



# Public Hearing Handout

Project ID 1113-00-00

## Environmental Report

### US 41 Interstate Conversion, State Line to Green Bay

September 10, 11, and 12, 2013



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## Welcome

Thank you for attending today’s public hearing for the US 41 Interstate Conversion project hosted by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT). The public hearing is part of the process for involving citizens in transportation decisions and gives you the opportunity to comment on the environmental report for the proposed conversion of US 41 to an Interstate Highway.

## Agenda

| Time      | Action   |
|-----------|--|
| 5 p.m.    | Sign in, review exhibits, visit with WisDOT staff and ask questions about the project.   |
|           | Availability of <b>private verbal testimony</b> and <b>written testimony</b> begins. The private verbal testimony is available until end of the public hearing and written testimony can be left at the meeting or sent to WisDOT by September 26, 2013. |
| 5:30 p.m. | WisDOT presentation and reading of the Project Statement.  |
| 6 p.m.    | <b>Public verbal testimony</b> begins upon completion of WisDOT presentation. You may also continue to provide private verbal testimony at this time.  |
|           | Additional opportunity to review displays and have informal discussion with WisDOT staff (this will not be part of the public hearing record).   |
| 7 p.m.    | End of Public Hearing. Written (mail-in) testimony available until September 26, 2013.   |

## Public Hearing Dates and Locations

### Tuesday, September 10, 2013

Fox Valley Technical College  
1825 N. Bluemound Drive, Appleton  
Room A161A & B

### Wednesday, September 11, 2013

University of Wisconsin–Fond du Lac  
400 University Drive, Fond du Lac  
Room LGI 113/114

### Thursday, September 12, 2013

Milwaukee Area Technical College–Oak Creek Campus  
6665 South Howell Avenue, Oak Creek  
Lecture Hall Room A241

## Testimony

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation will consider public and private testimony as the final decisions are made regarding the US 41 Interstate Conversion Project.

There are three ways for you to comment for the record at this public hearing.



1. Provide private verbal testimony—A court reporter is here to take your comments from 5 to 7 p.m.
2. Provide public verbal testimony—After WisDOT's presentation, public verbal testimony may be given to a project panel from approximately 6 p.m. until those wishing to testify publically are finished. Please fill out the registration slip at the back of this handout and give it to WisDOT staff. Please limit your comments to 3 minutes so that others have the opportunity to express their opinions. You can comment a second time as part of the verbal testimony after others have testified.
3. Provide written testimony—You may e-mail your comments to Tammy Rabe at the e-mail address below. You may also write your comments on the form at the back of this handout and drop it in the comment box or send it to:

Tammy Rabe, PE  
Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
Northeast Region Office  
944 Vanderperren Way  
Green Bay, WI 54304-5344  
tammy.rabe@dot.wi.gov

Please include your name and address with your written comments. All comments must be postmarked by **September 26, 2013**, to be considered part of the record.

In addition to the testimony provided at tonight's public hearing, all exhibits, handouts, audio/visual presentations and displays at the hearing tonight will be included in the official public hearing record. Page 9 contains a complete list of the hearing exhibits and other materials available for review and comment. Written testimony received after the hearing will be added to the official public hearing record provided it is postmarked no later than the end of the environmental document comment period (**September 26, 2013**).

## Contact Information

For more information about the US 41 Interstate Conversion project and to obtain copies of the Environmental Report, you may contact:

**Tammy Rabe, PE**  
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# Project Location

Project I.D. 1113-00-00  
US 41 Interstate Conversion Study



**LEGEND**

- Proposed Interstate conversion and newly designated I-41 route
- Proposed I-41 signing added to existing Interstate (Designated I-41)
- US 41 Not included in the designated interstate route



## Objective of this Public Hearing

The main objective of this public hearing is to obtain public input on the proposal to convert US 41 to an Interstate Highway between the US 41/I-94 interchange south of the Wisconsin/Illinois state line and Green Bay. The public input will be considered along with agency opinions in the decisions made by WisDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for the US 41 corridor. Court reporters are available to record all verbal testimony, which is then entered into the public hearing record along with other public hearing information and materials.

