

# ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION OF FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
DT2094 1/2008

Project ID 1197-22-00	Funding Source <input type="checkbox"/> State Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal	Federal Number 33PE008
Project Name (Highway, Airport, Rail Line) US 53 Haugen Interchange Location and Freeway/Expressway Conversion		Project Termini 26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue in Barron County to 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue at the Barron/Washburn County Line, a distance of approximately 4.2 miles
Section 26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	County Barron/Washburn Counties	Estimated Project Cost (Include R/W Acquisition) \$15.08 Million
National Highway System (NHS) Route <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Functional Classification of Existing Route <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Freeway/Expressway <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Principal Arterial <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Minor Arterial <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Collector <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Local <input type="checkbox"/> Urban No Functional Class	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural Freeway/Expressway <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural Principal Arterial <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Minor Arterial <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Major Collector <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Minor Collector <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Local <input type="checkbox"/> Rural No Functional Class

It is determined, after review of the comments from the public, and coordination with other agencies, that this action would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. This document is a

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

- Environmental Assessment (EA) No Significant Impacts Indicated by Initial Assessment
- Environmental Assessment (EA) EIS Required
- Environmental Report (2-ER)

(Signature)	(Date)
(Title)	
(Signature)	(Date)
(Title)	
(Signature) ( <input type="checkbox"/> District, <input type="checkbox"/> Aeronautics, <input type="checkbox"/> Rails & Harbors)	(Date)
(Director, Bureau of Equity & Environmental Services)	(Date)
( <input type="checkbox"/> FHWA, <input type="checkbox"/> FAA, <input type="checkbox"/> FTA, <input type="checkbox"/> FRA)	(Date)

(Signature)	(Date)
SEH Project Manager	
(Title)	
(Signature)	(Date)
WisDOT Project Manager	
(Title)	
(Signature) ( <input type="checkbox"/> District, <input type="checkbox"/> Aeronautics, <input type="checkbox"/> Rails & Harbors)	(Date)
(Director, Bureau of Equity & Environmental Services)	(Date)
( <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FHWA, <input type="checkbox"/> FAA, <input type="checkbox"/> FTA, <input type="checkbox"/> FRA)	(Date)

1. Description of Proposed Action (Attach project location map and other appropriate graphics).

The Proposed Action consists of a plan and follow-up actions for the conversion of the current expressway for US 53 between 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Barron and Washburn Counties) to a freeway. (See Exhibit 1A, Project Location Map). The proposed improvements resulting in freeway conversion would be officially mapped under the process established in Wisconsin Statutes. 84.295 to help preserve right of way (ROW) for future transportation needs. This portion of US 53 would officially be designated as a freeway. Thus, the short-term aspect of the Proposed Action is official mapping and freeway designation, while the long-term aspect is the plan for eventual conversion and construction of a freeway. The statute includes long-term planning, official mapping, and preservation tools available to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) to help protect and preserve right of way (ROW) for future transportation needs. The proactive tool allows WisDOT to address safety, operation, and mobility/capacity issues in advance of impending long-term needs, thereby preserving the existing roadway investment.

The Proposed Action and the actual steps of right of way purchase, final design, or construction would result in the ultimate conversion of the existing four-lane divided expressway to a freeway facility by removing existing at-grade public and private intersections from the facility in this section of US 53. The existing intersections would be reconstructed as cul-de-sacs or grade separations. One interchange would be constructed at County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue. In addition, several sections of the existing local roadway system would be reconstructed or altered to insure internal local road system continuity and access to the freeway system.

The Proposed Action does not include immediate programming of construction funds but is designed in such a way to allow incremental construction and funding over time. The long-term vision and management strategy used by this Proposed Action allows incremental improvements and funding strategies to ultimately achieve the final singular comprehensive system goal of a freeway facility. The direct impacts presented in this EA were examined as if the improvements were being constructed in the near future. The mapping and freeway designation actions do not have direct effects. However, they could have some minor indirect effects, which are discussed in the Pre-Screening Analysis for Indirect and Cumulative Effects Analysis (Appendix J).

2. Purpose and need of Proposed Action. Include description of existing facilities, abutting facilities, and how the action links into the overall transportation system. When appropriate, show that commitment for future work is not being made without evaluation, and that viable alternatives in a larger framework are not being unduly foreclosed.

US 53 is classified as a principle arterial highway with the primary purpose of providing interstate and interregional mobility and is designated as a backbone route in the WisDOT Corridors 2020 Plan. (See Exhibit 1B – Corridors 2020 Routes – Backbones and Collectors) This plan includes a network of existing and improved roadways that consists of a backbone network and connector highways. The backbone network consists of divided highways that connect each region of the state and major economic centers. The connector highways tie economic and tourism centers to that backbone. The plan achieves its objectives by striving to ensure that these routes have adequate capacity and provide an adequate Level of Service (LOS).

US 53 functions as the primary north/south route on the western side of the state connecting the cities to the west and south to northern Wisconsin. US 53 is the only facility on the western side of the state that provides four-lane access to northern Wisconsin.

Current traffic volumes and truck volumes along US 53 demonstrate its importance to the state industry, business, and tourism. As such, it is a priority transportation corridor for WisDOT. The current US 53 facility between 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue was converted from two lanes to a four-lane expressway with construction completed in 1987. The Wisconsin Department of Tourism estimates that visitors spend \$1.4 billion in what it designates as the “Northwoods” region. US 53 is an extremely important facility in helping to support the tourism economy of northern Wisconsin.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to develop a long-term highway access plan and officially designate this section of US 53 as a freeway in order to address three needs:

- Long-term highway planning and corridor preservation
- Emerging operational and existing safety concerns
- Land use/transportation planning and coordination

**Long-term highway planning and corridor preservation.** For decades, US 53 has been seen as the key high-speed, high-volume transportation connector between the entire northwest portions of Wisconsin and the other major metropolitan areas of the state. Over the decade, traffic has continued to grow at a steady rate on US 53 due to population increases in the corridor communities, increases in tourism, and expanding commerce using this route as a critical link. Traffic volumes are projected to continue to increase as population, tourism, and commerce continue to expand along this section of US 53.

As a rural principal arterial route, the primary function of US 53 is to provide state and regional mobility. The mobility role of arterials is preserved by having limited and well managed access points along the route. Developing a plan to limit closely spaced access points along the highway preserves the investment the public has already made in this facility and insures that the best access solutions have not been precluded by earlier development decisions. By planning ahead, lands needed for grade separation structures (interchanges and overpasses) and associated local road alterations can be preserved.

The study section of US 53 currently has numerous access points, including several intersecting roads (County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue, County SS, 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue). Under the Proposed Action, direct access to US 53 would only occur at interchanges. If access to US 53 is not effectively managed, the long-term result would likely be a degradation of safety and the level of service currently provided by this four-lane highway. Limiting access only to interchanges would maintain the corridor investment by providing a safer facility for both regional and local traffic and improving mobility on the study section. If the safety and/or level of service on the section decline, the result would be a diminishing return of the investment already made in the corridor. Through the implementation of WIS Stats. 84.295, the Proposed Action would help protect and preserve US 53 through a proactive rather than a reactive corridor management plan.

**Emerging operational and safety concerns.** Operational and safety needs for US 53 can be tied to existing and future traffic, the type, density, and location of land use along the corridor, and the number and severity of crashes. In 2003, traffic volumes along US 53 range were 10,000 vehicles per day (vpd) on this section of the highway. Future traffic volumes are anticipated to increase by 35 to 45 percent by the year 2040 with traffic volumes reaching between 13,500 and 14,300 vpd.

As traffic volumes increase along this predominantly rural facility, the ability to access or cross US 53 from connecting roads will likely become more difficult because the frequency and duration of gaps in US 53 traffic will decrease. At-grade intersections are already providing challenges and conflicts as drivers are forced to take higher risks to access the highway from side roads and driveways.

There is a direct relationship between increased traffic volumes and vehicle conflicts when direct access exists on a facility. These conflicts increase on four-lane, divided facilities such as US 53, when mainline traffic reaches 10,000 ADT and side road volumes reach 1,000 ADT. Crash statistics on US 53 are showing that several locations, including County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue within the limits of this study, are experiencing this increase in crashes and fatalities.

Within the project area, US 53 currently has 16 at-grade access points including intersecting county highways, local roads, and private driveways. This is roughly the equivalent of four at-grade access points per mile. If access to US 53 is not effectively managed, the long-term result will be a continued degradation of safety and operational efficiency.

As shown in the table below, the overall rate of crashes occurring on this section of US 53 is slightly lower than other rural state highways across the state. However, the injury and fatality crash rate is higher than other state highways, on average.

**Crash Rates 2003-2005  
US 53 Study Section Compared to Statewide Average**

	US 53 Study Section	Statewide
<b>Overall Crash Rate (includes deer)</b>	130 per 100 MVM*	179 per 100 MVM
<b>Crash Rate with Injury</b>	57 per 100 MVM	47 per 100 MVM
<b>Crash Rate with Fatality</b>	6.4 per 100 MVM	1.8 per 100 MVM

\*Million Vehicle Miles

From 2003 to 2005, the US 53/County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection had ten injury crashes, and three crashes resulting in fatalities. As traffic volumes increase along the corridor, it is likely that the rate and severity of crashes will also increase, especially at intersections.

**Local land use/transportation planning and coordination.** Land use changes in the area are contributing to increases in traffic on US 53. Conversely, the presence of a four-lane highway can affect development patterns. Identifying future changes in access can help communities insure that development plans are compatible with the planned transportation system. A principal benefit of the planning process is to provide certainty to land owners and local communities as to the location of access in the future and the right of way that would be needed for changes to the highway system. This would avoid potentially costly relocations and disruptions for property owners in the future as the corridor is eventually converted to a freeway.

- Summary of the alternatives considered and whether they meet the purpose and need. If they are not proposed for adoption, specify why not. Identify which, if any, of the alternatives is the preferred alternative. Provide the proposed LOS and the Acceptable LOS on the traffic summary page. If the design year proposed LOS is worse than the acceptable LOS, include a statement indicating why the proposed LOS is the best achievable. Include a list of probable effects associated with obtaining an acceptable LOS, or indicate if and when a study to determine how to achieve the acceptable LOS is planned.

## **No Action Alternative**

The No Action Alternative would include performing routine maintenance. Traffic management tools such as additional signage, flashing lights, rumble strips etc., have been implemented in the past at some of the existing intersections within the project and have not proven to be effective in the reduction of crashes. This alternative would not adequately address safety and operational issues at intersections within the project area. At-grade access along expressway corridors can lead to increased safety issues as traffic volumes increase over time. As gaps in traffic for entering and crossing vehicles decrease, the incidence of high risk driver behavior can increase.

The No Action Alternative does not support the function of a Corridors 2020 backbone route to provide safe and efficient regional mobility and economic vitality and is not consistent with other improvements to other US 53 highway system sections. For this reason, the Proposed Action does not fulfill the project purpose and need.

## **Action Alternatives**

Three corridor alternatives were developed for comment and input in the first stage of the project. The alternatives include:

- System Alternative 1 – One interchange located just slightly north of the existing County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection with US 53
- System Alternative 2 – One interchange located approximately ¾ mile north of the existing County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection with US 53
- System Alternative 3 – One interchange located at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection with US 53

**See the Environmental Cost Matrix in this section for a comparison summary of the effects of the No Action alternative and the three Action alternatives.**

**See Exhibit 2 for a conceptual diagram of all of the Action alternatives.**

### System Alternative 1 – (Preferred Alternative – Exhibits 2 and 3)

This alternative would provide access to US 53 via a partial cloverleaf (parclo) interchange located on a modified County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue alignment located just north of the existing US 53/County V/28<sup>th</sup> Street alignment. Exhibit 3 shows the alternative in detail.

The interchange would require a shift in alignment further north of the existing at-grade intersection to avoid the need for extensive fill caused by a depression located in the southeastern quadrant of the intersection. The parclo design avoids the southwest quadrant of the intersection where a small manufacturing business is located. In addition, 19<sup>th</sup> Street would be realigned to provide greater separation of the 19<sup>th</sup> Street/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection from the new interchange ramps. The realignment would also create intersection geometry with four perpendicular legs and avoid intersection skew and associated sightline issues.

This alternative would include the following elements:

- Local road connecting 19<sup>th</sup> Street to 18 ¾ Street/29 ¾ Avenue
- Local road connecting 29 ¾ Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Cul-de-sac at the north intersection of US 53/County SS
- Cul-de-sac on the west side of the US 53/27<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection; on the east side a local connection constructed north to 19<sup>th</sup> Street
- Grade separated crossing of US 53 at 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Grade separated crossing of US 53 at 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Local connections and access to US 53 for locations north of 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue would be determined in a future study. System Alternative 1 is proposed for adoption and has been selected as the Preferred Alternative.

It is noted again that many of these improvements can occur incrementally over a period of years, allowing for phased construction and funding, and only implementing solutions when the actual need arises.

### System Alternative 2 (Exhibit 2)

This alternative would provide access to US 53 via a diamond interchange connecting 28 ¾ Avenue on the east side

of US 53 to a new local road on the west side of the highway that connects to County SS. This interchange would be approximately ¾ mile north of the existing US 53/County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection.

This alternative would include the following elements:

- Local road connecting 19<sup>th</sup> Street to 18 ¾ Street/29 ¾ Avenue
- Local road connecting 29 ¾ Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Cul-de-sac at the north intersection of US 53/County SS
- Cul-de-sac on the west side of the US 53/ 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection; on the east side a local connection constructed north to 19<sup>th</sup> Street
- Grade separated crossing of US 53 at 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Grade separated crossing of US 53 at 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Closing of the existing US 53/County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection and creation of a T intersection for County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 19<sup>th</sup> Street intersection

Local connections and access to US 53 for locations north of 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue would be determined in a future study.

System Alternative 2 is not proposed for adoption.

#### System Alternative 3 (Exhibit 2)

This alternative would provide access to US 53 via an interchange at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The interchange would provide a southern access to the Village of Haugen and surrounding areas. The interchange would be constructed as a parclo type interchange to provide adequate spacing between the ramps and the curve along US 53 south of 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

This alternative would include the following elements:

- Local road connecting 19<sup>th</sup> Street to 18 ¾ Street/29 ¾ Avenue
- Local road connecting 29 ¾ Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- Cul-de-sac at the north intersection of US 53/County SS
- Grade separated crossing of US 53 at 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Grade separated crossing of US 53 at County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Grade separated crossing of US 53 at 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Local connections and access to US 53 for locations north of 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue would be determined in a future study.  
System Alternative 3 is not proposed for adoption.

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

#### No Action Alternative

This alternative would require minimal construction energy (minor improvements and maintenance). Because the existing at-grade intersections would remain with this alternative, traffic operational characteristics would likely erode over time as volumes increase and gaps in traffic decrease. The erosion in operational characteristics would likely be due to increased cross traffic conflicts. Operational characteristics could include congestion and/or rapid acceleration/deceleration of traffic resulting in a higher consumption of energy.

#### Proposed Action (Preferred Alternative)

The Preferred Alternative would require the consumption of a large amount of energy during construction. However, the Proposed Action would remove the existing at-grade intersections and greatly reduce the potential for conflicts with cross traffic. The result would be greater operational efficiency and lower energy needs over the No-Action alternative.

Energy requirements for the construction of the Preferred Alternative would be greater than those required for the No Action Alternative. However, the No Action Alternative would result in the use of an inefficient transportation system, leading to more congestion, loss of travelers' time, higher consumption of energy, and increased crashes and safety issues. Over the design life of the facility, savings in operational energy would be greater than the energy required to construct the facility and thus in the long-term would result in net savings in energy usage.

The energy requirements and conservation potential of all of the action alternatives considered are essentially the same – any differences among them would be negligible.

5. Describe existing land use (Attach land use maps if available).

a. Land use in immediate area.

The 4.24 mile corridor lies in the Village of Haugen and the Towns of Bear Lake and Oak Grove in Barron County and the Towns of Saronia and Long Lake in Washburn County. Existing land uses surrounding the US 53 corridor include rural wooded uplands and wetlands, agriculture, low density residential, and limited commercial/industrial development. The Village of Haugen has higher density residential and commercial uses in comparison to the other communities in the study area. See Exhibit 4, Preferred Alternative with Aerial.

Residential

The majority of residential land uses can be classified as widely distributed, low density uses with on-site septic systems typical of wooded and agricultural areas. Higher concentrations of residential development include recreational homes located along shoreland lake areas and higher density suburban style housing in the Village of Haugen.

Commercial/Industrial

Commercial activities within the study area include services such as gas stations and restaurants, and industrial activities in rural areas primarily consisting of large quarry operations or managed forest lands. Other commercial/industrial activities include a pool cue manufacturing business and a landscaping business.

Agricultural

A significant portion of the land uses in the rural portions of the study area include forested lands. Aside from these lands, agricultural activities are also a significant land use activity that occurs within the area. Agricultural activities are located both east and west of US 53.

Parks and Recreation

Bear Lake Sedge Meadow State Natural Area is located west of the Village of Haugen. Bear Lake is located in the northwest portion of the study area and is a destination for boating, fishing, and other recreational activities.

Local recreational trails in the study area are used for hiking, biking, snowmobile and ATV use and include:

- Tuscobia State Trail – Connects Rice Lake and Park Falls for a total length of 74 miles and is open to hiking, mountain biking, snowmobile, and ATV use. ATV use is not allowed along the portion that runs concurrent with the Ice Age Trail. This trail is not affected by the Proposed Action.
- Ice Age Trail – This footpath will include nearly 1,000 miles within Wisconsin upon completion. A nine mile section of the trail runs concurrently with the Tuscobia Trail. A gap in the trail is located between County SS at the Tuscobia Trail and the Phillips Scout Ranch where it continues westward from the Haugen area. All motorized vehicles with the exception of snowmobiles are not allowed on the trail. The Proposed Action would not affect the Ice Age Trail (IAT).

A portion of the Tuscobia Trail outside of the study area currently allows ATV's and therefore cannot be designated as part of the Ice Age Trail. ATV users would like to use the nine-mile segment currently designated as Ice Age Trail, to close the gap in their trail system. The National Park Service is open to the idea of shifting the IAT off the Tuscobia Trail if an alternate corridor can be found. Specific design issues relating to the accommodation of multi-modal needs would be determined closer to the time of final design or construction if/when the desired changes to the IAT are determined. WisDOT has not committed to funding any improvements related to the relocation of the IAT.

- Wild Rivers State Trail – This 64 mile state managed rails-to-trails facility is open to hiking, mountain biking, and snowmobile use and connects Rice Lake to Solon Springs. The trail would be spanned by the overpass that would be built at 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue to go over US 53. This would remove the at-grade crossing of 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue and be a benefit to trail users.

The Department of Transportation Act (DOT Act) of 1966 included a special provision - Section 4(f) - which regulates the use of land from publicly owned parks, recreational areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, or public and private historical sites. Per FHWA, the Wild Rivers State Trail property is designated as an active

rail line and the bike trail is considered a temporary recreational use. Thus Section 4(f) regulations do not apply. (See Appendix D, Recreation Trail Maps)

The trails are shown relative to US 53 in Exhibits 2 and 3, and more detailed information about the trails can be found in Appendix D.

b. Land use in area surrounding project area.

The land uses surrounding the project area are similar to that of the immediate area. Land uses vary among agriculture, residential, and recreational land uses. Residential uses include homes along lake shoreland areas as well as widely dispersed farmsteads and other rural residential land uses.

Urban areas surrounding the project limits include the City of Rice Lake located approximately 5 miles south of the project area which is a regional employment and retail hub with significant commercial and industrial development, and the City of Spooner located approximately 15 miles north of the project area.

6. Briefly identify adopted plans for the area and discuss whether the proposed action is compatible with the plan. (For example, the following may be considered: Regional Planning Commission Plans, Transportation Improvement Program, State Transportation Improvement Plan, Local zoning and land use plans, DOT Storm Water Management Plans, others.)

US 53 is identified as a backbone route in the WisDOT Corridors 2020 Plan. Backbone routes are recognized for their importance to the state's transportation infrastructure and economic vitality, and are high priority corridors for determining improvement needs and maintaining safe and efficient travel on the statewide transportation system.

In Barron County, the Town of Bear Lake has recently completed its comprehensive plan as part of a joint planning effort. Barron County released the multi-jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan in May 2005. The Town of Oak Grove and the Village of Haugen did not participate in the county-sponsored effort and do not currently have local plans. Barron County has a land use ordinance for unincorporated and shoreland areas of the county. Currently the Town of Oak Grove follows county zoning. The Town of Bear Lake does not follow a comprehensive zoning ordinance. The Village of Haugen has adopted its own zoning ordinance.

In Washburn County the Town of Sarona and the Town of Long Lake have completed comprehensive plans with the assistance of Washburn County and North West Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NWRPC). The county zoning ordinance covers the unincorporated areas of the county. Both the Town of Long Lake and the Town of Sarona follow the county zoning ordinance.

Other plans within the project area include a recent corridor planning effort for the Ice Age Trail initiated by the Department of the Interior and National Park Service and coordination with WDNR. The location of a crossing of US 53 by the trail would be reevaluated closer to the time of final design/construction. If it is determined that the trail would require a crossing at a location other than one of the mapped crossings identified in the Preferred Alternative, funding for the crossing would be required by agencies/organizations other than WisDOT.

The US 53 Interchange Location and Freeway Conversion Study is compatible with county and local goals of providing a safe and efficient transportation system. The Proposed Action (Preferred Alternative) is consistent with (and/or does not conflict with) the following plans and land use controls/regulations for the communities within the project area. This conclusion was based on research of the following available plans:

<b><u>Plan/Ordinance Name</u></b>	<b><u>Agency/Year</u></b>
Barron County Ordinances Governing Land Use	Barron County/2006
Barron Area Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan Existing Conditions Report	Barron County/2005
Town of Long Lake Comprehensive Plan 2020	NWRPC & Town of Long Lake/2005
Town of Bear Lake Comprehensive Plan	Barron County & Town of Bear Lake/2005
Washburn County Comprehensive Plan	Washburn County/2005
Town of Sarona Comprehensive Plan	NWRPC & Town of Sarona/2004
Barron County Land Use Plan	Barron County/2001
Washburn County Zoning Ordinance	Washburn County

7. Early coordination with Agencies.

a. Intra-Agency Coordination

i) Bureau of Aeronautics

No - Coordination is not required. Project is not located within 2 miles (3.22 kilometers) of a public or military use airport, nor would the project change the horizontal or vertical alignment of a transportation facility located within 6.44 kilometers (4 miles) of a public use or military airport.

Yes - Coordination has been completed and project effects have been addressed. Explain.

ii) District Office Real Estate Section

No - Coordination is not required because no inhabited houses or active businesses will be acquired.

Yes - Coordination has been completed. Project effects and relocation assistance have been addressed. Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan attached as Appendix A.

b. Interagency Coordination

STATE AGENCY	COORDINATION	COMMENTS
	Correspondence Attached Y/N	Explain or give results. If no correspondence is attached to this document, indicate when coordination with the agency was initiated and, if available, when coordination was completed.
Agriculture (DATCP)	Y	<p>Opportunity for review and comment was extended to DATCP as part of the formal scoping process. DATCP indicated that an Agricultural Impact Statement would not be required at this time. An Agricultural Impact Notice (AIN) was submitted to DATCP.</p> <p>See Appendix B2, Scoping Letter. See Appendix B5, DATCP Correspondence.. See Appendix H, Agricultural Impact Notice.</p>
Natural Resources (DNR)	Y	<p>The WDNR was invited to provide initial comments as well as attend all agency, local official and public meetings. A coordination meeting with the WDNR was held on January 29, 2007. At the meeting WDNR indicated the presence of high quality wetlands adjacent to US 53 and north of 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Washburn County. WDNR also identified several surface waters, wetlands, endangered/threatened/special concern species, and recreational trails in an initial review of the study area. Continued coordination with WDNR would occur to determine specific impacts to these resources from the Proposed Action.</p> <p>Of special concern is the potential for effects upon the water quality of Bear Creek. WDNR also expressed concerns about the potential for secondary impacts due to development that could be spurred by the changes.</p> <p>A meeting with WDNR pertaining to the Ice Age Trail and other state trails within the study area was held February 21, 2007. WDNR was also involved in field visits with members of the project team as part of the study.</p> <p>See Appendix B2, Scoping Letter. See Appendix B4, WDNR Correspondence.</p>
State Historical Society (SHS)	Y	<p>The SHS would be coordinated with as part of the project Section 106 process. The Section 106 document has been submitted. The Section 106 approval would be obtained prior to issuance of the FONSI.</p> <p>See Appendix B2, Scoping Letter. See Appendix F, Section 106 Form.</p>
Others: Wisconsin State Patrol	Y	<p>The Wisconsin State Patrol was invited to provide initial comments as well as attend all local official and public meetings.</p> <p>See Appendix B2, Scoping Letter.</p>
<b>FEDERAL AGENCY</b>		
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP)	N	N/A
US Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE)	Y	<p>The USACOE has been given the opportunity to comment throughout all phases of the project.</p> <p>See Appendix B2, Scoping Letter.</p>
US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	N	The EPA was not invited to the agency scoping meeting due to the limited scope of this project.

National Park Service (NPS)	Y	<p>The NPS has jurisdiction over the Ice Age Trail within the project limits and has indicated a long-term goal of identifying an alternate trail location and trail crossing of US 53.</p> <p>A meeting with the NPS pertaining to the Ice Age Trail was held on February 21, 2007 and concurrence was reached regarding language to be included in the EA regarding the Ice Age Trail. The NPS requests on-going communication as WisDOT proceeds with its freeway conversion plans.</p> <p>See Appendix B2, Scoping Letter. See Appendix B3, NPS Correspondence</p>
Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)	Y	<p>The NRCS was invited to the agency scoping meeting. Agency officials were invited to provide comments throughout all phases of the project.</p> <p>See Appendix B2, Scoping Letter. See Appendix C, NRCS Form AD-1006.</p>
US Coast Guard (USCG)	N	N/A
US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS)	Y	<p>The FWS has identified federally listed species, wetlands, and fish and wildlife that could be potentially affected by the Proposed Action. Future coordination would occur closer to design/implementation to determine the presence of these species and habitats, the effect of the Proposed Action, and appropriate actions to be taken.</p> <p>If wetland disturbance or loss cannot be avoided, a wetland mitigation plan would be developed.</p> <p>See Appendix B2, Scoping Letter.</p>
Other(Identify) Federal Highway Administration	Y	<p>FHWA was coordinated with in regards to the Wild Rivers Trail. FHWA determined that the corridor is designated as an active rail line and the trail is a temporary recreational use.</p> <p>See Appendix B1 for the copy of the e-mail with this determination.</p>
Various tribes and Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council		<p>Tribes and the GLITC were notified, and requested further coordination in the event that discoveries are made prior to, and during construction.</p> <p>See Appendix E, Native American Correspondence.</p>

c. Local Government Coordination

LOCAL UNIT OF GOVERNMENT	COORDINATION	COMMENTS
	Correspondence Attached Y/N	Explain or give results. If no correspondence is attached to this document, indicate when coordination with the agency was initiated and, if available, when coordination was completed.
Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NWRPC)	Y	<p>The NWRPC was extended the opportunity to provide comments and attend all meetings throughout all phases of the project.</p> <p>See Appendix B2, Scoping Letter.</p>
North Central Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission	Y	<p>The NCWRPC was extended the opportunity to provide comments and attend all meetings throughout all phases of the project.</p> <p>See Appendix B2, Scoping Letter.</p>
Washburn County	Y	<p>Washburn County agencies were invited to provide initial comments as well as attend all local official and public meetings.</p> <p>See Appendix B2, Scoping Letter.</p>

Barron County	Y	Barron County agencies were invited to provide initial comments as well as attend all local official and public meetings.  See Appendix B2, Scoping Letter.
Village of Haugen	Y	The Village of Haugen was invited to provide initial comments as well as attend all local official and public meetings.  See Appendix B2, Scoping Letter.
Town of Bear Lake	Y	The Town of Bear Lake was invited to provide initial comments as well as attend all local official and public meetings.  See Appendix B2, Scoping Letter.
Town of Oak Grove	Y	The Town of Oak Grove was invited to provide initial comments as well as attend all local official and public meetings.  See Appendix B2, Scoping Letter.
Town of Long Lake	Y	The Town of Long Lake was invited to provide initial comments as well as attend all local official and public meetings.  See Appendix B2, Scoping Letter.
Town of Sarona	Y	The Town of Sarona was invited to provide initial comments as well as attend all local official and public meetings.  See Appendix B2, Scoping Letter.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS	EFFECTS				
	Adverse	Benefit	None	*N/A	Comments
<b>SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS</b>					
General Economics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<p>The Proposed Action would:</p> <p>Assist in ensuring the economic viability of the region by promoting safe and efficient travel on the US highway system.</p> <p>Promote the efficient movement of raw materials, goods, and services between markets.</p> <p>Provide safe and efficient access to the Village of Haugen and surrounding areas.</p> <p>Accommodate the current and planned economic growth/development for the area.</p> <p>Assist in ensuring safe and efficient access of police, fire, and emergency services to the area.</p> <p>Provide safe access to and across US 53 for agricultural equipment and other slow moving vehicles.</p> <p>Provide safe access to businesses and commercial operations along US 53.</p> <p>Require relocation of some current private and agricultural access to US 53 with the potential for slight indirection for vehicles to access some properties along the corridor.</p> <p>Require some land acquisitions and one residential acquisition to accommodate an interchange.</p> <p>Result in some increased travel time for rural residents who use the the US 53 corridor, due to the removal of direct access points. These residents may experience one to three miles of indirection to access US 53. The largest concentration of businesses and residences in the Village of Haugen would experience little or no indirection.</p> <p>Require a major capital investment by WisDOT that could not be expended elsewhere.</p> <p>Cause temporary disruptions during construction.</p> <p>See General Economics Factor Sheet.</p>
Community & Residential	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The Proposed Action would:</p> <p>Support local land use plans of communities along US 53.</p> <p>Have a minor effect on the character and traffic patterns of some county and local roadways.</p> <p>Balance indirection from access changes with additional safe crossings of US 53 for the provision of emergency response services.</p> <p>Cause minor changes for other transportation modes such as bicycle</p>

					<p>and snowmobile by changing the locations at which US 53 could be crossed.</p> <p>Require the acquisition of one private residence.</p> <p>See Community and Residential Factor Sheets.</p>
Economic Development and Business	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The Proposed Action would:</p> <p>Support local economic development plans for communities along US 53.</p> <p>Provide safe and efficient access to businesses along the US 53 corridor.</p> <p>Require the removal of 2 private and 3 field access points to US 53.</p> <p>The largest concentration of businesses is in the Village of Haugen; these would experience little or no indirection. Effects would be most significant for a Greenhouse/Landscaping business located on 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which will become an overpass. One direction of us 53 traffic would have an additional travel distance of approximately 4.5 miles while the other direction would only be approximately 1/2 miles of additional travel.</p> <p>See Economic Development and Business Factor Sheet.</p>
Agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The Proposed Action would:</p> <p>Assist in ensuring safe and efficient access to farm operations currently bisected by US 53 . Access for operations with parcels on both sides of US 53 would be via grade seperated crossings rather than the current at-grade crossings.</p> <p>Require acquisition of agricultural land from 17 farm operations.</p> <p>DATCP indicated that an Agricultural Impact Statement would not be required at this time.</p> <p>See Agricultural Impact Evaluation Factor Sheet. See Appendix B5 for DATCP Correspondence.</p>
Environmental Justice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>This document is in compliance with U.S. DOT and FHWA policies to determine whether a proposed project would have induced socioeconomic impacts or any adverse impacts on minority or low-income populations; and it meets the requirements of Executive Order on Environmental Justice 12898 - "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice on Minority and Low-Income Populations". Neither minority nor low-income populations would receive disproportionately high or adverse impacts as a result of the Proposed Action. The majority of the community and residential population are supportive of the Proposed Action.</p>

**NATURAL ENVIRONMENT FACTORS**

Wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Approximately 4.3 acres of wetland could be affected. Wetlands would be delineated by WisDOT closer to design/construction to determine the exact amount and location of wetlands impacted by the Proposed Action. Following that determination, a wetland mitigation plan would be developed to document the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The impacted wetland acreage by wetland type</li> <li>• The plan for on-site restoration and anticipated compensation acreage.</li> </ul>
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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposal for debiting the remaining compensation acreage to a WisDOT Wetland Mitigation Bank.</li> </ul> <p>The Proposed Action uses existing local roadway alignments for overpass crossings of US 53. Use of existing alignments minimizes impacts to wetlands and streams located within the project area that cross and/or run parallel to US 53. In some cases, wetlands are located on both sides of the existing alignment. Moving overpass locations to new alignments could impact a greater amount of wetland (and other natural and cultural) resources than staying on the existing local roadway alignments. In areas where frontage road alignments would need to be altered to accommodate the new overpasses, alignments were designed in such a manner as to avoid wetlands to the greatest extent possible and still maintain a safe design. In addition, wetland impacts were minimized to the extent possible by using the minimum possible slopes for overpasses allowed by WisDOT design standards.</p> <p>Coordination with WDNR and USFWS prior to and during construction to avoid nest disturbances of threatened species including: Bald Eagle, Le Conte's Sparrow, Osprey, Yellow Rail and Red-shouldered Hawk. Specific nesting seasons for these species occur from February to August each year.</p> <p>See Wetlands Impact Evaluation Factor Sheet.</p>
Streams & Floodplains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The dominant land use within the project area and in the vicinity of Bear Creek is agricultural. Wetlands immediately adjacent to Bear Creek streambed include SS and RPE.</p> <p>The Proposed Action does not include crossings of Bear Creek itself. However, three existing crossings of intermittent streams would be widened to accommodate the new interchange right-of-way at County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and two new crossings of tributaries of Bear Creek would be built.</p> <p>Several threatened species could be directly impacted by the Proposed Action. The Bald Eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>), Le Conte's Sparrow (<i>Ammodramus leconteii</i>) and Osprey (<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>) are bird species whose habitat is located near bodies of water, and are known to exist in or near the US 53 Corridor. Banded Killifish (<i>Fundulus diaphanus</i>), Least Darter (<i>Etheostoma microperca</i>), Ozark Minnow (<i>Notropis numbilus</i>), Pugnose Shiner (<i>Notropis anogenus</i>), and Weed Shiner (<i>Notropis texanus</i>) are fish species that are threatened or of special concern in or near the project.</p> <p>Consultation would occur closer to design/construction to determine the presence of the species identified above and/or critical habitat in the area of influence of the Proposed Action. If the presence is determined, a Biological Assessment could be conducted to determine if the Proposed Action is likely to adversely affect species or critical habitat. If necessary, a formal consultation would be initiated to determine appropriate mitigation measures.</p> <p>WisDOT would make every effort to design the interchange so that any runoff from the interchange would be contained within the interchange area through runoff basins and directed ditching. If feasible WisDOT could make design decisions which would allow the interchange to serve a drainage, retention and filter area for runoff from adjacent agricultural lands and may improve the overall</p>

					water quality reaching Bear Creek. See Streams & Floodplains Factor Sheet.
Lakes or Other Open Water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Upland Habitat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Wildlife associated with the project corridors land types include a variety of game and non-game species of birds, mammals, fish, reptiles and amphibians that typically live in Barron County.</p> <p>Several threatened species could be directly affected by the Proposed Action. The WDNR notes that the Bald Eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>), Le Conte's Sparrow (<i>Ammodramus leconteii</i>), Osprey (<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>), Red-shouldered Hawk (<i>Buteo lineatus</i>), and Yellow Rail (<i>Coturnicops noveboracensis</i>) are all bird species known to exist in or near the US 53 Corridor. An endangered and threatened species evaluation would likely be required at the time any improvements are implemented in the future.</p> <p>The Proposed Action would degrade small areas of habitat throughout the study area. The overall effect of the eventual implementation of the Proposed Action is expected to be minor.</p> <p>See Upland Habitat Factor Sheet.</p>
Erosion Control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Standard WisDOT erosion control methods would be used during construction as per WisDOT Standards Specifications for highway and structure construction. Temporary and permanent erosion control methods would include minimizing the amount of land exposed at one time, erosion bales, temporary seeding, silt fencing, erosion mats, rip-rap (side channel and backwater complex), seeding and mulching, temporary sediment traps, dust abatement, and grass-line conveyance (parallel to flow). Additionally, WDNR would be coordinated with in order to ensure adequate vegetative cover is maintained on approach slopes.</p> <p>A Stormwater Management Plan would be developed and incorporated into the project's design to reduce or minimize runoff effects to surrounding waters of the State from construction of the Proposed Action. Construction site erosion and sediment control would be part of the project's design and construction as set forth in TRANS 401 Wis. Adm. Code and the WisDOT/WDNR Cooperative Agreement. An Erosion Control Implementation Plan (EICP) would be prepared by the contractor and approved by WisDOT prior to construction. WDNR would be given an opportunity to review the EICP and provide comments.</p> <p>See Erosion Control Factor Sheet.</p>
Storm Water Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>A Stormwater Management Plan would be developed with coordination from WDNR to reduce or minimize runoff effects to surrounding waters of the State from construction of the Proposed Action. Construction site erosion and sediment control would be part of the project's design and construction as set forth in TRANS 401 Wis. Adm. Code and the WisDOT/WDNR Cooperative Agreement.</p> <p>WisDOT would make every effort to design the interchange so that any runoff from the interchange would be contained within the interchange area through runoff basins and directed ditching.</p> <p>If feasible WisDOT could make design decisions which would allow the interchange to serve a drainage, retention and filter area for runoff from adjacent agricultural lands and may improve the overall water quality reaching Bear Creek. The final determination of the</p>

				<p>storm weather measures to be taken will be made closer to design and construction.</p> <p>See Storm Water Management Factor Sheet.</p>
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**PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT FACTORS**

Air Quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The project is exempt from permit requirements under Wisconsin Administrative Code - Chapter NR 411. No substantial impacts to air quality are expected.</p>
Construction Stage Sound Quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>To reduce the potential impact of construction noise, the special provisions for this project would require that motorized equipment shall be operated in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations relating to noise levels.</p> <p>See Construction Stage Sound Factor Sheet.</p>
Traffic Noise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>A traffic impact analysis was performed per Wisconsin Administrative Code - Chapter TRANS 405.</p> <p>The Traffic Noise Model (TNM) predicted that one residential receptors within the project corridor would exceed Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) levels. This receptor (RCP 6) was located approximately .25 miles south of 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 272 feet from the road centerline of US 53. One residential receptor (RCP 4) located on the west side of US 53, approximately 350 feet from the road centerline between 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue was right at the 67 dBA Noise Level criteria specified in TRANS 405, Wisconsin Administrative Code. See Exhibit 6, Preferred Alternative With Noise Receptors</p> <p>See Traffic Noise Factor Sheet.</p>

**CULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS**

Section 4(f) and 6(f)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Historic Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>A potentially historic school building was identified. The DOE determined that the building was not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The Section 106 Review form was signed by SHPO on 9-4-08.</p> <p>See Appendix F, Section 106 Form.</p>
Archaeological Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Hazardous Substances or USTs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>One site was identified as having the potential for environmental concerns within 0.25 miles of the proposed project. Various unlabeled and unidentified containers stored on the ground as well as several areas of surface stained soils, solid waste, and engine parts were observed during the site reconnaissance. The site is not listed on any databases of contaminated properties, however, based on observations noted during the site reconnaissance, additional assessment is recommended.</p> <p>A Phase II Subsurface Investigation or special standard provisions proposed for design/construction is recommended dependent upon final improvement design for the site identified with the potential to have an adverse environmental impact to the project. If contaminated soil is encountered during construction activities, it would need to be sampled and disposed of in accordance with applicable statutes and rules, and may be considered a solid or</p>

					hazardous waste. Removal of the hazardous materials and contaminated soil would be a net benefit.  See the Hazardous Substances or Underground Storage Tank Factor Sheet.
Aesthetics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		The Proposed Action would not cause a substantial alteration to the visual character of the landscape as a whole. The Proposed Action would occur within and/or adjacent to the existing corridor, and though additional structures could be added over US 53, they would be similar to the existing structures along the corridor.  See Aesthetics Factor Sheet.
Coastal Zone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Proposed Action is not located in a coastal zone.
Other – Unique Areas Wild Rivers State Trail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue would be grade-separated, removing a crossing of the trail.  See the Unique Area Impact Evaluation Factor Sheet.
Other – Unique Areas Ice Age Trail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The trail would not be affected but coordination between WisDOT and the National Park Service will continue.  See the Unique Area Impact Evaluation Factor Sheet.

