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June 3, 2026

Surface Transportation Board
Office of Environmental Analysis
395 E Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

STB Docket No. AB-1350X

Lincoln Lumber Company, Petitioner and Applicant

**SUPPLEMENTAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION FILING AND
NOTICE OF SHPO CONCURRENCE**

VERIFIED NO HISTORIC PROPERTIES AFFECTED

Lincoln Lumber Company, Applicant was contacted by the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office ("Nebraska SHPO") after receiving the Notice of Abandonment and instructed the Applicant to have a qualified consultant perform a Historical Assessment. The Applicant hired Melissa Dirr Gengler with Historic Resources Group, Inc. to complete a Historical Assessment of the rail line segment at Lincoln Lumber (See Exhibit B). After reviewing the Historical Assessment, Nebraska SHPO was able to complete the Section 106 consultation process and concluded that the proposed abandonment will not affect historic properties and no further Section 106 consultation appears necessary (see Exhibit A).

On behalf of the Applicant, we request that the Nebraska SHPO determination be incorporated into the administrative record and considered by OEA in completing its environmental review. If you have any questions or further instructions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very Truly Yours,

KENT SEACREST
For the Firm

Enclosures

cc (w/ encl.): Copper Spur Partners, LLC (mgarnett276@gmail.com)
Nebraska State Historical Society (NSHS@Nebraska.gov)
Stacey Hageman, Urban Design & Historic Preservation Planner
(SLHageman@lincoln.ne.gov)



June 2nd, 2026

Lincoln Lumber Company
On Behalf of The Surface Transportation Board
VIA EMAIL

RE: HP# 2603-129-01, Lincoln Lumber Company Rail Line Abandonment, North 23rd-24th St
between W and Y St, Lincoln, Lancaster County, NE

To Whom it May Concern,

Thank you for submitting information for the above-referenced project for the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office (NESHPO) to review and comment on. Our comment on this project and its potential to affect historic properties is required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and implementing regulations 36 CFR Part 800.

Based on the information provided, the proposed undertaking is unlikely to affect any cultural resources listed in the National Register of Historic Places or eligible for such a listing. A determination that there will be **no historic properties affected (NP)** is appropriate for this undertaking, and the project may proceed as planned. Should any changes to the project be made, please notify NESHPO of the changes before further project planning continues.

Please retain this correspondence and your documented finding to show compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended. If you have any questions, please contact me at haylee.rose@nebraska.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Haylee Rose'.

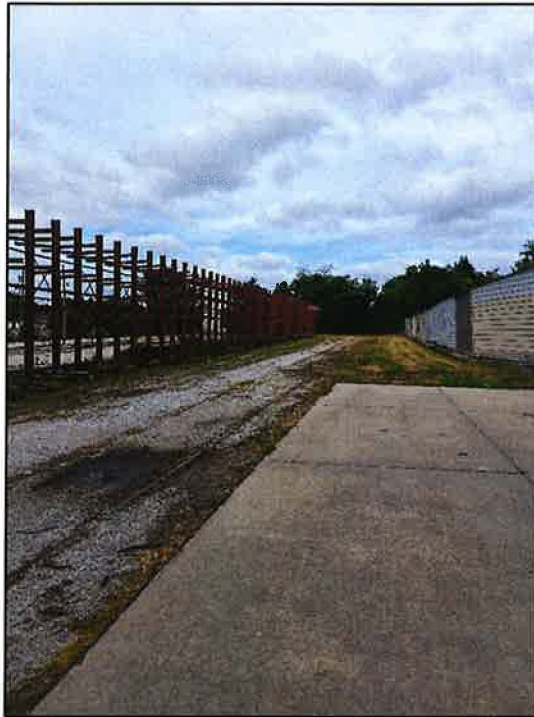
Haylee Rose
Section 106 Review and Compliance Coordinator for Standing Structures

Exhibit B

Lincoln Lumber Company Rail Line Abandonment Historic Assessment

North 23rd-24th Streets-Between "W" and "Y" Streets

May 2026



Prepared by:
Melissa Dirr Gengler
Historic Resources Group, Inc.



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Report of Findings

Introduction

This Project is located in Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska along a one block segment between North 23rd and vacated 24th Streets and “W” and “Y” Streets. (see Figure 1 for Vicinity Map). This linear resource is comprised of a short, terminal urban industrial stub section of rail line. The proposed project includes vacating this section of rail line. This report is being submitted to support compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The report has been prepared by Historic Resources Group, Inc., a federally certified woman owned small business historic preservation consulting firm, whose professionals meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualifications Standards in the areas of history and architectural history. The report will provide a historic property evaluation and provide a recommendation of eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for the rail line.



