

**Terminal Rehabilitation, Modernization and  
Energy Improvement Project  
Bemidji Regional Airport  
Bemidji, Minnesota**

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**Final Environmental Assessment  
Supplement**

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**U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Bemidji Regional Airport Authority**

**November 2011**

This environmental assessment becomes a Federal document when evaluated and signed by the responsible FAA official.

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Responsible FAA Official

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Date

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## 1.0 Introduction

A Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Terminal Rehabilitation, Modernization and Energy Improvement Project for the Bemidji Regional Airport was prepared and distributed for public and agency comment in February 2009 by the Bemidji Regional Airport Authority (BRAA). The proposed project in the Draft EA included the expansion of the parking lot. However, the parking lot expansion was removed from the project before the Final EA was approved and the Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) was issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). During construction of the infrastructure for the terminal building it was determined that:

- The size of the water main serving the existing terminal was smaller than indicated in City of Bemidji records. The existing water main could not provide the necessary flow for adequate fire protection and consisted of two dead end mains on either side of the terminal.
- The terminal was being served by a small diameter sewer service line, which was too small to provide the necessary capacity for the terminal expansion and additional restrooms.
- The terminal expansion would increase the amount of impervious surface; therefore the existing storm sewer system would not meet the City's standards for treatment and detention of storm water runoff.

For these reasons, BRAA determined that it was necessary to:

- Install a larger diameter water main around the parking lot with a connection to the two dead end mains across the front of the terminal.
- Extend the existing sanitary sewer main and provide a larger diameter sewer pipe to the terminal.
- Construct a new storm sewer system under the existing parking lot including storm water detention basins (in accordance with the FAA Advisory Circular (AC) 150/5200-33B – Hazardous Wildlife Attractants on or Near Airports) in order to meet the City's storm water treatment and detention requirements

Since the construction of the underground sewer and water main improvements would result in the disturbance of a majority of the existing parking lot, BRAA decided to proceed with an expansion of the lot as part of the utility improvement restoration efforts in order to provide adequate parking for air carrier passengers and other terminal users. Expansion of the parking lot, but not the required underground infrastructure improvements, was identified in the Draft EA but removed from the project before the FAA issued the FONSI. As stated in the Final EA in Section 2.1, the parking lot expansion was deferred due to insufficient available funding and the need to remove the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) building to provide space for the expansion.

Late in 2009, the CAP building was vacated at the request of BRAA due to the poor condition of the building. The CAP is now meeting in a hangar on the airport. The previous CAP building has been removed. Expansion of the parking lot has become a viable option when combined with the required restoration of the lot after the underground infrastructure improvements are accomplished and the availability of AIP entitlement funds in FY 2012.

In FAA Order 5050.4B, *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementing Instructions for Airport Actions*, paragraph 1402 (Supplementing a NEPA Document) discusses the need for supplementing an EA and the content of a supplement. In accordance with 1402.c (1) the FAA has decided to supplement the June 2009 Final EA by identifying the parts of the June 2009 Final EA for which new data are presented. Therefore, this document presents only the parts of the June 2009 Final EA that have been changed.

## **2.0 Proposed Action**

### **2.1 Proposed Project**

Additions to the Proposed Project, shown on **Figure 2A**, consist of the following:

- Removal of existing water main, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer underneath the existing parking lot and replacement with adequate water main, sanitary sewer, and storm water collection and treatment facilities to serve the expanded terminal building as shown on **Figure 2A**:
- Removal of existing 327 parking spaces and construction of a reconfigured parking area with 438 parking spaces as shown on **Figure 2A**.

### **2.2 Permits and Approvals**

No changes.

### **2.3 Requested Federal Action and Schedule**

Page 10; replace the last sentence with the following.

The project could be completed in 2012.

## **3.0 Purpose and Need**

### **3.1 Need**

Page 3, add the following.