\* N/A – Blacked out cells in this column require a check in at least one of the other columns.

### ENVIRONMENTAL COST MATRIX

Transportation Improvements

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE	UNIT MEASURE	ALTERNATIVES/SECTIONS					
		No Build	System Concept 1	System Concept 2	System Concept 3		
Project Length	Mi (Km)	4.2 (6.8)	4.2 (6.8)	4.2 (6.8)	4.2 (6.8)		
<b>Cost \$</b>							
Construction	Million \$	\$0.00	\$14.80	\$13.60	\$16.70		
Real Estate	Million \$	\$0.00	\$0.28	\$0.11	\$0.25		
Total	Million \$	\$0.00	\$15.08	\$13.71	\$16.95		
<b>Land Conversions</b>							
Total Area Converted to R/W * Concept 2 estimates do not include ROW already owned by WisDOT	Acres (Hectares)	0.0 (0.0)	98.35	68.02*	84.43		
Wetland Area Converted to R/W	Acres (Hectares)	0.0 (0.0)	4.3	2.2*	1.3		
Upland Area Converted to R/W	Acres (Hectares)	0.0 (0.0)	92.27	64.93*	80.55		
Other Area Converted to R/W	Acres (Hectares)	0.0 (0.0)	1.78	0.89*	2.58		
<b>Real Estate</b>							
Number of Farms Affected	Number	0	17	17	17		
Total Area From Farm Operations Required	Acres (Hectares)	0.0 (0.0)	97.78	67.45	83.86		



Yes, a minority population is within the project's area of influence.

Yes, a low-income population is within project's area of influence.

c) How was information on the Proposed Action communicated to the minority and/or low- income population(s)?  
Check all that apply.

- |   |  |                                     |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Brochures             | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Notices                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utility Bill Stuffers | <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Service Announcements | <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Mailings       | <input type="checkbox"/> Key Person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify)             |  |                                     |

d) Identify how input from the minority population and/or low-income population was obtained. Check all that apply.

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mailed Survey                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Door-to-door interview | <input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group Research         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Meeting                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing         | <input type="checkbox"/> Key Person Interview         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Small Group Informational Meeting |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Workshop/Conference |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify)                           |   |   |

e) Indicate any special provisions which were made to encourage participation from the minority population and/or low-income population(s)

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interpreter             | <input type="checkbox"/> Listening Aids      | <input type="checkbox"/> Accessibility for Elderly and Disabled |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation Provided | <input type="checkbox"/> Child Care Provided | <input type="checkbox"/> Sign Language                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify)        |  |   |

9) Briefly summarize the status and results of public involvement. Briefly describe how the public involvement process complied with EO 12898 on Environmental Justice.

The public involvement effort included public information meetings and local official meetings. In addition to letters mailed to property owners along the corridor, information pertaining to meetings was also released to area newspapers. A total of three public information meetings were held for the project. The first meeting was to identify local needs from members of the community. The second meeting was to gather public input on the range of alternatives developed for the project. The third meeting was to announce gather public input on the Preferred Alternative. In addition to the public information meetings, meetings with local officials and agencies with an interest in the project were held prior to the public meetings. A list of all meetings is listed below:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Location</u>
August 29, 2006	Local Official Meeting	Haugen Elementary School
January 29, 2007	Progress Meeting	SEH – Rice Lake
February 12, 2007	Progress Meeting with WisDOT	Spooner
February 21, 2007	Ice Age Trail Meeting	SEH - Madison
February 22, 2007	Local Official Meeting	Village of Haugen Village Hall
March 15, 2007	Public Information Meeting	Haugen Elementary School
March 29, 2007	US 53 DNR Meeting	Haugen
April 30, 2007	Progress Meeting	SEH – Rice Lake
June 7, 2007	Progress Meeting	WisDOT – Eau Claire
October 4, 2007	Public Information Meeting	Haugen Elementary School

a) Identify groups (e.g., elderly, handicapped), minority populations and low-income populations that participated in the public involvement process. This would include any organizations and special interest groups.

N/A

b) Describe, briefly, the issues, if any, identified by any groups, minority populations and/or low-income populations during the public involvement process.

N/A

- c) Briefly describe how the issues identified above were addressed. Include a discussion of those that were avoided as well as those that were minimized and those that are to be mitigated. Include a brief discussion of proposed mitigation, if any.

N/A

**TRAFFIC SUMMARY**  
**Acceptable Levels of Service**

See: FDM Procedure 11-5-3

STH Sub-System	Rural & Small Urban Areas	Urbanized Areas with Population > 50,000	Indicate The Acceptable Level Of Service Established For This Project
C2020 Backbone Routes	LOS C (< = 4.0)	LOS C (< = 4.0)	LOS C (< = 4.0)
C2020 Connector Routes and NHS Routes (not including NHS Backbone Routes)	LOS C (< = 4.0)	Mid LOS D (< = 4.5)	LOS C (< = 4.0)
Other Principal Arterials	LOS D (< = 5.0)	Mid LOS E (< = 5.5)	LOS D (< = 5.0)
Minor Arterials	LOS D (< = 5.0)	Mid LOS E (< = 5.5)	LOS D (< = 5.0)
Collectors & Local Function Roads	LOS D (< = 5.0)	Mid LOS E (< = 5.5)	LOS D (< = 5.0)

**Traffic Analysis Summary**

Alternative	System Alternative 1 – System Alternative 2 System Alternative 1 (Preferred Alternative)			
	26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	
<b>Segment Termini</b>				
<b>Traffic Volumes</b>				
Existing AADT	Year 2003	10,000	10,000	10,000
Construction Year AADT	Year 2011	11,300	11,300	11,300
Const. Year + 10 Years AADT	Year 2021	12,900	12,900	12,900
Design Year AADT	Year 2031	14,300	14,300	14,300
Design Year DHV	Year 2031	1,959	1,959	1,959
<b>Traffic Factors in Design Year</b>				
K (30%)	Design Hour 4-5 p.m.	13.7	13.7	13.7
D (%)		63	63	63
Truck (% of AADT)		15.9	15.9	15.9
Truck (% of DHV)		10.7	10.7	10.7
Peak Hour Factor		0.92	0.92	0.92
<b>Level of Service in Design Year</b>				
LOS Letter Value (A – F)		B	B	B
LOS Numeric Values (1.0 – 6.01)				
LOS analysis methodology (e.g., HCS, Synchro, Paramics, other)		HCS+	HCS+	HCS+
<b>Posted Speeds and Facility Type</b>				
Existing Facility Type (e.g., Freeway, Expressway, Rural Two-Lane, Urban Arterial)		Principal Arterial/ Freeway	Principal Arterial/ Freeway	Principal Arterial/ Freeway
Design Year Facility Type		Freeway	Freeway	Freeway
Existing Year Posted Speed		65	65	65
Design Year Posted Speed		65	65	65

AADT = Average Annual Daily Traffic in Both Directions

DHV = Design Hourly Volume

K = The percent of AADT in the Design Hour (30th, 200th, or other)

K8 = % of AADT occurring in the average of the 8 highest consecutive hours of traffic on an average day. (Only required when a carbon monoxide analysis must be performed per Wisconsin Administrative Code - Chapter NR 411.)

D = % of DHV occurring in the predominate direction of travel.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Indicate whether the issue listed below is a concern for the proposed action or alternative. If the issue is a concern, explain how it is to be addressed or where it is addressed in this environmental document.

1) Would the Proposed Action stimulate substantial secondary environmental effects?

No

Yes - Explain or indicate where addressed.

2) Would the creation of a new environmental effect result from this Proposed Action?

No

Yes - Explain or indicate where addressed.

3) Would the Proposed Action impact geographically scarce resources?

No

Yes - Explain or indicate where addressed.

4) Would the Proposed Action have a precedent-setting nature?

No

Yes - Explain or indicate where addressed.

5) Is the degree of controversy associated with the Proposed Action high?

No

Yes - Explain or indicate where addressed.

6) Would the Proposed Action have any conflicts with official agency plans or local, state, or national policies, including conflicts resulting from potential effects of transportation on land use and land use on transportation demand?

No

Yes - Explain or indicate where addressed.

7) Would the Proposed Action contribute to cumulative environmental impacts of repeated actions?

No

Yes - Explain or indicate where addressed.

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

Identify and describe any commitments made to protect the environment. Indicate when the commitment should be implemented and who in WisDOT would have jurisdiction to assure fulfillment for each commitment.

### ATTACH THIS PAGE TO THE DESIGN STUDY REPORT

A. General Economics	Not Applicable	
B. Community & Residential	No Commitments Needed	
C. Commercial & Industrial	No Commitments Needed	
D. Agriculture	Commitments Made	<p>When this project moves into final design, DATCP should be notified. If more than five acres of property would be acquired from any agricultural operation, an Agricultural Impact Statement must be prepared. If five acres or less is involved, DATCP has discretion whether to prepare an AIS. WisDOT cannot begin negotiation with a property owner until 30 days after the AIS has been published, if an AIS will be prepared for the project. Future WisDOT Project Manager (PM) to fulfill.</p>
E. Environmental Justice	Not Applicable	
F. Wetlands	Commitments Made	<p>The potential for on-site wetland mitigation exists where small sections of the existing frontage road would be removed/relocated and where design/construction would acquire small areas of right-of-way. WisDOT could explore the potential for on-site wetland mitigation at the locations closer to design/construction of the Proposed Action. Section 10 and Section 404 coordination would need to occur with USACOE before construction. Section 7 coordination with USF&amp;W would need to occur before construction. Consultation with WDNR would occur during both the design and construction phases of the project to avoid, minimize and mitigate effects to state listed species.</p> <p>Coordination with WDNR and USF&amp;W prior to and during construction to avoid nest disturbances of threatened species including: Bald Eagle, Le Conte's Sparrow, Osprey, Yellow Rail and Red-shouldered Hawk.</p> <p>Future WisDOT PM to fulfill.</p>
G. Streams & Floodplains	Commitments Made	<p>An endangered and threatened species evaluation would be done at the time of implementation. If these are found, consultation with WDNR and USFWS would occur during both the design and construction phases of the project to avoid, minimize and mitigate effects to state listed species. During the design stage, WisDOT will work with WDNR to determine the</p>

H. Lakes or Other Open Water	Not Applicable	appropriate time period for limiting work in or near streams/lakes to avoid impacts to nests and fish. Future WisDOT PM to fulfill.
I. Upland Habitat	Commitments Made	The WDNR and USF&W both note that an endangered and threatened species evaluation would likely be required at the time any improvements are implemented in the future. In accordance with the Federal Highway Administration and the Endangered Species Act of 1973, a determination would be made closer to design/construction as to whether the selected project alternative may affect any federal listed or endangered species, and what actions would be taken to minimize impacts. Future WisDOT PM to fulfill.
J. Erosion Control	Commitments Made	Construction site erosion and sediment control would be part of the project's design and construction as set forth in TRANS 401 Wis. Adm. Code and the WisDOT/WDNR Cooperative Agreement. An Erosion Control Implementation Plan (EICP) would be prepared by the contractor and approved by WDNR prior to construction. Future WisDOT PM to fulfill.
K. Storm Water Management	Commitments Made	A Stormwater Management Plan would be developed and incorporated into the project's design to reduce or minimize runoff effects to surrounding waters of the state in coordination with WDNR. If feasible, WisDOT would make design decisions which would allow the interchange to serve as a drainage, retention and filter area for runoff from adjacent agricultural lands and may improve the overall water quality reaching Bear Creek. Future WisDOT PM to fulfill.
L. Air Quality		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The project is exempt from permit requirements per Wisconsin Administrative Code – Chapter NR 411 criteria. <input type="checkbox"/> A construction permit is required for this project and an application has been submitted to the Department of Natural Resources – Bureau of Air Management. Construction on the project will not begin until the Construction Permit has been issued. See the Air Quality Factor Sheet. <input type="checkbox"/> A construction permit is required for this project and has been issued by the Department of Natural Resources – Bureau of Air Management. The Construction Permit Number is . See the Air Quality Factor Sheet.
M. Construction Stage Sound Quality		
		<input type="checkbox"/> No receptors are located in the project area. No impacts are anticipated from construction noise.

To reduce the potential impact of Construction Noise, the special provisions for this project will require that motorized equipment shall be operated in compliance with all applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations relating to noise levels permissible within and adjacent to the project construction site. At a minimum, the special provisions will require that motorized construction equipment shall not be operated between 10 PM and 6 AM without prior written approval of the project engineer. All motorized construction equipment will be required to have mufflers constructed in accordance with the equipment manufacturer's specifications or a system of equivalent noise reducing capacity. It will also be required that mufflers and exhaust systems be maintained in good working order, free from leaks or holes. See Construction Stage Sound Quality Factor Sheet.

N. Traffic Noise	No Commitments Needed	
O. Section 4(f) and 6(f)	No Commitments Needed	
P. Historic Resources	No Commitments Needed	
Q. Archaeological Resources	Commitments Made	One property remains needing investigation; the property owner would not give permission for shovel testing. This investigation would be completed prior to the start of final design and acquisition. Future WisDOT PM to fulfill.
R. Hazardous Substances or USTs	Commitments Made	A Phase II Subsurface Investigation would be done on a hazardous material site found in the Phase I investigation. If contaminated soil is found, it would be sampled and removed. Future WisDOT PM to fulfill.
S. Aesthetics	No Commitments Needed	
T. Coastal Zone	Not Applicable	
U. Unique Areas	Commitments Made	<p>Although the Ice Age Trail is not impacted by the Proposed Action, WisDOT met with the National Park Service to discuss potential changes to the IAT in the future. Specific design issues relating to the accommodation of multi-modal needs would be determined closer to the time of final design or construction if/when changes to the Ice Age Trail corridor are determined. WisDOT has not committed to funding any improvements related to the relocation of the IAT.</p> <p>If/when 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue is grade-separated, the Wild Rivers Trail would be spanned by the overpass of US 53.</p> <p>The proposed cul-de-sac on County SS would provide access to the Wild Rivers Trail parking lot. Access to the lot would be maintained throughout the construction process. Future WisDOT PM to fulfill.</p>

# GENERAL ECONOMICS IMPACT EVALUATION

DT2078 2004

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Alternative System Alternative 1 - 26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue (Barron/Washburn)	Preferred <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Portion of Project This Sheet is Evaluating 26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue (Barron/Washburn Counties, a distance of approximately 4.2 miles)	

- 1) Describe, briefly, the existing economic characteristics of the area around the project. This could include type(s) of farming, retail or wholesale businesses, manufacturing, tourism, or other elements contributing to the area's economy and potentially affected by the project.

The Proposed Action is located in Barron and Washburn Counties in northwest Wisconsin.

Barron County is bordered by several counties including Burnett County (northwest), Washburn County (north), Sawyer County (northeast), Rusk County (east), Chippewa County (southeast), Dunn County (south), St. Croix County (southwest), and Polk County (west). The county has a total land area of 862.8 square miles representing 1.3 percent of the total land area of the state. The county had a year 2000 population of 44,963. See Table 1, Demographic Comparison Chart (see the last page of this factor sheet) for a comparison of population among communities within the project limits.

Washburn County is bordered by Douglas County to the north, Bayfield County to the northeast, Sawyer County to the east, Rusk County to the south east, Barron County to the south and Burnett County to the west. The county has a total land area of 809.7 square miles that represents 1.2 percent of the total state land area. The county's population in 2000 was 16,036.

As Table 2, Economic Characteristics of the Project Area shows, the top three employers by industry for the two counties are generally consistent. Manufacturing, education and social services, and retail trades were the top employers for the two counties in 2000. Median household income was also relatively similar for the two counties.

<b>Year 2000</b>	<b>Barron County</b>	<b>Washburn County</b>
Total number of people employed	23,720	7,618
Top 3 employers by industry	1) Manufacturing	1) Educational, health, and social services
	2) Educational, health, and social services	2) Manufacturing
	3) Retail Trade	3) Retail Trade
Median household income	\$37,275	\$33,716

In Barron County there were 1,647 farms on 351,930 acres of land in 1997. In Washburn County there were 471 farms on 105,432 acres of land. Though agriculture in the two counties accounted for only 27 to 30 percent of the labor force in 2005, the amount of resources dedicated to agriculture makes it important to the two economies.

### Agriculture in Barron County

Barron County had 64 percent of its land area in farms in 2002 compared to the State of Wisconsin as a whole which had 38 percent in 2002. The market value of agricultural products sold by Barron County producers totaled \$149 million. Barron County's principle commodities include milk, turkeys, corn, soybeans, and vegetable production.

### Agriculture in Washburn County

Farmland covered 20 percent of Washburn County in 2002 compared to the state of Wisconsin as a whole which had 38 percent of land in farms statewide for the same year. The market value of agricultural products sold by Washburn County producers totaled \$17 million. Washburn provides a diverse range of agricultural commodities including beef, dairy cows, sheep, and a number of varying crops contained in both small and large farm operations. Top commodities in the county include milk, grain, and cranberries.

- 2) Discuss the economic advantages and disadvantages of the proposed action. Indicate how the project would affect the characteristics described in item 1 above.

The Proposed Action would have numerous economic benefits over the existing conditions:

- Assist in ensuring the economic viability of the region by promoting safe and efficient travel on the US highway system.
- Promote the efficient transportation of raw materials, goods, and services between markets.
- Provide safe and efficient access to the Village of Haugen and surrounding areas.
- Accommodate the current and planned economic growth/development for the area.
- Assist in ensuring safe and efficient access of police, fire, and emergency services to the area.
- Provide safe access to and across US 53 for agricultural equipment and other slow moving vehicles.
- Provide safe access to businesses and commercial operations along US 53.

The Proposed Action's disadvantages include:

- Require the relocation of some current private and agricultural access to US 53 causing slight indirection for vehicles accessing some of the property along the corridor.
- Require acquisitions to accommodate local connections, interchange and grade separation footprints in some locations.
- Increased travel time to/from some locations along the US 53 corridor.
- Require a major capital investment by WisDOT that could not be expended elsewhere.
- Cause temporary disruptions during construction.

- 3) In general, will the proposed action increase or decrease the potential for economic development in the area influenced by the project?

The Proposed Action is consistent with the goals of Corridors 2020 and development trends in the area. It is anticipated that the Proposed Action will support planned economic development in the area.

Changes in access along the US 53 corridor may initially influence the location of certain types of development such as highway-dependent businesses. Existing businesses and commercial operations in the project area would benefit from safe access to/from their operations. The separation of traffic destined to local commercial areas from regional traffic would improve mobility and circulation for customers destined to these locations.

The majority of the corridor could be classified as agricultural in nature. The Proposed Action could ultimately benefit local farming efforts by relocating competing land uses (highway-dependent) to safe access points along US 53 where they would not be in conflict with current agricultural land uses near existing at-grade intersections.

# COMMUNITY OR RESIDENTIAL IMPACT EVALUATION

DT2075 2004

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Alternative System Alternative 1 - 26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue (Barron/Washburn)	Preferred <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Portion of Project This Sheet is Evaluating if Different From First Basic Sheet Village of Haugen	

1) Give a brief description of the community or neighborhood affected by the Proposed Action.

Community/Neighborhood Name Village of Haugen	
Community/Neighborhood Population 287	Community is Unincorporated <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Community/Neighborhood Characteristics  
 The Village of Haugen is located in northern Barron County approximately 2 miles south of the Washburn County line and 6 miles north of the City of Rice Lake. Between 2000 and 2005 the village population increased by roughly 1.4 percent (287 to 291).

The village can be characterized as a rural community that is 100 percent white. The prominent ancestry is German (35.7 percent) followed by Czech, French, and Norwegian. Of the total population in 2000, 18.8 percent were aged 65 or older. The median household income in 2000 was \$30,714 with manufacturing as the leading industry. The village has a defined business district and neighborhood residential densities.

Land use in the Village of Haugen is predominately residential in nature with a few areas of commercial development. The village has scattered forested upland areas, however it has no major wetlands.

2) Identify and discuss the existing modes of transportation and their traffic within the community or neighborhood.

The primary mode of transportation within the community includes automobile and truck traffic. This traffic includes both local and regional trips on US 53 as well as county and local roadways. US 53 primarily serves local/regional trips for a variety of purposes, and recreational, business and long-haul truck trips for travelers from more distant locations. Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) on US 53 is roughly 10,000 on this segment.

Railroad facilities do not directly serve communities within the project area, however connections to the Canadian National Railroad (CNR) exist via the Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad (Spooner, WI) and Progressive Rail, Inc. (Rice Lake, WI). The CNR passes through Washburn County east of the project area and connects Superior, WI with Green Bay, WI and other rail junctions across the state.

Airports with controlled airspace within the study area include Shell Lake and Rice Lake. Shell Lake Municipal Airport is a basic utility airport located 12 miles northwest of the village of Haugen, and Rice Lake Regional Airport is a Transport/Corporate airport providing commercial cargo service and located approximately 9 miles southeast of the project area. Shell Lake serves roughly 34 flights a day, primarily consisting of local and recreational use. Rice Lake airport serves roughly 76 flights a day of which roughly ten percent include air taxi services.

Transit services are not present within the project area. In addition, pedestrian facilities are not present outside of the Village of Haugen because of the rural nature of the community. The Ice Age Trail enters the project area southwest of the Village of Haugen and follows a portion of the Tuscobia State Trail.

Bike facilities include marked county routes along 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 18<sup>th</sup> Street in Barron County and state recreation trails including the Tuscobia State Trail and the Wild Rivers State Trail. The Tuscobia State Trail is a 74 mile trail connecting Rice Lake to Park Falls and located in the southern portion of the project area. The Wild Rivers State Trail is a 40-mile rails-to-trails facility located between Rice Lake and Superior and roughly parallel to US 53. Both trails are open to snowmobile use during the winter season.

Several snowmobile trails are located within the project area with snowmobiling a major recreational activity in the area during winter months. Connections between local trails, Rice Lake, Haugen, and Spooner are provided via the Wild Rivers State Trail and the Tuscobia State Trail.

- 3) Identify and discuss the probable changes resulting from the Proposed Action to the modes of transportation and their traffic within the community or neighborhood.

The implementation of the Proposed Action would not likely to cause changes in the mode of travel used. There would likely be some minor changes in automobile and truck traffic patterns on the local road system, and some added indirection and changes in travel times to and from some locations in the study area, due to the fact that US 53 would only be accessed from the interchange proposed at County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The enhanced safety of having several grade separated crossing of US 53 may have the effect of encouraging more bicycling in the area.

- 4) Briefly discuss the Proposed Action's effect(s) on existing and planned land use in the community or neighborhood.

The Proposed Action is located in the Towns of Oak Grove, Bear Lake, Long Lake, and Sarona, and is located adjacent to the Village of Haugen. Existing land uses in the project corridor consist primarily of rural wooded, wetland, and agricultural uses. Area lakes support large numbers of recreational lakefront homes. Low concentrations of commercial and industrial activities exist within the Village of Haugen, surrounded by higher density housing. Area housing densities reflect the use of on site septic systems and wells. The Village of Haugen provides wastewater treatment supporting higher housing and commercial densities.

The Proposed Action is consistent with planned land uses for the communities along the US 53 corridor. The traffic patterns could change as a result of the Proposed Action within and near the Village of Haugen. Improved and safer access to businesses located within the Village of Haugen is a goal of the Proposed Action.

The Proposed Action may have some effect on where new development occurs. At the present time, development could be placed adjacent to any one of the numerous at-grade intersection on US 53. The Proposed Action would remove most of the existing access points to US 53. In the vicinity of the Village of Haugen, the effect will be most pronounced at the intersection of US 53 and County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which would become an interchange. New development that would benefit from being adjacent to US 53 and requires access may gravitate towards the proposed interchange.

- 5) Address any changes to emergency services or other public services during and after construction of the proposed project.

Changes to emergency services include indirection (altered travel routes/distance) during construction, and after access changes have been completed. Additional safe crossings of US 53 balance the safety and efficiency of emergency service responses with the potential indirection caused by those access changes.

- 6) Describe any physical or access changes and their effects to lot frontages, driveways, or sidewalks. This could include effects on side slopes or driveways (steeper or flatter), reduced terraces, tree removal, vision corners, sidewalk removal, etc.

The Proposed Action includes changes in direct access onto US 53 for all existing intersections in the study area, including local roads, driveways and agricultural accesses. In a few locations, access to property will change to be located onto local roads that do not access US 53. Because of the rural nature of the area, there are no sidewalks or terraces to be affected.

- 7) Indicate whether a community/neighborhood facility will be affected by the Proposed Action and indicate what effect(s) this will have, overall, on the community/neighborhood. Also include and identify any minority population or low-income population that may be affected by the proposed action.

Community facilities and minority/low income populations are not affected by implementation of the Proposed Action.

- 8) Place an "X" in the appropriate box below if one of the populations indicated would be affected by the proposal. Give a brief description of the community/neighborhood and population affected by the Proposed Action. Include demographic characteristics of those affected by the proposal.

For the populations shown below, The Orders issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation and its implementing agencies to satisfy the requirements of Executive Order 12898 require an evaluation to determine whether a minority and/or low-income population would experience a disproportionately high and adverse effect. If any of the populations shown below are affected, form DT2093, Environmental Justice Impact Evaluation, along with the remaining items on this worksheet, will need to be completed to satisfy Environmental Justice requirements.

- a) Is disabled population affected?  
 No  
 Yes - See form DT2093, Environmental Justice Impact Evaluation.
- b) Is elderly population affected?  
 No  
 Yes - See form DT2093, Environmental Justice Impact Evaluation.
- c) Are minority populations affected?  
 No  
 Yes - See form DT2093, Environmental Justice Impact Evaluation.
- d) Are low-income populations affected?  
 No  
 Yes - See form DT2093, Environmental Justice Impact Evaluation.

9) Identify and discuss, in general terms, factors that residents have indicated to be important or controversial.

The existing County V intersection has been identified in need of improvement to address perceived safety issues by local residents. The Proposed Action will remove the existing at-grade intersection. Access to US 53 would be provided via a new interchange at County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

10) Indicate the number and type of any residential buildings which would be removed because of the Proposed Action. If either item a) or b) is checked, items 11 through 18 do not need to be addressed or included in the environmental document.

- a)  None
- b)  No occupied residential building will be acquired as a result of this project.
- c)  Occupied residential building(s) will be acquired. Provide number and description of buildings, e.g., single family homes, apartment buildings, condominiums, duplexes, etc. If item c) is checked, you must complete items 11 through 18.

# COMMUNITY OR RESIDENTIAL IMPACT EVALUATION

DT2075 2004

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Alternative System Alternative 1 - 26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue (Barron/Washburn)	Preferred <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Portion of Project This Sheet is Evaluating if Different From First Basic Sheet Towns of Bear Lake, Long Lake, Oak Grove, Sarona	

- 1) Give a brief description of the community or neighborhood affected by the proposed action.

Community/Neighborhood Towns of Bear Lake, Long Lake, Oak Grove, Sarona	
Community/Neighborhood Population 2,617	Community is Unincorporated <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Community/Neighborhood Characteristics These towns in Barron and Washburn Counties can be characterized as predominantly rural communities with a racial makeup that is over 97 percent white. The prominent ancestry is German (35 - 39 percent). Of the total population in 2000, 10 to 17 percent were aged 65 or older. The median household income in 2000 in each of towns ranges from \$30,357 (Sarona) to \$44,271 (Bear Lake) with manufacturing as the leading industry. Land use in these areas is predominately agricultural with small pockets of residential development.	

- 2) Identify and discuss the existing modes of transportation and their traffic within the community or neighborhood.

The primary mode of transportation within the communities includes automobile and truck travel for local and regional trips on US 53 as well as county and local roadways. US 53 serves local/regional trips for a variety of purposes, and recreational, business and long-haul truck trips for travelers from more distant locations. Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) on US 53 is roughly 10,000 on this segment.

Railroad facilities do not directly serve communities within the project area, however connections to the Canadian National Railroad (CNR) exist via the Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad (Spooner, WI) and Progressive Rail, Inc. (Rice Lake, WI). The CNR passes through Washburn County east of the project area and connects Superior, WI with Green Bay, WI and other rail junctions across the state.

Airports with controlled airspace within the study area include Shell Lake and Rice Lake. Shell Lake Municipal Airport is a basic utility airport located 12 miles northwest of the village of Haugen, and Rice Lake Regional Airport is a Transport/Corporate airport providing commercial cargo service and located approximately 9 miles southeast of the project area. Shell Lake serves roughly 34 flights a day, primarily consisting of local and recreational use. Rice Lake airport serves roughly 76 flights a day of which roughly ten percent include air taxi services.

Transit services are not present within the project area. In addition, pedestrian facilities are not present outside of the Village of Haugen because of the rural nature of the community. The Ice Age Trail enters the project area southwest of the Village of Haugen and follows a portion of the Tuscobia State Trail.

Bike facilities include marked county routes along 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 18<sup>th</sup> Street in Barron County and state recreation trails including the Tuscobia State Trail and the Wild Rivers State Trail. The Tuscobia State Trail is a 74 mile trail connecting Rice Lake to Park Falls and located in the southern portion of the project area. The Wild Rivers State Trail is a 40 mile rails-to-trails facility located between Rice Lake and Superior and roughly parallel to US 53. Both trails are open to snowmobile use during the winter season.

Several snowmobile trails are located within the project area with snowmobiling a major recreational activity in the area during winter months. Connections between local trails, Rice Lake, Haugen, and Spooner are provided via the Wild Rivers State Trail and the Tuscobia State Trail.

- 3) Identify and discuss the probable changes resulting from the Proposed Action to the modes of transportation and their traffic within the community or neighborhood.

The implementation of the Proposed Action would not be likely to cause changes in the mode of travel used. There would likely be some minor changes in automobile and truck traffic patterns on the local road system, and some added indirection and changes in travel times to and from some locations in the study area, due to the fact that US 53 would only be accessed from the interchange proposed at County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The enhanced safety of having several grade separated crossing of US 53 may have the effect of encouraging more bicycling in the area.

- 4) Briefly discuss the proposed action's effect(s) on existing and planned land use in the community or neighborhood.

The project study area is located in the Towns of Oak Grove, Bear Lake in Barron County, and the Towns of Long Lake and Saronia in Washington County, and includes the Village of Haugen. (See Exhibit 4, Preferred Alternative with Aerial) shows the town boundaries. Existing land uses in the project corridor consist primarily of rural wooded, wetland, and agricultural uses. Area lakes support large numbers of recreational lakefront homes. Area housing densities reflect the use of on site septic systems and wells in the unincorporated areas. Low concentrations of commercial and industrial activities exist within the Village of Haugen, surrounded by higher density housing. The Village of Haugen provides wastewater treatment, supporting higher housing and commercial densities.

The Town of Bear Lake is in the process of adopting its comprehensive plan. The Town of Long Lake and the Town of Saronia have completed comprehensive plans. The Proposed Action is consistent with planned land uses for the communities along the US 53 corridor. The Town of Oak Grove does not have a comprehensive plan. The traffic patterns could change somewhat as a result of the Proposed Action but the rural towns are not expected to be greatly affected.

The Proposed Action may have some effect on where new development occurs. At the present time, development could be placed adjacent to any one of the numerous at-grade intersection on US 53. The Proposed Action would remove most of the existing access points to US 53. New development that would benefit from being adjacent to US 53 and requires access may gravitate towards the proposed interchange locations at County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the Town of Oak Grove. In the Towns of Saronia, Bear Lake and Long Lake, effects will be most pronounced at 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which will be come an overpass over US 53.

- 5) Address any changes to emergency services or other public services during and after construction of the proposed project.

Changes to emergency services include indirection (altered travel routes/distance) during construction, and after access changes have been completed. Additional safe crossings of US 53 balance the safety and efficiency of emergency service responses with the potential indirection caused by those access changes.

- 6) Describe any physical or access changes and their effects to lot frontages, driveways, or sidewalks. This could include effects on side slopes or driveways (steeper or flatter), reduced terraces, tree removal, vision corners, sidewalk removal, etc.

The Proposed Action includes changes in direct access onto US 53 for all existing intersections in the study area, including local roads, driveways and agricultural accesses. In a few locations, access to property will change to be located onto local roads that do not access US 53. Because of the rural nature of the area, there are no sidewalks or terraces to be affected.

- 7) Indicate whether a community/neighborhood facility will be affected by the Proposed Action and indicate what effect(s) this will have, overall, on the community/neighborhood. Also include and identify any minority population or low-income population that may be affected by the proposed action.

Community facilities and minority/low income populations are not affected by implementation of the Proposed Action.

- 8) Place an "X" in the appropriate box below if one of the populations indicated would be affected by the proposal. Give a brief description of the community/neighborhood and population affected by the Proposed Action. Include demographic characteristics of those affected by the proposal.

For the populations shown below, The Orders issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation and its implementing agencies to satisfy the requirements of Executive Order 12898 require an evaluation to determine whether a minority and/or low-income population would experience a disproportionately high and adverse effect. If any of the populations shown below are affected, form DT2093, Environmental Justice Impact Evaluation, along with the remaining items on this worksheet, will need to be completed to satisfy Environmental Justice requirements.

- a) Is disabled population affected?

No

Yes - See form DT2093, Environmental Justice Impact Evaluation.

- b) Is elderly population affected?

No

Yes - See form DT2093, Environmental Justice Impact Evaluation.

c) Are minority populations affected?

No

Yes - See form DT2093, Environmental Justice Impact Evaluation.

d) Are low-income populations affected?

No

Yes - See form DT2093, Environmental Justice Impact Evaluation.

9) Identify and discuss, in general terms, factors that residents have indicated to be important or controversial.

The existing County V intersection has been identified in need of improvement to address perceived safety issues by local residents. The Proposed Action will remove the existing at-grade intersection. Access to US 53 would be provided via a new interchange at County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

10) Indicate the number and type of any residential buildings which would be removed because of the proposed action. If either item a) or b) is checked, items 11 through 18 do not need to be addressed or included in the environmental document.

a)  None

b)  No occupied residential building will be acquired as a result of this project.

c)  Occupied residential building(s) will be acquired. Provide number and description of buildings, e.g., single family homes, apartment buildings, condominiums, duplexes, etc. If item c) is checked, you must complete items 11 through 18.

11) Estimate the number of households that would be displaced from the Occupied residential buildings identified in item 10c) above.

Total Number of Households to be Relocated

1 in Town of Oak Grove

(Note that this number may be greater than the number shown in 10c) above because an occupied apartment building may have many households.)

a) Number by Ownership

Number of Households Living in Owner Occupied Building	Number of Households Living in Rented Quarters
1	

b) Number of households to be relocated that have

1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	4 or More Bedrooms
			1

c) Number of relocated households by type and price range of dwelling

Number of Single Family Dwellings	Price Range
1	\$100,000 - \$120,000
Number of Multi-Family Dwellings	Price Range
Number of Apartments	Price Range

12) Describe the relocation potential in the community.

a) Number of Available Dwellings

1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 or More Bedrooms
		6+	3+

b) Number of Available and Comparable Dwellings by Location

4 within 10	9 within 30
6 within 20	within

c) Number of Available and Comparable Dwellings by Type and Price. (Include dwellings in price ranges comparable to those being dislocated, if any.)

Single Family Dwellings	Price Range
4	\$75,000 - \$99,999
5	\$100,000 - \$120,000
Multi-Family Dwellings	

Apartments

13) Identify all the sources of information used to obtain the data in item 12.

- WisDOT Real Estate
  Multiple Listing Service (MLS)
- Newspaper Listing(s)
  Other – Identify

14) Indicate the number of households to be relocated that have the following special characteristics.

Number of Minority Households	Number of Elderly Households
Number of Households with Disabled Residents	Number of Low-Income Households
Number of Households Made up of a Large Family (5 or more individuals)	Number of Households with no Special Characteristics
Number of Households for Which it is not Known Whether They Have Special Characteristics	
1	

15) Describe how relocation assistance will be provided in compliance with the WisDOT Relocation Manual or FHWA regulation 49 CFR Part 24.

In addition to the acquisition price, additional costs for the replacement dwelling, moving expenses, increased mortgage payments, addition of handicapped alterations, closing costs, and other valid relocation costs would be covered by the relocation program. No person would be displaced unless a comparable dwelling is provided. All the available resources are provided without discrimination. Before the initiation of any property acquisition activities, WisDOT real estate staff would contact the property owner to explain the details of the acquisition process, the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Estate Property Acquisition Policies of 1970, and Wisconsin's Eminent Domain Law under Section 32.05 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

16) Identify any difficulties or unusual conditions for relocating households displaced by the Proposed Action.

None identified

17) Indicate whether Special Relocation Assistance Service will be needed. Describe any special services or housing programs needed to remedy identified difficulties or unusual conditions noted in item #14 above.

- No
  Yes - Describe services that will be required.

