Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

Minnesota Department of Commerce

Public Information and Scoping Meeting

MERC Rochester Natural Gas Pipeline

Public Utilities Commission Docket Number

- G-011/GP-15-858

February 2016 - Rochester

Meeting Purpose

- Explain the Commission's review process
- Provide information about the proposed project
- Gather information for the environmental review
- Answer general questions about the process and the project

Minnesota Rules 7852.1300

Public Utilities Commission

- State Agency
- Regulates
  - Permitting for power plants, pipelines, transmission lines
  - Local and in-state long distance telephone companies
  - Investor-owned electric and natural gas utilities – rates and services
- 5 Commissioners
  - Appointed by the Governor
  - Serve staggered terms
  - Full time employment
- 50 staff

Natural Gas Pipeline Route Permit

- Transports natural gas at 275 pounds per square inch (psi) or more

- Requires Route Permit from Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
  - Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 216G
  - Minnesota Rules, Part 7852

Who's Who?

- **Applicant** – Company asking for Pipeline Route Permit – *Minnesota Energy Resources Corporation*
- **Department of Commerce Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA)** –State agency, conducts environmental review
- **Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH)** – State agency, Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) holds hearings, summarizes the comments and facts in the record, writes report for Public Utilities Commission

Who's Who?

- **Public Utilities Commission (PUC) Energy Facilities Planner** – Assists in building the record. Informs Commissioners on impacts of different decisions. Neutral party, does not give legal advice, not an advocate.

- **Public Utilities Commission (PUC) Public Advisor** – Helps citizens participate in the certificate of need and route permit processes. Neutral party, does not give legal advice, not an advocate.

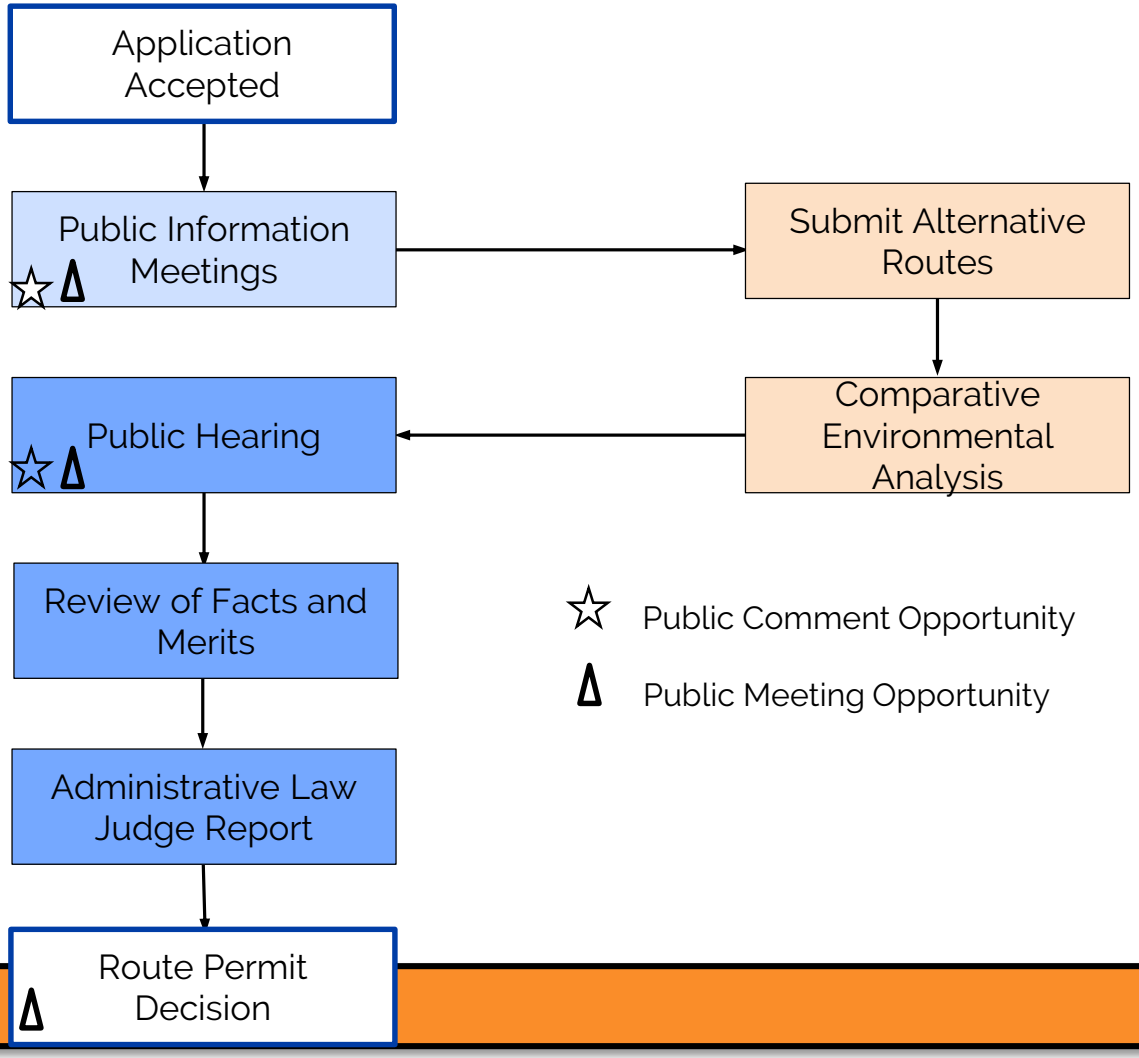
Factors Considered in Public Utilities Commission's Decision

- Human settlement – displacement, noise, aesthetics, cultural values, recreation, public services, land use and management plans
- Natural environment – air, water, plants, animals, wildlife habitat, recreation
- Archaeological and historic resources
- Economy– agriculture, forestry, tourism, mining
- Pipeline costs and accessibility
- Mitigation of human and environmental effects
- Use of existing rights-of-way
- Cumulative effects of future pipeline construction
- Compliance with local, state, federal regulations

Minnesota Rules 7852.1900

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

Pipeline Route Permit Process



Application Accepted to Decision = 9 months

Estimated Project Timeline

Route Permit Application Filed	November 2015
Route Permit Application Accepted	February 2016
*Public Information & Scoping Meeting	February 2016
Deadline for Alternative Routes, Route Segments, and Comments	March 14, 2016
Commission Decision about Alternative Routes and Route Segments	May 2016
Comparative Environmental Analysis Published	August 2016
Public Hearings	September 2016
Administrative Law Judge Report	October 2016
Commission Route Permit Decision	November 2016

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

Sample
Notice of Comment Period

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

Daniel P. Wolf, Executive Secretary

NOTICE OF COMMENT PERIOD ON COMPLETENESS OF THE ROCHESTER NATURAL GAS PIPELINE ROUTE PERMIT APPLICATION

Issued: November 13, 2015

In the Matter of the Application of Minnesota Energy Resources Corporation for a Route Permit for the Rochester Natural Gas Pipeline Project in Olmsted County

Public Utilities Commission (PUC) Docket Number: G-011/GP-15-858

Comment Period: Initial comment period closes November 30, 2015 at 4:30 p.m.
Reply comment period closes December 7, 2015 at 4:30 p.m.

