



In the Matter of the Certificate of Need and
Route Permit Applications for the
Minnesota Energy Connection Project in
Sherburne, Stearns, Kandiyohi, Wright, Meeker,
Chippewa, Yellow Medicine, Renville, Redwood, and
Lyon counties in Minnesota

**Environmental Impact Statement
Scoping Decision**

Docket No. E-002/CN-22-131
Docket No. E-002/TL-22-132
OAH Docket No. 23-2500-39782

The above matter is before the Commissioner of the Department of Commerce (Department) for a decision on the scope of the environmental impact statement (EIS) that will be prepared for the Minnesota Energy Connection Project (project) proposed by Xcel Energy (applicant) in Sherburne, Stearns, Kandiyohi, Wright, Meeker, Chippewa, Yellow Medicine, Renville, Redwood, and Lyon counties in Minnesota.

Project Description

The applicant submitted applications for a certificate of need¹ and route permit² to the Public Utilities Commission (Commission) for construction of the project. On August 10, 2023, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) directed these applications be processed jointly.³ The project consists of two major components: new substations and upgrades to existing substations, and new 345 kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission lines (HVTLs). The applicant proposed two HVTL routes as required by Minnesota Rule 7850.1900.

Substation work proposed involves:

- A new substation to be located near Garvin in Lyon County referred to as the Garvin Substation. This is the starting point of the project, which would move electricity south to north.
- An intermediate substation to be located 20 miles north of the proposed Garvin Substation referred to as the Intermediate Substation.
- A voltage-support substation to be located 80 miles south of the Sherco Substation in either Meeker, Kandiyohi, or Renville County referred to as the Support Substation.
- Modifications to the existing Sherco Substation and Sherco Solar West Substation near Becker in Sherburne County.

HVTL work proposed involves:

¹ Xcel Energy (March 9, 2023) Certificate of Need Application, eDocket Nos. 20233-193783-01 thru -05.

² Xcel Energy (October 30, 2023) *Application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for a Route Permit for the Minnesota Energy Connection Project*, eDocket Nos. 202310-199981-01 thru -10; 202310-199982-01 thru -10; 202310-199989-01 thru -10; 202310-199993-01 thru -04; 202310-199995-01 (hereinafter “RP Application”).

³ Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (August 10, 2023) *Order Authorizing Joint Proceedings*, eDockets No. [20238-198151-01](#).

- A new 345 kV double-circuit HVTL between the Garvin Substation in Lyon County and the existing Sherco Solar West Substation. The applicant's proposed routes are 171 and 174 miles in length and designated as the Purple Route and Blue Route, respectively.
- A new 3.1-mile single-circuit 345 kV transmission line between the existing Sherco Solar West Substation and the Sherco Substation referred to as the Green Segment. The Green Segment would be co-located with applicant's existing Line 5651, occupying the open position on the existing double-circuit-capable structures.

The applicant has generally requested a route width of 1,000 feet and a final right-of-way width of 150 feet. Exceptions to the 1,000-foot route width include areas near certain conservation easements and proposed substations where route widths ranging from three-tenths to one and one-quarter miles are requested to enable flexibility in routing.

Project Purpose

The project is a result of the applicant's approved 2020-2034 Upper Midwest Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) (Docket No. E002/RP-19-368). As part of the IRP, the applicant "will seek a certificate of need from the Commission to build . . . [an HVTL] from the retiring . . . Sherco facilities to connect to the regional grid operated by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator [(MISO)]."⁴ This HVTL must be designed to "permit new energy resources to connect to the transmission grid."⁵

As explained by the applicant in their route permit application, the project "would deliver 1,996 megawatts (MW) of carbon-free energy generation to the Sherco Substation. The project will also enable the interconnection of more than 4,000 MW of carbon-free energy generation overall that will support the recently enacted '100 percent by 2040' law that, generally, sets a standard for public utilities to generate or acquire 100 percent of the energy for retail sales from carbon-free resources."⁶

Minnesota Rule 4410.2300(G) states that an alternative may be excluded from detailed analysis in an EIS if "it would not meet the underlying need for or purpose of the project, it would likely not have any significant environmental benefit compared to the project as proposed, or another alternative, of any type, that will be analyzed in the EIS would likely have similar environmental benefits but substantially less adverse economic, employment, or sociological impacts."

Whether an alternative meets the underlying purpose of a project therefore can be used to determine whether to exclude an alternative from detailed analysis in an EIS. In effect, the purpose statement defines the range of reasonable alternatives to be studied. EERA staff refers to the Commission IRP Order⁷ when defining the purpose of the project. The purpose of the project is to construct an HVTL to connect new energy sources to the MISO transmission grid at the location of the retiring Sherco coal-fired generator, that is, the Sherco Substation.

⁴ Minnesota House Research (December 2022) *Xcel's Approved 2020-2034 Integrated Resources Plan*, retrieved from: <https://www.house.mn.gov/hrd/pubs/xcelreplan.pdf>.

⁵ Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (April 15, 2022) *Order Approving Plan with Modifications and Establishing Requirements for Future Filings*, eDockets No. [20224-184828-01](#), at 31 (hereinafter "IRP Order").

⁶ RP Application, 3.

⁷ IRP Order, 13.

Regulatory Background

The project requires two approvals from the Commission—a certificate of need and route permit.⁸ Accordingly, Department Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA) staff is conducting environmental review on behalf of the Commission to address these applications. Environmental review is being conducted consistent with Minnesota Rules 7850. EERA staff will prepare an EIS that will inform the Commission’s decisions on the applicant’s certificate of need and route permit applications. The EIS preparation process broadly includes scoping for the EIS, preparation of a draft EIS, public comment on the draft EIS, preparation of a final EIS, and a determination of adequacy.

Scoping Process

Scoping is the first step in the environmental review process. The scoping process has two primary purposes: (1) to gather public input as to the impacts and mitigation measures to study in the EIS and (2) to focus the EIS on those impacts and mitigation measures that will aid in the Commission’s decisions on the certificate of need and route permit applications. Staff uses the information gathered during scoping to inform the content of the EIS.

Commission and EERA staff gathered input on the scope of the EIS through seven public scoping meetings and an associated comment period.⁹ Six of the meetings were in-person; one meeting was virtual. In-person meetings were held in Granite Falls, Marshall, Olivia, Redwood Falls, Litchfield, Monticello, and Kimball. Approximately 865 people attended the public meetings. Eighty-eight people provided 108 verbal comments during these meetings.¹⁰

The purpose of the meetings was to provide information to the public about the proposed project, to answer questions, and to allow the public an opportunity to suggest alternatives and impacts for consideration during preparation of the EIS. A court reporter was present at the meetings to document oral statements.

A 44-day comment period, which closed on February 21, 2024, provided an opportunity to submit written comments to EERA staff on potential impacts and mitigation measures for consideration in the scope of the EIS. During the comment period, citizens provided approximately 443 written comments.¹¹ Additionally, 2 agencies and 11 local units of government provided comments.

Comments received during the public meetings and comment period expressed concern about a variety of potential impacts associated with the project, including those associated with farming operations, property values, multiple transmission lines on a property, aesthetics, land use, wildlife and associated habitat, and noise. Several comments questioned the need for and cost of the project, as well as reliability of wind and solar energy sources. Approximately one-quarter of the comments expressed a preference for, or displeasure with, a routing option proposed in the route permit application. Commentors proposed many route and alignment alternatives and several system alternatives, that is, alternatives to the project itself, for study in the EIS.

⁸ See Minn. R. 7849.1000 and 7849.1100, Subp. 5; Minn. R. 7850.1300, Subp. 2 and 7850.1000, Subp. 9.

⁹ Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (January 8, 2024) *Notice of Public Information and EIS Scoping Meetings*, eDockets No. [20241-202004-02](#).

¹⁰ Some individuals provided more than one comment.

¹¹ Minnesota Department of Commerce (March 20, 2024) *EIS Scoping Comments Received*, eDockets No. 20243-204510-01 thru -10; 20243-204510-01 thru 04.

Commission Review

After the close of the public comment period, consistent with Minnesota Rule 7850.2500, Subpart 3, EERA staff conferred with the applicant on the alternatives proposed for study in the EIS.¹² On April 17, 2024, staff provided the Commission with a summary of the EIS scoping process.¹³ The summary discussed the system and route alternatives that were proposed during the scoping process and those alternatives the Department recommended for inclusion in the scope of the EIS. On May 2, 2024, the Commission deliberated on the recommended system and route alternatives for study in the EIS, and concurred with EERA's scoping recommendation.¹⁴

* * * * *

¹² Xcel Energy (March 18, 2024) *Response Letter to Public Comments*, eDockets No. [20243-204450-01](#).

¹³ Department of Commerce (April 17, 2024) *Scoping Summary*, eDocket Nos. [20244-205673-01](#), [20244-205673-02](#), [20244-205673-03](#).

¹⁴ Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (May 9, 2024) *Order*, eDockets No. [20245-206524-02](#).

Having reviewed the matter, consulted with staff, and in accordance with Minnesota Rule 7850.2500, I hereby make the following scoping decision:

MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED

EERA staff will prepare an EIS on behalf of the Commission for the project. The EIS will include the information to be used by the Commission when making a certificate of need and route permit decision for the project. It will also inform other governmental agencies making permit and approval decisions for the project.

The EIS will be prepared in accordance with Minnesota Rule 7850.2500 and 7849.1900. The EIS will describe the project, the existing environment, and the human and environmental resources potentially affected by the project. It will provide information about potential direct and indirect impacts—both positive and negative—resulting from construction, operation, and maintenance of the project. The EIS will describe mitigation measures that could reasonably be implemented to reduce or eliminate identified negative impacts. The EIS will identify impacts that cannot be avoided and irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources. The EIS will discuss the relative merits of the routing alternatives studied in the EIS using the routing factors found in Minnesota Rule 7850.4100. The EIS will also include the analysis of alternatives required by Minnesota Rule 7849.1500.