18) Describe any additional measures which would be used to minimize adverse effects or provide benefits to those relocated, those remaining, or to community facilities affected.

See item # 15

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS IMPACT EVALUATION

DT2095 2005

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Alternative System Alternative 1 - 26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue (Barron County)	Preferred <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
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Length of Project This Sheet is Evaluating  
26<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue, a distance of approximately 4.2 miles

1) Describe the economic development or existing business areas affected by the Proposed Action.

The Proposed Action will be constructed over time with the first step likely being the construction of the interchange at County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Other steps will be taken later in the future as safety concerns develop. This phasing-in of the plan will allow communities and property owners to make long-term planning decisions that are compatible with the future plans for the highway.

Based on meetings with the affected municipalities, the area of greatest development potential is near the Village of Haugen. Existing businesses located near and within the Village of Haugen that could be affected include a mini storage facility, a pool cue factory, and a manufacturing company. A campground with access via the US 53/29-3/4 Avenue intersection may be affected. Alternate access would be provided and indirection is anticipated to be minor. Generally speaking, the businesses near the highway are not highway-dependent, and are not expected to be seriously affected. Visibility from the highway of the existing businesses would be retained. Access to the landscaping business located on 30th Avenue would be more indirect if/when the overpass is constructed, and would likely be via the interchange at County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Construction of the overpass would occur well into the future, as 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue is currently not a high-crash location.

2) Identify and discuss the existing modes of transportation and their traffic within the economic development or existing business area.

The primary mode of transportation within the economic development area includes automobiles and truck traffic. Bike and pedestrian traffic is also present to a greater degree in the village, with snowmobile access available during winter months.

3) Place an "X" in the appropriate box below if one of the populations indicated would be affected by the proposal. Give a brief description of the community/neighborhood and population affected by the proposed action. Include demographic characteristics of those affected by the proposal.

For the populations shown below, The Orders issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation and its implementing agencies to satisfy the requirements of Executive Order 12898 require an evaluation to determine whether a minority and/or low income population would experience a disproportionately high and adverse effect. If any of the populations shown below are affected, DT2093, Environmental Justice Impact Evaluation, along with the remaining items on this worksheet, will need to be completed to satisfy Environmental Justice requirements.

- a)  No - Disabled population is not affected.  
 Yes - Disabled population is affected. See DT2093, Environmental Justice Impact Evaluation.
- b)  No - Elderly population is not affected.  
 Yes - Elderly population is affected. See DT2093, Environmental Justice Impact Evaluation.
- c)  No - Minority population is not affected.  
 Yes - Minority population is affected. See DT2093, Environmental Justice Impact Evaluation.
- d)  No - Low-income population is not affected.  
 Yes - Low income population is affected. See DT2093, Environmental Justice Impact Evaluation.

4) Identify and discuss effects on the economic development potential and existing businesses that are dependent upon the transportation facility for continued economic viability.

The proposed project will have no effect on a transportation-dependent business or industry.

The proposed action will change the conditions for a business that is dependent upon the transportation facility. Identify effects, including effects which may occur during construction.

Changes in access at the US 53/29 3/4<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection could affect traffic traveling to the campground located on 29 3/4 Avenue, and the landscaping business located on 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Alternative access would be provided via the interchange at County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue and local road connections. Indirection is anticipated to be minor, and would likely not discourage most potential customers from traveling to these destinations.

5) Estimate the number of businesses and jobs that would be created or displaced because of the project.

a) Total number created  None

Number created by type including number of jobs.

Retail businesses created	Retail jobs created
Service businesses created	Service jobs created
Wholesale businesses created	Wholesale jobs created
Manufacturing businesses created	Manufacturing jobs created

b) Total number displaced.  None

Number displaced by type and number of jobs.

Retail businesses displaced	Retail jobs displaced
Service businesses displaced	Service jobs displaced
Wholesale businesses displaced	Wholesale jobs displaced
Manufacturing businesses displaced	Manufacturing jobs displaced

6) Identify any special characteristics of the created or displaced businesses or their employees.

a) Number of created businesses by special characteristics  None

Number of created businesses that will employ elderly  
serve elderly

Number of created businesses that will employ disabled  
serve disabled

Number of created businesses that will employ low income people  
serve low income people

Number of created businesses that will employ a minority population  
serve a minority

b) Number of displaced businesses by special characteristics  None

Number of displaced businesses that will employ elderly  
serve elderly

Number of displaced businesses that will employ disabled  
serve disabled

Number of displaced businesses that will employ low income people  
serve low income people

Number of displaced businesses that will employ a minority population  
serve a minority

7) Is Special Relocation Assistance Needed?

No

Yes – Describe special relocation needs.

8) Describe the business relocation potential in the community.

a) Total number of available business buildings in the community. N/A

b) Number of available and comparable business buildings by location

N/A

Number of available and comparable business buildings within

Number of available and comparable business buildings within

Number of available and comparable business buildings within

c) Number of available and comparable business buildings by type and price (Include business buildings in price ranges comparable to those being dislocated, if any.)

Number of available and comparable single business buildings in the price range of

Number of available and comparable single business buildings in the price range of

Number of available and comparable single business buildings in the price range of

Number of available and comparable multi- business buildings in the price range of

Number of available and comparable multi-business buildings in the price range of

Number of available and comparable multi- business buildings in the price range of

9) Identify all the sources of information used to obtain the data in item 8.

WisDOT Real Estate

Multiple Listing Service (MLS)

Newspaper listing(s)

Other - Identify:

10) Describe how relocation assistance will be provided in compliance with the WisDOT Relocation Manual or FHWA regulation 49 CFR Part 24.

N/A

11) Identify any difficulties for relocating a business displaced by the Proposed Action and describe any special services needed to remedy identified unusual conditions.

N/A

12) Describe any additional measures which would be used to minimize adverse effects or provide benefits to those relocated, those remaining, or to community facilities affected.

N/A

13) Generally describe both the beneficial and adverse effects accruing to:

a) The area's economic development potential or existing business area caused by the Proposed Action. Include any factors identified by business people that they feel are important or controversial.

The Proposed Action is likely to support the existing and planned land uses along the US 53 corridor. The primary planned land use along US 53 is agricultural. Conversion of existing US 53 and local road intersections to overpasses and cul-de-sacs could reduce the likelihood of transportation dependent commercial land uses from locating along US 53 and competing with existing agricultural activities currently taking place in this area. The Proposed Action is consistent with planned land uses for the areas where such plans exist.

b) The employment potential and existing employees in businesses affected by the proposal. Include, as appropriate, a discussion of effects accruing to minority populations or low-income populations.

The Proposed Action would benefit employees by providing a safer, more efficient transportation system for travel to/from their place of employment.

# AGRICULTURAL IMPACT EVALUATION

DT2063 2003

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Alternative System Alternative 1 - 26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue (Barron County)		Length of Center line and termini this sheet is evaluating if different from Sheet 1. 4.2 mi.	
Preferred Yes			
Type of Land  Acquired From Farm Operations	Type of Acquisition		Total Area Acquired
	Area Acquired In Fee Simple	Area Acquired By Easement	
Crop land and pasture	84.96 Acres	Acres	84.96 Acres
Woodland	11.22 Acres	Acres	11.22 Acres
Land of undetermined or other use (e.g., wetlands, yards, roads, etc.)	1.60 Acres	Acres	1.60 Acres
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>97.78 Acres</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>97.78 Acres</b>

1. Indicate the number of farm operations from which land will be acquired.

Total Number of Farm Operations from which land will be acquired [17]

- a) Number of Farm Operations from which 1 acre or less will be acquired. [ 5]
- b) Number of Farm Operations from which more than 1 acre but less than 5 acres will be acquired. [ 6]
- c) Number of Farm Operations from which more than 5 acres will be acquired. [6]

2. Identify and describe the effects to farm operations because of land lost due to the project.

Does Not Apply

Effects to farm operations would include strip acquisition of property near the existing at-grade intersections to accommodate interchange and grade-separated crossing footprints. Additional impacts from local road connections would also occur in some locations. In areas where more than five acres would be acquired, existing fields are of sufficient size that equipment would still be able to negotiate the remaining field area. Three of the farm operations would experience greater effects. Acquired acres would represent a small portion of the overall size of the farm affected in the majority of cases. See Appendix H, Agricultural Impact Notice.

3. Describe changes in access to farm operations caused by proposed action.

Does Not Apply

Changes in direct access to and across US 53 would occur resulting in some indirection for farm equipment travelling between fields. In addition, new local connections would be needed to provide access to one farm currently located along US 53.

4. Indicate whether a farm operation will be severed because of the project and describe the severance (include area of original farm and the size of any remnant parcels).

Does Not Apply

In one location, a 22-acre parcel would be divided from adjoining lands by a new local road to be built connecting 29 ¾ Avenue to 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The original size of the entire farm is 378 acres. The parcel to be split by the

roadway would still be farmable, and the level of traffic on the local road should be at a low enough volume that crossing the road with equipment would be feasible.

In a second location, a 6.5-acre parcel would be split off from a larger parcel in order to build a new local road connecting County V to 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue, at the location of the new interchange. The local road location was established in coordination with the property owner. The entire size of the farm is 295 acres.

5. Identify and describe effects generated by the acquisition or relocation of farm operation buildings, structures or improvements, e.g., barns, silos, stock watering ponds, irrigation wells, etc. As appropriate, address the location, type, condition and importance to the farm operation.

Does Not Apply

The Proposed Action would acquire five buildings in one location, one of which is a residence. The acquisition of these structures would provide right of way for the construction of an interchange at County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The town assessor's records show only one residence and a pole shed on the property. The other buildings are not listed due to their present state of disrepair.

6. Describe effects caused by the elimination or relocation of a cattle/equipment pass or crossing. Attach plans, sketches, or other graphics as needed to clearly illustrate existing and proposed location of any cattle/equipment pass or crossing.

Does Not Apply

Replacement of an existing cattle/equipment pass or crossing is not planned. Explain.

Cattle/equipment pass or crossing will be replaced.

Replacement will occur at same location.

Cattle/equipment pass or crossing will be relocated. Describe.

At one location, the existing agricultural crossing would be closed. The farmer would take a new local road connection to the interchange at County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue to reach the farm fields on the other side of the highway.

7. Describe the effects generated by the obliteration of the old roadway.

Does Not Apply

The elimination of direct access to US 53 from the local road system would, in some cases, cause a farm operator to choose an alternate route to access farm fields where the farm operation is currently located on both sides of the existing US 53 corridor. However, implementation of the Proposed Action would enhance safe access to farm fields for this group as well. Farm equipment using the local road system to access fields would be able to safely cross US 53 at overpass locations without having to negotiate traffic using the US 53 facility. The majority of overpass locations within the Proposed Action are situated to provide the best feasible access to area farm operations for this purpose.

8. Identify and describe any proposed changes in the land use or secondary development that will affect farm operations and is related to the development of this project.

Does Not Apply

Changes to land use as a result of implementation of the Proposed Action are anticipated to be minor because new traffic is not being generated by the Proposed Action. Changes in access at some locations could create shifts in traffic patterns on some county and local roads. Changes in travel patterns may slightly affect land use and development. It is not anticipated that current farm land would be in competition for these uses as a result of the Proposed Action. Eventually, commercial development could occur in the area surrounding the new interchange. Removal of direct access to the highway would discourage strip development along US 53.

9. Describe any other project-related effects identified by a farm operator or owner which may be adverse, beneficial or controversial.

No effects indicated by farm operator or owner.

Access to farm lands from farm operations that are currently located on both sides of the US 53 corridor was identified as the major issue to be addressed by local farm operators. Farm operators were concerned that reduced access across US 53 would create more travel on local roads for farm equipment to access fields and result in more conflicts between farm equipment and vehicles on those roads.

One farm operator with land on both sides would use a new local road connection to cross at the interchange, which would result in one to two miles of indirection, compared to using the agricultural crossing. While inconvenient, this will ultimately provide a safer crossing.

10. Indicate whether minority population or low-income population farm owners, operators, or workers will be affected by the proposal. (Include migrant workers if appropriate.)

No effects will accrue to farm owners, operators or workers from minority populations or low-income populations

Yes – Discuss.

11. Describe measures to minimize adverse effects or enhance benefits.

Grade-separated crossings would be limited to those locations where the greatest benefit to local circulation and access can be provided reducing the amount of land acquisition needed. Local connections, where needed, would follow existing property lines in order to limit the number of farm severances. Field access, to and across local connections would be provided to reduce the amount of indirection created for agricultural equipment.

# WETLANDS IMPACT EVALUATION

DT2099 12/2005

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Alternative System Alternative 1 - 26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue (Barron County	Preferred <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Length of Center Line and Termini This Sheet is Evaluating 26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue, a distance of approximately 4.2 miles	

- 1) Describe proposed work in the wetland(s), e.g., excavation, fill, marsh disposal, other.

The Proposed Action would require work in wetlands in three areas. The work would involve excavation, placement of fill, installation of culverts, grading, and drainage work. Work would also include changes to base course, concrete/asphaltic pavements, and adjustments to utilities.  
(See Exhibit 5, Preferred Alternative With Wetland Inventory)

- 2) Describe the location of wetland(s) affected by the proposal. Include wetland name(s), if available. (Use maps, sketches, or other graphic aids.)

There are two types of wetlands that would be affected by implementation of the Proposed Action:

### S3K

Class "S" – Shrub/Scrub

Subclass "3" – Broad-leaved Deciduous

Hydrologic Modifier "K" – Wet-soil, Palustrine

And

### E2H

Class "E" – Emergent

Subclass "2" – Narrow-leaved, Persistent

Hydrologic Modifier "H" – Standing water, Palustrine

The location of affected wetlands is as follows:

- A new overpass location at 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue/US 53 (E2H type wetland, non contiguous) – approximately 0.5 acre
- An interchange at County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue/US 53 (E2H type wetland, contiguous) – approximately 3.2 acres
- A local road connection from 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 19<sup>th</sup> Street (S3K type wetland, non contiguous) – approximately 0.6 acre

(See Exhibit 5, Preferred Alternative With Wisconsin Wetland Inventory)

These estimates of wetlands potentially affected are based on the Wisconsin Wetland Inventory maps, and wetlands verified in the field.

Three other types of wetlands are present near the US 53 Corridor: Northern Sedge Meadow, Northern Wet Forest, and Open Bog. These wetlands are not projected to be altered with the Proposed Action. An in depth analysis of wetland types and impacts should be completed closer to design/construction.

- 3) This wetland is:

- Isolated from stream, lake or other surface water body.
- Not contiguous, but within 5-year floodplain.
- Contiguous (in contact) with a stream, lake, or other water body.

Some wetlands are contiguous, some are not. See 2), above.

Identify corresponding stream, lake, or other water body by name or town-range location: Bear Creek tributaries

NOTE: If wetland is contiguous or adjacent to a stream, complete form DT2097, Streams and Floodplains Impact Evaluation. If wetland is contiguous to a lake or other water body, complete form DT2071, Lake or Water Body Impact Evaluation.

- 4) List any observed or expected waterfowl and wildlife inhabiting or dependent upon the wetland. (List should include both permanent and seasonal residents).

Expected wildlife and waterfowl in wetland areas near the Proposed Action include: white-tailed deer, cottontail rabbits, ruffed grouse, pheasant, grey squirrel, fox squirrel, muskrat, beaver, mink, weasel, raccoon, skunk, fox, coyote, woodcock, wood duck, mallard, and blue-winged teal. In addition, songbirds, badger, and woodchuck may also be present.

- 5) Are there any known endangered or threatened species affected by the project?

No

Yes - Identify the species and indicate whether it is on Federal or State lists.

The WDNR has identified the following special concern, threatened and/or endangered species from state inventories that have the potential to be present within the project study area:

Species on the state of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources endangered species list include the Bald Eagle, Le Conte's Sparrow (Special Concern) and Osprey, Red-shouldered Hawk, Yellow Rail (Threatened).

Section 7 coordination has been completed with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Describe mitigation required to protect the federally listed endangered species.

Consultation would occur closer to design/construction to determine the presence of the species identified in item # 5 above and/or critical habitat in the area of influence of the Proposed Action. If the presence is determined, a Biological Assessment could be conducted to determine if the Proposed Action is likely to adversely affect species or critical habitat. If necessary, a formal consultation would be initiated to determine appropriate mitigation measures.

Coordination with DNR has been completed. Describe mitigation required to protect the State listed species.

Consultation would occur with WDNR during the design/construction phase of the project to determine the presence of the above listed species and associated habitat. If species and/or critical habitat are identified within the project limits, the following mitigation measures have been recommended by WDNR:

Bald Eagle – A survey to determine areas of large aspen or white pine trees as these are nesting grounds. If a nest is found, avoid disturbances such as land clearing and tree removal within 330 feet of the nest year round. Avoid nest disturbances within 330-660 feet during the February to August breeding and nesting season.

Additional coordination with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure compliance with the Federal Endangered Species Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act should be completed closer to design/construction.

Le Conte's Sparrow – Threats to and issues affecting this species include:

- Succession of sedge meadows, wet meadows, and upland grasslands to shrub lands or woods, due to lack of fire to suppress woody growth
- Flooding of wet meadows
- Conversion of grassland and former sedge or grass wetlands to row crops or tree plantations
- Loss of grassland habitat due to development
- Disturbance of grassland nesting cover during the breeding season
- Invasion by woody plants or aggressive herbaceous species including cattails, yellow parsnip, crown vetch, leafy spurge, thistles, reed canary grass, and some goldenrods can degrade habitat quality of grasslands for this species.

The Le Conte's Sparrow was identified as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan (2005). Coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service should be completed closer to design/construction.

Osprey – Because Ospreys nest directly over or near water, following the Wisconsin Storm Water Management Technical Standards handbook will protect streamside or lakeside habitat. Avoid disturbances such as timber-cutting and road-building within 660 feet of an active Osprey nest during the May – August nesting season.

Red-shouldered Hawk – Cutting should not isolate an active nest tree and disturbances (including road construction and logging) should be minimized within 300 feet of a nest from March through July. The Wisconsin Storm Water Management Technical Standards handbook should be followed especially pertaining to the provision of a buffer zone along riparian corridors.

Yellow Rail – The Yellow Rail is recognized as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan. Threats to and issues affecting this species that may be relevant to road construction include:

- Drainage of flooding (altered hydrology) of large northern sedge meadows
- Conversion of drained sedge meadows to other land uses
- Succession of preferred wetland habitats to shrub carr, due to lack of fire or other management to suppress woody growth
- Habitat fragmentation may also be an issue for this species
- Invasion by exotic species such as reed canary grass and purple loosestrife can degrade habitat quality

Surveys of sedge meadow habitat are needed to monitor the Yellow Rail and find additional breeding sites. It is also necessary to preserve and maintain the healthy conditions of large expanses of northern sedge meadows. This includes allowing the natural fluctuation of water levels in sedge meadow habitat, burning to control woody shrubs and prevent encroachment, and preserving hummocky areas within wetlands.

6) FHWA Wetland Policy

Not Applicable - Explain

Individual Wetland Finding Required - Summarize why there are no practicable alternatives to the use of the wetland.

Statewide Wetland Finding. **NOTE: All must be checked for the Statewide Wetland Finding to apply.**

Project is either a bridge replacement or other reconstruction within 0.3 mile of the existing location.

The project requires the use of 7.4 acres or less of wetlands.

The project has been coordinated with the DNR and there have been no significant concerns expressed over the proposed use of the wetlands.

7) Erosion control or storm water management measures, which will be used to protect the wetland, are shown on form (either or both):

DT2080, Erosion Control Impact Evaluation

DT2076, Storm water Impact Evaluation

Neither form - Briefly describe measures to be used

8) Section 404 Permit

Not Applicable - No fill to be placed in wetlands

Applicable - Fill will be placed in wetlands.  
Indicate area of wetlands filled 4.3 Acres

Individual Section 404 Permit required

General Permit (GP) or Letter Of Permission (LOP) required to satisfy Section 404 Compliance.  
Indicate which GP or LOP required.

- Non-Reporting GP                       Provisional GP  
 Provisional LOP                               Programmatic GP

9) Section 10 Waters. For navigable waters of the United States (Section 10) indicate which Nationwide Permit is required.

N/A

Indicate whether Pre-Construction Notification (PCN) to the U.S. Corps of Engineers(USACE) is:

- Required  
 Submitted on                      (Date)

Status of PCN  
USACE has made the following determination on                      (Date)

USACE is in the process of review, anticipated date of determination is:                      (Date)

10) Identify wetland type(s) that will be filled or converted to another use. Use the DOT Wetland Bank System. (See FDM Procedure 24-5-10, Figure 2.) If the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) or Wisconsin Wetlands Inventory (WWI) are used to identify the types of wetlands, translate them to the DOT Wetland Bank System, wetland types.

a) Approximate areas of wetlands filled or converted by type.

Wetland Type	Area of Wetland Type	Acres	Hectares
RPE	26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue, County V/28 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	3.7	1.5
SS	29 3/4 Avenue	0.60	0.25

11) Wetland Mitigation  
(NOTE: Avoidance and minimization mitigation are required.)

a) Wetland Avoidance

- i) Describe methods used to avoid the use of wetlands, such as using a lower level of improvement or placing the roadway on new location, etc.

The Proposed Action uses existing local roadway alignments to determine the locations of overpass crossings and interchanges. The use of existing alignments minimizes impacts to wetlands and streams located within the project area that cross and/or run parallel to US 53. In some cases, wetlands are located on both sides of the existing alignment. Moving overpass locations to new alignments could impact a greater amount of wetland (and other natural and cultural) resources.

System Alternative 2 was not selected as the Preferred Alternative, in part due to the impacts on wetlands at the proposed location for an interchange. At 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue, WDNR recommended constructing the proposed overpass slightly north to avoid impacts on the contiguous wetland to the south of the intersection. The Preferred Alternative reflects this recommendation.

- ii) Indicate the total area of wetlands avoided

Impacts to approximately 15 acres of wetlands were avoided by the decisions described above for placement of the interchange at County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and the overpass at 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

b) Minimize the amount of wetlands affected

- i) Describe methods used to minimize the use of wetlands, such as a steepening of side slopes or use of retaining walls, equalizer pipes, upland disposal of hydric soils, etc.

Wetland impacts were minimized to the extent possible by using the minimum possible slopes for overpasses allowed by WisDOT design standards.

- ii) Indicate the total area of wetlands saved through minimization

3 Acres

- c) Compensation for unavoidable loss

Is compensation of unavoidable wetland loss required?

- Yes  
 No. Explain.

Wetlands would be delineated by WisDOT closer to design/construction to determine the exact amount and location of wetlands impacted by the Proposed Action. Following that determination, a wetland mitigation plan would be developed to document the following:

- The impacted wetland acreage by wetland type
- The plan for on-site restoration and anticipated compensation acreage
- The proposal for debiting the remaining compensation acreage to a WisDOT wetland mitigation bank site in accordance with provisions of the WisDOT Wetland Mitigation Banking Technical Guidelines.

- d) Type and amount of compensation

- On-Site Replacement- Wetland replacement located in the general proximity of the project site within the same local watershed. These replacements are often contiguous to the project.

Wetland type of on-site replacement

To be determined closer to design/construction

Total area of on-site replacement

Acres

- Near-Site or Off-site Replacement - Replacement opportunity for wetland compensation within a 8.05 kilometers (5 mile) corridor centered over the highway alignment or a wetland replacement located away from the project site, generally outside the project's local watershed.

Wetland type of off-site replacement

To be determined closer to design/construction

Total area of off-site replacement

Acres

- No near or off-site replacement - Describe reasons no near or off-site opportunities were found.

- Wetland Mitigation Bank Site - A wetland compensation site containing wetland credit areas and wetland types from bank developed wetland restoration/creation projects or surplus areas from the wetland compensation projects of specific DOT facility development projects.

To be determined closer to design/construction

Indicate name or location of wetland mitigation bank site to be used for the replacement of unavoidable wetland loss.

Wetland type of bank-site replacement

Total area of bank-site replacement  
Acres

Describe decision process used to determine the use of the bank-site and provide any coordination documentation with regulatory or resource agencies.

Wetlands would be delineated by WisDOT/WDNR closer to design/construction to determine the exact amount and location of wetlands impacted by the Proposed Action. Following that determination, a wetland mitigation plan would be developed to document the following:

- The impacted wetland acreage by wetland type
- The plan for on-site restoration and anticipated compensation acreage
- The proposal for debiting the remaining compensation acreage to a WisDOT wetland mitigation bank site in accordance with provisions of the WisDOT Wetland Mitigation Banking Technical Guidelines.

# STREAMS AND FLOODPLAINS IMPACT EVALUATION

DT2097 2004

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Alternative System Alternative 1 – 26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue (Barron County)		Preferred <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Length of Project This Sheet is Evaluating Approximately 4.2 miles		
1) Stream Name Bear Creek	2) Stream Location T.36N.-R.11.W Sections 7, 18, 19, and 30	
3) Stream Type (Indicate Stream Class, if known) <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Warm water <input type="checkbox"/> Trout-Class <input type="checkbox"/> Wild and Scenic River	4) Size of Upstream Watershed Area <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Permanent Flow (year-round) <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary Flow (dry part of year)	
5) Stream Characteristics		
a) Substrate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sand <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Silt <input type="checkbox"/> Clay <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cobbles <input type="checkbox"/> Other-describe:		
b) Average Water Depth Approximately 2 feet (0.62 meters) at County SS	c) Vegetation in Stream <input type="checkbox"/> Absent <input type="checkbox"/> Present - If known describe:	
d) Identify Fish Species Present Northern pike, walleye, perch, largemouth bass, bluegills, black crappies, rock bass, green sunfish, bullheads, white suckers, and a variety of minnows	e) If water quality data is available, include this information (e.g., DNR or local discharger might have such records).	

6) Are there any known endangered or threatened species affected by the project?

No

Yes - Identify the species and indicate whether it is on Federal or State lists.

A review request with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) revealed no federally or state endangered species however, several threatened species could be directly affected by the Proposed Action. The WDNR notes that the Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), Le Conte's Sparrow (*Ammodramus leconteii*), Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), and Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) are all bird species known to exist in or near the US 53 Corridor. Banded Killifish (*Fundulus diaphanus*), Least Darter (*Etheostoma microperca*), Ozark Minnow (*Notropis numbilus*), Pugnose Shiner (*Notropis anogenus*), and Weed Shiner (*Notropis texanus*) are fish species that are threatened or of special concern in or near the project.

United States Fish and Wildlife Service recognizes active bald eagles nests within the project area at two locations: north of the Village of Haugen and near the southern end of the study area.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service both note that an endangered and threatened species evaluation would likely be required at the time any improvements are implemented in the the future. In accordance with the Federal Highway Administration and the Endangered Species Act of 1973, a determination would be made in the closer to design/construction as to whether the selected project alternative may affect any federally listed or threatened endangered species.

Section 7 coordination has been completed with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Describe mitigation required to protect the federally listed endangered species.

Consultation would occur closer to design/construction to determine the presence of the species identified in # 6 above and/or critical habitat in the area of influence of the Proposed Action. If the presence is determined, a Biological Assessment could be conducted to determine if the Proposed Action is likely to adversely affect species or critical habitat. If necessary, a formal consultation would be initiated to determine appropriate mitigation measures.

Coordination with DNR has been completed. Describe mitigation required to protect the State listed species.

Consultation with WDNR would occur during both the design/construction phases of the project to avoid, minimize and mitigate effects to the listed species. If spawning habitat for the listed fish species occurs in the project area, time of year restrictions may be implemented to avoid effects to these species.

7) If bridge replacement, are migratory bird nests present?

- No  
 Yes – Identify Bird Species present

Estimated number of nests is: N/A

8) Is a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Depredation Permit required to remove swallow nests?

- Not Applicable  
 No - Describe mitigative measures.  
 Yes

9) Describe land adjacent to stream. If wetland, give type.

The dominant land use within the project area and in the vicinity of Bear Creek is agricultural. Wetlands immediately adjacent to Bear Creek streambed include SS and RPE. These wetlands near the stream edge provide habitat for muskrats, nesting teal and wood ducks.

The Proposed Action does not include crossings of Bear Creek. However, three existing crossings of intermittent streams at County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue would be widened to accommodate the new interchange right-of-way just east of US 53, and two new crossings of intermittent streams would be built in the same vicinity as the existing crossings.

10) Identify upstream or downstream dischargers or receivers (if any) within 0.8 kilometers (1/2 mile) of the project site.

Little Bear Creek and an unnamed tributary.

11) Section 404 Permit

- Not Applicable - No fill to be placed in wetlands.  
 Applicable - Fill will be placed in wetlands.  
Indicate area of wetlands filled. 4.3 Acres (1.7 Hectares)  
 Individual Section 404 Permit required  
 General Permit (GP) or Letter Of Permission (LOP) required to satisfy Section 404.  
Indicate which GP or LOP is required.  
 Non-Reporting GP       Provisional GP  
 Provisional LOP       Programmatic GP

12) Section 10 Waters

For navigable waters of the United States (Section 10) indicate whether the U.S. Coast Guard has been notified?

- No  
 Yes - Describe results of Notification.

Identify which Nationwide Section 10/404 Permit is required.

Indicate whether Pre-Construction Notification (PCN) to the U.S. Corps of Engineers(USACE) is:

Required

Submitted on (Date)

Status of PCN

USACE has made the following determination on (Date)

USACE is in the process of review, anticipated date of determination is: (Date)

- 13) Describe proposed work in, over, or adjacent to stream. Indicate whether the work is within the 100-year floodplain and whether it is a crossing or a longitudinal encroachment. (Note: U.S. Coast Guard must be notified when Section 10 waters are affected by a proposal.)

The Proposed Action includes acquiring right-of-way for interchange construction in the northwest quadrant of the County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue and US 53 intersection. The eventual construction of interchange ramps would occur adjacent to Bear Creek, with the construction of an overpass traversing US 53. The Proposed Action would occur adjacent to Bear Creek and would not cross the creek. Three existing crossings of intermittent streams would be widened and two new crossings of a tributary of Bear Creek would be constructed. Construction could include excavation and some fills, culverts, changes to subgrade, grade and drainage within wetland areas. Work would also include changes to base course, concrete/asphaltic pavements, and adjustment to utilities. The Proposed Action is located outside of the 100-year floodplain. Details of the design related to the crossings would be developed at a future time after further consultation with the Department of Natural Resources.

- 14) Discuss the effects of any backwater which would be created by the proposed action. Indicate whether the proposed activities would be consistent with NR 116, the National Flood Insurance Program, and Governor's Executive Order #73.

New construction would comply with the National Flood Insurance Program, NR 116 and Executive Order #73. New construction would be planned and constructed in such a way as to comply with local floodplain development plans. The Proposed Action is located within Zone X (areas determined to be outside 500-year floodplain).

- 15) Describe and provide the results of coordination with any floodplain zoning authority.

Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM maps) provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency were used in reference to the project area. The Proposed Action is outside the 100-year floodplain and within Zone X (areas determined to be outside 500-year floodplain).

- 16) Would the proposal or any changes in the design flood, or backwater cause any of the following impacts?

No impacts would occur.

Significant interruption or termination of emergency vehicle service or a community's only evacuation route.

Significant flooding with a potential for property loss and a hazard to life.

Significant impacts on natural floodplain values such as flood storage, fish or wildlife habitat, open space, aesthetics, etc.

- 17) Discuss existing or planned floodplain use and briefly summarize the project's effects on that use.

No impacts to floodplains are expected to occur.

- 18) Discuss probable direct impacts to water quality within the floodplain, both during and after construction. Include the probable effects on plants, animals, and fish inhabiting or dependent upon the stream.

Impacts to water quality could occur during construction in the form of erosion from exposed grades and slopes. After establishment of permanent vegetation, the primary impact to water quality will come from storm water runoff from the pavement surface. Deicing agents used on the pavement surface could have an effect on the vegetation in the immediate vicinity of the pavement surface.

- 19) Describe proposed measures to minimize adverse effects or to enhance beneficial effects.

WisDOT, through TRANS 401 and Cooperative Agreement, would comply with the substantive permit requirements of Chapter 147 Wis. Stats. Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System. Additionally, erosion control measures implemented during construction would conform to the standard specifications listed in WisDOT's Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction and the Wisconsin Storm Water Management Technical Standards.

Some of the construction Best Management Practices (BMP's) could include silt fence, bale checks, temporary sediment basins, rock construction driveways, inlet protection, and dust abatement. Grass swales, vegetated filter strips, buffer zones, and detention basins incorporating infiltration could be incorporated as BMP's into the design of the project to manage storm water runoff and maintain/improve water quality on a permanent basis. Salt resistant plants and vegetation could be used near the roadway alignment for final turf establishment but caution should be used to ensure those plants are not invasive species.

Specific measures also are discussed in Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Factor Sheets.

- 20) Erosion control or storm water management measures which will be used to protect the stream are shown on form DT2080, Erosion Control Impact Evaluation and form DT2076, Stormwater Impact Evaluation.

Yes

No - Briefly describe measures to be used such as sheet piling, cofferdam, turbidity barrier, barges, construction blackout window, etc.

# UPLAND HABITAT IMPACT EVALUATION

DT2098 2004

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Alternative System Alternative 1 - 26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue (Barron County)	Preferred <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
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Length of Center Line and Termini This Sheet is Evaluating

26<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Barron County to 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue at the Barron/Washburn County Line, a distance of approximately 4.2 miles

- 1) Give a brief description of the upland habitat area. Include prominent plant community(ies) at the project site (list vegetation with a brief description of each community type if more than one present).

General agricultural is the dominate land cover within the project area. Broad-leaved deciduous forest, and grassland as well as mixed deciduous-coniferous forest are also present. To a lesser degree, small pockets of shrub wetland and barren land can be found. The forested cover types are made up of a variety of size classes: regeneration, sapling-pole, and saw timber) and structure (canopy, layers, ground vegetation, dead and downed material, and inclusions). Forest cover types associated with project area: Aspen, northern hardwoods, Oak, swamp hardwoods, white and red pine, and fir-spruce.

- 2) Identify and describe any observed or expected wildlife associations with the plant community(ies).

Wildlife associated with the project corridors land types include a variety of game and non-game species of birds, mammals, fish, reptiles and amphibians that typically live in Barron County. Common types of wildlife include whitetail deer, wild turkeys, wolf, raccoon, squirrels, songbirds, waterfowl and raptors. In addition, migrating birds use habitat in the corridor for food, shelter, and resting stops during seasonal migration.

- 3) Identify the dominant plant community(ies) and estimate existing and proposed area of each dominant plant community to be altered.

The project area is a mosaic of farmland, fencerows, farmsteads, old fields, herbaceous and shrubby rights-of-way, northernmesic and wet-mesic forest, grassland, and some forested wetlands.

- 4) Are there any known endangered or threatened species affected by the project?

No

Yes - Identify the species and indicate whether it is on Federal or State lists.

A review request with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) revealed no federally or state endangered species however, several threatened species could be directly affected by the Proposed Action. The WDNR notes that the Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), Le Conte's Sparrow (*Ammodramus leconteii*), Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), and Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) are all bird species known to exist in or near the US 53 Corridor.

United States Fish and Wildlife Service recognizes active bald eagles nests within the project area at two locations: north of the Village of Haugen and near the southern end of the study area.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service both note that an endangered and threatened species evaluation would likely be required at the time any improvements are implemented in the future. In accordance with the Federal Highway Administration and the Endangered Species Act of 1973, a determination will be made closer to design/construction as to whether the selected project alternative may affect any federally listed or threatened endangered species.

Section 7 coordination has been completed with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Describe mitigation required to protect the federally listed endangered species.

Consultation would occur closer to design/construction to determine the presence of the species identified in # 4 above and/or critical habitat in the area of influence of the Proposed Action. If the presence is determined, a Biological Assessment could be conducted to determine if the Proposed Action is likely to adversely affect species or critical habitat. If necessary, a formal consultation would be initiated to determine appropriate mitigation measures.

Coordination with DNR has been completed. Describe mitigation required to protect the State listed species.

Consultation with WDNR would occur during both the design/construction phases of the project to avoid, minimize and mitigate effects to the listed species. If spawning habitat for the listed fish species occurs in the project area, time of year restrictions may be implemented to avoid effects to these species.

5) Describe the nature of proposed work in the upland habitat area (e.g., grading, clearing, grubbing, etc.).

The Proposed Action would see the permanent conversion of small portions of upland habitat to transportation facilities. The Proposed Action includes the acquisition of right of way for local access roads, overpasses, and a freeway interchange. Much of this conversion would take place on general agricultural land, however, some right of way in wooded areas would also be acquired.

Changes in grade at overpasses will likely affect plant communities in those immediate areas, however, since the upland habitat communities in the study corridor are already highly fragmented, and because the US 53 highway corridor is already a four-lane, high-speed facility, the overall effect of the eventual implementation of the Proposed Action is expected to be minor.

6) Identify and describe any known wildlife or waterfowl use areas or movement corridors that would be severed or eliminated by the proposed action. Include a discussion of the proposed action's effects upon the areas or corridors.

Wildlife and waterfowl critical habitats and movement corridors were not identified in the project area through field reconnaissance and agency correspondence. Waterfowl habitat (wetlands) and upland wildlife habitat (forest patches and farmland) are, however, present throughout the length of the corridor, with no definable areas of particular concentration. The Proposed Action will degrade small areas of habitat throughout the study area. The overall effect of the eventual implementation of the Proposed Action is expected to be minor.

7) Discuss other direct impacts on wildlife and estimate significance.

Direct impacts to wildlife in the form of habitat loss are expected to be minor. Habitat fragmentation effects are also anticipated to be minimal as most habitat areas are already fragmented or converted to cropland. The degree of habitat loss would be greater in those areas where new facilities such as local roadways, overpasses, or interchanges are proposed to be constructed.

No significant wildlife movement corridors have been identified in the project area, which could be affected by the Proposed Action or that could benefit from wildlife protection design treatments. Wildlife movement takes place throughout the study corridor, and will likely continue to do so once the Proposed Action is implemented. However, it should be recognized that transverse crossings of streams in the corridor will impact movement corridors for wildlife. This would include Bear Creek. This is also true for transverse crossings of wetlands. These areas are especially important to consider for amphibians and turtles. The Proposed Action has been designed to minimize impacts to wetlands, and care in design of the facilities will be important for the preservation of wildlife movement corridors.

8) Identify and discuss any probable secondary impacts which may be expected due to the project.

