5.0 Macro-Corridor Development

The Utilities considered numerous factors and stakeholder comments (Appendix A) to develop preliminary macro-corridors from refined CON Corridors, consistent with RUS guidance requiring consideration of environmental, engineering, economic, land use, and permitting in developing a Macro-Corridor Study (RUS 2002). Figure 5-1 shows the preliminary macro-corridors overlaid on the CON corridors. The Utilities focused on several overarching objectives in identifying preliminary macro-corridors, including:

- Compliance with Minnesota and Wisconsin ***regulatory requirements*** regarding the routing of transmission lines. This includes maximizing opportunities to use existing transmission and transportation rights-of-way, and property, field, and survey lines, and ensuring appropriate consideration of regulated areas. Compliance with federal laws, policies and guidelines regarding wetlands, floodplains, historic properties, and other resources was also considered
- Compliance with ***NERC electrical system planning standards***.
- Minimizing environmental and land use impacts, including impacts associated with ***river crossings*** (the Mississippi, Zumbro, Cannon, and Black rivers).

These strategic objectives are factors typically considered when routing a new transmission line and they are designed to minimize environmental and land use impacts. Environmental, engineering, economic, land use and permitting implications are implicit in each objective. For example, impacts may be minimized by identifying areas for the proposed transmission line that would use existing transmission or transportation corridors where rights-of-way already exist; reducing engineering, construction, and operational costs; and avoiding areas with sensitive environmental resources (such as wetlands) that require additional permitting and/or mitigation.

Other factors influencing the development of the preliminary macro-corridors included comments collected by stakeholders (the public, non-profit organizations, and government agencies), and field reconnaissance of the study area. These factors, and the strategies listed above, are described in detail in the following sections.

5.1 Regulatory Requirements

Wisconsin and Minnesota statutes and administrative rules mandate consideration of certain factors when routing high voltage transmission lines. Specifically, Wisconsin Statute §1.12(6) states that, to the greatest extent feasible, the following corridors should be used in routing high voltage transmission lines, in the following order of priority: (1) existing utility corridors, (2) highway and railroad corridors, (3) recreational trails, to the extent the facilities can be constructed underground and that the facilities do not significantly impact environmentally sensitive areas, and (4) new corridors.

Wisconsin law provides that utility corridors should be given top priority when routing high voltage transmission lines (Wisconsin Statute §1.12(6)(a)). Wisconsin law further provides that existing rights-of-way should be used “to the extent practicable and the routing… minimizes environmental impacts in a manner that is consistent with achieving reasonable electric rates.” Wisconsin Statute § 196.491 (3r). Likewise, Minnesota requires permitting authorities to consider existing electrical transmission rights-of-

way when issuing a route permit for a high voltage transmission line (Minn. R. 7849.5910(J)), *PEER*, 266 N.W.2d 868. RUS Bulletin 1794A-603 also notes that the use of existing rights-of-way or double circuiting of existing electric transmission lines should be considered in developing macro-corridors (RUS 2002).

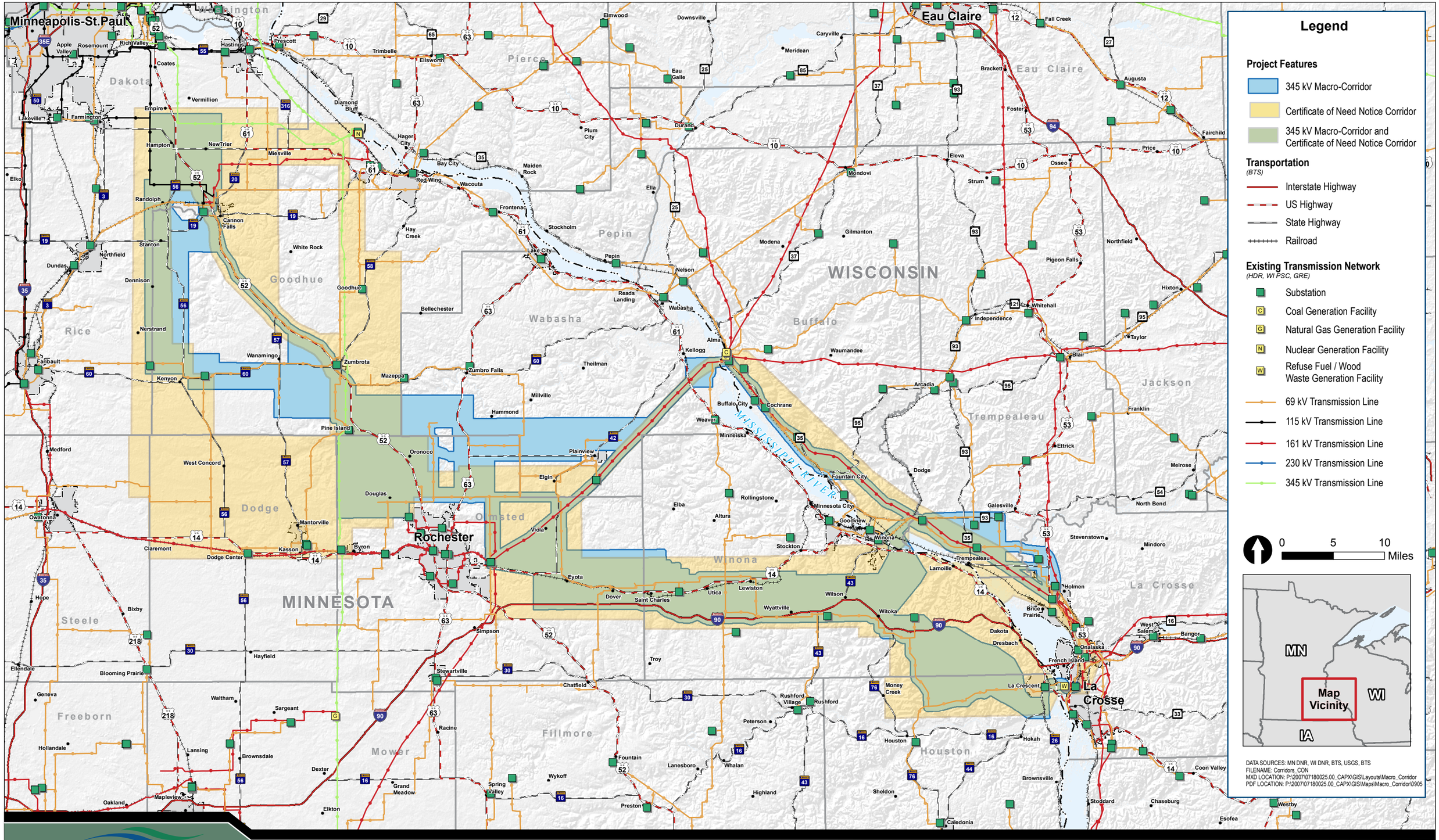
In Minnesota, the Power Plant Siting Act, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 216E and the Commission's implementing routing rules require consideration of existing railroad and highway right-of-ways and any existing transmission corridors in selecting transmission line routes. Minn. Stat. § 216E.03, Subd. 7(b)(8); accord Minn. R. 7849.5910(H) (requiring consideration of "use or paralleling of existing rights-of-way"). This policy of non-proliferation creates a preference for placing new transmission lines near existing infrastructure as a way to minimize the proliferation of new corridors. *People for Envtl. Enlightenment and Responsibility (PEER), Inc. v. Minnesota Envtl. Quality Council*, 266 N.W.2d 858, 868 (Minn. 1978). In contrast to the Wisconsin statute, the Minnesota statute and rules do not prioritize these routing considerations.