The inadequate water and sewer infrastructure, located under the existing parking lot, was discovered during construction of the terminal building. In addition, the existing storm water system was found to be insufficient to treat the additional runoff. The existing water main and sanitary sewer need to be upgraded to provide adequate service to the terminal and provide the flow necessary for fire protection. The storm sewer system also needs improvements to provide adequate treatment of storm water runoff for the increased impervious surface of the new terminal and expanded parking lot. The infrastructure upgrades will require trenching through and subsequent restoration of the parking lot.

There is also an immediate need for all types of parking in the terminal area – short-term, long-term, and rental car spaces. There are 327 existing parking spaces at the terminal that are full almost daily with people parking on the grass. There are numerous complaints by the BRAA Commissioners and public on the need for additional parking space at the terminal. The May 2007 Master Plan forecast a need for 1,033 spaces by 2013 and recommended a complete

modification of the entry road to allow a reconfiguration of the parking area to maximize parking space. The maximum number of surface spaces that can be provided adjacent to the terminal is 438, as proposed, which will accommodate the current demand. The BRAA will continue to monitor the parking situation and consider additional parking alternatives if needed in the future.

### **3.2 Purpose**

Add the following to the purpose/objectives:

5. to provide adequate infrastructure for the terminal building and firefighting activities
6. to adequately treat the increased storm water runoff
7. to provide sufficient cost-effective parking spaces adjacent to the terminal to accommodate short- and long-term parking and rental car demands.

### **4.0 Alternatives**

Add the following.

There are no feasible alternatives that would achieve the purpose and need for the infrastructure improvements. Expansion of the proposed parking lot adjacent to the terminal would require property acquisitions and displacement of private businesses and governmental facilities, neither of which would be cost effective at this time. Construction of a parking ramp was considered but is not economically feasible in northern Minnesota due to winter conditions requiring significant operation and maintenance costs to remove snow and maintain the facility.

### **5.0 Affected Environment**

No changes.

### **6.0 Environmental Consequences**

The following sections have been changed.

#### **6.4 Construction Impacts**

No changes. There will be no additional impacts from constructing the infrastructure improvements and restoring the parking lot.

#### **6.10 Historical, Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Resources**

Page 10, 2nd paragraph; replace the sentence beginning on line 4 with the following.

Four structures within the APE will be physically disturbed – the terminal built in 1991, the Fixed Base Operator (FBO) building #2 built in 1993, the Air Rescue and Fire Fighters (ARFF) building built in 1974 and the CAP building that was relocated to the airport in 1953. The CAP building is the only structure within the APE that will be disturbed during the infrastructure improvement project that has the potential to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). However, the CAP building was demolished in the spring of 2010 for safety and health reasons unrelated to the infrastructure improvement project. The building was constructed as a temporary structure with substandard materials and no insulation. It was built

on a temporary foundation that allowed exposure to the weather and access by rodents and other wildlife underneath. Over the years, these conditions resulted in collapsed roofing members that could not be repaired; water leakage throughout the building; rotted and collapsed interior walls, ceiling, and flooring; and rodent, skunk, and bird infestation. There were windows that had completely rotted out and were boarded over. It also had an unapproved well underneath the building adjacent to a septic system that required removal since the building was within the City's wellhead protection area. The well and septic system could not be removed without demolishing the building. As directed by the BRAA, the CAP vacated the building in late 2009 and moved their activities to a hangar on the airport.

Since the CAP building was over 50 years old and had not been evaluated as an historic property, the FAA required that an assessment of its eligibility for listing on the NRHP be performed. An assessment was prepared and submitted to the FAA in July 2011 with a conclusion that the history associated with the building does not merit NRHP consideration under any criteria.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the FAA found that a No Adverse Effect determination is appropriate for the infrastructure improvement project. FAA submitted its finding to the SHPO and SHPO concurred with the No Adverse Effect determination in its August 29, 2011 letter. The Section 106 Finding and SHPO concurrence are included in Appendix A.

