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Purpose of and Need for Action

1.1 Proposed Action

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in consultation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is studying alternatives to enhance continuity and provide a safe and efficient transportation facility from the eastern side of Macomb, Illinois to Interstate 474 (I-474) west of Peoria, Illinois. The project study area includes parts of McDonough, Fulton, and Peoria counties (Exhibit 1-1). The principal communities in and near the study area are Macomb, Canton, and Peoria. Smaller communities include Bardolph, New Philadelphia, Marietta, Smithfield, Cuba, Norris, Farmington, Hanna City, Norwood and Bellevue.

1.2 Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the Build Alternative is to provide a safe and efficient transportation facility from the eastern side of Macomb, Illinois to I-474 west of Peoria, Illinois. See Exhibit 1-1, which shows the general location of the project study area. The proposed action will help provide western Illinois and the communities of Jacksonville, Quincy, Monmouth, Macomb, Canton, and Peoria greater access to each other and to various east/west and north/south Interstate and expressway systems.

1.3 History of the Project

The IL 336 project is the culmination of a long planning process. For the past four decades, the State of Illinois, civic leaders, local agencies, and citizen groups have expressed the need for an improved highway system in west-central Illinois. Since the early 1960s, planning efforts have been directed toward providing the necessary linkages from western Illinois communities to the larger cities within the region. In 1969, the Illinois General Assembly passed legislation making possible major highway improvements statewide. An important part of that legislation was the Supplemental Freeway System. One of the freeways included in the enabling legislation, Supplemental Freeway F-7 (later known as FA 407), extended from Peoria west to Quincy (Exhibit 1-2).

After the legislation was passed, IDOT prepared a corridor study for FA 407 from Peoria to IL 61 west of Tennessee, IL in McDonough County. The corridor study was completed in 1970. The study evaluated three alternate routes, A, B, and C, from Peoria to Macomb, and resulted in the selection of Alternate A. These corridors, slightly modified primarily to include a logical terminus at Macomb, are shown in Exhibit 1-3. In the mid-1970s, IDOT began a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for FA 407 from Peoria to Canton. The EIS process was not completed, and in 1979 the study was suspended.

The FA 407 corridor was also included in three feasibility studies for a highway connection between Chicago and Kansas City. These studies were:

- 1968, Chicago-Kansas City Highway Corridor Recommended the state authorities undertake financing studies and plans for the immediate construction of a corridor highway.
- 1974, Kansas City, Missouri to Chicago, Illinois, Route Feasibility Study Determined a Kansas City to Chicago route was economically and environmentally feasible.
- 1990, Chicago/Kansas City Tollway Feasibility Study Concluded a privately-owned and operated Chicago-Kansas City Tollway was feasible if: 1) Cost, travel demand, and growth are as assumed by the study, 2) State governments acquire right-of-way (ROW) with revenues from local assessments, 3) Tollway rates are unregulated, and 4) Existing roads are incorporated into the privately-owned tollway.

In 1998, the 336 Coalition, a group of concerned citizens, business people, and local government representatives, was formed to promote the study and construction of a four-lane highway from Macomb to Peoria.

On February 5, 2003, FHWA published in the Federal Register a notice of intent to prepare an EIS for IL-336 from Macomb to Peoria, Illinois (notice is included in Appendix D). The EIS process began with corridor re-evaluation, then identification of a corridor within which alignment alternatives were evaluated. The corridor identified in the Corridor Study (IDOT 2004) is shown in Exhibit 1-4. It is referred to herein as the project corridor.

1.4 Need for Action

The proposed action is based on the need for improvement of system linkage, facility continuity, economic stability, and travel efficiency.

1.4.1 System Linkage and Facility Continuity

An efficient transportation facility from Macomb to Peoria will improve regional transportation continuity and enhance the linkage of west-central Illinois to major economic markets. The proposed action, while having independent utility, is a key link to the following four-lane highway improvements in west-central Illinois that are either existing, under construction, or planned (Exhibit 1-5).

US Route 67 (US 67), Macomb to Monmouth (Exhibit 1-5, Section 1): Construction of this four-lane expressway was completed in 2002.

US 67, Macomb to Alton (Exhibit 1-5, Section 2): All studies on this project are completed and approved. Design approval for a four-lane expressway between Macomb and Jacksonville was granted in 2003. A US 67 bypass of Jacksonville was completed and opened to traffic in 1999. The Jacksonville Bypass connects to I-72 and a completed four-lane section of US 67 that extends from I-72 south to the Scott/Morgan County line. The part of US 67 in Scott County is

currently under construction, as is a section in Morgan County north of the Jacksonville bypass. Engineering for contract plans and land acquisition is programmed during fiscal years (FY) 2008-2013 for parts of the project in Cass County. Engineering for contract plans is programmed during FY 2009-2013 for the section from north of Industry to IL 101 in McDonough and Schuyler Counties. Construction of new bridges and culverts, bridge replacement, grading, construction engineering, engineering for contract plans, land acquisition and utility adjustments are programmed during FY 2008-2013 for US 67 from Godfrey to the Scott County line (IDOT 2007).

IL Route 336, Quincy to Macomb Corridor (Exhibit 1-5, Section 3): A new four-lane highway for 21.3 miles from US 24 near Quincy to three miles south of Carthage and 1.2 miles from County Highway 18 to Deere Road west of Macomb is open to traffic. The construction to provide five miles of four lanes and an interchange from three miles south of Carthage to two miles east of Carthage and the construction to provide 1.1 miles of five lanes from US 136 east of Township Road 266 to County Highway 18 are underway. The work to finish the remaining 20.3 miles of four-lane highway from two miles east of Carthage to US 136 east of Township Road 266 is under construction.

IL 336/US 67, Macomb Area Study (Macomb Bypass) (Exhibit 1-5, Section 4): The Macomb Bypass will connect all of the above three projects. An EIS was completed for the Macomb Area Study and signed by FHWA on June 18, 2004. FHWA signed the Record of Decision for the Macomb Area Study on November 4, 2004. The Macomb Bypass will be an access-controlled, four-lane highway in McDonough County, Illinois that will allow for the continuation of US 67, US 136, and proposed Illinois 336 around the City of Macomb. It will be approximately 12.7 miles long. The highway will also link east-west roads, US 136 and IL 336 to US 67. It will also reduce traffic congestion in and around Macomb, increase safety for city traffic by establishing a through-traffic alternative (bypass), reduce travel times for local and regional drivers, and support the city's economic development goals. The final EIS determined that construction of the Macomb Bypass would require 710.9 acres of new ROW, result in the displacement of six residences and one business, and impact 1.87 acres of wetland. The majority of required ROW is used for agriculture; however, some locations are wooded.

