

ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION OF FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS
Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Basic Sheet 1

Project ID 8110-01-03	Project Termini From <u>St. Joseph Town Line</u> To <u>WIS 64/65 Intersection</u>	Funding Sources - Check all that apply <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local								
Route Designation (if applicable) <u>WIS 64</u> National Highway System (NHS) Route <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Nearest Community City of New Richmond, Village of Somerset	Estimated Project Cost \$12.3 Million (2013 Dollars) Real Estate Acquisition Portion of Estimated Cost \$0.9 Million (2013 Dollars)								
Project Name <u>Stillwater-New Richmond WIS 64 Freeway/Expressway Conversion</u>		Right of Way Acquisition <table border="1"> <tr> <th></th> <th>Acres</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Fee</td> <td>24.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TLE</td> <td>0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PLE</td> <td>0.0</td> </tr> </table>		Acres	Fee	24.3	TLE	0.0	PLE	0.0
	Acres									
Fee	24.3									
TLE	0.0									
PLE	0.0									
County St. Croix	Section-Township-Range T30N R18W, S4-8; T30N R19W, S1-10, 18; T30N R20W, S12, 13; T31N R18W, S31-36; T31N R19W, S36									
Bridge Number(s), if applicable N/A	Scheduled start date Operational Planning Meeting (OPM) 12/09/2009									

Functional Classification of Existing Route	Urban	Rural
Freeway/Expressway	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Principal Arterial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Minor Arterial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Major Collector	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minor Collector	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Local	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No Functional Class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

WisDOT Project Classification	Checked
Resurfacing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pavement Replacement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reconditioning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expansion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bridge Rehabilitation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bridge Replacement	<input type="checkbox"/>
A "Majors" Project	<input type="checkbox"/>
SHRM	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preventive Maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, Corridor Preservation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

FHWA Categorical Exclusion, Type 2c
 FHWA Environmental Assessment. No significant impacts indicated by Initial Assessment.

<u>[Signature]</u> (Signature) (TranSmart Project Manager)	<u>3/18/2014</u> (Date)	<u>[Signature]</u> (Signature) (Director, Bureau of Technical Services)	<u>4/15/14</u> (Date)
<u>[Signature]</u> (Signature) (WisDOT Project Manager)	<u>3/19/2014</u> (Date)	<u>[Signature]</u> (Signature)	<u>3/19/14</u> (Date)
<u>[Signature]</u> (Signature)	<u>3/24/2014</u> (Date)	<u>[Signature]</u> (Signature)	<u>3/19/14</u> (Date)

(X Region Aeronautics Rails & Harbors) (FHWA FAA FTA FRA)

After reviewing public comments and coordinating with other agencies, it is determined that this action:

A) Will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. This document is a:
 Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

B) Has potential to significantly affect the quality of the human environment:
 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Required

<u>[Signature]</u> (Signature) (TranSmart Project Manager)	<u>[Date]</u> (Date)	<u>[Signature]</u> (Signature) (Director, Bureau of Technical Services)	<u>[Date]</u> (Date)
<u>[Signature]</u> (Signature) (WisDOT Project Manager)	<u>[Date]</u> (Date)	<u>[Signature]</u> (Signature)	<u>[Date]</u> (Date)
<u>[Signature]</u> (Signature)	<u>[Date]</u> (Date)	<u>[Signature]</u> (Signature)	<u>[Date]</u> (Date)

(X Region Aeronautics Rails & Harbors) (FHWA FAA FTA FRA)

Sub-concept 8C was not carried forward for further evaluation in this environmental document because it was determined that an additional crossing of the Apple River was not prudent because of the magnitude of the potential effects associated with construction of a new crossing.

Prudent and Feasible Alternatives:

In addition to the No Build Alternative, four planning level concepts were identified as a result of the planning process and stakeholder input to be carried forward as alternatives for further evaluation. The concepts were further refined considering current design standards and available topographic data to determine the potential right-of-way needs and the potential effects (see Exhibit 3, Alternatives).

