

**I-39/90/94 Corridor Study**

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## **Scoping Summary**

**September 2023**

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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## 1. Introduction

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) to evaluate potential improvements to provide reliable and safe travel on Interstate 39/90/94 (I-39/90/94) between United States Highway (US) 12/18 in the city of Madison and US 12/Wisconsin State Highway (WIS) 16 in Wisconsin Dells. The study will also evaluate I-39 from its split with I-90/94 (the I-39 I-90/94 Split) to Levee Road near Portage. The study corridor is 67 miles long and travels through Dane, Columbia, Sauk, and Juneau counties, see Figure 1-1.<sup>1</sup> The study takes into account two separate ongoing projects in the corridor, both in Columbia County:

- I-39/90/94 bridge replacement over the Wisconsin River
- WIS 60 interchange reconstruction

I-39/90/94 in the study corridor is a multi-lane interstate with 15 interchanges and over 100 bridges. The study corridor travels through the largely urban/suburban Madison metropolitan area on the south end of the corridor, while the northern portion of the corridor is characterized by rural and natural resource land uses and the Wisconsin Dells, a popular tourist destination.

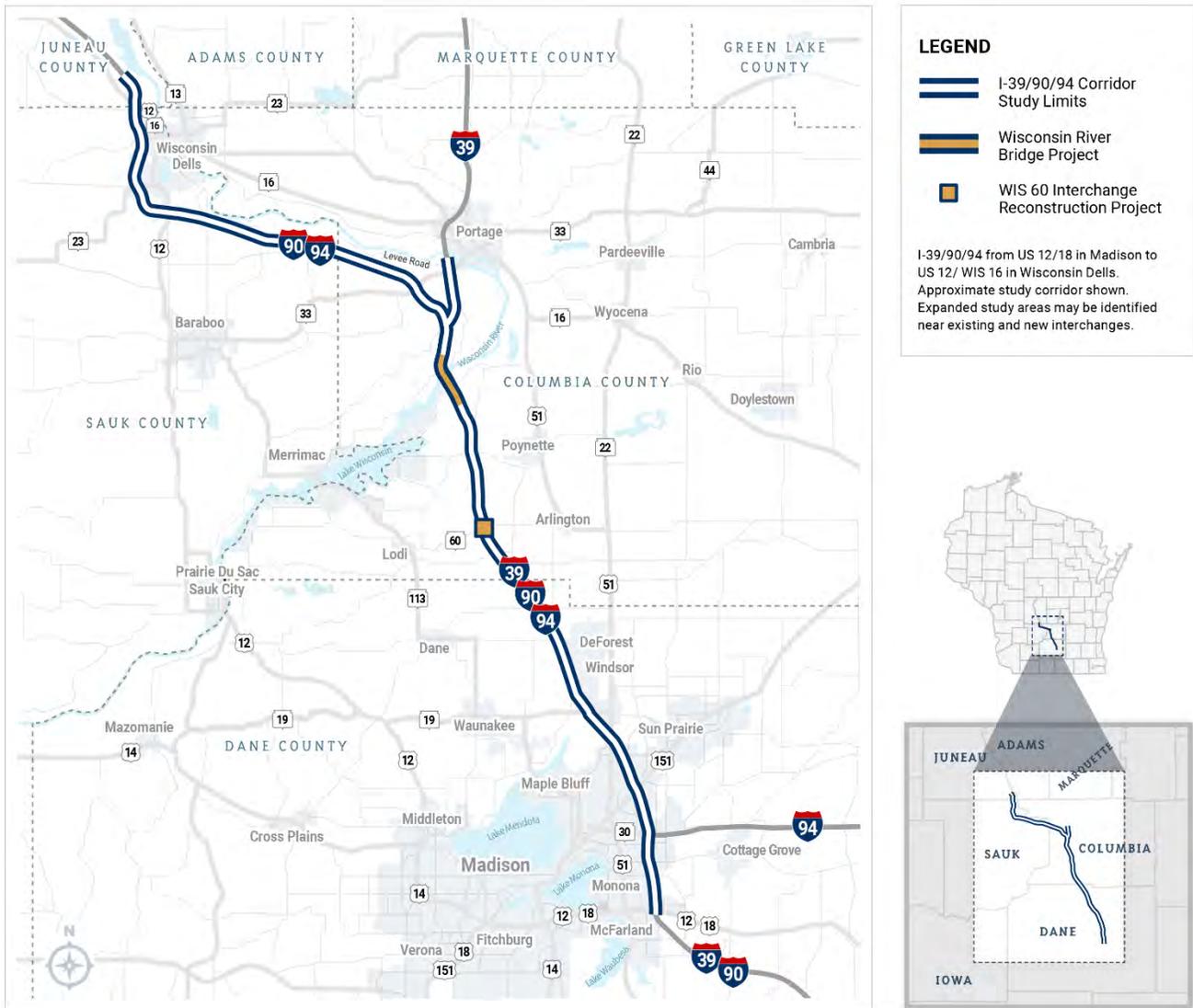
This technical memorandum summarizes the scoping review period that began with FHWA's publication of a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS. The following sections in this document provide a summary of comments received from the public and government agencies. Each public comment has been evaluated for unique sub-comments, which are then organized into seven themes. Themes may show trends within the comments that assist with the impact analysis. All comments received during the scoping comment period will be considered as part of the impacts analysis in the study's Draft EIS. Responses from WisDOT and FHWA, when requested by the commenter, are also summarized in this document.

During the EIS process, WisDOT and FHWA will continue to seek public and agency engagement to evaluate impacts, benefits, opportunities and costs associated with proposed improvements, including potential new interchanges within the study area. The EIS will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 United States Code [U.S.C.] 4321, et seq.), 23 U.S.C. 139, Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508), FHWA regulations implementing NEPA (23 CFR Part 771), and applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

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<sup>1</sup> Additional detail on study termini, particularly on the local roadway network may be identified as the alternatives analysis at interchanges proceeds.

Figure 1-1: I-39/90/94 Corridor Study Map



## 2. Study Purpose

The purpose of the I-39/90/94 Corridor Study is to address existing and future traffic demands, safety issues, aging and outdated infrastructure and corridor resiliency. WisDOT and FHWA determined to prepare an EIS to formally evaluate the needs in the study corridor. The EIS will identify a range of alternatives to address the study needs, evaluate impacts and coordinate with agencies and the public to address impacts and measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts.

### 3. Notice of Intent Publication and Scoping Comment Period

WisDOT and FHWA published a notice of intent (NOI) to the Federal Register on July 18, 2023 to solicit comment and advise the public, agencies and stakeholders that an EIS will be prepared for the study. The NOI is available from the Federal Register under document citation 88 FR 45973.<sup>2</sup> WisDOT and FHWA also prepared an *Additional Information Document*<sup>3</sup>, which provides more information on the study purpose and need, alternatives and the alternatives screening process and anticipated impacts.

Prior to the NOI publication, WisDOT and FHWA initiated public engagement and agency coordination to introduce the study including the study purpose and need and range of alternatives. In-person communications included public involvement meetings, outreach events and meeting with local officials. WisDOT announced the NOI on the study website and provided a link to a narrated presentation explaining the scoping process and opportunities to provide comments during the scoping period. WisDOT also notified study subscribers and cooperating and participating agencies of the NOI via email (Appendix A). Email notifications informed recipients the NOI formally started the study's environmental review process, which included a 30-day public comment period. Recipients were asked to provide input on any aspect of the study, including the purpose and need, alternatives and anticipated significant issues or environmental impacts and analyses to be considered in the EIS.

The NOI scoping comment period closed on August 17, 2023. This scoping summary will be posted on the study website. Outcomes of the scoping process will be provided at the next public involvement meeting anticipated in Fall 2023 and summarized in the Draft EIS.

### 4. Summary of Public Comments Received

The I-39/90/94 Corridor Study NOI was available for public review from July 18 to August 17, 2023. During the 30-day comment period, a total of 57 comments were received from the general public (50) and government agencies (7) (Table 4-1). Comments from the public were primarily received through WisDOT's web-based public involvement management application (PIMA), available from the study's website. The remaining public comment was received by email. A directory of public comments is provided in Table 4-3. The seven comments from governmental agencies are discussed in Section 5.

Within the 50 public comments, there were 71 unique comments addressing seven themes. Unique comments are individual statements within a comment, addressing an individual study theme. Themes represent generalized and related aspects of the study, such as transportation infrastructure, new interchanges, or pedestrian and bicycle uses. Each communication may have more than one unique comment. Table 4-1 summarizes unique comments received by theme.

Some commenters provided comments supporting or not supporting the study or interchange alternatives. 10 commenters expressed support for the US 151/High Crossing Boulevard alternative that provided a direct connection between East Washington Avenue to High Crossing Boulevard, but also requested East Washington Avenue retain direct access to US 151. They believed this alternative, with the stated design modification, would provide safe and efficient opportunities for multi-use trails or support economic development. One commenter

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<sup>2</sup> Federal Register. (2023). Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for a Proposed Highway Project; Madison to Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/07/18/2023-15199/notice-of-intent-to-prepare-an-environmental-impact-statement-for-a-proposed-highway-project-madison>. Accessed August 18, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Wisconsin Department of Transportation. (2023). I-39/90/94 Corridor Study – Notice of Intent – Additional Information. <https://wisconsindot.gov/Documents/projects/by-region/sw/399094/eisnoiadditionalinformation.pdf>. Accessed August 18, 2023.

did not support a direct connection between East Washington Avenue and High crossing Boulevard, stating it would increase commute times in and out of the Madison’s east side. Four commenters favored a new Hoepker Interchange mainly for its potential to improve residential and business access to the interstate. One commenter did not support a new Hoepker Road Interchange stating its close proximity to existing interchanges. Two commenters did not support the proposed Milwaukee Street Interchange, stating the potential for increased urban sprawl, impacts to health and safety, or negative socioeconomic effects.

**Table 4-1: Summary of Comments Received During Scoping Period**

Comment Theme	Unique Comments Received	Comment Summary
Pedestrian and Bicycle Uses	31	<p>Commenters requested bicycle, pedestrian and multi-use trails within the study, noting the connections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety</li> <li>• Increase community connections between Sun Prairie and the Madison Metropolitan Area</li> <li>• Improve quality of life</li> <li>• Increased economic prosperity via ecological and bicycle related tourism</li> <li>• Reduce vehicle air emissions by encourage commuters to bike or walk</li> <li>• Allow users access to trails beyond the study limits.</li> </ul>
Build Alternatives (Mainline, Existing Interchanges)	15	<p><i>Mainline</i> – Four commenters support the addition of a travel lane throughout the study corridor in order to handle high traffic volumes, improve safety and/or reduce travel times. The modernization hybrid alternative was specifically supported by one of these commenters.</p> <p><i>Existing Interchanges</i> – Ten commenters support a modified version of the US 151/High Crossing Boulevard Interchange alternative that allows East Washington Avenue to retain direct access to US 151, while providing a direct connection between East Washington Avenue and High Crossing Boulevard. The primary motivation for their support of the modified version of the US 151/High Crossing Boulevard Interchange alternative was related to benefits for pedestrian and bicycle uses. Other commenters mentioned concerns for the existing danger of the US 151 Interchange.</p> <p>One commenter did not favor the US 151/High Crossing Boulevard Interchange alternative that only provides a direct connection between East Washington Avenue and High Crossing Boulevard. The commenter believes this US 151/High Crossing Boulevard alternative would alter regional traffic patterns, overwhelm the WIS 30 / East Washington Intersection in Madison and increase commute times in and out of Madison’s east side.</p>

## Scoping Summary

Comment Theme	Unique Comments Received	Comment Summary
Transportation Infrastructure (BRT, Roundabouts)	5	<p><i>Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)</i> – Four commenters requested more alternative transportation infrastructure, such as BRT or multi-use trails, to reduce traffic volumes in the study corridor.</p> <p><i>Roundabouts</i> – One commenter requested constructing only single lane roundabouts when a roundabout is called for by design, believing single lane roundabouts are safer for pedestrians as compared to multi-lane roundabouts.</p>
New Interchanges (Hoepker Road, Milwaukee Street)	7	<p><i>Hoepker Road</i> – Four commenters support the Hoepker Road Interchange. They believe the interchange would support residential and commercial growth between Madison and Sun Prairie through increased access to the interstate. Improved pedestrian and bicycle uses were also mentioned. One commenter does not favor the Hoepker Road Interchange, stating it could only provide limited benefit given the existing interchanges nearby.</p> <p><i>Milwaukee Street</i> – Two commenters did not support the Milwaukee Street Interchange for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of dangerous traffic conditions for residents, such as speeding vehicles and increased traffic volume</li> <li>• Potential for increased crime and illegal activity in the neighborhood</li> <li>• Encourage unwanted urban sprawl</li> <li>• Increase vehicle related air pollutants, such as brake dust and exhaust, in the neighborhood</li> <li>• Cause health and learning issues for residents</li> <li>• Disproportionate impacts to low-income communities</li> </ul>
Biological Resources	3	<p>Commenters stated concerns for environmental impacts resulting from the study. Commenters requested special attention be provided for threatened and endangered species, especially amphibians and amphibian habitat, to mitigate study related impacts. One commenter requested the affected amphibian environment and potential impacts to amphibians be describe and identified within the study EIS.</p>
Yahara River Crossing	1	<p>The commenter requested new bridges, within the Yahara River basin, be fish and wildlife friendly, contain aesthetic enhancements and be designed for paddler safety.</p>
Other Issues	9	<p>7 commenters asked general questions about the study or expressed concerns about specific intersections along WIS 19 and US 51.</p>

WisDOT responded to individuals requesting responses, which generally address six reoccurring comment themes summarized in Table 4-3.

**Table 4-2: Summary of Responses Provided During Scoping Period**

Response Theme	Response Summary
Pedestrian and Bicycle Uses	WisDOT is working closely with local agencies to develop alternatives that serve the public in regard to improved bicycle and pedestrian transit. The Draft EIS will include a discussion and existing and proposed bike/pedestrian accommodations as part of the alternatives analysis.
Yahara River crossing	The Draft EIS will address waterway crossings and accommodations for recreational access that can be provided.
Transportation Infrastructure (BRT, Roundabouts)	<p><i>Roundabouts</i> - WisDOT’s traffic analysis considers future land use plans throughout the study corridor and also determines appropriate intersection layouts such as a roundabout. Roundabouts may be considered at interchange intersections and will be formally evaluated through the study’s intersection control evaluations.</p> <p><i>BRT</i> - All alternatives WisDOT is considering at the US 151/High Crossing Interchange would accommodate BRT service. WisDOT is working closely with the city of Madison to develop alternatives that serve the city’s goal for BRT service, as well as traffic and safety needs in the corridor.</p>
Biological Resources	The Draft EIS will address a range of subjects including impacts to threatened and endangered species, natural resources and water quality. WisDOT will continue coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) to implement measures that avoid, minimize and mitigate potential impacts.
New Interchanges at Hoepker Road and Milwaukee Street	The Draft EIS will consider a range of impacts associated with constructing new interchanges, as well as impacts of a No Build alternative at each location.
Build alternatives, including mainline modernization alternatives	The Draft EIS will consider a range of impacts associated with both the No Build and build alternatives.

**Table 4-3: Directory of Stakeholder Comments**

Stakeholder Name	Stakeholder Affiliation	Comment Date
Cassandra Benedict	Private Citizen	7/18/2023
Nathan Cook	Private Citizen	7/18/2023
Corey Bowman	Private Citizen	7/18/2023
Eric Johnson	Private Citizen	7/18/2023
John Smith	Private Citizen	7/21/2023
Anonymous	Unknown	7/23/23
Jackson Hurst	Private Citizen	7/25/2023
Juli Aulik	UW Health	8/7/2023

## Scoping Summary

Stakeholder Name	Stakeholder Affiliation	Comment Date
Brandon Blaschka	The American Center Development	8/9/2023
Jerry Schippa	Private Citizen	8/10/2023
Sarah Hodges	Private Citizen	8/10/2023
Alexander Harding	Private Citizen	8/10/2023
Katie Okpala	Private Citizen	8/11/2023
Hannah Koerten	Private Citizen	8/12/2023
Cindy Carter	Private Citizen	8/14/2023
Jason Fields	Madison Region Economic Partnership	8/15/2023
Mike McGarry	Private Citizen	8/15/2023
Kelly Pinchart	Private Citizen	8/15/2023
Jill Schaefer	Private Citizen	8/15/2023
Curt Pederson	Private Citizen	8/15/2023
Kristi Hall	Private Citizen	8/15/2023
Dan Jones	Private Citizen	8/15/2023
Kristofer Towe	Private Citizen	8/15/2023
Rebecca Price	Private Citizen	8/15/2023
Tekoni Maughan	Private Citizen	8/15/2023
Tammy Andorfer	Private Citizen	8/15/2023
Matt Braun	Private Citizen	8/15/2023
Tracy Pederson	Private Citizen	8/15/2023
Nick Wilkes	Private Citizen	8/15/2023
Angela McKeown	Private Citizen	8/16/2023
Sarah Slowik	Private Citizen	8/16/2023
Becky Mahan	Private Citizen	8/16/2023
Has Scharrer	Private Citizen	8/16/2023
Amy Kuehn	Private Citizen	8/16/2023
Ben Rodgers	Trek Bikes	8/16/2023
Cole Simmons	Private Citizen	8/16/2023
Steven Boutcher	Private Citizen	8/16/2023
Tim Clavette	Private Citizen	8/16/2023
Brad Sovinski	Private Citizen	8/16/2023
Adam Jerzak	Private Citizen	8/16/2023

Stakeholder Name	Stakeholder Affiliation	Comment Date
Amanda Zopp	Private Citizen	8/16/2023
Pete Dettmer	Private Citizen	8/16/2023
Josh Foster	Private Citizen	8/16/2023
Phillip McKeown	151 Adventure, Inc.	8/17/2023
Stephanie Wright	Private Citizen	8/17/2023
Collin Mead	Wisconsin Bike Fed	8/17/2023
Carmen Gerogeson	Private Citizen	8/17/2023
Susan Gaeddert	Private Citizen	8/17/2023
Andrew Calcagno	Private Citizen	8/17/2023
Richard Spotts	Private Citizen	8/17/2023

## 5. Summary of Government Agency Comments Received

WisDOT and FHWA received seven comments from federal, state and local government agencies in response to the NOI for I-39/90/94 Corridor Study (Appendix B). At the federal level, the National Park Service (NPS) informed WisDOT the Ice Age National Scenic Trail crosses the proposed study corridor on local roads at four locations in Sauk, Columbia and Dane counties, and requested the study evaluate impacts, including maintaining safe access for hikers, during all phases of the study. Where safe access cannot be maintained, determine a reasonable temporary trail re-route working with Ice Age National Scenic Trail personnel to establish.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) provided comments on a wide range of considerations for the Draft EIS, including (1) alternatives, (2) environmental justice, (3) children’s health, (4) air quality and greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, (5) bridge demolition and construction noise, (6) historic, architectural, archaeological and cultural resources, (7) terrestrial resources, (8) Federally-listed species, (9) aquatic resources, (10) cumulative impacts analysis and (11) agency consultation.

At the state level, WDNR outlined its expectations that WisDOT follow Cooperative Agreement procedures to address any resource issues or concerns identified while developing the study. WDNR requested water quality (stormwater) considerations be included within the study EIS and that the Transportation Construction General Permit (TCGP) be added to the list of anticipated permits and authorizations. WDNR noted NR 151 water quality standards, as required under the TCGP, should be considered when evaluating project alternatives, particularly at new and reconfigured interchanges.

At the local level, the village of Deforest offered its overall support for the I-39/90/94 Corridor Study as a means to improve this major transportation corridor in Wisconsin. Regarding interchanges, the village noted its preferred alternatives as follows: US 51 Interchange - Diverging Diamond, WIS 19 Interchange - U-Ramp and County V Interchange - Diverging Diamond. The village believes these alternatives are best suited to improve the overall safety and flow of traffic, while also meeting the needs of future planned residential and commercial developments. The village also requested a multi-use trail along the north side of WIS 19, new interstate bridge overpasses from Daentl Road to Pepsi Way and from Daley Road to River Road and the removal of the existing River Road overpass.

The city of Wisconsin Dells recommended alternative #1 (Diamond with realigned County H) to WIS 13 and alternative #1 (Split Diamond) to US 12/16 (*Note: Alternative #1 at US 12/WIS 16 is a Diamond interchange-WisDOT is following up with the city for clarification*). The village of Lake Delton supports Diverging Diamond interchanges at the US 12 and WIS 23 interchanges.

