



Public Engagement Plan (PEP)

Preliminary Engineering Services – Phase I

Interstate 29 and 40th Ave N Interchange

Project 8-029(213)069, PCN 23596

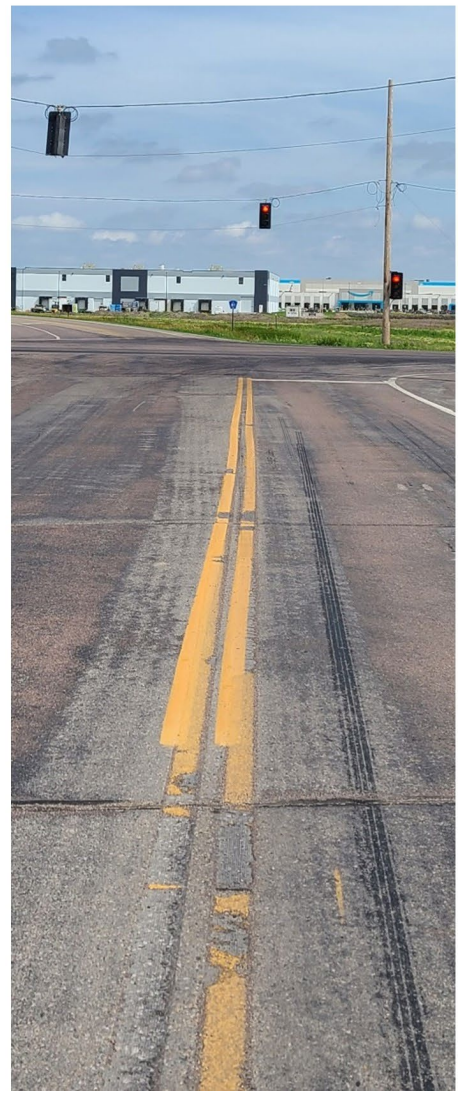


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INTRODUCTION

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN PURPOSE

This Public Engagement Plan (PEP) outlines the outreach, education, and input processes intended for various stages of NDDOT Project Number 8-029(213)069, PCN 23596. Engagement details, goals, audiences, activities, and schedules are laid out as a roadmap for the project. This process will coincide with the NDDOT public engagement process identified in the NDDOT Design Manual, Chapter 2: Environmental and Public Involvement.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Due to recent and proposed development along both sides of I-29, the interchange of I-29 and 40th Avenue North has been and will continue to experience significant traffic growth. The increase in traffic is expected to surpass the capacity of the interchange and County Road 20/40th Avenue, and adversely affect the operations and safety of several intersections within the study area. The NDDOT commissioned the completion of a Preliminary Engineering and Feasibility Study to analyze the issues surrounding the study area and make geometric and traffic related recommendations. A project location map is shown below in Figure 1.

This project consists of three phases:

- Phase 1 - Environmental documentation and preliminary design
- Phase 2 - Final design
- Phase 3 - Construction engineering assistance

A feasibility study for this project was completed Summer 2023. The feasibility study determined the selected alternative to move forward with was the dumbbell interchange. This interchange alternative consists of reconstructing the interchange to maintain a standard diamond layout, but with roundabout control at the ramp terminal intersections. A preliminary geometric layout of this interchange concept is shown in Figure 2.

This document will outline engagement activities anticipated for phase 1, the environmental documentation and preliminary design. This includes completing a documented CatEx. An updated PEP for phase 2 will be prepared once phase 1 is done.

The NDDOT is anticipated to lead engagement activities during phase 3, construction.

