



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Wyoming Division

May 19, 2015

2617 E. Lincolnway, Suite D
Cheyenne, WY 82001-5671

Mr. Nathan Beauheim, P.E.
Assistant City Engineer
City of Cheyenne
2101 O'Neil Ave.
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001

**SUBJECT: Christensen Railroad Overpass and Corridor, Christensen Road/East
Cheyenne, Laramie County, New Roadway**

Dear Mr. Beauheim:

We have reviewed the subject Categorical Exclusion (CE) and have determined that it satisfactorily addresses the environmental impacts associated with the project and meets the criteria under 23 CFR 771.117. We are enclosing one signed copy of the CE.

Please contact Phil Pratt at 771-2951, if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,

Phil Pratt
Highway Engineer

cc:

Erin Gates, P.E., Benchmark Engineers, w/enclosure
Tim Stark, P.E., WYDOT, w/ enclosure



Engineering

2101 O'NEIL AVENUE Room 206, Cheyenne, WY 82001
(Phone) 307-637-6268 (Fax) 307-637-6256

March 12, 2015

Mr. Joseph Dailey
Wyoming Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
2617 E. Lincolnway, Suite D
Cheyenne, WY 82001-5662

Christensen Railroad Overpass and Corridor
Christensen Road / East Cheyenne
Laramie County
New Roadway

Dear Mr. Dailey:

The City of Cheyenne is submitting this Categorical Exclusion (CE), in anticipation of federal funding for the above-referenced project pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The following sections present justification for the determination of minimal and temporary impacts. Form 100 (**Appendix A**) provides a simplified overview of these impacts.

PROJECT LOCATION AND BACKGROUND

The Christensen Railroad Overpass and Corridor Project (the Proposed Action) is located in Laramie County, Wyoming, partly within the City of Cheyenne corporate limits on the eastern edge of an urban area (**Figure 1**). The Proposed Action begins just north of Interstate 80 (I-80) at the intersection of Christensen Road and Commerce Circle and continues generally north, intersecting with East Pershing Boulevard (E. Pershing Blvd) and ultimately United States Highway 30 (US 30) (**Figure 2**). The Project Area is located in the statewide "at large" congressional district in Wyoming and is found in Township 14N, Range 65W, Section 30 and Township 14N, Range 66W, Section 25. The Proposed Action has been thoroughly evaluated and consistently supported through several land use planning efforts. Findings from the Cheyenne Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) *Christensen Railroad Overpass and Corridor Project: Grants for Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER V) Application* strongly support the Proposed Action and list these previous planning efforts (TIGER V Application, Cheyenne MPO, May 2013):

- The Cheyenne Area MPO and the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) first proposed the Christensen Railroad Overpass and Corridor Project in the 1988 *Master Transportation Plan*.
- The *Long Range Master Plan and Traffic Study for the Laramie County Corporation for Economic Development (LEADS) Cheyenne Business Parkway*, prepared in April 1990, recommended the construction of a railroad overpass along Christensen Road.
- The *Cheyenne Area Master Transportation Plan* of 1994 included the Proposed Action as a high/medium priority project with recommended funding.
- The *East Cheyenne Land Use and Transportation Plan*, adopted in 1998 by the City and County, listed the Proposed Action as a high priority connection.