At this time there are five intersections with US 53 in the study area. At present, development could occur at these intersections if permitted under the land use authority granted to local governments in the area. The Proposed Action would reduce the number of intersections with US 53 from five to one. Four intersections are being altered so as to not give direct access to US 53. Development which might have located at these four intersections likely would not, as the Proposed Action is implemented. Any potential new development may locate near the new interchange planned for the County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection. It is possible that further habitat loss may occur if the construction of an interchange at County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue spurs commercial or residential development in the immediate vicinity, but there is no reason to believe that the interchange itself would attract new development other than what might occur if the current intersections with US 53 remain as they are today. See the Indirect and Cumulative Effects Pre-screening Analysis, Appendix J.

9) Describe measures to minimize adverse effects or enhance beneficial effects.

The Proposed Action was designed and routed to avoid and minimize impacts to upland habitats wherever feasible. In the final design process as the improvements are implemented, right of way width for local roads and overpass and interchange designs may be optimized to minimize impacts to adjacent habitats.

Passive applications may benefit small animal movement across and through the corridor; these applications may include culverts and small underpasses adjacent to wetlands, lengthened stream crossing structures to ensure that stream bank is available for small animals to traverse the highway and local access roads, fine mesh fencing to direct animal movement to safe areas or to deflect crossings, and other deflection treatments such as tree planting to divert waterfowl flight paths away from collision zones.

# EROSION CONTROL

DT2080 12/2005

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Alternative

System Alternative 1 - 26th Avenue to 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Barron County)

Preferred

Yes  No

Length of Center Line and Termini This Sheet is Evaluating  
Approximately 4.2 miles

1. Give a brief description of existing and proposed slopes in the project area, both perpendicular and longitudinal to the project. Include both existing and proposed slope length, percent slope and soil types.  
Existing and proposed slopes vary by road classification type, traffic volume and vertical height of the roadway.

The proposed overpass and interchange would follow standard design criteria of 4:1 fill slopes within the clear zone and would be steepened beyond the clear zone as practical and permissible to minimize the effects on quality wetland, agricultural land, commercial and residential properties. Longitudinal slopes will vary from -6% to +6% dependant on local road locations. Overpass locations would be designed with the maximum longitudinal slopes permissible in order to minimize impacts to previously undisturbed sections of land, wetland and other natural resources.

2. Indicate all natural resources to be affected by the proposal that are sensitive to erosion, sedimentation, or waters of the state quality degradation and provide specific recommendations on the level of protection needed.

No - There are no sensitive resources affected by the proposal.

Yes - Sensitive resources exist in or adjacent to the area affected by the project.

River/stream

Wetland

Lake

Endangered species habitat

Other – Describe

3. Are there circumstances requiring additional or special consideration?

No additional or special circumstances are present.

Yes - Additional or special circumstances exist. Indicate all that are present.

Areas of groundwater discharge

Areas of groundwater recharge (fractured bedrock, wetlands, streams)

Long or steep cut or fill slopes

Overland flow/runoff

Other – Describe any unique or atypical erosion control measures to be used to manage additional or special circumstances.

4. Describe overall Erosion Control strategy to minimize adverse effects and/or enhance beneficial effects.

Standard WisDOT erosion control methods would be used during construction as per WisDOT Standard Specifications. Coordination with WDNR would also occur closer to the design and construction phases of these improvements in compliance with Trans 401 and the WisDOT/WDNR Cooperative agreement. Common erosion control measures would include but not be limited to: Silt fence would be used at the toe of fill slopes or silt screen where unavoidable wetland, stream or pond impacts would occur. The contractor's Erosion Control Implementation Plan (ECIP) would address individual concerns brought about during the design phase of the intended work.

Borrow sites or waste areas would follow practices as set forth in Trans 401, Wisconsin Administrative Code and the WISDOT/WDNR Cooperative Agreement. The contractor's ECIP for borrow sites and waste areas would cover erosion control. The ECIP would establish the schedule of implementation for temporary and permanent erosion control devices on the highway project and at the project borrow or waste sites. The ECIP would become part of the contract and would be submitted to WisDOT for approval and to WDNR for concurrence. Revegetation of the project site, including borrow pit sites and waste areas would be incorporated as a component of the project's erosion control plan, ECIP and construction contract. Revegetation and stabilization of cleared and graded areas shall be accomplished by using a combination of seed, mulch, erosion mat, or sod. Revegetation would occur as soon as practicable following the grading operations of the projects as they commence.

5. Erosion control measures reached consensus with the appropriate authorities as indicated below.

All Erosion Control measures (i.e., the Erosion Control Plan) shall be coordinated through the DOT-DNR liaison process and TRANS 401 except when Tribal lands of Native Americans are involved. Actual treatments to be used would be determined closer to design/construction. DNR's concurrence is not forthcoming without an Erosion Control Plan. In addition, TRANS 401 requires the contractor prepare an Erosion Control Implementation Plan (ECIP), which identifies timing and staging of the project's erosion control measures. The ECIP should be submitted to the WDNR and to WisDOT at least 14 days prior to the preconstruction conference (Trans 401.08(1)) and must be approved by WisDOT before implementation.

6. On Tribal lands, coordination for 402 (erosion) concerns are either to be coordinated with the tribe affected or with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). EPA or the Tribes have the 401 water quality responsibility on Trust lands. Describe how the Erosion Control/Storm Water Management plan can be compatible.

No Tribal lands are affected by the proposed improvements.

7. Identify the temporary and permanent erosion control measures to be utilized on the project. Consult the FDM Chapter 10 and the Products Acceptability List (PAL).

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minimize the amount of land exposed at one time | <input type="checkbox"/> Detention basin  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Temporary seeding                               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vegetative swales   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Silt fence                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Pave haul roads  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ditch checks                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Dust abatement   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Erosion or turf reinforcement mat               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rip rap   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ditch or slope sodding                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Buffer strips  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soil stabilizer  | <input type="checkbox"/> Dewatering – Describe method   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Inlet protection                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Silt screen  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Turbidity barriers   | <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary diversion channel  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary settling basin                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Permanent seeding   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mulching  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other - Describe Final treatments will be determined closer to design and construction. |

# STORMWATER IMPACT EVALUATION

DT2076 1/2007

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Alternative System Alternative 1 – 26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue (Barron County)	Length of Centerline and Termini This Sheet is Evaluating Approximately 4.2 miles
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Surrounding land use and a discussion of adopted plans are described on DT2094, Environmental Evaluation of Facilities Development Actions.

1. Indicate whether the affected area may cause a discharge or will discharge to the waters of the state (Trans 401.03). Special consideration should be given to areas that are sensitive to water quality degradation. Provide specific recommendations on the level of protection needed.

No water special natural resources are affected by the proposal.

Yes – Water special natural resources exist in the project area.

River/stream  
 Other - Describe

Wetland

Lake

Endangered species habitat

2. Indicate whether circumstances exist in the project vicinity that require additional or special consideration, such as an increase in peak flow, total suspended solids (TSS), or water volume.

No additional or special circumstances are present.

Yes - Additional or special circumstances exist. Indicate all that are present.

Areas of groundwater discharge

Areas of groundwater recharge

Stream relocations

Overland flow/runoff

Long or steep cut or fill slopes

High velocity flows

Cold water stream

Impaired waterway

Large quantity flows

Exceptional/outstanding resource waters

Increased backwater

Other – Describe any unique, innovative, or atypical stormwater management measures to be used to manage additional or special circumstances.

3. Describe the overall storm water management strategy to minimize adverse effects and enhance beneficial effects.

Best management practices and standard WisDOT erosion control methods will be used during construction as per WisDOT standard specification for highway and structure construction. Coordination with WDNR would also occur closer to design/construction for compliance with Trans 401 and the WisDOT/WDNR Cooperative Agreement.

Temporary and permanent erosion control methods may include but are not limited to:

- Silt fence and/or silt screen at the toe of fill slopes to avoid accumulation in wetland or undisturbed areas.
- Erosion mat for sheet flow conditions on long fill slopes adjacent to wetland areas.
- Inlet protection measures at all crossing culvert and area drains as required.
- Temporary ditch checks, erosion mat and rip rap would be used as appropriate for reducing particle transmission and sedimentation along swale drainage and ditches.
- Permanent seed or sod would be used on finished topsoil surfaces.
- WisDOT would make every effort to design the interchange so that any runoff from the interchange would be contained within the interchange area through runoff basins and directed ditching.
- If feasible WisDOT could make design decisions which would allow the interchange to serve a drainage, retention and filter area for runoff from adjacent agricultural lands and may improve the overall water quality reaching Bear Creek.

Final determination of these measures would be made closer to design and construction.

4. Indicate how the stormwater management plan will be compatible with fulfilling Trans 401 requirements.

- An Erosion Control Implementation Plan (ECIP) would be prepared by the contractor and approved by WisDOT. Prior to construction, WDNR would be given the opportunity to review the ECIP and comment.
- Water quality certification from WDNR and applicable Army Corps of Engineer permits would be applied for as required for discharge and fill into US inland waters.

5. Identify the storm water management measures to be utilized on the project.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Swale treatment (parallel to flow) Trans 401.106(10) | <input type="checkbox"/> In-line storm sewer treatment, such as catch basins, non-mechanical treatment systems      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetated filter strips (perpendicular to flow)                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Detention/retention basins - Trans 401.106(6)(3)                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distancing outfalls from waterway edge                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Buffer areas - Trans 401.106(6) - Describe   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Constructed storm water wetlands                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Infiltration - Trans 401.106(5)  |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other - Final treatments would be determined closer to design and construction. |

6. Indicate whether any Drainage District may be affected by the project.

- No – There will be no effects to a recognized drainage district.  
 Yes - Identify the affected drainage district.

Has initial coordination with drainage board been completed?

- No  
 Yes - Discuss results.

Has initial coordination with Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) been completed?

- No  
 Yes - Discuss results.

DATCP was sent a letter describing the project scope and goals and were given the opportunity to comment on the project. An Agricultural Impact Notice (AIN) was submitted to DATCP for review. DATCP indicated that an Agricultural Impact Notice (AIS) would not be required at this time (See Appendix B5, DATCP Correspondence).

7. Indicate whether the project is within DOT's Phase I or Phase II storm water management area. (NOTE: See Procedure 20-30-1, Figure 1, Attachment A4 the Cooperative Agreement between the Wisconsin Departments of Transportation and Natural Resources. Contact Bureau of Equity and Environmental Services Stormwater Engineer or the Regional Environmental Coordinator for more details on the following areas.)

- No - The project is outside of WisDOT's stormwater management area.  
 Yes - The project affects one of the following regulated by a WPDES storm water discharge permit issued by the DNR.
- WisDOT storm sewer system located within municipalities with populations > 100,000.
  - WisDOT storm sewer system located within a notified owner of municipal separate storm sewer systems.
  - Urbanized areas as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, NR216.02(3).
  - Municipal separate storm sewer systems serving > 10,000.

8. Has the affect of downstream properties been considered?

- No  
 Yes – Coordination is in process.

9. Are there any property acquisitions for storm water management purposes?

- No - There are no property acquisitions acquired for stormwater management purposes.  
 Yes - Complete the following.

- Safety measures, such as fencing, flooding, are not needed for potential conflicts with existing and expected surrounding land use.
- Safety measures are needed for potential conflicts with existing and expected surrounding land use. Describe proposed safety measures.

# CONSTRUCTION STAGE SOUND QUALITY IMPACT EVALUATION

Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
DT2074 12/2005

Alternative System Alternative 1 – 26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue (Barron County)	Preferred <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
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Length of Center Line and Termini This Sheet is Evaluating  
26<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue – a distance of approximately 4.2 miles

- 1) Identify and describe residences, schools, libraries, or other noise sensitive areas near the Proposed Action and which will be in use during construction of the Proposed Action. Include the number of persons potentially affected.

Some residential homes and/or property owners may be affected by noise during construction. Those homes in close proximity to the proposed new or modified intersections could expect to be those most affected.

- 2) Describe the types of construction equipment to be used on the project. Discuss the expected severity of noise levels including the frequency and duration of any anticipated high noise levels.

The noise generated by construction equipment will vary greatly, depending on equipment type/model/make, duration of operation and specific type of work effort. However, typical noise levels may occur in the 67 to 107 dBA range at a distance of 50 feet.

Figure 1 shows typical noise levels for a variety of construction equipment. Adverse effects related to construction noise are anticipated to be of a localized, temporary, and transient nature.

- 3) Describe the construction stage noise abatement measures to minimize identified adverse noise effects.

To reduce the potential impact of construction noise, the special provisions for this project will require that motorized equipment shall be operated in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations relating to noise levels permissible within and adjacent to the project construction site. At a minimum, the special provisions will require that motorized construction equipment shall not be operated between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. without the prior written approval of the project engineer. All motorized construction equipment will be required to have mufflers constructed in accordance with the equipment manufacturer's specifications or a system of equivalent noise reducing capacity. It will also be required that mufflers and exhaust systems be maintained in good working condition, free from leaks and holes.

## FIGURE 1, CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT SOUND LEVELS

The types of construction equipment that are likely to be used on the project along with the corresponding maximum level allowed by the USEPA in decibels (dBA) at 50 ft. (15.2 m) from specific machines are listed below. Data was estimated from Figure 2-36 of the Report to the President and Congress on Noise, prepared by USEPA, February, 1972.

<u>Earthmoving</u>	<u>Approx. Max. dBA Allowed</u>
Compactors (Rollers)	71 – 75
Front Loaders	74 – 86
Backhoes	72 – 94
Tractors	77 – 97
Scrapers, Graders	80 – 84
Pavers	86 – 89
Trucks	82 – 94
<u>Materials Handling</u>	<u>Approx. Max. dBA Allowed</u>
Concrete Mixers	75 – 88
Concrete Pumps	82 – 85
Cranes (Moveable)	75 – 88
Cranes (Derrick)	86 – 88
<u>Stationary</u>	<u>Approx. Max. dBA Allowed</u>
Pumps	68 – 72
Generators	72 – 83
Compressors	76 – 87
<u>Impact Equipment</u>	<u>Approx. Max. dBA Allowed</u>
Pneumatic Wrenches	82 – 88
Jack Hammers and Rock Drills	81 – 98
Impact Pile Drivers (Peaks)	93 – 106
<u>Other</u>	<u>Approx. Max. dBA Allowed</u>
Vibrator	68 – 82
Saws	72 – 83

# TRAFFIC NOISE IMPACT EVALUATION

DT2092 2005

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Alternative System Alternative 1 – 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Barron County)

Preferred  
 Yes  No

Portion of Project This Sheet is Evaluating  
26<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue, a distance of approximately 4.2 miles

## Need for Noise Analysis

1) Is the Proposed Action considered a Type I project? (A type I project is defined as a project that involves construction of a roadway on new location or the physical alteration of an existing highway which substantially changes either the horizontal or vertical alignment or increases the number of through-traffic lanes.)

No – Complete only form DT2074, Construction Stage Sound Quality Impact Evaluation.

Yes – Complete form DT2074, Construction Stage Sound Quality Impact Evaluation and the rest of this sheet.

## Traffic Data

2) Indicate whether traffic volumes for sound prediction are different from the Design Hourly Volume (DHV) on DT2094, Environmental Evaluation of Facilities Development Action, Traffic Summary Basic Sheet.

No

Yes – Indicate volumes and explain why they were used.

Automobiles Veh/hr

Trucks Veh/hr

Or Percentage (T) %

3) Identify and describe the noise analysis technique or program used to identify existing and future sound levels. (See Exhibit 7 – Preferred Alternative With Noise Receptors). A receptor location map shall be included with this document.

Both existing and future noise levels were predicted through modeling.

*Model used: FHWA Traffic Noise Model (TNM)*

*Version 2.5*

*Serial # 66074*

4) Identify sensitive receptors, e.g., schools, libraries, hospitals, residences, etc. potentially affected by traffic sound. (See Exhibit 6 – Preferred Alternative With Noise Receptors).

Sensitive receptors in the project study area include single family residences and a local business.

5) If this proposal is implemented will future sound levels produce a noise impact?

No

Yes, the impact will occur because

The Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) is approached (1 dBA less than the NAC) or exceeded.

Existing sound levels will increase by 15 dBA or more.

6) Will traffic noise abatement measures be implemented?

Not applicable – Traffic noise impacts will not occur.

No – Traffic noise abatement is not reasonable or feasible (explain why). In areas currently undeveloped, local units of government shall be notified of predicted sound levels for land use planning purposes. **A COPY OF THIS WRITTEN NOTIFICATION SHALL BE INCLUDED WITH THIS DOCUMENT.**

Yes – Traffic noise abatement has been determined to be feasible and reasonable. Describe any traffic noise abatement measures which are proposed to be implemented. Explain how it will be determined whether or not those measures will be implemented.

The area covered by this noise evaluation is mostly rural in nature. The TNM model predicted that two existing receptors within the project corridor would approach and exceed the 67 dBA Noise Level criteria specified in TRANS 405, Wisconsin Administrative Code. Abatement for the receptors, which are located in a rural setting would not be feasible due to the low density of receptors and high cost of abatement.

The overall traffic levels used for this evaluation would occur with or without the Proposed Action.

See Appendix G for the local units of government Noise Notification Letter

Receptor Location or Site Identification (See attached map)	Distance from C/L of Near Lane to Receptor in meter (m)	Number of Families or People Typical of this Receptor Site	Sound Level $L_{eq}^1$ (dBA)			Impact Evaluation		
			Noise Abatement Criteria <sup>2</sup> (NAC)	Future Sound Level	Existing Sound Level	Difference in Future and Existing Sound Levels (Col. e minus Col. f)	Difference in Future Sound Levels and Noise Abatement Criteria (Col. e minus Col. d)	Impact <sup>3</sup> or No Impact
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)
RCP 1	141.3	1	67	56	55	1	-11	N
RCP 3	58.5	1	67	62	60	2	-5	N
RCP 4	105.5	1	67	67	66	1	0	I
RCP 5	50.6	1	67	64	62	2	-3	N
RCP 6	82.9	1	67	70	68	2	3	I
RCP 7	43.3	0	72	68	65	3	-4	N

<sup>1</sup> Use whole numbers only.  
<sup>2</sup> Insert the actual Noise Abatement Criteria from Wisconsin Administrative Code, Chapter Trans. 405.04, Table 1.  
<sup>3</sup> An impact occurs when future sound levels exceed existing sound levels by 15 dB or more, or, future sound levels approach or exceed the Noise Abatement Criteria (“approach” is defined as 1 dB less than the Noise Abatement Criteria, therefore an impact occurs when Column (h) is -1 db or greater). I = Impact, N = No Impact.

# HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES OR UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANKS (USTs)

Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
DT2079 10/2004

Alternative <b>System Alternative 1 (Preferred Alternative)</b>	Preferred <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Length of Center Line and Termini This Sheet is Evaluating Approximately 4.2 miles	

- 1) Briefly describe the results of the Phase 1 hazardous materials assessment for this alternative. Do not use property identifiers (owner name, address or business name).

An initial Phase I or Reconnaissance and Record Search was conducted on properties within 0.25 mile of the proposed US 53 right-of-way between 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Barron County). One property was evaluated as a hazardous material site with potential adverse environmental impact to the project. The evaluation included a site visit to identify readily apparent recognizable environmental concerns, review of Federal and State environmental record databases, review of historic topographic maps, and interviews conducted with regulatory personnel and persons knowledgeable of the project location to assess current and former operations.

- 2) Which contaminants are known or suspected to be affecting sites on this alternative?

- |                             |   |                                    |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, how many sites 1 | Petroleum                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, how many sites              | Hazardous Waste                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, how many sites              | Closed Landfill Sites              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, how many sites              | Open Landfill Sites                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, how many sites 1 | Farm/Agricultural/Other Dump Sites |
|                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, how many sites              | Other                              |

- 3) How many sites require further investigation? 1

Were any sites not included in the Phase 1 assessment?

- No  
 Yes, how many

Why were they not reviewed?

## For the Preferred Alternative

- 4) Describe the results of any additional investigation (include number of sites investigated, level of investigation, and results for each site).

One site was identified as having the potential for environmental concerns within 0.25 mile of the proposed project. Various unlabeled and unidentified containers stored on the ground as well as several areas of surface stained soils, solid waste, and engine parts were observed during the site reconnaissance. The site is not listed on any databases of contaminated properties, however, based on observations noted during the site reconnaissance, additional assessment is recommended.

- 5) Describe measures taken in selection of this alternative to avoid hazardous materials contamination for this project, for example: changes in location, changes in design, or relocation of utilities.

A Phase II Subsurface Investigation or special standard provisions proposed for design/construction is recommended dependent upon final improvement design for the site identified with the potential to have an adverse environmental impact to the project. If contaminated soil is encountered during construction activities, it will need to be sampled and disposed of in accordance with applicable statutes and rules, and may be considered a solid or hazardous waste.

- 6) For areas where contamination cannot be avoided by the proposed alternative, describe the remediation measures to be incorporated into the design, (e.g., waste handling plan, remediation of contamination, design changes to minimize disturbances).

The district will work with all concerned parties to insure that the disposition of any petroleum contamination is resolved to the satisfaction of the Wisconsin DNR, WisDOT BEES, and FHWA before acquisition of any questionable site, and before advertising the project for letting. Nonpetroleum sites will be handled on a case-by-case basis with detailed documentation and coordination with FHWA as needed.

# AESTHETICS IMPACT EVALUATION

DT2062 2003

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Alternative System Alternative 1	Length of Center line and termini this sheet is evaluating if different from Sheet 1. 4.2 mi.
Preferred Yes	

1. Identify the alternative discussed on this sheet if it is different from the Proposed Action addressed in item 1 of Basic Sheet 1 or is different from the "Preferred Alternative" identified in item 3 of Basic Sheet 2.

Not Applicable.

2. Identify and briefly describe the visual character of the landscape. Include elements in the viewshed such as landforms, waterbodies, vegetation and human developments.

The landscape in the project area comprises gently rolling agricultural land, some forested areas, and low-lying wetlands along stream banks. Other elements in the viewshed include scattered site housing, highway oriented commercial development concentrated near existing interchanges and medium to low density urban development near the Village of Haugen.

3. Indicate the visual quality of the viewshed and identify landscape elements which would be visually sensitive.

The gently rolling farm land can provide aesthetically pleasing views for highway users. This landscape in the corridor provides long distance views of the surrounding countryside. The scattered commercial and residential development may be considered by some viewers to be less visually pleasing.

4. Identify the viewers who will have a view of the improved transportation facility and those with a view from the improved transportation facility. Indicate the relative numbers (low, medium, high) of each group.

The viewers who would have a view of the improved transportation facility include local residents and farm operators and their employees. The number of viewers with views of the improved transportation facility is expected to be relatively low, due to the corridor's low population density, the location of the improvements adjacent to and within the existing right of way, and the nature of the Proposed Action.

The number of system users with a view from the improved transportation facility is expected to be relatively high due to the number of through travelers in the area. Projected annual average daily traffic in the corridor is expected to reach 13,500 - 14,200 vehicles per day by the year 2040.

5. Indicate the relative time of day (morning, afternoon, evening, night) and the approximate amount of viewing time each viewer group would have each day.

Most local residents and visiting travelers would expect to view the corridor much as they do currently. Those who reside or work near the corridor would have similar viewing times and conditions as they now enjoy, with few changes to the existing viewshed. Specific viewing times and days would continue to vary according to individual travel patterns.

Viewing times would likely continue to range from seconds to hours, and would likely be measured in minutes or minutes per day. The majority of the viewing of the corridor would occur in the morning and afternoon, tapering off during the evening hours.

Travelers on the corridor include local residents using the facility for commuting and other purposes, and those passing through the area from more distant locations, such as truckers and tourists. The majority of viewing for area residents would occur at peak travel periods (7:00 a.m.- 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.- 6:00 p.m.). Viewing time for this group would likely be measured in seconds to minutes per viewer per trip. The aesthetic experience of travel in the corridor for this group as well would remain essentially the same as at present.

6. Describe whether and how the project would affect the visual character of the landscape.

The Proposed Action would have minimal effect overall on the existing landscape; the landscape would retain its character as an agricultural and wooded region. Changes in viewshed character would be minimal because US 53 is

currently a four-lane highway with limited access in some areas of the corridor. The highest potential for changes to the visual character of the corridor would occur at the grade separated crossings of US 53. New structures at County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 30th Avenue along with their approaches and associated roadway grade changes would be visible in the landscape.

7. Indicate the effects the project would have on the viewer groups.

The effects of the Proposed Action on viewer groups would be minimal, with results similar to existing conditions. New overpasses and the proposed interchange at County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue would occupy a greater portion of the visual horizon for residents who reside near the structures. Facility users are expected to have views similar to those they currently experience in the corridor. The additional overpasses would alter the existing viewshed of the road as drivers approach the structures, but the effect is anticipated to be similar to driving on other portions of US 53 that are already a freeway.

8. Identify and discuss reasonable mitigation measures to avoid or minimize adverse visual effects or enhance positive aesthetic effects of the project.

The aesthetic character of the corridor is primarily rural. The conversion of US 53 to a freeway would promote the rural character of the area by limiting access. This could result in development clustering near the County V interchange instead of occurring near all the existing at-grade intersections. Access changes and access management techniques on US 53 could help promote and maintain rural landscapes better than at-grade intersections, which could allow for highway-dependent land uses to compete with rural land uses.

# UNIQUE AREA IMPACT EVALUATION

DT2077 2004

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Alternative System Alternative 1 - 26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue		Length of Centerline and Termini This Sheet is Evaluating Approximately 4.2 miles	
1) Property Name Ice Age Trail		2) Location County SS	
3) Ownership or Administration Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources		4) Use Hiking	
5) Type			
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Park	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreational lands	<input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife Refuge	<input type="checkbox"/> Waterfowl Refuge
<input type="checkbox"/> Other – Identify		<input type="checkbox"/> Historic Site	

6) Indicate how the land or improvements on the property were funded.

No funds from any acts were used for this property.

s.6(f) LAWCON (LWCF)

Dingell-Johnson (D/J funds)

Pittman-Robertson (P/R funds)

(Lands purchased with D/J or P/R funds are treated similarly to those using s.6(f) LAWCON funds.)

7) Do FHWA requirements for section 4(f) apply to the project's use of the unique property?

No - Project is not federally funded

No - Property is not on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

No - Other - Explain: Trail is not affected by the Proposed Action

Yes - Indicate which of the Programmatic 4(f) Evaluation applies. Separate 4(f) evaluation attached or approved on \_\_\_\_\_.

Historic Bridge

Park minor involvement

Historic site minor involvement

Independent bikeway or walkway

Great River Road

8) Describe the significance of the unique property. For historic and archeological sites, quote or summarize the statement of significance from the Determination of Eligibility. For national landmarks, natural or scientific areas, etc., state registry listing. For other unique areas, include or attach statements of significance of officials having jurisdiction.

This footpath will cover nearly 1,000 miles within Wisconsin after completion. A nine-mile segment of the trail runs concurrently with the Tuscobia Trail. A gap in the trail is located between County SS at the Tuscobia Trail and the Phillips Scout Ranch where it continues westward from the Haugen area. All motorized vehicles with the exception of snowmobiles are not allowed on the trail. This trail is not affected by the Proposed Action.

9) Describe the proposed project's effects on this unique property.

a) Describe any effects on or uses of land from the property. "Use of land from" includes actual use (right of way acquisition, easements, etc.) or constructive use ("substantially impairs any of the site's vital functions"). For historic and archeological sites, give the results or status of Section 106 coordination. For other unique areas, include or attach statements from officials having jurisdiction over the property which discusses the project effects on the property. **(A map, sketch, plan, or other graphic which clearly illustrates use of the property and the project's use and effects on the property must be included.)**

The Proposed Action will not affect the Ice Age Trail (IAT), (See Appendix D, Recreation Trail Maps). A portion of the Tuscobia Trail outside of the study area currently allows ATV's and therefore cannot be designated as part of the Ice Age Trail. ATV users would like to use the nine-mile segment currently designated as Ice Age Trail, to close the gap in their trail system. NPS is open to the idea of shifting the IAT off the Tuscobia Trail if an alternate corridor can be found. A corridor north of the existing trail is under discussion. Specific design issues relating to the

accommodation of multi-modal needs would be determined closer to the time of final design or construction if/when the IAT is determined. WisDOT has not committed to funding any improvements related to the relocation of the IAT.

b) Discuss the following alternatives and describe whether they are feasible and prudent.

i) Do nothing alternative.

N/A

ii) Improvement without using the 4(f) lands.

N/A

iii) Alternatives on new location.

N/A

10) Indicate which measures would minimize adverse effects or enhance beneficial effects.

Replacement of lands used with lands of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location, and of at least comparable value.

Replacement of facilities impacted by the project including sidewalks, paths, lights, trees, and other facilities.

Restoration and landscaping of disturbed areas.

Incorporation of design features and habitat features where necessary to reduce or minimize impacts to the section 4(f) property.

Payment of the fair market value of the land and improvement taken or improvements to the remaining 4(f) site equal to the fair market value of the land and improvements taken.

Such additional or alternative mitigation measures as may be determined necessary based on consultation with officials having jurisdiction over the 4(f) property – Explain.

Property is a historic property or an archeological site. The conditions or mitigation stipulations are listed or summarized below.

Other – Describe.

No impacts from the Proposed Action are foreseen.

11) Briefly summarize the results of coordination with other agencies which were consulted about the project and its effects on the unique property. (For historic and archeological sites, include the signed Memorandum of Agreement and letter from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. For other unique areas, attach correspondence from officials having jurisdiction over the 4(f) land which illustrates concurrence with impacts and mitigation measures.)

(See Appendix B3, NPS Correspondence) for letter from the National Park Service.

(See Appendix I, Meeting Minutes) regarding specific discussion items regarding the Ice Age Trail on February 21, 2007.

# UNIQUE AREA IMPACT EVALUATION

DT2077 2004

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Alternative System Alternative 1 - 26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue		Length of Centerline and Termini This Sheet is Evaluating Approximately 4.2 miles	
1) Property Name Wild Rivers State Trail		2) Location 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	
3) Ownership or Administration Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources		4) Use Mountain Bike, Pedestrian, Snowmobile, ATV	
5) Type			
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Park	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreational lands	<input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife Refuge	<input type="checkbox"/> Waterfowl Refuge
<input type="checkbox"/> Other – Identify			

6) Indicate how the land or improvements on the property were funded.

No funds from any acts were used for this property.

s.6(f) LAWCON (LWCF)

Dingell-Johnson (D/J funds)

Pittman-Robertson (P/R funds)

(Lands purchased with D/J or P/R funds are treated similarly to those using s.6(f) LAWCON funds.)

7) Do FHWA requirements for section 4(f) apply to the project's use of the unique property?

No - Project is not federally funded

No - Property is not on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

No - Other - Explain: Per FHWA, the trail property is designated as an active rail line and the Wild Rivers State Trail is considered a temporary recreational use

Yes - Indicate which of the Programmatic 4(f) Evaluation applies. Separate 4(f) evaluation attached or approved on \_\_\_\_\_.

Historic Bridge

Park minor involvement

Historic site minor involvement

Independent bikeway or walkway

Great River Road

8) Describe the significance of the unique property. For historic and archeological sites, quote or summarize the statement of significance from the Determination of Eligibility. For national landmarks, natural or scientific areas, etc., state registry listing. For other unique areas, include or attach statements of significance of officials having jurisdiction.

The Wild Rivers State Trail stretches 104 miles through three counties in northwest Wisconsin. The counties of Barron, Washburn and Douglas are responsible for maintaining and managing the trail. Formerly a railroad corridor, the Wild Rivers State Trail begins just south of Superior and stretches through Solon Springs, Gordon, Minong, Trego, Spooner, Haugen and ends in Rice Lake.

This multi-use trail is open year round and is used in a variety of ways including: bicycling, walking, running, cross country skiing and snowshoeing and is open to snowmobiles and ATV's. The Wild Rivers State Trail is near the Ice Age Trail and North County National Scenic Trail and connects to the Tuscobia State Trail, within the project area, just north of 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

9) Describe the proposed project's effects on this unique property.

a) Describe any effects on or uses of land from the property. "Use of land from" includes actual use (right of way acquisition, easements, etc.) or constructive use ("substantially impairs any of the site's vital functions"). For historic and archeological sites, give the results or status of Section 106 coordination. For other unique areas, include or attach statements from officials having jurisdiction over the property which discusses the project effects on the property. **(A map, sketch, plan, or other graphic which clearly illustrates use of the property and the project's use and effects on the property must be included.)**

The Proposed Action would include a grade separated crossing of the trail and US 53 at 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This would result in a net benefit for trail users over the existing at-grade intersection with 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue overpass would be high enough to accommodate rail traffic, in the event that the trail is converted back to rail right of way some day.

During construction of the 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue overpass, some minor shifting of the trail may be needed to ensure the safety of riders. The proposed cul-de-sac on County SS would provide access to the Wild Rivers Trail parking lot and access to the lot would be maintained throughout the construction process (See Appendix D, Recreation Trail Maps).

b) Discuss the following alternatives and describe whether they are feasible and prudent.

i) Do nothing alternative.

The No Action alternative would leave the existing intersection in the same condition as it currently exists. The potential for conflicts between trail users and vehicles on 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue would remain the same as they are now.

ii) Improvement without using the 4(f) lands.

The proposed overpass would span the trail and therefore no lands would be used.

iii) Alternatives on new location.

10) Indicate which measures would minimize adverse effects or enhance beneficial effects.

- Replacement of lands used with lands of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location, and of at least comparable value.
- Replacement of facilities impacted by the project including sidewalks, paths, lights, trees, and other facilities.
- Restoration and landscaping of disturbed areas.
- Incorporation of design features and habitat features where necessary to reduce or minimize impacts to the section 4(f) property.
- Payment of the fair market value of the land and improvement taken or improvements to the remaining 4(f) site equal to the fair market value of the land and improvements taken.
- Such additional or alternative mitigation measures as may be determined necessary based on consultation with officials having jurisdiction over the 4(f) property – Explain.
- Property is a historic property or an archeological site. The conditions or mitigation stipulations are listed or summarized below.
- Other – Describe.

The Proposed Action would be a net benefit as the 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue overpass would separate the trail from the traffic on 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The overpass would be high enough to accommodate rail traffic in the event that the trail is converted back to rail right of way some day.

- 11) Briefly summarize the results of coordination with other agencies which were consulted about the project and its effects on the unique property. (For historic and archeological sites, include the signed Memorandum of Agreement and letter from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. For other unique areas, attach correspondence from officials having jurisdiction over the 4(f) land which illustrates concurrence with impacts and mitigation measures.)

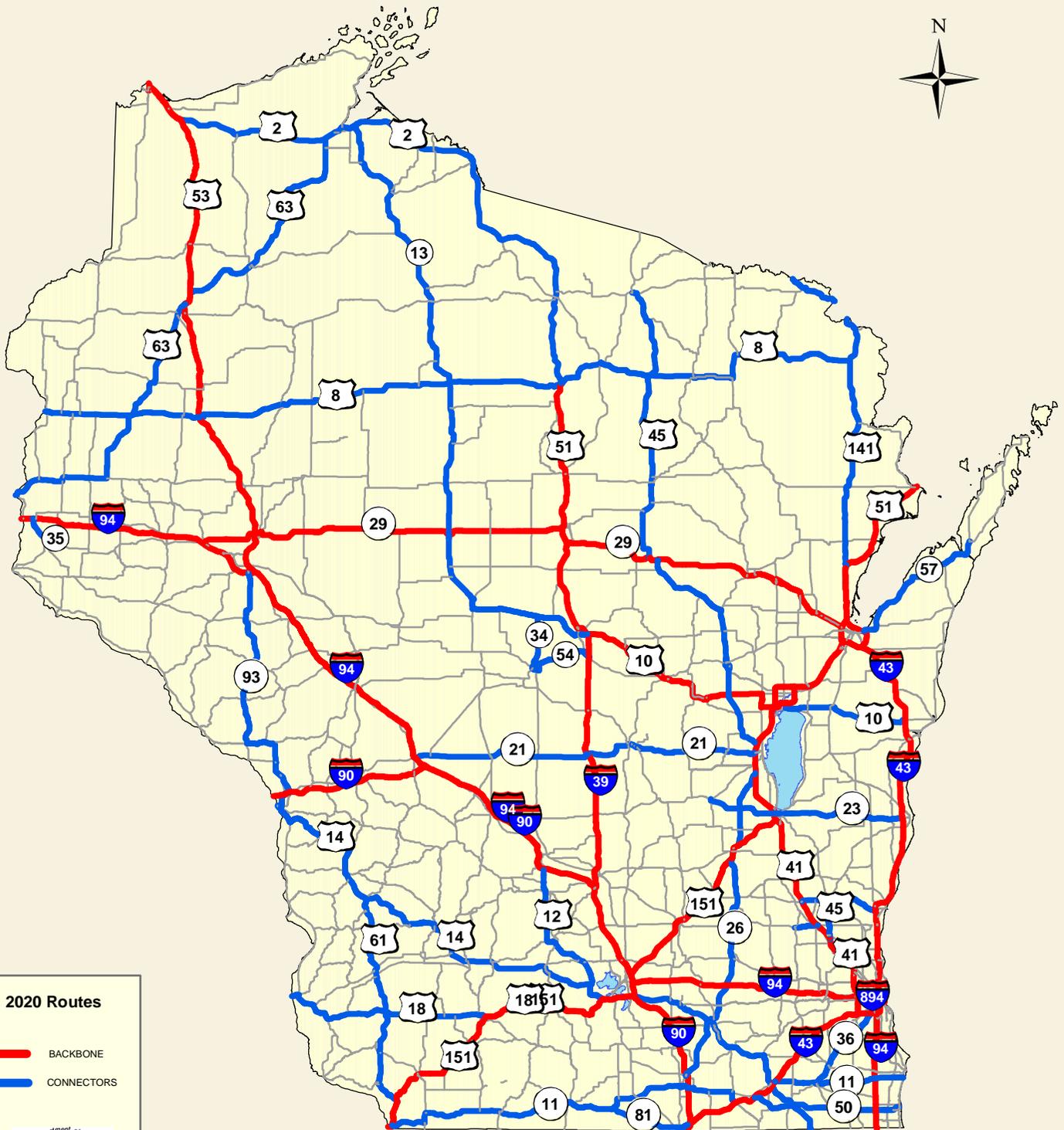
WDNR and WisDOT are in agreement on the treatment of the Wild Rivers State Trail (See Appendix B4, WDNR Correspondence which includes a response from June 2007 between WDNR and WisDOT about this, and other issues.

Per FHWA, the trail property is designated as an active rail line and the Wild Rivers State Trail is considered a temporary recreational use. (See Appendix B1, FHWA Correspondence) which includes an e-mail from FHWA with this determination.