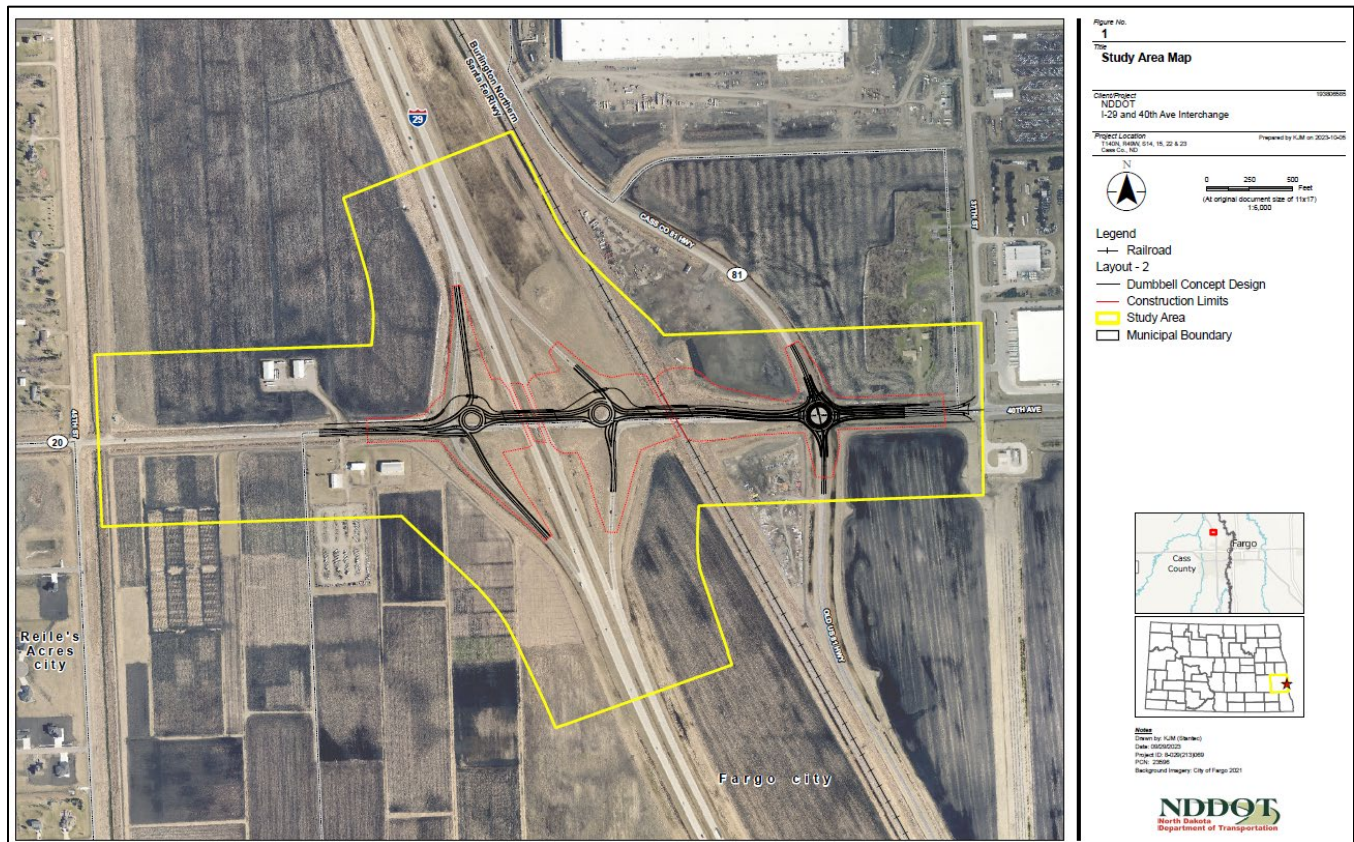


Figure 1 - Project Location Map: I-29 and 40th Avenue North Interchange

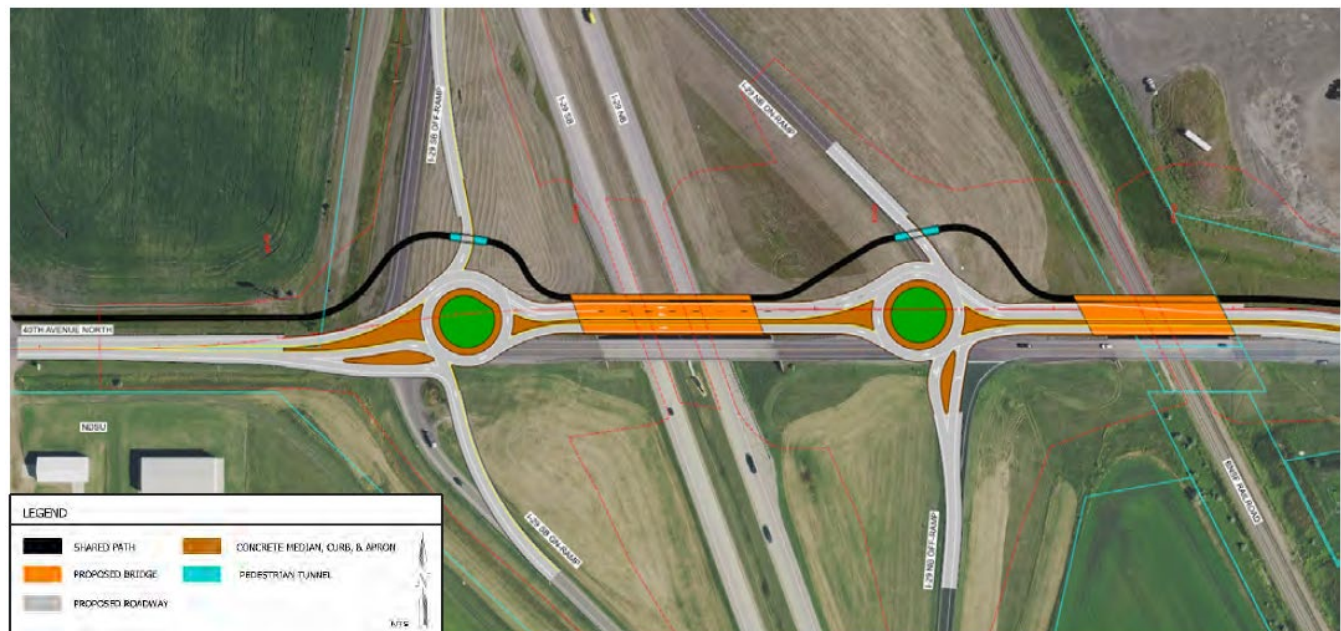


Figure 2 - Dumbbell Interchange Preliminary Layout

COMMUNITY PROFILE

When completing public engagement efforts, it is important to understand the community you are trying to reach. In 2020 Fargo, ND had a population of 124k people with a median age of 31.4 and a median household income of \$57,520. Between 2019 and 2020 the population of Fargo, ND grew from 121,889 to 123,550, a 1.36% increase and its median household income grew from \$55,551 to \$57,520, a 3.54% increase. The 5 largest ethnic groups in Fargo, ND are White (Non-Hispanic) (81.3%), Black or African American (Non-Hispanic) (7.83%), Asian (Non-Hispanic) (4.12%), Two+ (Non-Hispanic) (2.31%), and White (Hispanic) (1.87%).

A demographic summary using the Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool (EJ Screen) was completed for a 1-mile buffer around the project. EJ Screen uses data from the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). The summary showed a population