Data and analyses in the EIS will be commensurate with the importance of potential impacts and the relevance of the information to consider mitigation measures. Consideration will be given to the relationship between the cost of data and analyses and the relevance and importance of the information in determining the level of detail to provide in the EIS. Less important material may be summarized, consolidated, or simply referenced.

The EIS will list information sources. If relevant information cannot be obtained within timelines prescribed by applicable statute and rule, the costs of obtaining such information is excessive, or the means to obtain it is unknown, a statement that such information is incomplete or unavailable and the relevance of the information in evaluating potential impacts or alternatives will be included in the EIS.

The issues outlined below will be analyzed in the EIS. This outline is not intended to serve as a table of contents for the document itself.

1.0 Project Information

Purpose
Description
Location
Route Width and Right-of-Way Requirements
Engineering and Design
Construction
Operation and Maintenance
Cost
Schedule

2.0 Regulatory Framework

Certificate of Need

Route Permit
Environmental Review Process
Other Permits or Approvals

3.0 Affected Environment, Potential Impacts, and Mitigative Measures

3.1 Human Settlements

Aesthetics
Cultural Resources
Displacement
Electric and Magnetic Fields
Electronic Interference
Environmental Justice
Induced Voltage
Land Use
Noise
Populated Areas
Public Health and Safety (including implantable medical devices)
Public Services and Infrastructure (including right-of-way sharing)
Recreation
Socioeconomics
Stray Voltage
Zoning

3.2 Land-Based Economies

Agriculture
Forestry
Mining
Tourism

3.3 Archaeological and Historic Resources

3.4 Natural Environment

Air
Climate Change (including greenhouse gas emissions)
Geology
Public and Designated Lands
Rare and Unique Resources
Soils
Vegetation
Water Resources
Wetlands
Wildlife and their Habitats

4.0 Electric System Reliability

5.0 Operation and Maintenance Costs that are Design Dependent

6.0 Unavoidable Impacts

7.0 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

8.0 Cumulative Potential Effects

ROUTES AND ROUTE ALTERNATIVES TO BE EVALUATED

The EIS will evaluate the routes proposed by the applicant in its route permit application. The EIS will also evaluate the route segment and route alignment alternatives listed in Appendix A and visually depicted in Appendix B. The EIS will analyze whether these alternatives are feasible to the extent they provide a significant environmental benefit over the routes proposed by the applicant; will have substantially less adverse economic, employment, or sociological impacts compared to an alternative with similar environmental effects; and will assist in the Commission's decision on the route permit application. To the extent an alternative is feasible, it will be further studied in the EIS. If an alternative is not feasible, the EIS will provide the reasons why and the alternative will be excluded from detailed analysis.

ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The EIS, in accordance with Minnesota Rule 7849.1500, will describe and analyze the feasibility of the following system alternatives, and the human and environmental impacts and potential mitigation measures associated with each:

- No-build;
- Demand side management;
- Purchased power;
- Transmission line of a different size or using a different energy source than the source proposed by the applicant;
- Upgrading existing facilities;
- Generation rather than transmission; and
- Use of renewable energy sources.

Additionally, the EIS will analyze the feasibility and the human and environmental impacts of the following system alternatives:

- Construct a new nuclear plant or natural gas plant at the retired Sherco coal-fired generator and interconnect into the existing Sherco Substation;
- Construct a new nuclear plant or natural gas plant closer to the Minneapolis—St. Paul metropolitan area and interconnect into the existing Sherco Substation;
- Construct wind and solar generation closer to the Minneapolis—St. Paul metropolitan area and interconnect into the existing Sherco Substation; and
- Construct an underground transmission line.

The EIS will analyze whether the system alternatives are feasible inasmuch that they meet the purpose of the project either individually or in combination with other feasible alternatives. To the extent an alternative meeting the project's purpose is feasible, it will be further studied in the EIS. An alternative may be excluded from detailed analysis in the EIS if it would not meet the underlying purpose of project.

IDENTIFICATION OF PERMITS

The EIS will list and describe permits from other governmental agencies that may be required for the project.

ISSUES OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The EIS will not consider the following:

- Any route, route segment, or route alignment not specifically identified for study in Appendix A of this scoping decision.
- Any system alternative (an alternative to the proposed project) not specifically identified for study in this scoping decision.
- The appropriateness of state eminent domain laws; however, these laws will be discussed.
- The way landowners are compensated for easements associated with the project.

SCHEDULE

Upon issuance of the EIS scoping decision, preparation of the draft EIS will begin. Once the draft EIS is complete, it will be issued for public review and comment. The draft EIS is anticipated to be released in October 2024. Joint public meetings and hearings, and a written comment period will then occur. Substantive comments on the draft EIS will be responded to and included in a final EIS.

Signed this 13th day of May 2024

STATE OF MINNESOTA
Department of Commerce



Michelle Gransee, Deputy Commissioner

Appendix A
Alternatives Included for Study in the EIS

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
Blue Route	2.1-2.20	Route	NA	The Blue Route is 174 miles long and was proposed by the applicant. It crosses Sherburne, Stearns, Meeker, Kandiyohi, Renville, Redwood, and Lyon counties.	Applicant
Purple Route	2.1-2.20	Route	NA	The Purple Route is 171 miles long and was proposed by the applicant. It crosses Sherburne, Wright, Stearns, Meeker, Kandiyohi, Chippewa, Renville, Yellow Medicine, and Lyon counties.	Applicant
201	2.1	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Ronald McDaniel (#111) proposing Route Segment 201. This route segment initiates at the proposed Garvin Substation in Lyon County. It traverses north along U.S. Highway 59 until Country Road 2 where it turns east until it joins the Blue Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on habitat/wildlife/rare species, water resources, and land use.	Public
202	2.1	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received scoping comments from Stephen Miller (#59) and Ronald McDaniel (#111) proposing Route Segment 202. This route segment departs the Blue Route at County Road 9 and traverses north. It turns east along the northern border of T110N, R40W, S29 until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenters noted potential impacts on farming operations, habitat/wildlife/ rare species, water resources, and land use.	Public

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
203	2.1	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from the Lyon County Commissioner (#443) proposing Route Segment 203. This route segment departs the Blue Route at County Road 9 and traverses north. It turns east at 185th Street, traverses north on 310th Avenue, continues east on 190th Street, then traverses north on 320th Avenue until it rejoins the Blue Route. The Commissioner noted potential impacts on farming operation, land use, and tree removal.	Lyon County Commissioner
204	2.1	Route Segment	Purple	EERA received a scoping comment from Eldan Mitzer (#257) proposing Route Segment 204. This route segment departs the Purple Route by traversing further west on U.S. Highway 14. Halfway into T109N, R41W, S16, it turns north until it rejoins the Purple Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on stray voltage, land use, and green/clean energy.	Public
205	2.2	Route Segment	Purple	EERA received a scoping comment from Ken Marcotte (#32) proposing Route Segment 205. This route segment departs the Purple Route at 190th Street where it traverses east to U.S. Highway 59. From here it turns north until it rejoins the Purple Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on habitat/wildlife/rare species and water resources.	Public

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
206	2.2	Route Segment	Purple	EERA received a scoping comment from Ken Marcotte (#32) proposing Route Segment 206. This route segment departs the Purple Route at County Road 67 and traverses north to 220th Street. From here, it turns east until it rejoins the Purple Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on habitat/wildlife/rare species and water resources.	Public
101	2.2	Route Connector	Connects Blue and Purple Routes	Route Connector 101 was proposed by the applicant as "Connector D." It is approximately 8 miles long and located in Lyon County.	Applicant
207	2.2	Route Segment	(route segment starting and ending on Connector 101)	EERA received a scoping comment from Mike Truwe (#61) proposing Route Segment 207. This route segment departs the Blue Route and traverses north on the eastern border of T110N, R40W, S17 until it joins Route Connector 101. The commenter noted potential impacts on stray voltage, aesthetic impacts/property values, tree removal, and noise.	Public
208	2.2	Route Segment	(route segment starting and ending on Connector 101)	EERA received a scoping comment from Leslie Bergquist (#101) proposing Route Segment 208. This route segment departs Route Connector 101 at 230th Street and traverses west. It turns north at 310th Avenue until it rejoins Route Connector 101. The commenter noted potential impacts on farming operation, aesthetic impacts/property values, and use of existing ROW.	Public

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
209	2.4	Route Segment	Purple	EERA received a scoping comment from David Kietzmann and Saralee Kietzmann (#266) proposing Route Segment 209. This route segment departs the Purple Route at 490th Steet and traverses north. It turns east at 290th Avenue until it rejoins the Purple Route. The commenters noted potential impacts on farming operation and water resources.	Public
210	2.4	Route Segment	Purple	EERA received a scoping comment from Leslie Bergquist (#101) proposing Route Segment 210. This route segment departs the Purple Route continuing north on State Highway 23 following the curve of the highway until it rejoins the Purple Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on farming operation, aesthetic impacts/property values, and use of existing ROW.	Public