In accordance with the provision of section 84.295(10) of the Wisconsin Statutes, WisDOT is conducting this hearing on September 10, 11, and 12, 2013, to obtain comments on the environmental report regarding the future conversion of US 41 to an Interstate Highway. The hearing is also being conducted to consider the renumbering of a section of US 41 in the Milwaukee area to WIS 175.

The environmental report is available for review at this public hearing, and can be reviewed on the project web site at <http://www.41conversion.wi.gov>. Paper or CD copies can also be requested from WisDOT at the addresses listed on page 4. **Comments must be postmarked by September 26, 2013 and should be sent to Tammy Rabe at the address listed on page 4.**

## Purpose and Need for the Project

The purpose of the project is to enhance and accelerate economic development by converting US 41 to an Interstate Highway and sign it as an Interstate Highway. The need for proposed action is based on a combination of economics and legislation.

- **Economics**—Economic development experts surveyed by WisDOT during the project have identified two broad advantages of Interstate conversion: it will increase the number of businesses that may consider locating in the study area, and it has the potential to maintain and expand industrial and commercial development and tourism in the US 41 corridor.
- **Legislation**— The previous federal surface transportation law identified the US41 Corridor as a high priority corridor on the National Highway System and designated it a future Interstate route. Congress made the high priority corridor designation based on the importance of the route in serving regional, national, and international freight and vehicle movements.

## Project Statement

WisDOT, in consultation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is studying alternatives to convert 175 miles of US 41 from a non-Interstate Highway on the National Highway System (NHS) to an Interstate Highway between the US 41/I-94 interchange south of the Wisconsin/Illinois state line and the US 41/I-43 interchange in Green Bay. The study corridor extends through Kenosha, Racine, Milwaukee, Waukesha, Washington, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Winnebago, Outagamie, and Brown counties. See project location map on page 5. WisDOT and FHWA have limited the proposed action in this study to the following:

- Consider the broad costs and benefits of Interstate conversion.
- Evaluate the impacts of signing US 41 between Milwaukee and Green Bay with an Interstate route number and changing the designation of other segments of the study corridor.
- Determine the construction impacts of installing Interstate signing and other minor improvements along the study corridor.

Based on the results of the evaluation, WisDOT will determine whether to convert US 41 to an Interstate Highway. Converting US 41 to an Interstate Highway has four components which are discussed below.

1. **Interstate conversion**—The proposed action would convert US 41 from a non-Interstate Highway on the NHS to an Interstate Highway between the Zoo Interchange on I-94/I-894 in Milwaukee and the US 41/I-43 interchange in Green Bay. The converted section of US 41 extends through Milwaukee, Waukesha, Washington, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Winnebago, Outagamie, and Brown counties.
2. **Interstate designation**—Between the US 41/I-94 interchange south of the Wisconsin/Illinois state line (the project's south terminus) and the Zoo Interchange, the corridor already is Interstate Highway I-94/I-43/I-894. In this section the proposed action would sign I-41 concurrently with I-94 from the US 41/I-94 interchange to the Mitchell Interchange and with I-894 from the Mitchell Interchange to the Zoo Interchange. It would also be signed in parallel with I-43 from the Mitchell Interchange to the Hale Interchange (south of the Zoo Interchange). The designated I-41 route extends through Lake County, Illinois; and Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee counties in Wisconsin.
3. **Rerouting US 41**—The proposed action would relocate the existing US 41 designation in the Milwaukee area to align with the proposed I-41 route along I-894 and US 45. The segment of US 41 between the Mitchell Interchange and the Stadium Interchange that is signed concurrent with I-94, along with the section along Lisbon Avenue and Appleton Avenue, would be relocated to align with the proposed I-41. See Project Location Map on page 4.
4. **Designate Wisconsin Highway 175**—The segment of US 41 between I-94 near Miller Park (Stadium Interchange) and US 45, known locally as Lisbon Avenue and Appleton Avenue, will be designated WIS 175. See Project Location Map on page 4. The city of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County support the WIS 175 designation. The Milwaukee County Board passed a resolution supporting the WIS 175 designation on June 20, 2013.