The city of Madison summarized key objectives for improvements in the study corridor:

- o Moderating speeds on East Washington Ave to increase safety, especially for vulnerable users
- o Supporting a human scale, urban land use pattern and encouraging transit oriented redevelopment
- o Supporting existing businesses by providing safer access and more visibility
- o Providing the opportunity for new interstate access at both Milwaukee Street and Hoepker Road, which would unlock significant development potential in the city and support some of our largest employers
- o Mitigating noise levels that could increase with changes to the freeway mainline and interchanges

At the US 151 interchange, city staff favored Alternative 5 (6-lane High Crossing Boulevard) because it achieves the greatest number of city objectives. The city also noted Alternative 5A (East Washington Avenue-Freeway Connection – *recently revised as Alternative 6*) does not achieve as many objectives, but if selected asked to preserve Alternative 5 features by providing an urban connection to East Washington Avenue to slow traffic and provide pedestrian and bicycle connections from East Washington Avenue to High Crossing Boulevard. The city noted that Alternative 3 (East Washington Avenue-South) is a reasonable alternative.

The city of Madison’s analysis of a new interchange at Hoepker Road noted the benefits of access to employment and regional medical facilities and a retail center. The city’s analysis of a new interchange at Milwaukee Street noted the interchange has been planned for two decades and is necessary for commercial and employment uses envisioned in local plans.

The city does not favor capacity expansion on the Interstate mainline, but if capacity is incorporated into the preferred alternative, city staff recommends limited measures such as managed lanes rather than traditional lane addition. The city requested WisDOT to revise its noise policy because the current policy results in noise mitigation not being provided.

The city of Madison also commented the Interstate forms a barrier between central Madison and its growth areas to the east. The city commented that generally, all Interstate crossings for motor vehicles should provide all ages and abilities bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. The city also provided a map of requested dedicated pedestrian/bicycle crossings at locations across the study corridor.

## 6. Next Steps

WisDOT and FHWA have concluded the NOI scoping comment period for the I-39/90/94 Corridor Study. All comments received during the comment scoping period will be considered as part of the impacts analysis in the study’s Draft EIS. WisDOT and FHWA will continue coordination with agencies and local governments to refine alternatives and address impacts and avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures in the Draft EIS.

Outcomes of the scoping process, including discussion on preferred alternatives, will be provided at the next public involvement meeting anticipated in Fall 2023 and summarized in the Draft EIS. WisDOT and FHWA will formally select a preferred alternative in the Final EIS, expected in 2024. For more information on the I-39/90/94 Corridor Study, visit the study website <https://wisconsin.gov/pages/projects/by-region/sw/399094/default.aspx>.

## 7. Contact Information

FHWA: Bethaney Bacher-Gresock, Environmental Manager, Federal Highway Administration – Wisconsin Division, 525 Junction Road, Suite 8000, Madison, WI 53717; email: [bethaney.bacher-gresock@dot.gov](mailto:bethaney.bacher-gresock@dot.gov); (608) 662-2119.

WisDOT: James Oettinger, PE, Southwest Region Major Studies Team, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, 2101 Wright Street, Madison, WI 53704, [james.oettinger@dot.wi.gov](mailto:james.oettinger@dot.wi.gov), 608-246-3879.

## Appendix A. Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS Announcement

## Zach Zopp

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**From:** Caron Kloser  
**Sent:** Friday, August 18, 2023 10:35 AM  
**To:** Zach Zopp  
**Subject:** FW: I-39/90/94 Corridor Study - Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Here's the public notice for the NOI....sent via study website.

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**From:** Wisconsin DOT <[admin@pima.wisconsin.gov](mailto:admin@pima.wisconsin.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 18, 2023 9:38 AM  
**Subject:** I-39/90/94 Corridor Study - Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement



# I-39/90/94 Corridor Study

## Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-39/90/94 Corridor Study. The NOI formally begins the environmental review process, which includes a 30-day public comment period (also known as scoping), where WisDOT and FHWA request input on issues to consider in the EIS. Learn more about the NOI and the scoping process at this link [I-39/90/94 Study - Environmental information \(wisconsin.gov\)](https://www.wisconsin.gov/transportation/i-39-90-94-study-environmental-information).

Thank you for signing up to receive updates on the project. If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please click [here](#) to unsubscribe. Please do not reply to this message. Replies are routed to an unmonitored mailbox. If you have any questions or comments, please use the [Comment Form](#), and a WisDOT representative will respond to your inquiry.

If you would like to unsubscribe please click [here](#).

## Scoping Summary

**From:** [Schave, Daniel L - DOT](#)  
**To:** [Schave, Daniel L - DOT](#); [Caron Kloser](#)  
**Bcc:** [prasad@kapurinc.com](#); [Charlie.Webb@jacobs.com](#); [Brian.Andreas@strand.com](#); [jeff.held@strand.com](#); [ckloser@hntb.com](#); [Kowske, Andy](#); [Bennett, Nicholas](#); [joelbrown@HNTB.com](#); [colleen.harris@exp.com](#); [jrobinette@HNTB.com](#); [TLynch@cityofmadison.com](#); [DOT SWR Interstate Study](#); [kyle.d.zibung@usace.army.mil](#); [sedlacek.michael@epa.gov](#); [Bacher-Gresock, Bethaney](#); [Platz, Dave](#); [lisa.hemesath@dot.gov](#); [Gehrke, Michelle](#); [sarah\\_quamme@fws.gov](#); [Darin\\_Simpkins@fws.gov](#); [eric.allness@usda.gov](#); [bert\\_frost@nps.gov](#); [Guyah, Timothy](#); [Cook, Kimberly A - WHS](#); [Smith, Katy A – DATCP](#); [SteveS@CapitalAreaRPC.org](#); [choesly@cityofmadison.com](#); [Barta, Andrew H - DNR](#); [Schave, Daniel L - DOT](#); [Helmrick, Michael - DOT](#); [Taylor, Brian F - DOT](#); [Heggelund, Eric P - DNR](#); [MikeW](#); [Bad River THPO](#); [Daniels Jr. Ned](#); [Rhodd, Benjamin](#); [kevindupuis@fdlrez.com](#); [Hoppe, Jill - DNR](#); [WhiteEagle, Marlon](#); [Quackenbush, Bill](#); [pahhaitty@iowanation.org](#); [karinda.eden@bia.gov](#); [Louis Taylor](#); [Brian Bisonette - DNR](#); [Johnson, J](#); [LDF THPO](#); [jim.williams@lvd-nsn.gov](#); [Shively, Alina](#); [Chairman-MITW](#); [Grignon, Dave](#); [Hill, Tehassi - DNR](#); [Oneida THPO](#); [josephrupnick@pbpnation.org](#); [sduryea@pbpnation.org](#); [hattiemitchell@pbpnation.org](#); [jody.johnson@piic.org](#); [White, Noah - DNR](#); [Boyd, Chris](#); [Defoe, Marvin - DNR](#); [Buffalo-Reyes, Edwina](#); [tiauna.carnes@sacandfoxks.com](#); [Bahr, Gary](#); [chief@sacandfoxnation-nsn.gov](#); [Boyd, Chris](#); [adminast.council@meskwaki-nsn.gov](#); [Buffalo, Johnathan](#); [VanZile, Robert - DNR](#); [LaRonge, Michael](#); [Shannon Holsey](#); [THPO, Stockbridge-Munsee](#); [William R; McFaggen, Wanda](#); [virginia.deford@ho-chunk.com](#); [Greendeer, Ryan](#); [Blackdeer, Brett](#); [Legislature@ho-chunk.com](#); [Waldschmidt, Jay - DOT](#)  
**Subject:** I39/90/94 Notice of Intent To Prepare an EIS - Madison to Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 18, 2023 1:03:00 PM

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Hello,

As Cooperating and Participating agencies, I wanted you to be aware that Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-39/90/94 Corridor Study. FHWA published the notice in the Federal Register, which can be found at the following link: [2023-15199](#).

The NOI formally begins the process to prepare an EIS, beginning with a 30-day public comment, or scoping period. During this time FHWA and WisDOT request public and agency input on any aspect of the study, including alternatives and anticipated significant issues or environmental impacts and analyses to be considered in the EIS. You can learn more about the study scoping process on the study webpage [I-39/90/94 Study - Environmental information \(wisconsindot.gov\)](#). I encourage you to review and comment on material presented in the NOI and the Additional Information Document found here: <https://wisconsindot.gov/Documents/projects/by-region/sw/399094/eisnoiadditionalinformation.pdf>

The public scoping period will close August 17, 2023.

When the scoping process concludes, the study team will evaluate comments and follow up with Cooperating and Participating agencies, concurrence on the study purpose and need, range of alternatives and study schedule.

Should you have any questions as you review these materials, please don't hesitate to contact me via email or phone.

Thank you,

**Daniel Schave, P.E.**

Supervisor, Major Projects  
WisDOT – Southwest region

Scoping Summary

*(608) 246-3251 office*

*(608) 716-1585 cell*

## Scoping Summary

**From:** [Schave, Daniel L - DOT](#)  
**To:** [Schave, Daniel L - DOT](#); [Caron Kloser](#)  
**Bcc:** [Schroeder, Evan](#); ["Maasusga@Ho-Chunk.com"](mailto:Maasusga@Ho-Chunk.com); ["virginia.deford@ho-chunk.com"](mailto:virginia.deford@ho-chunk.com); [DOT SWR Interstate Study](#); [Joel Brown](#)  
**Subject:** FW: I39/90/94 Notice of Intent To Prepare an EIS - Madison to Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 18, 2023 2:07:00 PM

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Thank you,

***Daniel Schave, P.E.***

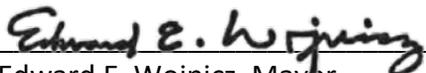
Supervisor, Major Projects  
WisDOT – Southwest region  
(608) 246-3251 office  
(608) 716-1585 cell

## Appendix B. Government Agency Comments

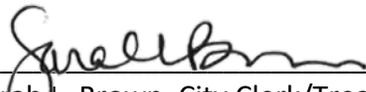
**CITY OF WISCONSIN DELLS**  
**RESOLUTION NO. 5486**

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by the City of Wisconsin Dells, that based upon the recommendation of the Public Works Committee from their July 10, 2023 meeting;

IT RECOMMENDS alternative #1 (Diamond with realigned CTH H) to State Highway 13 Interchange (Exit 87) & alternative #1 (Split diamond) to State Highway 12/16 Interchange (Exit 85) for the reconstruction of Interstate 90/94.

  
Edward E. Wojnicz, Mayor

Attest:

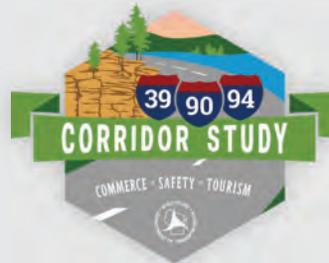
  
Sarah L. Brown, City Clerk/Treasurer

Vote: 5 ayes; 0 nays; 0 abs

Date Introduced: July 17, 2023

Date Passed: July 17, 2023

Date Published: July 27, 2023

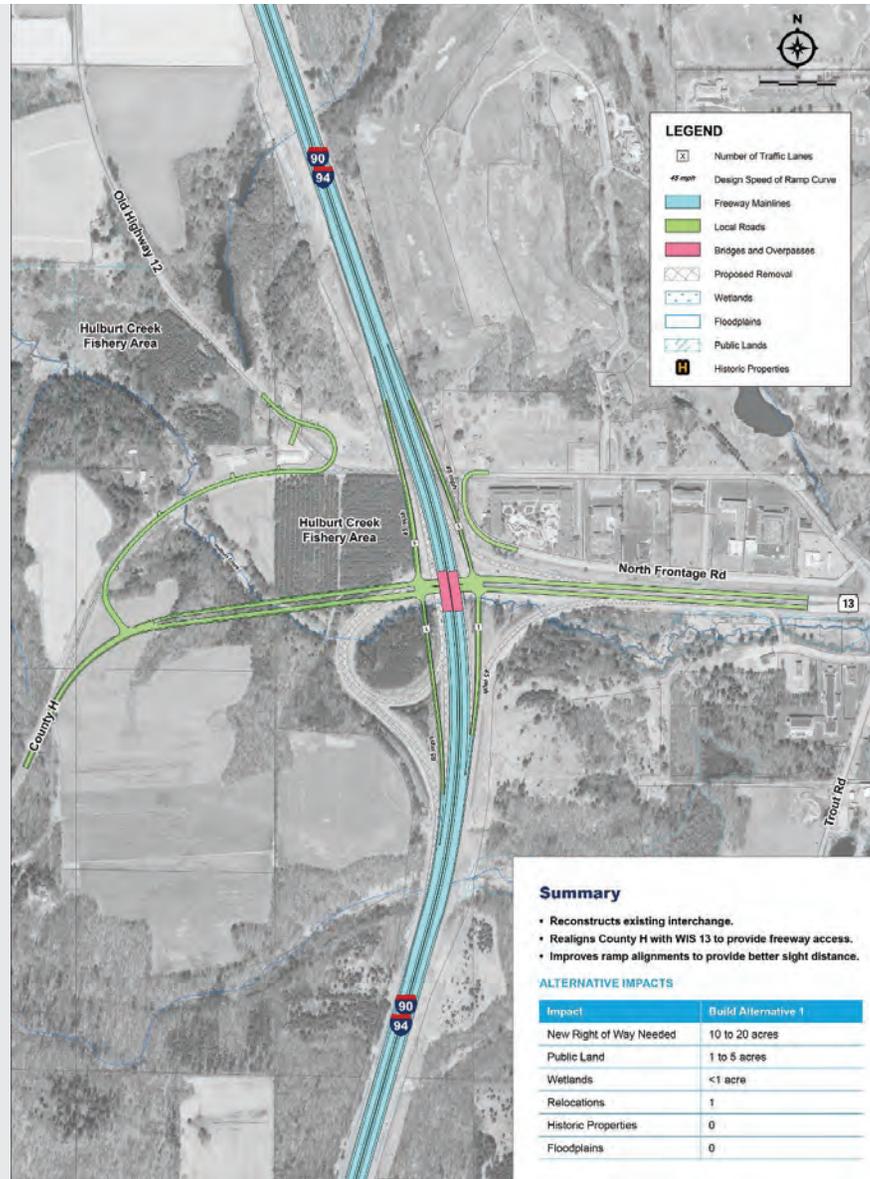


U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

# WIS 13 Interchange

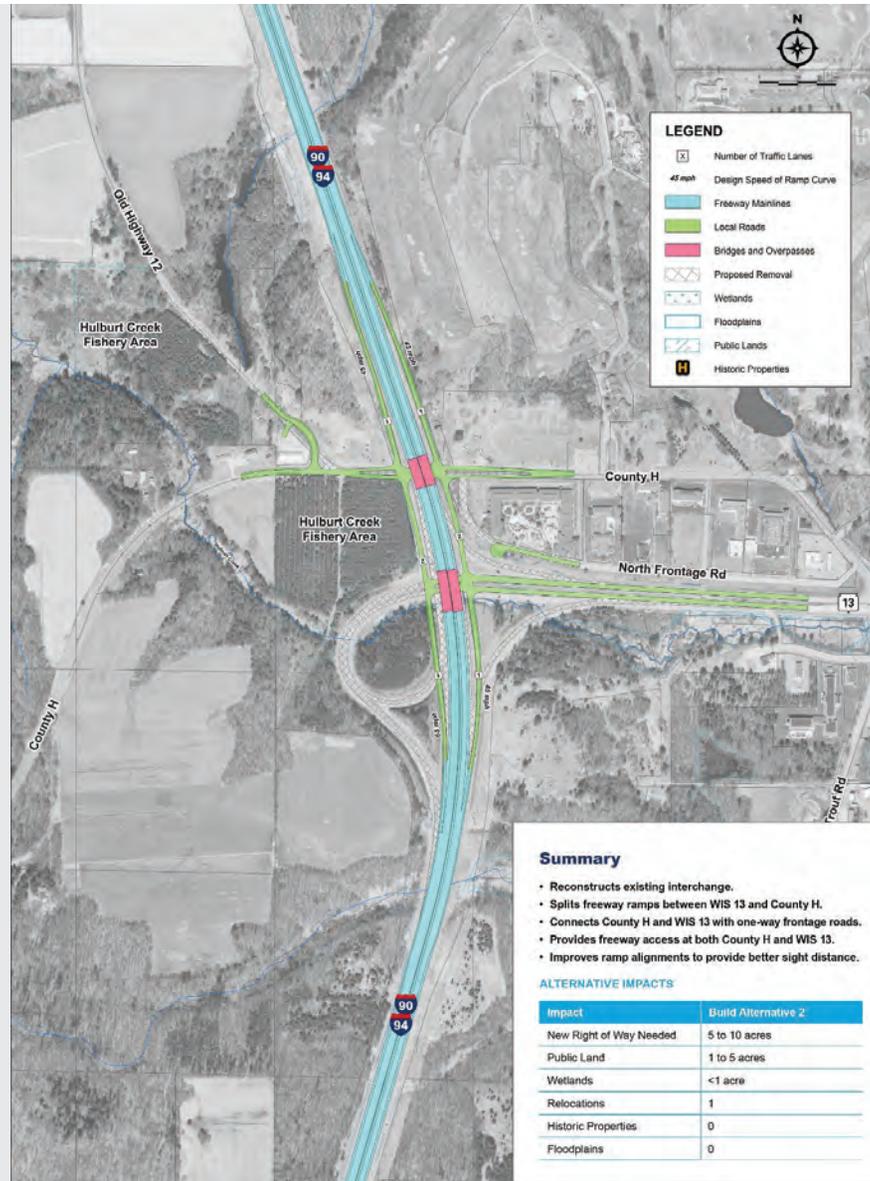
## Alternative #1: Diamond w/ Realigned CTH H

- Desire by local officials to better connect County H to the WIS 13 interchange
- Realign County H to intersect WIS 13 at newly designed diamond IC
- Would impact Hulburt Creek Fishery Area, but would also free up area where current trumpet interchange is located
- No Interstate crossing at existing County H location
- One relocation of out-building of Polynesian Hotel (both alts)



## Alternative #2: Split Diamond

- Desire by local officials to better connect County H to the WIS 13 interchange
- Keeps County H in current alignment, but connects County H with WIS 13 using frontage roads on either side of Interstate
- NB on & SB off would be to County H while NB off & SB on would be to WIS 13
- Less impactful real estate needs
- Still frees up real estate where current trumpet interchange is located
- One relocation of out-building of Polynesian Hotel (both alts)





U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

# US 12/WIS 16 Interchange

## Alternative #1: Diamond

- Both US 12/WIS 16 interchange alternatives are diamond ICs
- This alternative would reconstruct in a similar footprint to the existing interchange
- Divided median provided for protected left turns
- Ramp alignments would be improved to provide better sight distance
- Ramps would be lengthened to provide a greater distance to get up to speed



## Alternative #2: Realigned Diamond

- This alternative would realign US 12/WIS 16 to provide a less skewed interchange
- Similar to Alternative #1:
  - Divided median provided for protected left turns
  - Ramp alignments would be improved to provide better sight distance
  - Ramps would be lengthened to provide a greater distance to get up to speed
- Would remove access for 60<sup>th</sup> Street at US 12/WIS 16
  - Poor feedback to date
  - Likely won't move forward





## Office of the Mayor

Satya Rhodes-Conway, Mayor  
City-County Building, Room 403  
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
Madison, WI 53703  
Phone: (608) 266-4611 | Fax: (608) 267-8671  
[mayor@cityofmadison.com](mailto:mayor@cityofmadison.com)  
[cityofmadison.com](http://cityofmadison.com)

July 28, 2023

Dan Schave  
Colleen Harris  
WisDOT SW Region  
2101 Wright St  
Madison WI 53704

Re: WisDOT I-39/90/94 Corridor Study Preliminary Alternatives

Attached please find staff comments and recommendations regarding alternatives the I-39/90/94 Corridor Study project. They have been endorsed by Madison's Plan Commission and Transportation Commission. I support these recommendations and want to highlight key objectives for the City, which include:

- Moderating speeds on East Washington Ave to increase safety, especially for vulnerable users
- Supporting a human scale, urban land use pattern and encouraging transit oriented redevelopment
- Supporting existing businesses by providing safer access and more visibility
- Providing the opportunity for new interstate access at both Milwaukee Street and Hoepker Road, which would unlock significant development potential in the city and support some of our largest employers
- Mitigating noise levels that could increase with changes to the freeway mainline and interchanges

Overall, the City wants to prioritize creating vibrant places that are welcoming to and created for people (as opposed to vehicles). We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Department as you move through the environmental documentation process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SR-Conway". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long vertical line extending downwards from the end.

