other communities. The Comprehensive Plan states:

        - *Reduce dependency on fossil fuels for energy.*

The Plan encourages reducing the community's dependence on the automobile, but recognizes that road improvements and the beltway are important and will continue to be a part of the transportation system in the future.

C. **Establish New Truck Route Around City**: each route could reduce significantly the amount of truck traffic within Lincoln. The Comprehensive Plan states:

- *Complete implementation of the Beltway to complete a circumferential system for external to external truck traffic.*

D. **Provide a Multiple Use Corridor**: the goals of the Comprehensive Plan encourage the development of trails, open space, utilities and alternative transportation modes along major transportation corridors. The Comprehensive Plan states:

- *Include trails and pedestrian facility development in the design and funding of major roadway development projects, including the Beltway, the Antelope Creek Trafficway, and 84th Street.*

- *Consider the development of new, major corridors such as the Beltway as linear open spaces as well as major highways, integrated into development and open space patterns in developing parts of Lincoln.*

- *Program trails development as part of the City's transportation capital program as well as its recreational effort. Include trails and linear parks in the development of new major transportation projects, such as Antelope Valley and the South and East Beltway...*

- *Provide for the mobility needs of the community through a balanced and efficient system of roads, trails and public transportation alternatives.*

12. In regards to the East Far Beltway it will serve some of these functions, but not adequately address internal traffic relief or serve as a multiple use corridor as well as other routes:

A. **Complete Circumferential Transportation System:** The proposed East Far route would link I- 80 on the north to Highway 2 on the south and establish the ability for future east connection to Highway 77 via the south beltway to complete the system. Even if the circumferential route were never completed (i.e. the South route not built) there is still merit and function to the connection between Highway 2 and I- 80.

B. **Internal Traffic Relief:** The proposed East Far route would not significantly reduce traffic on 84th Street or other internal arterial streets, particularly as compared to the East Middle and East Close routes. On 84th Street, in the busiest section in the projected future between Adams and Highway 2, the East Far reduces traffic only 4 to 8%. It would carry some traffic external to Lincoln which now uses 84th Street and would find greater utility in the East Far Beltway route to go around Lincoln. According to the DEIS, approximately 14,000 to 26,500 vehicles a day would use the East Far route. 148th Street, which carries relatively little traffic, is the only street with significant traffic reductions due to the East Far. (See pages 2.52 to 2.55 of the DEIS) The DEIS projected significant reductions on Highway 2 traffic, but that is primarily due to the south segment of the beltway. The existing city limits and future urban area are 3 to 4 miles away, which is one factor in why the East Far route did not serve a significant function for internal traffic.

C. **Establish New Truck Route Around City:** The East Far route could reduce significantly the amount of truck traffic within Lincoln, particularly on 84th Street. The Comprehensive Plan already designates the East corridor for a possible future truck route. (Page 109 of the Comprehensive Plan.) Truck traffic on Highway 2 or Interstate 80 would use the East Far route. There is about a ½ mile of "backtracking" for traffic at the north end of the East Far route where east bound traffic would have to head about mile west before continuing northeast.

D. **Provide a Multiple Use Corridor:** Comprehensive Plan goals encourage the development of trails, open space, utilities and alternative transportation modes along major transportation corridors. The **East Far route is less successful as a multiple use corridor**, particularly compared to the other routes. It could have a trail adjacent, but that would be on the east side of Stevens Creek and does not have connections with other trails, except for tying into a potential trail along the south route. The potential as an open space corridor is possible for about 2 and ½ miles where it is within a ½ mile of Stevens Creek. However, East Far appears less desirable, particularly when compared to the East Middle route.

LES already has transmission corridor in this region along the proposed East Middle route as well, so there are fewer opportunities as a joint utility-road corridor. The route's remote location from the future urban area limit its merits for consideration for future transit and other transportation alternatives.

13. The proposed amendment would add the beltway route as a "free flow" 4 lane divided roadway with access limited to intersections two miles or more apart. The proposed East Far beltway intersections and overpasses are as follows:

Intersections

- Interstate 80, Fletcher Avenue, Adams St., O St., Pioneers Blvd., Pine Lake Road and Highway 2.

Road Overpass without an Intersection

- Alvo Road, Havelock Ave., Holdrege St., A St., Van Dorn St., Old Cheney Road, and Yankee Hill Road

14. The proposed amendment would change numerous sections of the Plan. It would designate the route in the Functional Classification, Future Road Network, Truck Route and County Road Improvement portions of the Plan. The text would also be amended to reflect the multiple functions of the beltway route. Establishing the beltway route in the Comprehensive Plan is important in order to state the local preference required by the federal process and to allow for right-of-way acquisition and/or corridor protection through the state, if the route is accepted as a NDOR project.

15. Since the East Far is 3 to 4 miles distant from the city, to complete the road network leading to the beltway intersections will require the additional costs to pave and improve existing rural section roads. For example, three miles of Pioneers Blvd. would need to paved from 98th to the beltway at approximately 141st Street. East Far is more expensive than East Close and East Middle routes for the paving roads leading to the beltway intersections.

<u>Comprehensive Plan Implications</u>

Future Land Use Implications

16. A **beltway** can be defined as a circumferential highway skirting an urban area while a **bypass** may be more narrowly define as a deflected route usually around a town and not necessarily part of an overall circumferential road network. In addition to the East Beltway, the South Beltway, I-80 and Highway 77 would complete the circumferential "beltway." Both I-80 and Highway 77 have portions where there is urban development on both sides of the road. For example, much of the West A Neighborhood is west of Highway 77, and the airport, Arnold Heights and Highlands neighborhoods are north of I-80.