Soils investigations and archaeological studies are on-going. IDOT has received corridor protection for the Macomb Bypass ROW and 165 acres have been acquired for environmental mitigation. A wetland mitigation site, which accounts for wetland impacts associated with the Macomb Area Study and the IL 336 Carthage to Macomb project, was constructed in 2007. It is located in Hancock County west of the city of Macomb. Interchange construction at the ends of the project has begun. The Macomb Area Study is not currently included in IDOT's FY 2009-2014 Proposed Highway Improvement Program.

¹ Final Environmental Impact Statement, Macomb Area Study, McDonough County, Illinois, US Route 67 (FAP) 310 and Illinois Route 336 (FAP 315), FHWA-IL-EIS-03-01-F. 2004.

In February and March, 2009, IDOT conducted a re-evaluation of the Macomb Area Study Final EIS, pursuant to FHWA regulations, to assess any changes that may have occurred and their effect on the adequacy of the Final EIS.² The re-evaluation included data review, field reconnaissance and a traffic analysis. The re-evaluation found that the design of the final alignment had not been modified, that the final alignment was corridor-protected in 2004, that no new development will be affected, and that there will be no new impacts within the final alignment. The traffic analysis conducted to determine new traffic impacts associated with the IL 336 Macomb to Peoria project terminating at the Macomb Bypass showed that the Macomb Bypass will still operate at level of service A (indicating no traffic delays). The re-evaluation report concluded that the Macomb Area Study Final EIS is still valid and that the preparation of a Supplemental EIS is not necessary.

The Macomb Area Study final EIS and re-evaluation are hereby incorporated into this EIS. These documents are available on IDOT's website.³ For the purposes of this IL 336 EIS, the Macomb Area Study is considered part of the "no-build" condition and the environmental impacts resulting from the Macomb Area Study have been fully evaluated.

The connection between Macomb and Peoria combined with the other four-lane facilities will provide an important link in the regional transportation system. Via I-474, Quincy, Macomb, Canton, and smaller communities will have four-lane access eastward to I-74, I-155, I-55, and I-39. This regional link will also provide an important connection between central Illinois towns and markets in western Illinois and eastern Missouri.

1.4.2 Economic Stability

The Build Alternative is necessary to maintain the regional economic viability of west-central Illinois. An essential attribute of any region's economic viability is adequate access. A good, safe, and efficient highway system is especially important in this region as rural areas are almost solely dependent on the highway system to meet the needs for agriculture, industry, and commerce.

Within the project area, Fulton and McDonough Counties lag behind most of the rest of the state in population growth, income and growth in employment. Economic stagnation and decline are two of the main concerns in these two counties. Both counties seek to halt further population declines and at a minimum maintain existing economic conditions.

² 23 CFR 771.129(c)

³ Macomb Area Study Final EIS and Re-evaluation are available on IDOT's website at: http://www.dot.state.il.us/desenv/rt336finalimpact/rt336 hp.html

Population. McDonough County's population declined by 6.6% between 1990 and 2000. While Fulton and Peoria counties showed slight increases in population between 1990 and 2000 (0.3% and 0.4% respectively), those increases are below the state average of 8.6%. Of all the municipalities in the study area, only Marietta, Canton, Farmington and Bellevue increased in population from 1990-2000. The City of Canton grew by 1,300 people between 1990 and 2000. The City of Peoria lost approximately 600 residents during the decade.

Employment. Improved access will strengthen the existing economic base in each of the three counties. Currently, the area between Macomb and Peoria, including all of Fulton County, is served only by two-lane roadways. Major employers in the project area are listed below, with locations shown in Exhibit 1-6. As discussed in more detail in Section 1.4.3, improved access will help these businesses through improved efficiency in the movement of raw materials, supplies, and products, and improved efficiency in movement of people such as employees, students, patients and conference attendees. The IL-336 Build Alternative will allow western Illinois to have greater access to surrounding communities and to various east/west and north/south interstate and expressway systems. Responsiveness of emergency services will benefit from the increase in design speeds, additional capacity and improved safety conditions on IL-336. There are several large and small truck firms that operate around Peoria that provide local, inter- and intra-state trucking services. These businesses will more easily be able to transport goods through western Illinois via IL-336.

In addition to benefiting emergency services and the local trucking industry, the Canton-Ingersoll Airport west of Canton, the Greater Peoria Regional Airport in Peoria, Spoon River College south of Canton, and the Illinois River Correctional Center on the west side of Canton will be more accessible. IL-336 will provide the opportunity to improve the regional transportation continuity and enhance linkage of west-central Illinois to major economic markets. A good, safe, and efficient highway system is especially important to this region as rural areas are almost solely dependent on the highway system to meet the needs of agriculture, industry, and commerce.

500+ Employees
Caterpillar – Mapleton Plant
Keystone Steel and Wire, Bartonville
Western Illinois University, Macomb
Graham Hospital, Canton
NTN Bower, Macomb

250 – 500 Employees Illinois River Correctional Center, Canton Canton School District, Canton Pella Corporation, Macomb

Other Large Employers
Evonik Industries (formerly Degussa Goldschmidt), Mapleton

Sodexho Marriott, Macomb Vaughan & Bushnell, Bushnell

Fulton County experienced an employment decline of 351 jobs between 1997 and 2000. Employment in McDonough and Peoria Counties increased slightly by 383 jobs in Peoria and 44 jobs in McDonough. This modest job growth occurred during an economic expansion when 268,000 jobs were added within the state of Illinois. The 2006 unemployment rates in Peoria, Fulton, and McDonough counties were 4.2%, 5.2%, and 4.3%, respectively, compared to the State average of 4.5% (Illinois Department of Employment Security 2007).