Topics Open for Comment:

- Does the route permit application contain the information required by Minnesota Rules 7852.2100 to 7852.3100?
- Are there contested issues of fact with respect to the representations made in the application?
- Should the Commission appoint an advisory task force?

KEYS to Sending Comments

- Include the docket number (*15-858*)
- Stick to topics listed
- No need to submit comments more than once
- Verbal and written comments carry the same weight
- Commission's decision based on facts in the record
- Comments are public information
- Must be received before deadline

How to Learn More

See all documents related to this project

- mn.gov/puc
- Select *Search eDockets*
- Enter the year and the Docket Number
  - 15 is the year and 858 is the number
  - Select *Search*
- The list of documents will appear on the next page

How to Learn More

Project Mailing List

- Receive information about project milestones and opportunities for citizen participation
  - Email or US Mail
  - Complete and return *Project Mailing List* card
  - Contact the Public Utilities Commission
    - docketing.puc@state.mn.us
    - 651-201-2204 or 1-800-657-3782

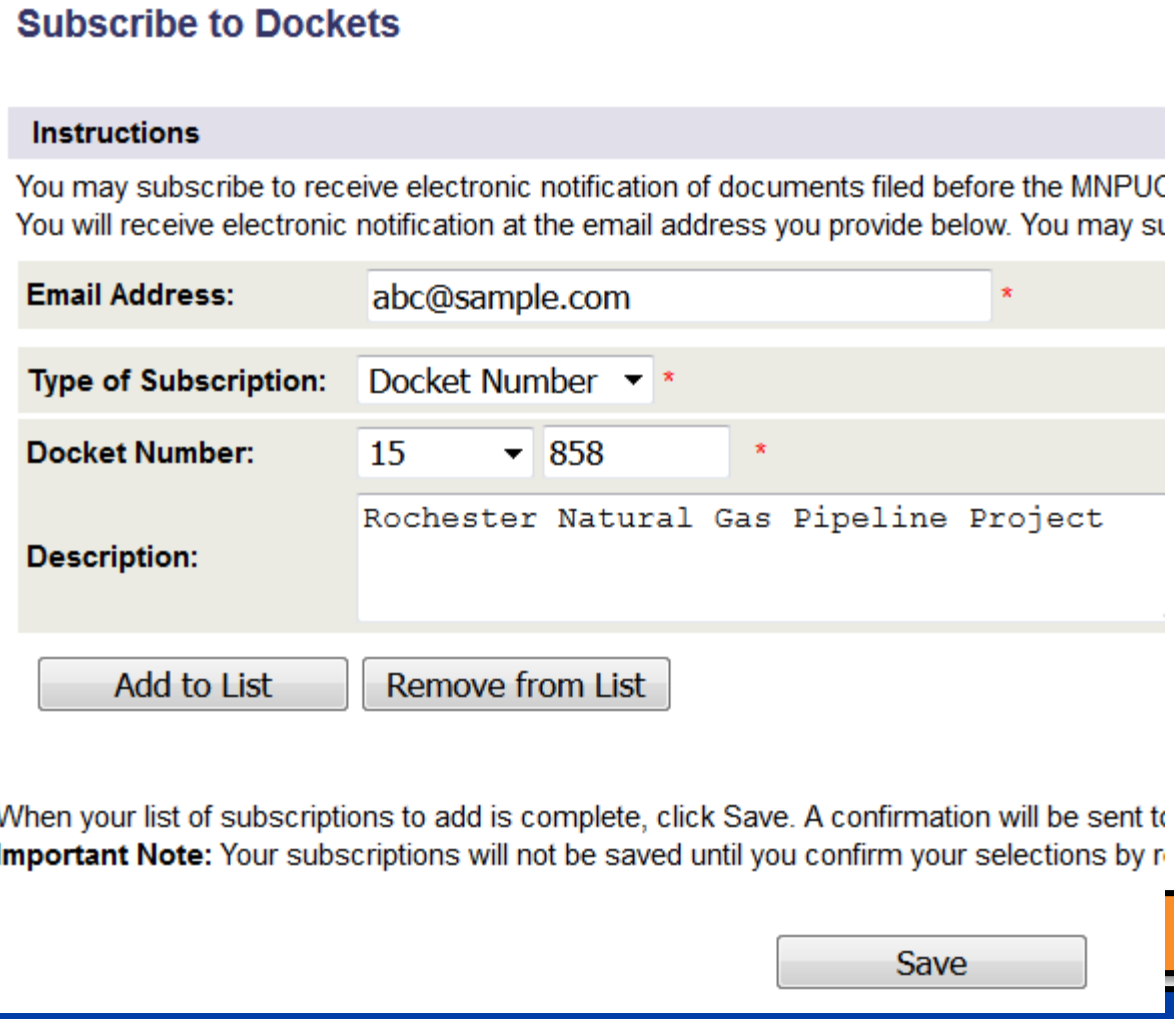
How to Learn More

Subscribe to receive email notification when new documents are added to the Docket

1. mn.gov/puc
2. Select *Subscribe to a Docket*
3. Type your email address
4. For *Type of Subscription*, select *Docket Number*
5. For *Docket Number*, select *15* in the first box, type *858* in the second box
6. Select *Add to List*

