

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Natchez Trace Parkway  
Mississippi



WETLAND STATEMENT OF FINDINGS

FOR

EXECUTIVE ORDER 11990 ("WETLAND PROTECTION")

NATCHEZ TRACE MULTI-USE TRAIL

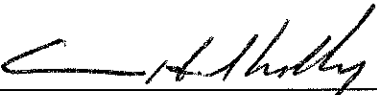
PROJECT NATR 055898-3P19

A BRIDGE OVER COUNTY LINE ROAD AND TRAIL FROM  
200 FEET WEST OF COUNTY LINE ROAD TO MILEPOST 96.0  
(APPROXIMATELY FROM MILEPOST 95.0 TO MILEPOST 96.0)

NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY

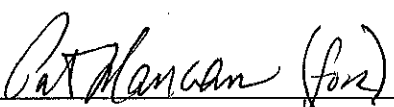
MADISON COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

Recommended:

  
Cameron H. Sholly, Superintendent

  
Date

Concurred:

 (for)  
Gary Rosenlieb, Acting Director of Water Resources Division

  
Date

Approved:

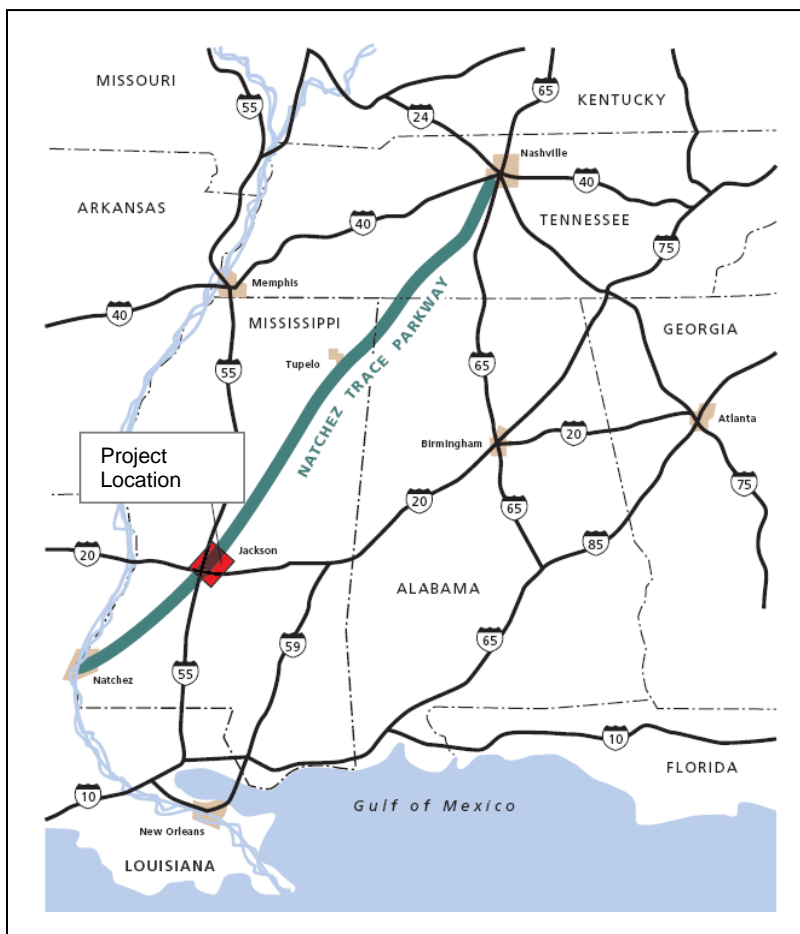
  
David Vela, Southeast Regional Director

  
Date

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## INTRODUCTION

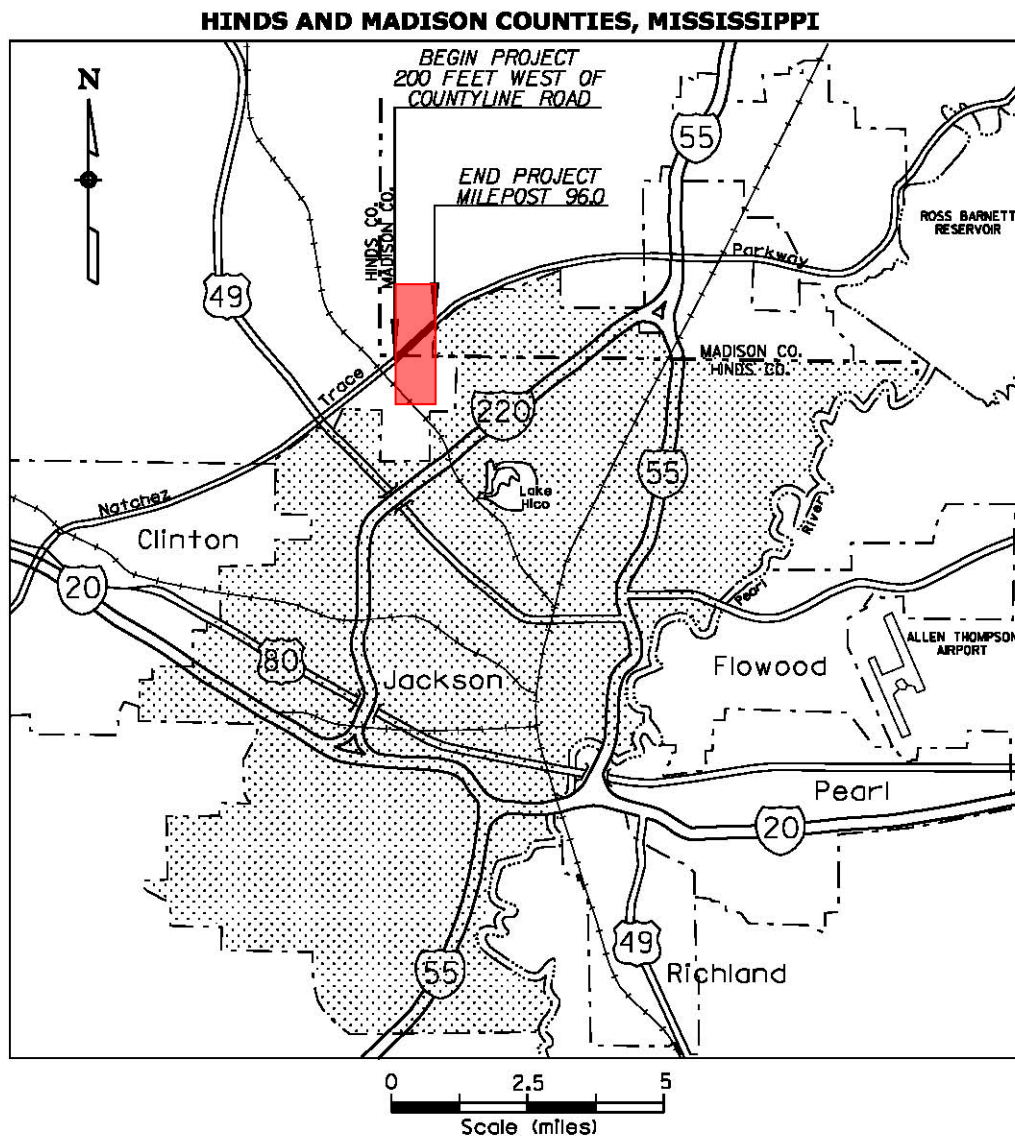
The National Park Service, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is proposing to construct approximately one mile of multi-use trail, hereafter referred to as the trail, including a bridge over County Line Road, from 200 feet west of County Line Road (approximately milepost 95.0) to milepost 96.0 within the Natchez Trace Parkway (NATR) boundaries. This project is being funded by Federal Lands Highway Program (FLHP) Category II funding for Congressionally Mandated Parkways.