Satya Rhodes-Conway  
Mayor  
Madison, Wisconsin

Cc: Secretary Craig Thompson



## Department of Transportation

Thomas Lynch, PE, PTOE, PTP, AICP, Director of Transportation

Madison Municipal Building  
215 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd  
Suite 109  
P.O. Box 2986  
Madison, Wisconsin 53701-2986  
Phone: (608) 266-4761  
Fax: (608) 267-1158

Subject: WisDOT Interstate Study Staff Review w/ Transportation and Plan Commission Comments

Date: July 5, 2023, Revised July 28, 2023

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is studying the reconstruction of the Interstate from Madison to Wisconsin Dells, with eventual construction beginning in 2027 that could span a decade. Key objectives for WisDOT will likely include preserving mobility and improving safety on their “Backbone Routes,” shown in the adjacent figure. This also may include providing “system” or freeflow ramps at the Backbone interchanges of I-39-90/I-94 (Badger) and I-90-94/US 151.

The study and subsequent project provides several opportunities for local mobility in the Madison area. This includes:

- An ability to rearrange the US 151 and I-39-90-94 interchange in a way that reduces speeds on East Washington Avenue and provides an urban street connection to the American Center.
- A new Interstate interchange at Hoepker Road, which would provide additional freeway access into the American Center.
- A new interchange at a Milwaukee Street extension with I-94. This interchange is planned in the Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan and Comprehensive Plan.

This memo provides observations and staff recommendations for this WisDOT study that affects Madison.

### US 151/Interstate Interchange

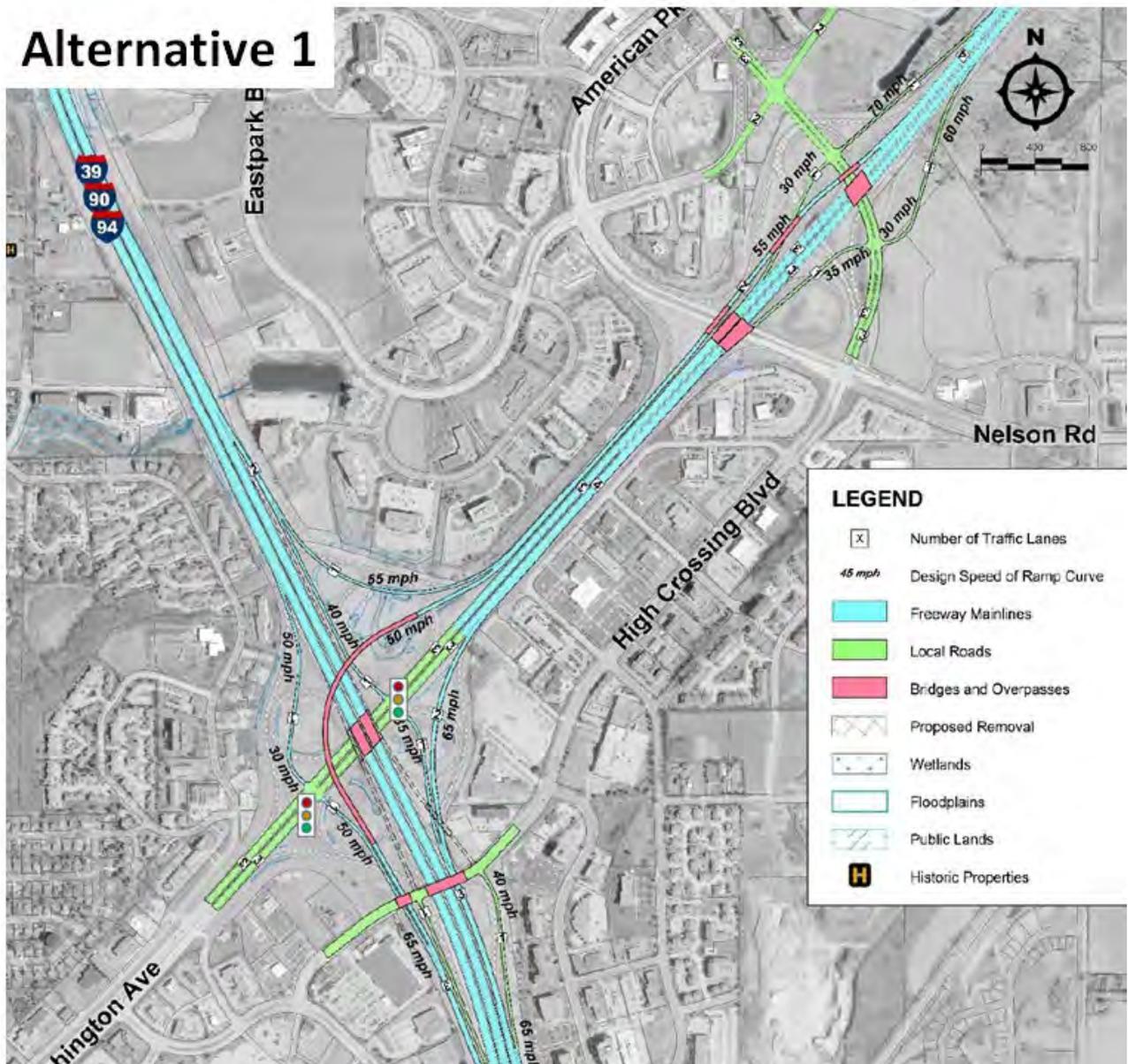
WisDOT developed five alternatives that generally accomplish their objective of providing system (freeflow) ramps at backbone to backbone connections. The alternatives have many features that can achieve local objectives. Pertinent local objectives include:

1. **Slowing speeds on East Washington Ave.** East Washington Ave is on the City’s High Injury Network, and experienced five pedestrian/bicycle fatalities in 2021. Speed is a primary contributor to fatalities and serious injuries on East Washington. Speed is a concern just west of the interchange where the US 151 freeway transitions to a street, and partial cloverleaf ramps join East Washington Ave. with posted street speeds of between 40 to 55 mph. Alternatives that extend an urban East Washington Ave with signals will help reduce speeds.
2. **Providing an Urban Connection to the American Center.** It is very difficult to access the American Center without using a freeway and it is almost impossible by bike. Providing an urban street connection to the American Center helps connect it to the whole of Madison.
3. **Reducing noise impacts to surrounding properties.** Generally, ramps that are not elevated have less potential to propagate highway noise.



4. **Enhance density/development opportunities.** Madison’s area for expansion is finite, and efficient, interconnected land development is a goal of the City’s Comprehensive Plan.
5. **Complement Bus Rapid Transit Service** – In this area BRT routing splits between servicing Sun Prairie and servicing the American Center/Hanson Road. Some alternatives enhance BRT connectivity and/or routing.
6. **Generally address entrance concepts contained in the Rattman Neighborhood Development plan.** This plan generally showed an additional connection into the American Center – most probably occurring through an extension of High Crossing to American Parkway. To provide acceptable ramp-to-ramp distances, WisDOT has modified and/or relocated the American Center entrance on several of the alternatives.

**Staff Review of US 151/Interstate Alternatives**

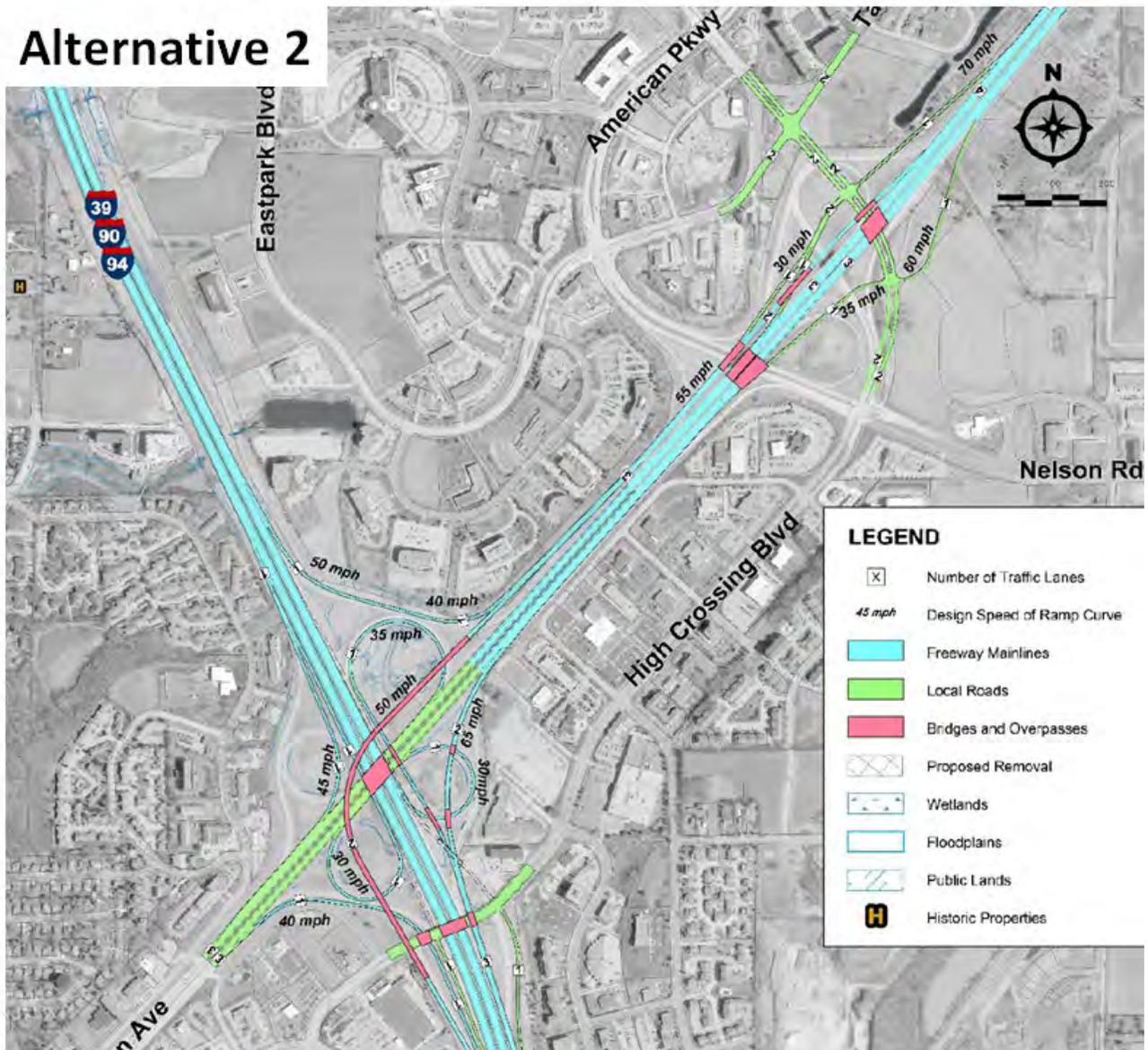


**Alternative 1** provides freeflow system ramps for the US 151/Interstate connection. The connection to East Washington Avenue is served with a more traditional diamond interchange with signalized ramp terminals (as opposed to the current cloverleaf interchange). It also relocates the American Center main entrance from American Parkway to American Family Drive.

### Alternative 1 Summary of Impacts

1. The signals on the East Washington Ramp terminals would help introduce an urban roadway with slower speeds.
2. There is no urban street connection to the American center with this alternative. Access without a motor vehicle remains difficult.
3. There is one elevated freeflow ramp, which could increase noise impacts.
4. This alternative would not influence density or development opportunities.
5. This alternative would not enhance BRT routing to the American Center.
6. This alternative relocates the US 151 entrance of the American Center from American Parkway to American Family Drive, yet maintains the Nelson Road/American Pkwy entrance from High Crossing

### Alternative 2

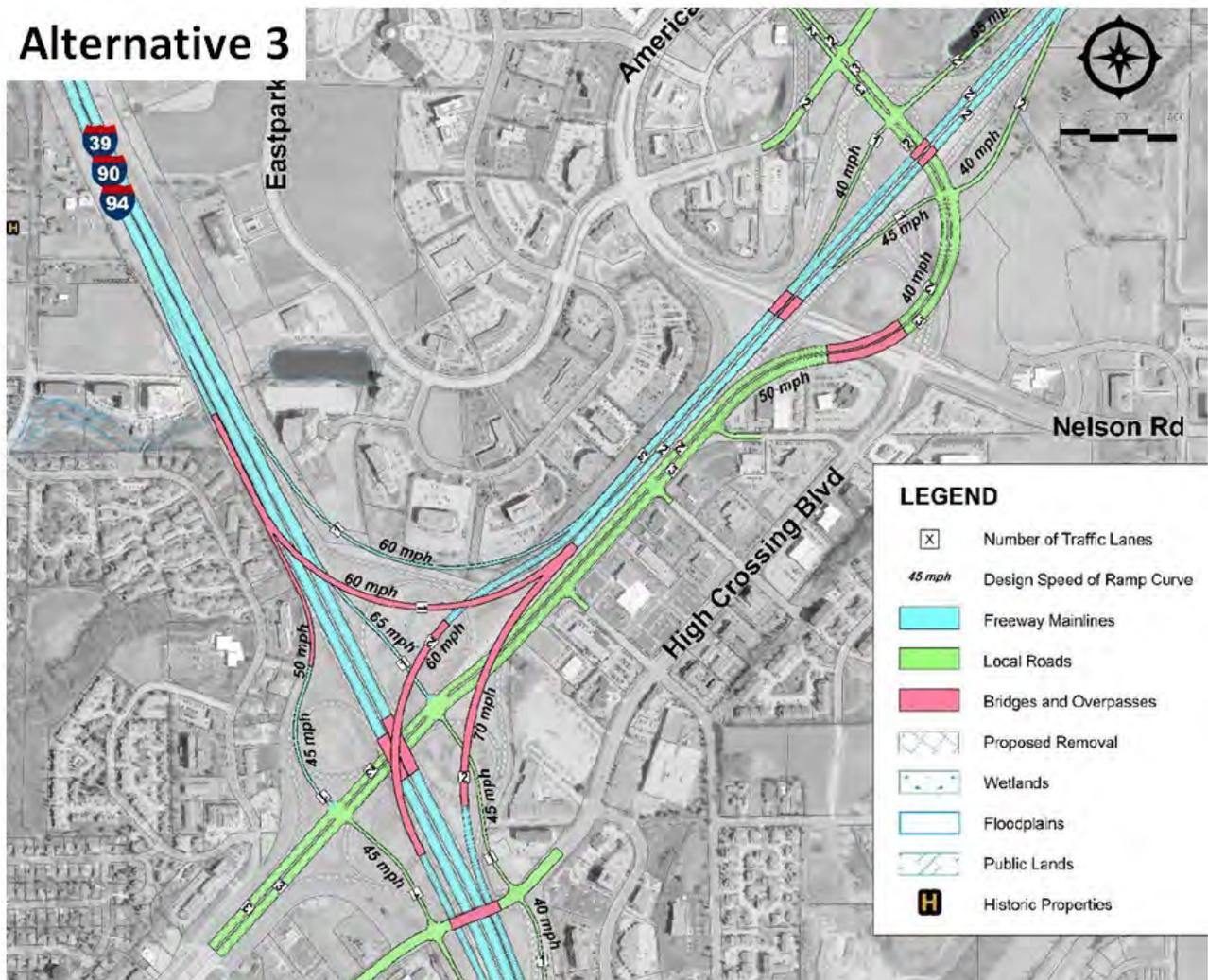


**Alternative 2** provides freeflow ramps for the US 151/Interstate movements. East Washington Ave continues to be served by the cloverleaf interchange ramps (without signals). It also relocates the American Center main entrance from American Parkway to American Family drive.

### Alternative 2 Summary of Impacts

1. The cloverleaf ramps remain, and East Washington speeds would remain high.
2. There is no urban street connection to the American Center with this alternative. Access without a motor vehicle remains difficult.
3. There is one elevated freeflow ramp, which could increase noise impacts.
4. This alternative would not influence density or development opportunities.
5. This alternative would not enhance BRT routing to the American Center.
6. This alternative relocates the US 151 entrance of the American Center from American Parkway to American Family Drive, yet maintains the Nelson Road/American Pkwy entrance from High Crossing Blvd.

### Alternative 3

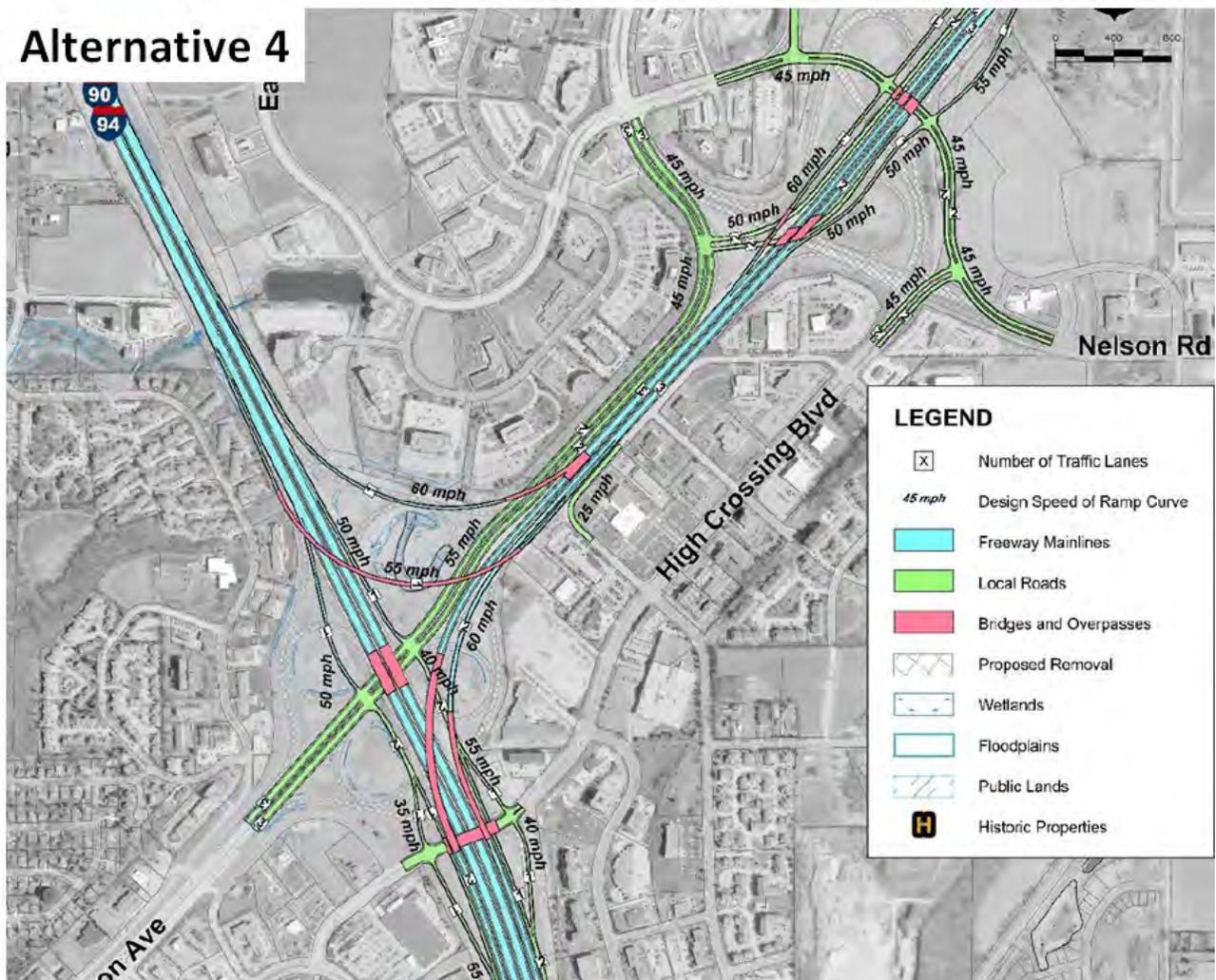


**Alternative 3** provides freeflow ramps for the US 151/Interstate movements, including the SW 151 to NW Interstate movement. East Washington Ave would be served through a split diamond interchange with High Crossing Blvd, with signals. It provides a direct urban street connection to the American Center through an extension of East Washington Avenue on top of Wayne Terrace, southeast of the US 151 freeway. It also relocates the American Center main entrance from American Parkway to American Family drive. With this alternative, traffic traveling from Sun Prairie to East Washington Ave would exit on American Family Drive.