*Subscribing may result in a large number of emails

How to Learn More



Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

PUC Project Contacts

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Energy Facilities Planner
Public Utilities Commission
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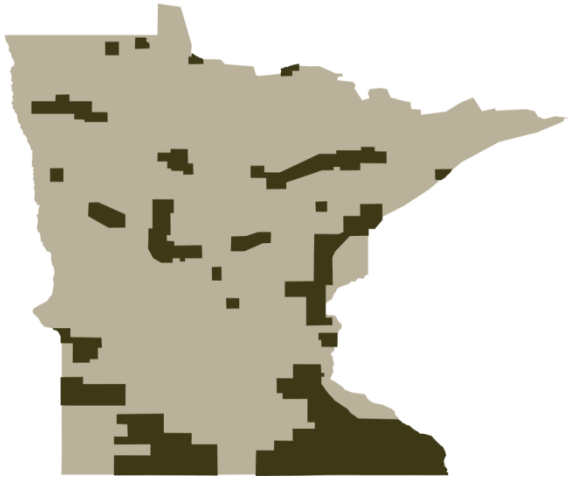
Phone 651-201-2257

Rochester Natural Gas Pipeline Project
Docket No. G011/GP-15-858

Amber Lee
Regulatory and Legislative Affairs Manager
February 29, 2016

About Minnesota Energy Resources (MERC)

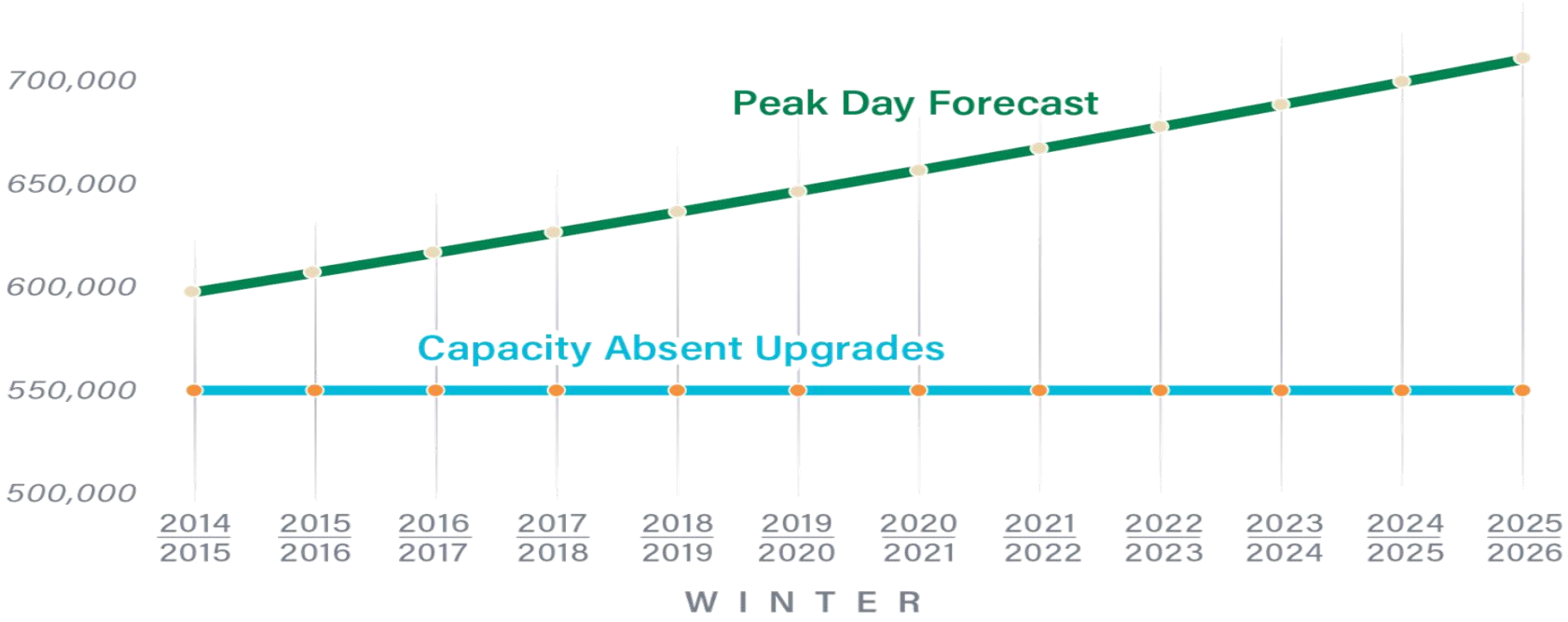
- Business
  - Natural gas distribution operations for 87 years
  - Regulated natural gas utility
  - 226 employees
- Market
  - Natural gas distribution services to approximately 230,000 natural gas customers in 177 communities
  - Minnesota customers only



Need for the Project

- Minnesota Energy Resources is sole natural gas provider in and around the city of Rochester
- Existing system has limited growth capabilities
- Project needed to provide reliable service:
  - To new commercial, industrial and residential customers
  - To meet the increased demand of existing customers

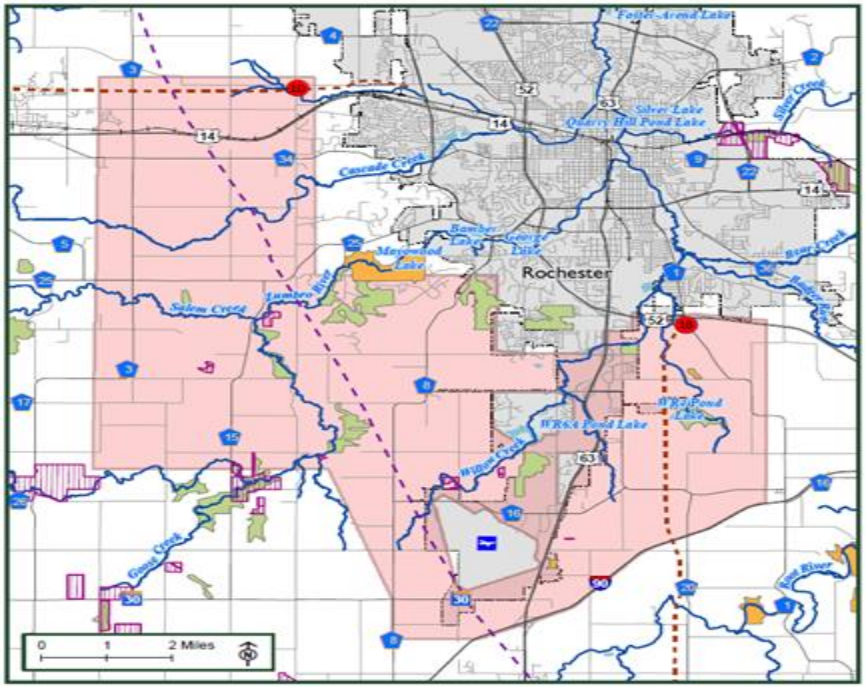
Need for the Project



Project Overview

- West and south sides of Rochester
- Connect two town border stations (one existing and one new) and a district regulator station
  - Town border stations interface between our system and interstate natural gas pipelines
  - District regulator stations reduce pressure from our high-pressure natural gas pipelines (400-500 psig) to standard distribution pressure (60-100 psig)