17. The proposed East Far Beltway route will route traffic around the existing Lincoln area. One of the principal questions about the beltway has been -- "should the urban area develop on both sides of the beltway route?" Any possible extension of the future urban area to be on both sides of the beltway route will not be answered at this time, but will instead be answered in a new Comprehensive Plan in the next year.

    Thus, this proposal will have the beltway **far beyond** the edge of the future urban area of Lincoln. Due to the distance, it will be of limited value to reduce internal traffic. It does provides an alternative truck route, will serve both urban and low density residential and residents in towns and villages in eastern Lancaster County.

18. The land use plan is **not** being amended at this time. However, the beltway routes can serve as a significant asset for existing and future land use patterns. The Stevens Creek Basin Initiative Task Force (SCBI) recommended that the future urban area be extended to include all of the west bank of Stevens Creek. The East Far route is east of the creek. The new Comprehensive Plan under development this year will address whether urban uses should be developed in this drainage basin. For the East Far route, a vast majority of the route is currently designated as agricultural in the land use plan. Even when the community determines to develop urban uses in Stevens Creek there is over 25 square miles of land just on the west bank of Stevens Creek. It would be a considerable period of time before urbanization would reach the east far route.

19. Comments on the DEIS included concern that the beltway will lead to urban "sprawl." The goals of the Comprehensive Plan encourage contiguous development and efficient use of infrastructure. Lincoln has used the Comprehensive Plan for over 50 years in order to make wise decisions for the future. Interstate 80 has been in place for decades and Highway 77 (Homestead Expressway) has been operable for nearly a decade. These roads do not dictate the future – it is the community through its adopted plans that determines our growth patterns.

Social, Economic & Environmental Implications

20. The goals of the Comprehensive Plan encourage protecting rural and urban neighborhoods, historic resources and preserving the environment. The Comprehensive Plan states:

    - *"Maintain and enhance an efficient network of roads and public ways that allows the movement of people and freight to all areas of the community, prioritized to meet the current and future needs, balancing environmental effects, safety concerns, cost effectiveness, urban design and relationships to other community goals."*

    - *"Maintain zoning and traffic patterns that are compatible with existing land uses and retain the character of the rural and urban neighborhood."*

    - *"Exercise stewardship by preserving, protecting and enhancing our historic resources for future generations."*

- *"Preserve highly productive agricultural land for agrarian purposes, as well as allow rural, nonagricultural residences; protect ecological and historic sites in rural Lancaster County."*

21. The DEIS provides information on the implications of adopting the East Far beltway route. A significant amount of time was spent on refining the route to minimize impacts of this project. (See Appendix D and "Refined Finalist Beltway Alternatives" figure.) In summary, the East Far route would:

    - Relocate 8 homes and 1 business; impact 19 acres of residential uses and 3 acres of commercial uses; have noise impacts on 7 homes and have visual impacts on 41 homes.

    - Impact 926 acres of farmland; 20 acres of wetlands, 7 acres of prairie grasslands and requires modification of two NRD farm ponds.

    - Adversely impacts 3 historic properties.

    - Require crossings of: no railroads, one trail, no major streams, 5 floodplains, and no floodways.

22. All routes will impact some residents, their homes and farm land. Development of the beltway should not be taken lightly as the lives of people within the route and adjacent property will be significantly affected.

23. The right-of-way would cover 1,110 acres or 1.7 square miles of land. In general, urban development and transportation projects often have some impact on existing residences or the environment. The project has yet to enter the final design stage, so it may be possible to mitigate or avoid some impacts once further engineering is completed. The DEIS reflects that this route can be built without a significant impact on the environment.

24. East Far has more environmental impacts as East Middle, and has more residential relocations; more visual and more noise impacts than East Middle. The East Far route would also bisect a high quality area of native prairie north of Havelock Avenue. It has fewer impacts in most categories than the East Close route.

25. East Far has more impacts on historic structures than the other two routes. This impact includes the Stevens Creek Stock Farm which is on the National Register of Historic Places. While East Far does not physically take any land of the Stevens Creek Stock Farm or any other historic site, it will have an adverse impact under Section 106 review. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has expressed concern about the impact of this route on the Stock Farm and historic resources in the area.

26. The "Stevens Creek Watershed Study and Flood Management Plan," prepared by the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District (NRD), is an approved component of the Comprehensive Plan.

    The Stevens Creek Watershed Plan emphasizes the preservation of open space along the Stevens Creek to protect the natural stream corridor for the purpose of improving water quality, reducing flood damage and. The Watershed Plan is being implemented by the NRD currently through two major actions. First, the NRD is acquiring conservation easements in the floodplain area between the

Murdock trail (approximately Havelock Ave) south to the MoPac trail (approximately A Street.) Second, the NRD has developed plans to provide detention storage for flood waters by building ten farm ponds throughout the watershed. These ponds will be built within the next year. Several of the ponds are within the East Beltway routes. The East Far and East Close would impact two ponds, the East Middle would impact only one.

27. The estimated cost of the East Far beltway alone was $128 million in 1996 dollars. As of this time, no federal funds have been set aside for land acquisition or final design for the east beltway.