### Alternative 3 Summary of Impacts

1. The signals on the East Washington Ramp terminals would help introduce an urban roadway with slower speeds. Additionally, the extension of East Washington Ave as an urban street with intersections would help to slow travel speeds east of the Interstate.

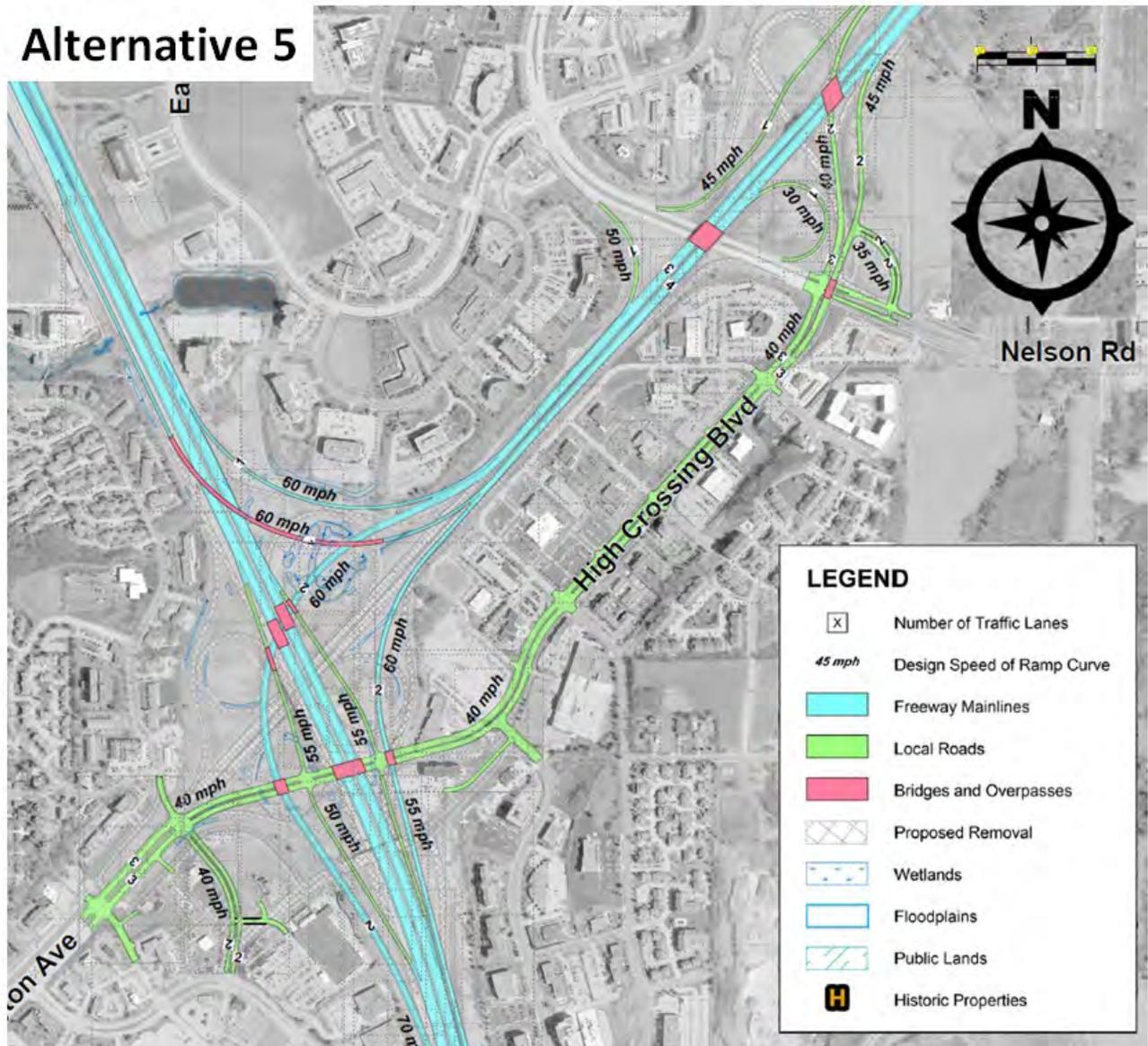
2. There is an urban street connection to the American Center with this alternative, which provides direct access for cyclists, pedestrians, and auto users who do not want use the freeway. This helps connect the American Center with the rest of the city. The urban street runs adjacent to the freeway, which could be less comfortable for some users.
3. There are three elevated freeflow ramps, which would increase noise impacts.
4. This alternative could enhance density or development opportunities. The extension of East Washington Ave along Wayne Terrace provides better access and visibility to the High Crossing area. This could create higher and better (denser) uses for the properties between Wayne Terrace and High Crossing.
5. This alternative probably would not affect BRT routing to the American Center. BRT probably would continue on High Crossing to serve the residential areas south.
6. This alternative relocates the US 151 main entrance of the American Center from American Parkway to American Family Drive through a diamond interchange. Access to American Parkway is maintained through High Crossing Blvd.



**Alternative 4** is similar to Alternative 3 in that it provides freeflow ramps for the US 151/Interstate movements, including the SW 151 to NW Interstate movement and provides a direct urban connection to the American Center. However, the urban street is on the north side of the US 151 freeway and does not connect with any side roads. As with Alternative 3, East Washington Ave is served through a split diamond interchange with High Crossing Blvd, with signals. Alternative 4 does not relocate the American Center main entrance, but does realign Nelson Road to connect with Eastpark Blvd. With this alternative, traffic traveling from Sun Prairie to East Washington Ave would exit on Nelson Road.

### Alternative 4 Summary of Impacts

1. The signals on the East Washington Ramp terminals would help introduce an urban roadway with slower speeds. However, the East Washington Ave extension would not provide as much speed moderation because there are no intersections or property accesses. This section of roadway would encourage higher than normal travel speeds.
2. The urban street connection to the American Center provides direct access for cyclists, pedestrians, and drivers who do not want use the freeway. Speeds on the East Washington Ave extension are a concern.
3. There are three elevated freeflow ramps, which would increase noise impacts.
4. This alternative would not enhance density or development opportunities. There is no property access or street intersections off of the extension, therefore the street would serve mainly as a local connection.
7. This alternative probably would have no effect on BRT routing to the American Center. BRT probably would continue on High Crossing to serve the residential areas south.
8. This alternative creates an addition US 151 entrance to the American Center through a modified diamond interchange connection of Nelson Road with Eastpark Blvd. It also provides an option for US 151 travelers to connect directly with the American Parkway/East Washington Ave extension.



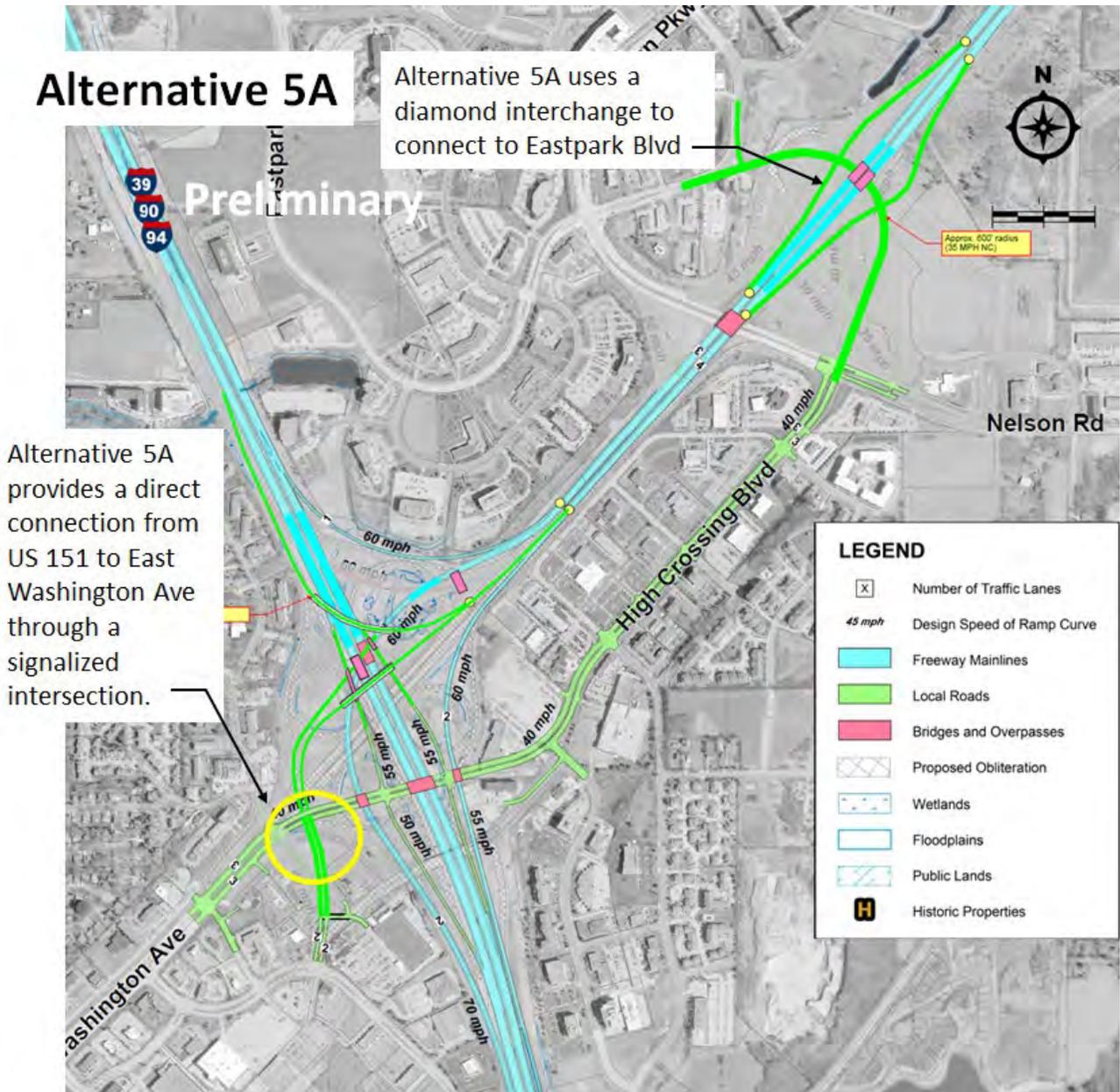
**Alternative 5** provides freeflow ramps for the US 151/Interstate movements, including the SW 151 to NW Interstate movement. However, two of the freeflowing ramps are at ground level, and only one is elevated. East Washington Ave. is extended and transitions into High Crossing Blvd before it joins US 151 east of Nelson Road. East Washington Ave/High Crossing would be served through a traditional diamond interchange. Northbound High Crossing joins Nelson Road with a jug handle intersection. The current entrance to the American Center is maintained from both US 151 and local streets (High Crossing Blvd., Nelson Road). With this alternative, traffic traveling from Sun Prairie to East Washington Ave would exit on Nelson Road.

#### **Alternative 5 Summary of Impacts**

1. The signals on the East Washington Ramp terminals would help introduce an urban roadway with slower speeds. Additionally, East Washington Ave as an urban street with intersections is extended northeast to Nelson Road/American Family Drive. The use of High Crossing Blvd as an urban street would also help to slow travel speeds, introducing city speeds a full mile east of the Interstate.
2. The urban street connection to the American Center provides direct access for cyclists, pedestrians, and drivers who do not want use the freeway, better connecting the American Center with the rest of the city.
3. There is only one elevated freeflow ramp, and two depressed freeflow ramps. The elevated ramp would increase noise levels, however the two depressed ramps would have lower noise impacts than Alternatives 3 and 4.
4. This alternative would enhance density or development opportunities. High Crossing Blvd is underutilized and has high redevelopment potential. The extension of East Washington Ave onto High Crossing Blvd would provide better access and visibility.
5. This alternative would enhance BRT routing to the American Center. Combining East Washington with High Crossing Blvd eliminates turns and provide a more direct connection to both the American Center and the Sun Prairie Park and Ride.
6. This alternative maintains the current main entrance of the American Center from American Parkway to American Family Drive through a jug handle similar to the current access. An additional access into the American Center is not provided.

Note: WisDOT is proposing expanding High Crossing Blvd. to three lanes in each direction with this alternative. With High Crossing Blvd. currently seeing approximately 15,000-18,000 average weekday traffic, which is low for a road of its size, Staff has encouraged WisDOT to examine traffic projections to see if this alternative requires an expansion of High Crossing Blvd. Similarly, staff has requested further information from WisDOT as to whether the jug handle shown at Nelson Road is needed.

**Alternative 5A** is a modification to Alternative 5 developed to address some of the traffic diversion effects of Alternatives 3, 4, and 5. By introducing an urban roadway sooner, Alternatives 3, 4 and 5 remove roughly 20,000 to 30,000 vpd from East Washington Avenue and divert this volume to I-39/90/94 and Highway 30. Removing traffic volumes from East Washington Ave could lead to less impactful East Washington/Stoughton Road alternatives from WisDOT's North Stoughton Road study. However, WisDOT may experience challenges in accommodating the diverted traffic on the Interstate and Highway 30.



As with Alternative 5, Alternative 5A provides freeflow ramps for the US 151/Interstate movements, including the SW 151 to NW Interstate movement. Two of the freeflowing ramps are at ground level, and only one is elevated. East Washington Ave. is extended and transitions into High Crossing Blvd before it joins US 151 east of Nelson Road. However, US 151 traffic destined to Central Madison would have the option to connect directly with East Washington Ave. through a signalized intersection. East Washington Ave/High Crossing would be served through a traditional diamond interchange.

Alternative 5A relocates the American Center main entrance to a traditional diamond interchange formed by extending High Crossing Blvd and connecting it to Eastpark Blvd.

**Alternative 5A Summary of Impacts**

1. The signals on the East Washington Ramp terminals would help introduce an urban roadway with slower speeds. Additionally, East Washington Ave as an urban street with intersections is extended northeast to Nelson Road/American Family Drive. The use of High Crossing Blvd as an urban street would also help to slow travel speeds, introducing city speeds a full mile east of the Interstate.

2. The urban street connection to the American Center provides direct access for cyclists, pedestrians, and drivers who do not want use the freeway, better connecting the American Center with the rest of the city.
3. There is one elevated freeflow ramp, one elevated extension of US 151 to East Washington Ave., and two depressed freeflow ramps. The elevated ramp and US 151 extension would increase noise levels.
4. This alternative would enhance density or development opportunities. High Crossing Blvd is underutilized and has high redevelopment potential. The extension of East Washington Ave onto High Crossing Blvd would provide better access and visibility.
5. This alternative would enhance BRT routing to the American Center. Combining East Washington with High Crossing Blvd eliminates turns and provide a more direct connection to both the American Center and the Sun Prairie Park and Ride.
6. This alternative adds/relocates the main US 151 entrance of the American Center through a diamond interchange with an extension of High Crossing Blvd to Eastpark Blvd. American Parkway still serves as an entrance to the American Center through High Crossing Blvd.

**US 151/Interstate Alternative Summary**

Objective	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 5A
1. Lower EW Speeds						
2. Urban Connection						
3. Noise/Elevated Ramps						
4. Development/Density						
5. Complement BRT Service						
6. American Center access configuration						

Generally, Alternative 5 accomplishes the greatest number of city objectives and therefore is favored by staff. It provides an urban connection to the American Center by routing East Washington on an underutilized road, and provides opportunity for greater development and density. The number of overhead freeflow ramps is also reduced. One added benefit is the reduction to East Washington Ave volumes prompted by this alternative.

If the diversion impacts are too great with Alternative 5, Alternative 5A satisfies many of the objectives, yet does not have the benefits of reducing traffic volumes on East Washington Ave. If Alternative 5A is selected, many features of Alternative 5 should be preserved, such as:

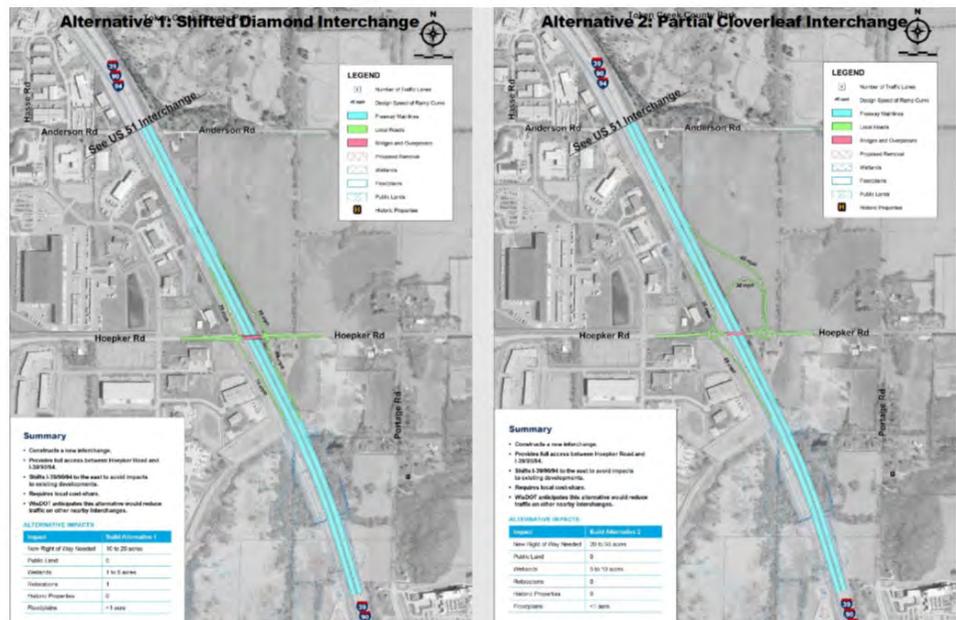
- An urban connection to East Washington Ave that slows traffic.
- All ages and abilities pedestrian and bicycle connections from East Washington Ave to High Crossing.

Alternative 3 satisfies some city objectives, and is a reasonable alternative.

## Hoepker Interchange

Reconstruction of the Interstate provides the opportunity to evaluate the installation of a new interchange at Hoepker Road. Stakeholders in the American Center have advocated for the installation of a new interchange at Hoepker Road. This interchange is not in the current Pumpkin Hollow Neighborhood Development Plan. It would provide more direct interstate access to employment and regional medical facilities in the American Center. It also would provide access to Sun Prairie's Prairie Lakes retail center via Hoepker Road.

### Hoepker Road Interchange Alternatives



The configuration of a potential interchange, either a standard diamond or partial cloverleaf, will largely be determined by WisDOT traffic modeling.

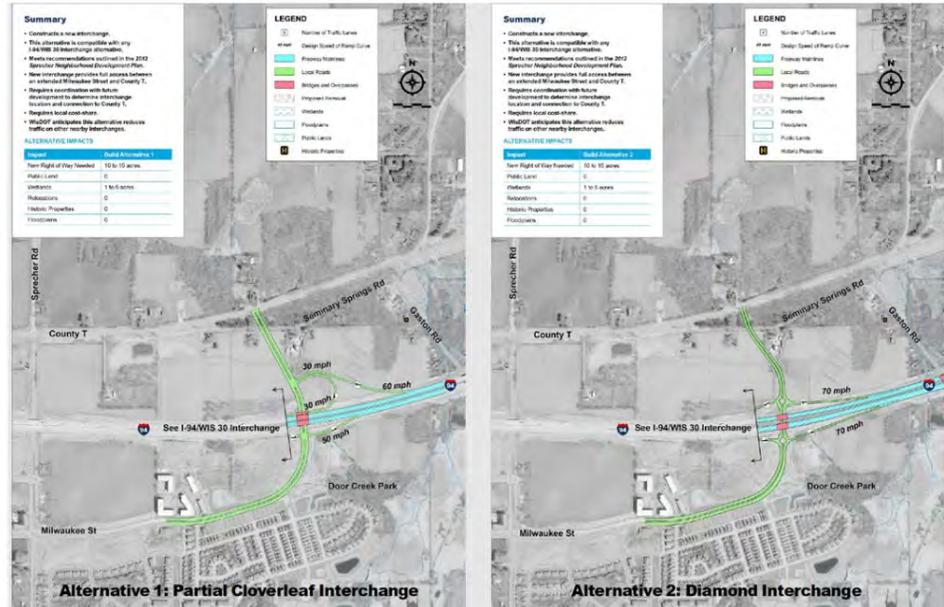
Preliminary Travel Demand Modeling was provided by WisDOT for the 2050 forecast year. If the US 151 Alternative 5 interchange is used as a base, the 2050 modeling indicates that Portage Road south of Hoepker Rd. would see roughly 2000 more vehicles per day (vpd), bringing the total to roughly 4000 vpd. The total daily volume is still well within the capacity of a typical two-lane roadway. Hoepker Road would see greater traffic volume increases, with up to 10,000 vpd being added to Hoepker Road east of the interstate. This would bring Hoepker Road traffic volumes to 20,000 vpd or above, perhaps affecting the capacity need on Hoepker Rd.