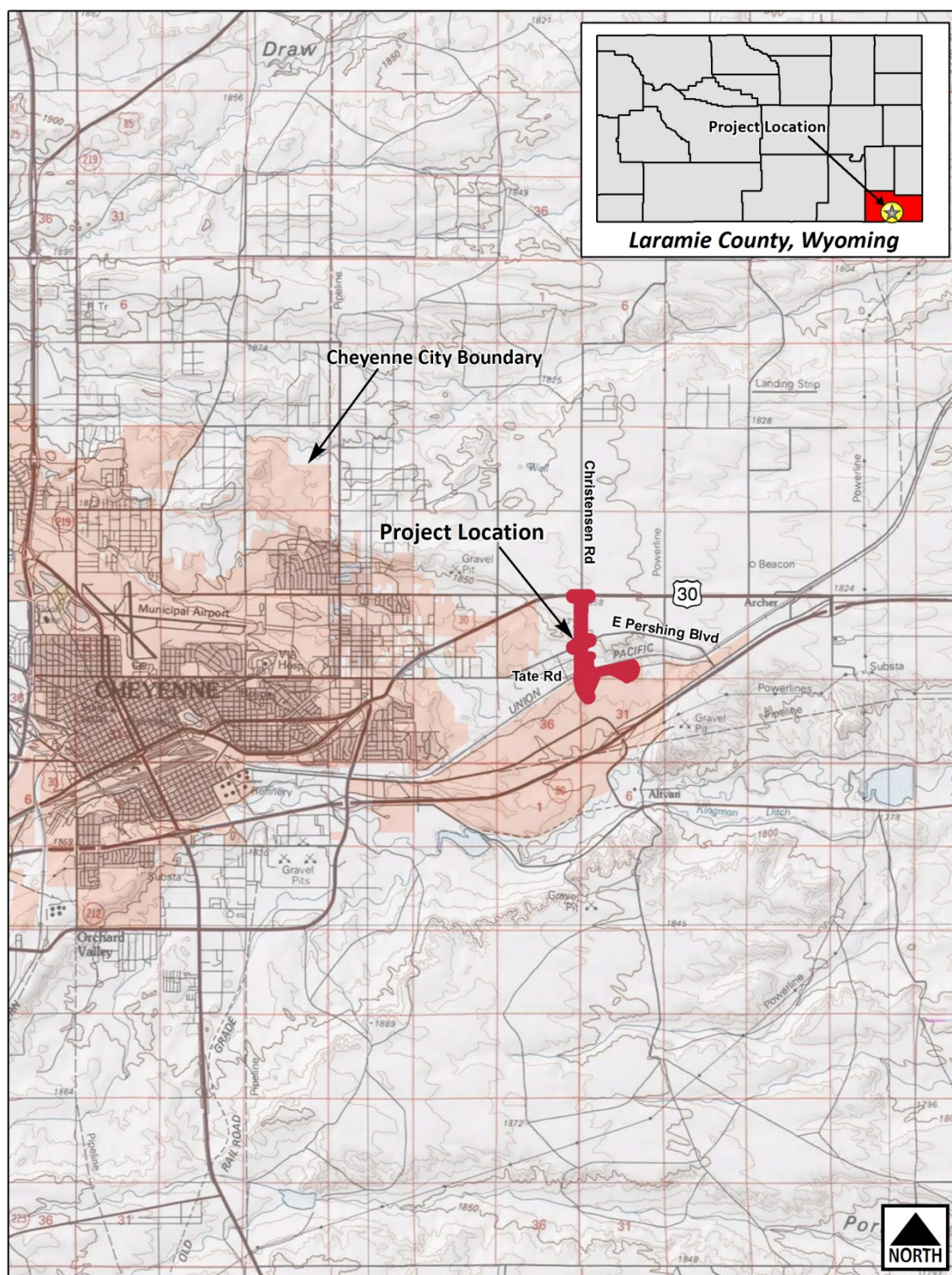


Figure 1: Project Vicinity Map

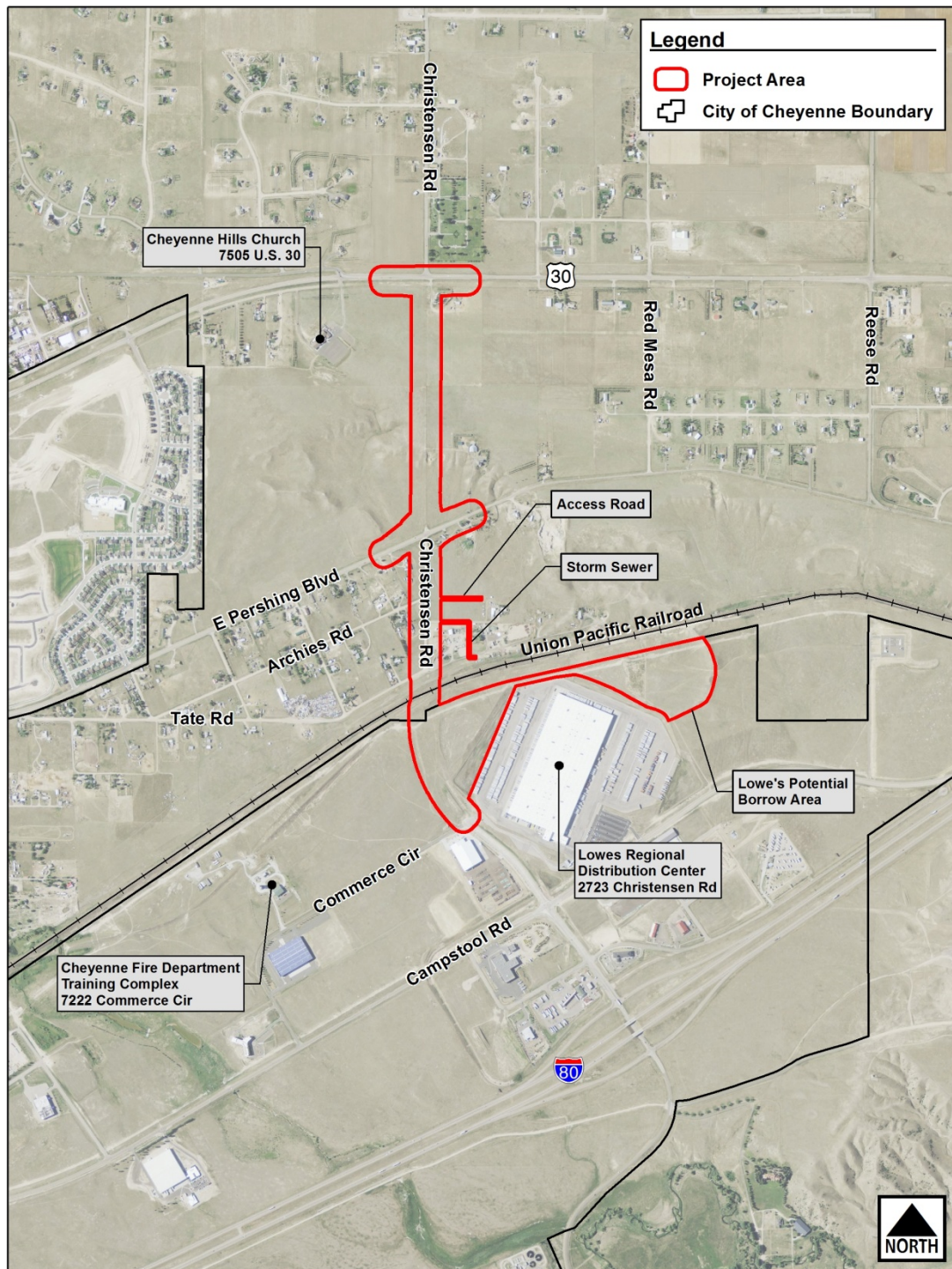


Figure 2: Project Location Map

- PlanCheyenne, the 2006 award-winning Cheyenne Area Comprehensive Plan, was adopted by both the City and County governing bodies. PlanCheyenne's Transportation Plan recommends the Christensen Railroad Overpass and Corridor Project.
- The 2014 PlanCheyenne Update by the City and County continued to recommend the Proposed Action. The MPO Policy Committee adopted this update in April, 2014.
- In August 2012, Laramie County held an election for the 6th Penny Special Purpose and Use Tax. The Christensen Railroad Overpass and Corridor Project was one of the projects included in the publicly approved project list. Voters approved the tax that provided \$2.0 million to put toward the final design of the Proposed Action, indicating a public desire for project completion.

PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action would provide a new bridge and road connection (including non-motorized facilities) on the eastern edge of the growing community of the City of Cheyenne. Upon completion, the City of Cheyenne will be responsible for maintenance of the roadway.

The two main segments of the project include the following:

- 1) The south segment (**Figure 3**) begins 3,100 feet north of the I-80/Campstool Road interchange at the Christensen Road/Commerce Circle intersection, the center of the LEADS Business Parkway. Christensen Road is currently a four-lane, concrete roadway with a striped center median as it heads north from Campstool Road and ends at the intersection with Commerce Circle. This location is near the main entrance to the 1.12 million-square-foot Lowes Regional Distribution Center. The Proposed Action would tie into this intersection and head north, following an alignment that consists of sparsely vegetated rangeland.

Approximately 1,600 feet north of the Commerce Circle intersection is a Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) mainline that transects the Project Area in an east/west manner. The Proposed Action would construct a new bridge over these railroad tracks and align with the existing graveled Christensen Road to the north. Although the two existing UPRR tracks are in a cut position that is lower than the surrounding ground level, bridging the UPRR would require fill material. Available sources immediately adjacent to the north and south sides of the bridge construction area will be generated through construction activities and used for these needed fill areas. These sites have been surveyed and environmentally cleared for potential impacts. Additionally, the new bridge would provide an underpass for Tate Road before the bridge descends to Christensen Road. The Proposed Action would follow and pave the existing gravel roadway north until intersecting with E. Pershing Blvd. A sidewalk would be constructed along the west side of the new roadway and a modern roundabout is planned at the E. Pershing Blvd intersection (**Figure 3**). The *Traffic Analysis Report* in **Appendix B** further discusses the proposed roundabout.

- 2) The north segment (**Figure 4**) is 3,050 feet of new roadway on the section line between the above-mentioned proposed roundabout at E. Pershing Blvd and the existing intersection with US 30. Private lands occur on both sides of this section and are undeveloped (sparsely vegetated rangeland); therefore, future access and street spacing needs would be built according to approved access standards.