Figure 1. Project location illustrated by red arrow.

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Project Information and Background

This project proposes to vacate an unused one-block length of railroad track located between “W” and “Y” Streets and North 23rd and vacated North 24th Streets. The Surface Transportation board (STB) has jurisdiction to approve abandonment of rail lines that have not been used for two years or more. As such, this action is considered a federal undertaking and must be reviewed under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended and implementing regulations at 36 CFR Part 800. In March 2026 cultural resource information was provided to the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for their review. Correspondence between the project applicant and SHPO resulted in a request to evaluate the rail line for NRHP eligibility with a focus on Criterion A in the areas of Community Planning and Development and/or Transportation and Criterion C in the area of Engineering at the local level of significance.

Methodology

A field survey of the rail line was conducted by HRG, Inc. in May 2026 Melissa Dirr Gengler (architectural historian) with HRG, Inc. Prior to field survey, a records search at the Lincoln/Lancaster County Historic Preservation division was conducted to document any previous surveys or historic information that may contribute to an understanding of evaluation methodology for this linear resource. Historic contextual material was gathered through newspaper research, online resources, related NRHP nominations, and property records.

National Register Criteria for Evaluation

When evaluating historic properties, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is the primary source by which they are identified for protection under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Criteria for determinations of eligibility are set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.4 (70) and are described in *National Register Bulletin How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. In order for a property to be determined eligible it must meet at least one of the four NRHP criteria and retain a high degree of historic integrity. Location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association are the seven aspects of integrity defined by the NRHP. In general, a property will always possess several, and usually most, of these aspects. Historic significance may then be present in one of four categories: important historic events (Criterion A); significant people in history (Criterion B); significant architecture, design, or property type (Criterion C); and potential to yield important historic information (Criterion D). Survey methodology was based on the *Nebraska Historic Resources Survey and Inventory Manual*

2010 Edition provided by the Nebraska SHPO. This manual provides guidance for survey techniques utilized in Nebraska as well as comparative information to support recommendations of eligibility for both individual properties and historic districts. Additional methodology and guidance was referenced in National Park Service Bulletins and Reviews including *Best Practices Review Issue 10: Areas of Significance: Community Planning & Development*; *Review Issue 9: Assessing Integrity, Not Condition*; *Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*; and *Bulletin 24: Guidelines for Local Surveys*.

Area History and Background

Lincoln is in Lancaster County and is home to the state capital, the University of Nebraska, and rich agricultural land in the county. This area was opened for settlement in 1859 when a handful of settlers near the salt basin in the southeast part of the new Nebraska Territory organized Lancaster County. They first platted a town named Lancaster on the east bank of Salt Creek and designated it the county seat. Salt was a valuable commodity at the time and used for preserving meat among other things. Presence of salt in the creek bolstered optimistic economic development among the early settlers. Salt could be seen covering the ground when a crust of salt brine would be exposed on hot sunny days. Quantities were not sufficient to support a saline industry and when industry pioneer J. Sterling Morton opened his salt mines across the border in Kansas, the potential for salt commerce was over in Lancaster.¹

By 1867, when Nebraska was declared a state, Lancaster had a small population of less than 30 people. Lancaster was selected as the state capital and managed to retain the title despite fierce competition from Omaha, the territorial capital, and other cities such as Ashland and the now defunct Yankee Hill. Lancaster was considered a more central location for the lands yet to be settled in western Nebraska. Lancaster was soon renamed Lincoln after the president. This was an attempt to garner controversy from those that were not supporters of the president and to remove the capital to Omaha. The effort to strike controversy failed and the city was renamed Lincoln and secured the state capital. Quick planning continued to establish public institutions, a market square, religious groups, educational buildings, and social clubs.²

Major public institutions that served the entire state were soon organized to cement the location of the capital. These included a university, state penitentiary, and a mental health facility at the time

¹ Ed Zimmer. "Lincoln and Lancaster County." Accessed at www.casde.unl.edu/history/counties/lancaster/lincoln

² Ibid.

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called the “insane asylum.” Soon after, the first railroad service arrived when the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad claimed a financial prize for the first locomotive to steam into Lincoln in 1870. Many rail lines followed, including the Missouri Pacific, and Lincoln became a thriving state capital. The success of these early institutions and businesses is clear in the growing population. Lincoln reached 2,500 in 1870, grew to 7,000 by 1875 and hit 13,000 by 1880. Suburbs grew around Lincoln and built some of their own institutions which were eventually annexed into the city. These included Havelock (railroads), University Place (Nebraska Wesleyan University), Bethany Heights (Cotner College), and College View (Union College). These towns were all incorporated into Lincoln proper by 1930 and remain among Lincoln’s distinctive neighborhoods.