**Figure 1. Project location on the Natchez Trace Parkway.**

The trail segment will be located in the Jackson, Mississippi metropolitan area, as depicted in Figure 1. The NPS proposes to construct the 1-mile long trail segment along the north side of the NATR motor road. (See Sheet No. A3 of the FHWA Location Maps in Appendix A.) The FHWA Location Maps are 70% complete, subject to changes, and have not yet been finalized for construction. The trail will follow the conceptual alignment identified in the September 1995 *Multi-Use Trail Study Environmental Assessment, Natchez Trace Parkway, Jackson, Mississippi*, (EA) (NPS 1995), subject to changes identified during design, and approved by the NPS. In a 1996 Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) (NPS 1996) the NPS approved the preferred

alternative for building an approximately 21-mile long trail adjacent to the NATR motor road as it passes through the Jackson, Mississippi metropolitan area (Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Project location.**

The trail profile will closely match the existing ground elevations. See Sheet No. A4 of the FHWA Location Maps shows a typical trail section (see Appendix A). The limits of disturbance to build the trail will vary, depending on the topography. Based on the 75% complete trail design of the 3P19 trail segment, no wetlands will be impacted.

At approximately Station 91+14, the multi-use trail will be routed to travel adjacent to the motor road, crossing Hanging Moss Creek, and will go back to an alignment away from the motor road at approximately Station 101+00. Station locations, such as Station 91+14 can be located on the Location Map sheets that illustrate the trail route located in Appendix A. Locations are identified by such stations throughout the document.