While unemployment rates have declined in the three-county area over the last 20 years, the labor force has also declined. In 1983, 2,000 manufacturing jobs were lost when International Harvester closed. This loss was followed by a loss of mining jobs. Between 1980 and 2002, manufacturing employment dropped 76%. During that same time in Fulton County, 94% of the people who had worked in the mining industry lost their jobs.

According to the 2000 Census, 42% of the employed people in Fulton County need to travel outside the county for work. This is higher than the state rate of 22% of people commuting outside of their county of residence for employment. While the percentage of people in McDonough County commuting to other counties for employment is currently below the state average, it has almost doubled since the 1990 census. In addition to increased mobility, the proposed improvement will increase the range of possible employment opportunities.

Income. Median 1999 family incomes for McDonough (\$43,385) and Fulton (\$41,193) counties are 22% and 26% below the state median of \$55,545, respectively (U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000). Approximately 10% of families in McDonough County had income below the poverty level in 1999, compared to the statewide level of 8% (U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000). Without improved access to support employment, income levels may decline further.

1.4.2.1 Regional Outlook

The creation of a four-lane road through Fulton County is essential for the long-term survival of the communities. The area is currently disconnected from the larger central Illinois communities because of lack of access via major roadways. Fulton County is currently served only by two-lane roadways with frequent stops.

Without an improved ability to transfer goods to the market in a timely, cost-effective manner, increased manufacturing employment is unobtainable. According to local real estate professionals, the county is currently at a disadvantage for recruiting manufacturing and warehouse/distribution plant expansions due to lack of road access to the larger central Illinois communities.

Western Illinois University has housing, food service and meeting facilities available for national meetings and conferences in the summer season. Access to these conference facilities currently is

limited to a series of indirect two-lane highways from all directions, including from the Peoria International Airport, which IDOT considers a primary airport in Illinois (IDOT 2007).

The Western Illinois Regional Council (Council), the regional planning council for McDonough and Fulton Counties, sees the establishment of IL 336 as a vital transportation link in western Illinois. The Council views the establishment of improved linkages in the area as important for future development.

McDonough County, Fulton County, and the City of Macomb have all developed plans that point to transportation as an important factor in economic development and have set transportation-related goals. For example, the first goal of the McDonough County plan is to promote and assist in the development of an improved highway system in McDonough County and all of western Illinois. The Fulton County plan describes the inadequate highway system and the need for a coordinated effort to build a four-lane highway in Fulton County. The highway system is inadequate in that travel between Peoria and Macomb requires a series of 90-degree steps on multiple two-lane state highways with speed reductions through towns in order to complete the trip.

All these plans focus on the need for improved transportation to stop the decline in businesses, population, and income within the study area. While many factors affect economic conditions, studies have shown transportation is key to economic stability in areas that are largely rural, such as this study area (Stommes et al 2002; Crane et al 1993). Transportation serves a critical role in rural areas by providing access to markets, both input and output, especially in the movement of agricultural products, and by providing access for rural residents to jobs and services. It has been shown that rural transportation investment has a positive economic impact on both farm and non-farm incomes (Crane et al 1993). A positive relationship exists between economic stability and access to Interstate or other major highways (Kusmin et al 1996; Brown 1999).

Further, in areas such as the study area, where transportation infrastructure is inadequate, but other economic factors are well-developed (i.e., good public education expenditures, economic incentive programs, high quality labor force, solid working relationships between industry and government), transportation becomes key to the prevention of economic decline (Aldrich et al 1997).

1.4.3 Travel Efficiency

Within the project corridor, US Routes 136 and 24, and IL Routes 9, 41, 78, 95, 97, and 116 provide the major access for the residential, commercial, and farm operations. These are two-lane highways with varying shoulder widths. There are numerous locations where horizontal and vertical curves require no passing zones and speed restrictions. The existing routes provide unrestricted access to residences, fields, and commercial sites, and are also intersected by side roads at frequent intervals. Travel speed and safety are affected by the traffic entering and exiting the highway. Travel time is further affected by farm equipment using the highway.

Using the existing road system it takes about 64 miles of travel to get from Macomb to Peoria. There are about 63 no passing zones along the way. Vehicles cannot legally pass for 40% of the trip and oncoming traffic and other factors further restrict the ability to pass.

Reduced Speed through Towns and Villages. There are several different routes from Macomb to Peoria. Each of these routes goes through 10 to 15 towns and villages. Travel speeds are reduced in each of these locations, in some cases to as low as 25 mph, adding to the travel time from Macomb to Peoria. These numerous speed reductions and delays also add to safety and enforcement concerns in the affected communities.

Truck Traffic. As the percentage of trucks increases, delays in travel also increase, particularly on two-lane rural highways. Within the study area, portions of US 24, US 136, IL 116, IL 41, and IL 9 have truck percentages as high as 20%.

Existing Traffic. The existing traffic on marked roadways that travel through the project corridor (i.e., IL-95, CH-5, IL-78, IL-116) is generally low, with 2006 average daily traffic (ADT) ranging from 1500 vehicles per day (vpd) near Marietta, to 9000 vpd near Peoria. Refer to Exhibit 7 (7A through 7D) for maps of 2006 ADT traffic on state and local routes within the study area.

An origin-destination study was included in the IL-336 Peoria to Macomb Corridor Report (dated 2003), in Appendix A. The study suggested that there was a slight directional shift in A.M. and P.M. traffic across the project corridor. The results suggested a 60%/40% split favoring eastbound traffic in the AM peak hour, and a 40%/60% split favoring the westbound traffic in the PM peak hour. The report suggested the split was due to more employers located near Peoria.

Projected Traffic. In modeling done as part of the traffic analysis for the project, IL 336 was inserted into the existing traffic grid and 2006 traffic was redistributed to include IL 336. To obtain design year (2035) traffic with IL 336, the redistributed 2006 traffic was escalated using a one percent per year growth factor. The results are shown in Exhibit 1-8 (8A through 8D). The traffic analysis assumed 10 percent truck traffic.