Missouri Pacific Railroad (MoPac) was founded as the Pacific Railroad, chartered in Missouri in 1849. It was headquartered in St. Louis and was reorganized in 1872 as the Missouri Pacific. Railroad tycoon, Jay Gould, acquired the line in 1879.³ The MoPac arrived in Lincoln in 1886 from Weeping Water. The next year, the company began building an elaborate brick depot at 9th and “S” Streets, west of the University, to replace its small frame depot. MoPac and the Freemont, Elkhorn, & Missouri Valley Railroad shared the depot and the rails. MoPac continued to grow and laid additional tracks across Lincoln in the late 1880s.⁴ Falls City became MoPac’s main operating center, housing its division headquarters and roundhouse and employing 700 people by 1924.⁵ They were known for their blue engines with white eagles painted on the nose in later years. Throughout the next century, Lincoln was an important stop for many large rail companies including the Union Pacific and Burlington Northern. There were many other smaller lines that accessed the city and were absorbed into the larger companies over the years as well.

³ James Steely, Thomas Witt, Christian Driver, and Barb Gibson. “Railroad Development in Nebraska 1862-1980 A Historic Context” Prepared for the Nebraska State Historical Society, June 2014, 134.

⁴ “MoPac Heritage: The Lincoln-Union Branch and the Missouri Pacific in Nebraska.” Accessed at www.trainweb.org/screamingeagle/history.html

⁵ “Railroad Development in Nebraska”, 135.

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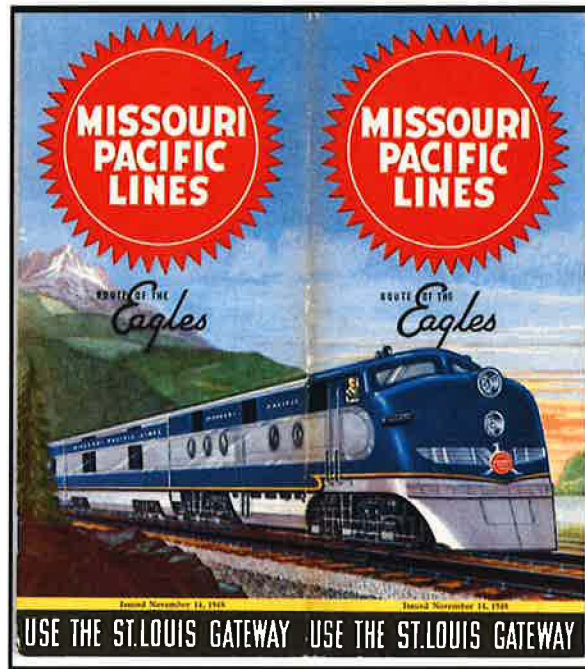


Missouri Pacific Railroad Depot at 9th and “S” Streets, Lincoln, 1920. Nebraska State Historical Society Digital Collections.



MoPac yard, roundhouse and turntable, c. 1910 at their Falls City Headquarters. Postcard: www.cardcow.com

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Missouri Pacific Line timetable November 14, 1948, Nebraska State Historical Society Digital Collections.

MoPac eventually operated 380 miles of railway in Nebraska. They competed for business in Omaha and operated the Omaha Belt Line Railroad, a line that circled the city and offered both passenger and freight deliveries. Their Missouri River Eagle streamliners operated passenger service between St. Louis, Kansas City, and Omaha from 1940-1965.⁶

In the 1980s, three major rail lines, the MoPac, Western Pacific, and Union Pacific (UP) merged. Several factors contributed to the merger and the decline of the MoPac. In 1984, significant flooding damaged the rails and washed away a bridge crossing west of Weeping Water. Repair costs were astronomical for the branch line between the two communities. Additionally, the trucking industry began to consume more of the rail line profits, and the city of Lincoln was pressuring MoPac specifically to reroute their line around the city and abandon the trackage that cut through town. Removing trackage through town was a major issue for many. It caused problems with collisions at their at-grade crossings with the tracks cutting through densely populated and busy neighborhoods. One accident in 1981, included a collision with a Station 9 fire truck at Cotner and Vine that resulted in the death of firefighter Harley Grasmick.⁷

⁶ "Railroad Development in Nebraska," 136

⁷ Barb Koenig. "Fire truck-train crash fatal." *Lincoln Journal Star* (Lincoln, NE) April 2, 1981, 1.