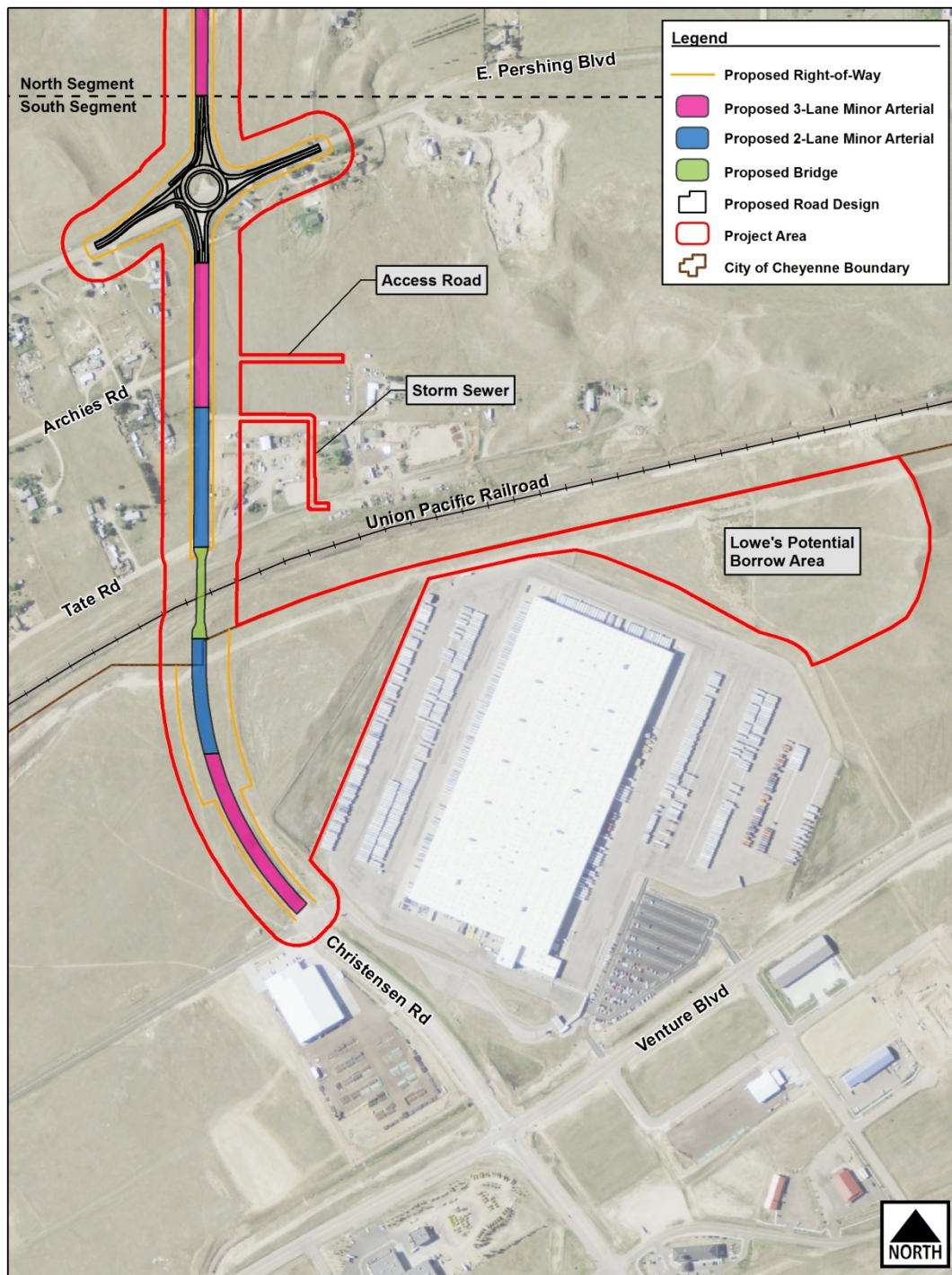


Figure 3: South Segment of Proposed Action

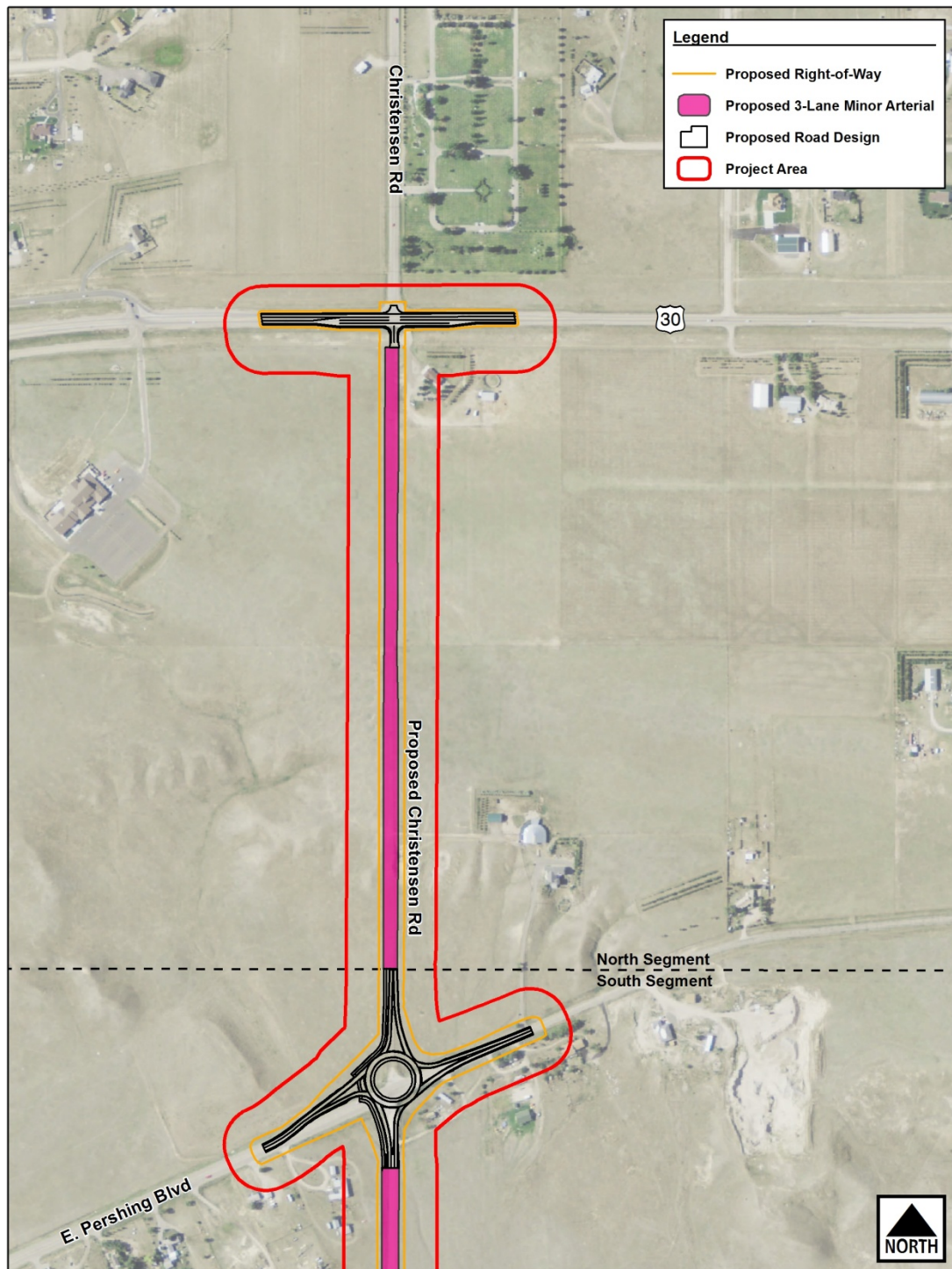


Figure 4: North Segment of Proposed Action

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose and need for this project have been developed through various planning studies over the past 20 years. Combined, these previous studies have created the foundation for the proposed project's necessity to address growing demands near the Project Area. As Cheyenne continues its outward growth to the east, it will be necessary to facilitate increased traffic and pedestrian volumes through safe roadway corridors that effectively connect to roadway and pedestrian networks. Refer to the Project Location and Background section for a list of planning studies. In addition, traffic analysis of the Project Area further expresses the need to accommodate anticipated growth along the eastern edge of the City of Cheyenne. The *Traffic Analysis Report* in **Appendix B** provides further details. These items are discussed below.

The **purpose** of this project is to provide a transportation system that enhances roadway network connectivity in eastern Cheyenne and improves vehicular and pedestrian safety while addressing the future transportation demands due to expanding residential and commercial development.

The project is **needed** to:

Accommodate the projected growth and subsequent strain on transportation resources in eastern Cheyenne

Significant growth within and around the City of Cheyenne is anticipated in the near future (PlanCheyenne, 2014). Toward the east of the City, projected land use in the Project Area suggests residential and commercial growth developing adjacent to Christensen Road (**Figure 5**). As a result, traffic along US 30 is expected to more than double by the year 2040, creating a strain on the existing aging infrastructure. The Christensen Road connection would help to relieve this strain on the existing system by carrying between 6,300 and 11,600 vehicles per day (vpd) (**Appendix B**).

Provide an improved connection between I-80 and US 30 to better manage traffic flow

Increase in vehicular and pedestrian access would come from the completion of a critical missing link in the Cheyenne transportation system. The improvements could accommodate the traffic that currently uses the E. Pershing Blvd bridge. By constructing the 1.25-mile corridor between Commerce Circle and US 30, a direct connection between I-80 and US 30 would be completed in eastern Cheyenne. This would provide convenient and safe access, including better access to emergency services, LEADS, and other City and County commercial centers.

Traffic operations were analyzed at intersections along Christensen Road to provide recommendations about the appropriate number of travel lanes along the Christensen Road extension and intersection traffic control and geometry needed to support acceptable Level of Service (LOS) through the Year 2040. All intersections and movements are projected to operate at LOS C or better during peak hours, an adequate LOS to provide an improved connection for anticipated increased traffic flow (refer to the Alternatives Analysis section for lane and intersection details). LOS is a qualitative measure for traffic operations based on average delay per vehicle at a given intersection ranging from A (best) to F (worst).

Provide pedestrian access where none currently exists and accommodate future enhancements in accordance with City and County plans

According to the *Cheyenne On-Street Bicycle Plan and Greenway Plan Update*, "Approximately 43 miles of future bikeways are recommended along roadways that are not paved or along corridors where the roadway has not yet been constructed" (City of Cheyenne, MPO, 2012). Christensen Road is a part of this planned pedestrian expansion and would tie into other planned

greenways, connecting the greater area with pedestrian-friendly modes of travel. Refer to the Pedestrian and Bicycle section.

Shorten emergency response times to eastern Cheyenne by creating more direct routes

Speedy response times north of the UPRR have been negatively impacted due to inefficient access. The City has built a state-of-the-art fire training complex located 0.5 miles west of the Lowes Distribution Center entrance; however, the fire department has not staffed or equipped the site as a full fire station because of the lack of access to the north (see the Designated Emergency Routes section).

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

A **No-Build** alternative and a **Proposed Action** alternative were considered.

The **No-Build** alternative would involve no construction along Christensen Road, leaving the current condition as-is and failing to address the Purpose and Need. The anticipated residential and commercial growth in eastern Cheyenne would endure an ineffective transportation network, increasing pressure and demand for improved mobility and access on the existing roadway system. A crucial missing transportation link would remain, continuing to force traffic into lengthy out-of-the-way travel on aging infrastructure. Furthermore, pedestrian opportunities would not be provided in this area. Due to these foreseen circumstances, the No-Build alternative has been dismissed from further consideration.

The **Proposed Action** alternative (preferred) would meet the Purpose and Need by improving connectivity between I-80 and US 30 through lane widening and paving, providing pedestrian access by construction of a pedestrian trail, improving safety at intersections by installing a roundabout and traffic signals, creating efficient travel patterns and reducing emergency response times in eastern Cheyenne by creating a corridor connection that does not currently exist (see the Proposed Action section).

The following intersection designs would support the goals of the Proposed Action (traffic counts were conducted in December 2013):

Christensen Road/US 30: This intersection is currently unsignalized. Traffic growth and completion of the new Christensen Road extension are expected to justify future signalization based on the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Depending on the pace of growth, signalization may be needed by the Year 2025. Several auxiliary turn lanes are needed at the intersection to provide acceptable traffic operations.

Christensen Road/Pershing Blvd: Following coordination with the general public, project steering committee, and adjacent property owners, the roundabout emerged as the recommended option. Operational analyses indicate that a single-lane roundabout is sufficient to accommodate Year 2040 traffic levels. It is recommended that the roundabout be designed to be compatible with a future expansion to two circulating lanes to accommodate growth beyond 2040.

Christensen Road/ Campstool Road: This intersection is currently signalized, and Christensen Road provides two travel lanes through the intersection. With this lane geometry, the intersection currently operates at an acceptable level (LOS A) and is expected to continue to operate at LOS A by Year 2040. No changes to this intersection are recommended to occur with the Proposed Action.

Proposed travel lanes:

A three-lane section is recommended between Commerce Circle and Pershing Blvd, narrowed to two lanes approaching and across the UPRR bridge. North of Pershing Blvd and up to US 30, a three-lane section is proposed, with a center turn lane for current and future access needs. These widths are anticipated to be sufficient to accommodate Year 2040 traffic levels. In addition to through lanes, a 10-foot wide path is expected to serve as a linkage in the Cheyenne Greenway and will enhance non-motorized travel through the area. The recommended number of travel lanes along Christensen Road was determined based on Year 2040 daily traffic volume forecasts and intersection operational analyses described previously.