## **6.11 Light Emissions and Visual Impacts**

No Change. Parking lot lighting from the infrastructure improvement project will be on shorter poles and their emissions will not affect any resident.

## **6.12 Natural Resources and Energy Supply**

Page 11; replace the last sentence under Section 6.12 with the following.

The existing parking lot lighting system is high pressure sodium and will be replaced with metal halide. The existing lights are 400 watts on taller poles while the new are proposed to be 150 watts on shorter poles. The proposed design meets current energy codes. The Proposed Project and No Action Alternative would have no adverse impact on local supplies of energy or natural resources.

## **6.16 Water Quality**

Page 14, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph; replace line 4 with the following.

The Proposed Project (terminal and infrastructure improvements) would add approximately 1.79 acres of impervious surface. For this reason, storm water treatment facilities meeting City of Bemidji standards for storm water treatment and detention will be added to ensure that the Project will not adversely impact storm water runoff but still meet FAA Advisory Circular (AC) 150/5200-33B – Hazardous Wildlife Attractants on or Near Airports requirements. Temporary measures during construction meeting best management practices for minimizing degradation of storm water runoff will be included. Permanent treatment and detention of storm water runoff

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<sup>1</sup> Bemidji Airport Naval Reserve Barracks, An Assessment of National Register Eligibility, SHPO Number 2009-1069, by Hess, Roise and Company, July 2011.

will include temporary retention of storm water, infiltration basins, sumps in catch basins for collection of sediments, and routing of water over turf buffer areas.

### **6.19 Cumulative Effects**

Page 15; replace the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph with the following, which deletes reference to the parking lot expansion since it is now part of the proposed project.

There are no known off-airport projects or actions that would have a cumulative effect with the environmental consequences of the Proposed Project. Planned development on the Airport is shown on **Figure 5**, which includes potential GA hangar development north of Runway 13/31 and associated Taxiway D, airport business development on the north and west sides of the Airport and a new access road. If the other developments are implemented, additional cumulative storm water runoff would result, which may require a modification of the SWPPP. No single impact; even when considered with past, present or future actions; represents a substantial impact that cannot be mitigated. As a result, adverse cumulative impacts are not expected with the proposed project.

# Appendix A

## Comments on Draft EA and Responses

### Responses to EPA Comments

6. Delete the 1<sup>st</sup> sentence. The Gun Club will remain on airport property until it can relocate to a new site, and at that time it is required to perform the reclamation of the lead shot.
7. The UST has been removed. No soil contamination was found.
8. Replace the 1<sup>st</sup> sentence with the following.

There are four structures in the APE that will be physically affected – the terminal built in 1991, Fixed Base Operator (FBO) building #2 built in 1993, Air Rescue and Fire Fighters (ARFF) building built in 1974 and the CAP building relocated to the airport in 1953. The CAP building has been demolished in whole. See discussion in Section 6.10 of this Supplement.

11. Cost-effective BMP's have been and will continue to be used for these infrastructure improvements to minimize construction impacts.

### Responses to Mn/DOT Comments

Replace Responses 2 and 7 with the following.

2. The basis of the argument is in the Master Plan. See revised discussion in Section 3.1 of this Supplement.
7. The proposed project (terminal and infrastructure improvements) will increase the existing impervious surface of approximately 23 acres by 1.79 acres, which will not adversely impact storm water runoff and will not require a revision of the SWPPP, as discussed in revised Section 6.16 of this Supplement.

### Responses to SHPO Comments

Replace the response with the following.

1. See discussion in Section 6.10 of this Supplement.

**FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION  
DOCUMENTATION OF SECTION 106 FINDING OF  
NO HISTORIC PROPERTIES AFFECTED  
SUBMITTED TO THE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER  
PURSUANT TO 36 CFR SECTION 800.4(d)(1) FOR THE  
BEMIDJI REGIONAL AIRPORT  
PARKING LOT EXPANSION PROJECT**

### **1. DESCRIPTION OF THE UNDERTAKING**

The proposed project at the Bemidji Regional Airport consists of expanding the existing parking lot. This project was part of the terminal expansion Draft EA but was removed prior to the completion of the EA or the Section 106 process.