This segment is a realignment for a trail segment previously described in the *Wetland Statement of Findings Natchez Trace Multi-Use Trail Project NATR 055989-3P18, Milepost 95.8 to 200 Feet West of Livingston Road (Approximately from Milepost 95.8 to Milepost 97.85) Natchez Trace Parkway, Madison County, Mississippi* (3P18 Wetland SOF). In the 3P18 Wetland SOF, this segment was located away from the motor road. A double 8-foot span, 8-foot rise concrete box culvert was to be installed to cross Hanging Moss Creek. Wetlands along Hanging Moss Creek were delineated in 2008 as Riverine Emergent Wetland (Amy S. Green Environmental Consultants [ASGEC] 2008). The installation of the concrete box culvert would have resulted in 0.03 acres of Riverine Emergent Wetland impacts described in the 3P18 Wetland SOF (NPS 2010). The realignment along the motor road will avoid wetland impacts in this area.

The 1995 EA included analysis of three alternatives for accommodating trail users within the NATR motor road right-of-way in the vicinity of Jackson, Mississippi (NPS 1995). The preferred alternative, part of which is the 1-mile trail segment discussed in this SOF, provides a separate and continuous paved trail within the NATR motor road right-of-way, adjacent to the NATR motor road, connecting to local community trails, and potentially linking neighborhoods, parks, and tourist attractions throughout the greater Jackson, Mississippi, metropolitan area. The trail will maintain the visual qualities and character of the NATR motor road and surrounding landscape, accommodate the needs of a variety of trail user groups, and incorporate sustainable design and construction techniques and materials. The trail will be designed to meet American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standards and to Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards (ABAAS), maintaining a profile grade of less than 5 percent and accommodating other necessary accessibility requirements.

Adverse impacts to wetlands would be minimized by the use of temporary erosion control devices during construction, such as silt fences, slope drains, straw bales, inlet protection, plastic lining, loose riprap, sediment traps, diversion berms, and/or diversion channels in areas where there would be a potential to impact wetland areas. Permanent erosion control devices, such as loose riprap, paved waterways, and solid sod would be utilized at locations where the need exists.

Alternative 1 was a no action alternative; no trail will be constructed. Alternative 2, the preferred alternative, now being designed, involves construction of a separate and continuous paved trail on NATR property from approximately milepost 86.6 to milepost 107.9. The trail would be separate from the NATR motor road. Alternative 3 was construction of three separate paved trail segments. The trail segments would be independent of one another.

Alternative 1, the no-action alternative, would have no impact on wetlands. Alternative 2 and alternative 3 would have adverse impacts on wetlands. The extent and level of impacts were not identified in the 1995 EA.

Alternative 3 would have the same kinds of impacts as alternative 2 in the 1-mile multi-use trail project discussed in this SOF.

An additional alternative, paving the roadside shoulders of the NATR motor road through the greater Jackson metropolitan area, was considered but rejected for a number of reasons, foremost being the danger to non-motorized recreational users being placed immediately

adjacent to vehicle traffic, incompatibility with the visual continuity and scenic character of the NATR experience afforded NATR visitors, and negative impacts on the historic design integrity of the NATR landscape experience.

This SOF has been prepared to comply with NPS Director's Order #77-1, which requires such statement to be prepared to document why an alternative, the preferred alternative from the 1995 EA, with impacts to wetlands was chosen and to meet the other requirements identified in the procedural manual for protection of wetlands (NPS Procedural Manual #77-1: Wetland Protection 1998). This SOF has also been prepared to document the realignment from the 2010 SOF, which will avoid the wetland impacts described above.

## **PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION**

In 1938 the Natchez Trace Parkway was established as a unit of the NPS by Congress to commemorate the historic Natchez Trace – the principal overland link between the Southwest Territory, the Mississippi River and the United States during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The NATR motor road is designed to follow the alignment of the historic Natchez Trace as closely as possible.

In 1968 the National Trails Systems Act of 1968 (16 USC 1241-51) designated Natchez Trace as one of the initial trails to be studied for potential inclusion in the national trails system which will provide “. . . for the ever-increasing outdoor recreation needs of an expanding population . . . to promote preservation of, public access to, travel within and enjoyment and appreciation of the open-air, outdoor areas and historic resources for the Nation.”

In 1983 the Natchez Trace Scenic Trail was established by Congress as a result of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) study and recommendations, and the NPS was directed to designate a route.

The 1987 *Comprehensive Trail Plan, Natchez Trace National Scenic Trail / Alabama-Mississippi-Tennessee* (NPS 1987), developed in conjunction with the Natchez Trace Parkway General Management Plan (NATR-GMP) (NPS 1987), identified the Jackson, Mississippi, metropolitan area as one of three high use areas in which the NPS will build multi-use trails on NATR lands, but off of the NATR motor road. The Trail Plan states that; “Bicycling will continue along the entire developed length of the NATR. Bicycle use will be monitored however, and accommodations will be made to separate bicyclists and vehicular traffic where required in heavy use areas.”

By the 1990s increasingly heavy volumes of vehicular traffic on the NATR motor road through the Jackson, Mississippi, metropolitan area presented serious safety concerns for bicyclists traveling on the NATR motor road.