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
102	2.3	Route Connector	Connects Blue and Purple Routes	EERA received a scoping comment from Daniel Wambeke and 43 others (#320) proposing Route Connector 102. This route connector departs the Blue Route at Lyon Redwood Road and traverses north. It turns east at 230th Street, continues north on Aspen Avenue, then continues east on 260th Street. From there, the route connector traverses north at County Highway 8, turns east halfway into T114N, R39W, S33, then continues north at County Road 6. It traverses west across the lower portion of T114N, R39W, S28, turns north halfway into the section, then continues east halfway into T114, R39W, S21. The route connector traverses north at State Highway 274 following the curve of the highway, turns west halfway into T114N, R39W, S4, and continues north a third of the way into the section. It traverses west on 220th Ave, turns north at the western border of T115, R39W, S32, and continues west at 230th Avenue until it joins the Purple Route. The commenters noted potential impacts on public health/EMF/pacemaker, farming operation, stray voltage, aesthetic impacts/property values, habitat/wildlife/rare species, water resources, proximity to home/being boxed in, land use, and noise.	Public

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
211	2.3	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Ben Hicks (#289) proposing Route Segment 211. This route segment departs the Blue Route at County Road 8 and traverses south. It turns east at County Road 4 and continues north at Duncan Avenue until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on farming operation, habitat/wildlife/rare species, land use, and tree removal.	Public
212	2.3	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Jeff Turbes (#102) proposing Route Segment 212. This route segment departs the Blue Route by continuing east on 240th Street. It turns north at County Highway 7 until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on farming operation, stray voltage, aesthetic impacts/property values, and use of existing ROW.	Public
213	2.3	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Jeff Potter (#22) proposing Route Segment 213. This route segment departs the Blue Route by continuing north on Ideal Avenue. It turns east halfway into T112N, R37W, S14, and continues south at Kenwood Avenue until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on electronic interference, farming operation, stray voltage, aesthetic impacts/property values, and noise.	Public

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
214	2.5	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Cletus Gewerth (#30) proposing Route Segment 214. This route segment departs the Blue Route at Porter Avenue and traverses north. It turns east at 320th Street until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on water resources and wildlife.	Public
215	2.5	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Andrew Rieke and Linda Rieke (#270) proposing Route Segment 215. This route segment departs the Blue Route at Highway 19 and traverses east. It turns north halfway into T112, R34W, S2 until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenters noted potential impacts on farming operation.	Public
216	2.6	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Connie Kieper (#84) proposing Route Segment 216. This route segment departs the Blue Route halfway into T115N, R34W, S25 traverses east. It turns north at the eastern border of T115, R33W, S30 until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on public health/EMF/pacemaker, electronic interference, farming operation, noise, and use of existing ROW.	Public

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
217	2.6	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Larry Posl (#209) proposing Route Segment 217. This route segment departs the Blue Route near the top of the eastern border of T115N, R33W, S6 and traverses northwest. It turns west at County Road 70, continues north at County Road 57, then continues east at the northern border of T116N, R33W, S31 until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on farming operation and proximity to home/being boxed in.	Public
218	2.6	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Larry Posl (#209) proposing Route Segment 218. This route segment departs the Blue Route near the top of the eastern border of T115N, R33W, S6 and traverses northwest. It turns west at County Road 70, continues north at County Road 57, then continues east at the northern border of T116N, R33W, S30 until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on farming operation and proximity to home/being boxed in.	Public

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
219	2.3	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Ben Hicks (#289) proposing Route Segment 219. This route segment departs the Blue Route at County Road 8 and traverses south. It turns east at County Road 4, and continues north halfway into T110N, R38W, S17 until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on farming operation, habitat/wildlife/rare species, land use, and tree removal.	Public
220	2.5	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Brian Greenslit and Gloria Greenslit (#3) proposing Route Segment 220. This route segment departs the Blue Route at State Highway 19 and traverses east. It turns north halfway into T112, R34W, S3 until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenters noted potential impacts on aesthetic impacts/property values, proximity to home/being boxed in, and noise.	Public
221	2.4	Route Segment	Purple	EERA received a scoping comment from David Kietzmann and Saralee Kietzmann (#266) proposing Route Segment 221. This route segment departs the Purple Route at 260th Avenue and traverses west. It turns north at 520th Street, continues east at State Highway 67, and continues north a quarter of the way into T116N, R39W, S31. It turns east a quarter of the way into the section until it rejoins the Purple Route. The commenters noted potential impacts on farming operation and water resources.	Public

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
103	2.7	Route Connector	Connects Blue and Purple Routes	EERA received a scoping comment from Melvin Zuidem (#35) proposing Route Connector 103. This route connector departs the Purple Route continuing east on County Highway 18 until it joins the Blue Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on farming operation and development/community.	Public
222	2.9	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Luke Johnson (#306) proposing Route Segment 222. This route segment departs the Blue Route at 195th Avenue SE and traverses north. It turns east at County Road 77 until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on farming operation.	Public
223	2.9	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Duane Anderson (#200) proposing Route Segment 223. This route segment departs the Blue Route continuing east on 100th Street. It turns north at 515th Avenue until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on land use.	Public
104	2.7	Route Connector	Connects Blue and Purple Routes	Route Connector 104 was proposed by the applicant as "Connector C." It is approximately 29 miles long and located in Kandiyohi and Chippewa counties.	Applicant

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
224	2.10	Route Segment	Purple	EERA received a scoping comment from Marilyn Worke and Helga Miller (#256) proposing Route Segment 224. This route segment departs the Purple Route at 30th Avenue SE and traverses east. It turns north halfway into T119N, R33W, S19 until it rejoins the Purple Route. The commenters noted potential impacts on farming operation.	Public
225	2.10	Route Segment	Purple	EERA received a scoping comment from Jordan Junkermeier and Rachel Junkermeier (#130) proposing Route Segment 225. This route segment departs the Purple Route continuing north halfway into T119N, R33W, S6. It turns east at 30th Avenue NE until it rejoins the Purple Route. The commenters noted potential impacts on public health/EMF/pacemaker, aesthetic impacts/property values, habitat/wildlife/rare species, water resources, proximity to home/being boxed in, tree removal, and green/clean energy.	Public
105	2.11	Route Connector	Connects Blue and Purple Routes	Route Connector 105 was proposed by the applicant as "Connector B." It is approximately 1 mile long and located in Meeker County.	Applicant
106	2.11	Route Connector	Connects Blue and Purple Routes	Route Connector 106 was proposed by the applicant as "Connector A." It is approximately 1.5 miles long and located in Meeker County.	Applicant

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
107	2.12	Route Connector	Connects Blue and Purple Routes	EERA received a scoping comment from Maureen Murray (#45) proposing Route Connector 107. This route connector departs the Purple Route continuing east halfway through T121N, R31W, S27 until it connects to the Blue Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on public health/EMF/pacemaker, electronic interference, aesthetic impacts/property values, habitat/wildlife/rare species, water resources, land use, conservation easement, and bees/pollinator habitat.	Public
226	2.11	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Von Grotto (#246) proposing Route Segment 226. This route segment departs the Blue Route at the southwestern corner of T120N, R31W, S9 and traverses northeast. It turns east a quarter of the way through the section, continues north at 600th Avenue, and continues east at the northern border of T120N, R31W, S3 until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on farming operation and proximity to home/being boxed in.	Public

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
227	2.11	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Gordon Neuman and Ramona Neuman (#46) proposing Route Segment 227. This route segment departs the Blue Route continuing east on County Road 7. It turns north at State Highway 22 and follows the curve of the highway until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenters noted potential impacts on farming operation, habitat/wildlife/rare species, and conservation easement.	Public
228	2.11	Route Segment	Purple	EERA received a scoping comment from Gordon Neuman and Ramona Neuman (#46) proposing Route Segment 228. This route segment departs the Purple Route at State Highway 4 and traverses north. It turns east at County Road 16 until it rejoins the Purple Route. The commenters noted potential impacts on farming operation, habitat/wildlife/rare species, and conservation easement.	Public
229	2.12	Route Segment	Purple	EERA received a scoping comment from Dawn Jansen (#62) proposing Route Segment 229. This route segment departs the Purple Route at 590th Avenue and traverses north. It turns east at 349th Street until it rejoins the Purple Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on public health/EMF/pacemaker, aesthetic impacts/property values, proximity to home/being boxed in, and tree removal.	Public

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
230	2.12	Route Segment	Purple	EERA received a scoping comment from LuVern Becker (#132) proposing Route Segment 230. This route segment departs the Purple Route halfway into T121N, R31W, S10 and traverses north. It turns east at County Road 36 until it rejoins the Purple Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on farming operation, aesthetic impacts/property values, and habitat/wildlife/rare species.	Public
231	2.13	Route Segment	Purple	EERA received a scoping comment from Brad Libbesmeier and Ellen Libbesmeier (#79) proposing Route Segment 231. This route segment departs the Purple Route at 140th Street and traverses east. It turns north at County Highway 149 until it rejoins the Purple Route. The commenters noted potential impacts on public health/EMF/pacemaker, farming operation, aesthetic impacts/property values, use of existing ROW, and green/clean energy.	Public
232	2.13	Route Segment	Purple	EERA received a scoping comment from Ben Stockinger (#143) proposing Route Segment 232. This route segment departs the Purple Route three quarters through T122N, R29W, S32 and traverses east. It continues east at Balsam Road and follows the curve of the road until it rejoins the Purple Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on farming operation and aesthetic impacts/property values.	Public

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
108	2.14	Route Connector	Connects Blue and Purple Routes	EERA received a scoping comment from John Stein (#27) proposing Route Connector 108. This route connector departs the Purple Route a quarter through T122N, R29W, S34 and traverse south until it connects to the Blue Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on habitat/wildlife/rare species, water resources, and farming operations.	Public
109	2.14	Route Connector	Connects Blue and Purple Routes	EERA received a scoping comment from the MN DNR (#285) proposing Route Connector 109. This route connector departs the Purple Route at the western border of T122N, R29W, S35 and traverses south. It turns east a quarter of the way through the section, continues north a little over halfway through the section, then continues east two thirds through the section to connect to the Blue Route. The DNR noted potential impacts on habitat/wildlife/rare species, water resources, and tree removal.	DNR
110	2.14	Route Connector	Connects Blue and Purple Routes	EERA received a scoping comment from John Adolph and Tamile Adolph (#81) proposing Route Connector 110. This route connector departs the Purple Route at Power Rodge Road and traverses east until it connects to the Blue Route. The commenters noted potential impacts on farming operation.	Public