### **2. AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECT**

The Area of Potential Effect (APE) is the geographic area an undertaking may directly or indirectly affect an historic property, if any such properties are identified. The APE for this project encompasses all potential areas of disturbance and all property within the view-shed (the area that the project may visually affect) (Figure 1).

### **3. EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

Archaeological Research Services (ARS) conducted a Phase I cultural resource investigation of the entire airport property in 2005 (previously submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)). The investigation did not uncover any archaeological or cultural resources within the project area.

In addition, the entire APE has been subject to various earthmoving activities over the years. Disturbance on the site includes excavation, grading, and other earthmoving activities, which did not result in the discovery of any archaeological resources. Therefore, given the previous extent of disturbance and the results of the Phase I investigation, it is highly unlikely that any archaeological resources exist within the APE.

Previous work completed for the Terminal Expansion EA identified four structures that may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) - the Quonset hangar, the arched maintenance structure, the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) structure, and the Fixed Based Operator (FBO) building #1. Additional studies to determine the eligibility of these structures was not completed since the Terminal Expansion project did not include impacts to these resources.

The CAP structure is within the APE of the parking lot expansion project. Unfortunately, due to safety issues, the CAP structure was removed in 2010. The structure was removed prior to the completion of additional studies to determine the eligibility of the structure. The Airport Sponsor did not fully understand the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act and felt the need to address the safety issues (see attached letter). For the reasons documented in the January 20, 2011 letter, the FAA determined that the removal of the building does constitute as anticipatory demolition.

An assessment of the building, completed in July 2011 (attached), determined that the building was not eligible for listing on the NRHP. Though the building was not found to be eligible for listing on the NRHP, the Airport Sponsor has agreed to mitigate the demolition by documenting the history of the building in a display in the new terminal.

#### **4. BASIS FOR FINDING**

Completion of previous surveys, literature searches, and coordination did not identify any impacts to any National Register listed or eligible-for-listing resources. If any construction activity results in the advertent discovery of a cultural resource, construction will halt until the SHPO and the FAA are notified.

The FAA has therefore determined that a finding of *No Historic Properties Affected* is appropriate for this project. The FAA respectfully requests that the SHPO provide written concurrence with this Section 106 finding.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

APE

Bemidji Airport Naval Reserve Barracks: An Assessment of National Register Eligibility

January 20, 2011 Letter from Bemidji Regional Airport

Previous Section 106 Finding and Correspondence

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Kandice Krull  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Minneapolis Airport District Office

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Date

OCT 03 2011

Received

September 29, 2011

Kandice Krull  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Minneapolis Airports District Office  
MSP-ADO-600  
6020 28th Avenue South, Room 102  
Minneapolis, MN 55450

RE: Bemidji Regional Airport Parking Lot Expansion  
Bemidji, Beltrami County  
SHPO Number: 2011-3535

Dear Ms. Krull:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above project. Our review of this matter is based on the responsibilities given the State Historic Preservation Officer by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36CFR800).

We appreciate the information you provided about the demolition of the Civil Air Patrol Building at this airfield. As a matter of policy, our office no longer reviews any ex-post facto projects, but rather we refer the incident back to the relevant Federal Agency to investigate the situation and determine the correct response. From the sounds of your letter, you have already made the type of investigation we recommend, and we accept your findings.

Regarding the current parking lot expansion project, we concur with your finding of **no historic properties affected** by the project as proposed.