Existing transmission and transportation corridors, property lines, field lines, and section lines were considered potential opportunities for routing the proposed transmission lines within the identified macro-corridors. Existing transmission and transportation corridors were given greater priority than other possible corridors in compliance with Wisconsin and Minnesota policies. Existing rights-of-way were also given priority because from a practical standpoint, easements, access roads, and disturbance often already exist in these locations. As a result, using existing corridors usually results in less incremental environmental disturbance, lower construction costs, and less intrusive maintenance access. Property, field, fence, and section lines were considered in macro-corridor development in compliance with Minnesota policy. It is common practice to follow property, field, fence, and section lines when routing new transmission lines to minimize impacts on land use, specifically on homes and agricultural operations.

5.1.1 Transmission Corridors

Utilizing existing transmission corridors for new transmission lines would avoid any impacts to resources in previously undisturbed locations. There are also disadvantages to using existing transmission corridors, including the possibility that both lines could be damaged by a single catastrophic event (such as a tornado), potentially leading to network reliability problems.

The regional electric transmission network (Figure 5-2) provides opportunities to use existing transmission corridors by collocating the proposed transmission lines with existing transmission lines where appropriate and allowed by NERC system planning standards, or by paralleling existing rights-of-way. Data on existing transmission lines and substations in Minnesota were collected from the Minnesota Land Management Information Center (2007). Data on existing transmission lines and substations in Wisconsin were collected from PSCW (2001). These datasets were combined to create GIS layers that were verified and corrected using aerial photography as well as on-site verification.



DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Hampton • Rochester • La Crosse 345kV Transmission Project