To address that concern, the 1995 EA identified two alternative multi-use trail routes and a no action alternative through the Jackson metropolitan area on NATR lands adjacent to the NATR motor road (NPS 1995). The preferred alternative, alternative 2, is a separate and continuous multi-use trail between approximately mileposts 86.6 and 107.9. The preferred alternative includes the segment of the multi-use trail north of the NATR motor road from milepost 95.8 to 200 feet west of Livingston Road (approximate milepost 97.85) that is the subject of this SOF.

In 1999 a Congressional Directive to the NPS directed the NATR to construct a multi-use trail in conjunction with the construction of the NATR motor road (U.S. Congress 1999). A subsequent Congressionally mandated feasibility study, prepared by the Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration (EFLHD/FHWA) in conjunction with the NPS, identified the Jackson, Mississippi, metropolitan area as one of three metropolitan areas transected by the NATR motor road where a multi-use trail should be built within the NATR boundaries, based on existing and projected future average daily traffic volumes (ADT).

### **Design Alternatives Considered**

The multi-use trail analyzed as the preferred alternative in the 1995 EA had an 8-foot wide paved surface (NPS 1995). Because the minimum width of a multi-use trail currently recommended by AASHTO is 10 feet, the trail design was widened to accommodate that new standard. That design change was addressed in a memo to file from the NATR Superintendent, dated March 27, 2007 (NPS 2007a) and is available at the NATR Headquarters.

The separate and continuous multi-use trail between approximately mileposts 86.6 and 107.9 is expected to be constructed in segments due to funding constraints. Design of a 2.2-mile segment (3O16) of this multi-use trail from the 1995 EA was completed in 2008, and construction was completed in Spring 2009. Wetland impacts of that segment from Old Canton Road to Reservoir Overlook Parking Area (approximately from milepost 103.6 to milepost 105.8) were analyzed in a Wetland SOF approved by the Southeast Regional Director in April 2008 (NPS 2008). In addition, design of a 2.97-mile long trail segment (3P16) of this multi-use trail was completed in 2009, and construction was completed in December 2010. Wetland impacts of this segment from 2,000 feet east of Livingston Road to Highland Colony Parkway (approximately from milepost 98.23 to milepost 101.2) were analyzed in a Wetland SOF approved by the Southeast Regional Director in June 2009 (NPS 2009). Wetland impacts for bridges to be constructed in the 3P16 segment, which were designated as a separate project, 3P17, were also analyzed as part of the Wetland SOF approved by the Southeast Regional Director in June 2009 (NPS 2009). Design for 3P17 will be completed as part of the 3P18 project, and construction is scheduled to be completed in Fall 2011. Wetland impacts for the 2.05-mile segment (3P18) were analyzed in a Wetland SOF approved by the Southeast Regional Director in July 2010 (NPS 2010).

On May 23 through 25, 2007, NPS and EFLHD/FHWA staff, with staff from Parsons Corporation, conducted a Value Analysis and Value Engineering study (VA/VE) of the multi-use trail design for a 2.2-mile segment of proposed multi-use trail through the Jackson, Mississippi, metropolitan area. However, many of the recommendations from the VA/VE for this segment are applicable to the entire 21 miles of multi-use trail. It was confirmed at the VA/VE that the multi-use trail will be located on NATR property, but away from the NATR motor road as much as feasible, and primarily within wooded areas, with intermittent views to and from the NATR motor road. The trail design and construction will be guided by the AASHTO *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities* (AASHTO 1999), and by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), superseded by the ABAAS (General Services Administration [GSA] 2006).

On June 6, 2011, an on-site field review of the 70% design plans for the current trail segment from approximately 200 feet west of County Line Road (milepost 95.0) to milepost 96.0 was completed by staff from the EFLHD/FHWA, staff from NPS-NATR, and NPS-DSC. Consideration

has been given to potential realignment of parts of the trail, to avoid or minimize impacts to wetlands while avoiding impacts to other resources, maintaining the desired NATR trail and NATR motor road character, and complying with other design criteria and the basis of planning and design from the 1995 EA (NPS 1995).

### **Wetlands in the project area**

With the trail realignment from approximately Station 91+14 traveling adjacent to the motor road and crossing Hanging Moss Creek, to approximately Station 101+00, all impacts to wetlands in the project area will be avoided.

### **Compliance**

#### ***Clean Water Act Section 401 and Section 404, and National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)***

The proposed actions may impact waters of the United States as defined by the Clean Water Act and are therefore subject to review by the USACE. Section 401 of the Clean Water Act is a certification by the state that the project impacts to water quality will not exceed those allowed under the state's water quality standards. Section 404 of the Clean Water Act requires a permit for any activity which may result in the discharge of dredged or fill material into navigable waters. Therefore, a modification to the existing Section 401, Section 404, and NPDES permits may be required for this project. Modification to the existing Section 401, Section 404, and NPDES permits will complete the requirements for federal and state permitting for this segment of the trail.