1.5 Connection of Logical Termini

To "ensure meaningful evaluation of alternatives and to avoid commitments to transportation projects before they are fully evaluated," FHWA regulations require that the action evaluated in an EIS shall:

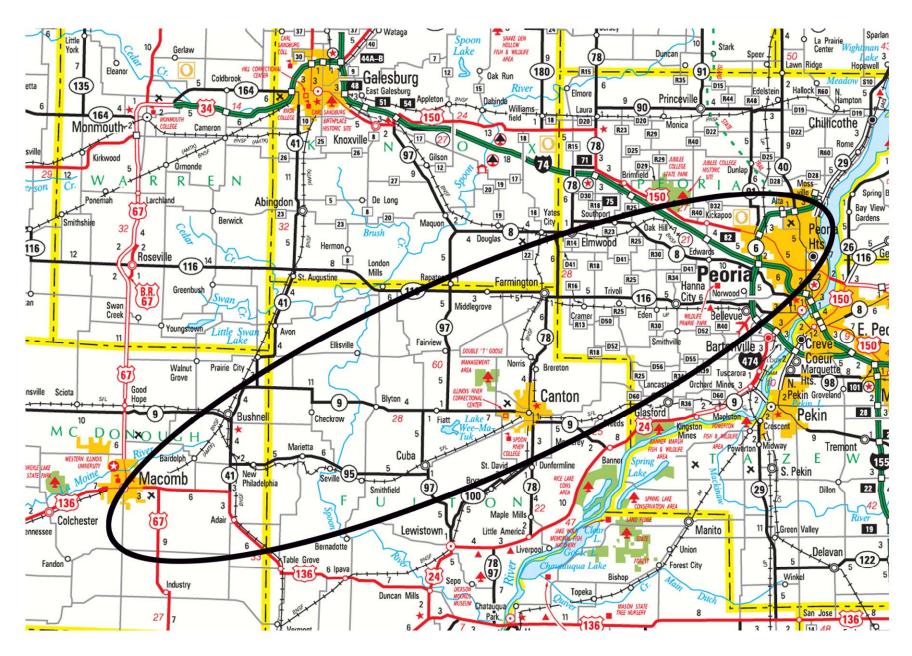
- Connect logical termini and be of sufficient length to address environmental matters on a broad scope
- Have independent utility (be usable and a reasonable expenditure even if no other additional transportation improvements in the area are made)

 Not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements.⁴

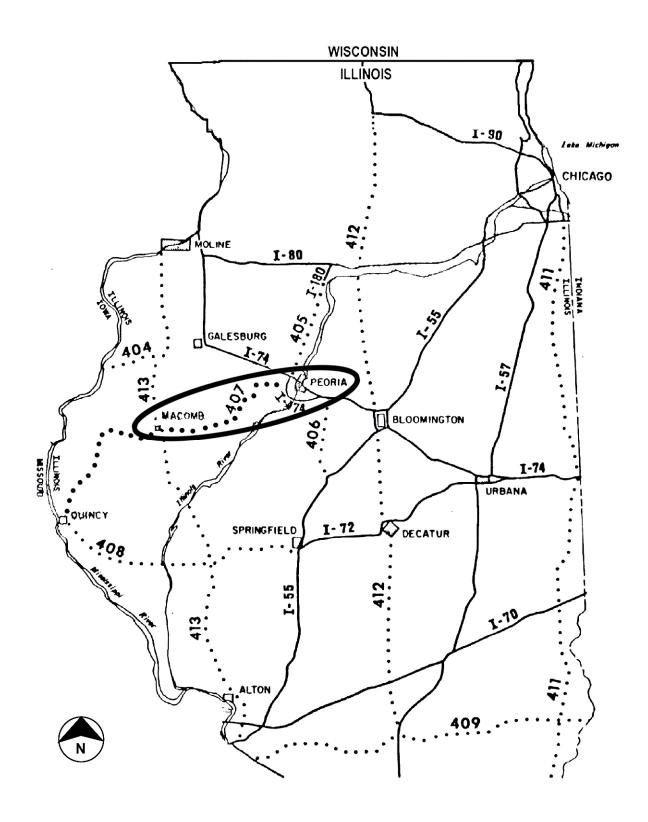
FHWA defines logical termini as "rational endpoints" (FHWA 1993). As discussed in *Section 1.4*, the proposed action is based on the need for improvement of system linkage, facility continuity, economic stability and travel efficiency. An efficient transportation system from Macomb to Peoria will provide an important link from the communities of west-central Illinois to the major Interstate highways to the east. Via I-474, access will be provided to I-74, I-55 and I-39. It will provide facility continuity by linking the four-lane highway system in west-central Illinois to the four-lane highway system in the east. It will help maintain the economic viability of west-central Illinois. As discussed in *Section 1.4.1* and shown in *Exhibit 1-5*, the Macomb Bypass will connect the major four-lane roadway improvements in west-central Illinois, and I-474 provides access to Interstate highways at and near Peoria. The area between Macomb and Peoria is in economic decline. Thus, the Macomb Bypass and I-474 provide rationale endpoints for the needed transportation improvement. At approximately 60 miles in length, the project area is sufficiently long to address environmental matters on a broad scope. The proposed action has independent utility. It does not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements.