28. Many of the roads leading to the East Far route are neither improved nor in the community's plans for improvements. Many roads leading to the beltway intersections may have to be improved. For example, Pioneers Blvd. and Adams Street are gravel east of 98th Street, and Pine Lake Road is gravel east of 112th Street. Fletcher Avenue is gravel east of Highway 6. These roads will need to be reviewed in the Long Range Transportation Plan update accompanying the new Comprehensive Plan.

29. In order to complete the beltway as a ~~limited access route~~ freeway, the designation of Highway 77 will need to be examined as part of the Long Range Transportation Plan update. Highway 77 currently has a few at grade intersections with traffic signals, rather than grade separated intersections to allow a free flow of traffic. In order to function as a ~~limited access roadway~~ freeway, the at grade intersections will have to be either eliminated or changed into interchanges without traffic signals.

30. The Beltway Management Committee met on June 15, 2001 and by consensus recommended that the East Middle as the preferred route. This committee is comprised of staff members from Lancaster County Engineer's Office, Nebraska Department of Roads, Federal Highway Administration, Lincoln Public Works and Utilities Department and Lincoln/ Lancaster County Planning Department.

31. Lincoln Electric System (LES) and the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District (NRD) have not stated any preference for any Beltway route.

CONCLUSION:

The East Far Beltway has undergone seven years of public input and extensive technical analysis. The public has reviewed and commented on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Public comments have raised questions about the boundaries of historic properties in the East Far route, but appear to not reveal any other social, economic or environmental impact that would change the DEIS recommendation that all four routes meet the purpose and need.

The purpose of this Comprehensive Plan Amendment is not to determine the accuracy or merits of the DEIS. The purpose of this Amendment is to determine if the East Far Beltway is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

The adopted goals of the Comprehensive Plan provide the foundation upon which the Plan itself was developed. The goals offer far-reaching guidance concerning the policies and objectives that the Plan's content and its implementation should reflect. Interpretation of the goals relative to a specific project should be undertaken considering the broad context within which they were developed, as well as the nature of the project being examined.

The East Far Beltway route is not in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. It is the least desirable route compared to East Close or East Middle because:

- **Transportation Functions:** The East Far route would aid in completing a circumferential roadway and provide a truck route. Both the East Close and East Far require more land due to "backtracking" of their routes. All three beltway routes will be of limited value for reducing internal traffic. but the East Far has the least value for internal traffic, when compared to the other two routes. It is 3 to 4 miles from the existing city and would be of limited value for 84th Street or other arterial streets.

- The East Far's potential as a multi-use corridor for trails, open space, utilities and other transportation alternatives is limited, particularly compared to the East Middle route. The Comprehensive Plan encourages that the beltway be a multi-use corridor for utilities, open space and trails — the East Middle is better suited to serve this function than either of the other two routes.

- The route has the least travel savings and may be the most expensive route if the costs of paving arterial streets leading to the East Far intersections are included.

- **Comprehensive Plan Implications**: The Plan emphasizes preservation of the natural environment with respect for economic consequence. The proposed route has a bit more impact on natural resources than East Middle and the East Far route would bisect a high quality area of native prairie north of Havelock Avenue. The Plan also encourages respect for existing residential areas and this route will impact more homes than East Middle.

- This route will adversely impact three historic sites, including the Stevens Creek Stock Farm which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Residents have also raised concerns about the impact on a total of seven historic properties in the East Far route. **The amount of impact of the East Far route on these historic resources is not in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan,** particularly given that there is another alternative with less impact.

The community has two alternatives to the East Far route which are superior in terms of transportation function and Comprehensive Plan implications. This route would not serve the goals of the Comprehensive Plan as well as either of the other two routes.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial.

Allan Abbott, P. E.
Director of Public Works & Utilities

Kathleen A. Sellman, AICP
Director of Planning

Should the City Council and County Board wish to approve this route, then the other two east routes should be denied and the language below should be approved:

1. Amend Figure 27 "Functional Street and Road Classification: Future," page 92, to include the East Far Beltway as an "Urban/Rural Interstate/Freeway & Expressway." Beltway alignment is shown on the attached exhibit.

2. Amend Figure 28, Proposed Changes in Functional Classifications," page 93, to include the East Far Beltway as a new category of "Unclassified to Urban/Rural Interstate & ~~Expressway~~ Freeway." Beltway alignment is shown on the attached exhibit.

3. Amend Figure 31 “Improvements for Future Road Network: 1-25 Year Program,” page 96, to add the East Far Beltway as a Four Lane ~~Limited Access Divided Highway~~ Freeway with 300 foot wide right-of-way with appropriate symbol and to eliminate the *South and East Beltway Corridor Study Area* for the area north of Highway 2. (The study corridor shall be renamed as appropriate or eliminated if the South Beltway route is also selected.) Beltway alignment is shown on the attached exhibit.

4. Amend Table 10, “Transportation Projects -Year 2015", page 97, to delete the *South and East Beltway Corridor Study* from the list of studies and to include this beltway segment as a new category. (The study corridor shall be renamed as appropriate or eliminated if the South Beltway route is also selected.)

5. Amend Figure 33, “City of Lincoln Ultimate Truck Routes,” page 107, to delete the “South and East Beltway Corridor Study Area for the area north of Highway 2 and to include the beltway route as shown on the attached exhibit.

6. Amend Figure 35, Future Road Improvements in County,” page 111, to include the beltway route as shown on the attached exhibit.

7. Amend Figure 38, Lincoln Area Current and Future Trails Network, page 120, to show “Future Grade Separation” where a trail location crosses the proposed beltway route.