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
233	2.14	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from the MN DNR (#285) proposing Route Segment 233. This route segment departs the Blue Route at State Highway 15 traversing north following the curve of the highway. It turns east a quarter of the way into T122N, R29W, S35, continues north halfway into the section, then continues east two thirds of the way through the section until it rejoins the Blue Route. The DNR noted potential impacts on habitat/wildlife/rare species, water resources, and tree removal.	DNR
234	2.15	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Joel Lauer (#222) proposing Route Segment 234. This route segment departs the Blue Route at State Highway 15 following the curve of the road. It turns east at County Road 146 until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on farming operation.	Public

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
235	2.16	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Dan Stein (#214) proposing Route Segment 235. This route segment departs the Blue Route continuing north at the western border of T122N, R29W, S25. It turns east three quarters through the section, then continues north a quarter through the section. From there, it turns east a quarter through T122N, R29W, S24 until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on public health/EMF/pacemaker, aesthetic impacts/property values, habitat/wildlife/rare species, water resources, and use of existing ROW.	Public
236	2.16	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Jason Pierskalla (#56) proposing Route Segment 236. This route segment departs the Blue Route at 73rd Avenue and traverses north. It turns east at 163rd Street until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on public health/EMF/pacemaker, habitat/wildlife/rare species, general environmental impact, and conservation easement.	Public

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
237	2.16	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Jason Pierskalla (#56) proposing Route Segment 237. This route segment departs the Blue Route at 73rd Avenue and traverses north. It turns east halfway into T122N, R28W, S19 until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on public health/EMF/pacemaker, habitat/wildlife/rare species, general environmental impact, and conservation easement.	Public
238	2.16	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Jason Pierskalla (#49) proposing Route Segment 238. This route segment departs the Blue Route at 73rd Avenue and traverses north. It turns east at 152nd Street until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on public health/EMF/pacemaker, farming operation, aesthetic impacts/property values, habitat/wildlife/rare species, general environmental impact, conservation easement, tree removal, and bees/pollinator habitat.	Public

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
239	2.16	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Jason Pierskalla (#162) proposing Route Segment 239. This route segment departs the Blue Route a quarter of the way through T122N, R28W, S30 and traverses north. It turns east at 152nd Street until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on public health/EMF/pacemaker, aesthetic impacts/property values, habitat/wildlife/rare species, general environmental impact, and conservation easement.	Public
240	2.16	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Jason Pierskalla (#162) proposing Route Segment 240. This route segment departs the Blue Route a quarter of the way into T122N, R28W, S30 and traverses north. It turns east three quarters through the section until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on public health/EMF/pacemaker, aesthetic impacts/property values, habitat/wildlife/rare species, general environmental impact, and conservation easement.	Public

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
241	2.15	Route Segment	Purple	EERA received a scoping comment from the MN DNR (#285) proposing Route Segment 241. This route segment departs the Purple Route at 73rd Avenue and traverses south. It turns east at 140th Street and follows the curve of the street. From there, it turns north at 53rd Avenue until it rejoins the Purple Route. The DNR noted potential impacts on habitat/wildlife/rare species, water resources, and tree removal.	DNR
242	2.15	Route Segment	Purple	EERA received a scoping comment from Joe Lauer (#197) proposing Route Segment 242. This route segment departs the Purple Route at County Highway 7 and traverses south. It turns northeast at County Highway 45 until it rejoins the Purple Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on electronic interference, farming operation, habitat/wildlife/rare species, and land use.	Public
243	2.17	Route Segment	Purple	EERA received a scoping comment from Raechell Nelson (#302) proposing Route Segment 243. This route segment departs the Purple Route three quarters of the way through T122N, R28W, S26 and traverses east. It turns north at 13th Avenue until it rejoins the Purple Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on proximity to home/being boxed in.	Public

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
111	2.15	Route Connector	Connects Blue and Purple Routes	EERA received a scoping comment from Jack Miller (#178) proposing Route Connector 111. This route connector departs the Blue Route continuing east at the southern border of T122N, R28W, S30. It turns south at County Highway 7 until it connects to the Purple Route. The commenter noted potential impacts on public health/EMF/pacemaker, farming operations, stray voltage, noise, and use of existing ROW.	Public
112	2.15	Route Connector	Connects Blue and Purple Routes	EERA received a scoping comment from the MN DNR (#285) proposing Route Connector 112. This route connector departs the Blue Route at Dellwood Road and traverses east following the curve of the road. It turns south at County Road 7, continues east at 170th Street, and continues south at 33rd Avenue. From there, it turns east at 165th Street, then continues south at 23rd Avenue until it connects to the Purple Route. The DNR noted potential impacts on habitat/wildlife/rare species, water resources, and tree removal.	DNR

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
113	2.15	Route Connector	Connects Blue and Purple Routes	EERA received a scoping comment from the MN DNR (#285) proposing Route Connector 113. This route connector departs the Blue Route at Dellwood Road and traverses east following the curve of the road. It turns south at County Road 7, continues east at 170th Street, and continues south at 33rd Avenue. From there, it turns east three quarters through T122N, R28W, S23. It turns southeast three quarters of the way through the section until it connects to the Purple Route. The DNR noted potential impacts on habitat/wildlife/rare species, water resources, and tree removal.	DNR

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
114	2.15	Route Connector	Connects Blue and Purple Routes	EERA received a scoping comment from the MN DNR (#285) proposing Route Connector 114. This route connector departs the Blue Route a quarter of the way through T122N, R28W, S20 and traverses east. It turns northeast a quarter of the way through the section, continues north a third of the way through the section, turns east three quarters of the way through the section, and continues northeast two thirds of the way through the section. From there, the route connector traverses north just above the southern border of T122N, R28W, S16, turns east at Dellwood Road following the curve of the road, and continues south at County Road 7. It turns east at 170th Street, continues south at 33rd Avenue, continues east at 165th Street, then turns south at 23rd Avenue until it connects to the Purple Route. The DNR noted potential impacts on habitat/wildlife/rare species, water resources, and tree removal.	DNR

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
115	2.15	Route Connector	Connects Blue and Purple Routes	EERA received a scoping comment from the MN DNR (#285) proposing Route Connector 115. This route connector departs the Blue Route a quarter of the way through T122N, R28W, S20 and traverses east. It turns northeast a quarter of the way through the section, continues north a third of the way through the section, turns east three quarters of the way through the section, and continues northeast two thirds of the way through the section. From there, the route connector traverses north just above the southern border of T122N, R28W, S16, turns east at Dellwood Road following the curve of the road, and continues south at County Road 7. It turns east at 170th Street, continues south at 33rd Avenue, and continues east three quarters through T122N, R28W, S23. It turns southeast three quarters of the way through the section until it connects to the Purple Route. The DNR noted potential impacts on habitat/wildlife/rare species, water resources, and tree removal.	DNR

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
244	2.18	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from the MN DNR (#285) proposing Route Segment 244. This route segment departs the Blue Route at the southern border of T123N, R28W, S32 and traverses east. It turns north at almost halfway through T123N, R28W, S33, continues northeast three quarters through the section, continues north at two thirds through the section, and turns northeast at County Road 142 until it rejoins the Blue Route. The DNR noted potential impacts on habitat/wildlife/rare species, water resources, and tree removal.	DNR
245	2.19	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Miguel Cabrera and Shannon Cabrera (#167) proposing Route Segment 245. This route segment departs the Blue Route at Franklin Road and traverses north. It turns east at the southern border of T34N, R30W, S5, continues northeast at the southwest corner of T34N, R30W, S4, and continues southeast at County Road 8 SE until it rejoins the Blue Route. The commenters noted potential impacts on public health/EMF/pacemaker, aesthetic impacts/property values, habitat/wildlife/rare species, and water resources.	Public

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
246	2.19	Route Segment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Miguel Cabrera and Shannon Cabrera (#167) proposing Route Segment 246. This route segment departs the Blue Route at Franklin Road and traverses north following the curve of the road. It continues north about 1,200 feet at the western border of T123N, R27W, S8 then continues northeast. It turns east at the halfway parallel of T35N, R30W, S32, then continues southeast at River Road SE following the curve of the road until it rejoins the Blue Line. The commenters noted potential impacts on public health/EMF/pacemaker, aesthetic impacts/property values, habitat/wildlife/rare species, and water resources.	Public
247	2.17	Route Segment	Purple	EERA received a scoping comment from the MN DNR (#285) proposing Route Segment 247. This route segment departs the Purple Route halfway up the eastern border of T122N, R27W, S17 and traverses east about 1,000 feet. From there, it turns north until it reaches County Road 46, and continues east on County Road 46 until it rejoins the Purple Route. The DNR noted potential impacts on habitat/wildlife/rare species, water resources, and tree removal.	DNR
AA1	2.5	Alternative Alignment	Blue	EERA received a scoping comment from Tom Haak (#6) proposing Alternative Alignment 1. He recommended the alternative alignment to avoid RIM easements on his property.	Public

Name	Map	Type	Route Connection	Alternative Description	Source
AA2	2.8	Alternative Alignment	(Neither) Route Connector 104	EERA received a scoping comment from Dennis Neimeyer (#258) proposing Alternative Alignment 2. He recommended the alternative alignment because it is more direct (less distance) and better avoids tree cover on his property which he notes is used for shelterbelt and CRP.	Public
AA3	2.17	Alternative Alignment	Purple	EERA received a scoping comment from Greg Potthoff (#82) proposing Alternative Alignment 3. He recommended the alternative alignment to minimize disruption to farming activities.	Public
AA4	2.4	Alternative Alignment	Purple	EERA received a scoping comment from John Welckle (#34) proposing Alternative Alignment 4. He recommended the alternative alignment to minimize farming activities. He specifically noted the alternative alignment would minimize impediment to large machinery maneuvering to accomplish modern farming.	Public