No Build Alternative — The No Build Alternative would include routine maintenance without improvements or alterations to existing WIS 64. The existing WIS 64/River's Edge Drive/85th Street and WIS 64/95th Street/100th Street intersections would remain as currently constructed. This alternative would not address or enhance safety, operations, or mobility functions of the corridor, nor would it allow for preservation of the corridor, or coordination between local entities and WisDOT for future transportation decision making.

The No Build Alternative is not recommended for adoption because it fails to meet the study purpose and need. It would not maintain the investment already allocated to WIS 64. Safety, operation, and mobility challenges would continue to increase as local traffic and development conflict with regional through traffic. Finally, this alternative offers little guidance for a long-term strategy for WIS 64, thereby creating uncertainty for local land use planning initiatives related to access along WIS 64. While the No Build Alternative does not meet the study purpose and need, it does serve as a baseline for comparison of the potential effects related to a recommended alternative.

Jug Handle (Preferred Alternative) — A “jug handle” at County K/North 4th Street and County CC/Wall Street is a component of Alternatives 1 through 4. This alternative was part of an earlier 2005 study completed by the city of New Richmond as part of their Official Mapping of future roads within and adjacent to the city. The city requested WisDOT review and comment on their alternatives to improve the WIS 64/County CC/Wall Street intersection. The city was concerned with future growth potential in the northwest part of the community and the potential safety issues that could arise at the intersection as a result of increased traffic. The resulting analysis brought forward the Jug Handle concept which was officially mapped by the city. At the initial local official meeting held in March of 2010, the city of New Richmond inquired about WisDOT's participation in the construction of the jug handle alternative should the need arise. As a result, the jug handle was included as a component of all alternatives developed for the WIS 64 project.

The jug handle would add a median at County K/North 4th Street and restrict turning movements at the intersection to right-in/right-out only. A new local road would be constructed extending 185th Avenue from County K/North 4th Street to County CC. County CC/Wall Street would be grade-separated from WIS 64 with the construction of a new bridge over the highway (see Exhibit 3.1, Map 1). The elevation and embankment of the new bridge would require the closure of Industrial Drive, North Shore Drive, and three private driveways intersecting County CC/Wall Street; new local road connections and driveways would be constructed to maintain access to properties. **(The Jug Handle is included in all of the alternatives carried forward in this document as follows).**

The Jug Handle is a component of the Preferred Alternative to be mapped and is included in all environmental evaluations and calculations of potential effects in this document.

Alternative 1 — Alternative 1 (formerly Concept 1) consists of constructing a new local road connection between 100th Street and Winding Trail Road. With this alternative, 185th Avenue would be extended to connect 100th Street and 110th Street. With the new local road connections, both the WIS 64/River's Edge Drive/85th Street intersection and the WIS 64/100th/95th Street intersection would be closed. Direct access between the local road system and WIS 64 would be provided at the existing 110th Street interchange (see Exhibit 3, Map 1). This alternative would designate WIS 64 as a freeway.

Alternative 1 was not recommended as the Preferred Alternative to be mapped because it creates the greatest amount of indirection for roadway users over the existing condition compared to the other alternatives being considered. It does not meet the mobility and circulation/access portion of the purpose and need as well as the other alternatives considered.

Alternative 2 — Alternative 2 (formerly Concept 9) proposes building a new partial interchange at the WIS 64/River's Edge Drive/85th Street intersection with a new overpass. Both an eastbound exit ramp and a westbound entrance ramp would be constructed to WIS 64 at this location. With this alternative, 185th Avenue would be extended to connect 100th Street and 110th Street. A new local road would connect 180th Avenue to 85th Street south of the current intersection to provide a minimum safe distance from the eastbound exit ramp. In addition, a new frontage road would connect 179th Avenue to 178th Avenue. A median would be constructed at the WIS 64/100th/95th Street intersection

creating two right-in/right-out intersections with WIS 64 (see Exhibit 3, Map 2). This alternative would designate WIS 64 as an expressway.

Alternative 2 was not recommended as the Preferred Alternative to be mapped, because Alternative 4 meets the study purpose and need with fewer impacts and provides better local circulation than Alternative 2.