8. Amend the text description on page 104 and 105 as follows:

Current text (with proposed changes shown in legislative format)

1. South and East Beltway

“A complete circumferential roadway system has been discussed formally in Lincoln for more than 30 years. The 1961 Comprehensive Plan identified Interstate 80 as the most important link in the circumferential route, supplemented by a system around the urban area.

The 1966 "Lincoln Metropolitan Area Transportation Study" depicted an "East Side Freeway" and a "U.S. 77 West By-Pass" in the Major Street Plan.

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Since most of the work on the U.S. 77 West By-Pass is either underway or has funding committed, attention should now be focused to the future and the need to complete the loop road network with South and East Beltway. Clearly the desire of the community is to complete the loop roadway network.

The community views the beltway system as an essential component of the regional transportation network which would move through traffic around congested urban areas, reduce delay and improve traffic flow on the existing urban street system. ~~The east beltway corridor extends from 96th Street to half a mile east of 148th Street and the south beltway corridor extends from Yankee Hill Road to half a mile south of Bennet Road. (Amendment 9405)~~

From 1995 to 2001 the South and East Beltway Study was conducted. This study evaluated numerous potential routes in a broad study corridor. In 2001 after significant public review and analysis, the south and East Far beltway routes were adopted for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan.

~~The network model evaluated the potential impacts of the South and East Beltway on the rest of the street network. The projected traffic diverted to the beltway was found to be heavily dependant upon their location. An unrestrained East Beltway (with higher speeds and no signals) located at the extreme eastern limits of the corridor was shown to serve 24,000 fewer vehicles per day than a similar facility located at the extreme western edge of the corridor. A similar sensitivity to location was shown in the South Beltway, although the projected volumes were somewhat lower with a change of 5,500. It is, therefore critical that a Feasibility, Corridor Alternative Evaluation and Preliminary Environmental Assessment be undertaken early in the Planning period. This is necessary not only to provide corridor protection but to address impacts on other portions of the network.~~

~~Establish a high priority plan to develop early identification of beltway corridors~~ Now that the corridor has been established the next step is for corridor protection, right-of-way ~~retention~~, acquisition and to develop an aggressive program to commence the process of funding requests. The roadway corridor is approximately 1,320 feet wide to allow flexibility in the final design of the roadway. Every effort should be made to reduce the impact on adjacent residences when possible. The multi-use corridor, outside of the roadway, will vary in width.

The beltway route is a multi-use corridor which should incorporate the following features in addition to the four lanes of roadway:

- trails and pedestrian facilities,
- linear open spaces integrated into development and open space patterns in the development of Lincoln,
- utility corridors, and
- potential route for alternative transportation modes.

As a multi-use corridor there will need to be significant advance planning and coordination among various agencies. Planning and financing of the roadway construction and the other uses in the corridor should proceed concurrently. The development of an open space corridor along significant portions of the beltway is an important aspect of the integrating the roadway into the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and one way to address the impact of the beltway on natural environment.

~~The study process would involve the cooperation and coordination of the County, Nebraska Department of Roads, Federal Highway Administration, other regulatory agencies, neighborhoods and other special interests. The process would require that all State and Federal regulations and requirements be met or exceeded, this will include the completion of a major investment study to be done before the beltway project is identified in the transportation plan. And, because of the relationship between transportation and land use, the study should integrate future land use plans, beyond those described in this plan, with the transportation study process.~~

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APPENDIX A: Brief History of South and East Beltway Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) Process

November 1994	South and East Beltway Study areas are included in adoption of new Comprehensive Plan.
August 1995	Consultants hired -- Beltway study begins
March 1996	City Council and County Board, in Comprehensive Annual Review, extend the South Beltway study area to a ½ mile south of Bennett Road.
Fall 1996	Study scope revised -- significant increase in citizen participation and inclusion of full environmental study
1996-1997	Study consultants evaluate different route alternatives and "no build" alternatives.
June 1997	Study consultants recommend elimination of the East Far route and to pursue on East Close and East Middle.
June 1997	City Council, County Board, Mayor and Planning Commission, meeting as "Super Common" recommend elimination of the East Close route and to pursue only the East Middle and East Far routes.
August 1997	"Super Common" hold a public meeting at which citizens comment on the various routes proposed.
December 15, 1998	City Council and County Board, at a special concurrent meeting, vote separately to consider only the East Far route for the Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).
Early 1999	Federal Highway Administration directs that all three east routes must be included in the DEIS.
March 23, 2001	Public Release of Beltway Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) *and Section 4(f) Statement*, along with an *Assessment of Effect to NRHP and NRHP-Eligible Sites and Properties in the South and East Beltway Study Area.*
March 27, 2001	Open House on the DEIS was attended by approximately 430 citizens.
April 23-24, 2001	Public Hearings on DEIS (notices mailed to approximately 1,100 citizens)
June 15, 2001	End of public comment period on DEIS

APPENDIX B: Purpose & Need Statement for South and East Beltway As Stated in Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

- "The beltway would complete a circumferential transportation system by linking Interstate 80 (I-80) on the north and U. S. Highway 77 (US 77) on the west."

- "The project would move through traffic around Lincoln's congested urban area, and improve traffic flow on the existing urban street system."

- "The south beltway would provide an alternative connection between US 77 in the southwest and Nebraska Highway 2 at the southeast edge of Lincoln."

- "The east beltway would connect (Highway 2) at the southeast edge of Lincoln with I-80 in the northeast."