Roadway functional classification:

The Christensen Road extension would be classified as an arterial roadway in view of the following factors:

- PlanCheyenne designates the extension project as a new minor arterial.
- The current Cheyenne Functional Classification Map shows Christensen Road as a minor arterial.
- Christensen Road connects to I-80 with a full interchange.
- Christensen Road will cross UPRR, one of only a few crossings in the area.
- Christensen Road will serve regional traffic as a link in a future “beltway.”

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

As mentioned, WYDOT Form 100 summarizes potential environmental impacts associated with this Proposed Action. These impacts and other pertinent issues are discussed in more detail below. Because they are not present within the Project Area or are not associated with the Proposed Action, the following resources have been dismissed from further review:

- Relocation Potential (see right-of-way [ROW] section)
- Energy
- Public Transportation
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Farmlands
- Floodplains

SOCIAL IMPACTS

LAND USE

Existing Conditions:

South of the UPRR mainline, zoning within and adjacent to the Project Area consists of undeveloped *Light Industrial*, *Heavy Industrial* and *Community Business*. This southern portion contains the LEADS Business Park with the Lowes Distribution Center directly east of Christensen Road. North of the UPRR mainline, land is zoned as *Agricultural and Rural Residential*, *Agricultural* and *Agricultural Residential* (PlanCheyenne, 2014). **Figure 5** depicts anticipated future land use (2040) in the Project Area, showing increased residential occupation and commercial development.

Potential Impacts from Proposed Action:

Christensen Road and the addition of a vehicular/pedestrian bridge over the UPRR would help meet this demand and have been identified as supporting assets to Cheyenne's future land use in this area. Improved transportation connections provided by the Proposed Action may accelerate this expected growth, but this growth is expected to occur regardless of Proposed Action implementation.

Mitigation Measures:

No mitigation measures for Land Use are required.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Existing Conditions:

There are few UPRR crossing in Cheyenne, creating a local barrier. The most prominent UPRR crossing is at College Drive, with Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes of 23,000. Over 4.5 miles to the east of College Drive is the next available crossing – an outdated, narrow bridge on E. Pershing Blvd built in 1934. Approximately 6.5 miles east from College Drive is the Archer Interchange, far outside the urban area (*TIGER V Application*, Cheyenne MPO, May 2013).

The county-owned E. Pershing Blvd bridge is the nearest crossing to the Proposed Action and carries approximately 745 vehicles a day. Listed by WYDOT as a deficient overpass, this structure provides an indirect connection to I-80 that creates ineffective flow, failing to provide safe vehicular movement among the greater community.

Potential Impacts from Proposed Action:

The Proposed Action would enhance community cohesion by providing an improved crossing of the UPRR and by addressing the demand for increased connectivity and mobility. Archies Road and Tate Road would remain for local access after construction.

Mitigation Measures:

No mitigation measures for Community Cohesion are required.

CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS

Existing Conditions:

Located approximately 0.25 mile west of the Christensen Road/US 30 intersection is the Cheyenne Hills Church. Cheyenne Hills Church holds three weekend services with an average 1,000-person attendance per weekend (www.Cheyennehills.org). The nearest school, Saddle Ridge Elementary School, is located approximately 0.75 mile directly west of the Project Area.

Potential Impacts from Proposed Action:

The Proposed Action is not expected to cause adverse impacts to churches and schools. Those attending the Cheyenne Hills Church would have improved access from the south, and access to the school would be improved by an overall increase in connectivity.

Mitigation Measures:

No mitigation measures for Churches and Schools are required.

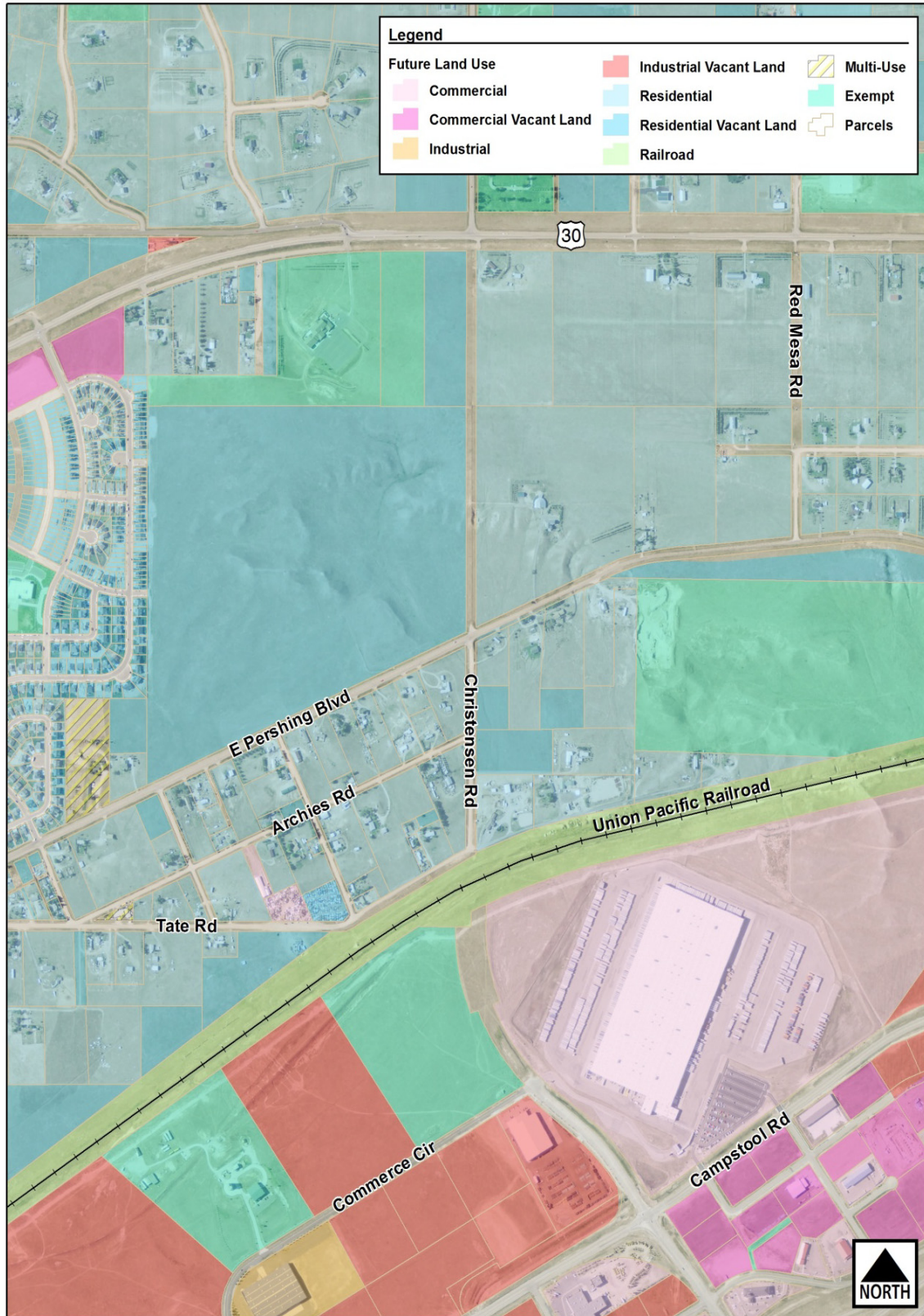


Figure 5: Future Land Use

CONTROVERSY POTENTIAL

The City of Cheyenne and the MPO have identified the Proposed Action as a needed project since 1988 in numerous transportation planning documents, more than 20 years. During this time, the planning process has remained highly transparent to the public.

To identify any potential controversy, a public open house was held on December 12, 2013, at the Cheyenne Hills Church; 48 people attended this meeting. Verbal and written comments were received and included several general concerns, as well as general overall support. Some of the more substantive concerns included the need for ROW acquisitions; effects on neighboring properties; potential annexation into the City of Cheyenne (not part of this project); changes to local property access; increased local development; poor local drainage worsening; and, dissatisfaction with roundabouts. The concerns and discussions mostly involved adjacent property owners, and the project team held subsequent one-on-one meetings with these owners to understand and address their concerns. Project design elements were incorporated, where appropriate, to address their concerns, avoid impacts and improve the project. After these meetings, no evidence of controversy has been observed, as demonstrated by all of the final project ROW acquisition negotiations proceeding consensually. Through the public involvement process, no environmental resources with substantive impacts that were controversial have been identified from the Proposed Action.