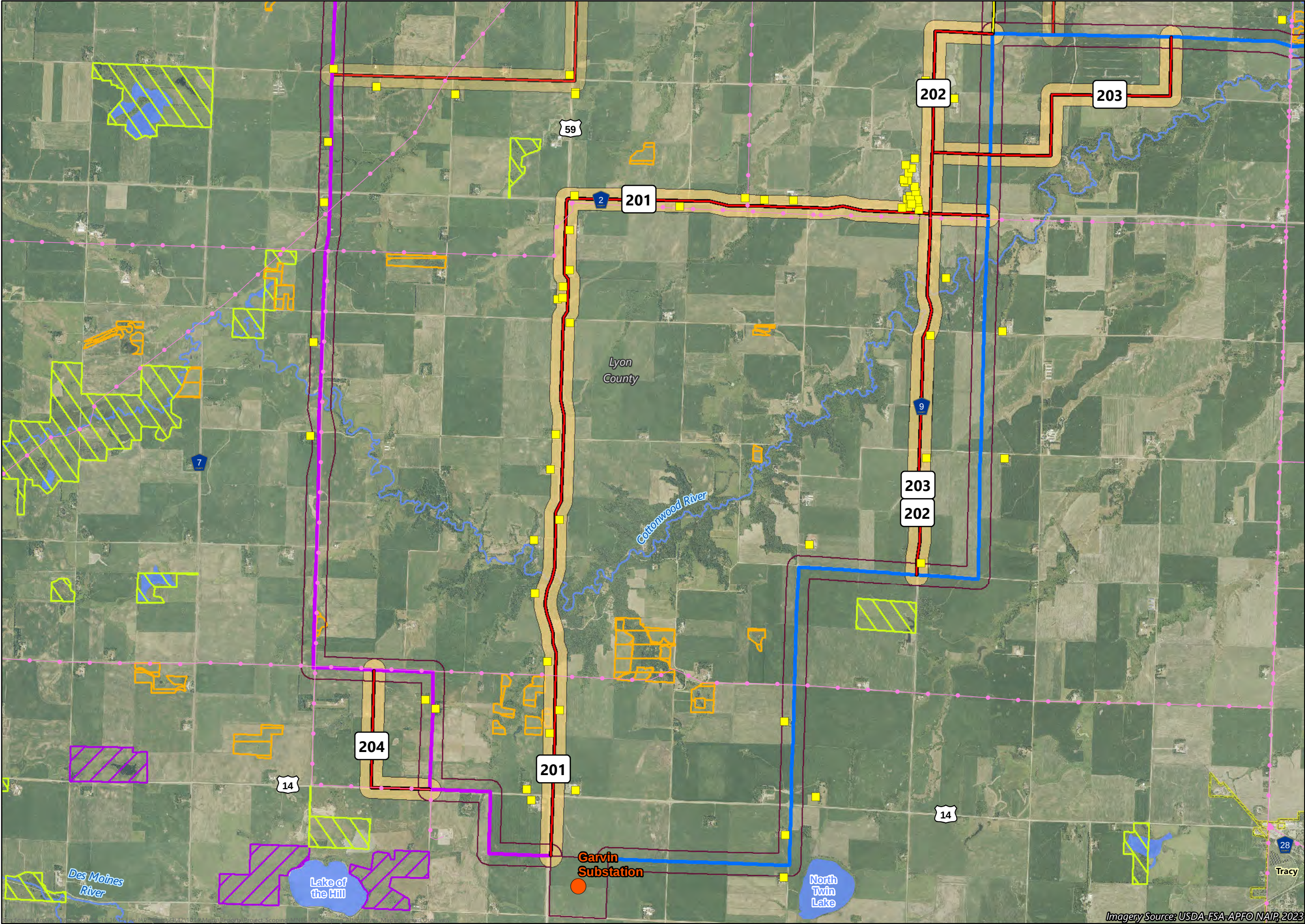
Appendix B

Maps

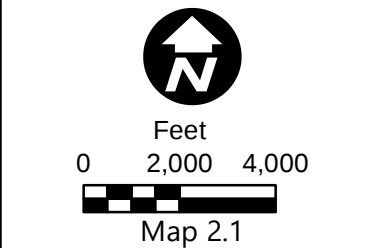
Map 1 Overview

Map 2 Alternatives Included for Study in the EIS



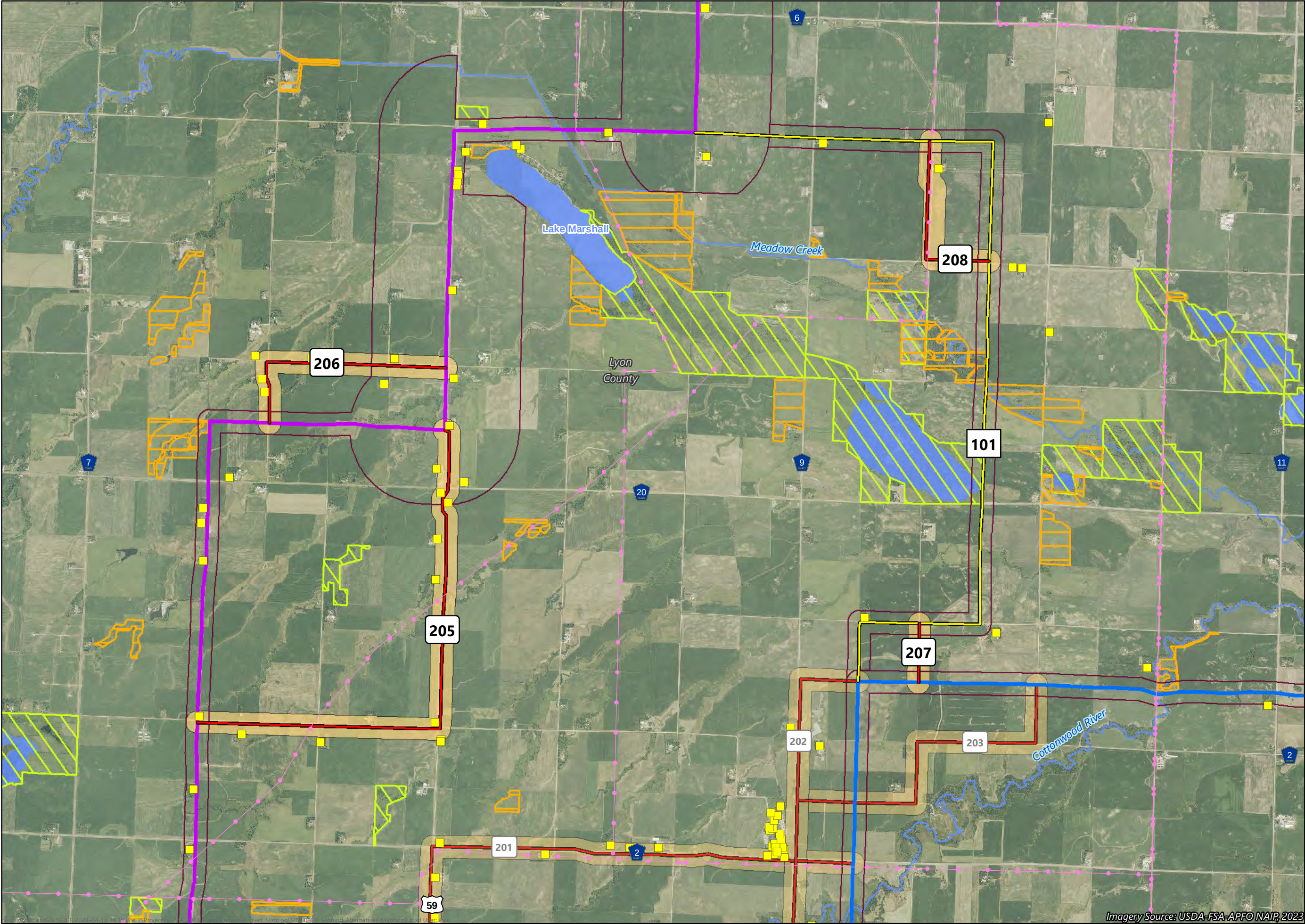


- Proposed Routes**
- Blue Route
 - Purple Route
 - Route Connector
 - Proposed Route Width
- Alternatives**
- Alignment
 - Route Connector
 - Route Segment
 - Alternative Width
 - Residence Location
 - Proposed Substation
 - Existing Transmission Line
 - Municipal Boundary
 - PWI Waterway
 - PWI Basin
- Owner Type**
- Federal Land
 - State Land
 - Local Land



ROUTE SEGMENTS 201 - 204
Scoping Alternatives
Minnesota Energy
Connection Project

Imagery Source: USDA-FSA-APFO NAIP, 2023



Proposed Routes

- Blue Route
- Purple Route
- Route Connector
- Proposed Route Width

Alternatives

- Alignment
- Route Connector
- Route Segment
- Alternative Width
- Residence Location
- Existing Transmission Line
- PWI Waterway
- PWI Basin