Macro-Corridor Study

Figure 5-1: Preliminary Macro-Corridors with CON Corridors

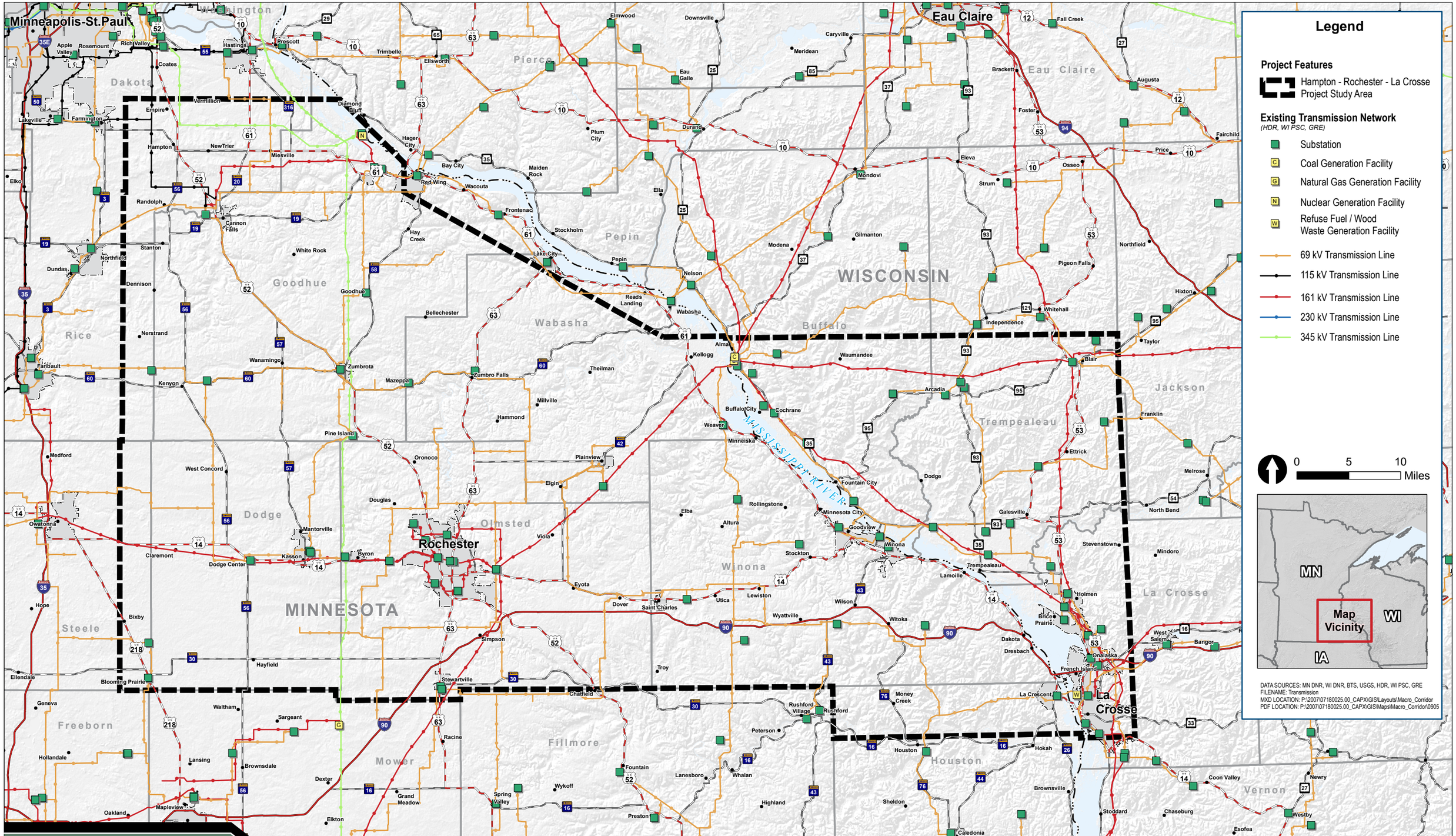


Figure 5-2: Regional Transmission System

5.1.2 Transportation Corridors

The state of Wisconsin mandates that highway and railroad corridors be given secondary priority, after existing transmission corridors, in routing new high-voltage transmission lines (Wisconsin Statute §1.12 (6)(b)). Minnesota also requires that state permitting authorities consider existing transportation systems or existing rights-of-way in issuing a route permit (Minn. R. 7849.5910(J)). Existing transportation corridors, such as roads, bridges, and railroads, may facilitate construction of the transmission line through right-of-way access.

Figure 5-3 shows major roadways in the study area. Data on highways, roads, and railroads were obtained from the Bureau of Transportation Services (BTS 2003). Interstate 90, that runs from southeast of Rochester to La Crosse, is the only interstate highway that occurs in the study area. There are several U.S. highways and state highways, as well as other major roadways in the study area that may represent opportunities for routing the transmission line

5.1.3 Property, Field, Fence, and Survey Lines

Experience indicates that following property, field, fence, and surveyed lines in routing new transmission lines can minimize impacts on land use. The state of Minnesota requires the MN PUC to consider use or paralleling survey lines, natural division lines, and agricultural field boundaries (Minn. R. 7849.5910 (H)). Minnesota Statute § 216E.03 further requires “evaluation of governmental survey lines and other natural division lines of agricultural land so as to minimize interference with agricultural operations.” Property lines are established lines of ownership by survey, defined by deed or possession. Field lines separate field plots, and may follow a constructed fence. Survey lines are surveyed land subdivision lines, used by governments in mapping and surveying, and may include section lines, county boundaries, and municipal boundaries. Following any of these lines may minimize intrusion and impact inside agricultural fields or other property.

The Utilities used aerial photographs and landowner input to identify property lines, field lines, and survey lines with potential to minimize impact to structures (which may include homes and farm buildings), and agricultural fields (including irrigation pivots). In many cases, these corridors provide connections between corridor segments that follow existing transmission or transportation rights-of-way. Property, field, and survey lines that follow straight lines for longer distances are generally seen as presenting better opportunity for transmission line routing, because angle structures and additional length caused by angles and curvature in the line tend to result in additional impacts to landowners and natural resources as well as higher construction costs. Property, field, and survey lines that have fewer nearby structures, such as homes, are also seen as presenting greater opportunity with respect to transmission line routing. During the route refinement process, proximity to homes and economic impacts of line curvatures will be evaluated in-depth.

5.1.4 State Protected Resources

Minnesota and Wisconsin have specific statutes and agency regulations that guide the routing of high voltage transmission lines on or around specific land areas, jurisdictions, landscapes, and environmental features. These regulations often set constraints on transmission line routing, except when alternatives are not feasible and prudent, are too costly, or are otherwise undesirable.