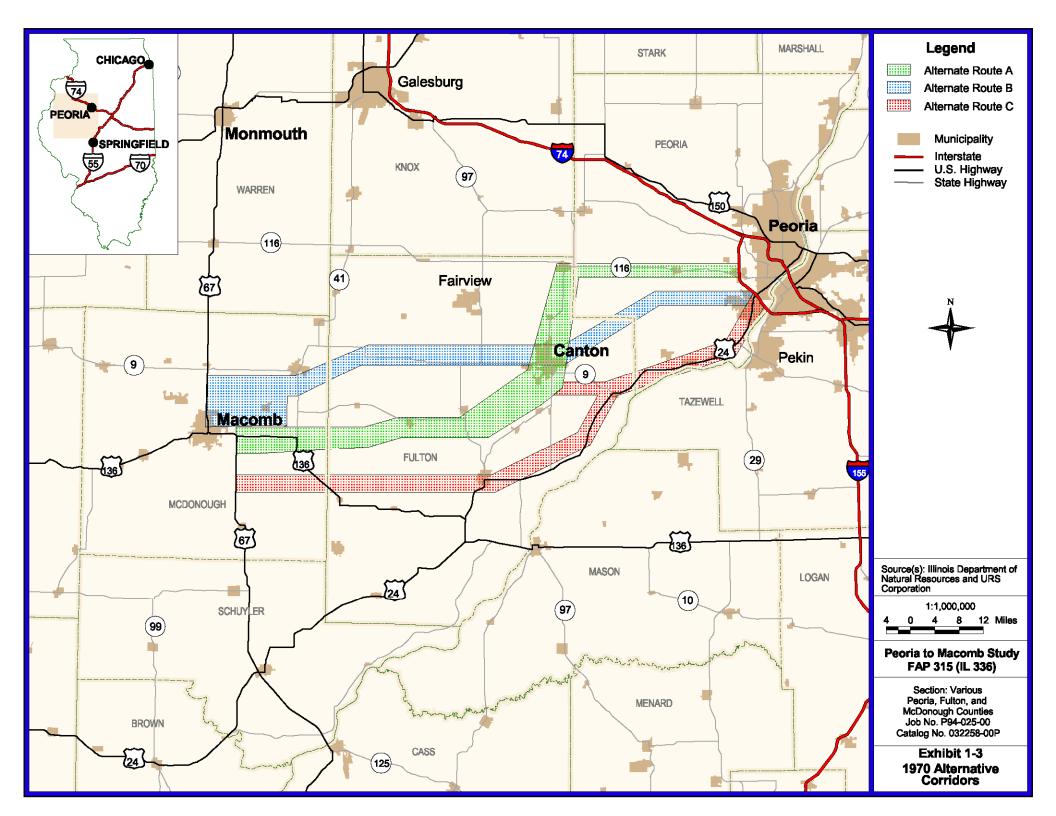
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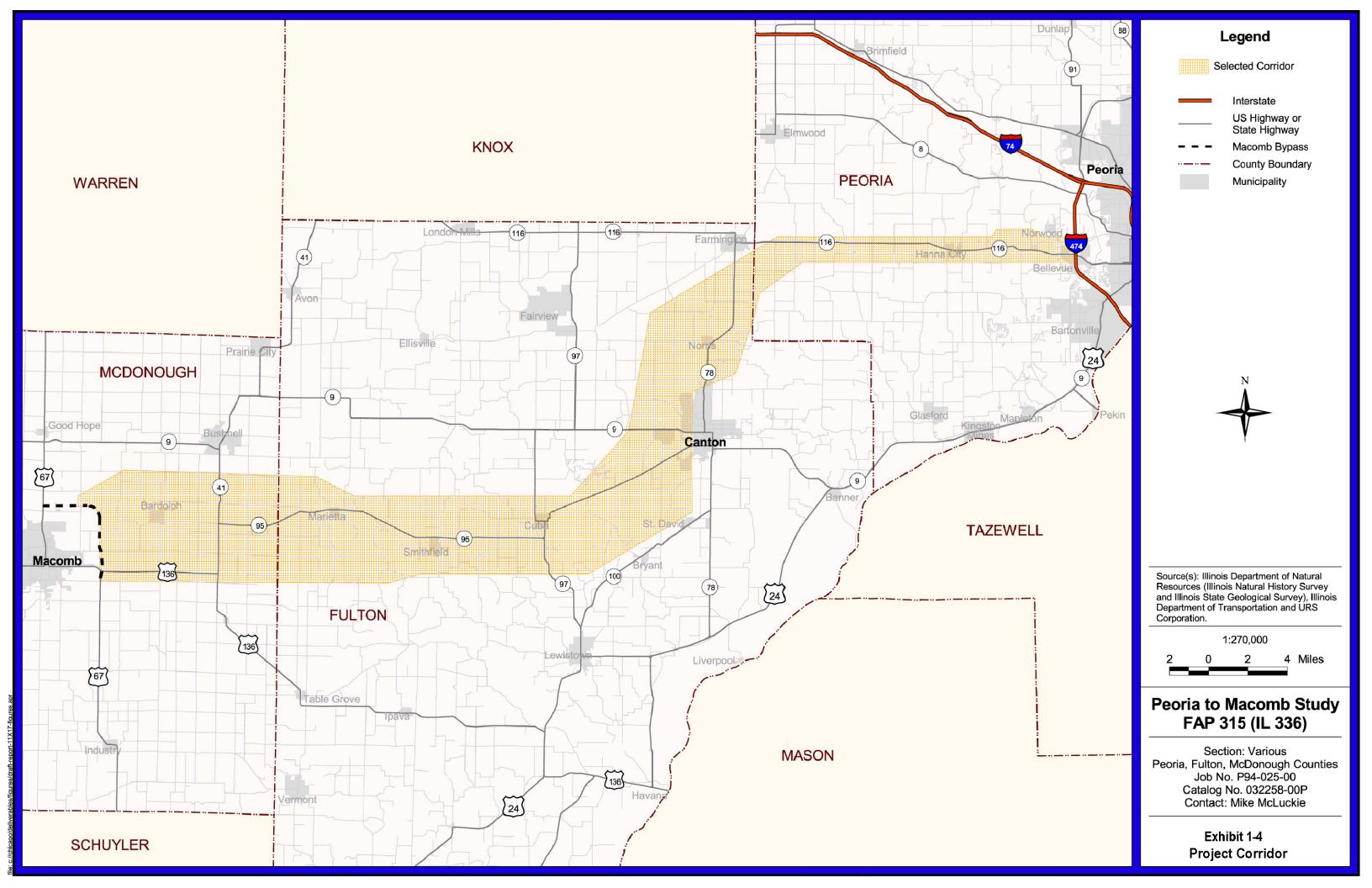
⁴ Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations (23 CFR), §771.111(f)