- "The beltway could be constructed together, completing the loop around the City, or separately as stand alone projects with independent utility (i.e. they would be useable and a reasonable expense even if only one is built without the other)."

- "Purpose and Need. Traffic data, regional growth trends and previous studies have all indicated a need for south and east beltway. Some of the highest rates of growth have been on the south and east fringes of Lincoln thereby requiring a long-range plan to develop early identification of bypass corridors and potential purchase of right-of-way. Existing high volumes of local traffic on arterials such as (Cornhusker Highway) and (Highway 2) is made worse by high volumes of through traffic which originates outside of Lincoln and travels to destinations beyond the City. In addition, internal to external trips and external to internal trips are currently made using arterial roadways with signalized intersections and, in some areas, direct access to adjacent properties. This results in excessive delay and congestion along these roadways."

APPENDIX C: Pertinent References in 1994 Lincoln/ Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan

GOALS: The goals of the current Comprehensive Plan state:

- *"Provide for a long-range plan to develop early identification of bypass corridors and right-of-way retention.*
- *Protect and enhance features which give Lincoln and Lancaster County its distinctive character, supporting a desirable quality of life.*
- *Exercise stewardship by preserving, protecting and enhancing our historic resources for future generations.*
- *Reduce dependency on fossil fuels for energy.*
- *Maintain zoning and traffic patterns that are compatible with existing land uses and retain the character of the rural and urban neighborhood.*
- *Preserve highly productive agricultural land for agrarian purposes, as well as allow rural, nonagricultural residences; protect ecological and historic sites in rural Lancaster County.*
- *Protect unique, rare, threatened or endangered plant and animal species in our community.*
- *Maintain, preserve and enhance native prairie, and re-establish native plants on eroded areas to halt soil degradation, provide economic gain and enhance the landscape.*
- *Preserve, conserve and expand the significant ecological resources and important historical sites that relate to the history and development of the community."*

STRATEGIES in the transportation and other sections of the Comprehensive Plan state:

- *Carry out feasibility and corridor studies and a preliminary environmental assessment for the South and East Beltway within the next five years.*
- *Proceed with development of the Beltway and Antelope Creek Trafficway projects.*
- *Complete implementation of the Beltway to complete a circumferential system for external to external truck traffic.*
- *Ensure compliance with Federal air quality standards.*
- *Include trails and pedestrian facility development in the design and funding of major roadway development projects, including the Beltway, the Antelope Creek Trafficway, and 84th Street.*
- *Consider the development of new, major corridors such as the Beltway as linear open spaces as well as major highways, integrated into development and open space patterns in developing parts of Lincoln.*

- *Program trails development as part of the City's transportation capital program as well as its recreational effort. Include trails and linear parks in the development of new major transportation projects, such as Antelope Valley and the South and East Beltway...*

- *Provide for the mobility needs of the community through a balanced and efficient system of roads, trails and public transportation alternatives.*

- *Maintain and enhance an efficient network of roads and public ways that allows the movement of people and freight to all areas of the community, prioritized to meet the current and future needs, balancing environmental effects, safety concerns, cost effectiveness, urban design and relationships to other community goals.*

- *Maintain and better utilize the capacity of the existing transportation system through prudent transportation management techniques that reduce present volume and/or slow growth rate of automobile traffic. Make alternative transportation a priority in order to reduce the need to expand existing roadways and parking lots.*

TEXT REFERENCES:

Page 108 of the plan states " The South and East Beltway were identified as extremely important links that will provide for ease of external trips around the perimeter of the City. Most of the growth in truck traffic is shown along this loop road system.."

Page 119 of the Plan states "A major opportunity for trail development may be to follow the storm water drainage system into the new areas of the community. This multiple use corridor could also then provide a natural wildlife habitat corridor. The benefits of developing a multi-use corridor include a reduced cost of right-of-way acquisition by using the same corridor for many purposes and the benefit of placing the underpasses of arterials at the same spot. This potential should be considered in evaluating the **South and East Beltway** and the Antelope Valley alternate to 16th and 17th Streets."

Page 104 and 105 as follows: **1. South and East Beltway**

"A complete circumferential roadway system has been discussed formally in Lincoln for more than 30 years. The 1961 Comprehensive Plan identified Interstate 80 as the most important link in the circumferential route, supplemented by a system around the urban area.

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Establish a high priority plan to develop early identification of beltway corridors and right-of-way retention and develop an aggressive program to commence the process of funding requests."

The study process would involve the cooperation and coordination of the County, Nebraska Department of Roads, Federal Highway Administration, other regulatory agencies, neighborhoods and other special interests. The process would require that all State and Federal regulations and requirements be met or exceeded, this will include the completion of a major investment study to be done before the beltway project is identified in the transportation plan. And, because of the relationship between transportation and land use, the study should integrate future land use plans, beyond those described in this plan, with the transportation study process."