of 828 with a population density of 140 people per square mile. There are 235 households within the area. 87% of people within this area are white, 67% are above the age of 18, and 79% of people have a household income above \$75,000. The full summary is included in Appendix A.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POPULATIONS

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations, dated February 11, 1994, directed "each federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations in the United States..."

EJ Screen was used to review the percentages of low-income and minority populations within a 1-mile radius of the study area. Low-income populations are in the 13th percentile and minority populations are in the 17th percentile meaning there is not a high probability of disproportionately affecting either of these groups.

Maps showing these percentages are shown in Figure 3 and Figure 4. The EJ Screen report is included in Appendix B.

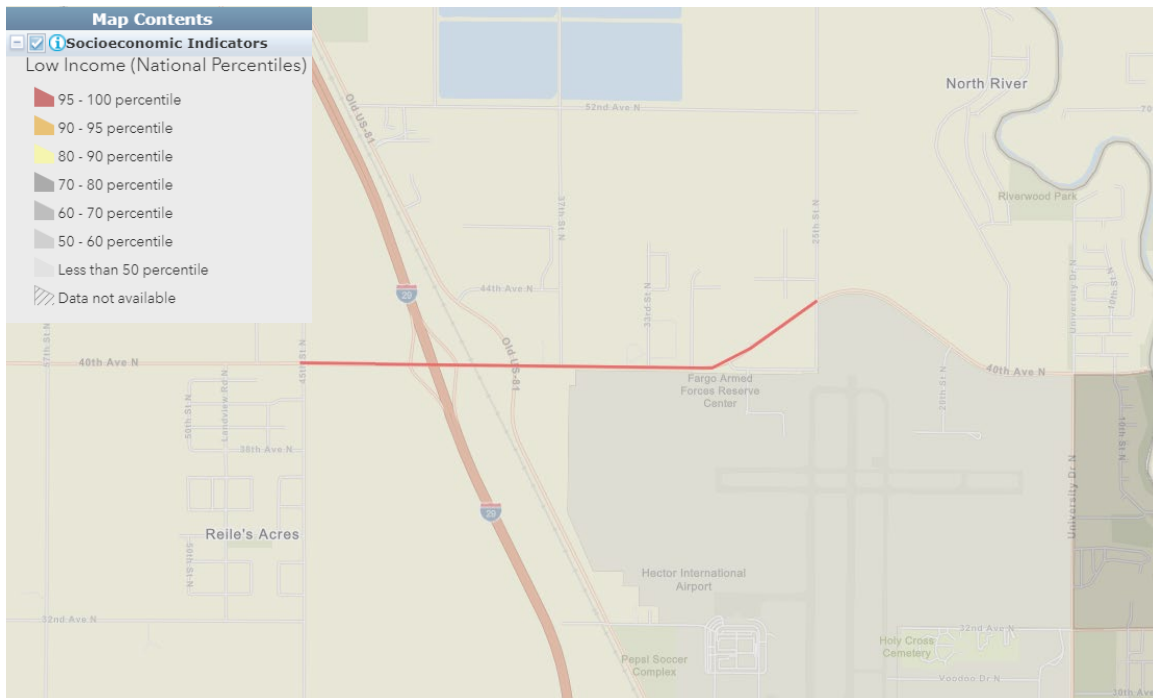


Figure 3 - EJ Screen: Percentages of low income population within 1 mile of the project area.