Support from the following has been received (support letters can be found in **Appendix C**):

Governor of Wyoming, Matthew H. Mead
Mayor of Cheyenne, Richard L. Kaysen
The Board of County Commissioners
Director of the Wyoming Department of Transportation, John F. Cox
Wyoming Business Council Interim CEO, Mark Willis,
Cheyenne LEADS CEO, Randy Bruns
Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce President and CEO, Dale Steenbergen
Visit Cheyenne President, Darren Rudloff
Wyoming Center for Business and Economic Analysis, Inc. President, Richard T. O’Gara
Laramie County Planning Interim Director, Dan Cooley
Laramie County Public Works Director, Don Beard
Cheyenne Public Works Engineer, Craig LaVoy
Cheyenne Fire and Rescue, Chief James A. Martin
Cheyenne Police Department, Chief Brian N. Kozak
Cheyenne Transit Program Director, Joe Dougherty
Cheyenne Housing & Community Development Program Manager, Deanne Widauf
Greenway Advisory Committee Chairman, Jo Ellen Butler
Cheyenne Light, Fuel & Power, Vice President Operations, Mark Stege
Edwards Construction, William J. Edwards
#1 Properties, Larry Sutherland
Campstool Land Company, James Volk
JFP Properties, J. Michael Powers
Wallick and Volk Chairman, John Volk
Coldwell Banker, Bradley Graham
List of Supporters, approximately 300 signatures

UTILITIES

Existing Conditions:

The following companies have utilities within the Project Area:

- *High West Energy* – Overhead electrical service provider for areas north of the UPRR
- *Cheyenne Light Fuel and Power* – Natural gas provider for areas north and south of the UPRR, electrical service provider south of the UPRR
- *Century Link* – Landline telecommunications provider
- *Sprint* – Underground fiber optic line within UPRR ROW, south of the tracks
- *Board of Public Utilities (BOPU)* – Water and sanitary sewer service provider to businesses south of the UPRR. Residents north of the UPRR have onsite water wells for supply and septic systems for wastewater treatment. This project includes no sanitary sewer system improvements.

Potential Impacts from Proposed Action:

- *High West Energy* – Existing electrical lines may need to be relocated.
- *Cheyenne Light Fuel and Power* – Underground gas lines may need to be relocated at the intersection of US 30 and in the rural residential area between E. Pershing Blvd and Tate Road due to excavation for the roadway improvements. The electrical lines south of the UPRR may also need to be relocated.
- *Century Link* – Telephone and fiber optic lines cross the proposed roadway alignment and may need to be relocated, or adjusted.
- *Sprint* – Current designs for the bridge indicate this line will be left in place and no adjustment will be required.
- *BOPU* – The BOPU has requested that a 12-inch water line be accommodated with this project. Although not part of the Proposed Action, installing the planned water line concurrently would prevent repeating any disturbances to the project area. The line is planned to tie into the existing system near the intersection of Commerce Circle and Christensen Road, follow the roadway, be cased across the UPRR ROW and terminate at the intersection of Christensen Road and US 30.

All affected utilities will be coordinated through the City of Cheyenne and the construction contractor. All utilities in the area have been notified of the Proposed Action. Utilities in the area have been considered and included in project plans. Any utility adjustments or interruption of service for the convenience of the contractor will be the sole responsibility of the utility company. Any environmental permits required for utility relocations will be the responsibility of the utility company.

Mitigation Measures:

No mitigation measures for Utilities are required.

DESIGNATED EMERGENCY ROUTES

Existing Conditions:

The City of Cheyenne's Fire Station 3 is located at Cleveland Avenue and US 30 (over 2.5 miles from the Project Area - north of the UPRR). Due to inefficient access, this distance has hindered speedy response times. Furthermore, the City has built a state-of-the-art fire training complex located 0.5 mile west of the Lowes Distribution Center entrance. This complex was built to staff

and house a new fire station. The Fire Department has not staffed or equipped the site as a full fire station because of the lack of access to the north (*TIGER V Application*, Cheyenne MPO, May 2013).

Potential Impacts from Proposed Action:

The Proposed Action would substantially benefit emergency response times in the area. Fire Chief James A. Martin states in his TIGER FY 14 Grant Application Support Letter (dated April 21, 2014), "With the building of this railroad overpass Cheyenne Fire and Rescue will have a second access to residents living in the far eastern edge of the City. This will enable a reduced response time to this area, and also it will reduce the response time to citizens who work in the Cheyenne Leads Business Parkway. With the building of this overpass, the City plans to open and man Fire Station 4 located at 7220 Commerce Circle. The manning of this station will effectively lessen response time to the areas served by two to three minutes. Those areas would be serviced by Station 4 thus reducing the time and response area of Fire Station 3 located at 1720 Cleveland Avenue, currently Fire Station 3 responds to this area and takes anywhere from 6 to 8 minutes to respond and render assistance." (**Appendix C**)

Mitigation Measures:

No mitigation measures for Emergency Services are required.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Existing Conditions:

Minority populations:

Based on the block group data from the 2010 US Census Bureau, three of the four block groups within the Project Area have a lower Hispanic/Latino minority population as compared to those of Laramie County and the State of Wyoming (2010 Census, accessed March 2014). The fourth block group contains a Hispanic/Latino minority population that is slightly higher than that of Laramie County as a whole, exceeding the County average by 0.05 percent. According to the Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice, a "Non-Hispanic/Latino White" percentage of less than 50 percent implies a minority population of greater than 50 percent, which indicates that there is a "Minority Population." Although Census Tract 5.01, Block Group 1 has 14.30 percent population that identifies themselves as Hispanic/Latino, none of the four blocks within the Project Area have a Non-Hispanic/Latino White population that falls below 50 percent.

Low-income Populations:

Data from the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the US Census Bureau, 2008–2012 American Community Survey, were collected and evaluated to determine the presence of low-income populations within the Project Area. The low-income threshold for Laramie County was \$18,800. Within Laramie County, 14.7 percent of households fall at or below this income level. Within the Project Area, no census tract exceeded the county's figure of 14.7 percent.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Populations:

No linguistically isolated populations were within the Project Area.

Potential Impacts from Proposed Action:

It has been concluded that minority and/or low-income populations will incur no disproportionate impacts within the community study area. Generally, project impacts and benefits will be equally shared among all populations and will not be disproportionately borne by minority or low-income populations. Therefore, this project has met the provisions of Executive Order 12898 and FHWA Order 6640.23, and no further environmental justice analysis is required.

Mitigation Measures:

No mitigation measures for Environmental Justice are required.

RIGHT-OF-WAY

Existing Conditions:

From the north side of the UPRR and along the existing gravel roadway from Tate Rd to E. Pershing Blvd, there is currently 80 feet of designated ROW. In accordance with previous master planning efforts for this area, there is also 80 feet of dedicated ROW from E. Pershing Blvd north to US 30. South of the UPRR, varying widths of dedicated ROW exist, ranging from approximately 100 to 250 feet.

Potential Impacts from Proposed Action:

ROW would be needed from nine adjacent private landowners (10 lots) to meet roadway width standards. Construction and utility easements will be needed from 15 landowners (16 parcels). Individual meetings have taken place with impacted property owners. No relocations of residents or businesses are anticipated. No public land exists in the Project Area and would, therefore, not be impacted. ROW and easement areas are based on the best available information. Actual areas will be based on the final designs and per the agreements with the specific property owners and the project owner. Any land acquisitions shall follow the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, amended 1987.

The UPRR ROW would not be changed, although easements would be needed for construction.

The following coordination has taken place with the UPRR:

The City provided UPRR a Preliminary Engineering letter on February 27, 2014, formally requesting their assistance in preliminary engineering, review, and development of railroad-related cost estimates for the project. In April, the City and UPRR discussed the necessary documents needed to establish an easement across the railroad ROW for the proposed Christensen Road overpass. On July 1, 2014, the City submitted 30% plan documents to UPRR for review and comment. UPRR noted that the bridge length will need to be increased by approximately 20 feet on the north side to account for future railroad track expansions. Following receipt of any additional UPRR comments and any revisions needed, the City will compile the 100% plan submittal for UPRR review and approval. A Railroad Agreement will be approved before construction begins.

Mitigation Measures:

No mitigation measures for Right-of-Way are required.

CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

The foreseeable coordination/permits for this project include:

- Department of Environmental Quality – water main
- UPRR – bridge and utility crossings
- WYDOT Access – US 30
- Wyoming Pollution Discharge Elimination System (WYPDES)/Storm water permit

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE

Existing Conditions:

There are currently no designated bicycle or pedestrian pathways within or adjacent to the Project Area. Previous planning efforts depict a pedestrian and bicycle network that includes a planned greenway along Christensen Road (see *Existing Bicycle Network* [2011] in **Appendix D**). Updates to the Cheyenne Area Master Plan now show Christensen Road having a Shoulder Bikeway that would ultimately connect to the proposed greenway along US 30 and Shoulder Bikeways at Pershing Blvd and Campstool Road (see *Existing and Proposed Bicycle Network* also in **Appendix D**) (Transportation Plan, Cheyenne MPO, 2014).

Potential Impacts from Proposed Action:

The Proposed Action would provide a net benefit to the Project Area by connecting other planned pedestrian/bicycle corridors to the greater Cheyenne area and continue to promote alternate modes of transportation, supported by both City and County planning efforts.