# Corridors 2020 routes: Backbone & Connectors

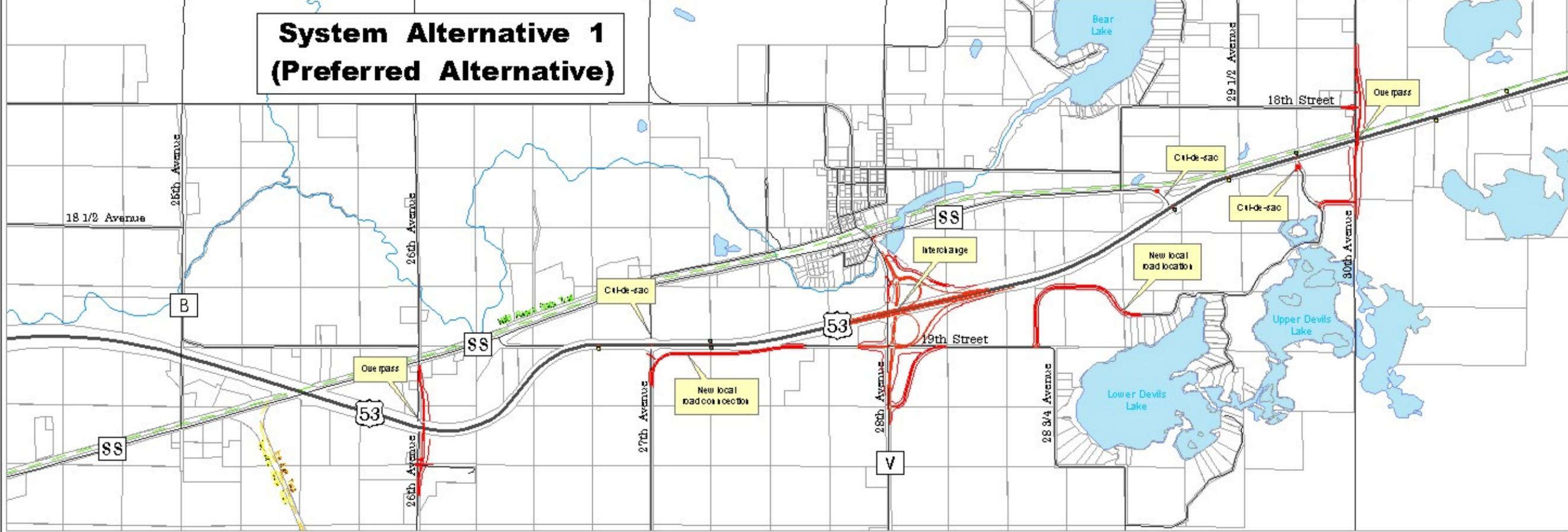
Exhibit 1B



### 2020 Routes

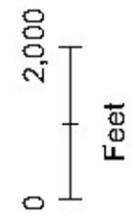
- BACKBONE
- CONNECTORS

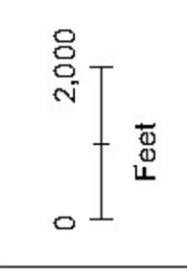
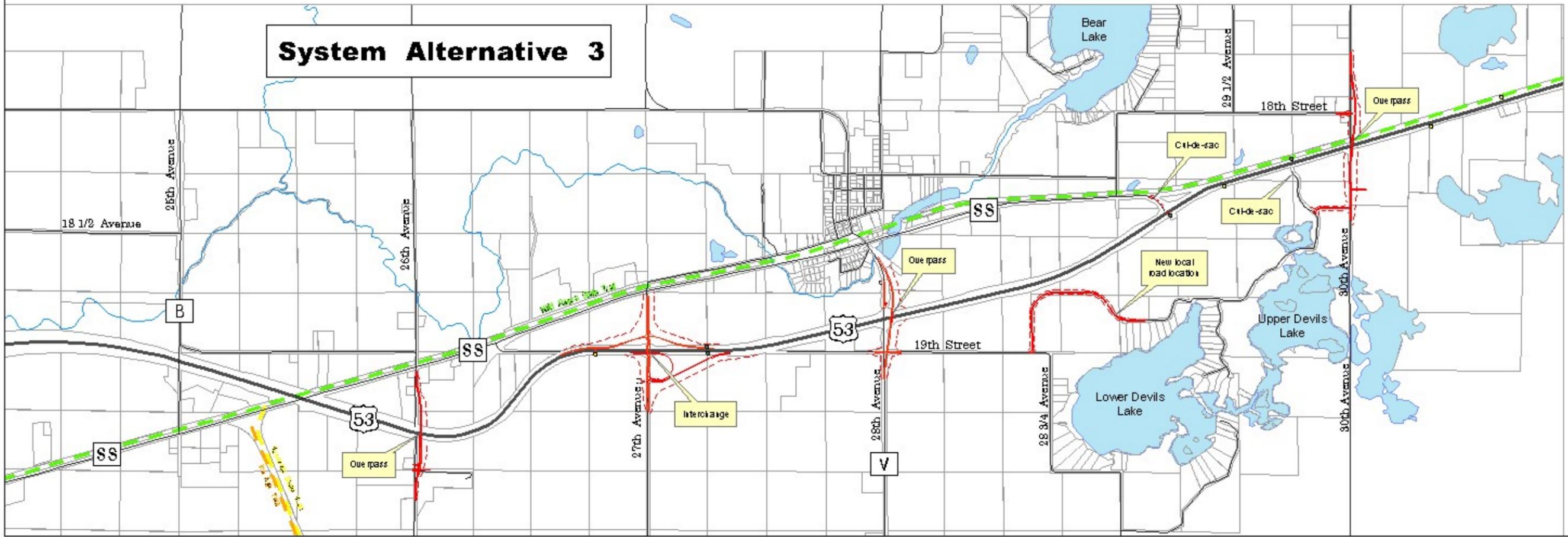
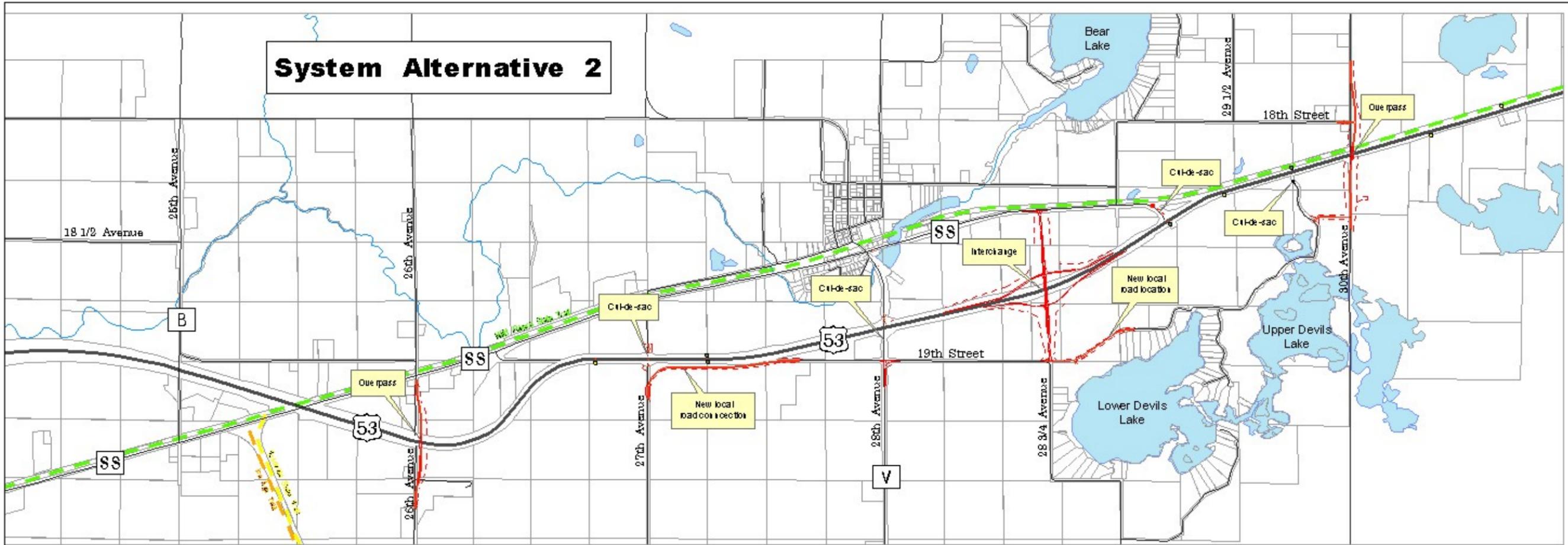




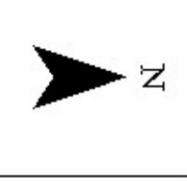
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(Preferred Alternative)**

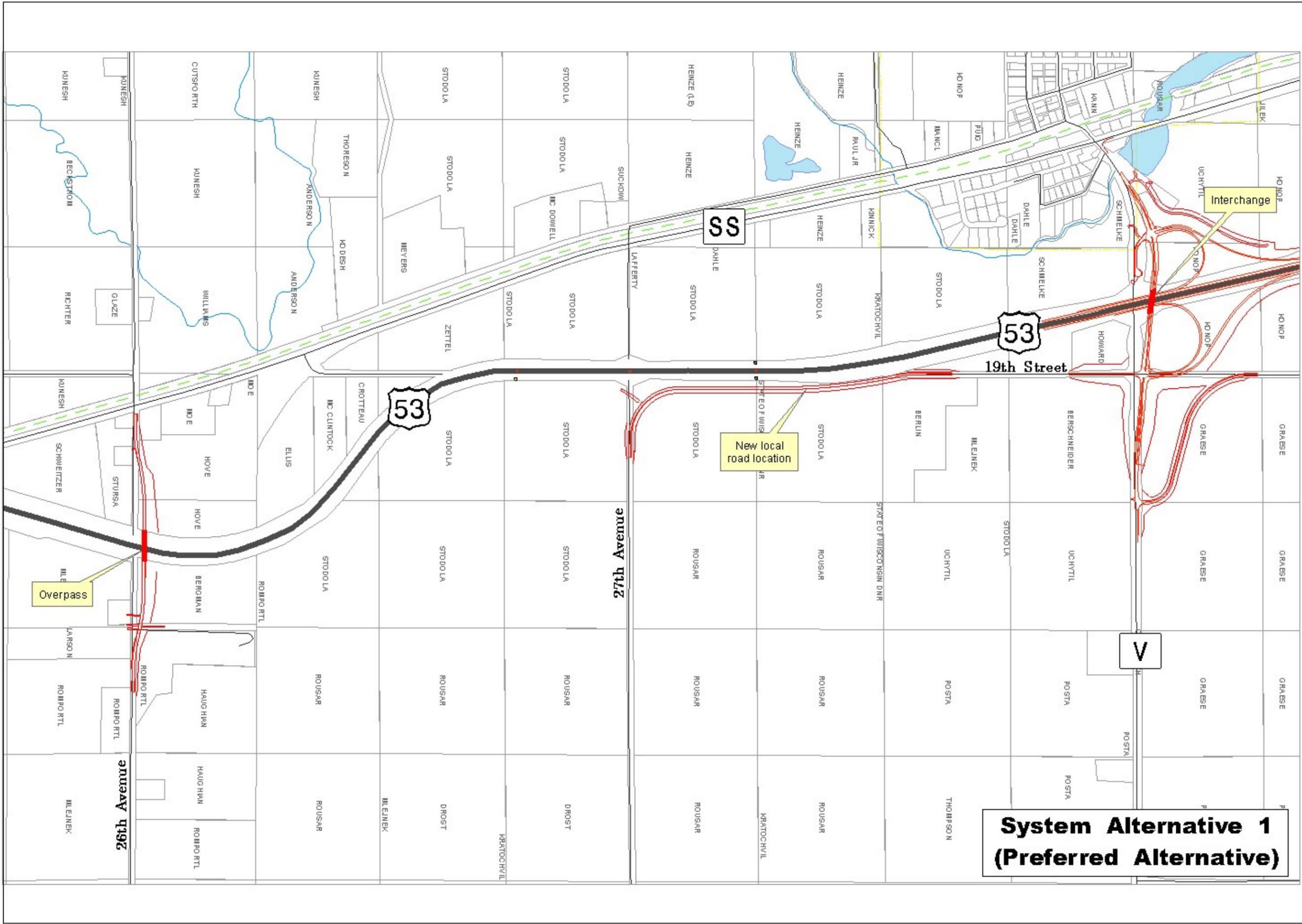
US 53/Haugen INTERCHANGE LOCATION  
& FREEWAY CONVERSION STUDY  
PROJECT ALTERNATIVES  
PROJECT I.D. 1197-22-00





US 53/Haugen INTERCHANGE LOCATION  
& FREEWAY CONVERSION STUDY  
PROJECT ALTERNATIVES  
PROJECT I.D. 1197-22-00

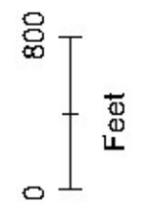


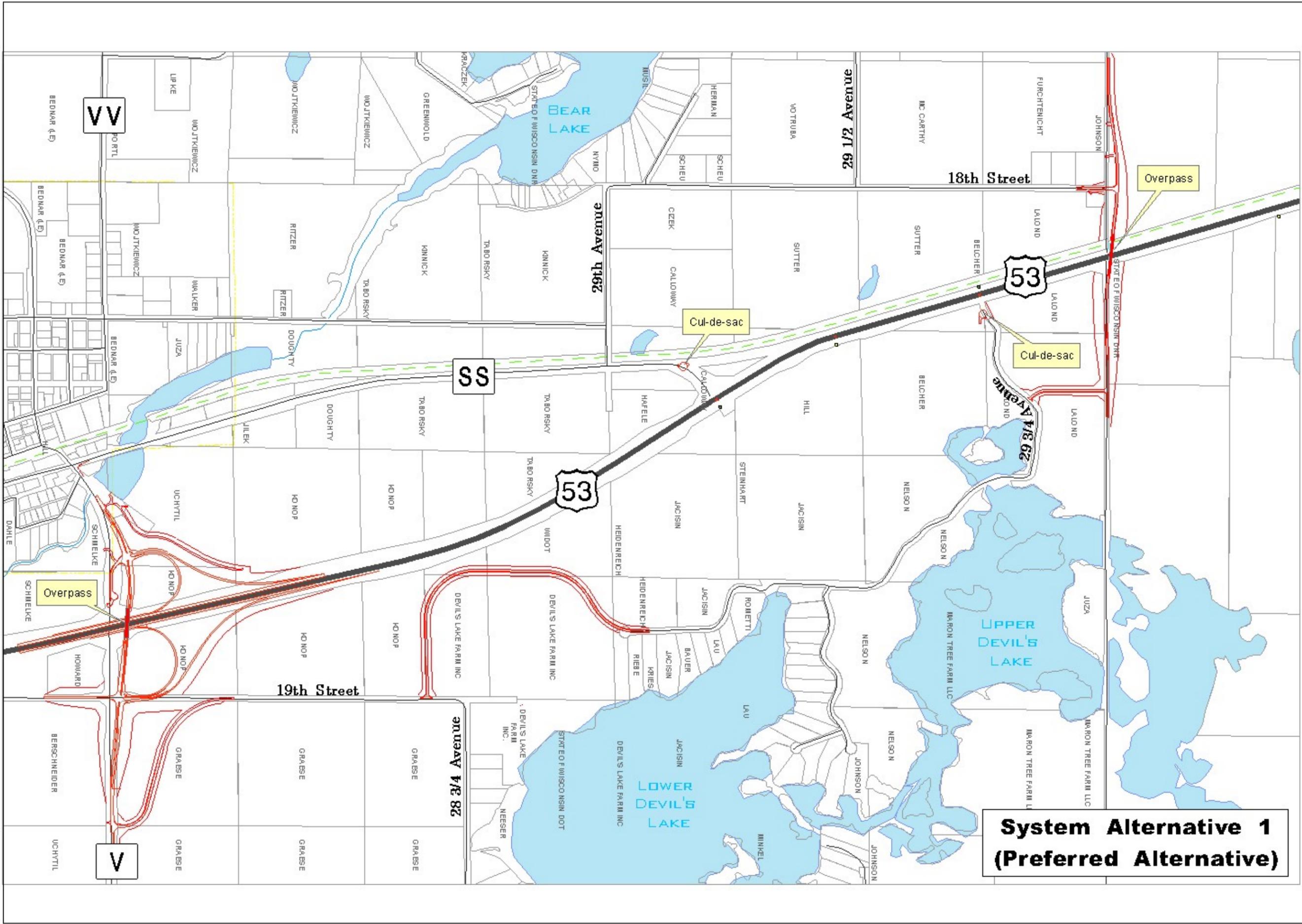


**System Alternative 1  
(Preferred Alternative)**



**US 53/HAUGEN INTERCHANGE LOCATION  
& FREEWAY CONVERSION STUDY  
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE  
PROJECT I.D. 1197-22-00**

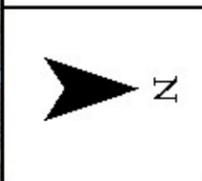
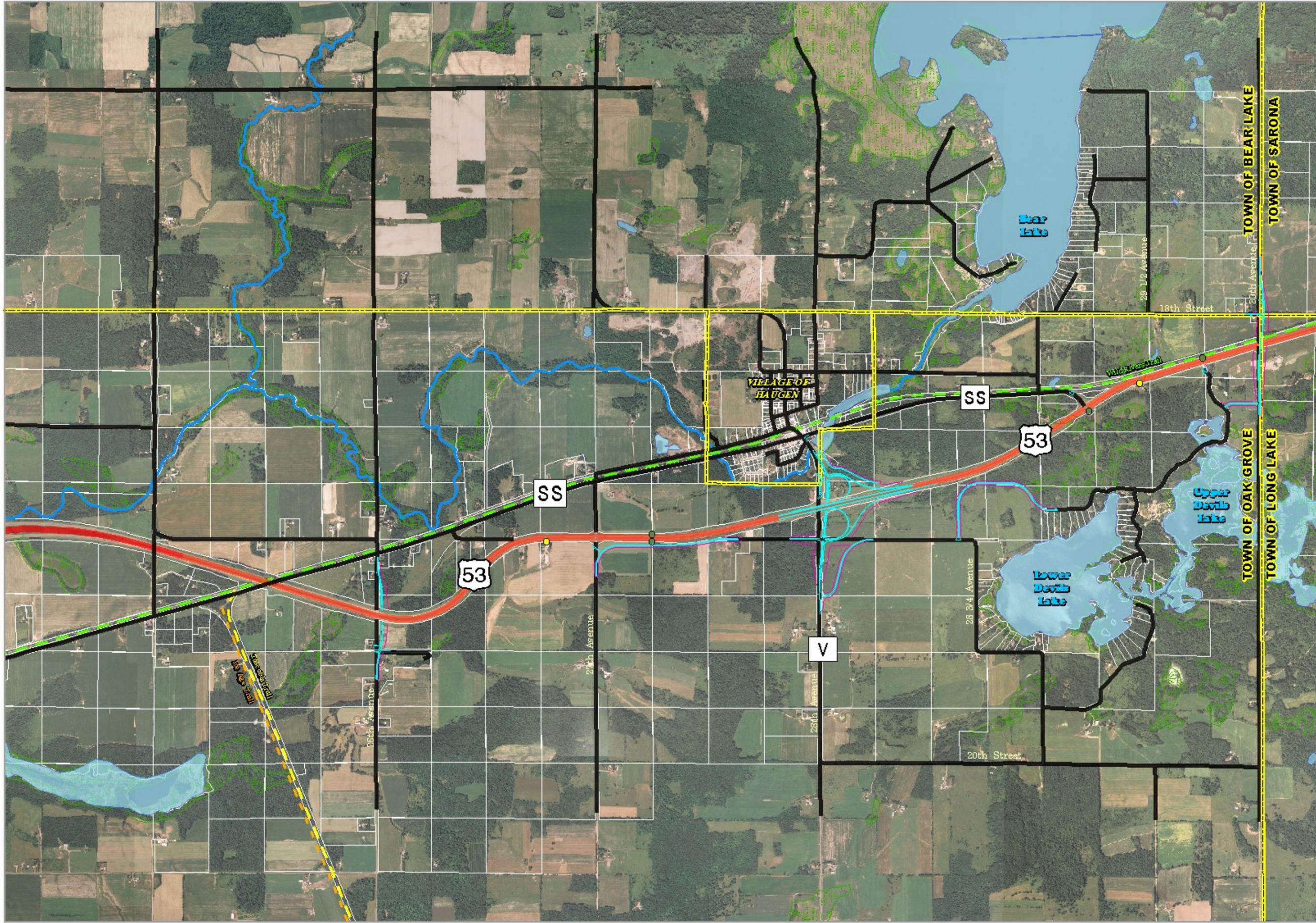




**System Alternative 1  
(Preferred Alternative)**

**US 53/HAUGEN INTERCHANGE LOCATION  
& FREEWAY CONVERSION STUDY  
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE  
PROJECT I.D. 1197-22-00**





US 53/HAUGEN INTERCHANGE LOCATION  
 & FREEWAY CONVERSION STUDY  
 PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE WITH AERIAL  
 PROJECT I.D. 1197-22-00

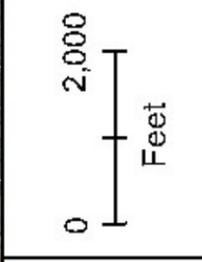
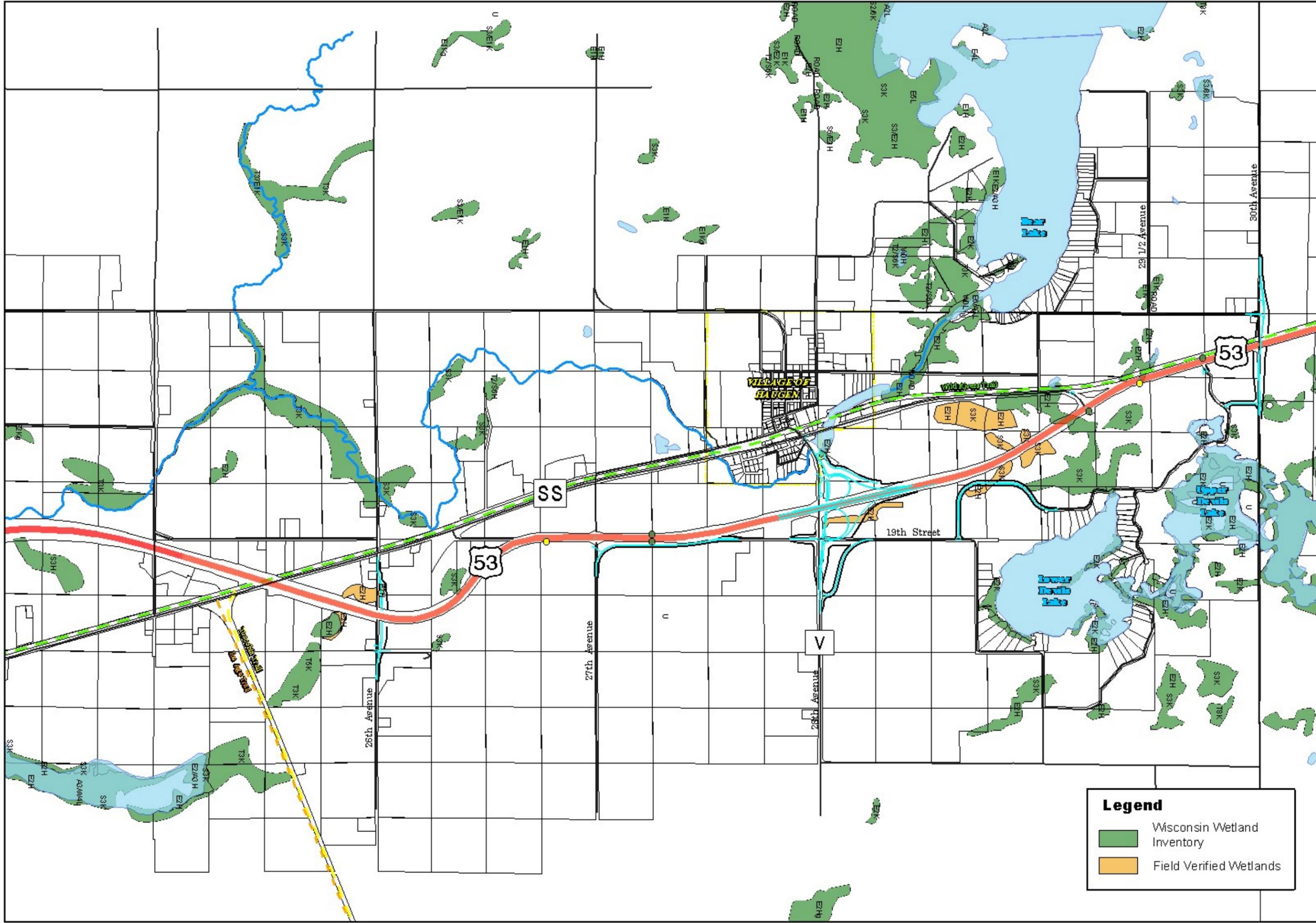


EXHIBIT 4  
 1 OF 1



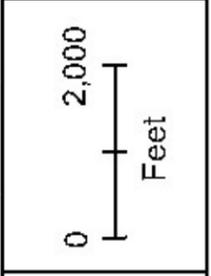
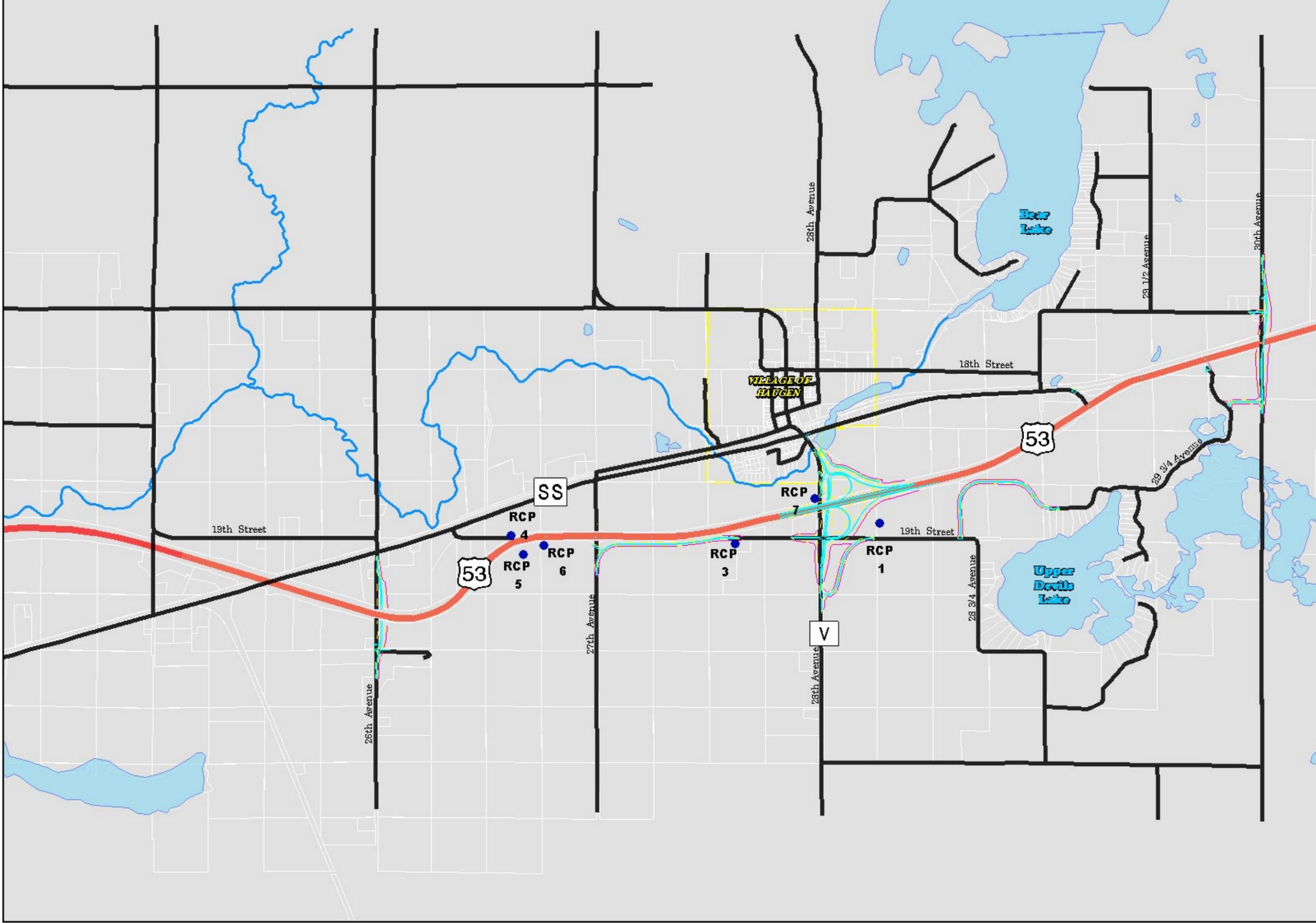
**Legend**

- Wisconsin Wetland Inventory
- Field Verified Wetlands

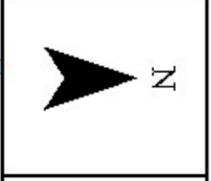


**US 53/HAUGEN INTERCHANGE LOCATION  
& FREEWAY CONVERSION STUDY  
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE WITH  
WISCONSIN WETLAND INVENTORY  
PROJECT I.D. 1197-22-00**

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US 53/HAUGEN INTERCHANGE LOCATION  
& FREEWAY CONVERSION STUDY  
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE WITH NOISE RECEPTORS  
PROJECT I.D. 1197-22-00



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- B3 – NPS Correspondence
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- B5 – DATCP Correspondence
- B6 – FWS Correspondence

Appendix C – NRCS Form AD-1006

Appendix D – Recreation Trail Maps

Appendix E – Native American Correspondence

Appendix F – Section 106 Form

Appendix G – Noise Notification Letter

Appendix H – Agricultural Impact Notice

Appendix I – Meeting Minutes

Appendix J – Indirect and Cumulative Effects – Pre-screening Analysis

**Appendix A**

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**Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan**

# **Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan**

*US Highway 53*

*26th Avenue to 30th Avenue*

Barron and Washburn Counties, Wisconsin

WisDOT ID: 1197-22-00

SEH No. A-WIDOT0623.00

February 2008

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Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan

US Highway 53  
26th Avenue to 30th Avenue

Barron and Washburn Counties, Wisconsin

Prepared for:

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Project ID: 1197-22-00

Prepared by:

Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc.  
6418 Normandy Lane, Suite 100  
Madison, WI 53719-1149  
Phone: 608.274.2020  
Fax: 608.274.2026

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# Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan

## US Highway 53 26th Avenue to 30th Avenue

Prepared for Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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### 1.0 Purpose

This Conceptual Stage Relocation Assistance Plan is developed for the proposed US 53 Haugen Interchange and Freeway Conversion Study.

Estimates are given to determine the following:

1. The approximate number of individuals, families, farms, businesses, and non-profit organizations that would be relocated by the project.
2. The probable availability of decent, safe, and sanitary replacement housing within the financial means of the individuals and families affected by the project.
3. The probable availability of bare land sites, options, office buildings, and replacement units for businesses affected by the project.
4. An estimate of the total relocation assistance costs.

---

## **2.0 Data Sources**

The following sources were used in compiling data for this plan:

1. United States Census Bureau
2. Town of Oak Grove Assessor
3. Wisconsin Multiple Listing Service
4. Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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### 3.0 Project Description

The Proposed Action would officially designate US 53 between 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue as a freeway/expressway via the process established in Wisconsin State Statutes (Wis. Stats. 84.295). The statute includes long-term planning, official mapping, and preservation tools available to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) to help protect and preserve right-of-way (ROW) for future transportation needs. The proactive tool allows WisDOT to address safety, operation, and mobility/capacity issues in advance of impending long-term needs, thereby preserving the existing roadway investment.

The Proposed Action would include the conversion of the existing four-lane divided facility to a freeway/expressway through the removal or relocation of the existing at-grade intersections with public roads and private driveways. The existing intersections would be reconstructed as cul-de-sacs or grade separations. In addition, one interchange would be constructed in the vicinity of County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue and local connecting roadways would be constructed to provide access.

US 53 is classified as a principle arterial highway with the primary purpose of providing interstate and interregional mobility and is designated as a backbone route in the WisDOT Corridors 2020 Plan. The plan includes a network of existing and improved roadways that consists of a backbone network and connector highways. The backbone network consists of divided highways that connect each region of the state and major economic centers. The connector highways tie economic and tourism centers to that backbone. The plan achieves its objectives by striving to ensure that these routes have adequate capacity and provide an adequate Level of Service (LOS).

The 4.24-mile segment of US 53 that was studied lies in the Village of Haugen and the Towns of Bear Lake and Oak Grove in Barron County, and the Towns of Sarona and Long Lake in Washburn County. Existing land uses surrounding the US 53 corridor include rural wooded uplands and wetlands, agriculture, low-density residential, and limited commercial/industrial development. The Village of Haugen has higher density residential and commercial uses in comparison to the other communities in the study area.

During the course of the project development three alternatives were developed and presented to both the local officials and the general public. The alternatives mainly differed with respect to the location of the proposed interchange. Project alternatives were subject to detailed environmental analysis and review.

Two of the alternatives, including the Preferred Alternative, would involve the acquisition of one residence and a pole shed, both on the same property. There are three additional out-buildings on the property which would be acquired that are not included in the assessor's valuation due to their state of disrepair. The property that would be acquired is located in the Town of Oak Grove in Barron County, and is approximately one quarter mile from the Village of Haugen.

---

## 4.0 Project Purpose and Need

US 53 functions as the primary north/south route on the western side of the state connecting the cities to the west and south to northern Wisconsin. US 53 is the only facility on the western side of the state that provides four-lane access to northern Wisconsin tourist areas. The Wisconsin Department of Tourism estimates that visitors spend \$1.4 billion in what it designates as the “Northwoods” region. US 53 is an extremely important facility in helping to support the tourism economy of northern Wisconsin.

Current traffic volumes and truck volumes along US 53 demonstrate its importance to state industry, business, and tourism. As such, it is a priority transportation corridor for WisDOT. The current US 53 facility between 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue was converted from two lanes to a four-lane expressway with construction completed in 1999. The existing expressway facility provides direct access via at-grade intersections with public roads and private driveways.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to develop a long-term highway access plan and officially designate this segment of US 53 as a freeway in order to address three needs:

- Long-term highway planning and corridor preservation
- Emerging operational and safety concerns
- Land use/transportation planning and coordination

---

## 5.0 Population and Household Characteristics

Below are two tables showing demographic, economic, and racial characteristics for the area in which the one acquisition would occur. The data is from the 2000 US Census.

**Table 1**  
**General Demographic and Economic Characteristics: 2000**

	Barron County	Town of Oak Grove	Village of Haugen
Population	44,936	911	287
Total households	17,851	313	120
Median household income (1999)	\$37,275	\$43,088	\$30,714

**Table 2**  
**Racial Characteristics: 2000**

	Barron County	Town of Oak Grove	Village of Haugen
White	97.7%	97.4%	100%
Black or Afric Am	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%
Amer Ind, Eskimo, Aleut	0.8%	0.5%	0.0%
Asian	0.3%	0.2%	0.0%
Hispanic	1.0%	0.7%	0.0%
Other	2.3%	0.1%	0%

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## 6.0 Proposed Displacement

The property affected is a 62-acre parcel in the vicinity of the intersection of County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue and US 53. The Preferred Alternative would require the acquisition of 10.25 acres, which will include the residence on the property and a pole shed. According to the assessor for the Town of Oak Grove, the estimated fair market value (EFMV) of the residence is \$100,600. The home has four bedrooms and 1.5 baths. The metal pole shed is valued at \$2,300. There are three additional buildings on the property that are valued at zero by the town assessor, due to their state of disrepair. There is no evidence of an active farming operation or any other business operating on the property.

The removal of this property should not cause a major impact on the economy or the neighborhood in the unincorporated Town of Oak Grove. The relocation would occur prior to the start of the project.

---

## **7.0 Relocation Process and Effects**

### **7.1 Divisive or Disruptive Effects**

The Proposed Action would not cause any extreme disruptive effects on the residence affected by this project. With professional moving services available, it would be possible to reduce physical moving time and effort for the owners. The relocation would occur prior to the project and would not be impacted by construction activities. This report indicates there is an adequate supply of available comparable housing within 30 miles of the project area.

### **7.2 Neighborhood Impact**

The relocation of the home's resident would not cause a major impact on the economy or neighborhoods in the unincorporated community of Oak Grove or in the Barron County area. There is comparable replacement housing in the area that would have access to similar services and businesses as before. The Proposed Action and relocation would not inhibit access to jobs, schools, churches, etc., but when completed should facilitate better access and safer travel to and from all such institutions.

There is a ready supply of housing available for purchase. Due to the nature of the area affected, there would be minimal divisive or disruptive effects on the nearby neighborhoods and communities that would provide replacement housing.

### **7.3 Description of Relocation Housing Process**

Public Law 91-646, as amended, also known as "The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970," provides for assistance to displaced persons, businesses, farms, and non-profit organizations. This assistance is to help find comparable, Decent, Safe, and Sanitary (DSS) housing and/or comparable locations for business, farm, and non-profit organizations. Assistance may also be in the form of services, increased housing payments, moving costs, increased interest payments, closing costs, and other incidental costs.

No owner or tenant would be required to move until available replacement dwellings within their means and/or business sites were provided for said owners or tenants. Relocation assistance would be provided by WisDOT or its consultant and in accordance with Wisconsin Statutes, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) rules and regulations, and with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970 as amended.

Prior to ROW acquisition the owner would be contacted by WisDOT or its consultant to explain the acquisition process. The relocation assistance program's rights and benefits would be explained in detail. The owner would also be given pamphlets covering acquisition and relocation rights. Both pamphlets summarize the rights and benefits available to owners and tenants of property who are required to move for a public project. A separate pamphlet for businesses, farms, and non-profit organizations would be provided which covers their rights and benefits.

## 8.0 Residential Relocation Cost Estimates

For the purpose of estimating the relocation costs for this occupied home, it is assumed that a family is living in the home that has a market value of \$100,600. This figure was obtained from the assessor for the Town of Oak Grove.

Table 3 below shows some of the residential housing available within 30 miles of the property to be acquired. There appears to be an ample supply of 3 and 4 bedroom homes in the \$75,000 to \$125,000 range. Table 4 provides a cost estimate for relocation of the affected family.

It is unknown if the availability of replacement housing will be similar when relocation actually occurs but at this time there is no reason to believe conditions will differ substantially than the current time.