The City of Madison would be responsible for paying a local cost share associated with interchange construction. Madison has a policy that passes that cost onto benefiting properties through assessments/impact fees. This policy could be revised to include other funding sources. The Neighborhood Development Plan would also need to be modified to reflect land use changes that could occur with a new interchange.

## Milwaukee Street Interchange

The I-94 reconstruction also provides an opportunity to construct an interchange off an extension of Milwaukee Street. This interchange has been part of the Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan for two decades, and is necessary for the commercial/ employment uses in the Neighborhood Development Plan and Comprehensive Plan to be realized. The Milwaukee St interchange could enable a commercial/ employment/ mixed-use node similar to

## Milwaukee Street Interchange Alternatives



highway frontage projects like Arbor Gate (by Todd Drive) or the “City Center West” area southwest of the Beltline/Old Sauk Road interchange (TDS/Johnson Bank, Deco mixed-use building, etc).

The type of interchange, partial cloverleaf or conventional diamond, will largely be determined by WisDOT traffic modeling.

WisDOT provided preliminary Travel Demand Modeling for the 2050 forecast year. If the US 151 Alternative 5 is used as a base, there would be very modest changes to traffic in the area. Milwaukee St west of Sprecher would see a 10 to 15 percent increase of daily traffic volume. Sprecher Rd south of Milwaukee St. would see less than a 5 percent increase in traffic volume.

An interchange at this location provides new access opportunities for residents in the Sprecher neighborhood, as well as enhancing emergency response times from nearby Fire Station No. 13. With an interchange planned in the Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan, Milwaukee Street has generally been constructed to accommodate additional traffic in this area. The Common Council adopted a resolution supporting study of a Milwaukee Street interchange in 2017 (see [Legistar #48640](#)).

As with the Hoepker Road interchange, the City of Madison would be responsible for paying a local cost share associated with the interchange. Madison has a policy that passes that cost onto benefiting properties through assessments/impact fees. This policy could be revised to include other funding sources, which for this area could include Tax Increment Financing (TIF)<sup>1</sup>.

This is probably the only opportunity in the coming decades to install this interchange. If the city were to decide not to install it, the Neighborhood Development Plan and Comprehensive Plan should be modified to reflect no access to the Interstate system, which would likely mean multifamily residential replacing planned employment.

<sup>1</sup> Note that this would require a change in the assessment policy  
September 2023  
7/28/2023-Staff analysis Interstate Alternatives 2023-07-05 with Comments.docx

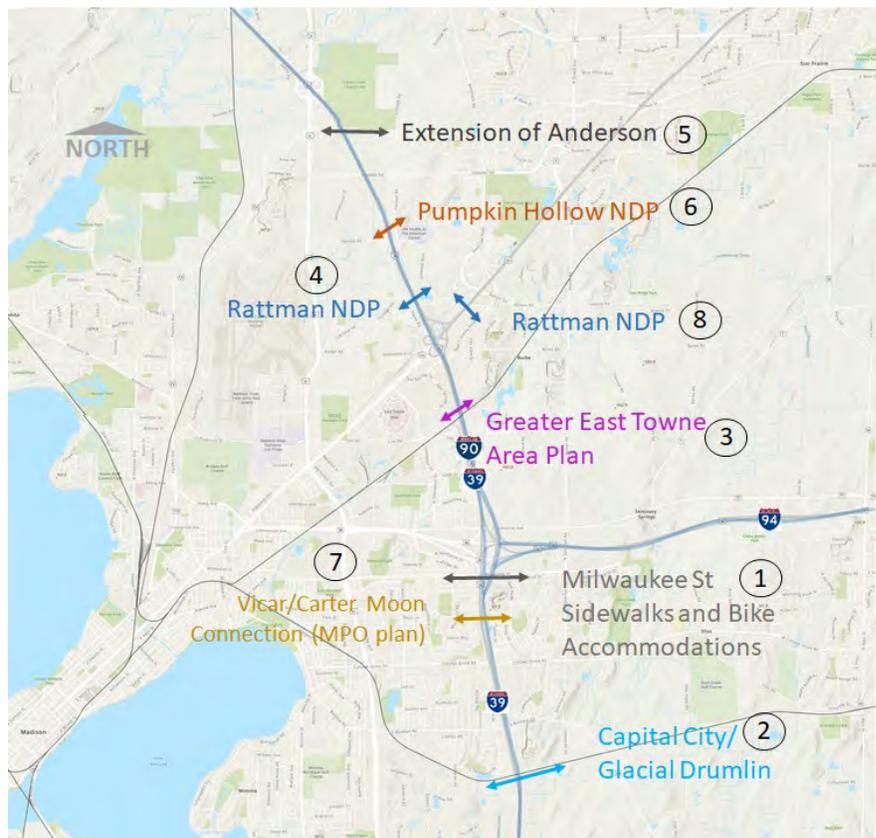
## Interstate Mainline Expansion Alternatives

The Interstate facility is under state jurisdiction, and WisDOT has and will favor their objectives for the facility. It is well documented that capacity expansion leads to greater vehicle miles travel with the associated environmental and land use effects. Consequently, Madison favors no capacity expansion. If capacity expansion is incorporated into the preferred alternative, staff recommends advocating for limited measures, such as managed lanes, rather than traditional lane addition.

In all capacity expansion alternatives, staff requests that WisDOT revise its noise policy FDM Chapter 23 (associated with 23 CFR 772.7), which uses a “feasible and reasonable” criteria for noise walls. Many Type 1 highway projects have noise impacts, and noise mitigation is feasible. Yet this policy defines “reasonable” as costing less than \$50,000 per receptor, which often results in noise mitigation not being provided. This places an undue burden for reasonableness in mitigating legitimate noise impacts. For example, with the Beltline Flex Lane project there were over 100 receptors with an impact (66 dbA or greater), yet none of the noise walls investigated satisfied the “reasonable” criteria to warrant noise mitigation walls. If it is reasonable to invest hundreds of millions to expand capacity, the “reasonability” criteria should be adjusted to allow noise mitigation.

## Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections

The Interstate forms a barrier between central Madison and its growth areas to the east. The reconstruction of the interstate provides a once in a 40 year opportunity to include crossings that would help ameliorate the barrier the Interstate poses. Most of the neighborhood development plans and area plans recommend pedestrian/bicycle crossings of the Interstate. For some of these connections, the need is high because the Interstate severs existing development. Other connections are not as urgent in that they will serve development planned in the future. Generally, all Interstate crossings for motor vehicles should also provide all ages and abilities bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. For dedicated pedestrian bicycle crossings, the following map indicates requested crossings, and their order of importance. Milwaukee Street, while a motor vehicle crossing, is shown as the first priority because it is of critical importance. The Milwaukee Street bridge has no pedestrian facilities, yet pedestrian volumes are increasing substantially.



### **Comments from Madison's Plan Commission and Transportation Commission<sup>2</sup>**

The following bullets summarize and paraphrase comments made by Madison's Plan Commission at their meeting on July 10 and the Transportation Commission at their meeting on July 12, 2023

#### Plan Commission

- Generally commission members supported staff recommendations.

#### Transportation Commission

- Generally commission members supported staff recommendations
- Many commission members supported providing a more urban connection to the American Center.
- The District 15 Alder supported the connection between Milwaukee and County T associated with the Milwaukee Street interchange.
- One person testified about the difficulty biking on High Crossing Road. Commissioners testified that High Crossing Road should be appropriately sized and the expansion to 6-lanes may not be necessary..
- A couple of commission members expressed concern over increased capacity on the interstate and how that increases Vehicle Miles Traveled.
- An overall summary comment was that any change should not further divide the community.

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<sup>2</sup> Appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the council. See MGO 33.56 and 28.204  
September 2023

**RESOLUTION No. 23-014**

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE I-39/90/94 CORRIDOR STUDY**

**WHEREAS**, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are conducting the I-39/90/94 Corridor Study between US 12/18 in Madison and US 12/WIS 16 in Wisconsin Dells; and

**WHEREAS**, the purpose of the I-39/90/94 Corridor Study is to address existing and future traffic demands, safety issues, aging and outdated infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, WisDOT will identify project needs and evaluate a range of alternatives in an environmental impact statement (EIS). The EIS process, which will include ongoing opportunities for public involvement, will lead to the identification of a preferred alternative; and

**WHEREAS**, the Village of Lake Delton and Wisconsin Dells has a significant impact on Wisconsin's economy due to increasing visitors resulting in Sauk County becoming the second highest county behind only Milwaukee in Direct Visitor Spending of \$1.6 billion in 2022 according to the Wisconsin Department of Tourism; and

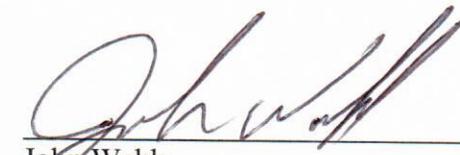
**WHEREAS**, over 5 million annual visitors to the Wisconsin Dells primarily entering the community via the I-39/90/94 Corridor and is vital to the growth of this significant segment of the local and Wisconsin economies.

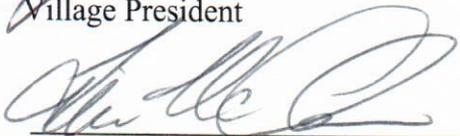
**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:** The Village Board of the Village of Lake Delton supports the modernization plus added general purpose lanes US 151 through the I-39 Split to US 12/WIS 16.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Village Board of the Village of Lake Delton supports the improvement of traffic flows with the Alternative 1: Diverging Diamond Interchanges at the Lake Delton US 12 Interchange and the Lake Delton WIS 23 Interchange.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the Village Board of the Village of Lake Delton this 14<sup>th</sup> day of August 2023.

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John Webb  
Village President

  
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Tim McCumber  
Administrator-Clerk-Treasurer



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 5  
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD  
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

August 16, 2023

**VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY**

Bethaney Bacher-Gresock  
Environmental Manager  
Federal Highway Administration  
525 Junction Road  
Madison, Wisconsin 53717

Dan Schave, P.E.  
Project Supervisor  
Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
2101 Wright Street  
Madison, Wisconsin 53704

**RE: EIS Scoping: I-39/90/94 Improvements from US 12/18 (Beltline) in Madison to US 12/WIS 16 Interchange in Wisconsin Dells, Dane, Columbia, Sauk and Juneau Counties, Wisconsin**

Dear Ms. Bacher-Gresock and Mr. Schave:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) and Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) Notice of Intent – Additional Information dated July 2023, the I-90 Madison to Tomah Needs Study (Study) dated January 2022, and the Corridor Needs Report (Report) dated January 2022, for proposed improvements to 67 miles of Interstate 39/90/94 (I-39/90/94) in Dane, Columbia, Sauk, and Juneau Counties, Wisconsin. EPA's comments are provided in accordance with our responsibilities as a Cooperating Agency in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process (40 CFR Part 1501.8), our authorities under NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

FHWA and WisDOT are planning to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate potential improvements to provide reliable and safe travel on I-39/90/94 between US Highway (US Highway) 12/18 in Madison and US 12/Wisconsin State Highway (WIS) 16 in Wisconsin Dells. The EIS will also evaluate I-39 from its split with I-90/94 (the I-39 I-90/94 Split) to Levee Road near Portage. The study corridor is 67 miles long. WisDOT's Report evaluated existing and future conditions (e.g., traffic, safety, pavement, and resiliency) along the I-39/90/94 corridor. The Report serves as the basis for development of the I-39/90/94 Corridor Study purpose and need and range of alternatives.

I-39/90/94 is a multi-lane interstate with 15 interchanges and more than 100 bridges, traveling through the urban/suburban Madison metropolitan area at the south end of the corridor, while the northern portion of the corridor is characterized by rural and natural resource land uses and the Wisconsin Dells. This corridor is part of Wisconsin's "backbone system," a network of highways connecting major population and economic regions of the state, and is relied on for its tourism accessibility, employment access, and freight mobility.

Based on our review of the Study and Report, we offer comments regarding: (1) alternatives, (2) environmental justice and community engagement, (3) children’s health, (4) air quality, greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, (5) bridge demolition and construction noise, (6) historic, architectural, archaeological and cultural resources, (7) terrestrial resources, (8) Federally-listed species, (9) aquatic resources, (10) cumulative impacts analysis, and (11) agency consultation. Please find EPA’s detailed comments enclosed. Our comments are intended to inform development of the forthcoming EIS.

Please send electronic copies of future NEPA documents pertaining to this project to [R5NEPA@epa.gov](mailto:R5NEPA@epa.gov). If you would like to discuss the contents of this letter further; please contact Kathy Kowal, lead reviewer for this project, at [kowal.kathleen@epa.gov](mailto:kowal.kathleen@epa.gov). Ms. Kowal is also available at 312-353-5206.

Sincerely,

**ELIZABETH  
PELLOSO** Digitally signed by  
ELIZABETH PELLOSO  
Date: 2023.08.16  
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for

Krystle Z. McClain, P.E.  
NEPA Program Supervisor  
Tribal and Multimedia Programs Office

Enclosures: *EPA’s Detailed Comments for I-39/90/94 from US 12/18 (Beltline) in Madison to US 12/WIS 16 Interchange in Wisconsin Dells Construction Emission Control Checklist*

ccs: Kyle Zibung, U.S Army Corps of Engineers  
Sarah Quamme, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Andrew Barta, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

## EPA's Detailed Comments

I-39/90/94 from US 12/18 (Beltline) in Madison to US 12/WIS 16 Interchange in Wisconsin Dells, Dane, Columbia, Sauk and Juneau Counties, Wisconsin  
August 16, 2023

### Alternatives

Section 3 of the Study describes the alternatives under consideration, Section 4 summarizes the preliminary range of impacts from mainline and interchange alternatives, and Section 5 summarizes the screening matrix used to determine alternatives carried forward for continued study.

**Recommendations for the Draft EIS:** We recommend the Draft EIS address the following:

- provide clear explanation for elimination of any alternatives. EPA recommends augmenting elimination criteria to include impacts to residences and commercial properties;
- discuss how alternatives carried forward would address problems identified (e.g., traffic, geometric design of the roadway, pavement conditions, and resiliency) along the corridor, including any potential shortcomings;
- discuss the necessity of rebuilding the I-94/WIS 30 interchange and the US 151/High Crossing Boulevard interchange, which are approximately one mile apart. Explain how safety concerns will be addressed for two interchanges in close proximity as well as what land uses are served by the two interchanges, including cumulative impacts;
- explain how users will access US 51 if access is removed from North American Lane and Daentl Road. Discuss impacts (e.g., noise, air quality, etc.) from using alternative routes to access US 51;
- explain how proposed improvements to 60<sup>th</sup> Street (US 12/WIS 16 Alternative 1 – Diamond Interchange) will improve safety when compared to the current configuration which appears to provide better line-of-site with fewer natural resource impacts;
- discuss whether Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and Transportation System Management Operations (TSMO) will be retained as a hybrid to alternatives carried forward for consideration;
- discuss advantages and disadvantages of proposed changes (e.g., replacing traffic signals with free flow loop ramps) in terms of safety, congestion, air quality, etc.);
- discuss how each alternative would address expected level of service (LOS) through the project's proposed design year (2050). Provide a clear explanation of the comparisons between average and peak future and existing forecasts shown in the I-90 Madison to Tomah Needs Study (page 6);
- discuss how proposed alternatives address regional transit and rail investments identified in the Connect Greater Madison Regional Transportation Plan for 20501 (Plan). Discuss how measures identified in the Plan can be included in Build Alternatives;
- discuss how regional growth is factored into traffic forecasts and the alternatives. In particular, discuss reasonably-foreseeable projects (eg, residential/commercial/industrial development particularly in the southern half of the corridor near Madison) and the effect on traffic forecasts;
- discuss how the alternatives minimize residential/commercial relocation, to the extent practicable;
- explain impacts to traffic using the corridor during construction. Discuss whether traffic will be routed to other roadways, whether alternate route(s) can handle additional vehicles, expected LOS on alternative routes, and additional impacts (e.g., increased air and noise impacts); and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.greatermadisonmpo.org/planning/documents/FullPlan-ConnectRTP-web.pdf>

- clearly explain all terms that may be unfamiliar to readers (e.g., collector-distributor lanes, modernization, etc.) and ensure all topics are explained in plain language.

### **Environmental Justice Impacts / Community Engagement**

To promote environmental justice (EJ), Executive Order 12898: *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations* requires Federal agencies to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse impacts of all programs, policies, and activities on low income and/or minority populations. EPA encourages the use of EJSCREEN<sup>2</sup> as a useful first step in highlighting locations that may be candidates for further analysis. The tool can help identify potential community vulnerabilities by calculating EJ Indexes and displaying other environmental and socioeconomic information in color-coded maps and standard data reports (e.g., pollution sources, health disparities, critical service gaps, climate change data). EJSCREEN can also help focus environmental justice outreach efforts by identifying potential language barriers, meeting locations, tribal lands and indigenous areas, and lack of broadband access. For purposes of NEPA review, EPA considers a project to be in an area of potential EJ concern when the area shows one or more of the twelve EJ Indexes at or above the 80th percentile in the nation and/or state. However, scores under the 80th percentile should not be interpreted to mean there are definitively no EJ concerns present.

While EJSCREEN provides access to high-resolution environmental and demographic data, it does not provide information on every potential community vulnerability that may be relevant. The tool's standard data report should not be considered a substitute for conducting a full EJ analysis, and scoping efforts using the tool should be supplemented with additional data and local knowledge. Also, recognizing the inherent uncertainties with screening level data, and to help address instances when the presence of EJ populations may be diluted (e.g., in large project areas or in rural locations), EPA recommends assessing each block group within the project area individually and adding an appropriate buffer around the project area. Please see the EJSCREEN Technical Documentation<sup>3</sup> for a discussion of these and other issues.

**Recommendations for the Draft EIS:** EPA acknowledges the mention of WisDOT's EJ Analysis and Plan (Plan), which inventories income and race information from the most recent U.S. Census data and the most recent American Community Survey. We recommend the Draft EIS address the following while noting the following information may be useful as FHWA/WisDOT determines impacts, mitigation, and outreach efforts:

- identify the presence of low-income and/or minority communities within the project areas that could experience impacts from the proposed project(s). Disclose demographic information. For initial screening, use EPA's EJSCREEN mapping tool. Use census-tract-level information to initially help locate communities with EJ concerns;
- describe past activities and future plans to engage low-income, minority, and non-English speaking populations, and the surrounding community in the environmental review and planning phase, and, if the project commences, during construction;
- evaluate the impacts (adverse and beneficial) of project proposals on low-income and/or minority communities and sensitive populations (e.g., children, people with asthma, elderly communities, etc.);

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen/technical-information-about-ejscreen>

- compare project impacts on low-income and minority populations with an appropriate reference community to determine whether there may be disproportionate impacts (e.g., consider risk of exposure to hazardous/toxic materials associated with the project construction, and noise impacts)
- identify measures to: 1) ensure meaningful community engagement; 2) minimize adverse community impacts; and 3) avoid disproportionate impacts to communities with EJ concerns. The Draft EIS should describe how individuals and communities were provided a meaningful voice in the project’s development. The Draft EIS should also clearly document how FHWA/WisDOT have ensured full, fair, and meaningful public participation;
- compare the demographics of residents in the project area with the expanded demographics of the individuals (e.g., highway users, business owners, etc.) who would benefit from the proposed project to assist in considering the potential for disproportionate impacts. Include demographic data for Dane, Columbia, Sauk and Juneau Counties as well as the State of Wisconsin.<sup>4</sup>
- In addition to considering air quality and noise impacts, consider the risk of exposure to hazardous/toxic materials associated with project construction and operation;
- incorporate and discuss the latest EJ resources<sup>5</sup> to appropriately engage in meaningful, targeted, community outreach, analyze impacts, and advance environmental justice through NEPA implementation. Resources to aid agencies when conducting EJ analyses include:
  - the Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice’s Promising Practices for EJ Methodologies in NEPA Reviews<sup>6</sup>; and
  - Executive Order 13985 requiring agencies to take a heightened focus on justice and equity issues<sup>7</sup>;
- describe future plans to engage minority/low-income populations, and the surrounding communities in the environmental review and planning phase, and, if the project commences, during construction. FHWA/WisDOT may find the Community Guide to EJ and NEPA Methods<sup>8</sup> useful when designing methods to engage in meaningful, targeted, community outreach, analyze impacts, and advance environmental justice through NEPA implementation;
- discuss the cumulative impacts from climate change on public health for communities in the project area. Studies have shown that communities with EJ concerns may have less adaptive capacity and are thus more prone to disproportional impacts from climate change. See EPA’s report “Analyses of the Effects of Global Change on Human Health and Welfare and Human Systems<sup>9</sup>”;
- include FHWA/WisDOT’s analyses and conclusions regarding whether the Proposed Action may have disproportionately high and adverse impacts on low income or minority communities, as specified in CEQ’s Environmental Justice Guidance;<sup>10</sup>
- describe measures that will be taken to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts any disproportionate impacts to communities with EJ concerns and impacts to other sensitive populations;
- use conclusions on the potential for disproportionate impacts to inform project decisions, including mitigation;

<sup>4</sup> EPA is not suggesting additional data collection; we recommend use of available data.