Mitigation Measures:

No mitigation measures for Pedestrians and Bicycles are required.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL IMPACTS

Existing Conditions:

A Class III Survey was completed and submitted to the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) for review and concurrence. File reviews and on-site surveys led to the discovery of six historic/potentially historic resources near the Proposed Action. See **Appendix E** for details on each site and SHPO/THPO coordination:

- *Lincoln Highway (original alignment)*: Located along the current E. Pershing Blvd alignment, this resource is part of a historic transportation facility that spans the US. Although previous consultation has listed the Lincoln Highway on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), this segment within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) was found to be a non-contributing element to the overall resource.
- *Lincoln Highway (current alignment)*: Shifted north from its original position and located along the current US 30 alignment, this resource is part of a historic transportation facility that spans the US. Although previous consultation has listed the Lincoln Highway on the NRHP, this segment within the APE was found to be a non-contributing element to the overall resource.
- *E. Pershing Blvd UPRR Bridge*: Located beyond the APE to the east of the Proposed Action, this bridge constructed of concrete and iron spans the existing UPRR along the original alignment of the Lincoln Highway. This bridge is being recommended as eligible for listing on the NRHP.

- *UPRR*: This railroad line runs in a general east/west orientation through the APE and consists of two tracks sunken below the surrounding ground plane. As part of the original 1868 UPRR grade, previous coordination has listed this resource on the NRHP. However, the segment within the APE has been determined as a non-contributing element to the overall resource.
- *Stone rings*: Four double-ringed stone sites with approximately 32 stones per site and potential subsurface deposits were discovered beyond the APE to the west of the Proposed Action. This resource is being recommended as “unevaluated” at the time of recording before THPO coordination.
- *Isolated find*: A single granitic stone exhibiting two adjacent and parallel flake scars was discovered. Isolated finds, by their nature, are not eligible for listing on the NRHP.

Potential Impacts from Proposed Action:

The Proposed Action would directly and indirectly have an impact on resources surveyed within the APE (Lincoln Highway segments and UPRR). While these resources are listed on the NRHP, the segments within the APE do not contribute to their historical integrity. Therefore, the Proposed Action would have a “no adverse effect” to these resources.

Consultation with THPOs was initiated and completed by FHWA in January 2015.

SHPO concurred with a determination of *no historic properties adversely affected* on February 27, 2015 (**Appendix E**) and recommended that the undertaking proceed in accordance with state and federal laws, subject to the following stipulation:

If any cultural materials are discovered during construction, work in the area shall halt immediately, the federal agency and SHPO staff be contacted, and the materials be evaluated by an archaeologist or historian meeting the Secretary of Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards (48 FR22716, Sept. 1983).

Mitigation Measures:

No mitigation measures for Archaeological and Historic Sites are required.

SECTION 4(f)

RECREATIONAL AREAS

Existing Conditions:

No park or recreational lands, wildlife, and/or waterfowl refuges exist within the Project Area.

Potential Impacts from Proposed Action:

No impacts to recreational areas are anticipated.

Mitigation Measures:

No mitigation measures for Section 4(f) Recreational Areas are required.

HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Existing Conditions:

The UPRR and Lincoln Highway (two segments) are listed resources on the NRHP. However, the segments within the APE are non-contributing elements to the overall resources (see the Archaeological and Historic Sites section above and supporting materials in **Appendix E**).

Potential Impacts from Proposed Action:

Direct and indirect impacts are anticipated to the listed resources within the APE. The affected segments of these resources are non-contributing elements and the impact finding has been declared as a “no adverse effect” to each listed resource. In accordance with Section 6009(a) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU, P.L. 109-59) amending the existing Section 4(f) regulations of Section 138 of Title 23 and Section 303 of Title 49 of the United States Code, the SHPO understands that concurrence with the determination of no adverse effect may be used by the FHWA Division Administrator to make a *de minimis* impact finding for one or more of these Section 4(f) resources based on the Section 106 findings presented in this document: UPRR; and, Lincoln Highway (two segments).

Mitigation Measures:

No mitigation measures for Section 4(f) Historic Properties are required.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

WETLANDS AND WATER OF THE U.S.

Existing Conditions:

A qualified Felsburg Holt & Ullevig biologist conducted wetland delineations on October 24, 2013 and on July 29, 2014. These wetland delineations were based on the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) approved wetland delineation methodologies (Environmental Laboratory, 1987; USACE, 2010). No wetlands or other Waters of the US (WUS) were identified during the October 2013 site visit. No wetland vegetation, wetland hydrology, or hydric soils were present in the Project Area. However, the wetland delineation conducted in July 2014 identified wetland vegetation, hydric soils, and wetland hydrology in the bottom of the existing retention pond in the northwest corner of the Lowes Distribution Center. Currently, the design of the proposed water quality pond for this project includes a pipe connecting to the Lowes water quality pond. This wetland appears to lack a significant nexus with jurisdictional wetlands, open water, or other WUS. Therefore, this wetland is likely an isolated, non-jurisdictional wetland (**Appendix F**).

Potential Impacts from Proposed Action:

The Proposed Action would have no impacts to the isolated wetland identified on Lowe’s property; therefore, no impacts to wetlands or WUS are anticipated.

Mitigation Measures:

No mitigation measures for Wetlands or WUS are required.

WATER QUALITY

Existing Conditions:

Groundwater:

The City of Cheyenne sits at 6,062 feet above sea level atop the “High Plains Aquifer,” a compilation of the Ogallala, Arikaree, and White River Formations. The BOPU and the US Geological Survey installed a well in 1997 to monitor and obtain aquifer behavior beneath Cheyenne approximately 3 miles to the west of the Project Area. Data collected (1998–1999) showed water levels ranging from 6,002.41 to 6,004.27 feet above mean sea level (USGS, 2014). In addition, data obtained from the Laramie County Planning Department shows water levels fluctuating just above and below the 6,000-foot mark between 1998 and 2008 (Water Resource Atlas, 2008).

Surface Water:

No permanent surface water was present within the Project Area. The immediate terrain generally slopes to the south, ultimately draining into the east-flowing Crow Creek along the southern edge of the City. Although no surface water is present, the Project Area experiences annual flooding as snow melt drains over frozen ground during early spring months. Currently, an open channel drainage ditch is located along the east side of Christensen Road south of the UPRR, and culverts are located within the existing roadway area between E. Pershing Blvd and Tate Road. The City of Cheyenne owns and maintains storm sewer systems within the City ROW and applicable easements; Laramie County owns and maintains storm sewer systems within their ROW and applicable easements. The appropriate jurisdiction will maintain any storm sewer system improvements constructed with this project.

Potential Impacts from Proposed Action:

Groundwater:

No direct impacts to groundwater resources are anticipated because construction activities would not reach a depth where groundwater will be contacted. No residential wells would be affected.

Surface Water:

The Proposed Action includes benefits to the corridor by inclusion of curb and gutter, supplemented with retention facilities, which address surface water runoff and subsequent flooding of properties within the Project Area. The proposed retention pond will be constructed just north of the existing retention pond found on Lowes property. The two ponds will be adjoined via piping to manage surface water fluctuations. No detrimental impacts from construction of the new pond are likely to occur.

Mitigation Measures:

Groundwater:

No mitigation measures for groundwater are required.

Surface Water:

Construction-associated sediment control will be addressed by using Best Management Practices (BMPs) to ensure that sediments and other pollutants will be contained within the boundaries of the work area. Erosion control and storm water plans are required on all projects that have one acre or more of disturbed soil. A Wyoming Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

(WYPDES) permit will be required for this project and prepared before construction begins. Disturbed areas will be promptly revegetated with native plants after construction to maintain water quality.

WILDLIFE AND HABITAT (Including Aquatic)

Existing Conditions:

The Project Area was surveyed during the October 2013 site visit for birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA), and Birds of Conservation Concern (BCC). No migratory bird nests were observed in the Project Area (**Appendix F**). Additionally, based on a review of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) Wyoming Interagency Spatial Database and Online Management (WISDOM) system and GIS range mapping, no Crucial Big Game Range is in or near the Project Area.

Generally, the Project Area lies within an upland/open range zone, consisting of upland herbaceous and weedy species, dominated by smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*). Very few trees are found within the Project Area, and there are no riparian areas, streams, or waterbodies. The primary land use is rangeland by evidence of the many lots containing horses in the area.

No raptors or their nests, including Bald and Golden Eagles, were observed during the survey due to the lack of large nesting trees near the Project Area (though the use of the Project Area as hunting grounds by raptors is likely). Also, due to the presence of human development and livestock, ground nesting raptors are not likely to nest in areas of open shortgrass prairie. Due to the timing of the site visit (October 2013), no migratory birds were observed within or near the Project Area. It is assumed that most migratory birds would have migrated out of the area by the time the site visit was conducted.

Potential Impacts from Proposed Action:

If project construction occurs during the typical nesting season of migratory birds in Wyoming (April 1 to August 31), a follow-up survey for active nests nearby should be conducted before construction. If nests are identified during this survey and construction is scheduled to occur during the nesting season, a qualified biologist should survey for nesting birds and monitor nesting activity to avoid impacts to migratory nesting birds.

To minimize impacts to game animal movements, wildlife compatible fencing should be considered. The fence type should be determined during final design and with input from adjacent landowners.

Mitigation Measures:

No mitigation measures for Wildlife and Habitat are required.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

Existing Conditions:

Federally Listed Threatened and Endangered Species

Information was collected from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information, Planning, and Conservation (IPAC) System (USFWS, 2014). The IPAC provides a list of federally listed species as well as BCC, which includes migratory nongame birds that are likely to be listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) without additional conservation actions. No species or their habitats were identified within the Project Area.