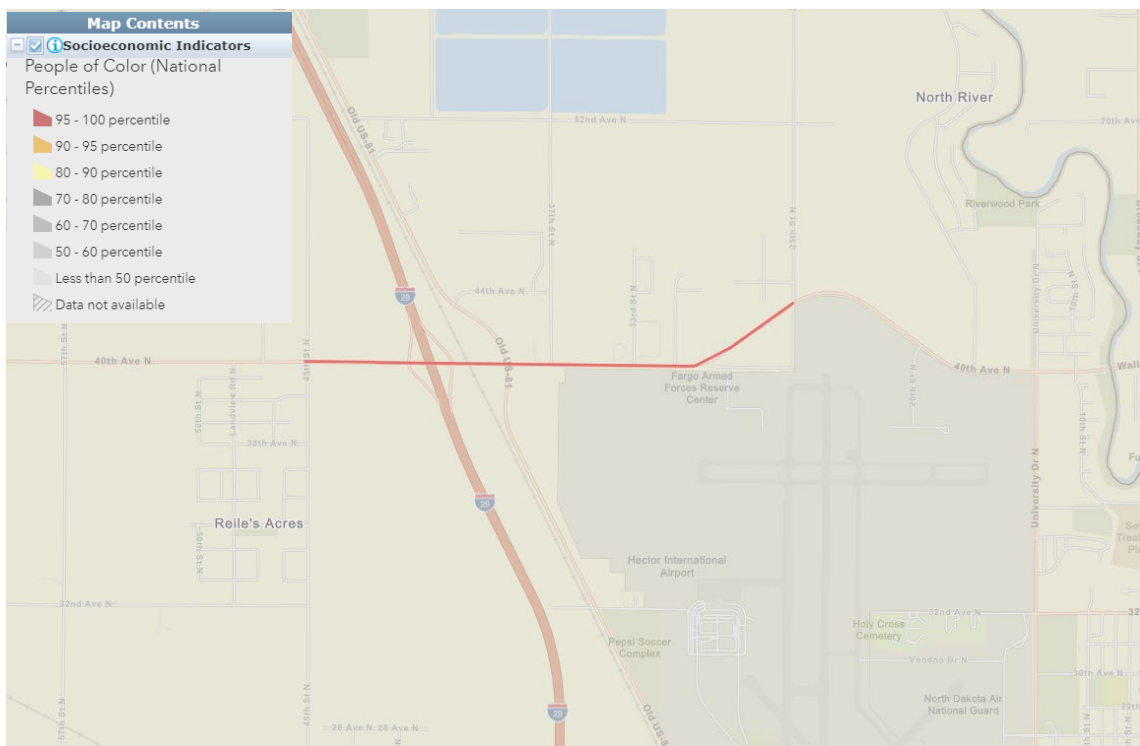


Figure 4 - EJ Screen: Percentages of minorities population within 1 mile of the project area.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

PUBLIC/STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

The following section describes the core public engagement techniques that will be utilized during the project. They are a project website, Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Focus Group Meetings, and Public Outreach Opportunities.

Technical Advisory Committee

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will be created to include representation from NDDOT, FHWA, City of Fargo, Fargo-Moorhead Metro COG, Cass County, and others as needed. The TAC will help guide the project through project completion by making informed decisions and providing agency direction to the consultant team as needed. TAC members are anticipated to consist of the following individuals:

NDDOT Fargo District

- Aaron Murra (District Engineer - Fargo)
- Joe Peyerl (Assistant District Engineer - Fargo)

NDDOT Design Division

- Jennifer Kern
- Chad Frisinger

NDDOT ETS

- Alexis Wanek

NDDOT Traffic Operations

- Justin Schlosser

NDDOT Local Government

- Michael Johnson

NDDOT Bridge Division

- Dustin Wing

NDDOT Materials & Research

- Colter Schwagler

NDDOT Planning

- Jim Styron

FHWA

- Gary Goff

City of Fargo

- Thomas Knakmuhs (City Engineer)
- Jeremy Gorden (Transportation Division Engineer)
- Eric Hodgson (Traffic Engineer)

Fargo-Moorhead Metro COG

- Dan Farnsworth (Transportation Planner)
- Paul Bervik (Transportation Improvement Program)

Cass County

- Jason Benson (County Engineer)

Up to twenty (20) TAC meetings will be conducted virtually for this project. Each TAC meeting will be approximately one to two hours long. A meeting summary will be provided for all TAC meetings and will be included in a final summary of all engagement activities.

Focus Group Meetings

A focus group is utilized to gather data from or share data with groups associated with a particular design component. Each session will include people with similar interests. Up to ten (10) focus group meetings are anticipated to be held virtually. Potential focus groups include but are not limited to:

- Local businesses
- Hector International Airport
- Reile's Acres representatives
- NDSU representatives
- BNSF Railroad
- Truck drivers
- Nearby warehouse or manufacturing operations
- Bicycle advocacy groups

Public Outreach Opportunities

One public outreach opportunity will be held during this phase of the project. This outreach event will show the public the preliminary interchange layout and collect feedback on specific issues or opportunities in the project area.

Following the outreach event, a brief graphical summary of findings and recommendations will be completed and shared with the public. All materials for public consumption will be ADA compliant.

The outreach event will be enhanced by NDDOT's project website, virtual and published advertisements, providing multiple avenues for the public to express comments, online survey opportunities, graphics, and GIS based story maps as needed.

Additional tools can be added if it becomes apparent that a group or organization needs supplementary interaction with the project team. The addition or subtraction of engagement techniques will be fluid as public engagement needs and project development progress.

