



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

NOV 23 1994

ER 94/786

Mr. Hubert A. Willard  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
105 Sixth Street  
Post Office Box 627  
Ames, Iowa 50010

Dear Mr. Willard:

This is in response to the request for the Department of the Interior's comments on the draft Environmental Assessment/Section 4(f) statement for the improvement of Iowa 60, Segment 3, Ritter to the Iowa/Minnesota State Line, Osceola County, Iowa.

SECTION 4(f) STATEMENT COMMENTS

We concur that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the proposed project. Mitigation of impacts to Section 4(f) lands which may be impacted by the proposed highway project will depend on which alternative is finally selected as the preferred alternative.

The statement indicates on page 5 that if Alternative B is selected, mitigation measures to Ashton Wayside Park could include such things as the purchase of replacement land, enhancement of existing facilities, parking improvements or other similar compensation equal to the value of parkland, or functions lost as a result of the project. The Osceola County Conservation Board has asked that a water-control structure be provided to allow for maximum pool elevation in the quarry pond if Alternative B is selected. The statement further indicates that Ashton Wayside Park received assistance from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCF) under projects 19-00313 and 19-00786. Therefore, Ashton Wayside Park falls under the protection of Section 6(f) of the LAWCF Act which requires that lands proposed for conversion to non-outdoor recreation use be replaced with lands of equal fair market value and reasonably equivalent usefulness and location. The request for conversion of land from Ashton Wayside Park under Alternative B should be made to the National Park Service (NPS) through Mr. Larry J. Wilson, Director, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Building, East Ninth and Grand Streets, Des Moines, Iowa 50319. The conversion request will be considered by NPS only after Section 4(f) approval of the project by the Department of Transportation

As to mitigation of impacts to Ashton Roadside Park and Historic Marker if Alternative A is selected, we support the request made by the city of Ashton that lands taken from the park be replaced with lands of equal fair market value and reasonably equivalent usefulness and location. All facilities which may be impacted by the proposed highway project in either park should be replaced and/or relocated at highway expense as recommended by the appropriate park authority. Evidence to that effect should be documented in the final Section 4(f) statement.

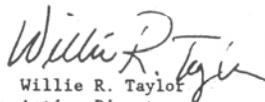
SUMMARY COMMENTS

The Department of the Interior would have no objection to Section 4(f) approval of this project by the Department of Transportation, providing the mitigation measures discussed above, including the replacement lands to satisfy the requirements of Section 6(f) of the L&WCF Act, are adequately addressed in the final Section 4(f) statement.

As this Department has a continuing interest in this project, we are willing to cooperate and coordinate with you on a technical assistance basis in further project evaluation and assessment. For matters pertaining to park, recreational and cultural resources, please contact the Regional Director, Midwest Region, National Park Service, 1709 Jackson Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102, telephone, (402) 221-3431.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely,



Willie R. Taylor  
Acting Director  
Office of Environmental Policy  
and Compliance

cc: Mr. Harry S. Budd  
Director, Project Planning  
Iowa Department of Transportation  
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Since the 1994 EA was released, bypass alternatives were developed that avoid all Section 4(f) resources in Ashton.