Minnesota statutes and regulations govern the placement of transmission lines in proximity to sensitive environmental features or landscapes, including wetlands, Minnesota Wild and Scenic Rivers, recreation areas, scientific and natural areas, trout streams, forested MN DNR lands, other public lands, and public waters (Minn. R. Ch. 6135; Minn. R. Ch. 7849). Minnesota law prohibits transmission line routing through state or national parks or state scientific and natural areas, "unless the transmission line would not materially damage or impair the purpose for which the area was designated and no feasible and prudent alternative exists" (Minn. R. 7849.5930).

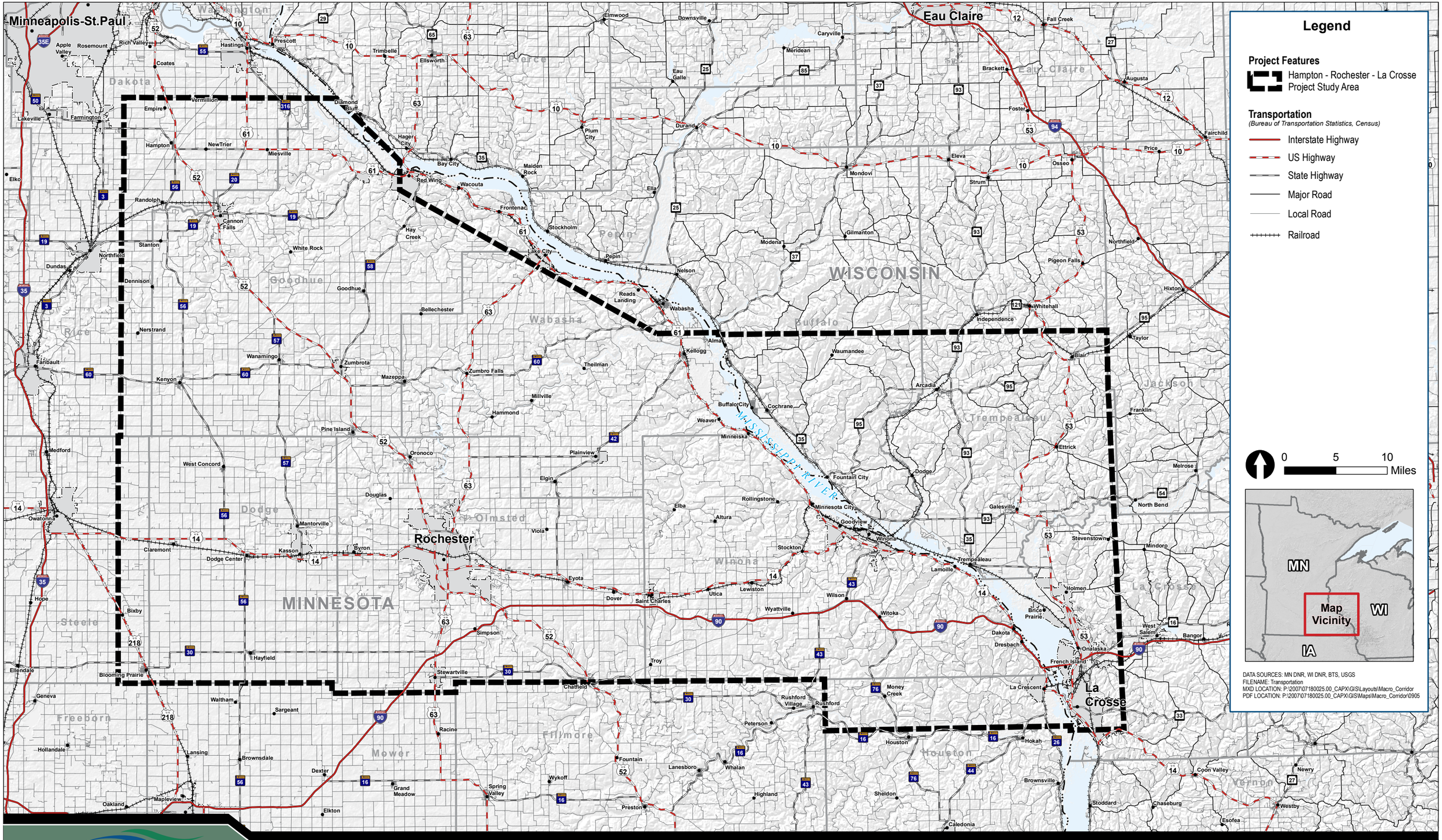
Although these environmental features will be addressed in detail during routing, efforts were made to avoid sensitive and prohibited areas or concentrations of such areas during macro-corridor development.[9] Specifically, the area between MN-42 and I-90 (see Figure 3-1) was deliberately avoided in macro-corridor development because of several recreation areas including Whitewater State Park, Whitewater Wildlife Management Area, John A. Latsch State Park, and a number of RJD Forest recreation sites. These areas are all managed by MN DNR. WDNR manages lands within the study area in Wisconsin, including the Van Loon Wildlife Area in Wisconsin, Whitman Dam Wildlife Area, and Perrot State Park, which were considered during routing. Efforts were also made to avoid federally protected areas, including the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge, and the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, except where there are existing transmission line corridors.

5.2 NERC Electrical System Planning Requirements

The Southeastern Minnesota–Southwestern Wisconsin Reliability Enhancement Study (March 13, 2006), which is further described in the AES, evaluated the system alternatives for meeting the community service needs in the Rochester and Winona/La Crosse areas.