Owner Type

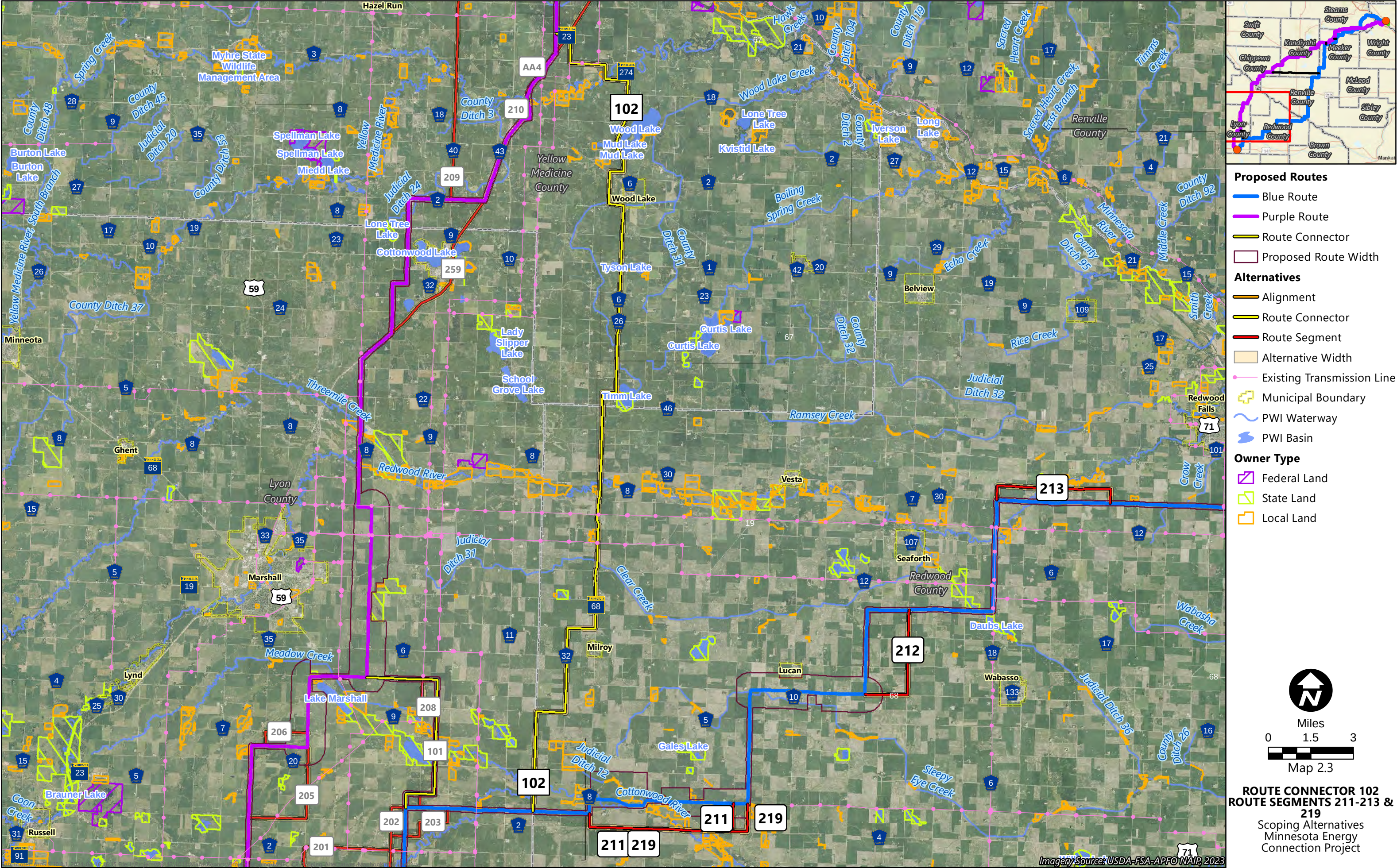
- State Land
- Local Land

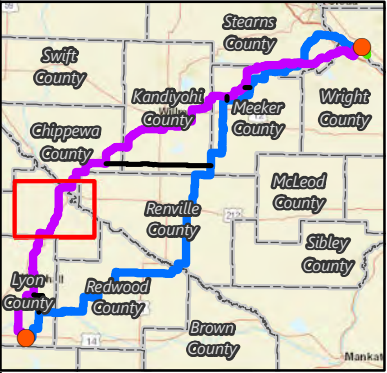
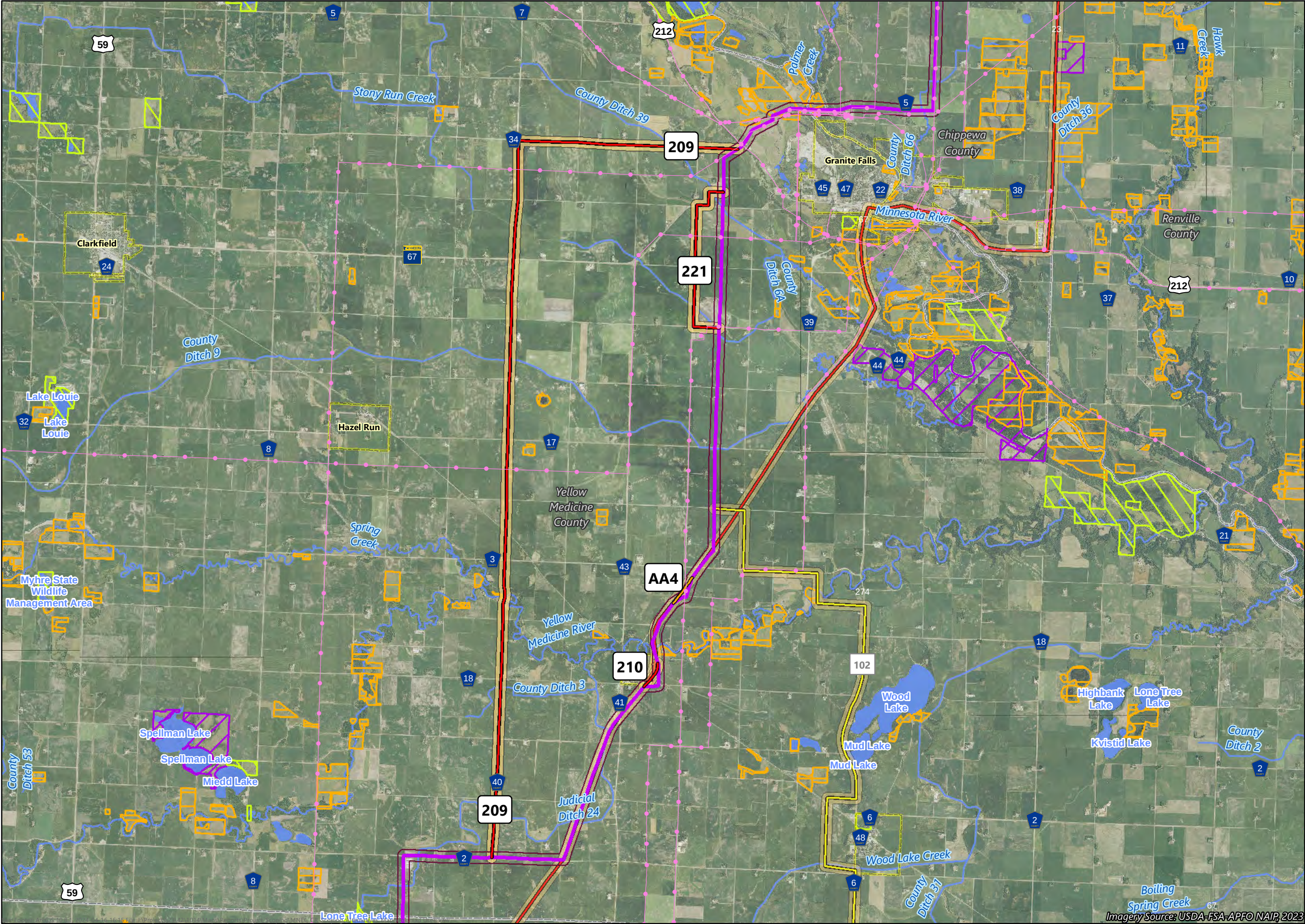

Feet
0 2,000 4,000

Map 2.2

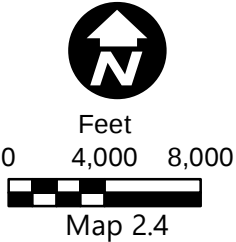
**ROUTE CONNECTORS 101
ROUTE SEGMENTS 205 - 208**
Scoping Alternatives
Minnesota Energy
Connection Project