#### ***National Environmental Policy Act***

The 1995 EA and FONSI, the Section 106 compliance review, a Floodplain SOF for Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, and this SOF for Executive Order 11990 will complete the requirements for the National Environmental Policy Act for this project.



## REFERENCES CITED

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)

1999 *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.

Amy S. Greene Environmental Consultants, Inc. (ASGEC)

2007 "Wetland Delineation Report for Natchez Trace Parkway MP 103.5 to MP 105.8 (Old Canton Road to Reservoir Overlook Parking Area), MP 88.1 to MP 90.2 (Kansas City Southern Railroad Bridge to Traceway Park Parking Area), and MP 86.6 (Clinton Wayside Parking Lot) Madison and Hinds Counties, Mississippi." Report prepared for the NPS under contract. On file at DSC.

2008 "Wetland Delineation Report for Natchez Trace Parkway Trail Section 3P16 and 3P17 Milepost 93.5 to Milepost 101.5 (U.S. Route 49 to Interstate Highway 55). Report prepared for the NPS under contract. On file at DSC.

General Services Administration (GSA)

2006 41 CFR Part 102-76.60 – 102-76.95. Adoption of Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standard (ABAAS).

National Park Service (NPS), Department of the Interior

1987 *General Management Plan (GMP)*, Natchez Trace Parkway/Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee. On file at the NATR.

1987 *Comprehensive Trail Plan, Natchez Trace National Scenic Trail/Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee*. Developed in conjunction with the NATR GMP. On file at the NATR.

1995 *Multi-Use Trail Study Environmental Assessment, Natchez Trace Parkway, Jackson, MS*. On file at the NATR.

1996 *Finding of No Significant Impact for Multi-Use Trail Study Environmental Assessment, Natchez Trace Parkway, Jackson, MS*. On file at the NATR.

1998 NPS Procedural Manual #77-1: Wetland Protection.

2002 Director's Order #77-1: Wetland Protection.

2007a Trail Design Change. Memo to file from NATR Superintendent. March 27, 2007. On file at NATR.

2008 Natchez Trace Multi-Use Trail. Project NATR 055898-3O16, Old Canton Road to Reservoir Overlook Parking Area (Approximately from Milepost 103.6 to Milepost 105.8). Wetland Statement of Findings. Approved April 15, 2008. On file at NATR.

2009 Natchez Trace Multi-Use Trail. Project NATR 055898-3P16, 2,000 Feet East of Livingston Road to Highland Colony Parkway (Approximately from Milepost 98.23 to Milepost 101.2). Wetland Statement of Findings. Approved June 30, 2009. On file at NATR.

2009 Natchez Trace Multi-Use Trail. Project NATR 055898-3P18, Milepost 95.8 to 200 Feet West of Livingston Road (Approximately from Milepost 95.8 to Milepost 97.85). Wetland Statement of Findings. Approved July 27, 2010. On file at NATR.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Department of the Army

1987 *Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual* (Technical Report Y-87-1). Washington, DC.

United States Code (U.S.C.)

1968 16 U.S.C. §§ 1241-1251 et. Seq. (PL 107-303). National Trails Systems Act. U.S.C.

U.S. Congress

1999 National Park Service – Construction. Natchez Trace Parkway Construction.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Department of the Interior

1979 *Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States*, by Cowardin, L.M., V. Carter, F.C. Golet, and E.T. LaRoe. Washington, DC.

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Department of the Interior

1960 *General Introduction and Hydrologic Definitions Manual of Hydrology. Part 1. General Surface-Water Techniques*. Water-Supply Paper 1541-A. By W.B. Langbein and K.T. Iseri.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **FHWA Location Maps**

The FHWA Location Maps are 70% complete and subject to change. They have not yet been finalized for construction.

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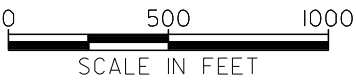
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END PROJECT  
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120+00 3P18 REALIGNMENT

NATR 3P19



EXISTING  
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TRAIL  
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REALIGNMENT