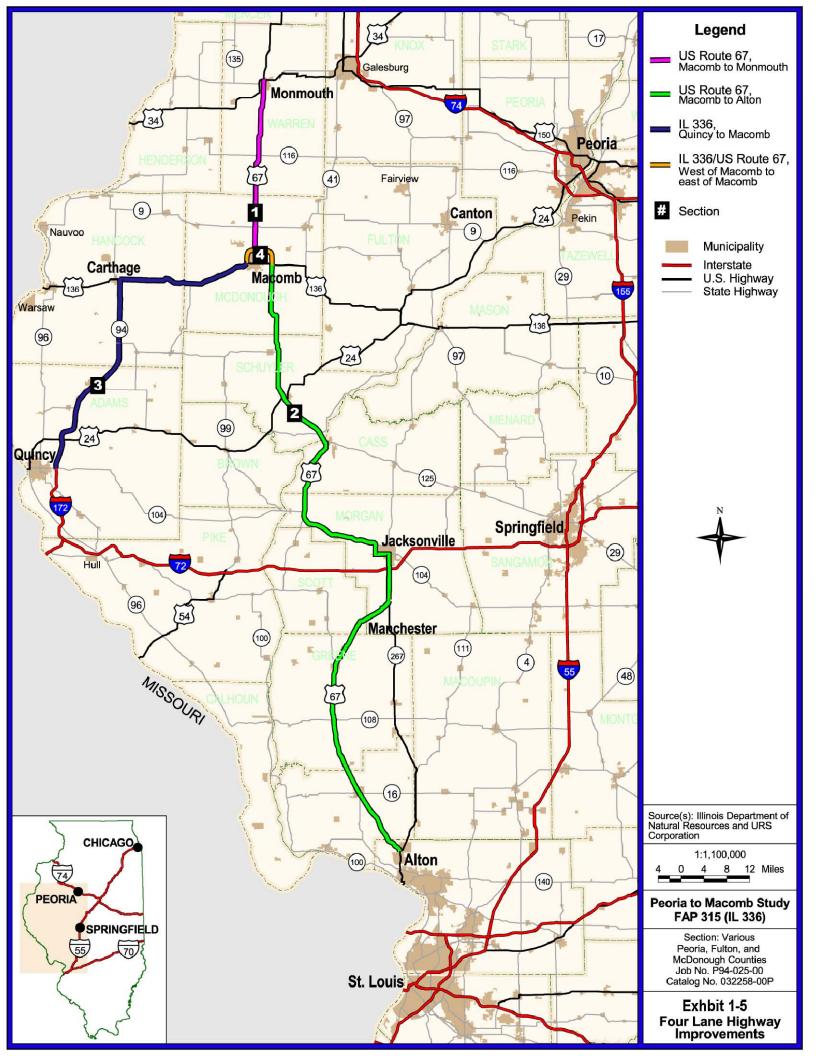


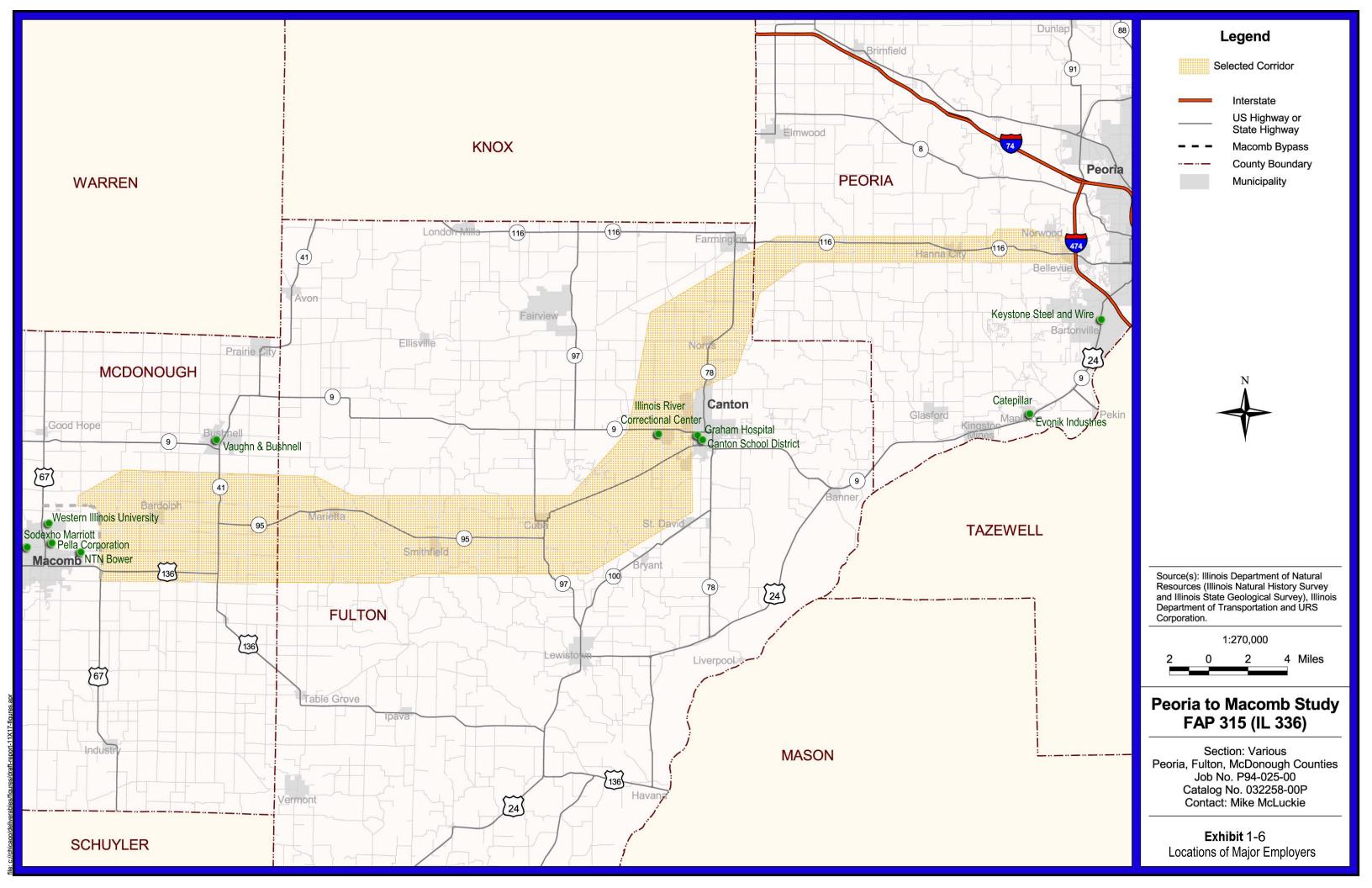












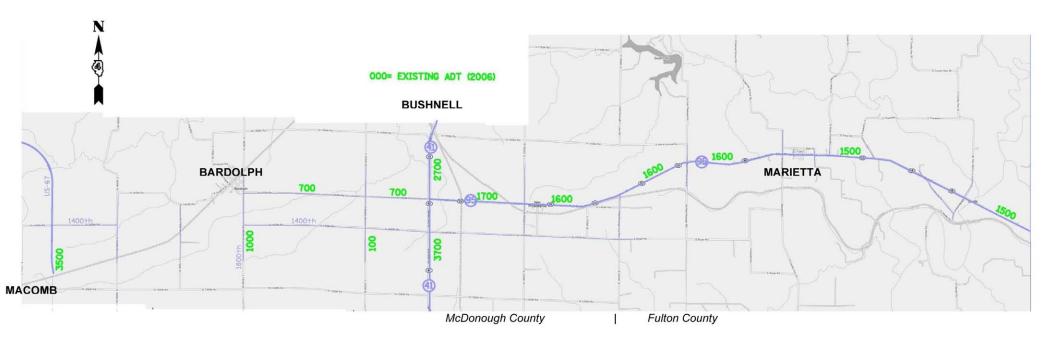


EXHIBIT 1-7A: LOCATION MAPS SHOWING EXISTING TRAFFIC (2006), 1 OF 4 EXHIBIT 1-7A

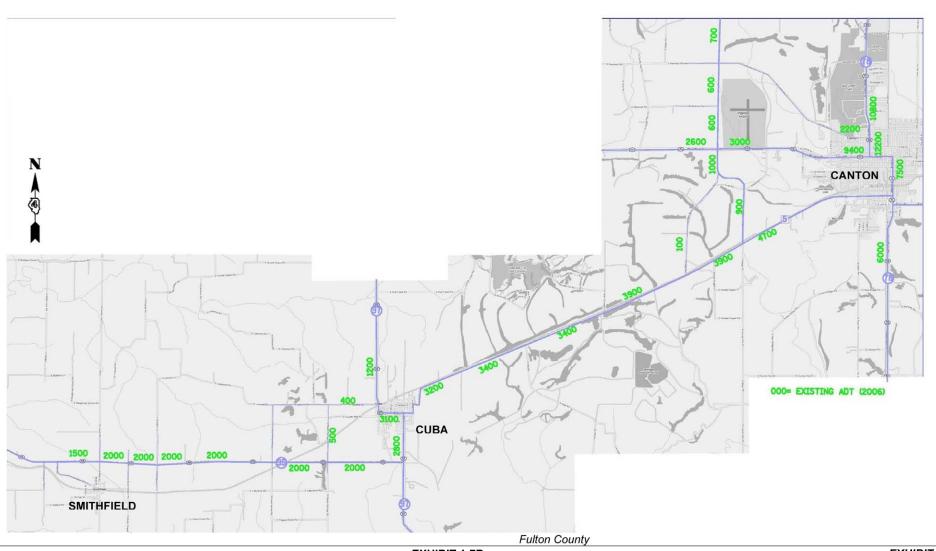


EXHIBIT 1-7B: LOCATION MAPS SHOWING EXISTING TRAFFIC (2006), 2 OF 4 EXHIBIT 1-7B

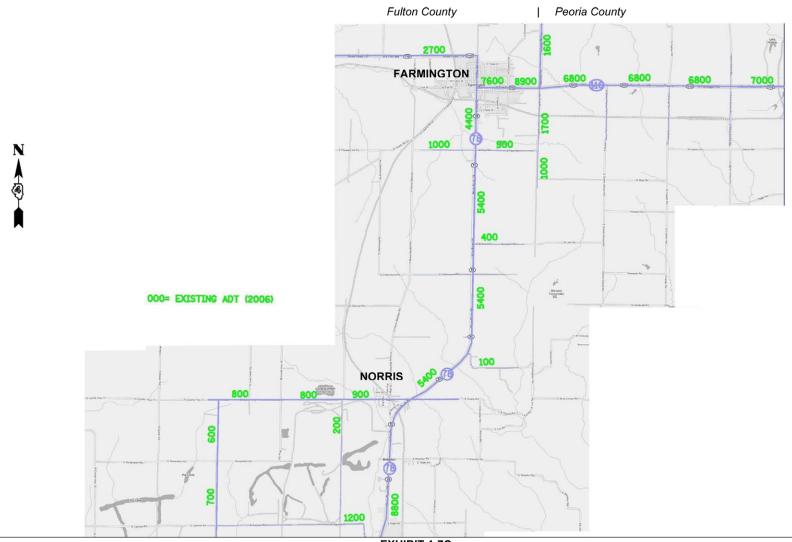