Imagery Source: USDA-FSA-APFO NAIP, 2023



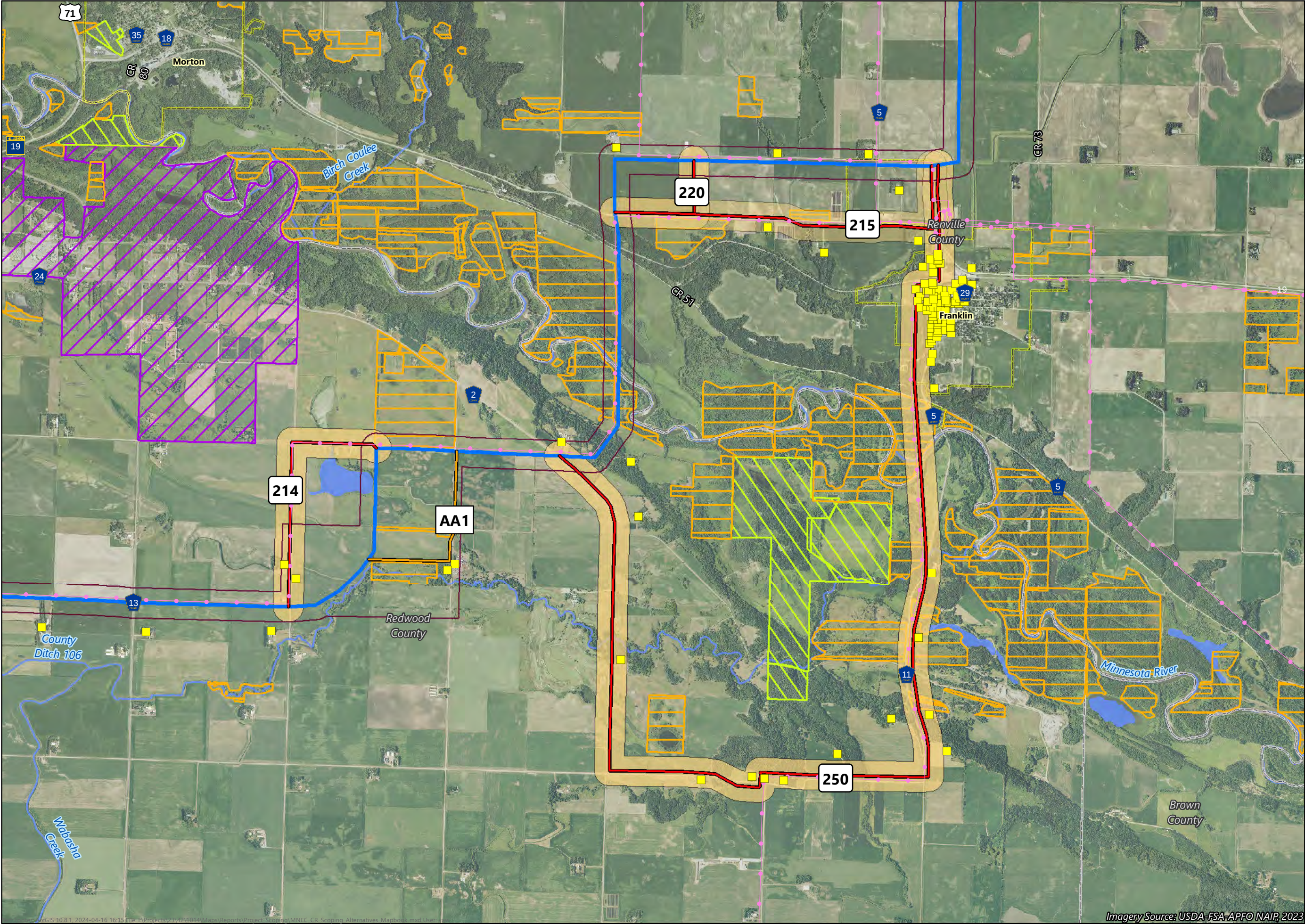


- Proposed Routes**
- Purple Route
 - Proposed Route Width
- Alternatives**
- Alignment
 - Route Connector
 - Route Segment
 - Alternative Width
 - Existing Transmission Line
 - Municipal Boundary
 - PWI Waterway
 - PWI Basin
- Owner Type**
- Federal Land
 - State Land
 - Local Land

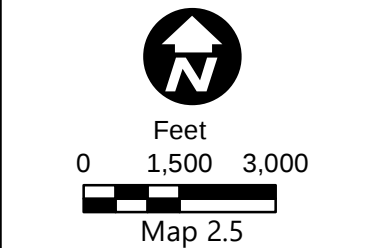


ROUTE SEGMENTS 209, 210, & 221
ALIGNMENT ALTERNATIVE AA4
 Scoping Alternatives
 Minnesota Energy
 Connection Project

Imagery Source: USDA-FSA-APFO NAIP, 2023

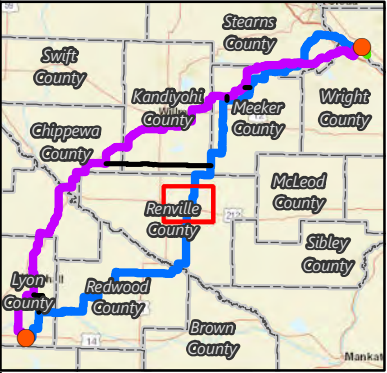
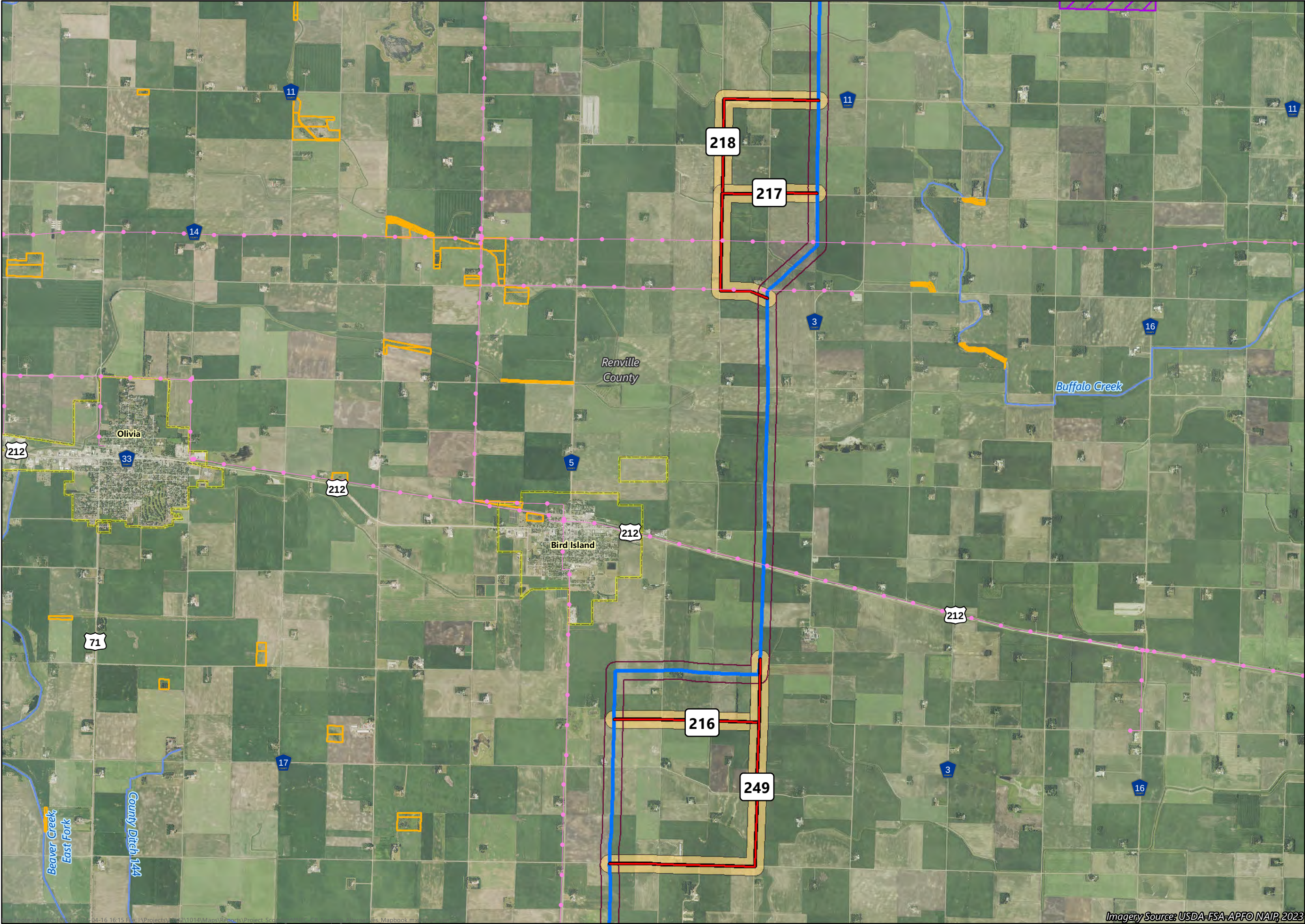


- Proposed Routes**
- Blue Route
 - Proposed Route Width
- Alternatives**
- Alignment
 - Route Connector
 - Route Segment
 - Alternative Width
 - Residence Location
 - Existing Transmission Line
 - Municipal Boundary
 - PWI Waterway
 - PWI Basin
- Owner Type**
- Federal Land
 - State Land
 - Local Land



ROUTE SEGMENTS 214, 215, 220, & 250
ALIGNMENT ALTERNATIVE AA1
Scoping Alternatives
Minnesota Energy Connection Project

Imagery Source: USDA-FSA-APFO NAIP, 2023



Proposed Routes

- Blue Route
- Proposed Route Width

Alternatives

- Alignment
- Route Connector
- Route Segment
- Alternative Width
- Existing Transmission Line
- Municipal Boundary
- PWI Waterway