Route Development Study Area



Legend

- Study Area
- Interconnection Point
- Railroad

Existing Pipeline

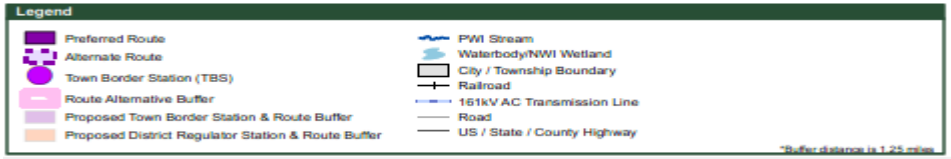
- Natural Gas
- Oil

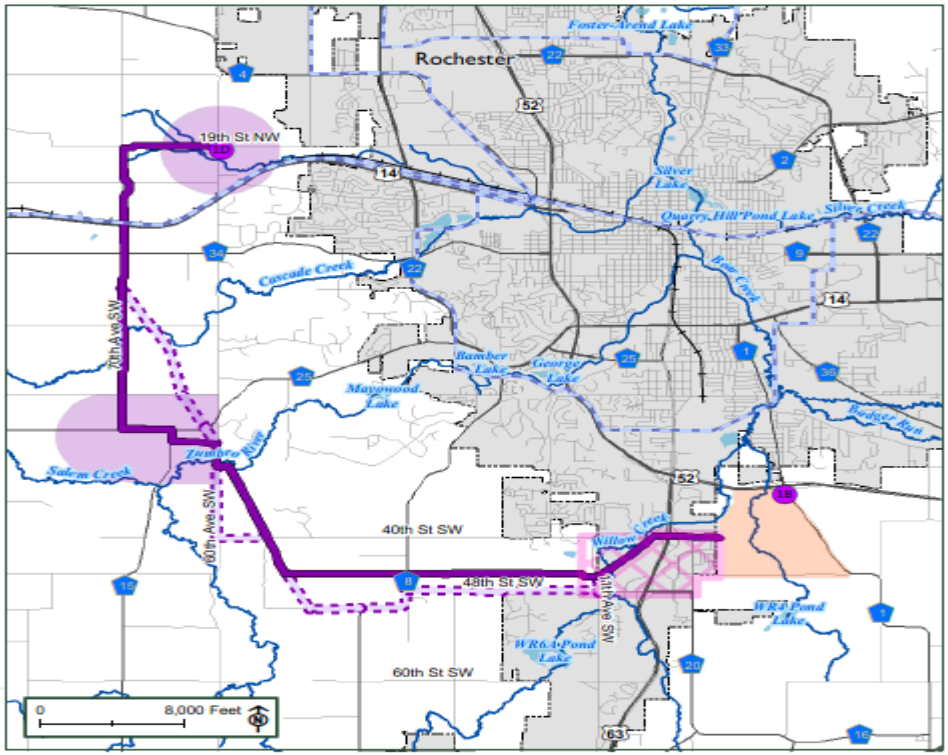
- PWI Stream
- Waterbody/NWI Wetland
- State Managed Land/Easement
- Moderate Biodiversity Significance Site
- High Biodiversity Significance Site
- City / Township Boundary
- RST Airport

Path: \\mspe-gis-file\gisproj\050_den\232026_MERC\map_docs\Overview_8x11_P.mxd

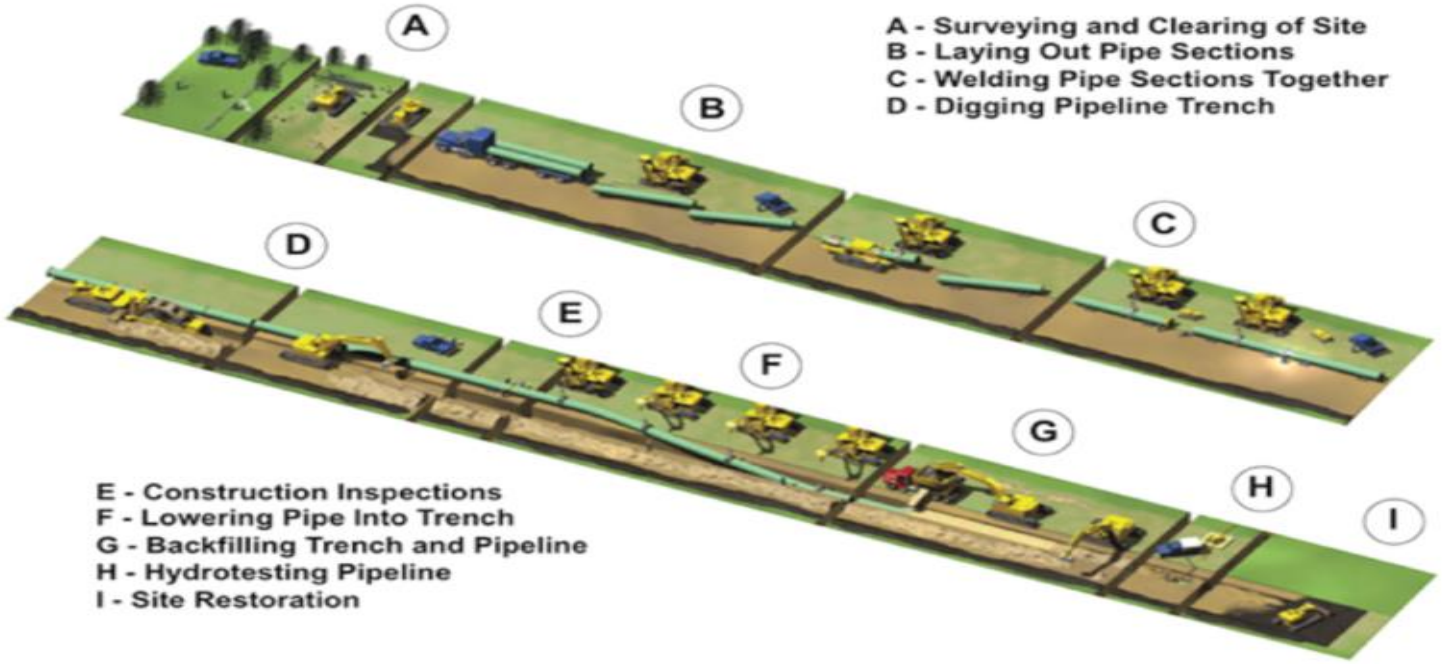
Proposed Map of Route

- Solid line – preferred route
- Dashed line – route segment alternatives
- 5.1 miles of 16-inch pipe
- 8.0 miles of 12-inch pipe