Alternative 3 — Alternative 3 (formerly Sub-concept 9A) proposes building a new partial interchange at the WIS 64/River's Edge Drive/85th Street intersection with a new overpass. Both an eastbound exit ramp and a westbound entrance ramp would be constructed to WIS 64 at this location. With this alternative, 185th Avenue would be extended to connect 100th Street and 110th Street. A new local road would connect 180th Avenue to 85th Street south of the current intersection to provide a minimum safe distance from the eastbound exit ramp. In addition, a new frontage road would connect 179th Avenue to 178th Avenue. An additional frontage road between 85th Street and 95th Street would also be constructed. The WIS 64/100th/95th Street intersection would be closed as part of this alternative (see Exhibit 3, Map 3). This alternative would designate WIS 64 as a freeway.

Alternative 3 was not selected as the Preferred Alternative to be mapped because Alternative 4 meets the study purpose and need with fewer impacts and provides better local circulation than Alternative 3.

Alternative 4 (Preferred Alternative) — Alternative 4 (formerly Concept 10) proposes to construct new frontage roads and a new overpass structure spanning WIS 64 between the existing intersections of WIS 64/River's Edge/85th Street and WIS 64/95th/100th. Medians would be constructed at both the WIS 64/River's Edge/85th Street and WIS 64/95th/100th Street intersections converting the existing full-access intersections to right-in/right-out only. New frontage road segments would be constructed to connect Winding Trail Road and 100th Street on the north side of WIS 64 and connect 85th Street and 95th Street on the south side of WIS 64. A new overpass located approximately midway between 85th Street and 100th Street and spanning WIS 64 would be constructed to connect the new frontage roads (see Exhibit 3.1, Map 2). This alternative would designate WIS 64 as an expressway.

Alternative 4 was selected as the Preferred Alternative to be mapped because it best meets the purpose and need by eliminating left-turn movements at three at-grade intersections, and completely eliminates one at-grade intersection. These changes would improve safety conditions along WIS 64. The Preferred Alternative to be mapped also balances local and regional circulation better than the other alternatives considered by causing the least amount of indirection for people traveling to/from destinations located north and south of WIS 64. The alternative also has fewer, and more geographically concentrated impacts than the other alternatives considered.

3. Description of Proposed Action (attach project location map and other appropriate graphics)

The intent of the Proposed Action is to designate WIS 64 as a freeway between the St. Joseph Town Line and WIS 35 and as an expressway between WIS 35 and WIS 65. (see Exhibit 1, Project Location Map). This designation is a *planning* action to identify the requisite improvements and associated right-of-way needs to convert this facility to a Freeway and Expressway. This designation is also a *preservation* action where Official Mapping under §84.295 (10)(a) is used to preserve the right-of-way needed for the eventual actual conversion.

Since §84.295 (10)(a) also provides WisDOT the authority to purchase Officially Mapped lands as right-of-way, the action is intended to complete the Environmental Analysis to a Tier 2 level. A Tier 2 evaluates potential effects of alternatives with more detail than a Tier 1 effort. The Tier 2 level will enhance the validity of the designation and conversion process as required under §84.295 (10)(a) and serve as a link between the planning and preservation process and the final project design.

A Tier 2 level analysis also provides that adequate evaluation of alternatives has resulted in the selection of a preferred alternative to be mapped. Furthermore, the Tier 2 analysis provides a higher level of assurance that the identified right-of-way needs (Official Map) can be acquired when approached by an affected property owner or when WisDOT makes the Official Map an approved project in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

The WIS 64 corridor was constructed as a four-lane facility in 2006 and the portion of the corridor from the St. Joseph Town Line to the WIS 35 interchange removed direct private access and public at-grade intersections at the time it was constructed. This portion of WIS 64 would involve declaration only as a freeway with no construction necessary. Between WIS 35 and WIS 65, WIS 64 is currently constructed to expressway standards and would be enhanced by eliminating left-turn and crossing movements from side roads.