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With the merger with UP, the dangerous routes through town were diminished and emphasis placed on UP's routes that encircled town. Soon after, new schedules and engine colors were seen in the area, denoting the merger and the absorption of the other two lines into the larger Union Pacific. Within two years of the merger, UP abandoned the former MoPac trackage to Weeping Water.

When UP cut the west end of the line between Weeping Water and Lincoln it left the former MoPac line running only as far as 35th Street in Lincoln so it could interchange with the Omaha, Lincoln & Beatrice (OL&B) line near the former fairgrounds, now University of Nebraska's Innovation Campus. As the University grew in this area and the tracks abutted and cut through their campus, they negotiated with the UP to vacate the track. UP began removing the remaining rails in 2000. Discontinuous fragments of the former line extended only from the OL&B interchange at 18th Street to 23rd Street with segments removed between 27th and 33rd Streets.⁸

In 2001, Lincoln Lumber Company (932 North 23rd Street) purchased the small section of track near their property on North 23rd Street and approximately Y Street from the UP. The line was serviced by the OL&B, a Class III switching railroad, but only intermittently given the lack of connectivity and track conditions. Because of the condition of the track and weight concerns, OL&B would run only one of its' locomotives, the #12.⁹

Over the next twenty years, the line would get used sporadically for deliveries to Lincoln Lumber. It has not been used for more than two years. Today, a trail follows some of the abandoned MoPac corridor. It begins at the University of Nebraska Campus at 19th and Vine and continues east through Lincoln to 84th Street and the Novartis Trailhead. From there, it continues 25 miles to Wabash, Nebraska. The trail was constructed between 1993 and 2009.

Survey Summary Results and Standing Structures Evaluation

HRG conducted field investigation of this segment of rail in May 2026. Contextual research was also conducted to identify and document other resources listed in or eligible for the NRHP as well

⁸“MoPac Heritage: The Lincoln-Union Branch and the Missouri Pacific in Nebraska.” Accessed at www.trainweb.org/screamingeagle/history.html

⁹ “Railroads of Lincoln and Lancaster county, accessed at www.llcgs.info/cpage.php?pt+51

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as contextual documents prepared by both Nebraska and neighboring states. Nebraska’s “Railroad Development in Nebraska 1862-1980, A Historic Context” prepared for the SHPO contributed to an understanding of railroad development in the state, while documents such as “Guidelines for Inventory and Evaluation of Railroads in Minnesota,” contributed to developing questions and evaluation methodology. Additionally, existing NRHP nominations for rail segments were consulted. There are segments of rail line represented in the NRHP. Many are rare narrow-gauge lines, some of which remain in operation such as the Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad in Colorado, the East Broad Top Railroad and Coal Company in Pennsylvania, and the Georgetown Loop Railroad in Colorado. Other rail lines that are represented in the NRHP have significant engineering associations such as the Mauch Chunk Switchback Railway in Pennsylvania that was a coal hauling line built in 1827 and was the second gravity line built in the United States. The Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad Company Historic District is comprised of the historic right-of-way of the line that ran a distance of 14.5 miles from East Portal, Montana to Loop Creek Idaho. This line is listed for its significant engineering with bridges and tunnels cut through the mountains that extend to over 8,000 feet long.¹⁰

There are other examples of rail lines listed in the NRHP and common features include a loop rail that begins and ends at a single point, a length of rail sufficient to express the significance of a longer linear corridor, or significant engineering and design features such as bridges and tunnels.

Segments of rail should be sufficiently long enough that they retain integrity of setting, feeling, and association. This can differ based on location, but the length should be sufficient to provide a segment with an uninterrupted viewshed, or it should embody the characteristics of the historic setting. A railroad segment or portion of railroad corridor should be a length between two reasonable endpoints (station to station for example).¹¹

Other associated features important to the railroad during the historic period may be considered part of the setting as well. Loss of integrity may be considered when a segment is damaged or altered with intrusions such as new construction, alterations of the original alignment, grade and roadbed width changes caused by new grading for roads or other features, and removal of other distinctive elements that contribute to the character of the line.

¹⁰ National Register nominations. Railway lines on the National Register of Historic Places: Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, East Broad Top Railroad and Coal Company, Georgetown Loop Railroad, Mauch Chunk Switchback Railway, and Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad Company Historic District.

