Agenda
1. Project Overview
2. Alternatives
3. Stakeholders
4. Outreach
5. Take-Aways

Project Location

Next up...

THANK YOU!

Project Overview

Alternatives

Stakeholders

Outreach

Take-Aways

Project Location

THANK YOU!
US 53 EIS
Virginia, MN to Eveleth, MN

Agenda

1. Project Overview
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Beth Kunkel
Kimley-Horn
Rachel Haase
Kimley-Horn

Project Location

NORTH AMERICA
Project Location

Virginia, Minnesota
MnDOT District 1
Project Overview

Timeline
- 1960 Easement Agreement
- May 2010 Notice to Vacate
- May 2017 Relocation Deadline

Location
- High Priority Corridor
- Quad Cities
- Mining landscape
Timeline

1960 Easement Agreement

May 2010 Notice to Vacate

May 2017 Relocation Deadline
Location

- High Priority Corridor
- Quad Cities
- Mining landscape
Alternatives

2013 Scoping Decision
- Changes to no build and existing US 53 alternative
- Additional alternatives
- Final decision on preferred alternative

2013 Amended Scoping Process
- Revised alternative
- Final decision on preferred alternative
- Map of minor alignment modifications to alternative

Alternatives Development

2011-2012 Scoping Process
- Next tier 12 alternatives analyzed
- Four alternatives narrowed to two

Alternative E-2
- Build
- Existing US 53
- New

Bridge Height Comparison
- Existing bridge comparison to new bridge
Alternatives

2011-2012 Scoping Process

- More than 12 alternatives studied
- **Four** alternatives carried forward to the Draft EIS

- **No Build**
- **Existing US 53**
- **M-1**
- **E-2**
2013 Amended Scoping Process

- Reconsidered previously dismissed alternatives
  - W-1
  - E-1

- Made minor alignment modifications to one alternatives
  - E-2A
2013 Scoping Decision

- Changes to **No Build** and **Existing US 53** Alternatives
- Additional alternative carried forward to Draft EIS (Alternative E-1A)

- **No Build**
- **Existing US 53**
- **M-1**
- **E-1A**
- **E-2**
Build Alternatives

ALTERNATIVE M-1
(RSS FILL/BRIDGES)

ALTERNATIVE E-1A
(BRIDGE)

EXISTING US 53

ALTERNATIVE E-1A
(RSS FILL)

ALTERNATIVE E-2
(BRIDGE)

VIRGINIA, MN

US 53 ALTERNATIVES REFERENCE SHEET
(LOOKING SOUTHWEST)
Alternative E-2

Bridge

US 53 ALTERNATIVE E-2 (BRIDGE)
(LOOKING NORTH)

Legend:
- Alternative E-2 Area of Evaluation
- Existing US 53 Right-of-Way
- Existing US 53 Farmstead
- Existing US 53 Agreement Area
- Existing Public Recreation Land
- Existing School Trust Land

Note: A 160-foot wide corridor was assumed for impact calculations reported in the Draft EIS.

Source: US 53 Area 2017

Figure 2.1-6
Alternative E-2
US Highway 53 Virginia to Eveleth
Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Bridge Height Comparison

US 53 BRIDGE (COMPAARED TO BLATNIK BRIDGE)
(LOOKING SOUTHWEST)
3 Stakeholders

- RGGS – current land owner
- Cliffs Natural Resources United Taconite Division (UTAC) – mine operator
- Area residents and businesses
- Quad Cities
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
- Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)
4 Project Outreach

- Typical Outreach
- Western Alternative
- Environmental Justice
- Noise
- Visual Quality
Project Outreach

- Typical Outreach
- Western Alternative
- Environmental Justice
- Noise
- Visual Quality
Typical Outreach

Coordination Plan for Agency and Public Involvement

Public open houses and public hearings

Project Advisory Committee

Cooperating and participating agencies
Western Alternative

- Strong public opposition
- Coffee & Conversation meetings
- Economic study and related public and business meetings
- Additional involvement of PAC and cooperating agencies
Environmental Justice

- Outreach to Cities of Virginia and Eveleth
- Virginia Indian Center north of project area
- Affordable housing searches identified locations in Eveleth and along the western alternative
- Meeting flyers included in a free newspaper with wide distribution in the study area and posted at local convenience stores
Noise

- Mailed ballots and meeting notices
- Distributed open house flyers door-to-door
- Held open house for benefitted receivers
- Hand delivered ballots to unresponsive parties
- Extra effort to reach owners of vacant properties
Visual Quality

- 10 member Visual Quality Review Committee representing local businesses and residents

- Generate ideas for developing visual character of the project

- Produce Visual Quality Guidelines for preliminary and final designs

- Create a corridor that the community can embrace and will be attractive for visitors
Take-Aways

- Typical outreach methods are beneficial and sometimes sufficient
- Unique project circumstances can warrant a different approach
- Public involvement strengthens projects
THANK YOU!

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