## Next Steps

WisDOT and FHWA are planning to prepare a final environmental report in October 2013 that will report on the input received at the hearings and during the public comment period. The final environmental report will contain changes to the draft report as a result of input received at the hearings.

If federal grandfathering legislation is passed in 2013, installation of Interstate signs will begin in summer 2014.

## Alternatives Comparison

This study differs from most WisDOT studies that address safety and capacity deficiencies by physically changing the footprint of a roadway. Evaluating changes to the designation of US 41 without changing its footprint leads to a different range of alternatives that have fewer impacts to natural resources and the built environment than capacity expansion and safety projects.

This study has two preferred alternatives, the **No Interstate Designation Alternative** and the **Interstate Designation Alternative**. The selected preferred alternative will depend on whether Congress passes federal grandfathering legislation for US 41. If the federal grandfathering legislation passes, the **Interstate Designation Alternative** will be selected as the preferred alternative. If the legislation does not pass, the **No Interstate Designation Alternative** will be selected as the preferred alternative.

The Alternative Comparison Matrix on page 8 summarizes the environmental impacts for each preferred alternative.

## Alternatives Comparison Matrix

| ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE                      | UNIT MEASURE  | ALTERNATIVES/SECTIONS                   |   |
|--|---------------|---|---|
|  |               | No Build<br>(No Interstate Designation) | Build<br>(Interstate Designation-<br>Preferred Alternative) |
| Project Length                           | Miles         | 175 <sup>a</sup>                        | 175 <sup>a</sup>  |
| <b>Preliminary Cost Estimate</b>         |               |   |   |
| Construction                             | Million \$    | 0                                       | 9.1   |
| Real Estate                              | Million \$    | 0                                       | 0   |
| Total                                    | Million \$    | 0                                       | 9.1   |
| <b>Land Conversions</b>                  |               |   |   |
| Wetland Area Converted to ROW            | Acres         | 0                                       | 0   |
| Upland Habitat Area Converted to ROW     | Acres         | 0                                       | 0   |
| Other Area Converted to ROW              | Acres         | 0                                       | 0   |
| Total Area Converted to ROW              | Acres         | 0                                       | 0   |
| <b>Real Estate</b>                       |               |   |   |
| Number of Farms Affected                 | Number        | 0                                       | 0   |
| Total Area Required From Farm Operations | Acres         | 0                                       | 0   |
| AIS Required                             | Yes/No        | No                                      | No  |
| Farmland Rating                          | Score         | NA                                      | NA  |
| Total Buildings Required                 | Number        | 0                                       | 0   |
| Housing Units Required                   | Number        | 0                                       | 0   |
| Commercial Units Required                | Number        | 0                                       | 0   |
| Other Buildings or Structures Required   | Number (Type) | 0                                       | 0   |
| <b>Environmental Issues</b>              |               |   |   |
| Indirect Effects                         | Yes/No        | Yes                                     | Yes   |
| Cumulative Effects                       | Yes/No        | No                                      | Yes   |
| Environmental Justice Populations        | Yes/No        | Yes                                     | Yes   |
| Historic Properties                      | Number        | 0                                       | 0 <sup>b</sup>  |
| Archeological Sites                      | Number        | 0                                       | 0 <sup>b</sup>  |
| 106 MOA Required                         | Yes/No        | No                                      | No  |
| 4(f) Evaluation Required                 | Yes/No        | No                                      | No  |
| Flood Plain                              | Yes/No        | Yes                                     | Yes   |
| Total Wetlands Filled                    | Acres         | 0                                       | 0   |
| Stream Crossings                         | Number        | 89                                      | 89  |
| Endangered Species                       | Yes/No        | Yes                                     | Yes   |
| Air Quality Permit Required              | Yes/No        | No                                      | No  |
| Design Year Noise Sensitive Receptors    |               | 0                                       | 0 <sup>c</sup>  |
| No Impact                                | Number        |   |   |
| Impacted                                 | Number        |   |   |
| Contaminated Sites                       | Number        | 0                                       | 0   |

(All estimates, including costs, are based on conditions described in this document at the time of preparation. Additional agency or public involvement may change these estimates in the future.)