¹¹ “Guidelines for Inventory and Evaluation of Railroads in Minnesota.” Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office and Minnesota Department of Transportation, 2019, 4.

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Integrity

This segment of rail does not retain physical integrity due to lack of connectivity (feeling and association), insufficient material/length to express significance, material replacement (design, material, workmanship), and change in setting. Location remains in tact.

As requested in correspondence from Nebraska SHPO this small segment of line is evaluated below under NRHP Criteria A and C. No association appears to be present under Criterion B for important people in history.

Criterion A

Criterion A (Transportation or Community/Regional Planning): In evaluating this one-block section of rail important questions to consider are whether it contributes to the settlement of the region or played a significant role in the commercial, industrial or agricultural development in the region or played a significant role in planning and physical growth. Additionally, how connected is this fragment to other remnants of the line. In this case Sanborn Fire Insurance maps show the area was platted and businesses present prior to the construction of the tracks. Other railroads served Lincoln well before the arrival of the MoPac as well. MoPac is not associated with town building or expansion as part of their history in Nebraska. The transportation corridor existed prior to the presence of the railroad, but the small spur did help to deliver products to local businesses. The railroad corridor did not open the area up to settlement or spur development as the area was already developed and platted at the time of the railroad’s arrival. It does not represent an important transfer point or terminal market for products, nor did it expand or establish a connection or contribute to significant industrial or commercial growth. It does not represent a significant early connection within the railroad network in Nebraska or Lincoln as several rail lines served the area for many years prior. There remains no greater connectivity of this line, since the spur was removed from Weeping Water. Broken elements, like this fragment, remain in small segments in Lincoln. This segment of track, or the greater remnant segment is not eligible under Criterion A.

Criterion C

Criterion C (Engineering): In evaluating this resource under Criterion C for any potential engineering or design merit, it is important to discern whether the track or line remnants embody the distinctive design or construction methods associated with a significant railroad complex, or if they represent the work of a significant engineer or builder, or if they exemplify the designs of a significant railroad company. No distinctive features, engineering innovations, or designs were identified along this segment of track. This segment of track, or the greater remnant segment is not eligible under Criterion C.

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The historic images below illustrate the general nature of the area immediately adjacent to this study area.



View looking south just south of Y Street on 22nd Street at Desmond Lumber, c. 1940. Though one block from the project location, this image references historic-era conditions of the area (Photo: Growing Up Lincoln Facebook)



Missouri Pacific Railroad crossing at 24th and X Street, 1947, and approximately one block from the subject study area for this undertaking. Photo: Nebraska State Historical Society Digital Collections

Criterion D

Additional consideration was given regarding evaluation under Criterion D for potential to yield information. Railroad rights-of-way, abandoned beds, and remnant tracks can be reviewed under all NRHP Criteria. The following information was prepared by Rob Bozell, a professional who meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Standards in the area of archeology:

There is not a Nebraska state or nationwide consensus regarding whether abandoned rail lines and associated rail resources are best considered as archeological properties or above ground structures. Accordingly, in the interest of broad National Register of Historic Place (NRHP) consideration of the proposed undertaking, the following remarks address NRHP eligibility under Criterion D – archeological information potential.

Abandoned rail lines and associated sites can certainly be NRHP significant under Criterion D with clear archeological research potential. Some examples include:

- Very early original or unique rail lines which could contribute to explanation of key elements of the history of railroad technology.
- Rail lines linked to specific events or patterns in history such as preserved Civil War lines, mining camp lines, or development of key settlements or cities.
- Poorly known ancillary facilities such as unique bridges or underpasses, railroad production or storage facilities, or worker camps such as Chinese immigrant camps for building the transcontinental railroad.

The proposed undertaking is the removal of about 320 linear feet of the abandoned Missouri Pacific rail line between 23rd and 24th Streets and ‘Y’ and ‘W’ Streets. The track is partially exposed, but the underlying ties are buried. This small segment of tracks does not have any obvious archeological research potential. Archeological field investigations and subsequent research would not provide significant information related to rail technology, the Missouri Pacific Railroad, the Lincoln Lumber Yard, or Lincoln settlement that is not readily available in existing archival sources. This segment of the Missouri Pacific rail line is not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion D.

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Recommendations

This report recommends the segment of remaining unused track near Lincoln Lumber between 23rd and 24th Streets and “Y” and W” Streets is not eligible for the NRHP.

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Photos



1. Tracks looking west from North 23rd Street

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2. Tracks looking west from North 23rd Street.

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3. Tracks looking east from North 23rd Street.

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4. Tracks looking northeast from North 23rd Street.