**Table 3  
Available Residential Housing Within 30 Miles**

MLS # or Source	Price	Address and Location	Bedrooms
618969	\$75,900	204 N Broadway, Haugen	3
626645	\$119,900	2610 27 <sup>th</sup> Street, Rice Lake	4
623295	\$109,900	916 E Barker St, Rice Lake	3
3461190	\$114,900	320 E Orchard Ln, Rice Lake	4
629844	\$105,000	971 27 <sup>th</sup> Ave, Cumberland	4
608338	\$99,000	2940 4 <sup>th</sup> St, Cumberland	3
635649	\$78,000	W5323 Ripley Rd, Sarona	3
635747	\$89,000	180 S 8 <sup>th</sup> St, Barron	3
3445526	\$109,000	N6270 10 <sup>th</sup> St, Spooner	3

**Table 4  
Residential Relocation Cost Estimate  
(one owner-occupied unit)**

Estimated Year 2007 Market Value	\$100,600*
Average sales of comparable properties (range \$75,900 - \$119,000)	\$109,000
Moving Expense	\$ 5,000
Incidental Costs	\$ 2,500
Total Acquisition and Relocation Costs (Average replacement home of \$109,000 plus moving and incidental costs)	\$116,500

\* Per Town of Oak Grove Assessor

**Appendix B**

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**Agency Correspondence**

**Appendix B1**

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**FHWA Correspondence**

-- FHWA Correspondence regarding Wild Rivers Trail

-----Original Message-----

From: McKenney, Tracey  
Sent: Monday, April 23, 2007 1:00 PM  
To: Davey, Anna  
Cc: Scudder, Dan; Hickman, Stephanie  
Subject: RE: Wild River Trail/US 53/30th Ave

Anna,

I'm sorry it took so long to get back to you on this one, but as I indicated earlier, I needed to coordinate with our HQ office. Based on the information that you have sent, FHWA would say that 4(f) is not applicable to the Wild River Trail.

Since this trail is still designated as an active rail line and the DNR holds a CITU, we would consider the trail to be a temporary recreational occupancy of lands designated for rail use. FHWA guidance states that "In situations where land which is owned by a State DOT or other Applicant and designated for future transportation purposes (including highway rights-of-way) and is temporarily occupied or being used for either authorized or unauthorized recreational purposes such as for a playground or a trail on property purchased as right-of-way, Section 4(f) does not apply."

While there was a recent court case in the 2nd Circuit that made a determination in conflict with FHWA's determination on applicability, there were some unique circumstances and factors. As such, FHWA's position remains that as stated above.

I hope this answers your question. I should stress that our determination is based on the project information sent to us. If there are other aspects of the project that were not forwarded, please let us know. Also, let me know if you have further questions or would like to discuss.

Tracey McKenney, P.E.  
Program Operations Engineer  
(Statewide Operations Team Leader)  
Federal Highway Administration  
567 D'Onofrio Drive, Suite 100  
Madison, WI 53719  
(608) 829-7510  
FAX (608) 829-7526  
tracey.mckenney@fhwa.dot.gov

**Appendix B2**

---

**Scoping Letter**



**Division of Transportation  
System Development**  
Northwest Region – Spooner Office  
7102 GREEN VALLEY ROAD  
Spooner, WI 54801

**Jim Doyle, Governor**  
**Frank J. Busalacchi, Secretary**  
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Telephone: (715) 635.4975  
Facsimile (FAX): (715) 392.7863  
E-mail: [superior.dtd@dot.state.wi.us](mailto:superior.dtd@dot.state.wi.us)

---

July 21, 2006

US Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resource Conservation Service  
8030 Excelsior Drive, Suite 200  
Madison, WI 53717

To Whom It May Concern:

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Northwest Region (WisDOT) is initiating the US 53/Haugen Interchange Location & Freeway Conversion Study near the village of Haugen (WisDOT ID: 1197-22-00). The actual roadway limits on US 53 are between 26th Avenue and 30th Avenue in Barron and Washburn Counties.

US 53 is a Backbone route in the WisDOT Corridors 2020 Plan and is a vital transportation corridor from both a local and regional perspective. The study is occurring now to ensure long-term safety and improvement options are not precluded as conditions change along the corridor over time.

The study consists of several elements including a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and environmental assessment (EA), Official Map, and freeway designation through Wis. Stats. 84.295. The entire process is anticipated to occur over two years and requires extensive coordination with federal, state, and local agencies as well as the general public.

The US 53/Haugen Interchange Location & Freeway Conversion Study is not a capacity expansion project. Additionally, construction funding has not been programmed for this segment of US 53. The primary focus of the project is the conversion of this segment of US 53 from an expressway to a freeway. As such, long-term alternatives will likely focus on spot improvements such as removal and relocation of at-grade intersections and driveways to cul-de-sacs, over/underpasses, and interchanges. In addition, potential new roadway segments could be planned to address access and local circulation needs.

Given the importance of this transportation facility to the area and region, as well as the number of factors that must be considered as part of the project, we are seeking your comments specific to needs and issues that should be considered as part of the study. Your input is vital in avoiding, minimizing, or mitigating negative impacts to the environment, as well as maximizing benefits for the public and users of the highway.

As part of the agency/utility coordination and environmental review process, we are requesting information from your agency to determine the effect freeway conversion and associated highway access changes could have on farmland. We would like your input as to whether any of the surrounding farmland and other agricultural soils are either: 1) prime farmland which is

not already committed to urban development or water storage, 2) unique farmland, or 3) farmland which is of statewide or local importance as protected by the Farmland Protection Policy Act. Once alternatives have been developed, we will complete the site assessment criteria form USDA Form AD-1006 to determine if formal coordination is required. We are also in the process of coordinating with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) regarding the proposed action.

The area of potential impact could include anything within the study area. Please review the enclosed exhibits and submit your response in writing by Friday, August 25 with your concerns and comments. If further coordination is needed, please provide us with the appropriate contact person and outline the necessary procedures to follow.

To assist you in providing comments, we have developed a scoping package that includes the following items:

- 1) Project location map
- 2) Frequently asked questions (FAQ)
- 3) Anticipated project timeline/schedule
- 4) List of agencies/utilities with whom coordination/contact is occurring
- 5) Project contacts for questions and/or additional information (WisDOT and SEH)
- 6) Business Reply Envelope

If you feel we should be seeking comment from other agencies/utilities not included on the list included with this packet, please let us know and we would be happy to contact them.

If you would like to discuss this project in person, we would be happy to meet with you. We are requesting comments by **Friday, August 25**. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, or if you wish to discuss this project in further detail. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

We have provided a business reply envelope for your convenience in submitting comments. Comments can also be mailed to:

US 53/Haugen Interchange Location Study  
c/o Short Elliott Hendrickson, Inc.  
6418 Normandy Lane, Suite 100  
Madison, WI 53719

Sincerely,

Marc Bowker  
WisDOT Project Leader

cw  
Enclosure

US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE  
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MADISON WI 53717

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U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
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HAYWARD WI 54843

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---

July 21, 2006

Executive Director Michael Allen  
Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council, Inc.  
PO Box 9  
Lac Du Flambeau, WI 54538

Dear Michael Allen:

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Northwest Region (WisDOT) is initiating the US 53/Haugen Interchange Location & Freeway Conversion Study near the village of Haugen (WisDOT ID: 1197-22-00). The actual roadway limits on US 53 are between 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 30th Avenue in Barron and Washburn Counties.

US 53 is a Backbone route in the WisDOT Corridors 2020 Plan and is a vital transportation corridor from both a local and regional perspective. The study is occurring now to ensure long-term safety and improvement options are not precluded as conditions change along the corridor over time.

The study consists of several elements including a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and environmental assessment (EA), Official Map, and freeway designation through Wis. Stats. 84.295. The entire process is anticipated to occur over two years and requires extensive coordination with federal, state, and local agencies as well as the general public.

The US 53/Haugen Interchange Location & Freeway Conversion Study is not a capacity expansion project. Additionally, construction funding has not been programmed for this segment of US 53. The primary focus of the project is the conversion of this segment of US 53 from an expressway to a freeway. As such, long-term alternatives will likely focus on spot improvements such as removal and relocation of at-grade intersections and driveways to cul-de-sacs, over/underpasses, and interchanges. In addition, potential new roadway segments could be planned to address access and local circulation needs.

Given the importance of this transportation facility to the area and region, as well as the number of factors that must be considered as part of the project, we are seeking your comments specific to needs and issues that should be considered as part of the study. Your input is vital in avoiding, minimizing, or mitigating negative impacts to the environment, as well as maximizing benefits for the public and users of the highway.

As part of the agency/utility coordination and environmental review process, we are requesting information from your agency to determine the effect, if any, proposed freeway conversion and associated highway access changes would have on Native American lands, either individually owned lands, tribal lands, or land in trust. As part of the process, we will be conducting studies that include an archaeological and historic resources surveys. We would appreciate any

information you may have pertaining to prehistoric and historic archaeological resources and historical buildings/structures of cultural significance that may be located in the project study area. Your input will be valuable in the treatment of cultural resources associated with the project. Also, please note that there is a complete list in the back of this package of all the agencies and Native American tribes that we are coordinating with on this project.

The area of potential impact could include anything within the project study area. Please review the enclosed exhibit and submit your response in writing by Friday, August 25 with your concerns and comments. If further coordination is needed, please provide us with the appropriate contact person and outline the necessary procedures to follow.

To assist you in providing comments, we have developed a scoping package that includes the following items:

- 1) Project location map
- 2) Frequently asked questions (FAQ)
- 3) Anticipated project timeline/schedule
- 4) List of agencies/utilities with whom coordination/contact is occurring
- 5) Project contacts for questions and/or additional information (WisDOT and SEH)
- 6) Business Reply Envelope

If you feel we should be seeking comment from other agencies/utilities not included on the list included with this packet, please let us know and we would be happy to contact them.

If you would like to discuss this project in person, we would be happy to meet with you. We are requesting comments by **Friday, August 25**. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, or if you wish to discuss this project in further detail. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

We have provided a business reply envelope for your convenience in submitting comments. Comments can also be mailed to:

US 53/Haugen Interchange Location Study  
c/o Short Elliott Hendrickson, Inc.  
6418 Normandy Lane, Suite 100  
Madison, WI 53719

Sincerely,

Marc Bowker  
WisDOT Project Leader

cw  
Enclosure

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**Appendix B3**

---

**NPS Correspondence**

United States Department of the Interior  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Ice Age & North Country  
National Scenic Trails  
700 Rayovac Drive  
Madison, Wisconsin 53711-2468

L7619(IATR)

August 25, 2006

Mr. Marc Bowker  
Project Manager  
Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
Northwest Region—Spooner Office  
P.O. Box 282  
Spooner, Wisconsin 54801

Dear Mr. Bowker:

We are responding to your July 21 letter requesting information relevant to the US 53/Haugen Interchange Location and Freeway Conversion Study (WisDOT ID: 1197-22-00).

You specifically asked for information relating to the Ice Age National Scenic Trail (NST) administered by this office in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation (IAPTF). We very much appreciate you taking notice of the fact that the trail and US 53 intersect within the study area delineated on the map enclosed with your letter. We want to work very closely with you and any planning and design consultants as you proceed with this study.

The Ice Age NST will need to cross US 53 within the limits of your study area. Since the long-term goal is to convert the highway from an expressway to a freeway, a grade-separating structure will ultimately be needed for the Ice Age NST, whether that is provided by a pedestrian walkway on a vehicle bridge crossing the freeway or a separate pedestrian underpass or overpass.

Presently, the Ice Age NST follows the Tuscobia State Trail from the vicinity of Birchwood to County Trunk Highway (CTH) SS. From this point westward to section 10 in Bear Lake Township (T 38 N, R 12 W), there currently is a gap in the off-road, non-motorized trail route. Hikers can follow CTH SS or the Wild Rivers State Trail as a "Temporary Connector" north to Haugen and then walk west on 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue to reach that next section of off-road trail.

While this could suggest that the crossing of US 53 would occur near the southern end of your study area, there are other factors at play. All-terrain vehicle (ATV) users would like to have the DNR open the Tuscobia Trail between Birchwood and CTH SS to their use. Should this ever

occur, the Ice Age NST would have to abandon the Tuscobia Trail as part of its route because, by Federal law, NSTs may not be open to motorized use by the general public.

For the past several years, there have been a number of meetings and discussions between the Ice Age NST partners and local ATV club members about establishing an alternative route for the Ice Age NST. A lot of field work has occurred to try to identify and negotiate passage across private lands to make such a route possible. Some of the routes considered would result in an interface with US 53 in the middle or more northern portion of your study area. None of the options that have been examined would place the interface outside of your study area. However, to date these efforts have not resulted in agreement on an alternative route. For the foreseeable future, and perhaps permanently, the Ice Age NST will remain on the Tuscobia Trail. Meetings to assess the present situation are scheduled in September.

It will be important to maintain an open channel of communication as we go forward with Ice Age NST plans and as you go forward with highway plans. Freeway conversion can be a significant challenge to the continuity of a long-distance hiking/backpacking trail. We would ask you to keep us fully informed and involved and we pledge to do the same.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments. Please call us at 608-441-5610 or email Trail Manager Pam Schuler at [pam\\_schuler@nps.gov](mailto:pam_schuler@nps.gov) or myself at [tom\\_gilbert@nps.gov](mailto:tom_gilbert@nps.gov) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

/s/ Thomas L. Gilbert

Thomas L. Gilbert  
Superintendent

Cc:  
US 53/Haugen Interchange Location Study  
c/o Short Elliott Hendrickson, Inc.  
6418 Normandy Lane, Suite 100  
Madison, WI 53719

Andrew Hanson  
Trailway Director  
Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation  
306 East Wilson Street, Lower Level  
Madison, WI 53703

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Dale Crisler and Tim McRaith  
Superior Lobe Chapter Coordinators  
Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation  
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Bill Morrissey  
Director  
Bureau of Parks and Recreation  
Department of Natural Resources  
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Brigit Brown  
State Trails Coordinator  
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Tim Miller  
Department of Natural Resources  
N4103 Highway 27  
Ladysmith, WI 54848

Terry Jordan  
Department of Natural Resources  
810 West Maple  
Spooner, WI 54801

Re: US 53/Haugen interchange location and Freeway/Expressway Conversion Study, Wisconsin

We have received your letter of February 1, 2007 concerning the above referenced project.

- We have no comment on your proposed action.
- Please address any further correspondence about this project or any project to the following address:

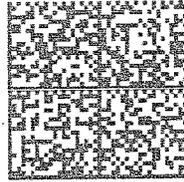
Regional Environmental Coordinator  
National Park Service  
Midwest Regional Office  
601 Riverfront Drive  
Omaha, NE 68102

Due to limited staff and the number of requests we receive for early coordination, we ask that companies/agencies assume we will have no comments on projects if they have not heard from us within 30 days of our receipt of the request.

Thank you,

Regional Environmental Coordinator

Environmental Coordinator  
National Park Service  
Midwest Regional Office  
601 Riverfront Drive  
Omaha, NE 68102



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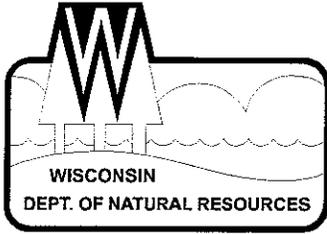
Division of Transportation System  
Development  
Northwest Region, Spooner Office  
P.O. Box 282  
Spooner, Wisconsin 54801



**Appendix B4**

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**WDNR Correspondence**



## State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Jim Doyle, Governor  
Scott Hassett, Secretary  
John Gozdziński, Regional Director

Northern Region Headquarters  
810 W. Maple Street  
Spooner, Wisconsin 54801  
Telephone 715-635-2101  
FAX 715-635-4105  
TDD 715-635-4001

November 8, 2006

Marc Bowker  
DOT, Northwest Region – Spooner Office  
P.O. Box 282  
Spooner, WI 54801

RE: **I.D. # 1197-22-00**  
**USH 53/Haugen Interchange Location & Freeway Conversion Study**  
**Barron/Washburn County**

Dear Marc:

This letter is in response to your inquiry for our comments on what natural resources the above referenced freeway conversion and associated access changes could impact. Our comments identify existing resources within a 2,000-foot corridor centered on USH 53, and in some cases provide suggestions on how to protect those resources. Please keep in mind that this is a very broad overview of potential resource issues. When the scope of the project is narrowed down to specific details we will do a more in-depth field investigation and review.

**Surface Waters** - The following surface waters are located within the study area.

- **Monday Lake** – A soft water seepage lake. There is a large scrub/shrub and emergent/wet meadow wetland complex associated with Monday Lake.
- **Star Lake** – A soft water seepage lake surrounded by a 73-acre cattail-sedge meadow wetland.
- **Haugen Lake** – A soft water seepage lake. A road culvert connects it to Upper Devils Lake. About 22 acres of marsh wetlands adjoin the lake on the east and northwest bays.
- **Upper Devils Lake** – A soft water seepage lake with an intermittent channel to Lower Devils Lake. 25 acres of wetlands border the lake.
- **Lower Devils Lake** – A soft water seepage lake with an intermittent channel to Upper Devils Lake. 19-acre marsh wetland adjacent to the lake.
- **Bear Lake** – A hard water drainage lake with an outlet, Bear Creek, which has a water control structure on it. 875 acres of tamarack swamp and leatherleaf bog adjoin the lake. The lake and adjoining wetlands contain productive waterfowl habitat. Bear Lake is an Outstanding Resource Water (ORW).
- **Bear Creek** – Flows southward from Bear Lake into the Red Cedar River. Bear Creek has been approved for designation as an Outstanding Resource Water (ORW) from the outlet of Bear Lake to the inlet at Stump Lake.
- **Tuscobia Creek** – A short spring feeder stream of good water quality and habitat, flows south into Tuscobia Lake. This entire creek is considered Class I native brook

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trout habitat.

- **Tuscobia Lake** – Hard water drainage lake with an outlet flowing into Bear Creek. 160 acres of wetlands surround the lake and contain productive waterfowl habitat.

**Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW)** – Outstanding Resource Waters are surface waters which provide valuable fisheries, hydrologically or geologically unique features, outstanding recreational opportunities, unique environmental settings, and which are not significantly impacted by human activities. Added protection is given to these water bodies to ensure their continued status as ORW's. For example, placement of a new structure on Bear Creek would be closely studied to determine that there would not be any adverse effects on the fisheries or hydrology of the stream. Grading activities occurring on the stream would also be watched closely.

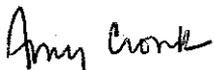
**Wetlands** - Several wetland types are found throughout the project area. Shallow open water communities, deep marshes, shallow marshes, and bogs are a few examples of the wetland types that are found throughout the USH 53 corridor. Wetlands are often associated with threatened and endangered plant and bird species, as we discuss in the next section. These areas are also very important for waterfowl production, furbearers, frogs, turtles and aquatic invertebrates, as well as providing floodwater retention and filtering of stormwater. All efforts should be made to avoid wetland impacts.

**Threatened/Endangered/Special Concern Species** – Several bird, plant and fish species, and three natural communities have been found within the project area. We have attached specific species information and avoidance recommendations at the end of this letter. Most of these species and communities are associated with Bear Lake and adjacent wetlands up to the dam in Haugen. However, suitable habitat for some of these species may also be found in other wetland areas throughout the project area. For example, the large wetland complex associated with Monday Lake could hold suitable habitat for the Yellow Rail (threatened) or Le Conte's Sparrow (special concern).

**Recreational Trails** - Two recreational trail corridors run through the study area. The Tuscobia State Trail and the Wild Rivers State Trail both provide opportunities for activities such as ATV riding, snowmobiling and hiking. Both of these trails are on federally granted right-of-ways and cannot be for any other purposes. In addition, the Wild Rivers Trail is part of the Rails to Trails Program and cannot be used for any other purpose than recreational.

We look forward to continued coordination on this project. When the preliminary bridge layout and design plans are made available along with a copy of the draft special provisions, we will complete our review and provide final concurrence.

Sincerely,



Amy Cronk  
Environmental Review Coordinator

cc: Ted Gostomski – Spooner  
Troy Stapelmann – DOT, Northwest Region – Eau Claire

## Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species and Communities for the Highway 53 Interchange at Haugen

Prepared by T. Gostomski, Northern Region Ecologist, Bureau of Endangered Resources

The following plant and animal species and natural communities are known to occur in or near the Highway 53 interchange site at Haugen. Species information and some avoidance recommendations are given below.

Taxa Group	Scientific Name	Common Name	State Status*	Federal Status*
Bird	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald Eagle	SC/FL	LT, PD
	<i>Ammodramus leconteii</i>	Le Conte's Sparrow	SC/M	
	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Osprey	THR	
	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>	Red-shouldered Hawk	THR	
	<i>Coturnicops noveboracensis</i>	Yellow Rail	THR	
Fish	<i>Fundulus diaphanus</i>	Banded Killifish	SC/N	
	<i>Etheostoma microperca</i>	Least Darter	SC/N	
	<i>Notropis nubilus</i>	Ozark Minnow	THR	
	<i>Notropis anogenus</i>	Pugnose Shiner	THR	
	<i>Notropis texanus</i>	Weed Shiner	SC/N	
Natural Community	<i>Northern sedge meadow</i>	Northern Sedge Meadow	NA	
	<i>Northern wet forest</i>	Northern Wet Forest	NA	
	<i>Open bog</i>	Open Bog	NA	
Plant	<i>Botrychium minganense</i>	Mingan's Moonwort	SC	
	<i>Arethusa bulbosa</i>	Swamp-pink	SC	

\* LT,PD = currently listed as threatened, but proposed for de-listing; NA = Status classification is not applicable; SC = Special Concern (those species about which some problem of abundance or distribution is suspected but not yet proved.); SC/FL = Special Concern in WI, but federally listed as endangered or threatened; SC/M = Special Concern but fully protected by federal and state laws under the Migratory Bird Act; SC/N = no laws regulating use, possession, or harvesting; THR = Threatened.

**Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)** – a Species of Special Concern in Wisconsin and a Federally-listed Threatened species, prefer to nest in tall trees (usually white pine) with a commanding view of nearby lakes or streams. Eagles return to nest sites in late winter or early spring and eggs are laid in late March or early April. The first egg hatches about 40 days later.

The following steps must be followed to avoid negative impacts to or incidental take of Bald Eagles:

1. The project area should be surveyed for large aspen or white pine trees (diameter of  $\geq 12$  inches) containing eagle nests before any trees are cleared from the property;
2. If a nest is found, avoid disturbances such as land clearing and tree removal **within 330 feet of the nest year round**;
3. Avoid nest disturbances **within 330-660 feet during the 15 February to 15 August breeding and nesting season**;

## Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species and Communities for the Highway 53 Interchange at Haugen

4. Bald Eagle roosts and feeding sites should be protected **within 660 feet of a nest**. If tree removal occurs, it is suggested that several super-canopy trees be left for future nest tree replacement;
5. Leave standing as many large dead trees as possible, especially trees with a diameter of  $\geq 12$  inches.

Additionally, project applicants should check with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure compliance with the Federal Endangered Species Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668a-d).

**Le Conte's Sparrow** (*Ammodramus leconteii*) – a Species of Special Concern in Wisconsin, are typically associated with extensive emergent wetlands of grass, sedges, and rushes, as well as the edges of marshes and bogs. Nesting begins in late April to mid-May and continues into mid-July. Nests are typically found in areas of moist or dry tall, rank grass. During migration and winter, Le Conte's Sparrows utilize woody fields, sedge meadows, and cattails.

The Le Conte's Sparrow was also identified as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan (2005). Threats to and issues affecting this species that may also be relevant to road construction include:

- Succession of sedge meadows, wet meadows, and upland grasslands to shrublands or woods, due to lack of fire or other management to suppress woody growth. [*Emphasis added.*]
- Flooding of wet meadows.
- Conversion of grassland and former sedge or grass wetlands to row crops or tree plantations.
- Loss of grassland habitat due to development.
- Disturbance of grassland nesting cover during the breeding season.
- Invasion by woody plants or aggressive herbaceous species, including cattails, yellow parsnip, crown vetch, leafy spurge, thistles, reed canary grass, and some goldenrods can degrade habitat quality of grasslands for this species.

**Osprey** (*Pandion haliaetus*) – a bird listed as Threatened in Wisconsin, prefers large trees in isolated areas that are close to large areas of surface water, large complexes of deciduous forest, coniferous forest, wetland, and shrub communities. Large lakes and rivers with nearby tall pine trees are preferred for nesting. The breeding season extends from late April through August. In northern Wisconsin, breeding habitat is generally mature second-growth hardwood and pine forests. Primary nest sites are super-canopy snags and dead-topped pines located along lake and stream shorelines, but nests may also be located in recent clearcuts adjacent to water, on snags in marshes or bogs and in swamp conifer stands. Nests in these locations are highly vulnerable to being toppled by wind. Ospreys also nest on power line poles or other human-made structures.

Because Ospreys usually nest directly over or near water, following Wisconsin's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality (BMPs) will protect their streamside or lakeside habitat. BMPs will also protect water quality, which enhances survival of the fish upon which Osprey feed. **Avoid disturbances such as timber-cutting and road-building within 660 feet of an active Osprey nest during the May 1 to August 15 nesting season.**

## Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species and Communities for the Highway 53 Interchange at Haugen

**Red-shouldered Hawk** (*Buteo lineatus*) – a bird listed as Threatened in Wisconsin, prefers larger stands of medium-aged to mature lowland deciduous forests, dry-mesic, and mesic forest with small wetland pockets. Preferred habitat contains numerous large trees. Breeding occurs from mid-March through early August. The majority of nests are found in red oaks. Nest tree diameters range from 18 to 35 inches. Nests are usually placed near the main trunk in a crotch 40 to 60 feet above ground.

Maintaining an average canopy closure of 70% or more in woodlands would be beneficial to Red-shouldered Hawks. An aspen component (1- to 5-acre patches) also would be beneficial. Cutting should not isolate an active nest tree, and **disturbance (including road construction and logging) should be minimized within 300 feet of a nest from March through July 15.** Use of *Wisconsin's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality* should be followed, especially the provision of a buffer zone along riparian corridors.

**Yellow Rail** (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) – a Threatened species in Wisconsin, prefers large northern sedge meadows and open bogs dominated by the sedge *Carex lasiocarpa*. Common associates are the Sandhill Crane, Sedge Wren, Common Snipe, and Savannah and LeConte's Sparrows. Breeding (nesting and chick-rearing) occurs from May through August.

The Yellow Rail is also recognized as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan. Threats to and issues affecting this species that may be relevant to road construction include:

- Drainage or flooding (altered hydrology) of large northern sedge meadows.
- Conversion of drained sedge meadows to other land uses.
- Succession of preferred wetland habitats to shrub carr, due to lack of fire or other management to suppress woody growth.
- Habitat fragmentation may also be an issue for this species.
- Invasion by exotic species such as reed canary grass and purple loosestrife can degrade habitat quality.

Surveys of sedge meadow habitat are needed to monitor the Yellow Rail and find additional breeding sites. It is also necessary to preserve and maintain the healthy conditions of large expanses of northern sedge meadows. This includes allowing the natural fluctuation of water levels in sedge meadow habitat, burning to control woody shrubs and prevent their encroachment, and preserving hummocky areas within wetlands.

**Banded Killifish** (*Fundulus diaphanus*) – a State Special Concern fish, prefers clear water of the bays and quiet backwaters of large lakes and medium to large streams with and sparse to no vegetation over gravel, sand, silt, marl, clay detritus or cobble. Spawning occurs from June through mid-August.

## **Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species and Communities for the Highway 53 Interchange at Haugen**

The Banded Killifish is also recognized as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan. Threats to and issues affecting this species that may be relevant to road construction include:

- Dams that do not allow for water level fluctuations that mimic natural low and high flow conditions.
- Shoreline habitat destruction and alteration due to development pressures on the shoreline proper, and a philosophy of stabilizing artificially raised water elevations.
- Exotic invasive plants and animals threaten this species through habitat degradation and possible alteration of food web dynamics.
- Non-point source pollution from land management practices in the watersheds surrounding the lakes and inlet and outlet streams where this species occurs.
- Habitat loss and degradation from shoreline development, littoral zone modification of lakes, and agriculture and urbanization of shorelines and watersheds.

Limiting work in or near water (lakes or streams) to late August through early May will help to avoid impacts to nests and fish. Additionally, the following steps will also help to protect this species and its preferred habitat:

- Reduction of non-point source pollution.
- Protection and restoration of natural lake and river shoreline areas. This includes the utilization and maintenance of strict erosion controls and the proper restoration (use of native plants instead of rip-rap or other "hard armoring") of stream bank and shoreline habitats after construction is completed.
- Appropriate restoration of shoreline areas after construction will also contribute to protecting aquatic plants.

**Least Darter** (*Etheostoma microperca*) – a fish listed as Special Concern in Wisconsin, prefers clear, warm, quiet waters of overflow ponds, pools, lakes and streams over substrates of gravel, silt, sand, boulders, mud or clay with dense vegetation or filamentous algal beds. Spawning occurs from late April through July.

The Least Darter is also recognized as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan. Threats to and issues affecting this species that may be relevant to road construction include:

- Shoreline and watershed agriculture and urbanization.
- Aquatic plant control efforts.
- Non-point source pollution from agriculture and other activities within the watershed.

Limiting work in or near water (lakes or streams) to August through mid-March will help to avoid impacts to nests and fish. Additionally, the following steps will also help to protect this species and its preferred habitat:

- Protect areas of lake and river shorelines where shallow, densely vegetated areas used for spawning can be found. These types of areas are often cleared of vegetation for purposes including beaches and access to boat ramps.
- Control of non-point source pollution is needed to improve water and habitat quality.

## Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species and Communities for the Highway 53 Interchange at Haugen

**Ozark Minnow** (*Notropis nubilus*) – a fish listed as Threatened in Wisconsin, prefers clear, small to medium, low-gradient streams over bottoms of cobble. This species is intolerant of excessive turbidity and siltation. Spawning occurs from May through early August.

The Ozark Minnow is also recognized as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan. Threats to and issues affecting this species that may be relevant to road construction include non-point source pollution, particularly sedimentation and runoff.

Limiting work in or near water (lakes or streams) to late August through late April will help to avoid impacts to nests and fish. Additionally, the following steps will also help to protect this species and its preferred habitat:

- Protection and restoration of habitat in the Mississippi River drainage basin, particularly in the areas of southern and possibly northwestern Wisconsin where the species has been documented, are needed to protect this species.
- Control of non-point source pollution, including erosion and agricultural runoff, in the Mississippi River basin.

**Pugnose Shiner** (*Notropis anogenus*) – a fish listed as Threatened in Wisconsin, prefers weedy shoals of glacial lakes and low-gradient streams over bottoms of mud, sand, cobble, silt, and clay. This species is intolerant of turbidity and siltation and is very sensitive to environmental modification. Spawning occurs from mid-May through July.

The Pugnose Shiner is also recognized as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan. Threats to and issues affecting this species that may be relevant to road construction include:

- Habitat degradation and loss from urbanization and agriculture along shorelines and within watersheds.
- Loss of habitat due to lakeshore development and destruction of littoral zone macrophyte communities.
- Non-point source pollution.

Limiting work in or near water (lakes or streams) to August through early May will help to avoid impacts to nests and fish. Additionally, the following steps will also help to protect this species and its preferred habitat:

- Protection of refuge areas is needed to conserve this species.
- Protection and restoration of natural lake and stream habitat, including efforts to control non-point source pollution and implement appropriate management of aquatic plants.

**Weed Shiner** (*Notropis texanus*) – a fish listed as Special Concern in Wisconsin, prefers sloughs, lakes, and still-to-sluggish sections of medium streams to large rivers, over substrates of sand, mud, clay, silt, detritus, gravel or boulders. Spawning occurs from late June through July.

## Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species and Communities for the Highway 53 Interchange at Haugen

Limiting work in or near water (lakes or streams) to August through early May will help to avoid impacts to nests and fish.

**Mingan's Moonwort** (*Botrychium minganense*) – a plant of Special Concern in Wisconsin, prefers cool, mixed conifer-hardwood forests near Lake Superior. Optimal identification period is from early June to late July.

**Swamp-pink** (*Arethusa bulbosa*) – a plant of Special Concern in Wisconsin, prefers neutral bog and fen mats with a mix of sedges, ericads, and sphagnum. Blooming occurs from mid-May through mid-July. Optimum identification period is from early June to mid-July.

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In addition to the above-listed animal and plant species, three natural communities occur in the project area. Natural communities are not legally protected, but they are sites of high conservation value because they provide good-to-excellent quality examples of the state's various habitat types. Therefore, protecting the components of these sites is requested where possible.

### Northern Sedge Meadow

This open wetland community is dominated by sedges and grasses. There are several common subtypes: Tussock meadows, dominated by tussock sedge (*Carex stricta*) and Canada bluejoint grass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*); Broad-leaved sedge meadows, dominated by the robust sedges (*Carex lacustris* and/or *C. utriculata*); and Wire-leaved sedge meadows, dominated by such species as woolly sedge (*Carex lasiocarpa*) and few-seeded sedge (*C. oligosperma*). Frequent associates include marsh bluegrass (*Poa palustris*), manna grasses (*Glyceria* spp.), panicled aster (*Aster lanceolatus*), joy-pye-weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*), and the bulrushes (*Scirpus atrovirens* and *S. cyperinus*).

### Northern Wet Forest

These weakly minerotrophic conifer swamps, located in the North, are dominated by black spruce (*Picea mariana*) and tamarack (*Larix laricina*). Jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*) may be a significant canopy component in certain parts of the range of this community complex. Understories are composed mostly of sphagnum (*Sphagnum* spp.) mosses and ericaceous shrubs such as leatherleaf (*Chamaedaphne calyculata*), Labrador-tea (*Ledum groenlandicum*), and small cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*) and sedges such as (*Carex trisperma* and *C. paupercula*). The Natural Heritage Inventory has split out two entities, identified (but not strictly defined) by the two dominant species: Black Spruce Swamp and Tamarack Swamp. (Descriptions of these two communities can be found online at <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/communities/descriptions.htm>.)

## Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species and Communities for the Highway 53 Interchange at Haugen

### Open Bog

These non-forested bogs are acidic, low nutrient, northern Wisconsin peatlands dominated by *Sphagnum* spp. mosses that occur in deep layers, often with pronounced hummocks and hollows. Also present are a few narrow-leaved sedge species such as (*Carex oligosperma* and *C. pauciflora*), cotton-grasses (*Eriophorum* spp.), and ericaceous shrubs, especially bog laurel (*Kalmia polifolia*), leatherleaf (*Chamaedaphne calyculata*), and small cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccus*). Plant diversity is very low but includes characteristic and distinctive specialists. Trees are absent or achieve very low cover values as this community is closely related to and intergrades with Muskeg. When this community occurs in southern Wisconsin, it is often referred to as a Bog Relict.



State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Jim Doyle, Governor  
Scott Hassett, Secretary  
John Gozdziwski, Regional Director

Northern Region Headquarters  
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Spooner, Wisconsin 54801  
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TDD 715-635-4001

May 10, 2007

Marc Bowker  
DOT- Northwest Region  
P.O. Box 282  
Spooner, WI 54801

RE: **I.D. # 1197-22-00**  
**USH 53/Haugen Interchange Location & Freeway Conversion Study**  
**Barron/Washburn County**

Dear Marc:

This is in follow-up to your submittal of conceptual design alternatives and our subsequent joint field review for the above referenced project. The purpose of this letter is to provide our comments on the three alternatives that have been developed to date as part of this study.

**COMMENTS ON ISSUES COMMON TO ALL THREE ALTERNATIVES:**

**26<sup>th</sup> Avenue/USH 53:** During our field review on March 29, 2007, we discussed the option to push the overpass slightly to the north to avoid wetland impacts in the southwest quadrant of this intersection. We support this option and understand it will be incorporated into the alternatives.

**CTH SS/USH 53** – The proposed cul-de-sac on CTH SS should provide access to the Wild Rivers Trail parking lot. Access to the Wild Rivers Trail needs to be maintained at all times during construction.

**19<sup>th</sup> Street connection to 18 ¾ Street at Lower Devils Lake** – This new connector road could open the door for more development on Lower Devils Lake and lead to additional land fragmentation. Lower Devils Lake is a seepage water lake and subject to occasional winterkill. Adding impervious surfaces, additional drainage, and stormwater runoff, as well as the possibility of more residential development, could have serious impacts to the water quality of Lower Devils Lake.

There is an active osprey nest located next to 19<sup>th</sup> Street (Sec. 7, T36N, R11W). Osprey are listed as a threatened species in Wisconsin. They are very easily agitated and timing restrictions may be needed for any construction in this vicinity.

We ask that you provide us with additional information on the secondary impacts of constructing this new connector road. What kind of improvements, if any, will need to be made to the existing portions of 19<sup>th</sup> Street and 18 ¾ Street? Will daily traffic counts

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increase in this area? What kind of impacts would there be to Lower Devils Lake and the wetlands adjacent to these roads?

**Connector road between 29 ¾ Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue** – There is an active osprey nest located near 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Haugen Lake. As mentioned above, osprey are listed as a threatened species in Wisconsin. Timing restrictions may be needed for any construction in this vicinity. We support the proposal to push this connector road further west than currently planned in order to avoid wetland impacts to this area.

**30<sup>th</sup> Avenue/USH 53** – If an overpass is built at this location, we recommend it completely span the entire right-of-way for the Wild Rivers Trail, and that you consider constructing it high enough to accommodate any future railroad use. This railroad corridor has been preserved under the federal Trails Act as a Rails to Trails corridor. Any plans which could impact the rail corridor must be done in accordance with federal law and take into consideration that rail service could be restored at any time. In addition, if there are any temporary or permanent impacts to the Wild Rivers Trail it may require a Section 4(f) determination.

Could traffic patterns on 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue change after the other crossings along USH 53 are closed off? Would they increase to the point that 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue would need to be upgraded to support additional traffic? East of USH 53, 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue runs adjacent to Upper Devils Lake and Haugen Lake, as well as several other wetland areas. What impacts could there be to these areas if 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue needed to be upgraded?

**Land use** – One of the secondary impacts we are concerned with is future land use around the proposed interchange. These areas can be subject to heavy development, and we understand there are already future plans to build a business in the northeast quadrant of the CTH V/USH 53 intersection. What measures have the DOT and/or the Village of Haugen discussed to manage land development around the proposed interchange?

#### **SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON EACH ALTERNATIVE:**

##### **Alternative 1: Interchange at CTH V**

**27<sup>th</sup> Avenue/USH 53** - We recommend locating the proposed cul-de-sac closer to CTH SS. It appears that there is only one residence located along this portion of 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and it may be unnecessary to construct the cul-de-sac in the proposed location. Removing a larger portion of 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue would reduced paved surfaces and allow this land to be returned to agricultural use.