Owner Type

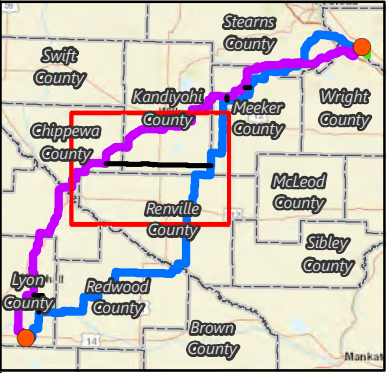
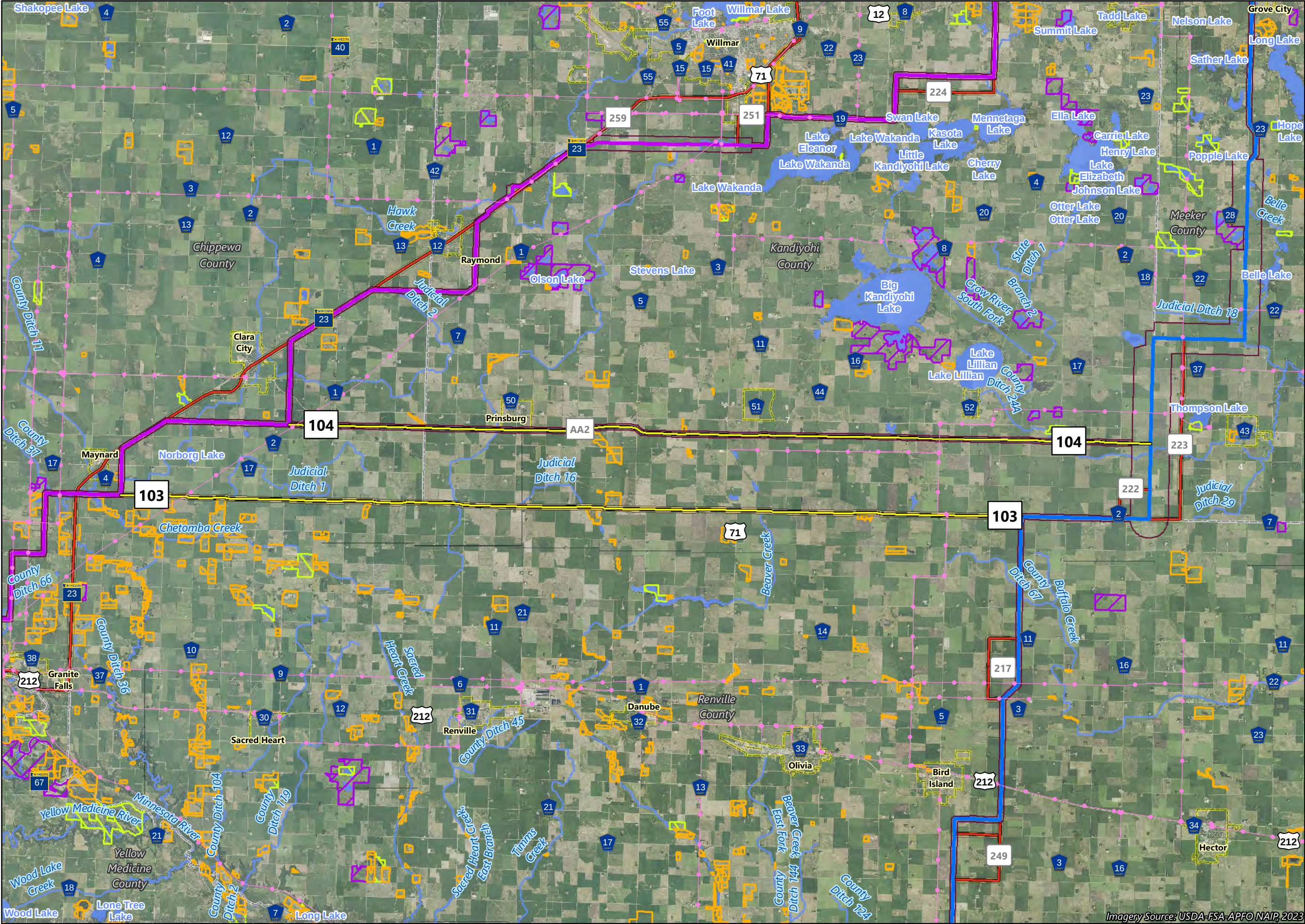
- Federal Land
- Local Land


Feet
0 2,500 5,000

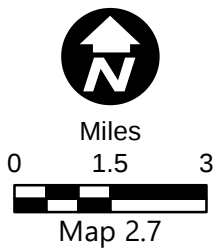
Map 2.6

ROUTE SEGMENTS 216 - 218, & 249
Scoping Alternatives
Minnesota Energy
Connection Project

Imagery Source: USDA-FSA-APFO NAIP, 2023



- Proposed Routes**
- Blue Route
 - Purple Route
 - Route Connector
 - Proposed Route Width
- Alternatives**
- Alignment
 - Route Connector
 - Route Segment
 - Alternative Width
 - Existing Transmission Line
 - Municipal Boundary
 - PWI Waterway
 - PWI Basin
- Owner Type**
- Federal Land
 - State Land
 - Local Land



ROUTE CONNECTOR 103 & 104
Scoping Alternatives
Minnesota Energy
Connection Project

Imagery Source: USDA-FSA-APFO NAIP, 2023



Proposed Routes

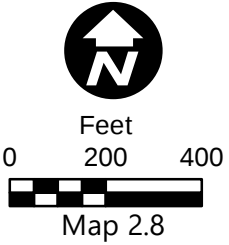
- Route Connector
- Proposed Route Width

Alternatives

- Alignment
- Route Connector
- Route Segment
- Alternative Width
- Residence Location

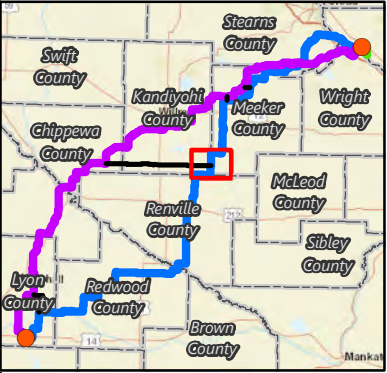
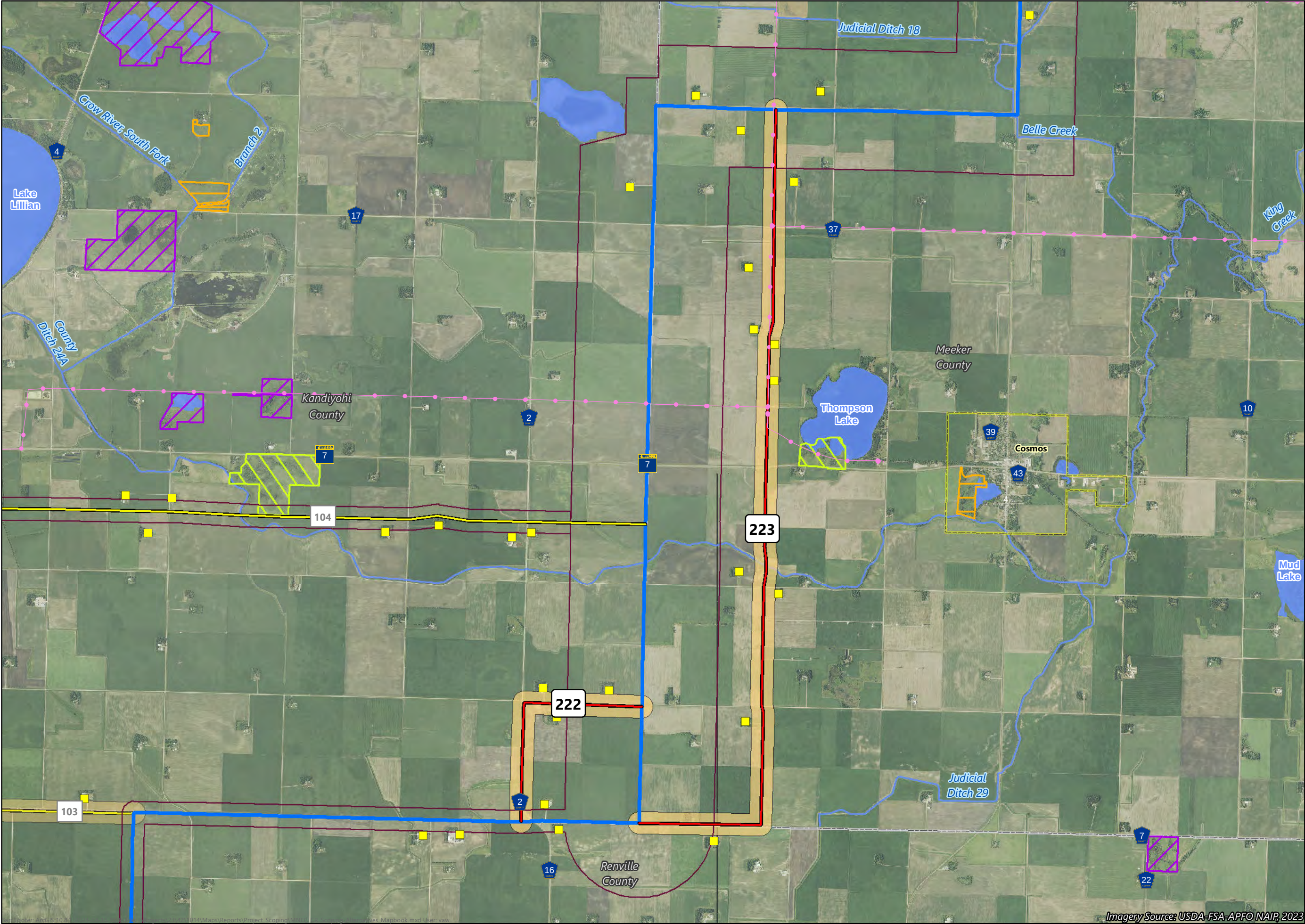
Owner Type

- Local Land



**ALIGNMENT ALTERNATIVE
AA2**
Scoping Alternatives
Minnesota Energy
Connection Project

Imagery Source: USDA-FSA-APFO NAIP, 2023



Proposed Routes

- Blue Route
- Route Connector
- Proposed Route Width

Alternatives

- Alignment
- Route Connector
- Route Segment
- Alternative Width
- Residence Location
- Existing Transmission Line
- Municipal Boundary
- PWI Waterway
- PWI Basin

Owner Type

- Federal Land
- State Land
- Local Land

North Arrow

Feet
0 2,000 4,000

Map 2.9

ROUTE SEGMENT 222 & 223
Scoping Alternatives
Minnesota Energy
Connection Project

Imagery Source: USDA-FSA-APFO NAIP, 2023