<sup>5</sup> EJ and NEPA resources available at <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-and-national-environmental-policy-act>

<sup>6</sup> The Promising Practices Report is a compilation of methodologies gleaned from current agency practices identified by the NEPA Committee concerning the interface of environmental justice considerations through NEPA processes. See <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/ej-iwg-promising-practices-ej-methodologies-nepa-reviews>

<sup>7</sup> See E.O. 13985 on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government and E.O. 12898 on Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.energy.gov/nepa/articles/community-guide-environmental-justice-and-nepa-methods>

<sup>9</sup> <http://cfpub.epa.gov/ncea/cfm/recorddisplay.cfm?deid=197244>

<sup>10</sup> CEQ’s Environmental Justice Guidance Under the National Environmental Policy Act. See Section III, Part C-4.

[https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-02/documents/ej\\_guidance\\_nepa\\_ceq1297.pdf?VersionId=78iNGtdwSTz5E2x.H0aHq.E96\\_Tphbgd](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-02/documents/ej_guidance_nepa_ceq1297.pdf?VersionId=78iNGtdwSTz5E2x.H0aHq.E96_Tphbgd)

- if unavoidable relocations will occur, discuss whether fair market value will be assessed at the highest point of value to protect owner wealth;
- clearly indicate benefits and impacts that would be realized by communities living in the project area (e.g., construction and operational air pollution and noise) while project benefits would be experienced by a larger population who live and work outside the project area but use the corridor; and
- identify locations for properly designed vegetative barriers within the project corridor. Public health concerns related to near-road air quality are an important environmental issue, given the established science linking adverse health effects to populations spending significant amounts of time near high-traffic roads<sup>11</sup>. Research indicates that roadways generally influence air quality about 500-600 feet downwind, particularly roads with significant truck traffic. Properly designed vegetation barriers (i.e., strategically placed evergreen trees meeting specific depth and height specifications) can be used to reduce exposure to near-road air pollution, either alone or in combination with solid noise-reduction fences or barriers. In addition to air quality benefits, roadside vegetation can also improve aesthetics, increase property values, reduce heat, control surface water runoff, and reduce noise pollution. As such, EPA recommends FHWA/WisDOT evaluate whether locations where sensitive receptors live, work, and play (e.g., schools, childcare centers, hospitals, elder-care facilities), might especially benefit from a vegetated buffer. Additional considerations can be found in: *Recommendations for Constructing Roadside Vegetation Barriers to Improve Near-Road Air Quality*,<sup>12</sup> *Near Roadway Air Pollution and Health: Frequently Asked Questions*,<sup>13</sup> and *Vegetation Barrier Toolkit for Schools and Communities*.<sup>14</sup> Consider vegetated barriers in addition to the already-proposed noise walls. EPA is available to assist if necessary;
- use conclusions on the potential for disproportionate impacts to inform project decisions, including mitigation;
- if unavoidable relocations will occur, discuss whether fair market value will be assessed at the highest point of value to protect owner wealth; and
- clearly indicate benefits and impacts that would be realized by communities living in the project area (e.g., construction and operational air pollution and noise) while project benefits would be experienced by a larger population who live and work outside the project area but use the corridor.

### **Children's Health**

**Recommendations for the Draft EIS:** We recommend the Draft EIS address the following:

- indicate how the proposed project incorporates Executive Order 13045: *Protection of Children From Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks*, which directs each Federal agency to make it a high priority to identify and assess environmental health and safety risks that may disproportionately affect children and ensure that policies, programs, activities, and standards address these risks, and
- commit to a construction traffic management plan to ensure that trucks hauling materials and heavy machinery avoid areas where children congregate, when possible. Construction traffic should be routed away from schools, daycare facilities, and parks; crossing guards should be used

<sup>11</sup> Health Effects Institute, 2010. Traffic-related air pollution: a critical review of the literature on emissions, exposure, and health effects. HEI Special Report 17. Health Effects Institute, Boston, MA

<sup>12</sup> [https://cfpub.epa.gov/si/si\\_public\\_file\\_download.cfm?p\\_download\\_id=528612](https://cfpub.epa.gov/si/si_public_file_download.cfm?p_download_id=528612)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/air-research/near-roadway-air-pollution-and-health-frequent-questions>

<sup>14</sup> <https://chicagorti.org/resources/vegetation-barrier-toolkit-for-schools-and-communities/> - EPA collaborated on this document, which takes EPA research and puts it in a more user-friendly form. This document provides a step-by-step guide to developing vegetative barriers for air quality, including all stages of design, species selection, planting, maintenance, and community engagement.

when such areas cannot be avoided. In addition to air quality benefits, careful routing may protect children from vehicle-pedestrian accidents.

### **Air Quality and Mitigation**

**Recommendations for the Draft EIS:** We recommend the Draft EIS address the following:

- discuss current air quality in Dane, Columbia, Sauk and Juneau Counties;
- identify and discuss construction and operation air quality impacts that could result from the proposed project. We recommend quantifying estimates of construction emissions and identifying sensitive receptors (residences, schools, etc.) that would be impacted;
- assess the use of vegetative barriers to reduce the movement of roadway air pollution into adjacent neighborhoods for build alternatives.<sup>15</sup> EPA research has demonstrated that well-planned vegetative barriers can reduce exposure to roadway air pollution by up to 50 percent, and the combination of a solid fence with vegetation can result in the greatest protection while still following safety and line-of-sight requirements.<sup>16</sup> EPA would appreciate the opportunity to discuss use of vegetation to reduce pollution exposures. Please contact Kathy Kowal to connect with EPA scientists specializing in vegetative barriers for air quality benefits;
- commit to applicable measures from the enclosed *Construction Emission Control Checklist* that would minimize exposure;
- per Executive Order 13045 on Children’s Health,<sup>17</sup> pay particular attention to worksite proximity to places where children live, learn, and play, such as homes, schools, and playgrounds. Construction emission reduction measures should be strictly implemented near these locations to be protective of children’s health<sup>18</sup>; and
- require completion of a construction traffic management plan that ensures trucks hauling materials and heavy machinery avoid areas where children congregate within adjacent neighborhoods, when possible. Route construction truck traffic away from schools, daycare facilities, and parks, if applicable, and use crossing guards when such areas cannot be avoided. In addition to air quality benefits, careful routing may protect children from vehicle-pedestrian accidents.

### **Greenhouse Gas Reduction (GHG) and Climate Change**

**Recommendations for the Draft EIS:** We recommend the Draft EIS address the following:

- fully quantify and disclose emissions from the proposed action. Consider the following when analyzing emissions:
  - Executive Order 14008: *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad* states, states “The United States and the world face a profound climate crisis. We have a narrow moment to pursue action...to avoid the most catastrophic impacts of that crisis and to seize the opportunity that tackling climate change presents.”;

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<sup>15</sup> Vegetative barriers are strategically-sited trees and shrubs, with rows preferably 3 meters tall and 4 meters thick, without any gaps in foliage between trees, running parallel to the roadway. Use of coniferous tree species is critical because they keep their needles year-round.

<sup>16</sup> Expressways generally influence air quality within 500-600 feet; it is therefore most important to assess sites for barriers where there are residences, schools, playgrounds, and other places people gather within 500-600 feet of a roadway. See EPA’s Near Roadway Air Pollution and Health: Frequently Asked Questions [https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-11/documents/420f14044\\_0.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-11/documents/420f14044_0.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/children/executive-order-13045-protection-children-environmental-health-risks-and-safety-risks>

<sup>18</sup> Children may be more highly exposed to contaminants because they generally eat more food, drink more water, and have higher inhalation rates relative to their size. Also, children’s normal activities, such as putting their hands in their mouths or playing on the ground, can result in higher exposures to contaminants as compared with adults. Children may be more vulnerable to the toxic effects of contaminants because their bodies and systems are not fully developed and their growing organs are more easily harmed.

- the U.S. Global Change Research Program’s National Climate Assessment provides data and scenarios that may be helpful in assessing trends in temperature, precipitation, and frequency and severity of storm events.<sup>19</sup> The proposed project would release GHG emissions during construction from trucks hauling materials, workers’ vehicles and operation of construction equipment as well as during roadway use;
- federal courts have consistently held that NEPA requires agencies to disclose and consider climate impacts in their reviews, including impacts from GHG emissions. On January 9, 2023, the Council on Environmental Quality’s (CEQ) *National Environmental Policy Act Guidance on Consideration of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change*<sup>20</sup> was published in the Federal Register. CEQ issued this interim guidance to assist Federal agencies in assessing and disclosing climate impacts during environmental reviews. The guidance responds to Executive Order 13990: *Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis*, which directed CEQ to review, revise, and update CEQ’s 2016 emissions guidance. The 2023 interim guidance is effective immediately and should be used to inform the reviews of new proposed actions. CEQ indicated that agencies should use this interim guidance to inform the NEPA review for all new proposed actions and may use it for evaluations in process, as agencies deem appropriate, such as informing the consideration of alternatives or helping address comments raised through the public comment process. The Draft EIS should clearly discuss how the interim guidance was applied, as appropriate, to ensure robust consideration of potential climate impacts, mitigation, and adaptation issues;
- estimate and disclose the social cost of greenhouse gases (SC-GHG) from the proposed action. Consider the following:
  - estimates of the social cost of greenhouse gases (SC-GHG<sup>21</sup>) are informative for assessing the impacts of GHG emissions. SC-GHG estimates monetize the societal value of changes in GHG emissions from actions that have small, or marginal, impacts on cumulative global emissions. Estimates of the social cost of carbon (SC-CO<sub>2</sub>) and other greenhouse gases (e.g., social cost of methane (SC-CH<sub>4</sub>)) have been used for over a decade in Federal government analyses. Quantification of anticipated GHG releases and associated SC-GHG comparisons among all alternatives (including the No Action Alternative) within the Draft EIS can inform project decision-making and provide support for implementing all practicable measures to minimize GHG emissions.

#### Emissions & SC-GHG Disclosure and Analysis

- quantify reasonably-foreseeable direct (e.g., construction) and indirect (e.g., off-site material hauling and disposal) GHG emissions;
- use SC-GHG estimates to consider the climate damages from net changes in direct and indirect emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and other GHGs from the proposed project. To do so, EPA recommends a breakdown of estimated net GHG emission changes by individual gas, rather than relying on CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) estimates, followed by monetizing the climate impacts associated with each GHG using the corresponding social cost estimate (i.e., monetize CH<sub>4</sub> emissions changes expected to occur with the social cost of methane (SC-CH<sub>4</sub>) estimate for emissions).<sup>22</sup> When applying SC-

<sup>19</sup> Information on changing climate conditions is available through the National Climate Assessment at: <http://nca2018.globalchange.gov>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2023-00158>

<sup>21</sup> EPA uses the general term, “social cost of greenhouse gases” (SC-GHG), where possible because analysis of GHGs other than CO<sub>2</sub> are also relevant when assessing the climate damages resulting from GHG emissions. The social cost of carbon (SC-CO<sub>2</sub>), social cost of methane (SC-CH<sub>4</sub>), and social cost of nitrous oxide (SC-N<sub>2</sub>O) can collectively be referenced as the SC-GHG.

<sup>22</sup> Transforming gases into CO<sub>2</sub>e using Global Warming Potential (GWP) metrics, and then multiplying the CO<sub>2</sub>e tons by the SC-CO<sub>2</sub>, is not as accurate as a direct calculation of the social costs of non-CO<sub>2</sub> GHGs. This is because GHGs differ not just in their potential to absorb infrared radiation over a given time frame, but also in the temporal pathway of their impact on radiative forcing and in their impacts on physical endpoints other than temperature change, both of which are relevant for estimating their social cost but not reflected in the

GHG estimates, just as with tools to quantify emissions, disclose assumptions (e.g., discount rates) and uncertainties associated with such analysis and the need for updates over time to reflect evolving science and economics of climate impacts; and

- compare and disclose GHG emissions and SC-GHG across alternatives to inform decision-making.

### Resilience and Adaptation

- large storm events are occurring with increasing frequency and intensity in the Midwest due to climate change. Describe changing climate conditions (i.e., temperatures and frequency and severity of storm events) and assess how such changes could impact the proposed project and the environmental impacts of the proposed project and alternatives. Consider increases in frequency and severity of storm events, flooding, and periods of high heat (e.g., more severe/frequent flooding). Discuss how stormwater infrastructure could be designed to help ensure public health and safety in addition to decreasing impacts to aquatic resources (e.g., capture and filtration of runoff). We strongly encourage committing to on-site green stormwater management via use of bioswales, permeable pavement, rain gardens, retention ponds, and/or over-sized culverts or bridges, as applicable, in the Draft EIS;
- consider climate-resilient solutions based on equity and inclusivity to reduce vulnerability for everyone. Consider solutions that boost resilience while improving livelihoods, accessibility, and social and economic well-being. Solutions could include adding green spaces in urban areas and investing in low-carbon transportation networks. Such solutions can also promote other local benefits by mitigating the effects of urban heat islands, reducing air pollution, and strengthening community interaction; and
- describe climate resilience and adaption considerations for 1) construction plans; 2) emergency planning; 3) stormwater management; and 4) maintenance and monitoring of the roadway.

### Reduction and Mitigation

- identify practices to reduce and mitigate GHG emissions. Some chronic medical conditions can increase an individual's risk of illness and death when facing climate change-related impacts, particularly exposure to heat and poor air quality;
- consider ways to reduce heat island effects from increased pavement (e.g., increase tree canopy, include vegetated barriers to reduce air and noise impacts);
- analyze best available control strategies, while considering low-income and minority populations, and sensitive environmental and health receptors, such as children; and
- engage people with diverse backgrounds and experiences as well as non-English speakers to make effective use of the community's experience to expand on climate-related considerations that can inform NEPA decisions.

### **Bridge Demolition**

**Recommendations for the Draft EIS:** We recommend the Draft EIS address the following:

- Commit to testing existing bridge infrastructure to determine if lead paint is present. If lead paint is verified, EPA recommends the use of contractors trained and certified to conduct lead-abatement activities and apply appropriate lead-safe work practices. Specific mitigation measures might include, but are not limited to:

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GWP. See the Interagency Working Group on Social Cost of Greenhouse Gases' February 2021 *Technical Support Document: Social Cost of Carbon, Methane, and Nitrous Oxide Interim Estimates under Executive Order 13990* for more discussion and the range of annual SC-CO<sub>2</sub>, SC-CH<sub>4</sub>, and SC-N<sub>2</sub>O estimates currently used in Federal benefit-costs analyses.

- bridge deconstruction in a way that does not drop debris into water bodies (e.g., Mirror Lake);
- containment, end-of-workday cleanup and proper storage of debris and waste;
- placement of barriers to prevent lead dust from leaving from the site;
- use of personal protective equipment by workers;
- protocols for entering and exiting the work area and the posting of warnings signs; and
- all other relevant or applicable federal environmental regulations should apply, including the Occupational and Safety Hazard Administration’s lead in construction standards.

**Construction Noise and Vibration**

**Recommendations for the Draft EIS:** We recommend the Draft EIS address the following:

*Noise and Vibration Impacts*

- identify residences and other sensitive receptors that would potentially be impacted by construction noise and vibration. Include residences, cultural and religious gathering spots, schools, day care centers, senior housing, community centers, medical facilities, and offices, among others. Assess how the project would impact such receptors;
- assess whether low-income and minority residences could experience disproportionate noise and vibration impacts during construction, and if so, whether mitigation is justified. For mitigation, if any residences are particularly close to pile driving or other highly impactful activities during construction, consider whether the option for temporary housing may be warranted or limiting time windows when certain equipment can be used; and
- provide a plan for giving residents sufficient warning of noise and vibration-intensive activities.

*Staging*

- include exhibits showing the location of proposed staging areas;
- show locations of proposed access roads and associated impacts. We recommend the least amount of habitat disturbance (e.g., tree removal). A discussion concerning mitigation – voluntary or permitted – associated with access and staging should also be included;
- discuss the transport of necessary materials, anticipated number of transport vehicles traveling to the construction area each day, etc.;
- include best management practices typically employed to minimize construction impacts to air quality, water resources, soil (e.g., sediment and erosion control methods), and other regulated resources during this type of project; and
- include a spill management plan.

*Construction Debris*

- discuss the potential for reuse and/or recycling of existing pavement, which can preserve valuable landfill capacity;
- discuss the potential for replacing carbon-intensive Portland Cement in concrete; and
- consider practices applicable from EPA’s Sustainable Management of Construction and Demolition Materials webpage<sup>23</sup> and Large-Scale Residential Demolition webpage.<sup>24</sup> Use these resources to help identify environmentally-sensitive activities associated with road construction and develop contract language for bid packages with specific technical requirements to improve environmental results.

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/smm/sustainable-management-construction-and-demolition-materials>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/large-scale-residential-demolition>

### **General Mitigation Opportunities**

**Recommendations for the Draft EIS:** We recommend the Draft EIS address the following:

- include a factsheet of all protective measures required for project construction (e.g., idling time limits, speed limits for construction trucks, and dust suppression). Include a telephone number residents can call if contractors are not following required practices and distribute the factsheet to the surrounding communities; and
- discuss how users will be informed of construction periods, paying special attention to tourists who use the corridor to visit the Wisconsin Dells during annual tourist seasons.

### **Historic, Architectural, Archaeological, and Cultural Resources**

**Recommendations for the Draft EIS:** We recommend the Draft EIS address the following:

- discuss results of consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act to determine if the project area and any proposed staging areas contain historical or archaeological resources, including properties that are listed on the National Register of Historic Properties or eligible for listing; and
- determine potential impacts, if any, to historic properties within the project area.

### **Terrestrial Habitat**

**Recommendations for the Draft EIS:** We recommend the Draft EIS address the following:

- include exhibits showing natural habitats that would be temporarily or permanently disturbed as a result of each alternative;
- disclose estimated acreage of terrestrial impacts for each alternative; and
- consider voluntary tree mitigation on a one-to-one basis for native trees removed during construction. Consultation with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) or local park districts would likely provide options for tree planting.

### **Noxious and Non-Invasive Species (NNIS)**

**Recommendations for the Draft EIS:** We recommend the Draft EIS address the following:

- discuss standard best management practices (e.g., washing construction equipment) that will be used to eliminate the spread of NNIS into, as well as out of, the project area; and
- address measures to control or eradicate existing populations of NNIS, ideally before earthmoving activities begin.

### **Federally-Listed Threatened and Endangered Species**

**Recommendations for the Draft EIS:** We recommend the Draft EIS address the following:

- disclose the results obtained from using U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) project planning tool (iPAC) to streamline the environmental review process.<sup>25</sup> Correspondence sent to and from the resource agencies regarding consultation efforts, and information on the status and results of those consultation efforts, should be included in the Draft EIS's appendices;

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<sup>25</sup> <https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>

- discuss coordination in compliance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (Act);<sup>26</sup> and
- address potential affects to aquatic organisms from proposed alternatives and whether any seasonal restrictions are or will be required.