<sup>a</sup> The 43 miles between the Zoo Interchange and the US41/ 94Interchange already are an Interstate.

<sup>b</sup> Numerous previously identified architectural/historic resources, cemetery/burial sites and archaeological sites were identified adjacent to the US 41 corridor and the highway segments that would be redesignated as part of the project. Given that the boundaries of cultural resource sites within the project include roads with signs, it is likely that signs will be replaced within the boundaries of cultural resource sites. Because signs are currently located within or adjacent to the boundaries of cultural resource sites, replacing existing signs with this project is not anticipated to cause adverse effects.

<sup>c</sup> Because Interstate Conversion will not add capacity to US 41 or change the vertical or horizontal profile of the highway, it is not a Type I project and therefore does not require a noise analysis.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: Why did WisDOT select I-41 as the preferred route designation number?**

**A:** For several reasons, including:

- I-41 follows the AASHTO guidelines of increasing route numbers west to east with its location between I-39 and I-43. (AASHTO is the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.)
- I-41 is the route number anticipated and preferred by the general public.
- I-41 allows for future consideration of Interstate loop or spur routes to be designated. Potential loop or spur routes are WIS 441 in the Appleton area or WIS 172 in the Green Bay area.

### **Q: Is the I-41 designation finalized?**

**A:** AASHTO conditionally approved the I-41 designation, pending FHWA approval, on November 16, 2012. On December 13, 2012, FHWA indicated it had no objection to renumbering US 41 as I-41, but final approval cannot be given until the project's environmental document and the Formal Conversion Request Package have been approved. The environmental process and the Formal Conversion Request Package are expected to be completed in the fall of 2013.

### **Q: What happens to US 41?**

**A:** US 41 will run concurrently with I-41 the entire length of the corridor. The section of US 41 that runs from the Stadium Interchange to US 45 along Lisbon Avenue and Appleton Avenue will be renamed WIS 175.

### **Q: Why is existing US 41 in the Milwaukee area being renamed WIS 175?**

**A:** For several reasons, including:

- It extends existing WIS 175 further south so that Appleton Avenue/WIS 175 continues as Appleton Avenue/WIS 175 into the City of Milwaukee.
- Permanent signing at the I-41/US 45/WIS 175 interchange will be less confusing since the cross road has only one route number rather than two.
- The WIS 341 designation (locally known and signed as Miller Park Way) can be removed from the state highway system. The existing Miller Park Way signing will remain as currently signed.

### **Q: What happens to I-894?**

**A:** The I-894 route number will remain around Milwaukee. The three digit route number lets the public know that the route is a bypass of the city and will return to I-94. It also allows existing mile markers and exit numbers to remain in place.

### **Q: Are there any construction projects required if US 41 becomes an Interstate?**

**A:** No. Converting US 41 to an Interstate does not require capacity expansion of the highway. Ongoing construction projects are unrelated to Interstate conversion, but they are being built to Interstate standards.

### **Q: Will WisDOT need to acquire any property to convert US 41 to an Interstate?**

**A:** No. Conversion would not require the acquisition of any new real estate or right-of-way.

**Q: Why did WisDOT complete an Environmental Report (ER)?**

**A:** WisDOT completed an ER to document potential impacts of Interstate conversion. When the Interstate Conversion Study began in summer 2007, WisDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) felt a tiered environmental impact statement (EIS) should be completed. However, since moving forward with the study, potential issues have been dealt with or have not risen to a level of significant concern. In addition, there have not been any major controversies associated with Interstate conversion. Because of this, WisDOT and FHWA determined that an ER was the appropriate level of documentation for Interstate conversion.