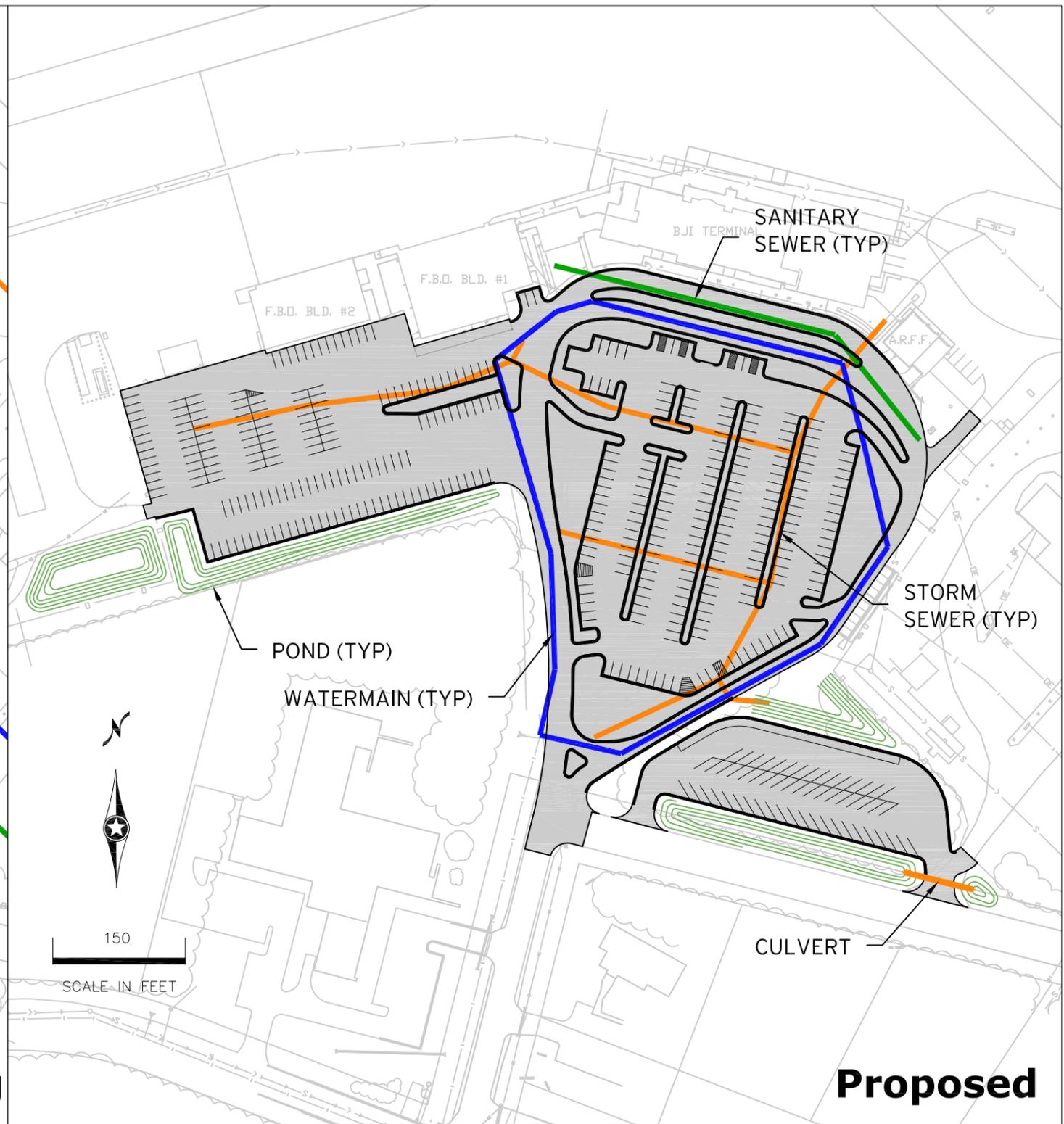
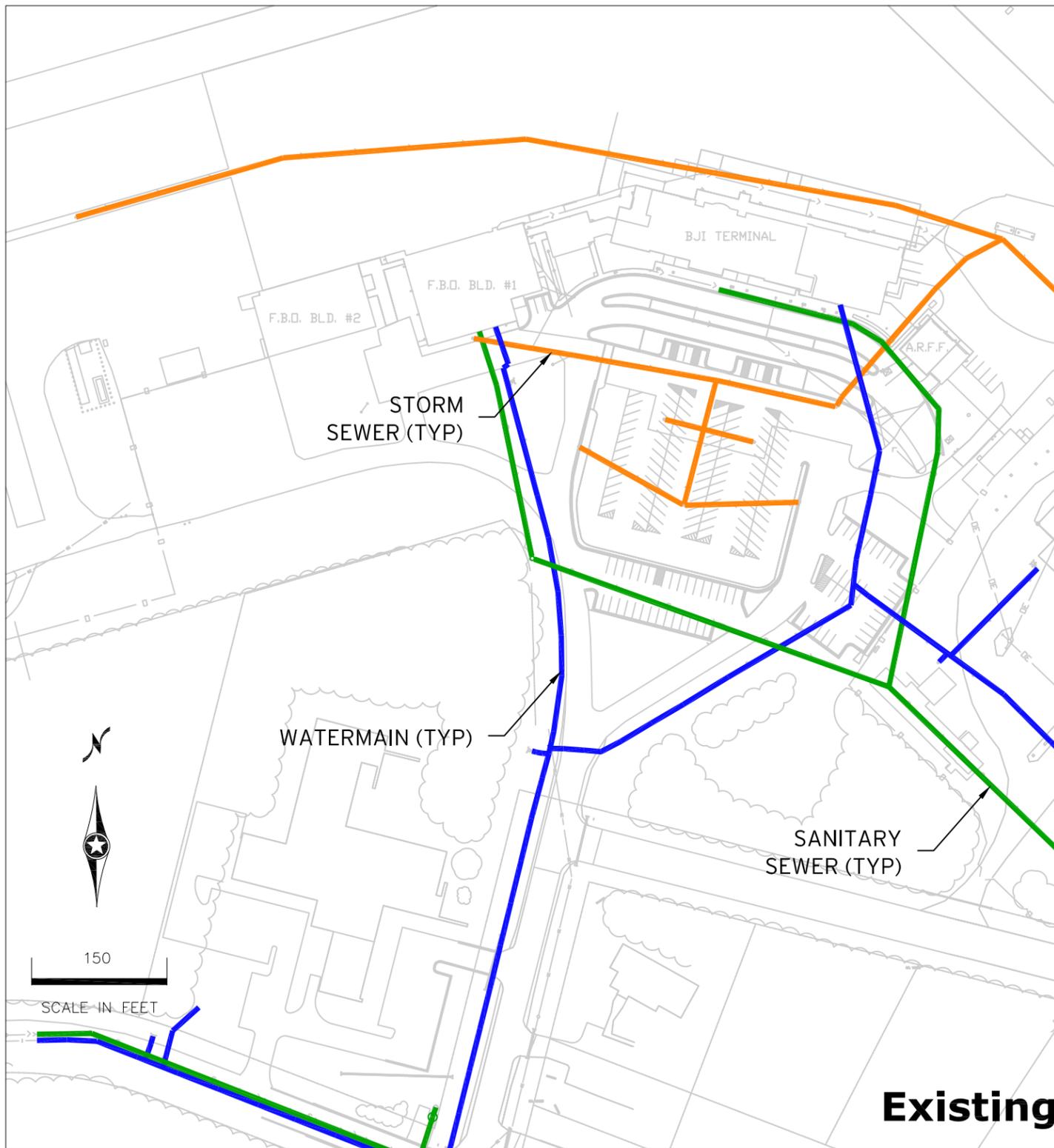
Feel free to contact me at (651) 259-3456 with any questions on our review.

Sincerely,

  
Mary Ann Heidemann, Manager  
Government Programs and Compliance

# **Appendix B**

## **Figures**



**Proposed Infrastructure Improvements and Parking Lot Expansion**

Environmental Assessment

**HNTB**

**Figure 2A**