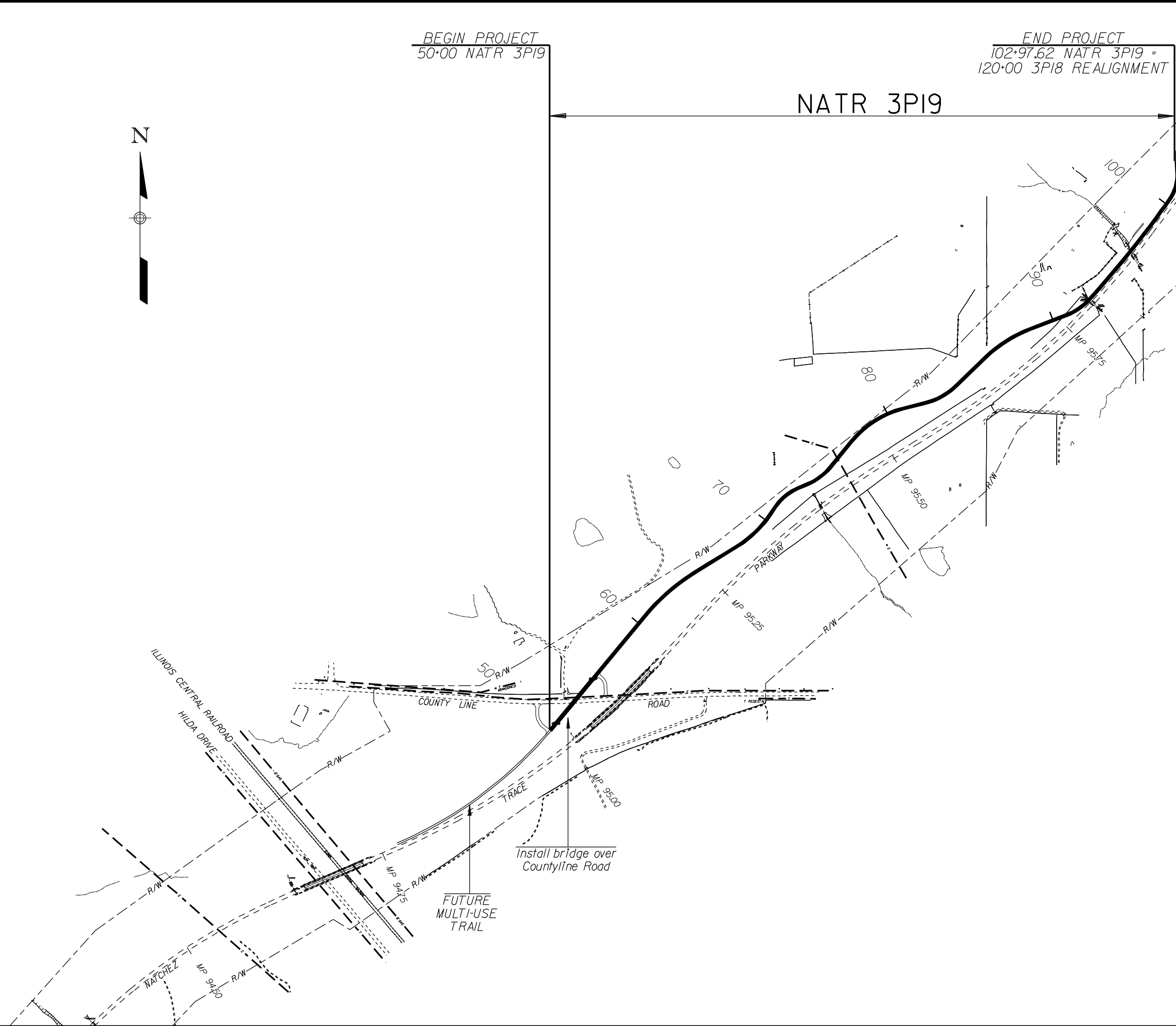


U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION  
EASTERN FEDERAL LANDS HIGHWAY DIVISION  
STERLING, VIRGINIA

NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY

**LOCATION MAP**  
**50+00 TO 102+97.62**

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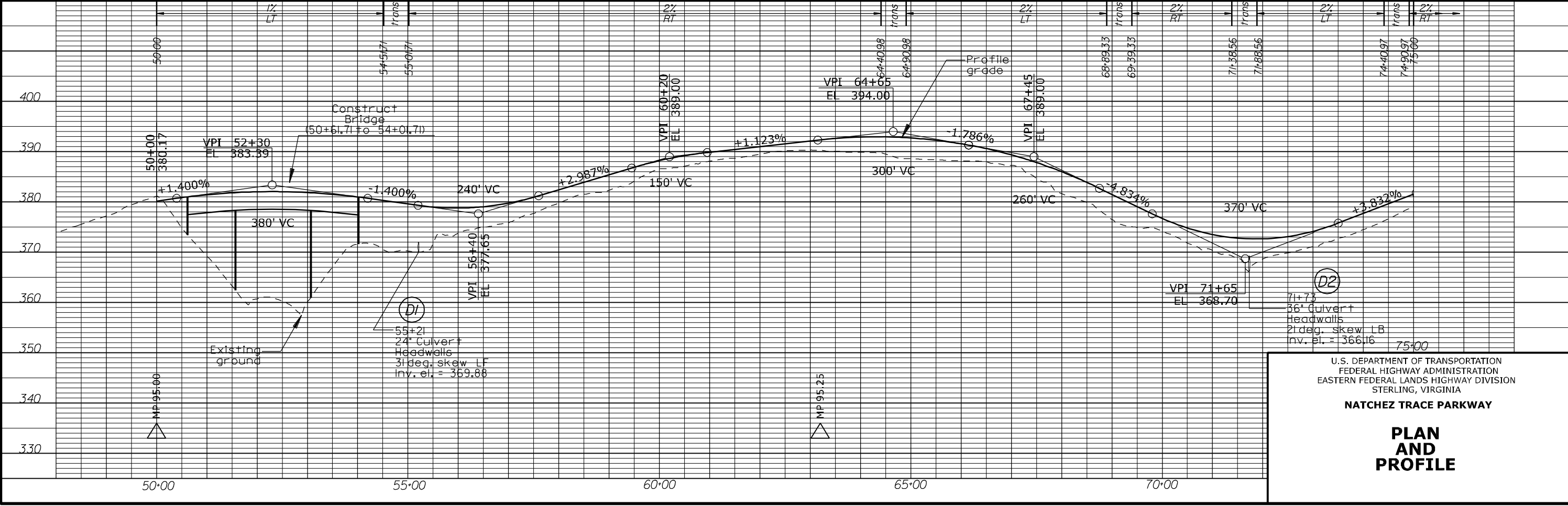