The Proposed Action would map for construction of new frontage roads both north and south of existing WIS 64 connecting Winding Trail to 100th Street on the north side of WIS 64 and connecting 180th Avenue to 95th Street south of WIS 64. An overpass of WIS 64 would also be mapped for construction connecting the new frontage roads (see Exhibit 3.1, Map 2). Medians would be mapped for construction at the WIS 64/Rivers Edge Drive/85th Street

intersection and the WIS 64/95th/100th Street intersection converting the existing full access intersections to right-in/right-out only intersections.

In addition, a “jug handle” system would be mapped for construction at County K/185th Avenue/North 4th Street and County CC/Wall Street. A new local road connection would be mapped for construction extending County K/185th Avenue across County CC to Blue Bill Avenue. An overpass of WIS 64 would be mapped for construction at County CC/Wall Street. The existing full access County K/185th Avenue/North 4th Street intersection would be converted to right-in/right-out only with the addition of a median. The elevation and embankment of the new bridge would require the closure of Industrial Drive, North Shore Drive, and five private driveways intersecting County CC/Wall Street. New driveways would be constructed from the newly constructed local road connections (see Exhibit 3.1, Map 1).

The Proposed Action is a long-term corridor planning/preservation initiative identifying future right-of-way needs for the conversion of WIS 64 to a freeway and expressway. No funds have been programmed for construction at this time. Funding for construction of the Proposed Action would be determined as improvements become necessary.

4. In general terms, briefly discuss the construction and operational energy requirements and conservation potential of the various alternatives under consideration. Indicate whether the savings in operational energy are greater than the energy required to construct the facility:

The Preferred Alternative to be mapped would have comparable construction energy consumption to the other build alternatives and would be greater than the No Build Alternative. However, in the long-term, operational energy consumption would be less than the No Build Alternative due to less congestion and vehicle operations at energy-efficient speeds. The long-term operational savings in energy would offset the construction energy costs and result in a net savings of energy usage.

5. Describe existing land use (attach land use maps, if available):

a. Land use of properties that adjoin the project:

The project corridor lies in the towns of Somerset, Richmond, and Star Prairie, the village of Somerset, and the city of New Richmond. Land uses immediately adjacent to the project corridor are predominately rural or semi-rural. Urban land uses adjacent to the corridor are located on the corridor’s eastern terminus in the city of New Richmond. In the town of Somerset, woodlands, agriculture, and low-density residential uses are the majority of land uses on the corridor, with small amounts of recreational land and wetlands. Wetland types found in the area are riparian wetland (wooded, scrub/shrub, and emergent/wet meadow). Agriculture, residential, and woodland uses characterize the properties located in the towns of Star Prairie and Richmond. Within the city of New Richmond, residential, agriculture, recreational, and commercial land uses are the most common. Land use maps for communities surrounding the project area can be found in Exhibit 4, Land Use Maps.

b. Land use surrounding project area:

Land uses surrounding the project study area are very similar to those in the immediate area. Agricultural uses are interspersed with small woodlots, widespread large-lot rural residential uses, and small amounts of open water and wetlands. There are numerous commercial properties in the study area and some industrial uses; these are concentrated in and near the village of Somerset and the city of New Richmond. In addition, there are three golf courses in the study area.

Further out, but within ten miles of the corridor, land uses are generally more rural and less developed than in the study area, except for the city of Stillwater, Minnesota, which is located approximately five miles southwest of the western terminus of the study corridor on the western banks of the St. Croix River. Stillwater is a predominantly older city of about 15,000 residents with residential, commercial, and industrial uses laid out in a traditional urban street grid.