EXHIBIT 1-7C: EXHIBIT 1-7C

LOCATION MAPS SHOWING EXISTING TRAFFIC (2006), 3 OF 4

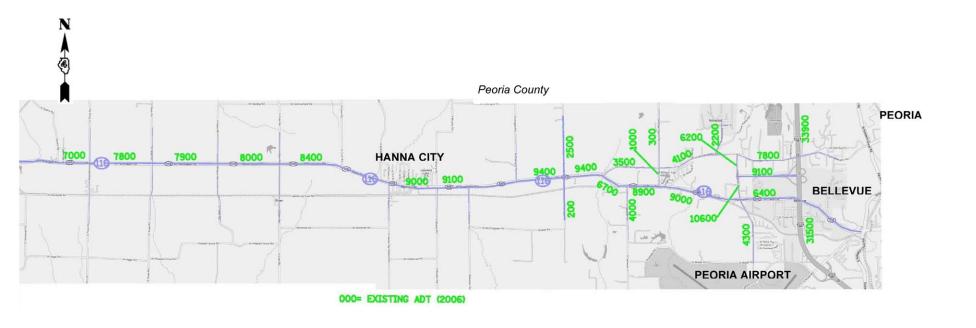


EXHIBIT 1-7D: LOCATION MAPS SHOWING EXISTING TRAFFIC (2006), 4 OF 4 EXHIBIT 1-7D

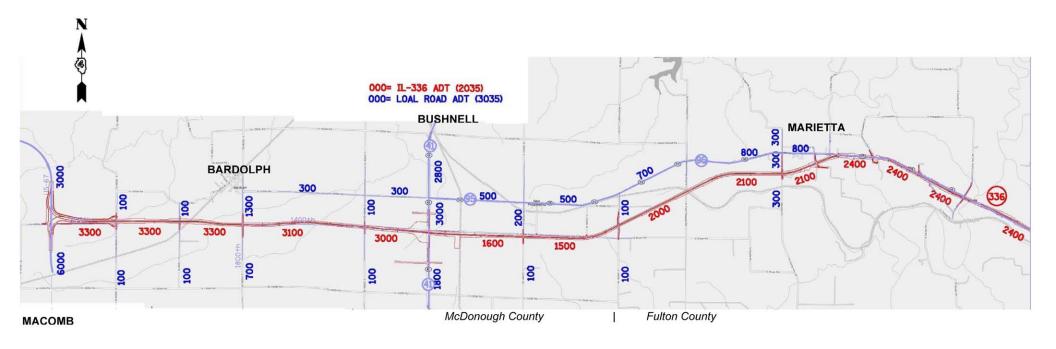


EXHIBIT 1-8A: LOCATION MAPS SHOWING PREDICTED TRAFFIC (YEAR 2035) WITH IL-336, 1 OF 4 EXHIBIT 1-8A

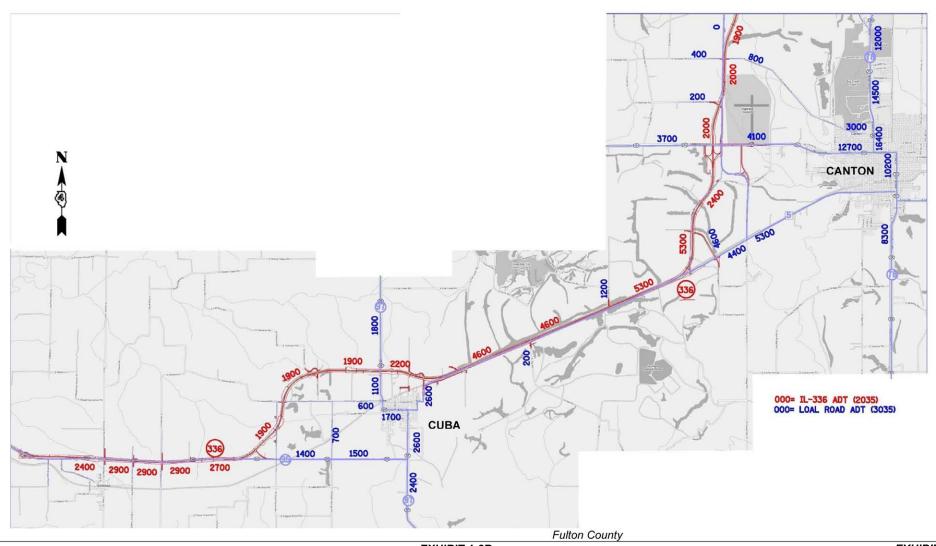