This study applied NERC standards and identified system deficiencies and facilities to address those deficiencies. The standards require affected entities, including the Utilities, to maintain the system in a secure state, able to withstand the next contingency, even after one or more contingencies have already occurred. Utilities are required to meet NERC reliability standards when planning, constructing, operating, and maintaining the electrical systems. *Mandatory Reliability Standards for the Bulk-Power System*, Order No. 693, 72 FR 16,416 (April 4, 2007), Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Stats. & Regs., 31,242 *order on reh'g,* 120 FERC 61,053 (July 19, 2007). NERC standards include a requirement that the system be designed so that under "system intact" conditions or "single contingency" ("N-1") condition (for example, when a single transmission line, generator, or transformer is out of service), operators are able to reliably operate the system and serve all connected loads without any ongoing overloads or voltage problems.

9 An objective for developing macro-corridors for the Project was to minimize environmental impacts. As part of the development of the preliminary macro-corridors environmentally sensitive landscapes and resources at a largely regional or "macro" level were considered. Site-specific environmental data will be incorporated as the routing progresses and as part of the NEPA and state permitting processes.



DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Hampton • Rochester • La Crosse 345kV Transmission Project

Macro-Corridor Study

Figure 5-3: Transportation

In developing the macro-corridors, the Utilities considered potential opportunities to double circuit the new transmission facilities with existing lines. One factor that must be considered when determining whether double circuiting is a feasible option is compliance with NERC Standard TPL-003-0, *System Performance Following Loss of Two or More Bulk Electric System Elements*. This standard requires transmission planners to perform periodic assessments that demonstrate that their portion of the interconnected transmission system is planned such that the network can be operated reliably under specified contingency conditions. One such contingency condition is an event resulting in the loss of any two circuits of a multiple circuit transmission line.

The extent to which new transmission lines and existing transmission lines can be placed on double circuit structures depends on specific circumstances, application of system reliability requirements, and the electrical characteristics of the transmission lines. More specifically, double circuiting is more feasible when the two transmission lines that will be strung on the same structures serve different purposes. For example, double circuiting may be appropriate where one circuit is used more for transfer capability on the bulk transmission system, and a lower-voltage second circuit is designed to provide for local community service reliability needs. If, in contrast, both lines are needed for the system to withstand the outage of the first line, then the two lines must be placed on separate structures.

NERC planning criteria will continue to be an important consideration in routing.

5.3 River Crossings

Important environmental considerations for routing are the crossings of the Mississippi, Cannon, Zumbro, and Black rivers. These rivers are protected waters with specific regulations and permitting requirements.

5.3.1 Mississippi River

Protection of the Mississippi River biological, cultural, visual and recreational values are important considerations for routing. Valuable resources associated with the Mississippi River Valley include sensitive species habitat, vegetation, recreation areas, scenic areas, and cultural and historic sites. The wetland backwaters in the area are primarily owned and or administered as part of the national wildlife refuge system by USFWS, including the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge and the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Physical characteristics such as topography, and land use, were considered as well.

Each Mississippi River crossing alternative is located at an existing high-voltage transmission line corridor and identified to meet USFWS requirements as well as minimize new impacts to the river by using existing rights-of-way.

There are two existing transmission lines that cross the river near Alma, Wisconsin: The existing 161 kV and 69 kV transmission lines cross the river on the same double-circuit structures but diverge both east and west of the river. There are also three existing transmission lines that cross the Mississippi River near Winona, Minnesota. The existing transmission line that crosses farthest downstream is a 69 kV transmission line owned by Xcel Energy that parallels a railroad grade across the river. Other existing transmission lines that cross the Mississippi River upstream are located in proximity to high-density

development and an airport, and were considered as potential crossing sites. Additionally, two 69 kV transmission lines cross the Mississippi River between La Crosse, Wisconsin, and La Crescent, Minnesota, on double-circuit structures south of a railroad bridge with structures on French Island.

After initial review of the proposed crossings at the Mississippi River, USFWS sent a letter to the Utilities recommending "any crossing considers use of existing energy company rights-of-way or easements." Furthermore, the letter states that new rights-of-way are unlikely to be approved, "since Service policy and regulations do not allow new uses that fragment habitat on refuges." USFWS' recommendations affirm the Utilities' decision to propose crossing the Mississippi River at existing transmission line corridors. Appendix C contains official correspondence received to date from the USFWS regarding the Proposal.

5.3.2 Cannon River

Segments of the Cannon River, near Cannon Falls, Minnesota, are designated as scenic or recreational by MN DNR. Macro-corridors avoid sections of the Cannon River that are designated as Scenic River, because of regulations designed to prevent impact to scenic views.

Macro-corridors are wide where they cross the Cannon River in order to facilitate consideration of several crossings to minimize impact. The macro-corridor that follows MN-56 includes potential Cannon River crossings at existing roadway crossings (Dixie Avenue and Randolph Boulevard/MN-56), and at points along the river channel where both the channel and associated floodplains are narrow. The macro-corridor along US-52 includes an existing 69 kV transmission line crossing over the Cannon River, and an existing roadway crossing along US-52. An area between Cannon Falls and Randolph was omitted from the macro-corridor due to floodplains that are too wide to span.

5.3.3 Zumbro River

There are three macro-corridor alternatives that cross the Zumbro River in Minnesota. These macro-corridors were set to allow consideration of multiple options crossing the Zumbro River, while avoiding high density residential areas and the Evergreen Acres conservation easement along the river.