Information to be Presented for Public Outreach Opportunities

The following information will be presented at the public outreach opportunity in accordance with the NDDOT Design Manual.

- SFN 59531 NDDOT Sign-In Sheet and SFN 60149 NDDOT Title VI Public Participation Survey

- The project's purpose, need, and consistency with the goals and objectives of any local planning.
- The project alternatives under consideration and major design features.
- The social, economic, environmental, and other impacts of the project, including any floodplain and/or wetland impacts.
- The storm water poster will be on display, and the brochure “After the Storm” should be made available for attendees.
- The right of way acquisition process, to include the relocation assistance program if needed. Also a tentative schedule of acquisition will be presented, and a brochure describing the land acquisition process and the owner’s rights, privileges, and obligation will be distributed.
- A description of the procedures for receiving both oral and written statements from the public. The participants should be informed that statements or exhibits may be presented for 15 calendar days following the Public Input Meeting and will be made part of the record.
- Provide a tentative schedule of construction.
- The source of project funding and reasonable expectation of cost sharing responsibilities.
- The agency responsible for developing the project.
- The back of the comment cards will have space for land owners to write down if they have wetlands or borrow on their property that they would be willing to mitigate or sell.

SCHEDULE

The notice to proceed for this project phase was given on September 21, 2023. The tentative date for the public engagement opportunity is April 16, 2024. Milestone dates for public engagement tasks are listed below based off the NDDOT Design Manual, Chapter 2: Environmental and Public Involvement.

Outreach Opportunity

Outreach Opportunity – In-person Community Open House. This meeting will allow the public to provide feedback on the dumbbell interchange layout. The anticipated open house date is **April 16, 2024**. Below are the milestone dates for activities leading up to the open house.

- Legal display ad to the Technical Support Contact for review (7 to 10 days prior to the publication deadline): **March 12, 2024**
 - The Fargo Forum publishes on Wednesdays. Ads need to be submitted the Friday prior to publication by 5pm.
- Legal display ad in the official county newspaper. The Cass County official paper is the Fargo Forum and publishes weekly on Wednesdays (15 to 21 calendar days prior to the meeting): **March 27, 2024**
- Press release and social media picture to the Technical Support Contact (21 calendar days prior to the meeting): **March 26, 2024**
- Press release and social media picture (5 to 7 calendar days prior to the meeting): **April 9, 2024**
- Anticipated open house date: **April 16, 2024**
- Comment period (15 calendar days following the meeting): **May 1, 2024**

TAC and Focus Group Meetings

TAC and Focus Group meetings will take place throughout the entire project.

Focus group meetings will be completed during preliminary design to understand the unique business operations and/or challenges of each group. This feedback will be used to inform final detailed design aspects of the interchange.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Stantec is responsible for attending, scheduling, and presenting at all TAC, Focus Group, and outreach activities. They will develop engagement and advertising materials and coordinate online engagement opportunities. Stantec will create meeting summaries to document the engagement process.

NDDOT is responsible for posting to NDDOT's project website, oversight of engagement activities, and reviewing material developed for engagement opportunities.

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A – EJ Screen Demographic Summary

Location: User-specified linear location

Ring (buffer): 1-miles radius

Description:

Summary of ACS Estimates		2016 - 2020
Population		828
Population Density (per sq. mile)		140
People of Color Population		145
% People of Color Population		17%
Households		235
Housing Units		246
Housing Units Built Before 1950		2
Per Capita Income		47,772
Land Area (sq. miles) (Source: SF1)		5.90
% Land Area		100%
Water Area (sq. miles) (Source: SF1)		0.03
% Water Area		0%

	2016 - 2020 ACS Estimates	Percent	MOE (±)
Population by Race			
Total	828	100%	359
Population Reporting One Race	808	98%	638
White	723	87%	292
Black	80	10%	302
American Indian	1	0%	10
Asian	3	0%	14
Pacific Islander	0	0%	10
Some Other Race	0	0%	10
Population Reporting Two or More Races	21	2%	53
Total Hispanic Population	56	7%	159
Total Non-Hispanic Population	772		
White Alone	684	83%	276
Black Alone	64	8%	252
American Indian Alone	1	0%	10
Non-Hispanic Asian Alone	3	0%	14
Pacific Islander Alone	0	0%	10
Other Race Alone	0	0%	10
Two or More Races Alone	20	2%	53
Population by Sex			
Male	404	49%	188
Female	424	51%	212
Population by Age			
Age 0-4	61	7%	88
Age 0-17	271	33%	166
Age 18+	558	67%	202
Age 65+	52	6%	41

Data Note: Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding. Hispanic population can be of any race.