List of Exhibits

Exhibit 1: Project Location Map

Exhibit 2: Concept Evaluation Matrix

Exhibit 3: Alternatives

Exhibit 3.1 Proposed Action

Exhibit 4: Land Use Maps

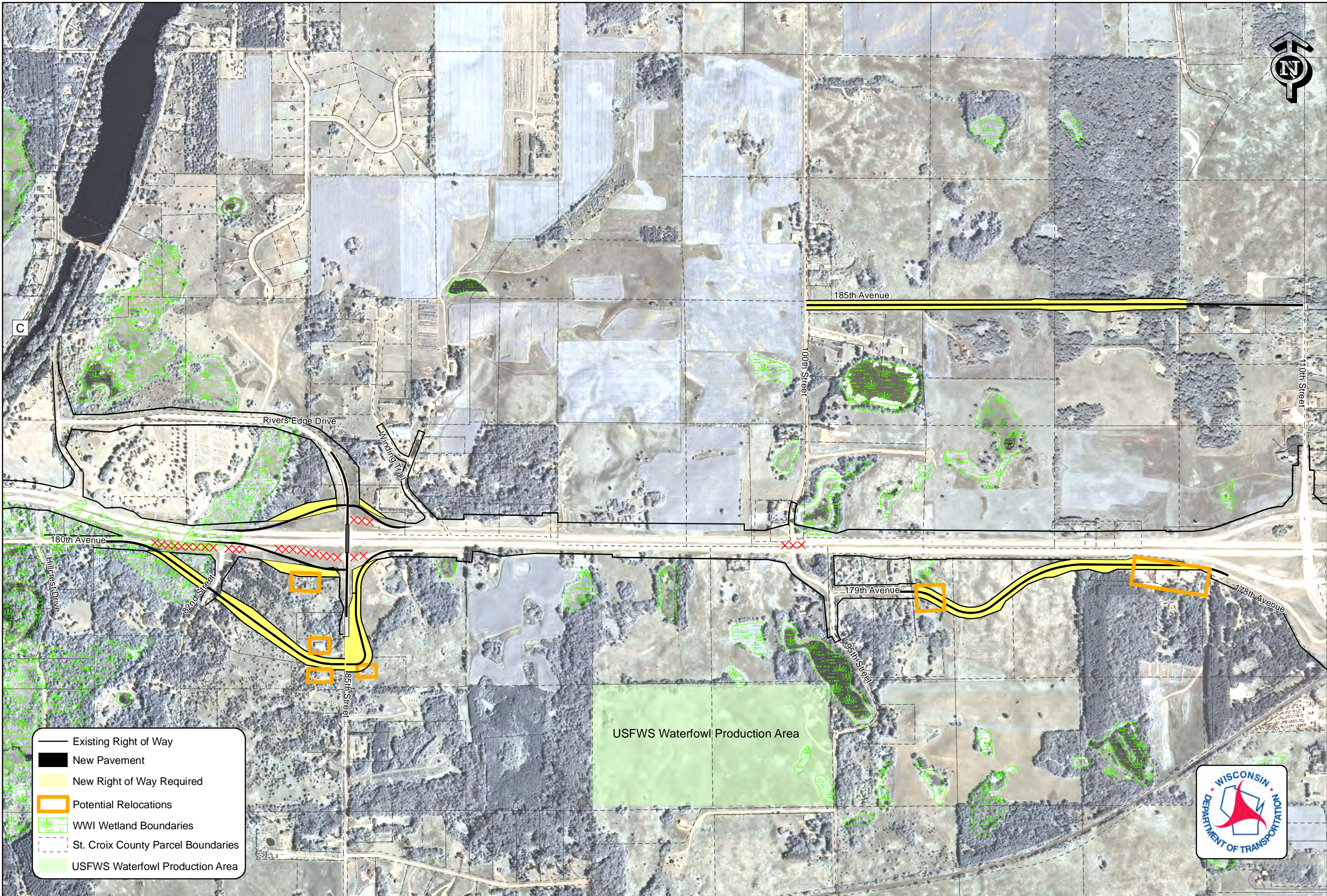
Exhibit 5: WWI Wetland Boundary Map

Exhibit 6: Delineated Wetland Boundary Map

Exhibit 3: Alternatives



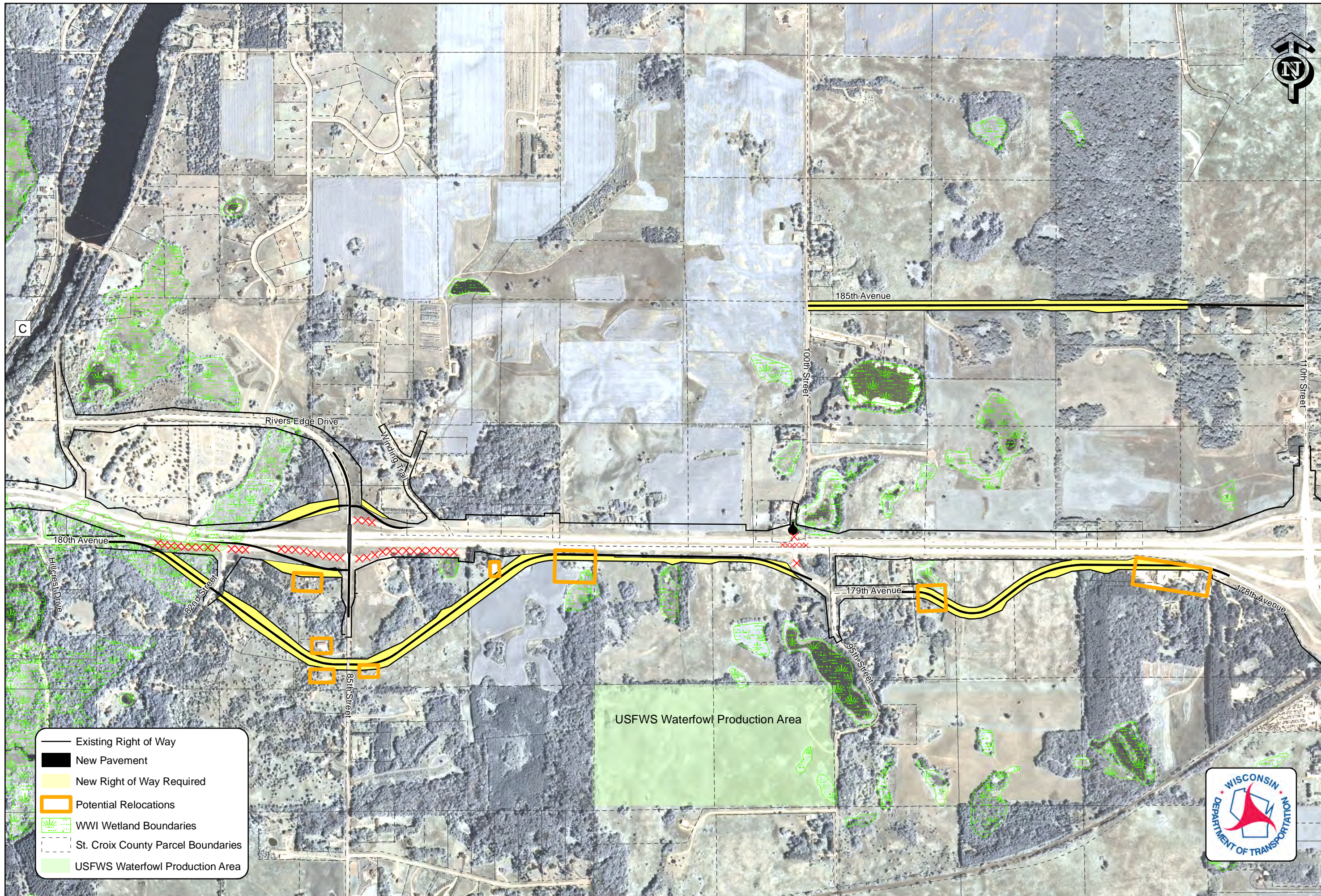
- Existing Right of Way
- New Pavement
- New Right of Way Required
- Potential Relocations
- WWI Wetland Boundaries
- St. Croix County Parcel Boundaries
- USFWS Waterfowl Production Area



C

-  Existing Right of Way
-  New Pavement
-  New Right of Way Required
-  Potential Relocations
-  WWI Wetland Boundaries
-  St. Croix County Parcel Boundaries
-  USFWS Waterfowl Production Area