The northernmost corridor would only be utilized for the proposed 345 kV transmission line. This corridor includes the Zumbro Dam and other field or property lines that may provide an opportunity for crossing the river while avoiding residences. The central macro-corridor alternative could be utilized for the 345 kV transmission line, the 161 kV transmission line, or both lines collocated on the same structures, and it follows a bridge that crosses the Zumbro River along White Bridge Road. The southern macro-corridor alternative would only be utilized for the proposed 161 kV transmission line, and follows a bridge that crosses the Zumbro River at 75th Street.

5.3.4 Black River

The macro-corridor was set to allow consideration of multiple options crossing the Black River, while mitigating for potential environmental impacts in the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge (managed by USFWS), and the Van Loon Wildlife Area (managed by WDNR).

Several linear features cross the Black River inside the macro-corridor. To the north, Highway 93 crosses the Black River east of Galesville along an existing bridge outside of the Van Loon Wildlife Area. An

existing 69 kV transmission line crossing near the Seven Bridges historic trail, which links several bridges listed as historic places on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

West of the Holman area, the macro-corridor contains a Black River crossing at Wisconsin Highway 35, through the Van Loon Wildlife Area. This portion of WI-35 is designated as the Great River Road National Scenic byway.

The existing Dairyland-owned Q-1 161 kV transmission line also crosses the Black River through the Upper Mississippi Wildlife and Fish Refuge and the Van Loon Wildlife Area in the southern portion of the macro-corridor in this area. This transmission corridor is the Dairyland Q-1 transmission line that needs to be rebuilt (discussed in Section 4.1).

5.4 Opportunities and Constraints Identification

Table 5-1 identifies opportunities and constraints associated with the preliminary macro-corridors, as discussed in Section 5.1, Regulatory Requirements. Findings are organized and color-coded by sections within the macro-corridors illustrated on Figure 5-4. Constraints were identified to determine areas that should be avoided or excluded, when possible during routing.

Table 5-1:
Macro-Corridor Opportunities and Constraints by Section

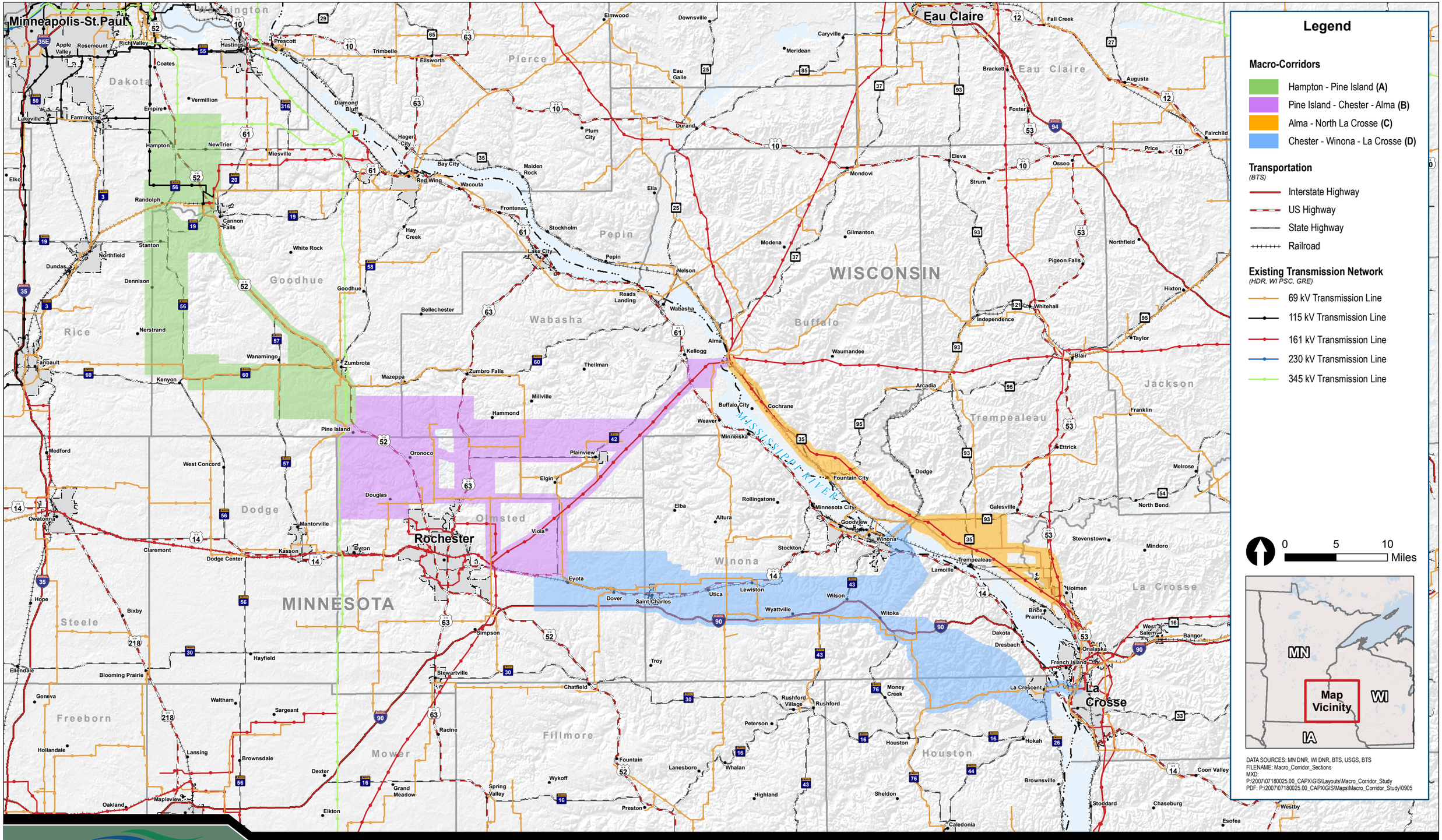
Segment	Opportunity Along Existing Transmission Corridor	Opportunity Along Existing Transportation Corridor	Opportunity Along Property, Field, on Survey Lines	Potential Constraints[10]
Section A: Hampton Substation to North Rochester Substation				
Hampton Substation Siting Area	None	US-52, MN-56, Railroad corridor	Property, Field, and Survey Lines	Pivot irrigation, Residences, Town of Hampton
MN-56/MN-60 Transportation Corridor	69 kV transmission line from Kenyon to south of Wanamingo; 69 kV lines in east and west ends of corridor; 345 kV in east end of corridor.	MN-56, MN-60, local and county roads	Property, Field, and Survey Lines (County Line)	Cannon River and associated resources; Towns of Randolph, Wanamingo, Dennison, Stanton, and Nerstrand; West Byllesby Park (Dakota County Parks); Stanton Airfield; Pivot Irrigation; Warsaw WMA; Nansen Agricultural Historic District and historic farms; Woodbury WMA; Residences along roadways