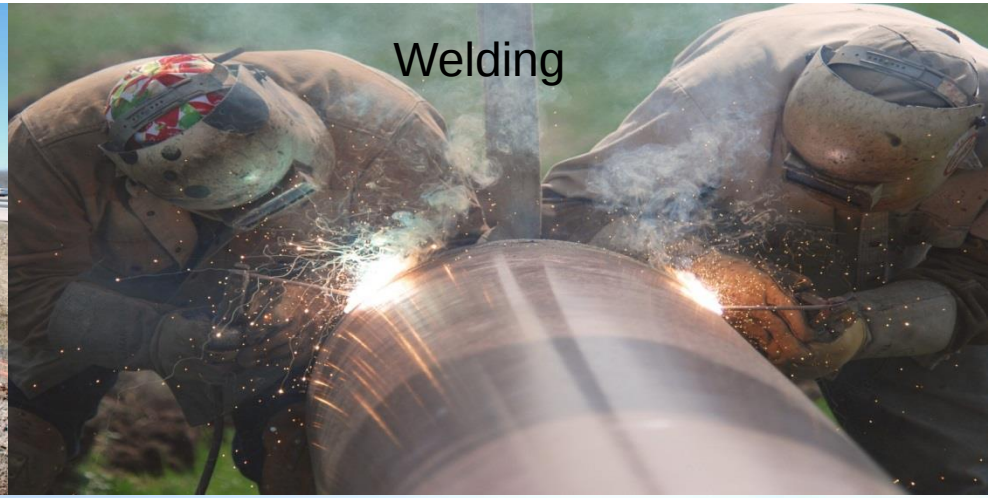
Construction



Construction

Trenching

Welding



Pipe placement

Back fill

Town Border Station – Representative Photos

District Regulator Station – Representative Photos

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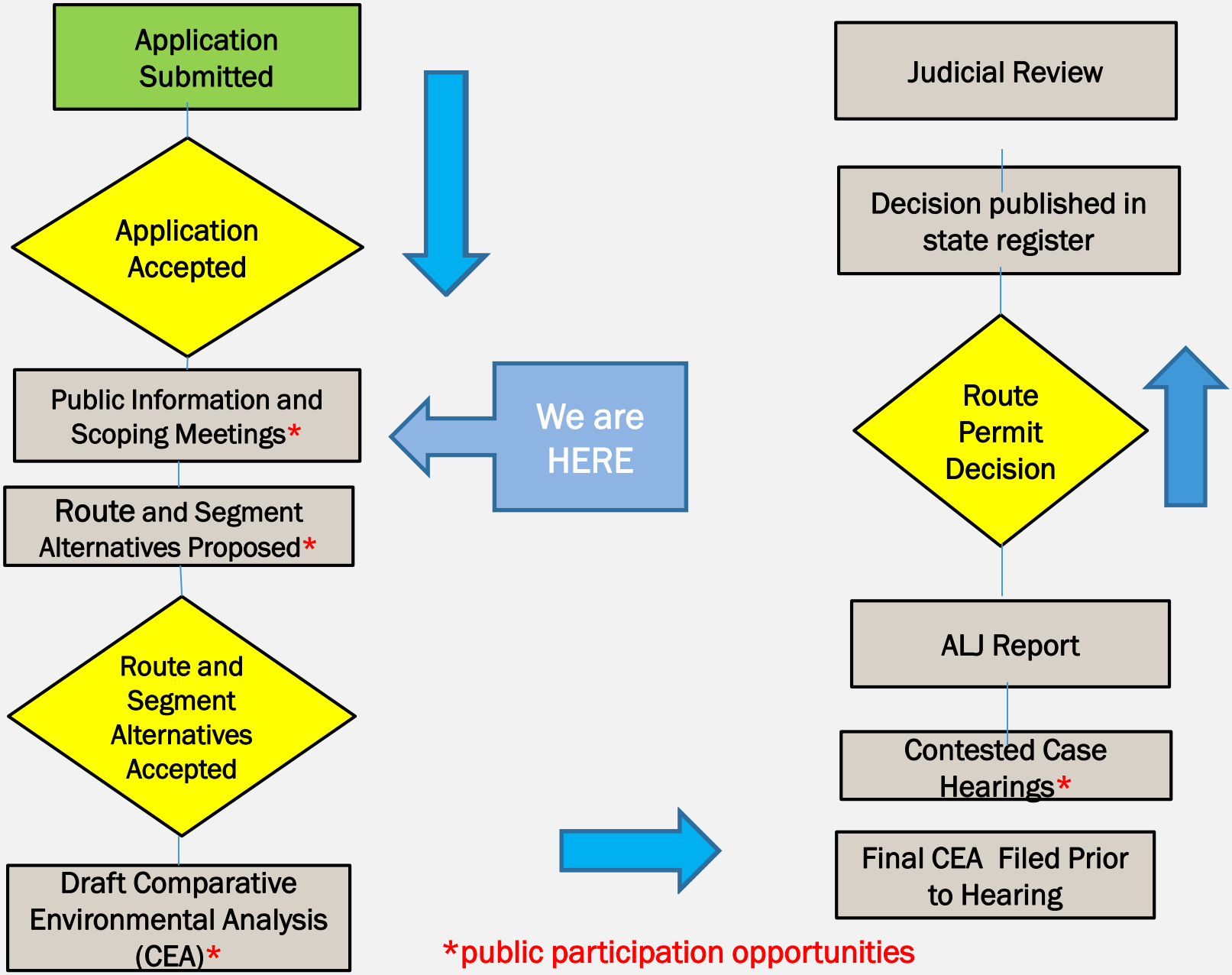
Public Information and Environmental Document Scoping Meeting

ROCHESTER NATURAL GAS PIPELINE PROJECT

G-011/GP-15-858

Pipeline Routing Process

- Routing of pipelines governed by Minn Statute 216.G and Minn Rule7852
- Rochester Natural Gas Pipeline Project Replacement Project is a full review process (7852.0800-7852-1900)
- Includes preparation of an environmental document
- Public hearings presided by an Administrative Law Judge from the Office of Administrative Hearings



*public participation opportunities

Scoping the Environmental Document

Scoping meetings provide the public, agencies, tribes, and local governments the opportunity to:

1. Identify issues and impacts (human and environmental) for analysis
2. Participate in the development of route and segment alternatives
3. Route alternatives approved by PUC

What is a Comparative Environmental Analysis?