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APPENDIX D: Table 4.1 Summary of Beltway Benefits and Impacts From Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

LEVEL IV: SUMMARY OF BELTWAY BENEFITS AND IMPACTS

IMPACTS	UNITS	ALTERNATIVES			
		SM-4	EC-1	EM-1	EF-1
TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS (End to End Beltway Analysis: South and East Combined)					
Total Daily Beltway Usage	Vehicle Kilometers (Miles) Traveled	--	762 800 (474,000)	721 000 (448,000)	696 800 433,000
Average Daily Time Savings	Hours	--	9,400	10,250	8,450
Average Annual Accident Savings[1]	$	--	$8,691,000	$7,430,000	$4,712,000
ECONOMIC IMPACTS					
Construction Cost (partial beltway)	$ (1996)	$107,000,000	$147,000,000	$152,000,000	$128,000,000
Construction Cost (end-to-end beltway with SM-4)	$ (1996)	--	$254,000,000	$247,000,000	$236,000,000
Payoff Period[2] (end-to-end beltway with SM-4)	Months	-	25	23	35
Cost Effectiveness	Payoff Period less than Design Life of Project	--	Yes	Yes	Yes
SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS					
Total Right-of-Way	ha (ac)	295 (730)	451 (1114)	389 (960)	449 (1110)
Residential Relocations	no. of houses	5	6	4	8
Business Relocations	no. of businesses	1	0	0	1
Railroad Crossings[3]	no. of crossing	3	2	0	0
Airfield Impacts	impacts	none	none	none	none
Cropland Impacts	ha (ac)	206 (508)	296 (731)	282 (698)	316 (780)
Total Farmland Impacts	ha (ac)	238 (587)	367 (906)	329 (813)	375 (926)
Prime and Unique Farmland Impacts (end-to-end beltway with SM-4)	Impact Rating Points (0-260)	--	140 (minor)	143.5 (minor)	142 (minor)
LAND USE IMPACTS					
Distance from 2000 City Limit	km (mi)	0.8-2.4 (0.5-1.5)	0.8-3.2 (0.5-2.0)	2.4-4.8 (1.5-3.0)	2.4-6.4 (1.5-4.0)
Residential Impact	ha (ac)	9.5 (23.4)	12.3 (30.3)	4.0 (10.0)	7.8 (19.3)
Commercial/Industrial Impact	ha (ac)	4.2 (10.3)	1.6 (3.9)	0.6 (1.4)	1.1 (2.7)

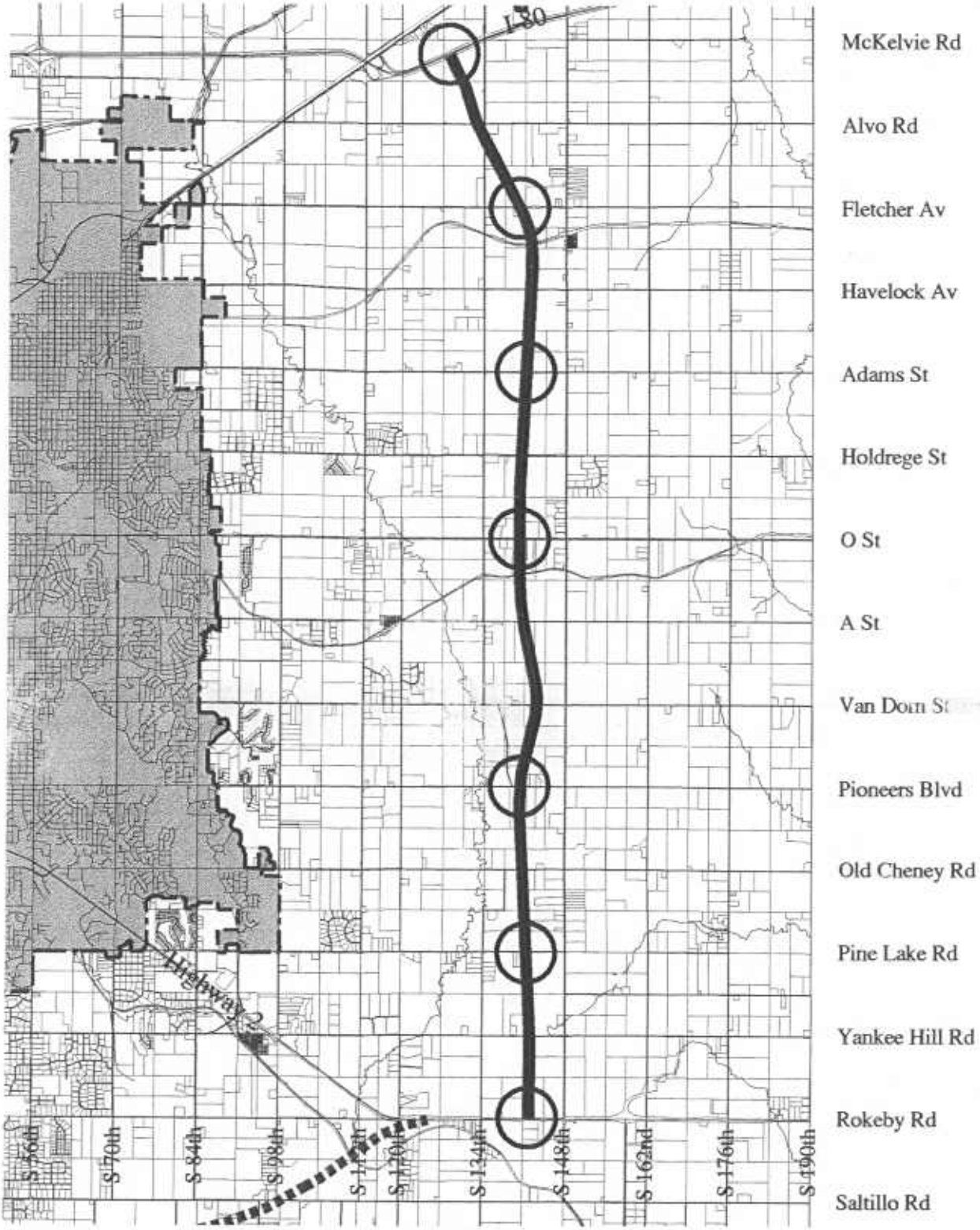
IMPACTS	UNITS	ALTERNATIVES			
		SM-4	EC-1	EM-1	EF-1
Trail Impacts	no. of crossings ha (ac)	0 0	2 0.6 (1.5)	1 0.3 (0.8)	1 0.3 (0.7)
Modification of Proposed LPSNRD Farm Ponds	no. of ponds	0	2	1	2
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS					
Air Quality	NAAQS impacts	no impact	no impact	no impact	no impact
Noise[4]	no. of impacted receptors[4]	5	10	5	7
Water Quality	Impacts	minor and temporary	minor and temporary	minor and temporary	minor and temporary
Major Stream Crossings	no. of crossings	2	2	1	0
Total Streams	no. of crossings	8	9	6	4
100-Year Floodplains	no. of crossings	4	4	6	5
Floodways	no. of crossings	0	2	1	0
Wetlands	ha (ac)	7.3 (18.0)	16.9 (41.8)	8.8 (21.8)	8.3 (20.4)
Prairie Grasslands	ha (ac)	0	0.4 (1.1)	1.3 (3.2)	2.7 (6.6)
Endangered & Threatened Species	Impacts	none	none	none	none
NRHP Archeological Sites Adversely Affected under Section 106	no. of sites	0	1	1	0
NRHP Standing Structures Adversely Affected under Section 106	no. of sites	1	0	1	3
Section 4(f) Impacts-Recreation	no. of resources	0	2	1	1
Section 4(f) Impacts-Historic	no. of sites	0	0	1	1
Potential Environmental Risk Sites	no. sites along route	9	4	4	4
Visual Impacts to Residences	no. w/in 0.4 km (0.25 mi)	27	58	31	41