**19<sup>th</sup> Street extension down to 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue** - As discussed during our field review, the resource impacts associated with extending 19<sup>th</sup> Street down to 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue could be minimized by shortening the distance between USH 53 and 19<sup>th</sup> Street. Using methods such as conifer plantings between the two roadways could be an effective way to provide a safe barrier. If there are wetlands located in the proposed road extension area, impacts would be minimized by pushing the two road corridors closer together. Again, we have concerns about associated secondary impacts to the surrounding area by extending 19<sup>th</sup> Street southward. What kind of improvements would have to be made to the existing portions of 19<sup>th</sup> Street in order to support the predicted traffic counts?

**CTH V/USH 53** – Locating the interchange at this location could have serious impacts to the existing drainage system to Bear Creek. Approximately 4.3 acres of wetland could be impacted by this alternative, most from the interchange. On the east side of USH 53, there is an intermittent tributary to Bear Creek that currently crosses CTH V and 19<sup>th</sup> Street (south of CTH V). The topography in the northeast quadrant of this intersection also provides enough relief to form another drainage that eventually connects with the Bear Creek tributary. Bear Creek is currently classified as an Outstanding Resource Water (ORW). This means it provides valuable fisheries, hydrologically or geologically unique features, outstanding recreational opportunities, unique environmental settings, and is not significantly impacted by human activities. The grading that would be necessary to construct the proposed ramps and overpass structure for the interchange and to realign and raise 19<sup>th</sup> Street could greatly impact this important drainage system. This in turn could jeopardize the integrity and water quality of Bear Creek.

In addition, there would be large amounts of grading needed to realign CTH V, and to construct the proposed ramps and cul-de-sac in the northwest quadrant. There is a significant drop in elevation in this area and most stormwater drains to Bear Creek. The additional impervious surfaces and change in drainage patterns could again seriously impact the water quality of Bear Creek.

We have many concerns with the direct impacts associated with this alternative, as well as potential secondary impacts. CTH V is already designed to carry higher traffic volumes than the smaller secondary roads located in this study area. What kind of improvements would need to be made to CTH V outside of the study limits?

#### **Alternative 2: Relocated CTH V North**

**Relocated CTH V North** – The area through which this interchange and access roads would be constructed contains hilly topography, an unfragmented parcel of forested land, an intermittent tributary to Bear Creek, and several wetlands. Approximately 9.1 acres of wetlands could be impacted by this alternative, most of which would be associated with the interchange.

Most of the concerns we mentioned above for Alternative 1 also apply to this option. Locating a new interchange in this area could seriously impact the integrity and water quality of Bear Creek, open up the area to new development, and unnecessarily fragment a large parcel of diverse forestland and habitat. Again, this is an important drainage area for the Bear Creek system. Protecting this valuable area is an effective way to help maintain Bear Creek's classification as an ORW (see comments on Alternative 1).

#### **Alternative 3: Interchange at 27<sup>th</sup> Ave.**

**Interchange at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue.** – This location may have fewer direct impacts to natural resources than the other proposed alternatives. However, we believe there could be potential secondary impacts to the surrounding area. Locating the interchange at this intersection could put increased pressure on 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and subsequently have to be improved to handle the increased traffic volumes. What could the impacts be on the secondary road system if an interchange was built here? Again, this issue needs to be more thoroughly addressed.

**CTH V/USH 53** – Putting in an overpass and pushing it north of existing CTH V could have many of the same impacts that we stated in our comments for Alternative 1. Protecting this valuable area is an effective way to help maintain Bear Creek's classification as an ORW (see comments on Alternative 1). Changing the alignment of CTH V in this area could seriously impact the integrity and water quality of Bear Creek.

**OTHER COMMENTS:**

**Other alternatives** - Is there a possibility of developing an interchange at 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue if the proposed interchange is located at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue? This should be addressed in the alternatives because it could potentially affect wetlands, land use, and secondary roads that are found within the current study area. We have concerns with "segmenting" these conversion studies, especially when an issue in the next segment could affect options in this study area.

**Future corridor studies** - For purposes of future planning, we would like to share our concerns with you on an issue that could potentially affect the Wild Rivers Trail. We have been hearing that there is a possibility that DOT would use the current trail as a frontage, or access road, in other segments of the USH 53 conversion process. This old railroad right-of-way is federally granted and is also a Rails-to-Trails corridor. Therefore, it can only be used for recreational trail purposes. Please refer to our comments on this issue on Page 2 under "30<sup>th</sup> Avenue/USH 53".

At this time, we do not have sufficient information to identify a preferred alternative. We will complete our review process and identify our preferred alternative after we have received the additional information requested and have an opportunity to review the Environmental Assessment on the study design alternatives.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on your study. If you have any questions regarding this letter or the information we have requested, please feel free to contact me here in our Spooner office at (715) 635-4229.

Sincerely,

Amy Cronk  
Environmental Review Coordinator

cc: Terry Jordan- Spooner  
Darren Fortney  
6418 Normandy Lane, Ste. 100  
Madison, WI 53719  
Greg Weyandt  
421 Frenette Dr.  
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729-3374  
Troy Stapelmann  
DOT Northwest Region - Eau Claire  
Dan Munson  
ACOE – St. Paul



Division of Transportation  
System Development  
Northwest Region - Spooner Office  
7102 Green Valley Rd  
Spooner, WI 54801

Jim Doyle, Governor  
Frank J. Busalacchi, Secretary  
Internet: [www.dot.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov)

Telephone: 715-392-7925  
Toll Free: 800-590-1868  
Facsimile (FAX): 715-635-5016  
E-mail: [superior.dtd@dot.state.wi.us](mailto:superior.dtd@dot.state.wi.us)

June 28, 2007

AMY CRONK  
WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
810 W. MAPLE STREET  
SPOONER, WI 54801

Dear Amy:

Thank you for your letter on May 10<sup>th</sup> in regards to the USH 53 Haugen Interchange Location Study. We have reviewed your comments and provided responses to your comments below.

#### **COMMENTS ON ISSUES COMMON TO ALL THREE ALTERNATIVES:**

##### **26<sup>th</sup> Avenue/USH 53:**

**DNR Comment:** "During our field review on March 29, 2007, we discussed the option to push the overpass slightly to the north to avoid wetland impacts in the southwest quadrant of this intersection. We support this option and understand it will be incorporated into the alternatives."

**WisDOT Response:** Concur. Roadway would be shifted to the north to avoid wetland impacts in the southwest quadrant of the intersection.

##### **CTH SS/USH 53**

**DNR Comment:** "The proposed cul-de-sac on CTH SS should provide access to the Wild Rivers Trail parking lot. Access to the Wild Rivers Trail needs to be maintained at all times during construction."

**WisDOT Response:** Concur. Cul-de-sac would be located to provide access to the Wild Rivers Trail parking lot and access to the lot would be maintained throughout the construction phase.

##### **19<sup>th</sup> Street connection to 18 3/4<sup>th</sup> Street at Lower Devils Lake**

**DNR Comment:** "This new connector road could open the door for more development on Lower Devils Lake and lead to additional land fragmentation. Lower Devils Lake is a seepage water lake and subject to occasional winterkill. Adding impervious surfaces, additional drainage, and stormwater runoff, as well as the possibility of more residential development, could have serious impacts to the water quality of Lower Devils Lake.

There is an active osprey nest located next to 19<sup>th</sup> Street (Sec. 7, T36N, R11W). Osprey are listed as a threatened species in Wisconsin. They are very easily agitated and timing restrictions may be needed for any construction in this vicinity.

We ask that you provide us with additional information on the secondary impacts of constructing this new connector road. What kind of improvements, if any, will need to be made to the existing portions of 19<sup>th</sup> Street and 18 3/4 Street? Will daily traffic counts

increase in this area? What kind of impacts would there be to Lower Devils Lake and the wetlands adjacent to these roads?"

**WisDOT Response:** The proposed connector road is traversing a single property that already has access to the local road system from both the north and south. Thus the current condition of the property already allows for rather immediate development with minimal effort. Therefore we do not feel that construction of the connection is a new factor that would unilaterally spur growth beyond that which can or will already occur in this area.

Timing restrictions in relation to the Osprey nest would be incorporated into the construction project. Please provide the required restrictions so that they may be incorporated into the environmental document.

No geometric improvements would need to be made to the existing system to 19<sup>th</sup> Street or 18 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> Street. Adding the connector does not increase any traffic into the area, it merely redistributes the existing traffic patterns on 19<sup>th</sup> Street and 18 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> Street. . In addition, given the extremely low traffic volumes on these roadways, any minimal impact to the existing traffic patterns would not change the current roadway classification or their associated design standards. This also means future roadway work on these roadways would be constrained to pavement treatments that would not require any widening or significant grading work. Thus it is our opinion that our proposed connector would have no additional effects on Lower Devils Lake or the wetlands adjacent to the existing roadway or lake.

#### **Connector road between 29 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

**DNR Comment:** "There is an active osprey nest located near 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Haugen Lake. As mentioned above, osprey are listed as a threatened species in Wisconsin. Timing restrictions may be needed for any construction in this vicinity. We support the proposal to push this connector road further west than currently planned in order to avoid wetland impacts to this area."

**WisDOT Response:** Concur. Timing restrictions in relation to the Osprey nest could be incorporated into the construction project. It is our intent to move the connector further west to avoid wetland impacts to that area.

#### **30<sup>th</sup> Avenue/USH 53**

**DNR Comment:** "If an overpass is built at this location, we recommend it completely span the entire right-of-way for the Wild Rivers Trail, and that you consider constructing it high enough to accommodate any future railroad use. This railroad corridor has been preserved under the federal Trails Act as a Rails to Trails corridor. Any plans which could impact the rail corridor must be done in accordance with federal law and take into consideration that rail service could be restored at any time. In addition, if there are any temporary or permanent impacts to the Wild Rivers Trail it may require a Section 4(f) determination.

Could traffic patterns on 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue change after the other crossings along USH 53 are closed off? Would they increase to the point that 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue would need to be upgraded to support additional traffic? East of USH 53, 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue runs adjacent to Upper Devils Lake and Haugen Lake, as well as several other wetland areas. What impacts could there be to these areas if 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue needed to be upgraded?"

**WisDOT Response:** This project would officially map the property required to provide for the roadway structure to completely span and provide railroad clearance over the Wild Rivers Trail. No permanent effects would occur to the Wild River Trail as part of this project. However, some temporary measures such as flagging or minor shifting of the trail may be needed during construction to ensure the safety of trail users in the construction zone. It is emphasized that these measures would be done to ensure safe trail use could continue during construction. Upon completion of roadway construction, the trail would be returned to its existing condition. The situation on 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue is similar to that discussed early regarding the connector at 19<sup>th</sup> Street and 18 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> Street. While there may be some redistribution of existing traffic patterns, there would be no significant changes in traffic volumes on 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue and it would remain in its current highway classification and design class. It should be noted, that the combination of the proposed alteration to 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the proposed construction of the connection between

19<sup>th</sup> street and 18 ¾ Street, that the portion of 30<sup>th</sup> Ave. between USH 53 and 20<sup>th</sup> Street, through the Upper Devils Lake and Haugen Lake area, my actually see a decrease in the traffic volumes.

### Land use

**DNR Comment:** “One of the secondary impacts we are concerned with is future land use around the proposed interchange. These areas can be subject to heavy development, and we understand there are already future plans to build a business in the northeast quadrant of the CTH V/USH 53 intersection. What measures have the DOT and/or the Village of Haugen discussed to manage land development around the proposed interchange?”

**WisDOT Response:** It is our opinion that our proposed project would actually constrain development and associated secondary impacts in this area. Within the limits of this project there are currently five public road intersection offering opportunities for commercial development. As you’ve already noted, development proposals are already occurring at the existing US 53 / County V intersection.

The project alternatives being reviewed by WisDOT could reduce those access opportunities to a single interchange location where commercial growth and secondary impacts could be consolidated and more easily managed. . However, other than access restrictions and median closures, WisDOT does not have the statutory authority to define or restrict development along USH 53 Zoning and building permit authority are statutorily reserved for local units of government that WisDNR does have some review authority over.

## **SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON EACH ALTERNATIVE:**

### **Alternative 1: Interchange at CTH V**

#### **27<sup>th</sup> Avenue/USH 53**

**DNR Comment:** “We recommend locating the proposed cul-de-sac closer to CTH SS. It appears that there is only one residence located along this portion of 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and it may be unnecessary to construct the cul-de-sac in the proposed location. Removing a larger portion of 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue would reduced paved surfaces and allow this land to be returned to agricultural use.

**WisDOT Response:** Under Wis State Statute 84.295 for Expressways and Freeways, WisDOT would have limited authority to remove or vacate any portion of 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue between USH 53 and CTH SS beyond what is necessary for the removal of the connection with USH 53. The local Town would have the authority to vacate the entire segment of roadway, which could be completed as part of the actual construction project, but WisDOT does not have the authority to force zoning or use restrictions on that land to guarantee it would be returned to agricultural use once the roadway is eliminated. That authority would reside with the underlying local unit of government.

#### **19<sup>th</sup> Street extension down to 27<sup>m</sup> Avenue**

**DNR Comment:** “As discussed during our field review, the resource impacts associated with extending 19<sup>th</sup> Street down to 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue could be minimized by shortening the distance between USH 53 and 19<sup>th</sup> Street. Using methods such as conifer plantings between the two roadways could be an effective way to provide a safe barrier. If there are wetlands located in the proposed road extension area, impacts would be minimized by pushing the two road corridors closer together. Again, we have concerns about associated secondary impacts to the surrounding area by extending 19<sup>th</sup> Street southward. What kind of improvements would have to be made to the existing portions of 19<sup>th</sup> Street in order to support the predicted traffic counts?”

**WisDOT Response:** The recommended setback for the centerline of any roadway measured from the outside through lane of US 53 is 115 ft and is the desirable separation distance for this roadway. Separation between roadways is an important safety issue as they minimize or eliminate issues such as opposing headlight glare at night and/or driver confusion. Also it would appear to us that significant impacts and/or wetlands would need to be encountered to vary from the desirable separation distance in this area.

Traffic volumes on 19<sup>th</sup> street would be expected to increase slightly. However, since the current volume on 27<sup>th</sup> is only 33 AADT, the change would not require any roadway improvements to 19<sup>th</sup> Street.

### **CTH V/USH 53**

**DNR Comments:** “Locating the interchange at this location could have serious impacts to the existing drainage system to Bear Creek. Approximately 4.3 acres of wetland could be impacted by this alternative, most from the interchange. On the east side of USH 53, there is an intermittent tributary to Bear Creek that currently crosses CTH V and 19<sup>th</sup> Street (south of CTH V). The topography in the northeast quadrant of this intersection also provides enough relief to form another drainage that eventually connects with the Bear Creek tributary. Bear Creek is currently classified as an Outstanding Resource Water (ORW). This means it provides valuable fisheries, hydrologically or geologically unique features, outstanding recreational opportunities, unique environmental settings, and is not significantly impacted by human activities. The grading that would be necessary to construct the proposed ramps and overpass structure for the interchange and to realign and raise 19<sup>th</sup> Street could greatly impact this important drainage system. This in turn could jeopardize the integrity and water quality of Bear Creek.

In addition, there would be large amounts of grading needed to realign CTH V, and to construct the proposed ramps and cul-de-sac in the northwest quadrant. There is a significant drop in elevation in this area and most stormwater drains to Bear Creek. The additional impervious surfaces and change in drainage patterns could again seriously impact the water quality of Bear Creek.

We have many concerns with the direct impacts associated with this alternative, as well as potential secondary impacts. CTH V is already designed to carry higher traffic volumes than the smaller secondary roads located in this study area. What kind of improvements would need to be made to CTH V outside of the study limits?”

**WisDOT Response:** First, WisDOT would make every effort to design the interchange at this location to ensure that any runoff from that facility would be contained within the interchange area through retention basins and directed ditching. This would ensure no additional impacts to the Bear Creek Drainage system from this facility. Efforts would also be made to maintain any existing drainage patterns.

Secondly, WisDOT could make design decisions that could allow the interchange to serve as a drainage retention and filter area for runoff from existing agricultural lands in the immediate area that currently flow unimpeded into the Bear Creek Drainage system. Thus the interchange could help improve the overall water quality that ultimately reaches Bear Creek.

The project would not increase traffic volumes to the point that it would change either the existing classification or design class for CTH V.

### **Alternative 2: Relocated CTH V. North**

#### **Relocated CTH V North**

**DNR Comments:** “The area through which this interchange and access roads would be constructed contains hilly topography, an unfragmented parcel of forested land, an intermittent tributary to Bear Creek, and several wetlands. Approximately 9.1 acres of wetlands could be impacted by this alternative, most of which would be associated with the interchange.

Most of the concerns we mentioned above for Alternative 1 also apply to this option. Locating a new interchange in this area could seriously impact the integrity and water quality of Bear Creek, open up the area to new development, and unnecessarily fragment a large parcel of diverse forestland and habitat. Again, this is an important drainage area for the Bear Creek system. Protecting this valuable area is an effective way to help maintain Bear Creek's classification as an ORW (see comments on Alternative 1).”

**WisDOT Response:** Concur.

## **Alternative 3: Interchange at 27<sup>th</sup> Ave.**

### **Interchange at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue.**

**DNR Comments:** “This location may have fewer direct impacts to natural resources than the other proposed alternatives. However, we believe there could be potential secondary impacts to the surrounding area. Locating the interchange at this intersection could put increased pressure on 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and subsequently have to be improved to handle the increased traffic volumes. What could the impacts be on the secondary road system if an interchange was built here? Again, this issue needs to be more thoroughly addressed.”

**WisDOT Response:** This interchange location would require upgrade of the existing 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue roadway to current standards for the projected traffic. This would include roadway widening, paved surface and new right of way along 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the existing connecting roadway utilized to move the traffic back onto County V.

### **CTH V/USH 53**

**DNR Comments:** “Putting in an overpass and pushing it north of existing CTH V could have many of the same impacts that we stated in our comments for Alternative 1. Protecting this valuable area is an effective way to help maintain Bear Creek's classification as an ORW (see comments on Alternative 1). Changing the alignment of CTH V in this area could seriously impact the integrity and water quality of Bear Creek.”

**WisDOT Response:** While wetland area would be impacted by the overpass and COUNTY V relocation there may be some areas, vacated by the existing roadway that can be utilized to improve the water quality of the drainage area, which is also being fed by agricultural property, prior to passing the drainage further into the Bear Creek drainage system. Alternative 1 with the interchange at County V seems to provide the best chance for improving the water quality with the area inside the loop ramps.

## **OTHER COMMENTS:**

### **Other alternatives**

**DNR Comments:** “Is there a possibility of developing an interchange at 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue if the proposed interchange is located at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue? This should be addressed in the alternatives because it could potentially affect wetlands, land use, and secondary roads that are found within the current study area. We have concerns with "segmenting" these conversion studies, especially when an issue in the next segment could affect options in this study area.”

**WisDOT Response:** WisDOT does not see a need for an interchange at 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue and it is not proposed with any of the alternates. The project has independent utility and ends at a logical termini.

### **Future corridor studies**

**DNR Comments:** “For purposes of future planning, we would like to share our concerns with you on an issue that could potentially affect the Wild Rivers Trail. We have been hearing that there is a possibility that DOT would use the current trail as a frontage, or access road, in other segments of the USH 53 conversion process. This old railroad right-of-way is federally granted and is also a Rails-to-Trails corridor. Therefore, it can only be used for recreational trail purposes, Please refer to our comments on this issue on Page 2 under "30<sup>th</sup> Avenue/USH 53".”

**WisDOT Response:** WisDOT has not begun any additional studies at this time and thus there have been no official suggestions or considerations offered on any alternative uses of the existing trail. We can only assume that any information WisDNR has heard in this regard has come from non-WisDOT sources and thus should be considered hearsay. WisDOT understands the value and importance of the trail to WisDNR and will certainly have that in the

forefront of its mind as we initiate studies further north along the USH 53 Corridor. WisDNR will have the opportunity to independently comment and if necessary to object on those studies as they move forward.

If you feel that we have not addressed your comments please feel free to contact me at (715) 635-4975 so we can discuss those concerns. We look forward to continue working with you on this project and will forward to you the EA for review when we have it available.

Sincerely,

Marc Bowker  
Planning Engineer

**Appendix B5**

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**DATCP Correspondence**



State of Wisconsin  
Jim Doyle, Governor

Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection  
Rod Nilsestuen, Secretary

April 10, 2008

Ms. Barbara Feeney  
Short Elliot Hendrickson, Inc.  
6418 Normandy Lane, Suite 100  
Madison, WI 53719-1149

Dear Ms. Feeney:

Re: USH 53: Haugen Interchange Location & Freeway/Expressway Conversion Study  
Barron County  
Project ID: 1197-22-00

The Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has reviewed the notification and any supplemental information you have provided concerning the potential need for an agricultural impact statement (AIS) for the above project. We have determined that an AIS will not be prepared for this project at this time. It would not be productive for DATCP to contact the affected farmland owners regarding the project's impact on their farm when the actual project may not take place until the distant future. Landownership and land use may change significantly before WisDOT acquires the necessary property.

When WisDOT decides to move forward with the acquisition of farmland for the proposed project, DATCP should be re-notified. DATCP requests that you include this commitment in the Environmental Assessment that is being prepared for this project. The commitment could state: "At the time that any part of this project moves into final design, DATCP should be notified. If more than five acres of property would be acquired from any agricultural operation, an Agricultural Impact Statement must be prepared. If five acres or less is involved, DATCP has discretion whether to prepare an AIS. WisDOT cannot begin negotiation with a property owner until 30 days after the AIS has been published, if an AIS will be prepared for the project"

Please call me with any questions at 608/224-4650.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peter Nauth".

Peter Nauth  
Agricultural Impact Program  
(608) 224-4650

*Agriculture generates \$51.5 billion for Wisconsin*

2811 Agriculture Drive • PO Box 8911 • Madison, WI 53708-8911 • Wisconsin.gov

**Appendix B6**

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**FWS Correspondence**



# United States Department of the Interior

## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Green Bay ES Field Office  
 2661 Scott Tower Drive  
 New Franken, Wisconsin 54229-9565  
 Telephone 920/866-1717  
 FAX 920/866-1710

August 14, 2006

Mr. Mark Bowker  
 Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
 Northwest Region  
 Post Office Box 282  
 Spooner, Wisconsin 54801

re: Proposed Freeway Conversion  
 Project ID 1197-22-00  
 USH 53  
 Barron and Washburn Counties, Wisconsin

Dear Mr. Bowker:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has received your letter dated July 21, 2006, requesting comments on the subject project. The project entails potential conversion of a segment of USH 53 from freeway to expressway standards. The project study area extends from north of 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the Washburn County line to south of 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Barron County, Wisconsin. We have reviewed the information provided in your letter and our comments follow.

### **Federally-Listed Species, Candidate Species, and Critical Habitat**

The following species have been recorded within Barron County in habitats similar to those that are in or adjacent to areas that could be affected by the proposed project:

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Habitat</u>
threatened	bald eagle	<u>Haliaeetus</u> <u>leucocephalus</u>	breeding and wintering

Active bald eagle nests have been recorded within the study area at two locations: north of the Village of Haugen and near the southern end of the study area. As project planning proceeds, alternatives should be specifically evaluated for their potential to impact eagles. In addition to eagles, there are also state listed, rare, and/or sensitive species within the study area. Impacts to these species should also be avoided to the extent possible. Please be aware that over time, habitats near the project site may be utilized by listed or proposed species not present at this time. Therefore, if there is a time lag of more than 12 months between plan completion and execution, you should reassess the impact of the project on federally-listed or proposed species or designated critical habitat prior to start of construction activities.

As this project involves a Federal action (i.e., authorization, funding, or is carried out in whole or in part by a Federal agency), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or its designated agent is responsible for making a determination under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA), as to whether the selected project alternative may affect federally-listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat. If the proposed project may affect, but is unlikely to adversely affect federally-listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, FHWA or its agent must obtain written concurrence from our office. If the project may affect, and is likely to adversely affect federally-listed species or adversely modify designated critical habitat, FHWA must initiate formal consultation with the Service in accordance with section 7 of the ESA. Further information on the section 7 consultation process can be obtained by contacting the staff person identified at the end of this letter.

### Fish and Wildlife

The project area contains habitat for a number of rare and sensitive species, including Federal Species of Concern. We recommend that habitats for these species, such as wet meadows, prairies, or forested wetlands, be avoided when planning potential alternatives. In addition, under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended, it is unlawful to take, capture, kill, or possess migratory birds, their nests, eggs, and young. The project area includes habitat suitable for nesting by migratory bird species, including song birds and raptors. If impacts to migratory bird habitat cannot be avoided during construction, potential habitat or nesting structures should be removed before the initiation of spring nesting for migrants or after the breeding season has ended.

### Wetland Mitigation

The project study area appears to include wetlands and other water bodies. In refining and selecting project alternatives, efforts should be made to select an alternative that does not adversely impact wetlands or water bodies. If no other alternative is feasible and it is clearly demonstrated that project construction resulting in wetland disturbance or loss cannot be avoided, a wetland mitigation plan should be developed that identifies measures proposed to minimize adverse impacts and replace lost wetland habitat values and other wetland functions and values. Any project that impacts wetlands or waterways, including seasonally ephemeral and intermittent streams, should include design features such as culverts to retain hydrological connection between areas fragmented by the project.

We appreciate the opportunity to respond. Questions pertaining to these comments can be directed to Ms. Leakhena Au at 920-866-1734.

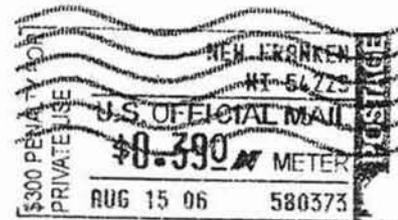
Sincerely,

Louise Clemency  
Field Supervisor

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Green Bay Field Office  
2661 Scott Tower Drive  
New Franken, WI 54229-9565

OFFICIAL BUSINESS  
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300

GREEN BAY WI 543  
15 AUG 2006 PM 1 T



Mr. Mark Bowker  
Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
Northwest Region  
Post Office Box 282  
Spooner, WI 54801

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**Appendix C**

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**NRCS Form AD-1006**

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December 19, 2007

Barb Feeney  
SEH  
6418 Normandy Lane, Suite 100  
Madison, WI 53719

RE: US 53 Interchange Location/Freeway Connection

Dear Barb:

I have reviewed the maps, descriptions, and the completed Farmland Conversion Impact Rating (Form AD-1006) for the above mentioned project, with regard to requirements of the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA). The purpose of the Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form is to evaluate farmland impacts for various alternatives to proposed projects.

Because the preferred alternative has already been selected for this project, provisions of the FPPA do not apply and no further action is needed on your part to comply with its requirements. I will work with our web site developer to make it clearer the need to send the Form AD-1006 to NRCS before the preferred site is selected.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed project.

Sincerely,



Larry Natzke  
Resource Soil Scientist

cc:

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# FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING

<b>PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency)</b>		Date Of Land Evaluation Request	10/23/07
Name Of Project	US 53 Haugen Interchange Location/Freeway Con	Federal Agency Involved	FHWA
Proposed Land Use	Highway ROW for interchange	County And State	Barron Co. Village of Haugen, Towns of Oak Grove

<b>PART II (To be completed by NRCS)</b>		Date Request Received By NRCS	
Does the site contain prime, unique, statewide or local important farmland? (If no, the FPPA does not apply -- do not complete additional parts of this form).		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Major Crop(s)		Farmable Land In Govt. Jurisdiction Acres: %	Acres Irrigated Average Farm Size
Name Of Land Evaluation System Used	Name Of Local Site Assessment System	Amount Of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: %	
		Date Land Evaluation Returned By NRCS	

<b>PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency)</b>	Alternative Site Rating			
	Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly	98.0	67.0	84.0	
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly				
C. Total Acres In Site	98.0	67.0	84.0	0.0

<b>PART IV (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information</b>				
A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland				
B. Total Acres Statewide And Local Important Farmland				
C. Percentage Of Farmland In County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted				
D. Percentage Of Farmland In Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value				

<b>PART V (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Criterion</b> Relative Value Of Farmland To Be Converted (Scale of 0 to 100 Points)	100	100	100	0
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<b>PART VI (To be completed by Federal Agency)</b> Site Assessment Criteria (These criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5(b))	Maximum Points				
1. Area In Nonurban Use	10	10	15		
2. Perimeter In Nonurban Use	8	5	10		
3. Percent Of Site Being Farmed	0	20	20		
4. Protection Provided By State And Local Government	4	4	4		
5. Distance From Urban Builtup Area	15	15	15		
6. Distance To Urban Support Services	0	0	0		
7. Size Of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average	5	0	10		
8. Creation Of Nonfarmable Farmland	0	0	0		
9. Availability Of Farm Support Services	5	5	5		
10. On-Farm Investments	5	5	20		
11. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services	0		0		
12. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use	0		0		
<b>TOTAL SITE ASSESSMENT POINTS</b>	160	52	64	99	0

<b>PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency)</b>					
Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)	100	100	100	100	0
Total Site Assessment (From Part VI above or a local site assessment)	160	52	64	99	0
<b>TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)</b>	260	152	164	199	0

Site Selected: Site A (System Alternative 1)	Date Of Selection	4/30/07	Was A Local Site Assessment Used?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Reason For Selection: Proximity to Village of Haugen, impact on wetlands, impact on farm operations

Notes: Site A= System Alternative 1, Site B=System Alternative 2, Site C= System Alternative 3

**Notes on NRCS-AD-1006  
Farmland Conversion Impact Rating**

**US 53 Haugen Interchange Location and Freeway Conversion Study  
Barron County**

**WisDOT Project ID 1197-22-00**

**Part VI Assessment Criteria for System Alternative 1 - Preferred Alternative**

**Scores focus on property being taken for US 53 Interchange near Haugen: M. Konop, B. Konop, Uchytel**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Explanation for score</b>
1. Area in nonurban use	10	Lands to the east are in non-urban use
2. Perimeter in a nonurban use	8	Lands to the east are predominantly rural. Village of Haugen is to the west.
3. Percent of site being farmed	0	The lands to be taken do not appear to be actively farmed, or being harvested for wood.
4. Protection being provided by state and local government	4	Minimal protection is provided. Most of the farmed area is not zoned for an exclusive ag use.
5. Distance from urban build-up area	15	The site is more than 10,560 feet from an urban build-up area (min 2500 population).
6. Distance to urban support services	0	All services are within ½ mile of the site.
7. Size of present farm unit compared to average	5	Average size of properties where acres are being taken is being taken is 56 acres. This is 25% of the average farm in Barron (220 acres)
8. Creation of Nonfarmable farmland	0	The remaining property will be able to continue in its current use.
9. Availability of farm support services	5	All services are available.
10. On-Farm investments	5	Limited on-farm investments.
11. Effects of conversion on farm support services	0	No decrease in demand for farm support services would result.
12. Compatibility with Existing Agricultural Use	0	Surrounding property can continue to be farmed.
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	<b>52</b>	

**Notes on NRCS-AD-1006  
Farmland Conversion Impact Rating**

**US 53 Haugen Interchange Location and Freeway Conversion Study  
Barron County**

**WisDOT Project ID 1197-22-00**

**Part VI Assessment Criteria for System Alternative 2**

**Scores focus on property being taken for US 53 Interchange near Haugen: Devils Lake Farm, Taborsky**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Explanation for score</b>
1. Area in nonurban use	10	Lands to the east are in non-urban use
2. Perimeter in a nonurban use	5	Lands to the east are predominantly recreational/residential. Village of Haugen is to the southwest.
3. Percent of site being farmed	20	The lands to be taken appear to be actively farmed.
4. Protection being provided by state and local government	4	Minimal protection is provided. Most of the farmed area is not zoned for an exclusive ag use.
5. Distance from urban build-up area	15	The site is more than 10,560 feet from an urban build-up area (min 2500 population).
6. Distance to urban support services	0	All services are within ½ mile of the site.
7. Size of present farm unit compared to average	0	Average size of properties where acres are being taken is being taken is 77 acres. This is 35 % of the average farm in Barron.
8. Creation of Nonfarmable farmland	0	The remaining property will be able to continue in its current use.
9. Availability of farm support services	5	All services are available.
10. On-Farm investments	5	Limited on-farm investments.
11. Effects of conversion on farm support services	0	No decrease in demand for farm support services would result.
12. Compatibility with Existing Agricultural Use	0	Surrounding property can continue to be farmed.
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	<b>64</b>	

**Notes on NRCS-AD-1006  
Farmland Conversion Impact Rating**

**US 53 Haugen Interchange Location and Freeway Conversion Study  
Barron County**

**WisDOT Project ID 1197-22-00**

**Part VI Assessment Criteria for System Alternative 3**

**Scores focus on property being taken for US 53 Interchange near Haugen: Stodola**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Explanation for score</b>
1. Area in nonurban use	15	Lands to the east, south and west are in non-urban use
2. Perimeter in a nonurban use	10	Lands to the south, west and east are predominantly rural. Village of Haugen is 3/4 mile to the northwest.
3. Percent of site being farmed	20	The lands to be taken appear to be actively farmed.
4. Protection being provided by state and local government	4	Minimal protection is provided. Most of the farmed area is not zoned for an exclusive ag use.
5. Distance from urban build-up area	15	The site is more than 10,560 feet from an urban build-up area (min 2500 population).
6. Distance to urban support services	0	All services are within 1/2 mile of the site (Village of Haugen)
7. Size of present farm unit compared to average	10	Average size of properties where acres are being taken is being taken is 340 acres. This is 150% of the average farm in Barron (220 acres).
8. Creation of Nonfarmable farmland	0	The remaining property will be able to continue in its current use.
9. Availability of farm support services	5	All services are available.
10. On-Farm investments	20	On-farm investments are being made.
11. Effects of conversion on farm support services	0	No decrease in demand for farm support services would result.
12. Compatibility with Existing Agricultural Use	0	Surrounding property can continue to be farmed.
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	<b>99</b>	

## STEPS IN THE PROCESSING THE FARMLAND AND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING FORM

Step 1 – Federal agencies involved in proposed projects that may convert farmland, as defined in the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) to nonagricultural uses, will initially complete Parts I and III of the form.

Step 2 – Originator will send copies A, B and C together with maps indicating locations of site(s), to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) local field office and retain copy D for their files. (Note: NRCS has a field office in most counties in the U.S. The field office is usually located in the county seat. A list of field office locations are available from the NRCS State Conservationist in each state).

Step 3 – NRCS will, within 45 calendar days after receipt of form, make a determination as to whether the site(s) of the proposed project contains prime, unique, statewide or local important farmland.

Step 4 – In cases where farmland covered by the FPPA will be converted by the proposed project, NRCS field offices will complete Parts II, IV and V of the form.

Step 5 – NRCS will return copy A and B of the form to the Federal agency involved in the project. (Copy C will be retained for NRCS records).

Step 6 – The Federal agency involved in the proposed project will complete Parts VI and VII of the form.

Step 7 – The Federal agency involved in the proposed project will make a determination as to whether the proposed conversion is consistent with the FPPA and the agency's internal policies.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING FORM

**Part I:** In completing the "County And State" questions list all the local governments that are responsible for local land controls where site(s) are to be evaluated.

**Part III:** In completing item B (Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly), include the following:

1. Acres not being directly converted but that would no longer be capable of being farmed after the conversion, because the conversion would restrict access to them.
2. Acres planned to receive services from an infrastructure project as indicated in the project justification (e.g. highways, utilities) that will cause a direct conversion.

**Part VI:** Do not complete Part VI if a local site assessment is used.

Assign the maximum points for each site assessment criterion as shown in § 658.5 (b) of CFR. In cases of corridor-type projects such as transportation, powerline and flood control, criteria #5 and #6 will not apply and will be weighed zero, however, criterion #8 will be weighed a maximum of 25 points, and criterion #11 a maximum of 25 points.

Individual Federal agencies at the national level, may assign relative weights among the 12 site assessment criteria other than those shown in the FPPA rule. In all cases where other weights are assigned relative adjustments must be made to maintain the maximum total weight points at 160.

In rating alternative sites, Federal agencies shall consider each of the criteria and assign points within the limits established in the FPPA rule. Sites most suitable for protection under these criteria will receive the highest total scores, and sites least suitable, the lowest scores.

**Part VII:** In computing the "Total Site Assessment Points" where a State or local site assessment is used and the total maximum number of points is other than 160, adjust the site assessment points to a base of 160. Example: if the Site Assessment maximum is 200 points, and alternative Site "A" is rated 180 points:

$$\frac{\text{Total points assigned Site A}}{\text{Maximum points possible}} = \frac{180}{200} \times 160 = 144 \text{ points for Site "A."}$$

## Site Assessment Scoring for the Twelve Factors Used in FPPA

The Site Assessment criteria used in the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) rule are designed to assess important factors other than the agricultural value of the land when determining which alternative sites should receive the highest level of protection from conversion to non agricultural uses.

Twelve factors are used for Site Assessment and ten factors for corridor-type sites. Each factor is listed in an outline form, without detailed definitions or guidelines to follow in the rating process. The purpose of this document is to expand the definitions of use of each of the twelve Site Assessment factors so that all persons can have a clear understanding as to what each factor is intended to evaluate and how points are assigned for given conditions.

In each of the 12 factors a number rating system is used to determine which sites deserve the most protection from conversion to non-farm uses. The higher the number value given to a proposed site, the more protection it will receive. The maximum scores are 10, 15 and 20 points, depending upon the relative importance of each particular question. If a question significantly relates to why a parcel of land should not be converted, the question has a maximum possible protection value of 20, whereas a question which does not have such a significant impact upon whether a site would be converted, would have fewer maximum points possible, for example 10.

The following guidelines should be used in rating the twelve Site Assessment criteria:

**1. How much land is in non-urban use within a radius of 1.0 mile from where the project is intended?**

More than 90 percent:	15 points
90-20 percent:	14 to 1 points
Less than 20 percent:	0 points

This factor is designed to evaluate the extent to which the area within one mile of the proposed site is non-urban area. For purposes of this rule, "non-urban" should include:

- Agricultural land (crop-fruit trees, nuts, oilseed)
- Range land
- Forest land
- Golf Courses
- Non paved parks and recreational areas
- Mining sites
- Farm Storage
- Lakes, ponds and other water bodies
- Rural roads, and through roads without houses or buildings
- Open space
- Wetlands
- Fish production
- Pasture or hayland

Urban uses include:

- Houses (other than farm houses)
- Apartment buildings
- Commercial buildings
- Industrial buildings
- Paved recreational areas (i.e. tennis courts)
- Streets in areas with 30 structures per 40 acres
- Gas stations

- Equipment, supply stores
- Off-farm storage
- Processing plants
- Shopping malls
- Utilities/Services
- Medical buildings

In rating this factor, an area one-mile from the outer edge of the proposed site should be outlined on a current photo; the areas that are urban should be outlined. For rural houses and other buildings with unknown sizes, use 1 and 1/3 acres per structure. For roads with houses on only one side, use one half of road for urban and one half for non-urban.