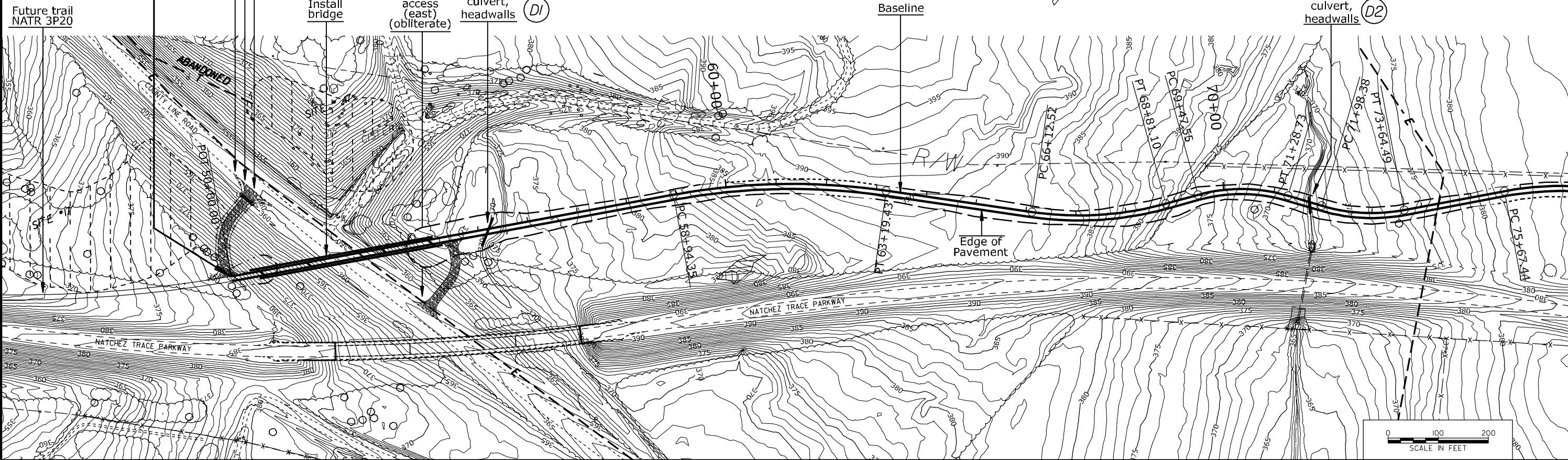
- Install barbed wire fence
- Install 28 ft gate
- Install construction access (west) (to remain)

- Install bridge
- Install construction access (east) (obliterate)
- Install 24" culvert, headwalls (D1)

Baseline

- Install 36" culvert, headwalls (D2)