[1] Average Annual Accident Savings is based on end-to-end beltway analyses performed with the BOS land use plan. The BOS II land use plan is expected to provide even greater accident cost savings.

[2] An analysis of the time savings with the BOS II model comparing the end-to-end beltway alternatives and no build alternative indicates the investment to construct the beltway would be paid off through time savings alone in less than three years (**Section 2.3.6.2**),. The conclusions of this comparison are that all end-to-end beltway alternatives for all the east alignments are economically feasible.

[3] If SM-4 and EC-1 are constructed, two crossings of the OPPD line will be required. EC-1 alone does not require any railroad crossing.

[4] These are receptors for which noise abatement measures were not considered reasonable.



Comprehensive Plan Amendment 94-63:

East Far Beltway Alternate (EF- 1)

- Lincoln Corporate Limits
- Proposed East Beltway (EF- 1)
- Proposed Interchange
- South Beltway Alternate SM- 4

LINCOLN - LANCASTER COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Geographic Information Systems

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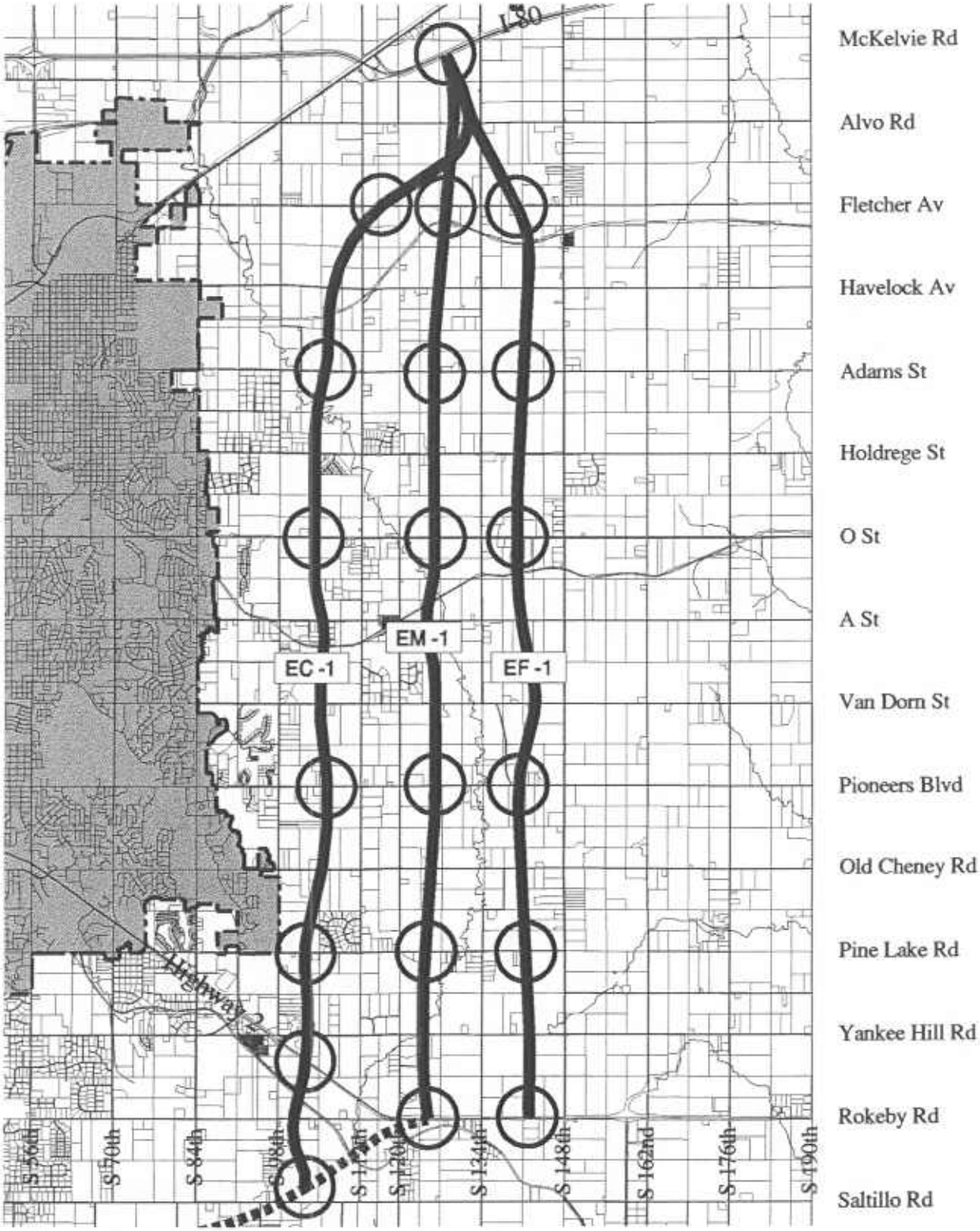