N/A means not available. **Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2016 - 2020

Location: User-specified linear location

Ring (buffer): 1-miles radius

Description:

	2016 - 2020 ACS Estimates	Percent	MOE (±)
Population 25+ by Educational Attainment			
Total	499	100%	200
Less than 9th Grade	3	1%	15
9th - 12th Grade, No Diploma	13	3%	31
High School Graduate	78	16%	64
Some College, No Degree	82	16%	76
Associate Degree	90	18%	69
Bachelor's Degree or more	233	47%	134
Population Age 5+ Years by Ability to Speak English			
Total	767	100%	327
Speak only English	756	99%	281
Non-English at Home ¹⁺²⁺³⁺⁴	11	1%	24
¹ Speak English "very well"	5	1%	16
² Speak English "well"	5	1%	17
³ Speak English "not well"	1	0%	12
⁴ Speak English "not at all"	0	0%	10
³⁺⁴ Speak English "less than well"	1	0%	12
²⁺³⁺⁴ Speak English "less than very well"	6	1%	18
Linguistically Isolated Households*			
Total	0	0%	10
Speak Spanish	0	0%	10
Speak Other Indo-European Languages	0	0%	10
Speak Asian-Pacific Island Languages	0	0%	10
Speak Other Languages	0	0%	10
Households by Household Income			
Household Income Base	235	100%	96
< \$15,000	0	0%	10
\$15,000 - \$25,000	0	0%	10
\$25,000 - \$50,000	36	15%	65
\$50,000 - \$75,000	14	6%	25
\$75,000 +	185	79%	101
Occupied Housing Units by Tenure			
Total	235	100%	96
Owner Occupied	228	97%	97
Renter Occupied	7	3%	21
Employed Population Age 16+ Years			
Total	571	100%	222
In Labor Force	486	85%	214
Civilian Unemployed in Labor Force	19	3%	54
Not In Labor Force	84	15%	74

Data Note: Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding. Hispanic population can be of anyrace.

N/A means not available. **Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS)

*Households in which no one 14 and over speaks English "very well" or speaks English only.

Location: User-specified linear location

Ring (buffer): 1-miles radius

Description:

	2016 - 2020 ACS Estimates	Percent	MOE (±)
Population by Language Spoken at Home*			
Total (persons age 5 and above)	928	100%	403
English	831	90%	350
Spanish	18	2%	51
French, Haitian, or Cajun	2	0%	56
German or other West Germanic	2	0%	13
Russian, Polish, or Other Slavic	1	0%	8
Other Indo-European	25	3%	83
Korean	1	0%	11
Chinese (including Mandarin, Cantonese)	26	3%	95
Vietnamese	1	0%	10
Tagalog (including Filipino)	0	0%	10
Other Asian and Pacific Island	8	1%	42
Arabic	3	0%	23
Other and Unspecified	9	1%	38
Total Non-English	96	10%	534

Data Note: Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding. Hispanic population can be of any race.

N/A means not available. **Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2016 - 2020.

*Population by Language Spoken at Home is available at the census tract summary level and up.

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX B – EJ Screen Environmental Justice Summary

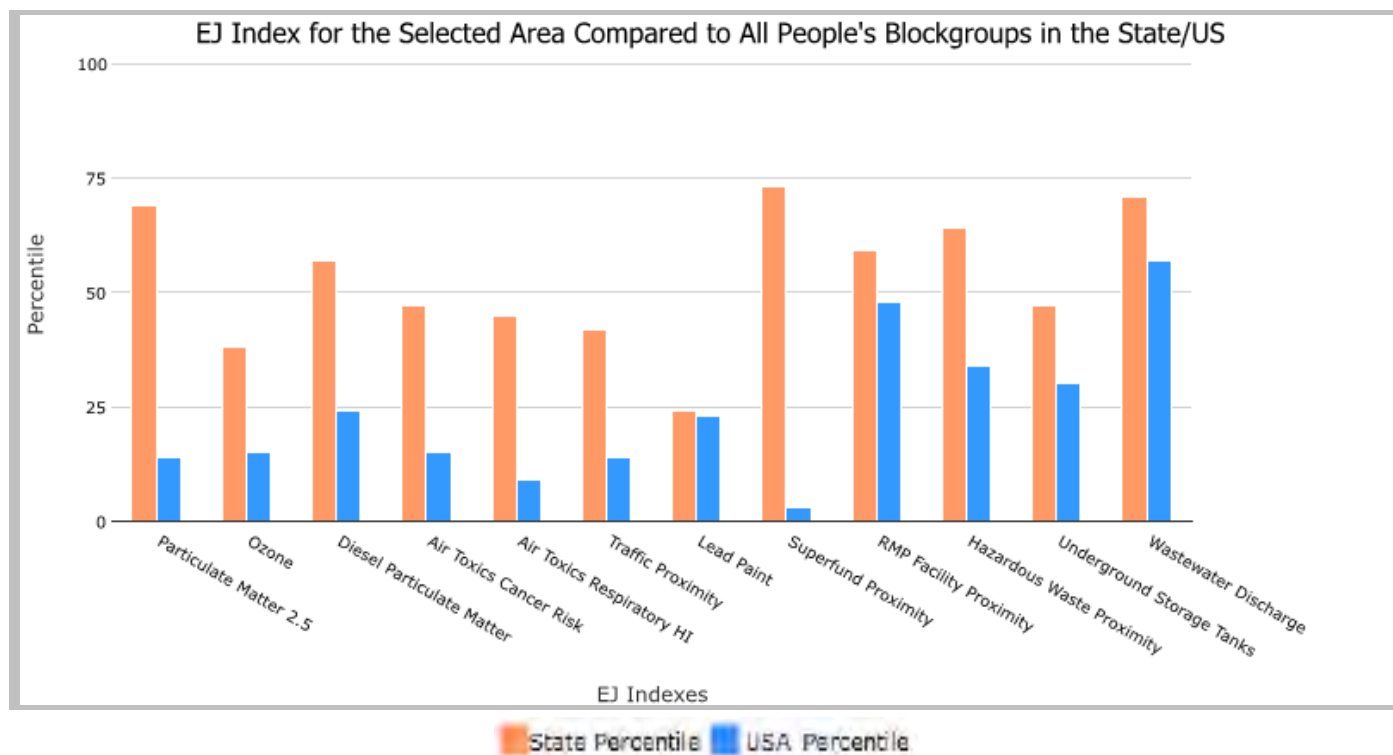
EJScreen Report (Version 2.1)