10 "Potential constraints" is not meant to include an exhaustive list of all constraints that occur in that section of the preliminary macro-corridor. Rather, it is included to identify major constraints appropriate for the level of macro-corridor identification. Specific constraints will be discussed during the routing when segments are compared.

Segment	Opportunity Along Existing Transmission Corridor	Opportunity Along Existing Transportation Corridor	Opportunity Along Property, Field, on Survey Lines	Potential Constraints[10]
US-52 Transportation Corridor	Existing 69 kV transmission line from Cannon Falls to Pine Island	US- 52	Property and Field Lines, with primary opportunity along U.S. Highway 52	Cannon River and associated resources; Towns of New Trier, Hampton, Cannon Falls, Zumbrota, and Pine Island; Lake Byllesby Park (Dakota County Parks); Pivot irrigation; Future development planned along US-52
North Rochester Substation Siting Area	345 kV and 69 kV transmission line from Zumbrota to Pine Island	Local roads	Property and Field Lines	Pivot irrigation, Residences
Section B: North Rochester Substation to Alma or to Chester Substation				
345 kV Corridor Between North Rochester Substation Siting Area to Alma	Existing 69 kV transmission line crosses Lake Zumbro at Zumbro Lake Dam; other existing 69 kV transmission lines; existing 161 kV transmission line to Alma River Crossing	US-63 through western corridor; MN-247 in southern corridor	Property and Field Lines	Zumbro River and associated natural resources; Residences along Zumbro River; Forested areas with associated natural resource values; RJD State Forest, Snake Creek Unit; Town of Plainview; Snake Creek (Minnesota Land Trust); McCarthy Lake WMA, Kellogg-Weaver SNA;, Wetlands/floodplains associated with Mississippi River; Upper Mississippi River National Fish and Wildlife Refuge
345 kV Corridor between North Rochester Substation Siting Area to Chester Substation	Existing 69 kV transmission line crosses Lake Zumbro at Zumbro Lake Dam; Existing 69 kV and 161 kV transmission lines.	Local road (White Bridge Road); 40th and 50th Avenues run N/S through corridor	Property and Field Lines	Zumbro River and associated natural resources; residences along Zumbro River ; RJD State Forest; Isaak Walton League WMA; Nietz Airstrip
161 kV Corridor between North Rochester Siting Area and Northern Hills Substation	Prairie Island-Byron 345 kV transmission line and a network of 69 kV transmission lines	US-52, Douglas Trail, 60th Avenue	Property, Field, and Survey Lines	Planned development along US-52; City of Rochester; Dense residential development
161 kV Corridor between North Rochester Substation Siting Area and Chester Substation	Existing 69 kV transmission lines	Local roads: 18th Avenue, White Bridge Road; 40th and 50th Avenues run N/S through corridor; 75th Avenue	Property and Field Lines	Zumbro River and associated natural resources, Houses along Zumbro River; Dense housing