## **Wetlands, Waterways, and Aquatic Resources**

**Recommendations for the Draft EIS:** We recommend the Draft EIS address the following:

### *Wetlands, Streams, and Floodplains*

- provide a summary of regulated water resources within the project boundary and include the wetland delineation undertaken for the project;
- provide exhibits illustrating the location of nearby wetlands, streams, and floodplain, as applicable, for each alternative;
- discuss existing conditions and determine the extent of water resource impacts expected to occur to these resources for each alternative;
- describe both direct (e.g., permanent fill), indirect (e.g., changes in hydrology), and temporary (e.g., temporary construction impacts) impacts for each alternative;
- in addition to identifying aquatic resources and potential impacts, apply sequencing established by the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines, namely, avoidance first, followed by demonstration of impact minimization, and mitigation for unavoidable impacts. The CWA Section 404 (b)(1) guidelines call for the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) to be selected to address impacts to wetlands, streams, and other waters of the United States. If applicable, the Draft EIS should include a discussion of proposed mitigation for unavoidable, minimized stream or aquatic impacts; and
- disclose and analyze potential permanent, temporary, direct, indirect and cumulative impacts to all aquatic resources.

### *Water Quality*

- include information concerning water quality within the project area based on the WDNR's Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list of impaired waterbodies. For each waterbody listed on the 303(d) list, discuss what impairments are precluding the meeting of water quality standards and analyze how the proposed project could potentially affect the waterbody's listing (both positively and negatively);
- describe how proposed bridge designs to span Mirror Lake will minimize impacts to the waterbody (e.g., during construction, collecting and filtering stormwater); and
- disclose best practices for protecting water quality during project construction.

### *Stormwater*

- include information on drainage design, including information on stormwater management, which may consist of stormwater basins for water quality treatment and rate control. Consider recent storm events (e.g., past 10-20 years) which may be greater than current regulatory requirements to account for changes in precipitation due to climate change;
- provide exhibits illustrating the potential locations of stormwater basins; and
- discuss whether scupper drains will be used to collect stormwater runoff from the bridges, and where such drainage will be directed.

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<sup>26</sup> 16 U.S.C. §§661-666c; PL 85-624. The Act requires agencies consult with USFWS and state wildlife agencies concerning the conservation of wildlife resources where the water of any stream or other water body is proposed to be controlled or modified by a Federal agency or any public or private agency operating under a Federal permit.

## **Cumulative Impacts Analysis**

**Recommendations for the Draft EIS:** We recommend the Draft EIS address the following:

- summarize corridor development;
- disclose and analyze potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts<sup>27</sup> to resources in the project areas, considering that highway development in the project area has a lengthy history;
- consider cumulative disproportionate environmental burdens faced by residents living near the project area when deciding on appropriate project mitigation measures, including accounting for and minimizing further displacement;
- consider the community's history of cumulative and disproportionate impacts. In particular, additional pavement and a changing climate with above-average hot days can increase ground ozone formation, exacerbating incidences of asthma for those with a history of exposure to air pollution; and
- consider reasonably-foreseeable impacts as a result of induced growth along or adjacent to the project area (e.g., at controlled access points, near the East Washington extension, along Hoepker and Portage Roads, etc.). Regional or county-wide smart growth or land use plans should inform the discussion of induced growth and cumulative impacts.

## **Agency Coordination**

**Recommendations for the Draft EIS:** We recommend the Draft EIS address the following:

- the Report indicates WisDOT convened meetings of the Citizens Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee in 2022. The Draft EIS should discuss how members were selected for each committee and whether members are representative of the corridor, particularly urban areas;
- the Report indicates WisDOT met with WDNR in 2022 to initiate early discussions focused on flooding events and sensitive environmental stewardship lands in the Pine Island Wildlife Area and with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding the Baraboo River Waterfowl Production. We look to the Draft EIS to include comments from WDNR and USFWS regarding proposed alternatives, impacts, and proposed mitigation;
- summarize coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding proposed alternative, impacts to aquatic resources, and proposed mitigation;
- summarize coordination with Indian tribes identified with environmental or cultural resources along the corridor; and
- include a list of all Federal, state, and local permits that will be required to undertake the preferred alternative. For all environmental impact categories requiring coordination with other Federal or state agencies, EPA recommends copies of both your letters to those agencies, as well as the responses from those agencies, be provided as appendices to the Draft EIS.

## **Additional Information**

**Recommendations for the Draft EIS:** We recommend the Draft EIS address the following:

- include an explanation of all technical terms and utilize plain language; and

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<sup>27</sup> Cumulative impacts are those that result from the proposed action's incremental impacts when these impacts are added to the impacts of other past, present, and reasonably-foreseeable future actions, including those under the control of other entities. This information could assist efforts to avoid, minimize, and mitigate adverse impacts, especially with communities with environmental justice concerns.

- demonstrate how FHWA/WisDOT have utilized the following databases to obtain environmental information related to the project area:
  - EnviroMapper<sup>28</sup>: <https://www.epa.gov/waterdata/waters-watershed-assessment-tracking-environmental-results-system>
  - Envirofacts<sup>29</sup>: <https://www3.epa.gov/enviro/facts/multisystem.html>
  - EJSCREEN: <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>
  - NEPAassist: <https://www.epa.gov/nepa/nepassist>
  - 303(3) Listed Impaired Waters: <https://www.epa.gov/exposure-assessment-models/303d-listed-impaired-waters>
  - National Ambient Air Quality Standards status: <http://www.epa.state.oh.us/dapc/general/naaqs.aspx>

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<sup>28</sup> The Watershed Assessment, Tracking & Environmental Results System (WATERS) unites water quality information previously available only from several independent and unconnected databases.

<sup>29</sup> Includes enforcement and compliance information.

## Construction Emission Control Checklist

Diesel emissions and fugitive dust from project construction may pose environmental and human health risks and should be minimized. In 2002, EPA classified diesel emissions as a likely human carcinogen, and in 2012 the International Agency for Research on Cancer concluded that diesel exhaust is carcinogenic to humans. Acute exposures can lead to other health problems, such as eye and nose irritation, headaches, nausea, asthma, and other respiratory system issues. Longer term exposure may worsen heart and lung disease.<sup>1</sup> We recommend FHWA/WisDOT consider the following protective measures and commit to applicable measures in the Draft EIS.

### **Mobile and Stationary Source Diesel Controls**

Purchase or solicit bids that require the use of vehicles that are equipped with zero-emission technologies or the most advanced emission control systems available. Commit to the best available emissions control technologies for project equipment to meet the following standards.

- On-Highway Vehicles: On-highway vehicles should meet, or exceed, the EPA exhaust emissions standards for model year 2010 and newer heavy-duty, on-highway compression-ignition engines (e.g., long-haul trucks, refuse haulers, shuttle buses, etc.).<sup>2</sup>
- Non-road Vehicles and Equipment: Non-road vehicles and equipment should meet, or exceed, the EPA Tier 4 exhaust emissions standards for heavy-duty, non-road compression-ignition engines (e.g., construction equipment, non-road trucks, etc.).<sup>3</sup>
- Low Emission Equipment Exemptions: The equipment specifications outlined above should be met unless: 1) a piece of specialized equipment is not available for purchase or lease within the United States; or 2) the relevant project contractor has been awarded funds to retrofit existing equipment, or purchase/lease new equipment, but the funds are not yet available.

Consider requiring the following best practices through the construction contracting or oversight process:

- Establish and enforce a clear anti-idling policy for the construction site.
- Use onsite renewable electricity generation and/or grid-based electricity rather than diesel-powered generators or other equipment.
- Use electric starting aids such as block heaters with older vehicles to warm the engine.
- Regularly maintain diesel engines to keep exhaust emissions low. Follow the manufacturer's recommended maintenance schedule and procedures. Smoke color can signal the need for maintenance (e.g., blue/black smoke indicates that an engine requires servicing or tuning).
- Where possible, retrofit older-tier or Tier 0 nonroad engines with an exhaust filtration device before it enters the construction site to capture diesel particulate matter.
- Replace the engines of older vehicles and/or equipment with diesel- or alternatively-fueled engines certified to meet newer, more stringent emissions standards (e.g., plug-in hybrid-electric vehicles, battery-electric vehicles, fuel cell electric vehicles, advanced technology locomotives, etc.), or with zero emissions electric systems. Retire older vehicles, given the significant contribution of vehicle emissions to the poor air quality conditions. Implement programs to encourage the voluntary

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<sup>1</sup> Carcinogenicity of diesel-engine and gasoline-engine exhausts and some nitroarenes. *The Lancet*. June 15, 2012

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.epa.gov/otaq/standards/heavy-duty/hdci-exhaust.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/emission-standards-reference-guide/epa-emission-standards-nonroad-engines-and-vehicles>

removal from use and the marketplace of pre-2010 model year on-highway vehicles (e.g., scrappage rebates) and replace them with newer vehicles that meet or exceed the latest EPA exhaust emissions standards, or with zero emissions electric vehicles and/or equipment.

### **Fugitive Dust Source Controls**

- Stabilize open storage piles and disturbed areas by covering and/or applying water or chemical/organic dust palliative, where appropriate. This applies to both inactive and active sites, during workdays, weekends, holidays, and windy conditions.
- Install wind fencing and phase grading operations where appropriate and operate water trucks for stabilization of surfaces under windy conditions.
- When hauling material and operating non-earthmoving equipment, prevent spillage and limit speeds to 15 miles per hour (mph). Limit speed of earth-moving equipment to 10 mph.

### **Occupational Health**

- Reduce exposure through work practices and training, such as maintaining filtration devices and training diesel-equipment operators to perform routine inspections.
- Position the exhaust pipe so that diesel fumes are directed away from the operator and nearby workers, reducing the fume concentration to which personnel are exposed.
- Use enclosed, climate-controlled cabs pressurized and equipped with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters to reduce the operators' exposure to diesel fumes. Pressurization ensures that air moves from inside to outside. HEPA filters ensure that any incoming air is filtered first.
- Use respirators, which are only an interim measure to control exposure to diesel emissions. In most cases, an N95 respirator is adequate. Workers must be trained and fit-tested before they wear respirators. Depending on the type of work being conducted, and if oil is present, concentrations of particulates present will determine the efficiency and type of mask and respirator. Personnel familiar with the selection, care, and use of respirators must perform the fit testing. Respirators must bear a National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health approval number.



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Ice Age National Scenic Trail  
8075 Old Sauk Pass Road  
Cross Plains, Wisconsin 53528



1.A.2(IATR)

August 10, 2023

Bethaney Bacher-Gresock, Environmental Manager, FHWA  
525 Junction Road, Suite 8000  
Madison, WI 53717; email: [bethaney.bacher-gresock@dot.gov](mailto:bethaney.bacher-gresock@dot.gov); 608-662-2119.

RE: NOI for EIS on I-39/90/94 in Dane, Columbia, Sauk, and Juneau counties, WI

Dear Ms. Bacher-Gresock

The National Park Service (NPS) Ice Age National Scenic Trail (NST) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the recently issued Notice of Intent (NOI) that an environmental impact statement (EIS) will be prepared to study potential improvements to 67 miles of Interstates 39, 90, and 94 (I-39/90/94) in Dane, Columbia, Sauk, and Juneau counties, Wisconsin. The Ice Age National Scenic Trail (Ice Age NST) traverses the proposed project study area (I-39/90/94 corridor) at several locations. This project may directly impact the Ice Age National Scenic Trail (NST) which is administered by the National Park Service (NPS) in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Ice Age Trail Alliance, and other partners along its 1200-mile length.

The specific road crossings of the Ice Age NST from South to North in the proposed project area are as follows: Sauk County on I-90/94 where Schepp Rd crosses under the Highway. This is the first location on the Eastern Bifurcation of the Ice Age NST in the project area where Trail hikers cross; Columbia County on I-39 where Levee Rd crosses under the Highway. This is the second location on the Eastern Bifurcation of the Ice Age NST in the project area where Trail hikers cross; Sauk County on I-90/94 where County Road H and Old US 12 crosses under the Highway. This is the first location on the Western Bifurcation of the Ice Age NST in the project area where Trail hikers cross; Juneau County on I-90/94 where the Ice Age NST connector along US 12/16 and 60<sup>th</sup> St align along the Highway. This is the second location on the Western Bifurcation of the Ice Age NST in the project area where Trail hikers pass in or near the project area. In summary, four potential locations in, or adjacent to, the proposed project area are included for evaluation.

The I-39/90/94 EIS will evaluate the potential social, economic, and environmental impacts/effects resulting from the implementation of the Build and No Build alternatives. FHWA and WisDOT will seek input from the public and agencies during the EIS development process regarding the effects of the project. The Ice Age NST would request the following be considered during the planning and implementation of the project. Determine if or to what extent the project will affect the three trail crossings and one adjacent section of trail at Highway 12/16. Where the Ice Age NST is in the project area, determine if 4f and or 6f consultation would be required. With regards to the trail and trail crossings in the I-39/90/94 project, maintaining safe access for hikers of the Ice Age NST during all phases of the project would be paramount. If this is not feasible at the current locations, then determine a reasonable temporary trail re-route working with Ice Age NST personnel to establish. It is the overall goal of the Ice Age NST during the project, to maintain safe and consistent trail access for hikers at each trail crossing location in the project area.



We appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments. Please contact us at 608-798-8700 or [eric\\_gabriel@nps.gov](mailto:eric_gabriel@nps.gov) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

**ERIC GABRIEL** Digitally signed by ERIC GABRIEL  
Date: 2023.08.10 08:53:40 -05'00'

Eric Gabriel, Superintendent, Ice Age National Scenic Trail

cc:

Dan Schave, PE, Project Supervisor, WIDOT

[daniel.schave@dot.wi.gov](mailto:daniel.schave@dot.wi.gov)

Kevin Thusius, Ice Age Trail Alliance

[kevin@iceagetrail.org](mailto:kevin@iceagetrail.org)

Andrew Hanson III, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

[andrew.hanson@wisconsin.gov](mailto:andrew.hanson@wisconsin.gov)



8-17-23

Daniel Schave  
Wisconsin Department of Transportation – SW Region  
2101 Wright Street  
Madison WI 53704

**Subject: Comments on Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS**

I-39/90/94  
Madison – Wisconsin Dells  
Dane, Columbia, Sauk, Juneau Counties

Dear Mr. Schave:

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has reviewed the Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for a proposed highway project: Madison to Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin as published to the Federal Register on 7-18-23 and the Additional Information Document provided.

From the published notice of intent, the Preliminary Purpose and Need for the proposed action is as follows:

“The purpose of the I–39/90/94 study is to address existing and future traffic demands, safety issues, aging and outdated corridor infrastructure, and corridor resiliency. The need for proposed improvements sets the stage for developing and evaluating possible alternatives. Traffic volumes and congestion are increasing, impacting travel reliability. Heavy recreational, commuting and freight traffic uniquely affect traffic operations in the study corridor. Recreational traffic occurs typically on Fridays and Sundays in the summer. Crashes at many locations along the study corridor exceed the statewide average crash rate. Congestion and geometric/design deficiencies contribute to elevated crash rates. Pavement maintenance projects are anticipated in 24 of the next 30 years somewhere in the study corridor, which presents ongoing travel delay and congestion for daily commercial and recreational traffic. There are 113 structures in the I–39/90/94 study corridor. 84 structures will be over 50 years old in the year 2030. In addition to aging structures, many bridges do not meet current vertical and lateral design standards. Flood events in 2008 and 2018 caused partial or full interstate closures, impacting corridor resiliency. Closures disrupt vital connections for commerce and emergency services. The closures cause substantial indirection for detoured traffic, causing congestion and delays on alternate routes. The study’s purpose and need statement may be revised based on the consideration of public and agency comments.’

**Alternatives:**

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) will Analyze and consider several different alternatives to determine how well they address the study purpose need. Additional screening criteria will consider environmental impacts, public and agency input, and cost. Alternatives under current consideration range from no improvements to several iterations of build alternatives detailed further below.

**No Build Alternative**

This alternative assumes no improvements to the I-39/90/94 mainline or interchanges outside of already scheduled projects (STH 60 interchange, Wisconsin River Bridges). This alternative does not meet the purpose or need of this study however it will be retained as a baseline to compare other impacts to.

**Transportation Demand Management/Transportation System Management and Operations Alternative**

This alternative considers strategies to reduce personal vehicular traffic, shift travel to alternative routes or times, and to better maximize existing transportation's facilities' capacity. Some examples include park-and-rides, ramp metering, reversible lanes, and crash investigation sites. While these options alone do not meet the purpose and need of this study, they can be incorporated into other alternatives to further improve the interstate corridor.

**Off Alignment (East Reliever)**

A previous study evaluated four alternatives for an off alignment route east of the current interstate highway corridor. WisDOT has eliminated this alternative from further study due to greater impacts and negative public reaction. The DNR agrees with this decision and sees little value in further consideration of this alternative.

**Spot Improvements**

This alternative retains the existing interstate configuration and only includes spot safety improvements such as addressing interchanges with high crash rates and priority bridge replacement. As this does not meet the study purpose and need, this alternative will not be considered in this study.

**Freeway Modernization**

WisDOT will continue to evaluate three Build modernization alternatives that would reconstruct the freeway to modern design standards whenever possible. Under the modernization alternatives, WisDOT will consider safety first; replace deteriorating pavement, bridges and culverts; move all ramp movements to the right, eliminating lefthand entrances and exits; improve ramp lengths and bridge clearances; expand shoulders; improve roadway curves, lighting and signage; consider opportunities to add bike and pedestrian facilities; and add noise walls where feasible and reasonable. WisDOT will also consider implementing strategies to improve operations, including Collector-Distributor (C-D) Lanes, Managed Lanes, and/or Auxiliary Lanes in each of the modernization alternatives (see Figure 3-1). All the modernization alternatives are generally within the existing right of way but depending on specific site conditions and alternative design, additional impacts outside the right of way could occur. These Build alternatives will be evaluated as additional data on purpose and need and other screening factors, such as impacts to natural and cultural resources, are developed. In the vicinity of the I-39 I-90/94 Split, where the interstate mainline has been impacted by prior flood events, all modernization alternatives include a combination of profile adjustments and waterway crossing design to reduce flood risk.

**Expected Impacts to be Evaluated:**

The EIS will evaluate the potential social, economic, and environmental impacts/effects resulting from the implementation of the Build and No Build alternatives. FHWA and WisDOT will seek input from the public and agencies during the EIS development process regarding the effects of the project. WisDOT identified preliminary impacts of alternatives, which is provided in the NOI Additional Information document. The following key resources and issues have been identified for evaluation in the EIS and supporting technical studies:

- Wetlands and Waters of the United States
- Floodplains
- Section 4(f) and/or Section 6(f) Public Lands
- Section 4(f) and/or Section 106 Historic Resources
- Threatened and Endangered Species
- Right of Way Acquisition and Relocations
- Farmland and Agricultural Impacts
- Noise
- Environmental Justice

While the above list is broad enough to cover a wide range of potential impacts, DNR anticipates WisDOT will follow the Cooperative Agreement procedures to address any other resource issues or concerns that are identified while developing the study.

Additionally, DNR submits that water quality (stormwater) considerations be included in the above list. The Transportation Construction General Permit (TCGP) could be added to the list of anticipated permits and authorizations as well. NR 151 water quality standards as required under the TCGP should be considered when evaluating project alternatives, particularly at new and reconfigured interchanges.

**Continued Coordination:**

The DNR has accepted a participating agency status through the development of this EIS and looks forward to continued coordination through the study process and project design.

If you have any questions, please contact the offices below:

Madison to STH 60:

STH 60 to Wis Dells:

Eric Heggelund, Transportation Liaison  
 3911 Fish Hatchery Road  
 Fitchburg, WI 53711  
 (608) 228-7927  
[eric.heggelund@wisconsin.gov](mailto:eric.heggelund@wisconsin.gov)

Andy Barta, Transportation Liaison  
 3911 Fish Hatchery Road  
 Fitchburg, WI 53711  
 (608) 235-2955  
[andrew.barta@wisconsin.gov](mailto:andrew.barta@wisconsin.gov)

Sincerely,

*Andy Barta*

Environmental Analysis & Review Specialist

cc: Brian Taylor – WisDOT REC  
Peter Fillipi – WisDOT SWEC  
Sam Kube – WisDOT SWEC  
Eric Heggelund – DNR  
Caron Kloser - HNTB  
Bethany Bacher-Gresock – DOT  
Kyle Zibung – USACE  
Sarah Quamme - USFWS

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**From:** Greg Hall <[Halg@vi.deforest.wi.us](mailto:Halg@vi.deforest.wi.us)>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 14, 2023 3:32 PM  
**To:** Schave, Daniel L - DOT <[Daniel.Schave@dot.wi.gov](mailto:Daniel.Schave@dot.wi.gov)>  
**Cc:** Judd Blau <[Blauj@vi.deforest.wi.us](mailto:Blauj@vi.deforest.wi.us)>; Bill Chang <[changb@vi.deforest.wi.us](mailto:changb@vi.deforest.wi.us)>; Jane Cahill Wolfgram <[cahillwolfgramj@vi.deforest.wi.us](mailto:cahillwolfgramj@vi.deforest.wi.us)>  
**Subject:** Village of DeForest 39/90/94 Corridor Study Recommendation Letter

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside the organization.  
Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.**

Hi Daniel,

Attached is the Village of DeForest 39/90/94 corridor study recommendation letter. We will also mail a hard copy for you as well. Please let us know if you have any follow up questions and we'd be happy to help you.