1 mile Ring around the Corridor, NORTH DAKOTA, EPA Region 8

Approximate Population: 828

Input Area (sq. miles): 7.31

Selected Variables	State Percentile	USA Percentile
Environmental Justice Indexes		
EJ Index for Particulate Matter 2.5	69	14
EJ Index for Ozone	38	15
EJ Index for Diesel Particulate Matter*	57	24
EJ Index for Air Toxics Cancer Risk*	47	15
EJ Index for Air Toxics Respiratory HI*	45	9
EJ Index for Traffic Proximity	42	14
EJ Index for Lead Paint	24	23
EJ Index for Superfund Proximity	73	3
EJ Index for RMP Facility Proximity	59	48
EJ Index for Hazardous Waste Proximity	64	34
EJ Index for Underground Storage Tanks	47	30
EJ Index for Wastewater Discharge	71	57

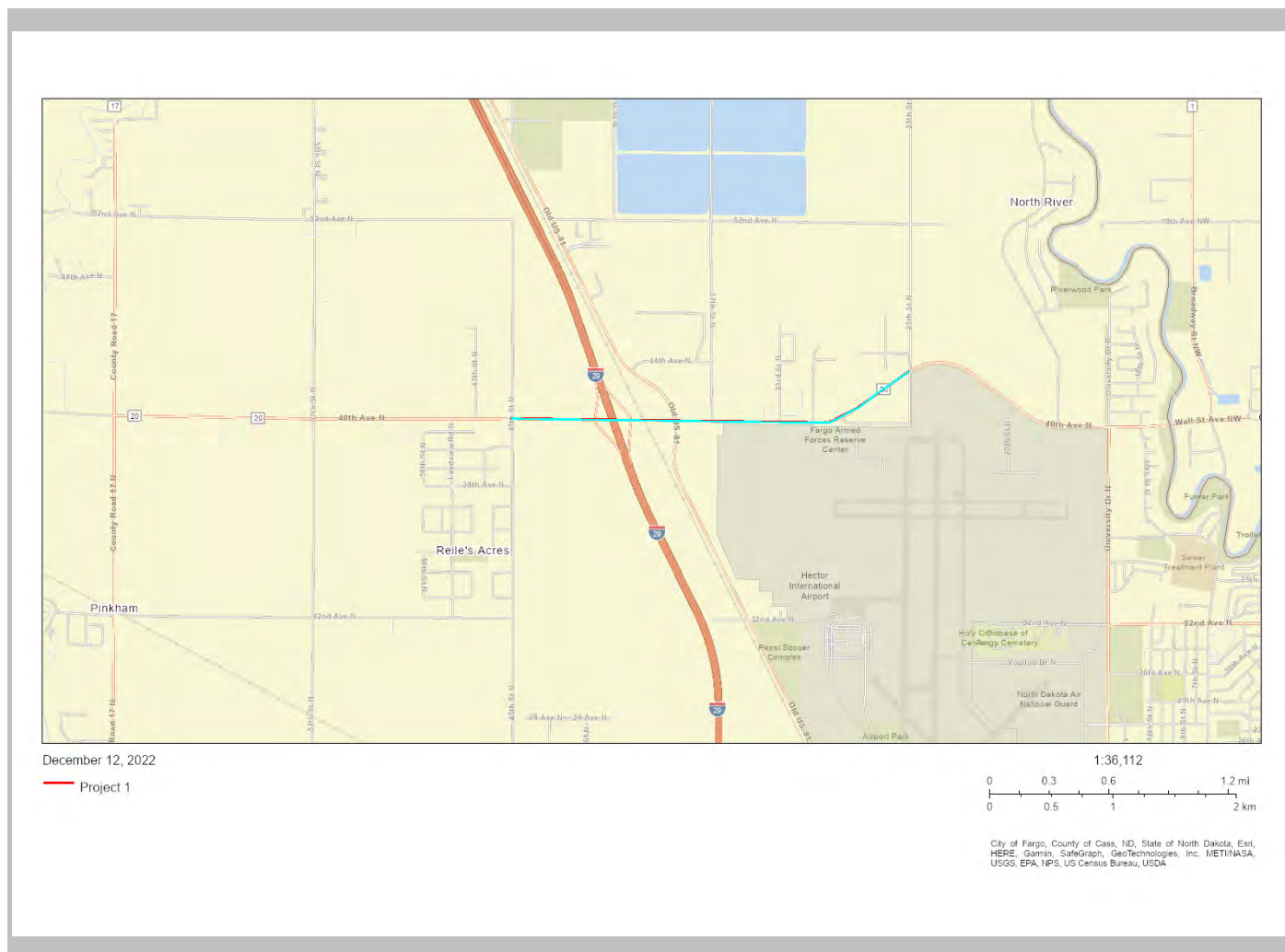


This report shows the values for environmental and demographic indicators and EJSCREEN indexes. It shows environmental and demographic raw data (e.g., the estimated concentration of ozone in the air), and also shows what percentile each raw data value represents. These percentiles provide perspective on how the selected block group or buffer area compares to the entire state, EPA region, or nation. For example, if a given location is at the 95th percentile nationwide, this means that only 5 percent of the US population has a higher block group value than the average person in the location being analyzed. The years for which the data are available, and the methods used, vary across these indicators. Important caveats and uncertainties apply to this screening-level information, so it is essential to understand the limitations on appropriate interpretations and applications of these indicators. Please see EJSCREEN documentation for discussion of these issues before using reports.

1 mile Ring around the Corridor, NORTH DAKOTA, EPA Region 8

Approximate Population: 828

Input Area (sq. miles): 7.31



Sites reporting to EPA

Superfund NPL

0

Hazardous Waste Treatment, Storage, and Disposal Facilities (TSDF)

0

EJScreen Report (Version 2.1)



1 mile Ring around the Corridor, NORTH DAKOTA, EPA Region 8

Approximate Population: 828

Input Area (sq. miles): 7.31

Selected Variables	Value	State Avg.	%ile in State	USA Avg.	%ile in USA
Pollution and Sources					
Particulate Matter 2.5 ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	7.18	6.54	73	8.67	16
Ozone (ppb)	37.6	38.7	35	42.5	19
Diesel Particulate Matter* ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	0.151	0.17	57	0.294	<50th
Air Toxics Cancer Risk* (lifetime risk per million)	21	20	90	28	<50th
Air Toxics Respiratory HI*	0.21	0.22	79	0.36	<50th
Traffic Proximity (daily traffic count/distance to road)	26	220	34	760	16