Segment	Opportunity Along Existing Transmission Corridor	Opportunity Along Existing Transportation Corridor	Opportunity Along Property, Field, on Survey Lines	Potential Constraints[10]
Section C: Alma to North La Crosse Substation Section				
Dairyland Q-1 161 kV between Alma and Winona crossing options	Follows existing 161 kV transmission line, and half of the corridor follows an existing 69 kV transmission line	Follows WI-35 and a railroad corridor	Property, field, fence lines	Wetlands/Floodplains associated with Mississippi River corridor; Great River Road Scenic Byway; Areas of dense residential development; Towns of Buffalo City, Cochrane, and Fountain City; Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge; Whitman Dam Wildlife Area (WDNR); Merrick State Park
Winona/Centerville Corridor Area	Existing 69 kV transmission lines, Dairyland Q-1 161 kV transmission line	WI-54/93, WI-35, other local roads	Property, field, fence, and section lines	Great River Road Scenic Byway; Pivot irrigation; Schubert and Carhart Farms Airstrips; residential development; Perrot State Park
Seven Bridges Corridor	Existing 69 kV transmission line adjacent to Seven Bridges Trail	None	None	Van Loon Wildlife Area; Seven Bridges; Seven Bridges Trail
WI-35 Corridor	None	WI-35	None	Great River Road Scenic Byway; Van Loon Wildlife Area
Dairyland Q-1 Black River Crossing to North La Crosse Substation	Dairyland Q-1	None	None	Van Loon Wildlife Area; Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge
Section D: I-90 Corridor Section				
Chester Substation and I-90 Corridor	Network of existing 69 kV transmission lines	Primary opportunities include US-14 and I-90. Secondary opportunities include railroad corridor and multiple local roads.	Property, field, fence, and section lines	Towns of Eyota, Dover, St. Charles, Utica, Lewiston, Wyattville, and Wilson; RJD State Forest parcels
I-90 to Winona River Crossing	Winona Mississippi River crossing option follows an existing 69 kV transmission line	Follows of US- 14 and railroad corridors	Property, field, fence, and section lines	Bluff areas approaching Winona; Wetlands/floodplains associated with the Mississippi River; Apple Blossom Scenic Byway
I-90 to La Crescent/ La Crosse River Crossing and La Crosse Substation Area	Network of 69 kV transmission lines	Follows I-90 in northern part of segment, South Ridge Road, County Road 103, and other local roads in area	Property, field, fence, and section lines	Town of Witoka; Bluffs area approaching La Crescent; Wetlands/floodplains associated with the Mississippi River; Minnesota Land Trust (Big Trout Creek); Apple Blossom Scenic Byway

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.



DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Hampton • Rochester • La Crosse 345kV Transmission Project

Macro-Corridor Study

Figure 5-4: Preliminary Macro-Corridors by Section

5.5 Stakeholder Input

The Utilities provided opportunities for stakeholders to comment on the preliminary macro-corridors during two rounds of public meetings in 2008, Route Working Groups, and public meetings described in the next sections.

5.5.1 Route Working Groups

The Utilities have not yet filed an application with either MN PUC for a route permit or PSCW CPCN. In advance of those anticipated submissions, the Utilities held Route Working Groups in March and May 2008 (Table 5-2) to gather comments from landowners, government representatives and other interested parties about the preliminary macro-corridors.

Table 5-2:
Route Working Groups

Locations	Dates	Time
Rochester, MN	March 3, 2008	10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Winona, MN	March 4, 2008	10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
La Crosse, WI	March 5, 2008	10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Lakeville, MN	March 6, 2008	5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Cannon Falls, MN	May 22, 2008	11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

The goal of the Route Working Groups was to provide key stakeholders early opportunities to contribute to data collection and initial routing efforts, prior to entering into a formal permitting process. The Route Working Groups consisted of representatives from federal and state agencies, as well as regional, county, and city representatives or local elected officials as well as landowners who requested to participate at the CON Environmental Report scoping meetings or through an update newsletter distributed in December 2007.

The Route Working Groups served as a venue to collect general input, route suggestions, and identify challenges within the preliminary macro-corridors. The data and information gathered during the Route Working Groups was used to supplement data and information already collected, and to refine the preliminary macro-corridors.

Approximately 43 individuals joined the Route Working Groups, which were divided by geographic regions of the study area. One group represents each of the following areas of interest: La Crosse-La Crescent, Wisconsin; Winona, Minnesota; Rochester, Minnesota; Hampton/Lakeville, Minnesota; and Cannon Falls, Minnesota. The Hampton/Lakeville, Minnesota meeting was combined with the Brookings County to Twin Cities 245 kV Transmission Line Project Route Working Group.

The Route Working Groups began with a presentation that described the Proposal overview, routing approach, criteria, resources, and comparative analysis. Discussion sessions in small groups were held to review the routing criteria, and map workshops were held to focus on specific geographic areas. Appendix A-2 provides a summary of comments received from the Route Working Groups.

5.5.2 May 2008 Public Meetings

Five public meetings, listed in Table 5-3, were held in May 2008 to present preliminary macro-corridors in the study area.

Table 5-3:
Public Meetings, May 2008

Locations	Dates	Time
Winona, MN	May 20, 2008	11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Trempealeau, WI	May 20, 2008	5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Rochester, MN	May 21, 2008	11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
St. Charles, MN	May 21, 2008	5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Cannon Falls, MN	May 22, 2008	4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

The Utilities notified all potentially affected landowners included in the CON Corridors and the preliminary macro-corridors. The meetings were held in an open house format, with large-format informational displays, Proposal fact sheets, and large sheet maps based on aerial photography and parcel boundaries illustrating the preliminary macro-corridors. The sheet maps facilitated discussion with landowners and other stakeholders to identify properties, issues, and concerns within the preliminary macro-corridors. Participants were able to write specific siting and routing suggestions directly on sheet maps. Sign-in sheets provided additional contact information that was added to the mailing list.

A total of 261 people signed in at the five public meetings. Attendees included landowners, farm owners, business owners, representatives from local electric cooperatives and public utilities, media, neighborhood associations, local elected officials, county commissioners, and planners. The majority of attendees who submitted comment forms identified themselves as residential property owners. Appendix A-3 provides a summary of comments received from the May 2008 public meetings.