- Environmental document for pipelines
- Alternative form of environmental review approved by EQB to meet MEPA requirements
- Objective Analysis of the Project
  - Impacts and Mitigation Measures
  - Does not Advocate – Just the Facts
  - Goal = Informed Decision Making

Comments and Alternatives

- Include a map (aerial photo, USGS, county highway map, plat book, etc.,) identifying your proposed route or route segment

- Include a brief description of the existing environment with as much supporting information you can provide

Route and Segment Alternatives (Minn. R. 7852.1400)

Comments and Alternatives

Alternatives to the Project Must:

1. Mitigate a Specific Impact(s)
   - Land Use Impact
   - Natural Resource Impact
   - Aesthetic Impact
   - Other
2. Meet the need for the project

Example of an Alternative Route Segment (Issue: Historic Property)

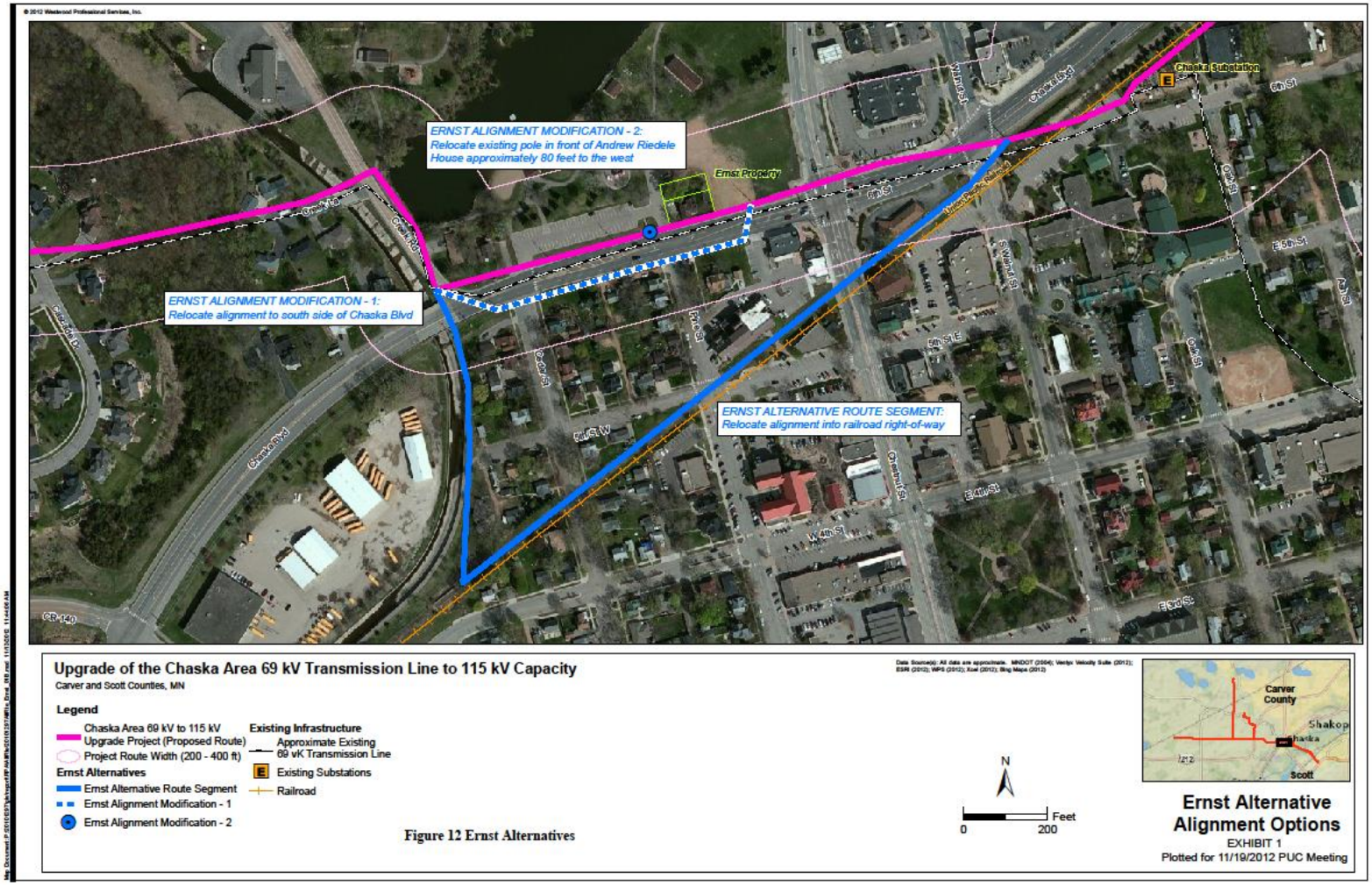


Figure 12 Ernst Alternatives

Example of an Alternative Route Segment (Issue: Re-align with County Rd 34)