Greg

Greg Hall  
Public Services Operations Supervisor  
Village of DeForest  
608-807-7023



## VILLAGE OF DEFOREST

120 S STEVENSON STREET  
DEFOREST, WI 53532  
PHONE: (608) 846-6751  
WWW.VLDEFOREST.WI.US

Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
Southwest Region Office  
2101 Wright Street  
Madison, WI 53704

Dear Dan Schave,

The Village of DeForest has reviewed Wisconsin Department of Transportation's ("WisDOT") plans for proposed improvements to the Interstates 39/90/94 adjacent to and through the Village of DeForest. We thank you for the opportunity to respond.

Overall, we agree with WisDOT plans to improve this major transportation corridor which link many communities together and is a conduit to the state of Wisconsin's robust tourism economy. There are different impacts at each of the Village of DeForest's exit points that have led us to the following recommendations. Each will be discussed starting with the southernmost portion of the interstate that bisects DeForest and moving north.

- 1) Highway 51 Alternate 2 is our preferred plan, particularly with consideration for the improvement of a roundabout at the intersection of Highway 51, Williamsburg Way, and Metro Drive. This is a dangerous intersection, with 3 fatalities plus additional crashes in the area, that could use upgrades to improve overall safety and flow. The Village of DeForest has planned and partially built an interior road network to provide alternate traffic routes to the State highways in this area. We anticipate the final piece of this internal network will be completed in the near future as development occurs on the lands west of Highway 51 and south of Highway 19. We are also requesting that WisDOT consider a bike or pedestrian trail along the eastern side of Highway 51.
- 2) Highway 19 interchange is the most challenging and we understand the complexity of improvements. We support alternative number 3 with the addition of a bike/ped trail along the north side of Highway 19. Additional multi-family and commercial business development is planned for the west side of I 39/90/94. This area is contained within a tax increment district, and we expect to see it fully built out before 2036. We feel that alternative number 3 with the north multi-use trail provides for the most efficient flow of traffic by bypassing the rail crossing, makes accessing the interstate safer, and provides a vital link between the different uses in this region through the trail connection and new traffic pattern.
- 3) The Highway V interchange is the latest area to see an increase in demand for growth. The Village has recently annexed over 300 acres in this area and is in the process of amending the tax increment district to include a majority of the annexed lands. This includes lands adjacent to the recently proposed Buc-ees development. The Village anticipates that this new regional destination and the ancillary developments thereafter will redefine this interchange and

therefore will require a significant upgrade of the Highway V interchange to handle the increased traffic. We are uncertain if WisDOT is aware of all the proposed developments that will occur west of the interstate. We strongly recommend Alternate 2 and a diverging diamond interchange. The Village will be extending sewer facilities to this new area of DeForest this year. We believe that Buc-ees's track record of success for attracting complementary businesses will further increase traffic demands and the existing businesses around the interstate and Highway V that support Wisconsin's vital tourism industry demands an enhanced at this interchange.

4) Other considerations:

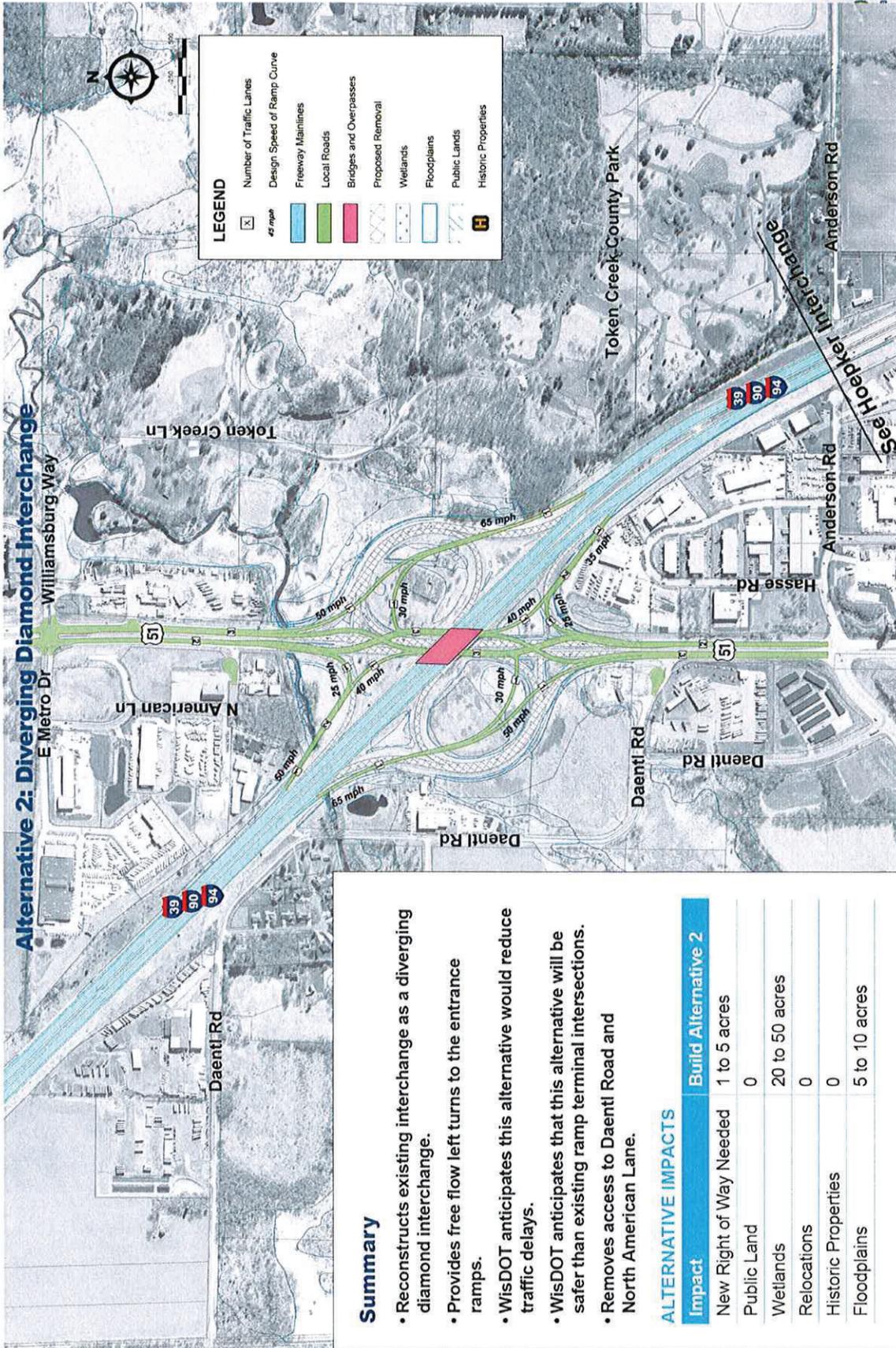
- Daentl Road Interstate Crossing via bridge. This area (currently in the Town of Burke) has approximately 20 residences and a proposed new business development that could include up to 1,000,000 square feet of light industrial facilities. There is currently a Cooperative Plan between the Village of DeForest, Burke, Madison, and Sun Prairie that expires in 2036. Upon the expiration of the Cooperative Plan, this area will automatically attach to the Village. There is currently only one way in and out of the area over the Token Creek. This area we be even more limited with the improvements at the Highway 51 interchange. So, a bridge crossing over the interstate to Pepsi Way would provide an alternative access point to this area greatly enhancing safety and overall traffic flow. This would also alleviate traffic congestion at the Highway 51 and Highway CV intersection.
- Daley Road was bisected by the interstate many years ago. With the increased development pressure to the west side (as stated above for the Highway V interchange), reconnecting this road with an overpass will lessen the local traffic on Highway V and provide for better traffic circulation.
- River Road Bridge over the interstate could be either removed or raised to mitigate the conflict that bridge seems to encounter. Should the bridge be removed, River Road could be extended north and connect into Cuba Valley Road.

We have attached supporting documentation for the various interchanges. We also plan to work on a comprehensive traffic impact analysis for Highway V. We can provide additional information and support that WisDOT may request. We thank you for taking your time to consider the Village of DeForest's needs as one of the fastest growing communities in Dane County.

Sincerely,

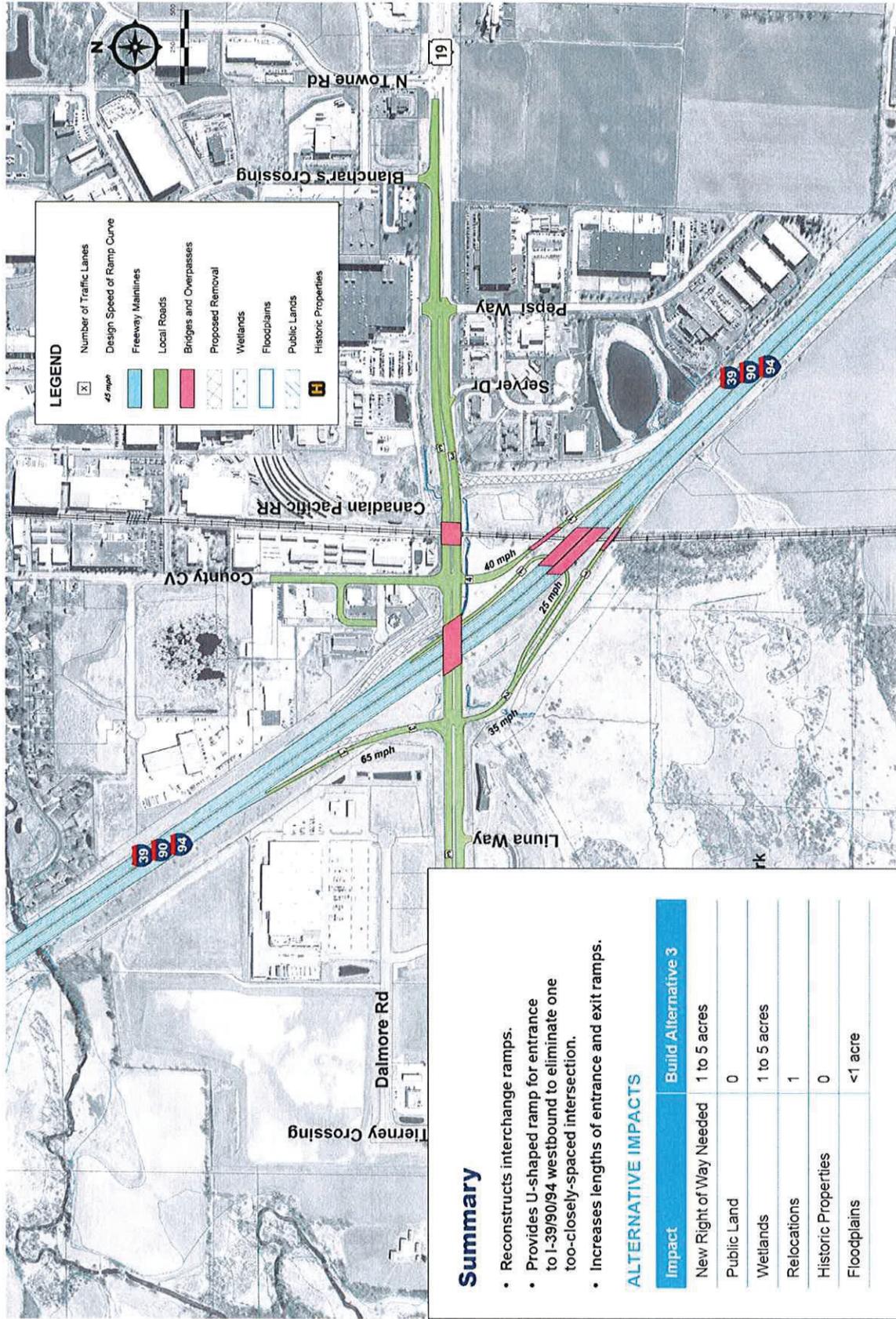


Bill Chang  
Village of DeForest Administrator



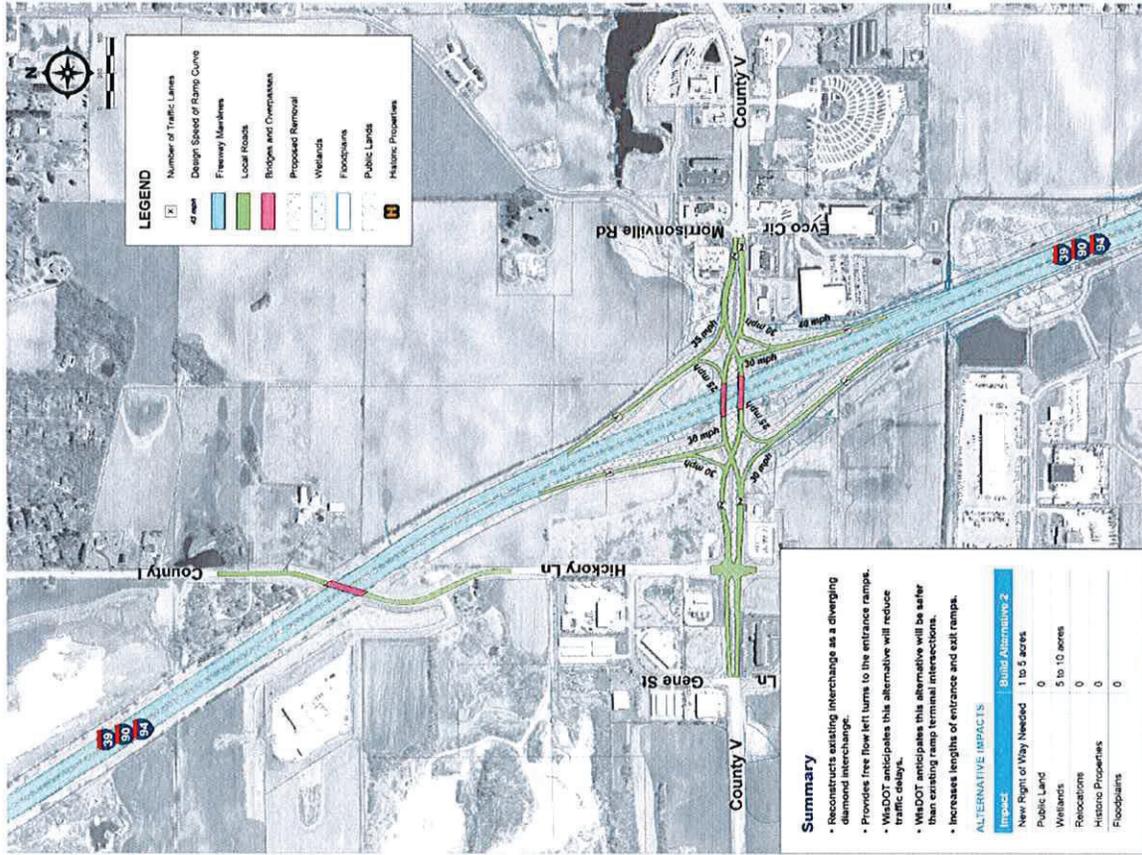
### Alternative #3: U-Ramp w/ WIS 19 Over Railroad

- Reduces signalized intersections from four to two by moving NB on ramp to a u-ramp and NB off ramp to align with County CV
- Elevates WIS 19 over railroad & I-39/90/94
- Adds WIS 19 capacity (3 lanes each direction)
- Commercial relocation at WIS 19 and County CV



## Alternative #2: Diverging Diamond Interchange

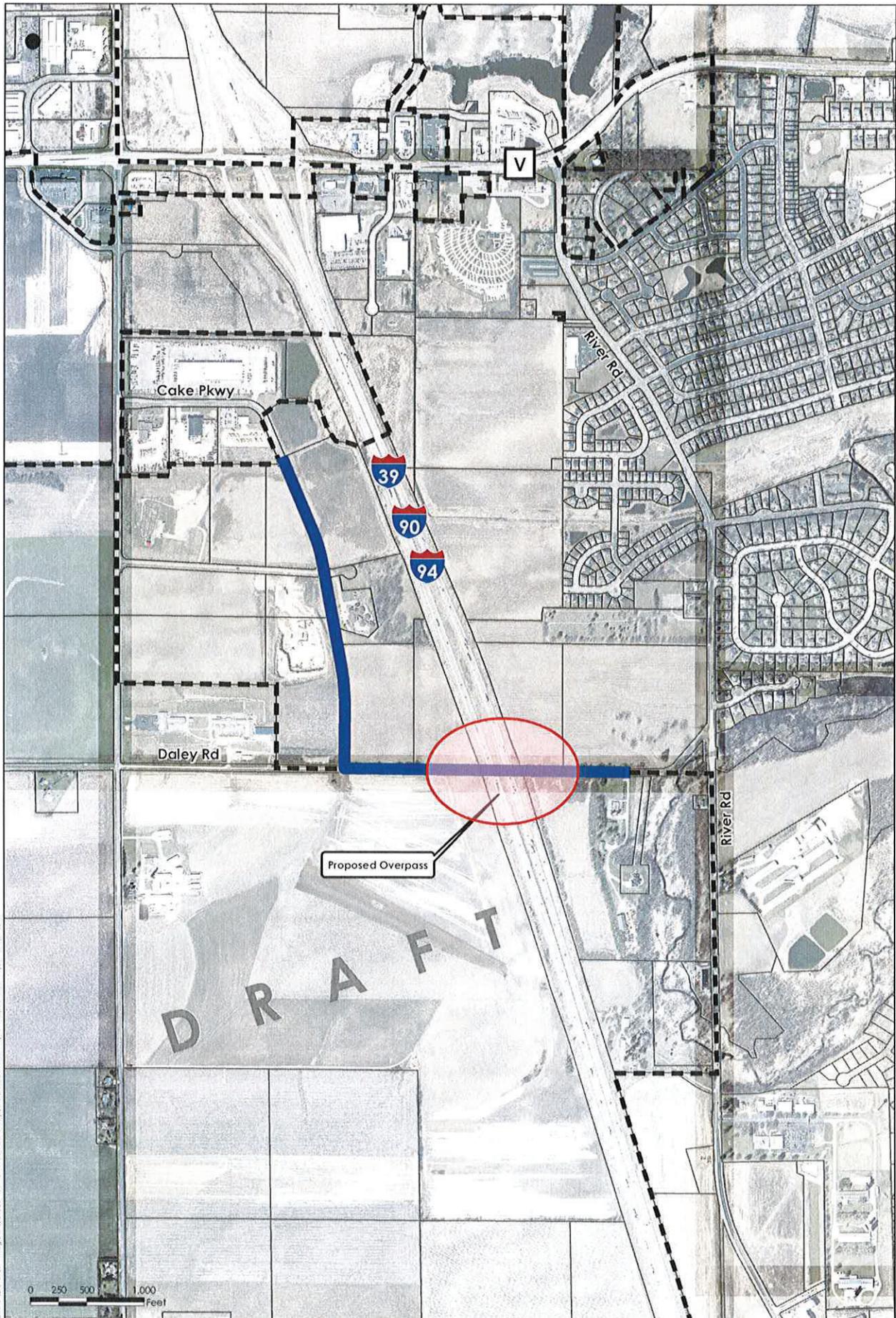
- Reconstructs the County V interchange as a diverging diamond interchange (DDI)
- DDI would:
  - Provide free-flow left turns to entrance ramps
  - Reduce traffic delays
  - Provide better safety
- Increases ramp lengths
- Would need to construct at least one new bridge over I-39/90/94











Document Path: K:\\_Deforest\ Village of DeForest\GIS\MapDocs\Stand Project\MapDocs\Stand Project\MapDocs



**Village of DeForest**  
 Daley Road  
 July 13, 2023

- Village of DeForest Corporate Limits (July 25, 2023)
- Proposed Road
- Proposed Overpass
- Parcels (July 25, 2023)

**vierbicher**  
 planners engineers advisors