PMIS NO.	NPS NO.	REG	STATE	PROJECT	SHEET NO.
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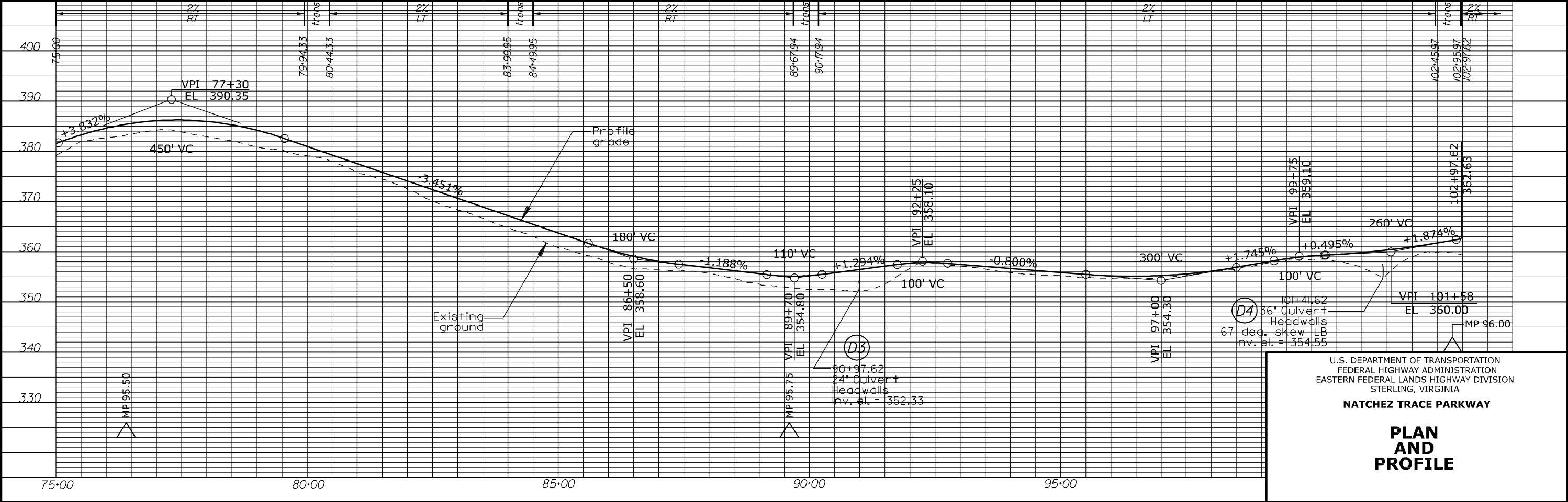
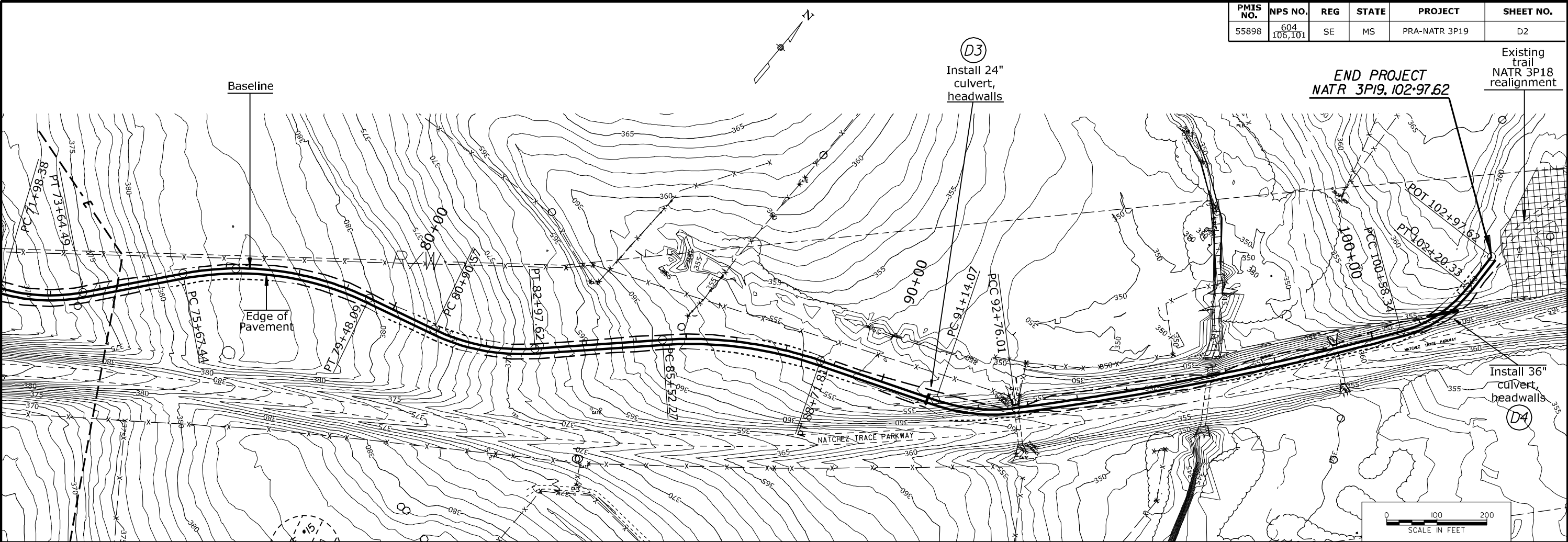


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FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION  
EASTERN FEDERAL LANDS HIGHWAY DIVISION  
STERLING, VIRGINIA

NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY

PLAN  
AND  
PROFILE

PMIS NO.	NPS NO.	REG	STATE	PROJECT	SHEET NO.
55898	604 106,101	SE	MS	PRA-NATR 3P19	D2



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EASTERN FEDERAL LANDS HIGHWAY DIVISION  
STERLING, VIRGINIA

NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY

PLAN  
AND  
PROFILE