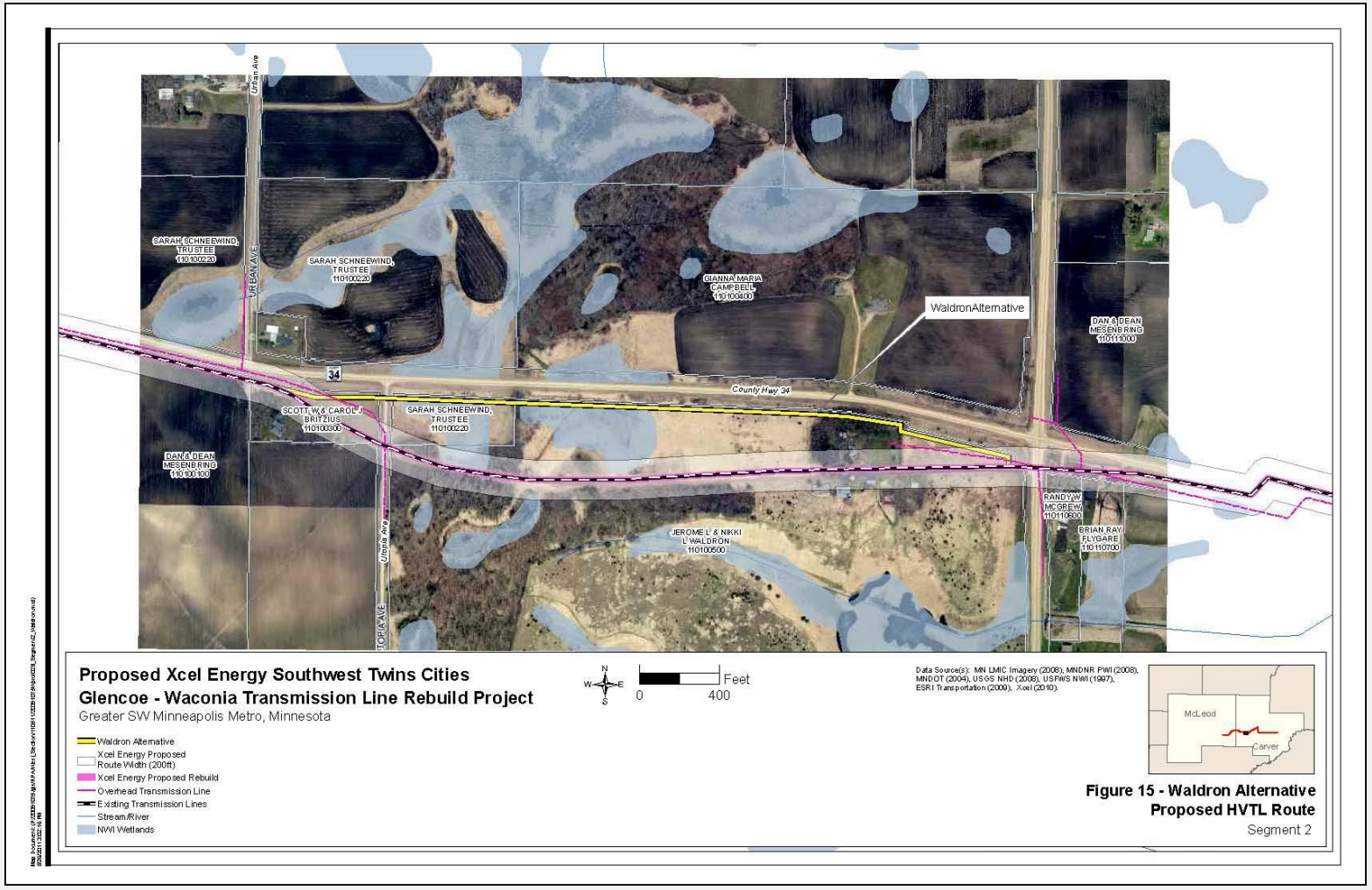
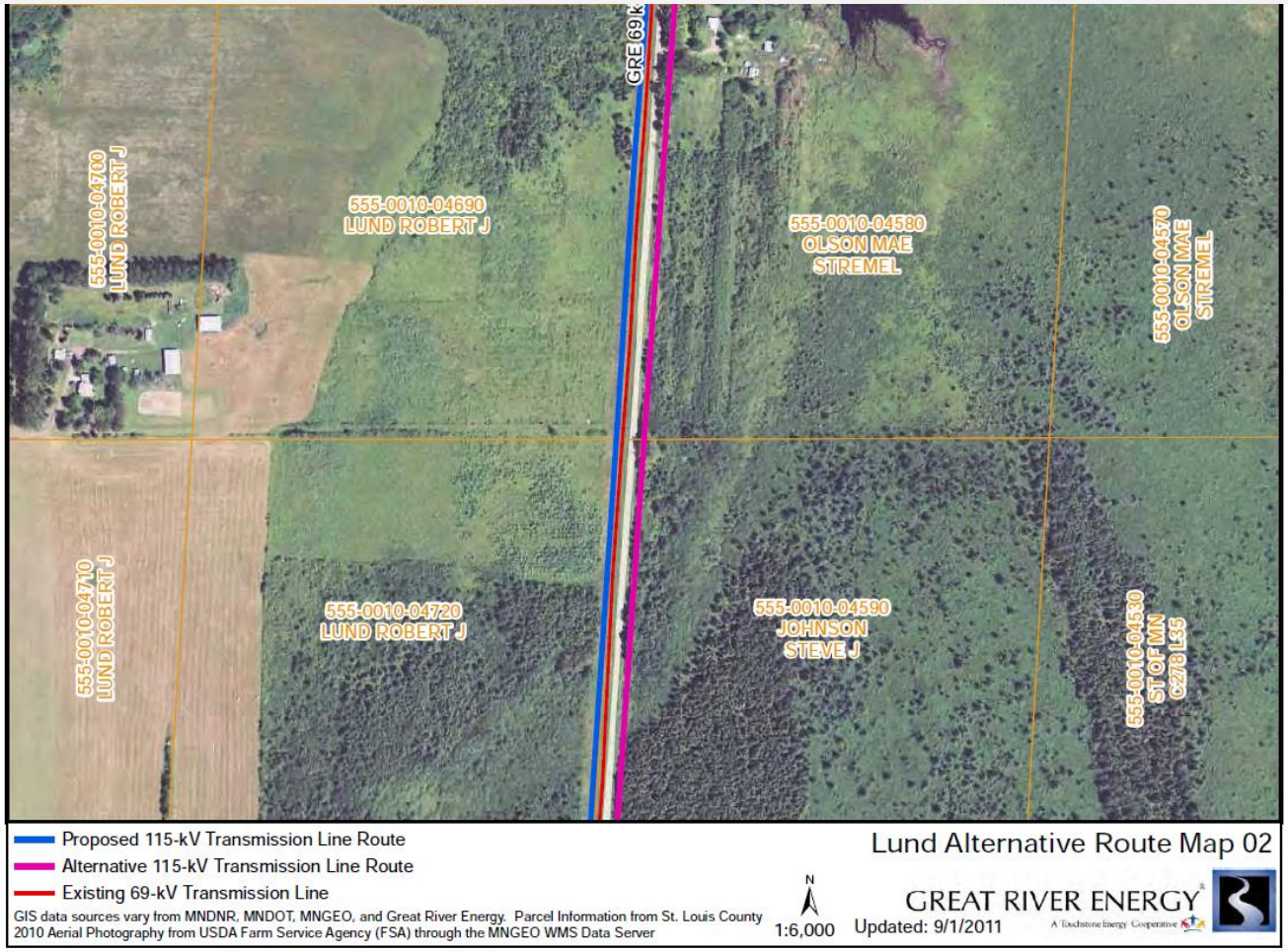
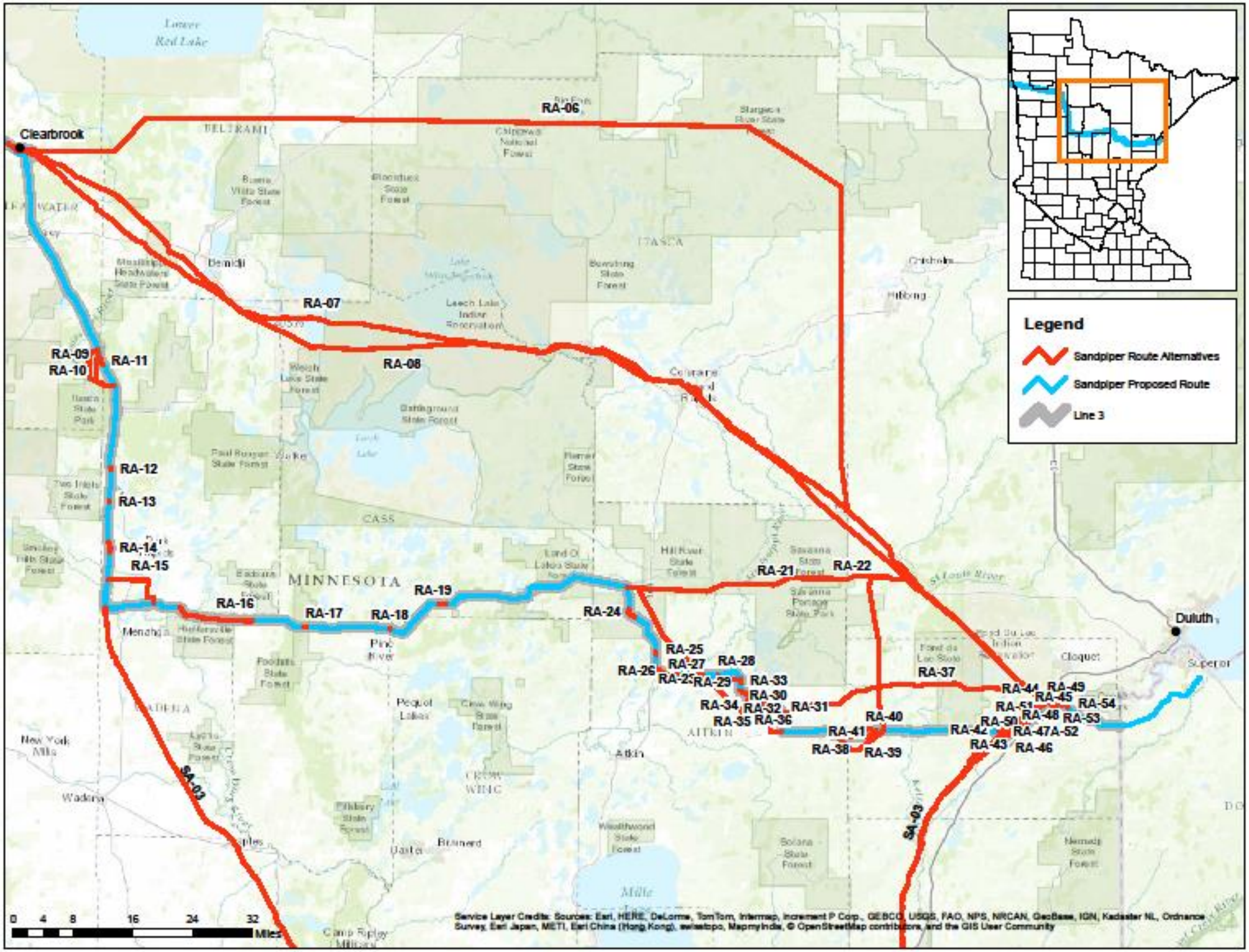