EXHIBIT 1-8B:
LOCATION MAPS SHOWING PREDICTED TRAFFIC (YEAR 2035) WITH IL-336, 2 OF 4

EXHIBIT 1-8B

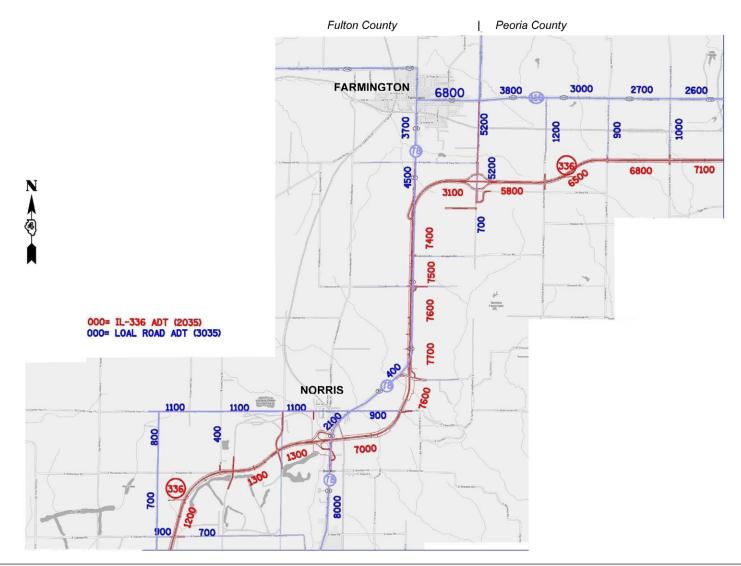


EXHIBIT 1-8C: LOCATION MAPS SHOWING PREDICTED TRAFFIC (YEAR 2035) WITH IL-336, 3 OF 4 EXHIBIT 1-8C

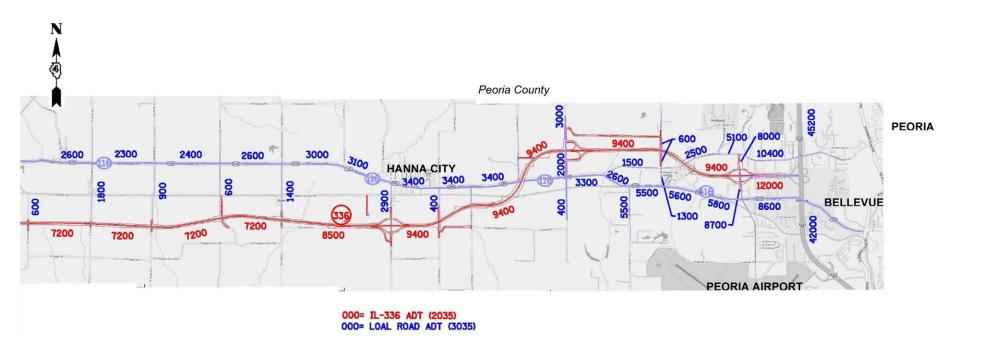


EXHIBIT 1-8D: LOCATION MAPS SHOWING PREDICTED TRAFFIC (YEAR 2035) WITH IL-336, 4 OF 4 EXHIBIT 1-8D