The USFWS has determined that water depletions from the North Platte River, Colorado River, Little Snake River, and Green River systems may have an effect on downstream threatened and endangered species. This project is within the North Platte River basin, and any water depletions from the basin must be handled under Wyoming's Depletions Plan through the USFWS' Platte River Recovery Implementation Program. However, no water depletions are anticipated to occur from the Proposed Action.

Big game species are not protected by the Federal ESA and only moose and bighorn sheep are listed as Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) under the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). There is no habitat for either species within the Project Area, and no "Crucial Big Game Range" is identified for either species.

State Listed Species

The Wyoming Interagency Spatial Database and Online Management (WISDOM) System was reviewed to identify if the Proposed Action conflicts with any of the WGFD's Priority Areas (WGFD, 2010). Priority Areas are aquatic, riparian, and/or terrestrial land areas that require additional protection to maintain or improve habitat for wildlife. The Proposed Action is located neither within nor adjacent to any Priority Areas. The Proposed Action does, however, include shortgrass/mixed grass prairie habitat, which may be inhabited by various species listed in the Wyoming SWAP, 2010 (**Appendix F**).

Potential Impacts from Proposed Action:

Federally Listed Threatened and Endangered Species:

No federal special status species wildlife habitat is present in the Project Area; therefore, no impacts are expected. Also, this project does not have elements that would cause any water depletions to the North Platte River basin or species habitat downstream in other states. There is the potential for a number of federal BCC species to occur in the Project Area. However, measures should be incorporated into the Proposed Action to avoid and minimize impacts to wildlife as part of project construction. Consultation with the USFWS was completed in 2014. The USFWS found the Proposed Action to be in compliance with the ESA of 1973 (**Appendix F**).

State Listed Species

Due to the presence of shortgrass and mixed shortgrass prairie habitat found within the Project Area, there is the potential that project construction would have an impact on SGCN habitat. Potential impacts include loss or removal of shortgrass habitat, introduction of invasive species or noxious weeds, habitat fragmentation, animal-vehicle collisions, and reduced reproduction rates. Consultation with the WGFD was completed in 2014. The WGFD have no terrestrial wildlife or aquatic concerns regarding the Proposed Action (**Appendix F**).

Mitigation Measures:

Federally Listed Threatened and Endangered Species:

No mitigation measures for Federally Listed Threatened and Endangered Species are required.

State Listed Species:

For each SGCN listed in the SWAP, conservation actions are provided to assist in conserving the species. Mitigation measures identified in the SWAP for many SGCN are to:

- Design vegetation treatments in habitat that mimic and restore natural landscape patterns and disturbance processes, maintain habitat connectivity, and maintain the native composition of herbaceous plant and shrub communities that are important for seed crops;
- Manage nesting areas to minimize disturbance (including haying, burning, and moderate to heavy grazing) during the breeding season; and
- Avoid or minimize pesticide use in habitats where bird species nest to ensure a food source is maintained. If possible, all pesticide use should be postponed until bird species have completed their nesting cycles.

VEGETATION

Existing Conditions:

Existing Land Cover/Vegetation

The vegetation in the Project Area consists primarily of native and non-native species, namely kochia (*Bassia scoparia*), annual sunflowers (*Helianthus annuus*), and smooth brome, along with other native and non-native grasses as part of a mixed grass prairie. No wetland or riparian vegetation is present, aside from the vegetation associated with Lowe's pond. There are no mixed shrublands or forested areas within the Project Area, and neither of these land cover types are found nearby.

Noxious Weeds

Noxious and invasive weeds inhabit about 1.3 million acres in Wyoming and pose a significant threat to Wyoming's crop lands, rangelands, and natural areas (Wyoming Weed Team, 2003). To help control and manage noxious and invasive weeds, Wyoming has compiled a list of 25 designated noxious weeds. Noxious weeds are designated as such due to their capacity to form dense monocultures and their difficulty of removal and control. The Wyoming Weed and Pest Control Act designates Dalmatian toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*), Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), Scotch thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*), and spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*) as noxious weeds (WyoWeed, 2012). These weeds were observed in and adjacent to the Project Area in all undeveloped plots of land. These four species are listed on the State of Wyoming's Weed and Pest Control Act Designated List and require proper control measures to eliminate. However, no dense populations of noxious weeds were found in the Project Area (**Appendix F**).

Potential Impacts from Proposed Action:

Existing vegetation will be removed/disturbed during construction. The potential exists for invasive plant species to colonize disturbed areas.

Mitigation Measures:

A revegetation plan will be created, and disturbed areas will be promptly revegetated with native plants after construction.

ECOSYSTEM

The Project Area contains disturbed land due to private residential and commercial development. This includes buildings, livestock grazing areas, fencing and other disturbances.

No riparian corridor exists, nor do any wooded areas for wildlife to use for travel. The Proposed Action will create a permanent wildlife barrier through the area; however, this addition is viewed as a minimal impact to ecological resources given that the area is currently segmented.

PHYSICAL IMPACTS

NOISE

Existing Conditions:

The Proposed Action will build a new road on a new alignment and is a Type 1 project requiring a traffic noise analysis (WYDOT, 2011). Noise-sensitive receptors near the Proposed Action include several rural residences in the area between E. Pershing Blvd and Tate Road, and two rural residences between E. Pershing Blvd and US 30. No new planned housing developments with building permits are known in the Project Area.

Three sound level measurements were taken in the Project Area in October 2013 (**Appendix G**). None of the measured sound levels approached or exceeded the FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC); therefore, no traffic noise impacts were identified through the measurements. However, these measurements indicated that several important noise sources other than local road traffic were present in the Project Area, including I-80 traffic, the UPRR, and aircraft approaching Cheyenne Regional Airport.

Noise levels for existing (2013) average peak traffic hour conditions were modeled using FHWA Traffic Noise Model (TNM) Version 2.5 software for 21 residences near the Proposed Action (**Appendix G**). Noise levels were modeled at both the road ROW (where applicable) and nearer the houses at locations more typically experiencing frequent human use. None of the model receptors were calculated to have noise levels that approached or exceeded the NAC for residences; therefore, no traffic noise impacts were identified for existing conditions.

Potential Impacts from Proposed Action:

Noise levels for future (2040) average peak traffic hour conditions with the Proposed Action in place were modeled for the 21 residences near the Project Area. Noise levels were modeled at both the road ROW (where applicable) and nearer the houses at locations more typically experiencing frequent human use. Six model receptors at the ROW were calculated to have noise levels that approached or exceeded the NAC for residences; however, only one model receptor for an associated house was found to be impacted. Therefore, one traffic noise impact was identified for the Proposed Action from the noise analysis.

Because traffic noise impacts were identified for the Proposed Action, noise mitigation measures were evaluated. For the one impacted receptor, modeling indicated that a barrier 12 feet tall by approximately 740 feet long would be needed to provide the noise reduction necessary to meet the WYDOT mitigation requirements (WYDOT, 2011). The estimated cost for such a barrier was \$400,000, which would far exceed the WYDOT limit of \$23,000 per benefiting receptor. Therefore, the noise barrier was found to be feasible but not reasonable and was not recommended for the Proposed Action.

Mitigation Measures:

No mitigation measures for Noise are required.

AIR QUALITY

Existing Conditions:

The Proposed Action is located in Laramie County, Wyoming, which is designated as an attainment area and/or treated as an attainment area for the criteria air pollutants with National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Therefore, transportation conformity rules do not apply, and the project complies with Section 176(c) of the Clean Air Act.

Potential Impacts from Proposed Action:

Transportation conformity rules do not apply to this project, but the proposed improvements are not expected to affect traffic emissions to such a degree that the NAAQS attainment status of Laramie County would be affected. Therefore, no air quality impacts are anticipated.

During construction, there may be short-term increases in fugitive dust or other construction emissions. Fugitive dust must be minimized during construction activities and is typically addressed through dust control plans. If equipment such as an asphalt plant is needed in the Project Area, the construction contractor would be responsible for obtaining and complying with the necessary permits, and local air quality would not be substantively degraded.

Mitigation Measures:

No mitigation measures for Air are required.

TEMPORARY IMPACTS

Appropriate measures will be taken to fully inform any impacted residences or businesses regarding access impediments and proper mitigation will be implemented to maintain access to these entities throughout the project's duration.

Access to Cheyenne Hills Church will be available at all times during construction. Should lane closures be necessary (i.e., during construction of the US 30/Christensen Road intersection), coordination with Cheyenne Hills Church will take place before construction begins and adequate signage will be displayed to direct traffic to the church.

Given the nature of the intersection construction activities, emergency service providers will be notified of potential detours and any access restrictions prior to construction.

To avoid or minimize noise disturbances from construction activities, standard construction abatement measures will be employed. These will include actions such as keeping equipment exhaust systems in good working order and performing noisy activities near sensitive locations during the least disturbing times of day.

HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES/CONTAMINATION

Existing Conditions:

A hazardous materials assessment was conducted to identify the potential for encountering hazardous materials on properties adjacent to or within the project footprint. Hazardous materials require specific materials management, handling, worker health and safety and disposal practices. If potential contamination of soils and/or groundwater is suspected, avoidance or engineering options to minimize the necessary remediation and treatment of residual contamination can be implemented when reasonably possible. Encountering soil and groundwater contamination during the construction process without prior knowledge of

contamination has the potential to affect the project in terms of mitigation, cost, schedule, and worker health and safety. The information provided within this section allows the City of Cheyenne to anticipate environmental conditions and to consider the potential need to address hazardous materials concerns in project decisions regarding materials management and worker health and safety.

This hazardous materials assessment is based on observation of current conditions within and adjacent to the Project Area and on a review of reasonably ascertainable standard record resources. This assessment did not attempt to detect the presence of environmental contamination that may exist in areas that could not be visually inspected. This assessment included the following:

- An Environmental Database Resources (EDR) report was ordered to review readily available local, state, and federal environmental agency databases as dictated by the American Society for Testing and Materials Standard E1527-13.
- A site reconnaissance consisting of a walkthrough of the Project Area was conducted on October 24, 2013. The purpose of the site reconnaissance was to assess the Project Area for obvious evidence of potential contamination sources such as current hazardous substances storage or use; unusually stained soils, concrete slabs, or pavements; sumps, dumps, drums, tanks, landfills, electrical transformers; stressed vegetations; and discarded hazardous substances containers. In addition, the EDR report findings were field confirmed.

The site reconnaissance noted that several rural residences adjacent to the corridor had miscellaneous debris (abandoned cars, drums, trash etc.) stored on their property and/or structures/sheds adjacent to the ROW. Additionally, a power-line and pole-mounted transformers were observed within the Project Area. Of the properties identified in the EDR report, none were located within 0.25 mile of the Project Area. Three properties were identified within 0.5 mile of the Project Area as Solid & Hazardous Waste Facilities (**Appendix H**).

Potential Impacts from Proposed Action:

- If, during construction, a hazardous material is encountered, the City of Cheyenne will notify the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality and properly dispose of the material. The contractor will be required to provide containment for accidental spills, and solid wastes will be properly handled and disposed of off-site in an approved facility.
- Project plans and specifications will identify any needed relocation of overhead electrical utility lines and pole-mounted transformers. Performance of the work set forth in the project plans and specifications will be conducted in accordance with any existing utility easement agreements between the City of Cheyenne and the utility company and/or private landowners.
- Prior to ROW acquisition, it is recommended that the City of Cheyenne confirm the non-presence of hazardous materials within the proposed ROW where areas were not observed. This additional due diligence should include interviews with landowners and visual inspections of private property to ensure that contaminated ROW property is not purchased.

Mitigation Measures:

No mitigation measures for Hazardous Waste resources are required.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Existing Conditions:

A visual resource inventory was performed for the Project Area. This involved an examination of the character of the landscape itself and of viewers and their potential sensitivity to impacts on the visual character of the landscape. The Project Area is a rural area containing gentle undulating terrain, with an overall upward slope from south to north. Visual resources of open rangeland and sparse private properties dominate the Project Area, with faint views of the Rocky Mountain Range foothills observed from select sites.

Potential Impacts from Proposed Action:

The construction of Christensen Road would create a moderate visual contrast to residences located on both the east and west sides of the Project Area. The strongest visual contrast elements would include the new bridge over the UPRR, including vertical construction due to the proposed UPRR overpass and the need to slope the structure/roadway back down to existing grade. Cut and fill areas would also create visual changes in the Project Area. The southern segment would have fill slopes approaching the UPRR crossing. This vertical expansion would create a visual barrier for adjacent residents in the immediate area.

The profile of the proposed roadway is controlled by the vertical clearance requirements of the UPRR and the proposed underpass at Tate Road for local access. To minimize the visual impacts of the crossing, the depth of the bridge over the railroad has been minimized, resulting in an approximately 2-foot reduction in profile height. Additionally, the profile of Tate Road has been modified to better fit under the Christensen Road improvements, allowing Christensen Road to begin its descent to existing grade sooner. This results in a net profile difference of 12 feet at Tate Road, and only 8 feet directly west of the current residence (east of the proposed bridge). The profile difference is 17 feet at the north end of the bridge, which is within UPRR property. Therefore, the proposed structure and vertical alignment have been minimized to the extent possible, reducing visual resource impacts.

The existing hillside terraces present to the north of E. Pershing Blvd extending to US 30 would be heavily modified with cut slopes. This would create a strong visual contrast with the existing natural landscape. The presence of the road would have an impact on the visual continuity of the existing landscape.

Throughout the length of the project, visual resources would be impacted, aside from the development of new roadway through rangeland where no roadway currently exists. However, the vertical profile change through rangeland would be minimal.

Visual contrast is most closely associated with the addition of structural elements and changes to landform contrast. Disturbed slopes would be treated for erosion control and would be revegetated using native plant species as appropriate for adjacent land use and terrain. Sensitive grading techniques would be used that blend grading with the natural terrain. Wall treatments would be aesthetically pleasing and discussed with adjacent landowners.

Mitigation Measures:

No mitigation measures for Visual Resources are required.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

An open house was held on December 12, 2013, at the Cheyenne Hills Church. This event was announced in the local newspaper on December 7 and through individual flyers mailed directly to adjacent property owners and stakeholders. The purpose of the open house was to provide a project overview, gather public input on critical issues and address individual and group concerns. A total of 48 participants, including consultants and agency representatives, were present to discuss the roadway alternatives and overall design. The format included display boards, handouts, and ROW process pamphlets. Additional information about public input can be found within the Controversy Potential section.

MITIGATION SUMMARY

Surface Water/Erosion:

The appropriate jurisdiction will maintain any storm sewer system improvements constructed with this project.

Construction-associated sediment control will be addressed by using BMPs to ensure that sediments and other pollutants will be contained within the boundaries of the work area. Erosion control and storm water plans are required on all projects that have one acre or more of disturbed soil. A WYPDES permit will be required for this project and prepared before construction begins. Disturbed areas shall be promptly revegetated with native plants after construction to maintain water quality.

T & E Species:

For each SGCN listed in the SWAP, conservation actions are provided to assist in conserving the species. Mitigation measures identified in the SWAP for many SGCN are to:

- Design vegetation treatments in habitat that mimic and restore natural landscape patterns and disturbance processes, maintain habitat connectivity, and maintain the native composition of herbaceous plant and shrub communities that are important for seed crops;
- Manage nesting areas to minimize disturbance (including haying, burning, and moderate to heavy grazing) during the nesting season; and
- Avoid or minimize pesticide use in habitats where bird species nest to ensure a food source is maintained. If possible, all pesticide use should be postponed until bird species have completed their nesting cycles.

Vegetation:

A revegetation plan will be created, and disturbed areas will be promptly revegetated with native plants after construction.

Temporary Impacts:

Appropriate measures will be taken to fully inform any impacted residences or businesses regarding access impediments and proper mitigation will be implemented to maintain access to these entities throughout the project's duration.

Access to Cheyenne Hills Church will be available at all times during construction. Should lane closures be necessary (i.e., during construction of the US 30/Christensen Road intersection) coordination with Cheyenne Hills Church will take place before construction begins and adequate signage shall be displayed to direct traffic to the church.

Given the nature of the intersection construction activities, emergency service providers shall be notified of potential detours and any access restrictions prior to construction.

To avoid or minimize noise disturbances from construction activities, standard construction abatement measures will be used. These will include actions such as keeping equipment exhaust systems in good working order and performing noisy activities near sensitive locations during the least disturbing times of day.

If any unanticipated impacts are discovered during project work, the appropriate personnel will be notified immediately to evaluate the impacts and determine the proper measures to be taken to prevent further impacts and mitigate any impacts that require mitigation.

PREPARERS:

Felsburg Holt Ullevig (FHU)

Jessica Myklebust, *Senior Environmental Scientist*

Dale Tischmak, *Senior Environmental Scientist*

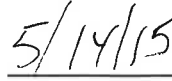
Anthony Marshall, *Environmental Scientist/Planner*

DETERMINATION

I determine that the *Christensen Railroad Overpass and Corridor Project* qualifies for a Comprehensive Categorical Exclusion. The attached Form 100 describes the impact evaluation and findings.



Nathan Beauheim, P.E.
Assistant City Engineer
City of Cheyenne
307-638-4315
Nbeauheim@cheyennecity.org



Date

Concur with Determination:



for

Joseph Dailey
Federal Highway Administration



Date

FIGURES:

- 1) Project Vicinity Map
- 2) Project Location Map
- 3) South Segment of Proposed Action
- 4) North Segment of Proposed Action
- 5) Existing Land Use (from PlanCheyenne data)
- 6) Planned Future Land Use (from PlanCheyenne data)

APPENDICES:

- A) Form 100 - Environmental Impact Evaluation
- B) Traffic Analysis Report
- C) Agency/Group Coordination and Support
- D) Pedestrian/Bicycle Pathways
- E) Cultural Resources
- F) Biological Resources
- G) Noise Analysis
- H) Hazardous Materials Environmental Database Report

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