Figure 15 - Waldron Alternative Proposed HVTL Route
Segment 2

Example of an Alternative Route Segment (Issue: Memorial Site)




Legend
Sandpiper Route Alternatives
Sandpiper Proposed Route
Line 3
Clearbrook
Bemidji
Duluth
Cloquet
Superior
Hibbing
Chisholm
Menahga
Pine River
Pequot Lakes
Brainerd
Aitkin
Wadena
New York Mills
MINNESOTA
RA-06
RA-07
RA-08
RA-09
RA-10
RA-11
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Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STATE AGENCIES FOR PIPELINE PERMITTING & REGULATION

Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Office of Pipeline Safety/Minnesota Department of Public Safety

Anticipated Route Permitting Schedule

Milestone		
Application Acceptance	February 3, 2016	
Public Information and Scoping Meetings	February 29, 2016	
Comment period on routes and route alternatives	April 13, 2016	
Routes Accepted for Consideration by PUC	July 2016	
Draft Comparative Environmental Analysis Released	August 2016	
Public Meetings and Contested Case Hearing	September 2016	
Commission Route Permit Decision	December 2016	

Comments

- Verbal Comments at tonight's meeting
- Complete and Submit a Comment Sheet
- Comment On-Line http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities

- Mail, Fax, or Email a Comment:

  Larry Hartman, Environmental Review Manager
  Minnesota Department of Commerce
  85 7th Place East, Suite 500
  St. Paul, MN 55101-2198

  fax: 651-539-0109
  Toll Free: 1-800-657-3794
  larry.hartman@state.mn.us

Comment Period Ends: April 13, 2016

Comments

- One Speaker at a Time
- Please State and Spell Your Name for the Court Reporter
- Please Limit Comments to a Few Minutes
- Maintain Respect for Others
- Direct Your Comments / Questions to the Scope of the CEA