Lead Paint (% Pre-1960 Housing)	0.05	0.25	23	0.27	26
Superfund Proximity (site count/km distance)	0.0094	0.0049	79	0.13	4
RMP Facility Proximity (facility count/km distance)	1	1.1	60	0.77	75
Hazardous Waste Proximity (facility count/km distance)	0.46	0.52	65	2.2	43
Underground Storage Tanks (count/km ²)	0.13	2.1	42	3.9	29
Wastewater Discharge (toxicity-weighted concentration/m distance)	8.3	6.3	95	12	97
Socioeconomic Indicators					
Demographic Index	15%	21%	44	35%	21
People of Color	17%	16%	70	40%	36
Low Income	13%	25%	20	30%	23
Unemployment Rate	4%	3%	72	5%	50
Limited English Speaking Households	0%	1%	0	5%	0
Less Than High School Education	3%	7%	31	12%	25
Under Age 5	7%	7%	64	6%	71
Over Age 64	6%	15%	17	16%	13

*Diesel particulate matter, air toxics cancer risk, and air toxics respiratory hazard index are from the EPA's Air Toxics Data Update, which is the Agency's ongoing, comprehensive evaluation of air toxics in the United States. This effort aims to prioritize air toxics, emission sources, and locations of interest for further study. It is important to remember that the air toxics data presented here provide broad estimates of health risks over geographic areas of the country, not definitive risks to specific individuals or locations. Cancer risks and hazard indices from the Air Toxics Data Update are reported to one significant figure and any additional significant figures here are due to rounding. More information on the Air Toxics Data Update can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/haps/air-toxics-data-update>.

For additional information, see: www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice

EJScreen is a screening tool for pre-decisional use only. It can help identify areas that may warrant additional consideration, analysis, or outreach. It does not provide a basis for decision-making, but it may help identify potential areas of EJ concern. Users should keep in mind that screening tools are subject to substantial uncertainty in their demographic and environmental data, particularly when looking at small geographic areas. Important caveats and uncertainties apply to this screening-level information, so it is essential to understand the limitations on appropriate interpretations and applications of these indicators. Please see EJScreen documentation for discussion of these issues before using reports. This screening tool does not provide data on every environmental impact and demographic factor that may be relevant to a particular location. EJScreen outputs should be supplemented with additional information and local knowledge before taking any action to address potential EJ concerns.