**Q: Will noise walls be constructed as part of Interstate conversion?**

**A:** The Interstate conversion project does not include construction other than installing Interstate signs; therefore, no noise walls are planned at this time. If, in the future, a construction project is proposed that meets noise analysis requirements, the issue of a noise barrier will be evaluated at that time.

**Q: What is the purpose of federal grandfathering legislation?**

**A:** Federal legislation is needed to allow current trucking practices to continue on the corridor after Interstate conversion. Wisconsin law authorizes trucks hauling certain commodities, by specified amounts, to exceed axle weights or to haul at more than 80,000 pounds, or both. This is authorized by permit or statutory exception for divisible loads, as established in Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 348, and by chapters of Wisconsin Administrative Code. Common divisible loads allowed by permit or statute include shipments of milk, timber, fresh vegetables, livestock, garbage, and scrap metal. Grandfathering legislation will allow trucks authorized to operate on US 41 to continue to use the road when it becomes I-41.

**Q: What happens if federal grandfathering legislation is not passed?**

**A:** Without legislation, the preferred alternative will be the No Interstate Designation Alternative. US 41 will not become an Interstate, and the full economic potential of the Highway 41 corridor will not be realized.

**Q: What will happen to the billboards that are currently along US 41?**

**A:** At the time of the conversion of US 41 to I-41, the billboards will be categorized as nonconforming, meaning they do not meet federal Interstate standards. They will be able to remain in their current state, but no substantial repairs, changes, or replacements will be allowed. Routine maintenance and repairs will be allowed.

**Q: Will new billboards be allowed after US 41 becomes an interstate?**

**A:** Generally, no, but there are a few locations where new billboards may be allowed if they meet federal guidelines.

**Q: When will Interstate signs be installed?**

**A:** If federal grandfathering legislation is passed in 2013, installation of Interstate signs will begin in summer 2014.

## Description of Hearing Exhibits

The following exhibits are displayed for your review:

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| Board 1  | Hearing Objective                           |
| Board 2  | Purpose and Need                            |
| Board 3  | Area Underserved                            |
| Board 4  | Strong Midwest Economic Relationships       |
| Board 5  | Primary Connection to the Nation            |
| Board 6  | Preferred Alternative                       |
| Board 7  | Selected Route Number: I-41                 |
| Board 8  | Milwaukee Area                              |
| Board 9  | Eliminated Alternatives                     |
| Board 10 | Preferred Alternative Impacts               |
| Board 11 | Future Projects                             |
| Board 12 | Sign Replacement at Typical Interchange     |
| Board 13 | Traffic Volumes                             |
| Board 14 | What's Next?                                |
| Board 15 | Federal Grandfathering Legislation          |
| Board 16 | Welcome                                     |
| Board 17 | Instructions for Providing Public Testimony |

## Environmental Report, Agency Coordination Plan, and Impact Analysis Methodology

Several copies of the Environmental Report, updated Agency Coordination Plan and updated Impact Analysis Methodology are on tables for your review and comment. Please do not remove them from the tables.

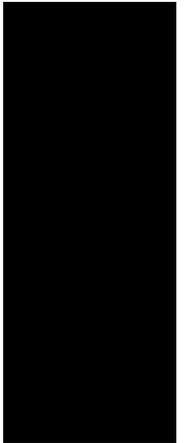
## PowerPoint Presentation

WisDOT is providing a brief PowerPoint presentation at 5:30 p.m. tonight on the proposal to convert US 41 to an Interstate Highway and to explain the public hearing process. The PowerPoint presentation also provides information required in the public hearing Project Statement.



**Note: This is a self-mailer—either deposit in the comment box or fold and return; postage is paid.**

----- Fold Here -----



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WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
944 VANDERPERREN WAY  
GREEN BAY WI 54304



**Attn: Tammy Rabe**

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# Registration Slip for Public Verbal Testimony

Public Hearing  
US 41 Interstate Conversion Project  
Project ID 1113-00-00

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Representing \_\_\_\_\_