Comprehensive Plan Amendment:

East Beltway Alternate Comparison

- Lincoln Corporate Limits
- Proposed East Beltway Alternates
- Proposed Interchange
- South Beltway Alternate SM- 4

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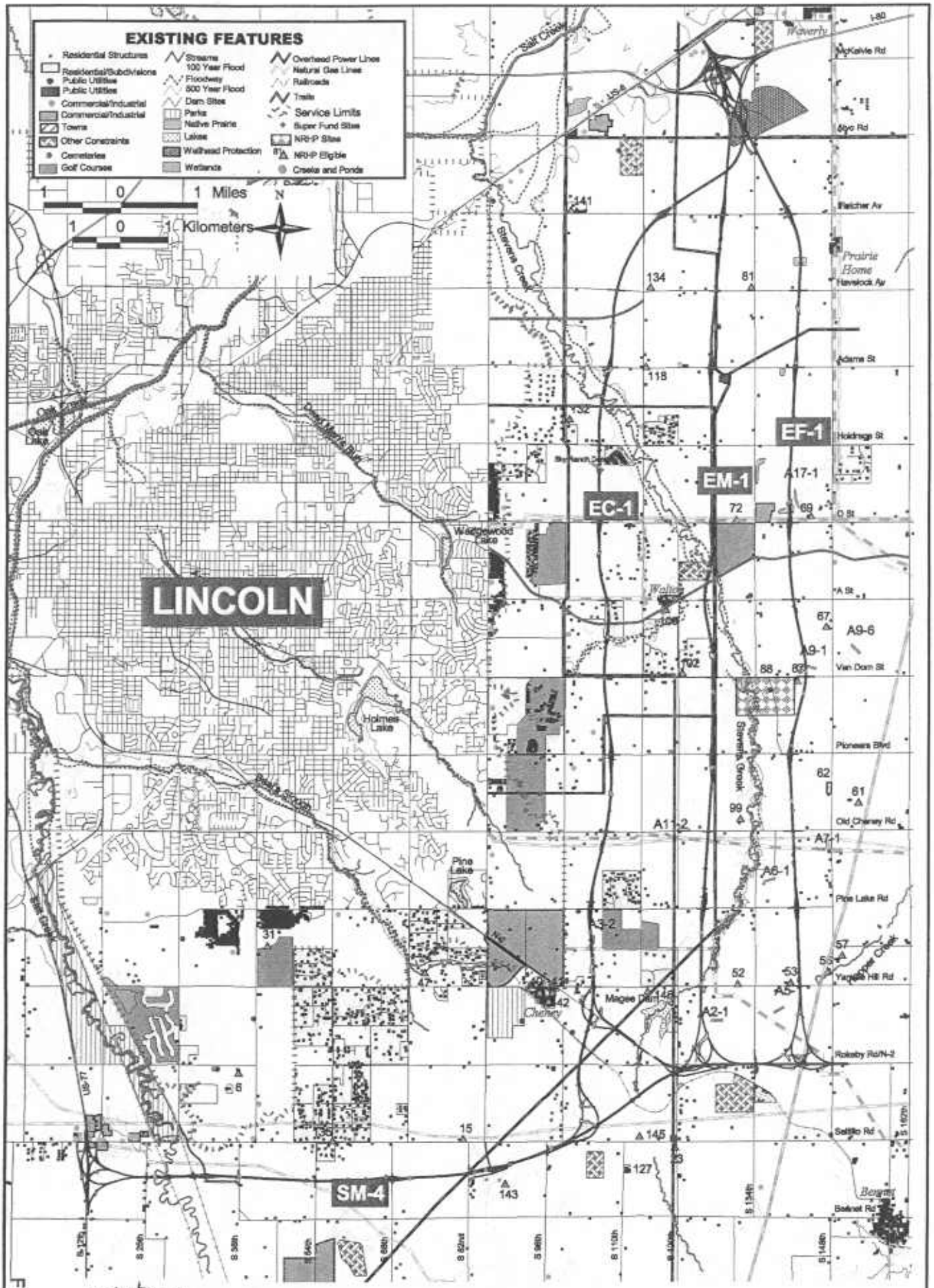

Figure 2.25

LINCOLN SOUTH AND EAST BELTWAYS
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

June 5, 2001

Refined Finalist
Beltway Alternatives