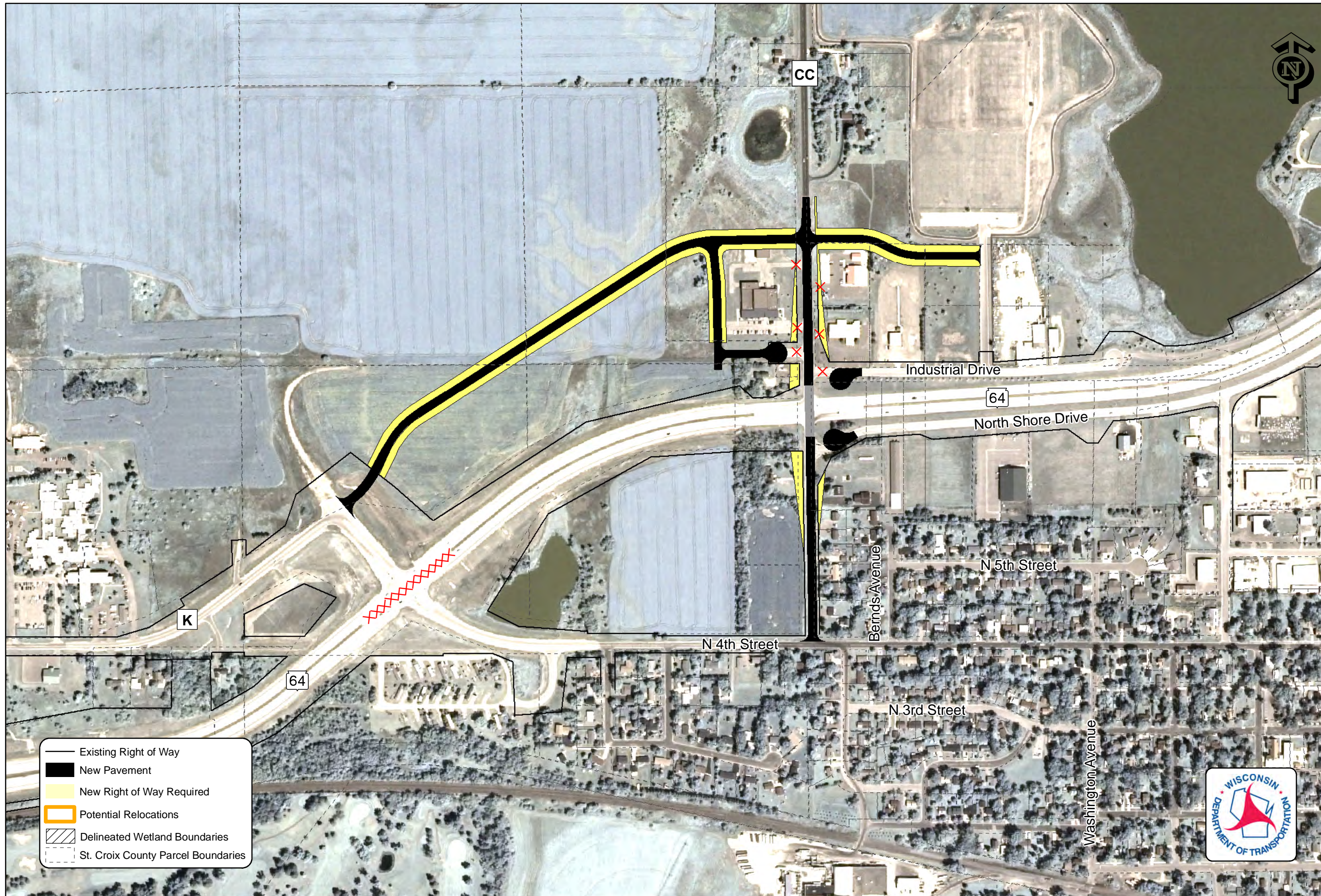








C

-  Existing Right of Way
-  New Pavement
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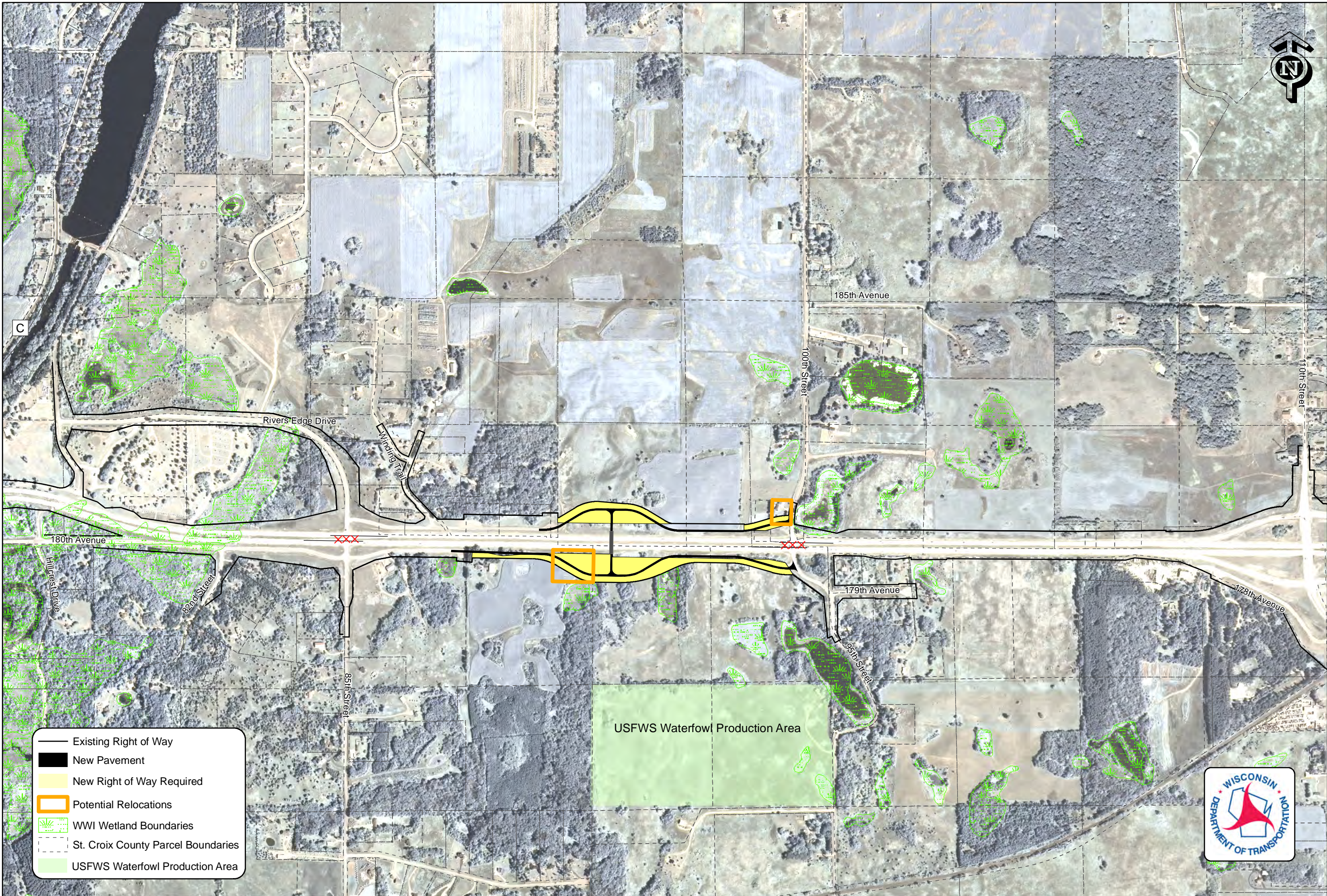


Exhibit 3.1: Proposed Action



-  Existing Right of Way
-  New Pavement
-  New Right of Way Required
-  Potential Relocations
-  Delineated Wetland Boundaries
-  St. Croix County Parcel Boundaries





- Existing Right of Way
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TranSmart