The purpose of this rating process is to insure that the most valuable and viable farmlands are protected from development projects sponsored by the Federal Government. With this goal in mind, factor S1 suggests that the more agricultural lands surrounding the parcel boundary in question, the more protection from development this site should receive. Accordingly, a site with a large quantity of non-urban land surrounding it will receive a greater number of points for protection from development. Thus, where more than 90 percent of the area around the proposed site (do not include the proposed site in this assessment) is non-urban, assign 15 points. Where 20 percent or less is non-urban, assign 0 points. Where the area lies between 20 and 90 percent non-urban, assign appropriate points from 14 to 1, as noted below.

<b>Percent Non-Urban Land within 1 mile</b>	<b>Points</b>
90 percent or greater	15
85 to 89 percent	14
80 to 84 percent	13
75 to 79 percent	12
70 to 74 percent	11
65 to 69 percent	10
60 to 64 percent	9
55 to 59 percent	8
50 to 54 percent	7
45 to 49 percent	6
40 to 44 percent	5
35 to 39 percent	4
30 to 24 percent	3
25 to 29 percent	2
21 to 24 percent	1
20 percent or less	0

**2. How much of the perimeter of the site borders on land in non-urban use?**

More than 90 percent:	10 points
90 to 20 percent:	9 to 1 point(s)
Less than 20 percent:	0 points

This factor is designed to evaluate the extent to which the land adjacent to the proposed site is non-urban use. Where factor #1 evaluates the general location of the proposed site, this factor evaluates the immediate perimeter of the site. The definition of urban and non-urban uses in factor #1 should be used for this factor.

In rating the second factor, measure the perimeter of the site that is in non-urban and urban use. Where more than 90 percent of the perimeter is in non-urban use, score this factor 10 points. Where less than 20 percent, assign 0 points. If a road is next to the perimeter, class the area according to the

use on the other side of the road for that area. Use 1 and 1/3 acre per structure if not otherwise known. Where 20 to 90 percent of the perimeter is non-urban, assign points as noted below:

<b>Percentage of Perimeter Bordering Land</b>	<b>Points</b>
90 percent or greater	10
82 to 89 percent	9
74 to 81 percent	8
65 to 73 percent	7
58 to 65 percent	6
50 to 57 percent	5
42 to 49 percent	4
34 to 41 percent	3
27 to 33 percent	2
21 to 26 percent	1
20 percent or Less	0

**3. How much of the site has been farmed (managed for a scheduled harvest or timber activity) more than five of the last ten years?**

More than 90 percent:	20 points
90 to 20 percent:	19 to 1 point(s)
Less than 20 percent:	0 points

This factor is designed to evaluate the extent to which the proposed conversion site has been used or managed for agricultural purposes in the past 10 years.

Land is being farmed when it is used or managed for food or fiber, to include timber products, fruit, nuts, grapes, grain, forage, oil seed, fish and meat, poultry and dairy products.

Land that has been left to grow up to native vegetation without management or harvest will be considered as abandoned and therefore not farmed. The proposed conversion site should be evaluated and rated according to the percent, of the site farmed.

If more than 90 percent of the site has been farmed 5 of the last 10 years score the site as follows:

<b>Percentage of Site Farmed</b>	<b>Points</b>
90 percent or greater	20
86 to 89 percent	19
82 to 85 percent	18
78 to 81 percent	17
74 to 77 percent	16
70 to 73 percent	15
66 to 69 percent	14
62 to 65 percent	13
58 to 61 percent	12
54 to 57 percent	11
50 to 53 percent	10
46 to 49 percent	9
42 to 45 percent	8
38 to 41 percent	7
35 to 37 percent	6
32 to 34 percent	5
29 to 31 percent	4
26 to 28 percent	3

23 to 25 percent	2
20 to 22 percent percent or Less	1
Less than 20 percent	0

**4. Is the site subject to state or unit of local government policies or programs to protect farmland or covered by private programs to protect farmland?**

Site is protected:	20 points
Site is not protected:	0 points

This factor is designed to evaluate the extent to which state and local government and private programs have made efforts to protect this site from conversion.

**State and local policies and programs to protect farmland include:**

**State Policies and Programs to Protect Farmland**

1. Tax Relief:

A. Differential Assessment: Agricultural lands are taxed on their agricultural use value, rather than at market value. As a result, farmers pay fewer taxes on their land, which helps keep them in business, and therefore helps to insure that the farmland will not be converted to nonagricultural uses.

1. Preferential Assessment for Property Tax: Landowners with parcels of land used for agriculture are given the privilege of differential assessment.
2. Deferred Taxation for Property Tax: Landowners are deterred from converting their land to nonfarm uses, because if they do so, they must pay back taxes at market value.
3. Restrictive Agreement for Property Tax: Landowners who want to receive Differential Assessment must agree to keep their land in - eligible use.

B. Income Tax Credits

Circuit Breaker Tax Credits: Authorize an eligible owner of farmland to apply some or all of the property taxes on his or her farmland and farm structures as a tax credit against the owner's state income tax.

C. Estate and Inheritance Tax Benefits

Farm Use Valuation for Death Tax: Exemption of state tax liability to eligible farm estates.

2. "Right to farm" laws:

Prohibits local governments from enacting laws which will place restrictions upon normally accepted farming practices, for example, the generation of noise, odor or dust.

3. Agricultural Districting:

Wherein farmers voluntarily organize districts of agricultural land to be legally recognized geographic areas. These farmers receive benefits, such as protection from annexation, in exchange for keeping land within the district for a given number of years.

4. Land Use Controls: Agricultural Zoning.

Types of Agricultural Zoning Ordinances include:

- A. Exclusive: In which the agricultural zone is restricted to only farm-related dwellings, with, for example, a minimum of 40 acres per dwelling unit.
- B. Non-Exclusive: In which non-farm dwellings are allowed, but the density remains low, such as 20 acres per dwelling unit.

Additional Zoning techniques include:

- A. Sliding Scale: This method looks at zoning according to the total size of the parcel owned. For example, the number of dwelling units per a given number of acres may change from county to county according to the existing land acreage to dwelling unit ratio of surrounding parcels of land within the specific area.
- B. Point System or Numerical Approach: Approaches land use permits on a case by case basis.  
  
LESA: The LESA system (Land Evaluation-Site Assessment) is used as a tool to help assess options for land use on an evaluation of productivity weighed against commitment to urban development.
- C. Conditional Use: Based upon the evaluation on a case by case basis by the Board of Zoning Adjustment. Also may include the method of using special land use permits.

5. Development Rights:

- A. Purchase of Development Rights (PDR): Where development rights are purchased by Government action.

Buffer Zoning Districts: Buffer Zoning Districts are an example of land purchased by Government action. This land is included in zoning ordinances in order to preserve and protect agricultural lands from non-farm land uses encroaching upon them.

- B. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR): Development rights are transferable for use in other locations designated as receiving areas. TDR is considered a locally based action (not state), because it requires a voluntary decision on the part of the individual landowners.

6. Governor's Executive Order: Policy made by the Governor, stating the importance of agriculture, and the preservation of agricultural lands. The Governor orders the state agencies to avoid the unnecessary conversion of important farmland to nonagricultural uses.

7. Voluntary State Programs:

- A. California's Program of Restrictive Agreements and Differential Assessments: The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly known as the Williamson Act, allows cities, counties and individual landowners to form agricultural preserves and enter into contracts for 10 or more years to insure that these parcels of land remain strictly for agricultural use. Since 1972 the Act has extended eligibility to recreational and open space lands such as scenic highway corridors, salt ponds and wildlife preserves. These contractually restricted lands may be taxed differentially for their real value. One hundred-acre districts constitute the minimum land size eligible.

Suggestion: An improved version of the Act would state that if the land is converted after the contract expires, the landowner must pay the difference in the taxes between market value for the land and the agricultural tax value which he or she had been

paying under the Act. This measure would help to insure that farmland would not be converted after the 10 year period ends.

- B. Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program: Agricultural landowners within agricultural districts have the opportunity to sell their development rights to the Maryland Land Preservation Foundation under the agreement that these landowners will not subdivide or develop their land for an initial period of five years. After five years the landowner may terminate the agreement with one year notice.

As is stated above under the California Williamson Act, the landowner should pay the back taxes on the property if he or she decides to convert the land after the contract expires, in order to discourage such conversions.

- C. Wisconsin Income Tax Incentive Program: The Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program of December 1977 encourages local jurisdictions in Wisconsin to adopt agricultural preservation plans or exclusive agricultural district zoning ordinances in exchange for credit against state income tax and exemption from special utility assessment. Eligible candidates include local governments and landowners with at least 35 acres of land per dwelling unit in agricultural use and gross farm profits of at least \$6,000 per year, or \$18,000 over three years.

#### 8. Mandatory State Programs:

- A. The Environmental Control Act in the state of Vermont was adopted in 1970 by the Vermont State Legislature. The Act established an environmental board with 9 members (appointed by the Governor) to implement a planning process and a permit system to screen most subdivisions and development proposals according to specific criteria stated in the law. The planning process consists of an interim and a final Land Capability and Development Plan, the latter of which acts as a policy plan to control development. The policies are written in order to:
- prevent air and water pollution;
  - protect scenic or natural beauty, historic sites and rare and irreplaceable natural areas; and
  - consider the impacts of growth and reduction of development on areas of primary agricultural soils.
- B. The California State Coastal Commission: In 1976 the Coastal Act was passed to establish a permanent Coastal Commission with permit and planning authority. The purpose of the Coastal Commission was and is to protect the sensitive coastal zone environment and its resources, while accommodating the social and economic needs of the state. The Commission has the power to regulate development in the coastal zones by issuing permits on a case by case basis until local agencies can develop their own coastal plans, which must be certified by the Coastal Commission.
- C. Hawaii's Program of State Zoning: In 1961, the Hawaii State Legislature established Act 187, the Land Use Law, to protect the farmland and the welfare of the local people of Hawaii by planning to avoid "unnecessary urbanization". The Law made all state lands into four districts: agricultural, conservation, rural and urban. The Governor appointed members to a State Land Use Commission, whose duties were to uphold the Law and form the boundaries of the four districts. In addition to state zoning, the Land Use Law introduced a program of Differential Assessment, wherein agricultural landowners paid taxes on their land for its agricultural use value, rather than its market value.
- D. The Oregon Land Use Act of 1973: This act established the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) to provide statewide planning goals and guidelines.

Under this Act, Oregon cities and counties are each required to draw up a comprehensive plan, consistent with statewide planning goals. Agricultural land preservation is high on the list of state goals to be followed locally.

If the proposed site is subject to or has used one or more of the above farmland protection programs or policies, score the site 20 points. If none of the above policies or programs apply to this site, score 0 points.

**5. How close is the site to an urban built-up area?**

The site is 2 miles or more from an urban built-up area	15 points
The site is more than 1 mile but less than 2 miles from an urban built-up area	10 points
The site is less than 1 mile from, but is not adjacent to an urban built-up area	5 points
The site is adjacent to an urban built-up area	0 points

This factor is designed to evaluate the extent to which the proposed site is located next to an existing urban area. The urban built-up area must be 2500 population. The measurement from the built-up area should be made from the point at which the density is 30 structures per 40 acres and with no open or non-urban land existing between the major built-up areas and this point. Suburbs adjacent to cities or urban built-up areas should be considered as part of that urban area.

For greater accuracy, use the following chart to determine how much protection the site should receive according to its distance from an urban area. See chart below:

<b>Distance From Perimeter of Site to Urban Area</b>	<b>Points</b>
More than 10,560 feet	15
9,860 to 10,559 feet	14
9,160 to 9,859 feet	13
8,460 to 9,159 feet	12
7,760 to 8,459 feet	11
7,060 to 7,759 feet	10
6,360 to 7,059 feet	9
5,660 to 6,359 feet	8
4,960 to 5,659 feet	7
4,260 to 4,959 feet	6
3,560 to 4,259 feet	5
2,860 to 3,559 feet	4
2,160 to 2,859 feet	3
1,460 to 2,159 feet	2
760 to 1,459 feet	1
Less than 760 feet (adjacent)	0

**6. How close is the site to water lines, sewer lines and/or other local facilities and services whose capacities and design would promote nonagricultural use?**

None of the services exist nearer than 3 miles from the site	15 points
Some of the services exist more than one but less than 3 miles from the site	10 points
All of the services exist within 1/2 mile of the site	0 points

This question determines how much infrastructure (water, sewer, etc.) is in place which could facilitate nonagricultural development. The fewer facilities in place, the more difficult it is to develop an area. Thus, if a proposed site is further away from these services (more than 3 miles distance away), the site should be awarded the highest number of points (15). As the distance of the parcel of land to services decreases, the number of points awarded declines as well. So, when the site is equal to or further than 1 mile but less than 3 miles away from services, it should be given 10 points. Accordingly, if this distance is 1/2 mile to less than 1 mile, award 5 points; and if the distance from land to services is less than 1/2 mile, award 0 points.

Distance to public facilities should be measured from the perimeter of the parcel in question to the nearest site(s) where necessary facilities are located. If there is more than one distance (i.e. from site to water and from site to sewer), use the average distance (add all distances and then divide by the number of different distances to get the average).

Facilities which could promote nonagricultural use include:

- Water lines
- Sewer lines
- Power lines
- Gas lines
- Circulation (roads)
- Fire and police protection
- Schools

**7. Is the farm unit(s) containing the site (before the project) as large as the average-size farming unit in the county? (Average farm sizes in each county are available from the NRCS field offices in each state. Data are from the latest available Census of Agriculture, Acreage of Farm Units in Operation with \$1,000 or more in sales.)**

As large or larger:	10 points
Below average: Deduct 1 point for each 5 percent below the average, down to 0 points if 50 percent or more is below average	9 to 0 points

This factor is designed to determine how much protection the site should receive, according to its size in relation to the average size of farming units within the county. The larger the parcel of land, the more agricultural use value the land possesses, and vice versa. Thus, if the farm unit is as large or larger than the county average, it receives the maximum number of points (10). The smaller the parcel of land compared to the county average, the fewer number of points given. Please see below:

Parcel Size in Relation to Average County Size	Points
Same size or larger than average (100 percent)	10
95 percent of average	9
90 percent of average	8
85 percent of average	7
80 percent of average	6
75 percent of average	5
70 percent of average	4
65 percent of average	3
60 percent of average	2
55 percent of average	1
50 percent or below county average	0

State and local Natural Resources Conservation Service offices will have the average farm size information, provided by the latest available Census of Agriculture data

**8. If this site is chosen for the project, how much of the remaining land on the farm will become non-farmable because of interference with land patterns?**

Acreage equal to more than 25 percent of acres directly converted by the project	10 points
Acreage equal to between 25 and 5 percent of the acres directly converted by the project	9 to 1 point(s)
Acreage equal to less than 5 percent of the acres directly converted by the project	0 points

This factor tackles the question of how the proposed development will affect the rest of the land on the farm. The site which deserves the most protection from conversion will receive the greatest number of points, and vice versa. For example, if the project is small, such as an extension on a house, the rest of the agricultural land would remain farmable, and thus a lower number of points is given to the site. Whereas if a large-scale highway is planned, a greater portion of the land (not including the site) will become non-farmable, since access to the farmland will be blocked; and thus, the site should receive the highest number of points (10) as protection from conversion.

**Conversion uses of the Site Which Would Make the Rest of the Land Non-Farmable by Interfering with Land Patterns**

Conversions which make the rest of the property nonfarmable include any development which blocks accessibility to the rest of the site. Examples are highways, railroads, dams or development along the front of a site restricting access to the rest of the property.

The point scoring is as follows:

<b>Amount of Land Not Including the Site Which Will Become Non-Farmable</b>	<b>Points</b>
25 percent or greater	10
23 - 24 percent	9
21 - 22 percent	8
19 - 20 percent	7
17 - 18 percent	6
15 - 16 percent	5
13 - 14 percent	4
11 - 12 percent	3
9 - 11 percent	2
6 - 8 percent	1
5 percent or less	0

**9. Does the site have available adequate supply of farm support services and markets, i.e., farm suppliers, equipment dealers, processing and storage facilities and farmer's markets?**

All required services are available	5 points
Some required services are available	4 to 1 point(s)
No required services are available	0 points

This factor is used to assess whether there are adequate support facilities, activities and industry to keep the farming business in business. The more support facilities available to the agricultural

landowner, the more feasible it is for him or her to stay in production. In addition, agricultural support facilities are compatible with farmland. This fact is important, because some land uses are not compatible; for example, development next to farmland can be dangerous to the welfare of the agricultural land, as a result of pressure from the neighbors who often do not appreciate the noise, smells and dust intrinsic to farmland. Thus, when all required agricultural support services are available, the maximum number of points (5) are awarded. When some services are available, 4 to 1 point(s) are awarded; and consequently, when no services are available, no points are given. See below:

<b>Percent of Services Available</b>	<b>Points</b>
100 percent	5
75 to 99 percent	4
50 to 74 percent	3
25 to 49 percent	2
1 to 24 percent	1
No services	0

**10. Does the site have substantial and well-maintained on farm investments such as barns, other storage buildings, fruit trees and vines, field terraces, drainage, irrigation, waterways, or other soil and water conservation measures?**

High amount of on-farm investment	20 points
Moderate amount of non-farm investment	19 to 1 point(s)
No on-farm investments	0 points

This factor assesses the quantity of agricultural facilities in place on the proposed site. If a significant agricultural infrastructure exists, the site should continue to be used for farming, and thus the parcel will receive the highest amount of points towards protection from conversion or development. If there is little on farm investment, the site will receive comparatively less protection. See-below:

<b>Amount of On-farm Investment</b>	<b>Points</b>
As much or more than necessary to maintain production (100 percent)	20
95 to 99 percent	19
90 to 94 percent	18
85 to 89 percent	17
80 to 84 percent	16
75 to 79 percent	15
70 to 74 percent	14
65 to 69 percent	13
60 to 64 percent	12
55 to 59 percent	11
50 to 54 percent	10
45 to 49 percent	9
40 to 44 percent	8
35 to 39 percent	7
30 to 34 percent	6
25 to 29 percent	5
20 to 24 percent	4
15 to 19 percent	3
10 to 14 percent	2
5 to 9 percent	1
0 to 4 percent	0

**11. Would the project at this site, by converting farmland to nonagricultural use, reduce the support for farm support services so as to jeopardize the continued existence of these support services and thus, the viability of the farms remaining in the area?**

Substantial reduction in demand for support services if the site is converted	10 points
Some reduction in demand for support services if the site is converted	9 to 1 point(s)
No significant reduction in demand for support services if the site is converted	0 points

This factor determines whether there are other agriculturally related activities, businesses or jobs dependent upon the working of the pre-converted site in order for the others to remain in production. The more people and farming activities relying upon this land, the more protection it should receive from conversion. Thus, if a substantial reduction in demand for support services were to occur as a result of conversions, the proposed site would receive a high score of 10; some reduction in demand would receive 9 to 1 point(s), and no significant reduction in demand would receive no points.

Specific points are outlined as follows:

<b>Amount of Reduction in Support Services if Site is Converted to Nonagricultural Use</b>	<b>Points</b>
Substantial reduction (100 percent)	10
90 to 99 percent	9
80 to 89 percent	8
70 to 79 percent	7
60 to 69 percent	6
50 to 59 percent	5
40 to 49 percent	4
30 to 39 percent	3
20 to 29 percent	2
10 to 19 percent	1
No significant reduction (0 to 9 percent)	0

**12. Is the kind and intensity of the proposed use of the site sufficiently incompatible with agriculture that it is likely to contribute to the eventual conversion of the surrounding farmland to nonagricultural use?**

Proposed project is incompatible with existing agricultural use of surrounding farmland	10 points
Proposed project is tolerable of existing agricultural use of surrounding farmland	9 to 1 point(s)
Proposed project is fully compatible with existing agricultural use of surrounding farmland	0 points

Factor 12 determines whether conversion of the proposed agricultural site will eventually cause the conversion of neighboring farmland as a result of incompatibility of use of the first with the latter. The more incompatible the proposed conversion is with agriculture, the more protection this site receives from conversion. Therefore, if the proposed conversion is incompatible with agriculture, the site receives 10 points. If the project is tolerable with agriculture, it receives 9 to 1 points; and if the proposed conversion is compatible with agriculture, it receives 0 points.

## CORRIDOR - TYPE SITE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

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The following criteria are to be used for projects that have a linear or corridor - type site configuration connecting two distant points, and crossing several different tracts of land. These include utility lines, highways, railroads, stream improvements, and flood control systems. Federal agencies are to assess the suitability of each corridor-type site or design alternative for protection as farmland along with the land evaluation information.

For Water and Waste Programs, corridor analyses are not applicable for distribution or collection networks. Analyses are applicable for transmission or trunk lines where placement of the lines are flexible.

(1) How much land is in nonurban use within a radius of 1.0 mile from where the project is intended?

- |                          |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| (2) More than 90 percent | (3) 15 points         |
| (4) 90 to 20 percent     | (5) 14 to 1 point(s). |
| (6) Less than 20 percent | (7) 0 points          |

(2) How much of the perimeter of the site borders on land in nonurban use?

- |                          |                   |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| (3) More than 90 percent | (4) 10 point(s)   |
| (5) 90 to 20 percent     | (6) 9 to 1 points |
| (7) less than 20 percent | (8) 0 points      |

(3) How much of the site has been farmed (managed for a scheduled harvest or timber activity) more than five of the last 10 years?

- |                          |                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| (4) More than 90 percent | (5) 20 points        |
| (6) 90 to 20 percent     | (7) 19 to 1 point(s) |
| (8) Less than 20 percent | (9) 0 points         |

(4) Is the site subject to state or unit of local government policies or programs to protect farmland or covered by private programs to protect farmland?

- |                       |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Site is protected     | 20 points |
| Site is not protected | 0 points  |

(5) Is the farm unit(s) containing the site (before the project) as large as the average - size farming unit in the County? (Average farm sizes in each county are available from the NRCS field offices in each state. Data are from the latest available Census of Agriculture, Acreage of Farm Units in Operation with \$1,000 or more in sales.)

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| As large or larger  | 10 points     |
| Below average deduct 1 point for each 5 percent below the average, down to 0 points if 50 percent or more below average | 9 to 0 points |

(6) If the site is chosen for the project, how much of the remaining land on the farm will become non-farmable because of interference with land patterns?

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Acreage equal to more than 25 percent of acres directly converted by the project         | 25 points        |
| Acreage equal to between 25 and 5 percent of the acres directly converted by the project | 1 to 24 point(s) |
| Acreage equal to less than 5 percent of the acres directly converted by the project      | 0 points         |

(7) Does the site have available adequate supply of farm support services and markets, i.e., farm suppliers, equipment dealers, processing and storage facilities and farmer's markets?

All required services are available	5 points
Some required services are available	4 to 1 point(s)
No required services are available	0 points

(8) Does the site have substantial and well-maintained on-farm investments such as barns, other storage building, fruit trees and vines, field terraces, drainage, irrigation, waterways, or other soil and water conservation measures?

High amount of on-farm investment	20 points
Moderate amount of on-farm investment	19 to 1 point(s)
No on-farm investment	0 points

(9) Would the project at this site, by converting farmland to nonagricultural use, reduce the demand for farm support services so as to jeopardize the continued existence of these support services and thus, the viability of the farms remaining in the area?

Substantial reduction in demand for support services if the site is converted	25 points
Some reduction in demand for support services if the site is converted	1 to 24 point(s)
No significant reduction in demand for support services if the site is converted	0 points

(10) Is the kind and intensity of the proposed use of the site sufficiently incompatible with agriculture that it is likely to contribute to the eventual conversion of surrounding farmland to nonagricultural use?

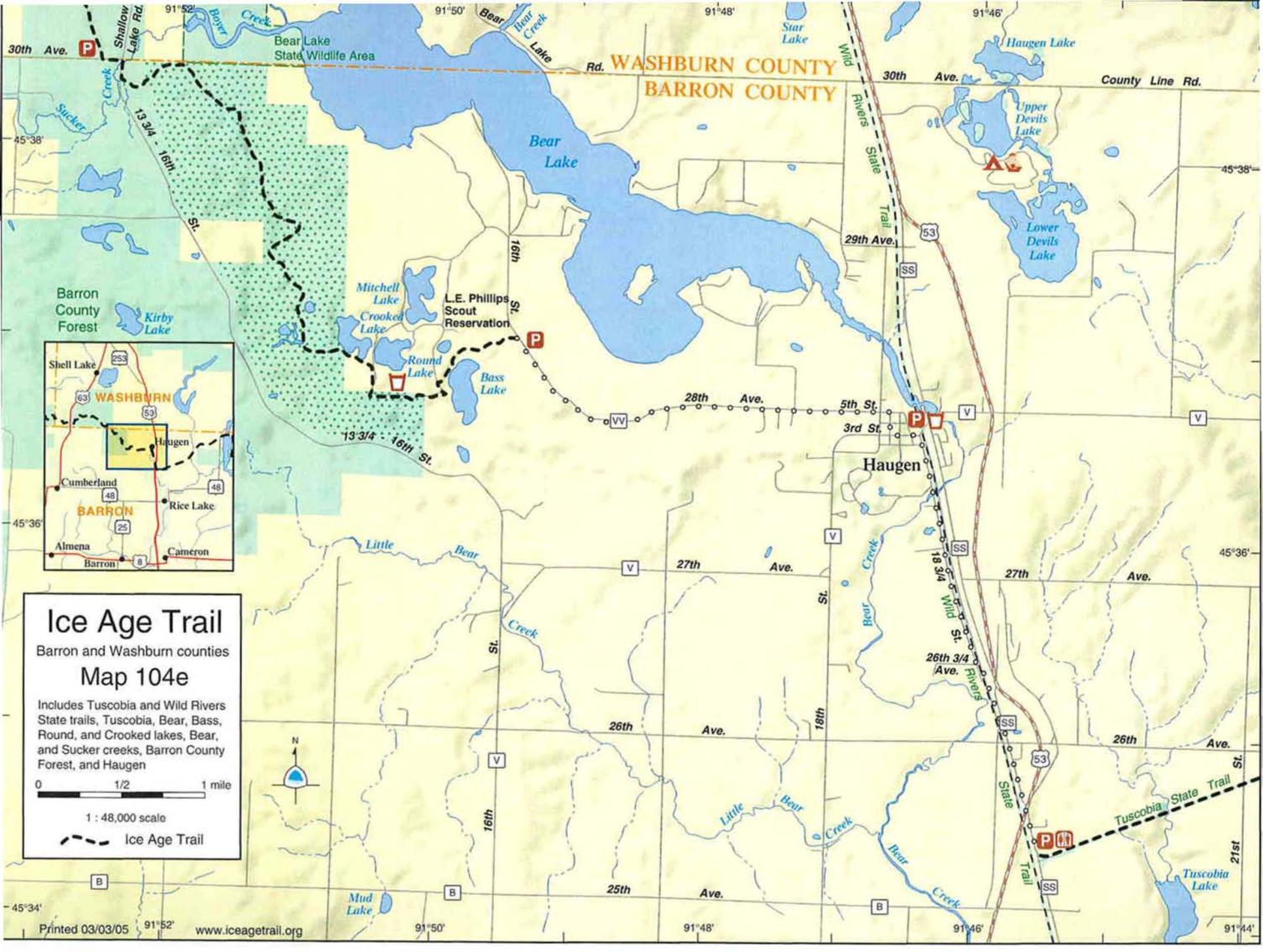
Proposed project is incompatible to existing agricultural use of surrounding farmland	10 points
Proposed project is tolerable to existing agricultural use of surrounding farmland	9 to 1 point(s)
Proposed project is fully compatible with existing agricultural use of surrounding farmland	0 points

**Appendix D**

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**Recreation Trail Maps**



# Ice Age Trail

Barron and Washburn counties

## Map 104e

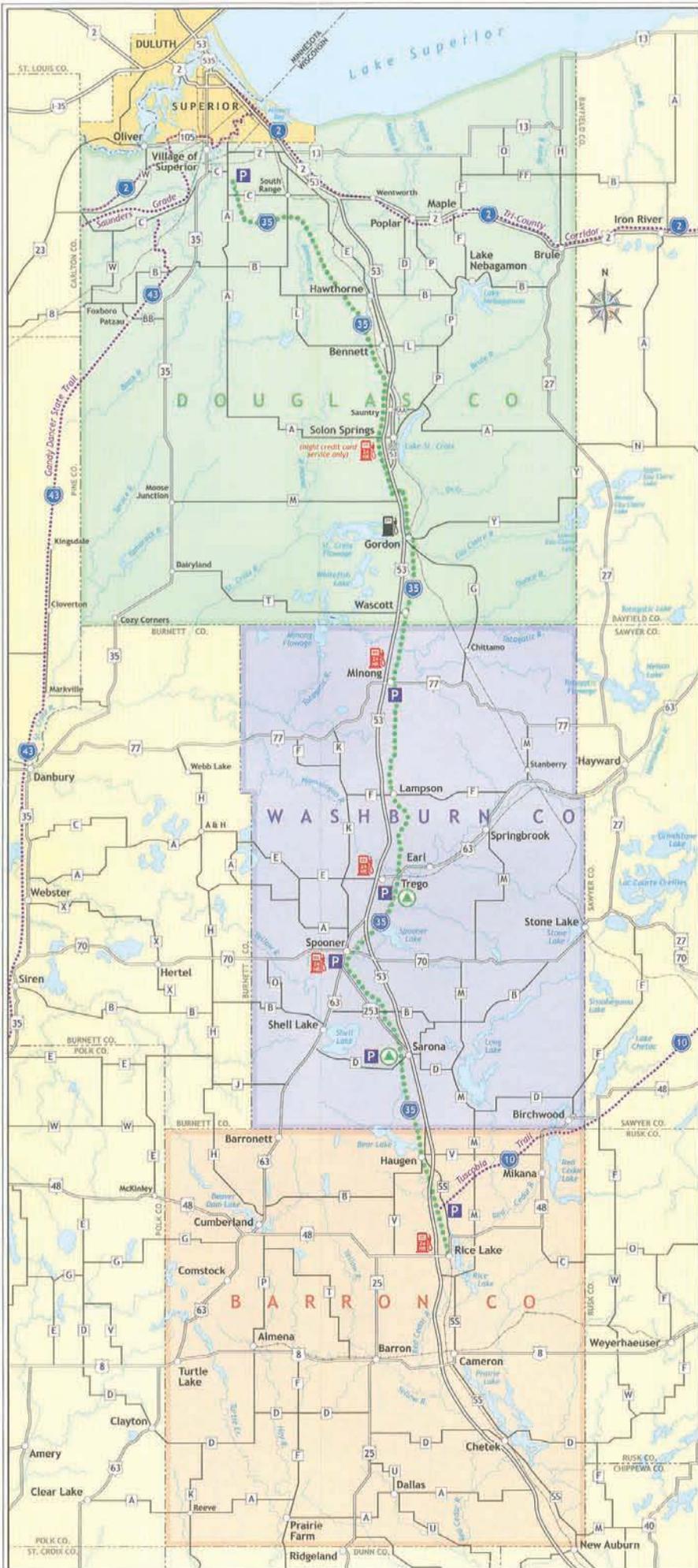
Includes Tuscobia and Wild Rivers State trails, Tuscobia, Bear, Bass, Round, and Crooked lakes, Bear, and Sucker creeks, Barron County Forest, and Haugen



1 : 48,000 scale

Ice Age Trail





- Wild Rivers Trail
  - Selected other trails
  - Trail Corridor
  - Parking
  - Gas available (24 hours)
  - Gas available
  - Restrooms
  - U.S. highway
  - State highway
  - County highway
- Map scales: 0 2 4 6 9 miles / 0 3 6 9 kilometers

- ### TRAILSIDE SIGNS
- Wild Rivers Trail Location**  
These signs denote your location on the trail. Please use this number when requesting trail assistance.
  - Blazer**  
To make sure you are on the designated trail, watch for the blazer. Where trail exits and entrances are minimal, they will be kept to a minimum.
  - Directional Arrow**  
This arrow advises trail users of a change in trail direction where your speed should be reduced to negotiate a corner.
  - Caution**  
Look for caution signs to warn of a change in trail condition. Prepare to reduce speed.
  - Stop & Yield**  
These signs are used to halt users at road crossings, highway bridge crossings, public railroad grade crossings, or trail intersections.
  - Bridge & Hazard Markers**  
Snowmobile bridge and culvert crossings are signed with reflective black and yellow hazard markers. Used in pairs, they mark the opening through which you must pass.
  - Special signs**  
A sign such as this one designates major travelways of metropolitan areas and major north-south and east-west corridors.
  - Snowmobile Route Signs**  
The main use of this sign and route arrow is to inform snowmobilers that it is permissible to use portions of the road or highway. It also alerts traffic that snowmobilers are using the roadway for travel. The arrows inform trail users which way to proceed on the roadway.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

The Wild Rivers Trail Commission assumes no liability as to trails, machines, or individuals.

Please respect private property and "no trespassing" signs.

Please do not operate snowmobiles and ATVs on highways, except on designated routes.

Speeding on the trail jeopardizes the safety of yourself and other trail users. Please observe posted speed limits.

Travel the trails in a safe and sane manner.

Special thanks to the following organizations for their on-going trail maintenance efforts:

- Rice Lake Sno-Birds Snowmobile Club
- Island City Snowmobile Club
- Rolling Hills Snowmobile Club
- Minong-Wascott Trails Club
- Northwest Trails Association of Douglas County

Map: cartography, design and layout: Jeff Allen, WRRPC

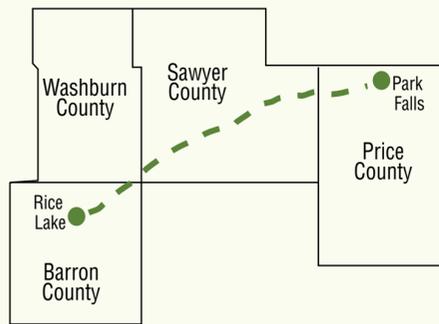
# Tuscobia State Trail

## ATVing

ATVing is permitted from Park Falls to just west of Birchwood April 15-November 15 and provides a good opportunity to view the wildlife and historical sites along the trail. The map highlights the specific ATV trail. ATV riders are required to stay on the trail.



- Developed trailhead/park
- Open to ATV riding
- Closed to ATV riding
- Campground



## Hiking/Horseback Riding

Hiking and Horseback riding are fantastic ways to see all that Tuscobia State Trail has to offer. There is plenty of natural beauty and historic sites, as well as restaurants and retailers along the trail to make a complete vacation. The terrain on the trail does vary, so proceed with caution. It is a good idea to use the contact information to learn more about the portions of the trail you plan to hike or ride.



## Canoeing, Kayaking, Fishing

With several waterways located near or along the Tuscobia State Trail, there are plenty of opportunities for canoeing and fishing. The Birchwood area offers especially good trout fishing. The Chippewa River, near the Ojibwa stretch of the Tuscobia is very popular for canoeing and fishing. The Brunet River, located east of Winter offers trout, as well as musky fishing. The numerous low rapids are attractive to many kayakers. Near the Park Falls area, three creek crossings provide fishing and scenic outlook options. The creeks flow into the Flambeau River, a popular canoeing and kayaking destination.



## Snowmobiling

Snowmobiling is allowed on the entire length of the Tuscobia State Trail, snow conditions permitting. Please check the web site, [www.tuscobiatrail.com](http://www.tuscobiatrail.com) or use the contact information for the portion of the trail you are interested in riding. The terrain on the trail does vary, so proceed with caution and ride safely.



Friends of the Tuscobia Trail is a non-profit organization committed to developing the Tuscobia State Trail as a multi-use trail that can be enjoyed by all. Created in 2001, Friends of the Tuscobia Trail was born out of the need for additional economic and use enhancements. By working with various government agencies, associations and private landowners, Friends of the Tuscobia Trail hope to further develop the trail so it is always available for hiking, ATV and snowmobile use along with other possible uses such as skiing and cycling. Persons interested in learning more about Friends of the Tuscobia Trail and how to get involved are encouraged to visit the web site [www.tuscobiatrail.com](http://www.tuscobiatrail.com) or call 1-800-762-7179.

[www.tuscobiatrail.com](http://www.tuscobiatrail.com)

## Safety Message

The Tuscobia State Trail is a state treasure and should be enjoyed by outdoor enthusiasts of all interests. Please make safety a priority while using the Tuscobia State Trail.

- Follow all regulations by requesting specific trail information for each area as rules can vary.
- Be certain your equipment is in good mechanical condition at all times.
- Wear sensible protective clothing.
- Use proper safety equipment at all times.
- Make efforts to know the terrain by asking others who have traveled on it before or by calling one of the contacts for more information.
- If you choose to use the trail at night, make certain you have proper operating lighting systems.
- Stay on the trail.

## Disclaimer:

The Tuscobia State Trail is open to the public, but users must proceed with care as many of the sections remain underdeveloped. Activities such as hunting (during deer gun and late bow season) and bicycling do occur on the Tuscobia State Trail. Cycling however is not encouraged as the trail is not groomed or surfaced and may be rough or soft in many sections of the trail making this potentially unsafe. Mountain bikes are recommended if one participates in this activity. Trail-users need to be aware that the Tuscobia State Trail is a multiple use trail. In order for all users to enjoy the trail, respect others and follow proper trail etiquette.

# Welcome...



A mix of history and scenic beauty, the Tuscobia State Trail is a 74-mile abandoned railroad grade, which makes it the longest state trail. Depending on the time of year, section of the trail, and your particular interests, activities on the multiple-use Tuscobia State Trail include ATV riding, snowmobiling, hiking, canoeing, fishing, and bird watching. Running through Barron, Washburn, Sawyer and Price Counties, you can find plenty of activities to keep you busy on the Tuscobia State Trail.

Use this map as a guide to plan your vacation along the Tuscobia State Trail. Many of the communities offer lodging and restaurants, as well as other amenities. For more information regarding the Tuscobia State Trail, visit [www.tuscobiatrail.com](http://www.tuscobiatrail.com) or call one of the contacts provided.

We invite you to visit the Tuscobia State Trail—

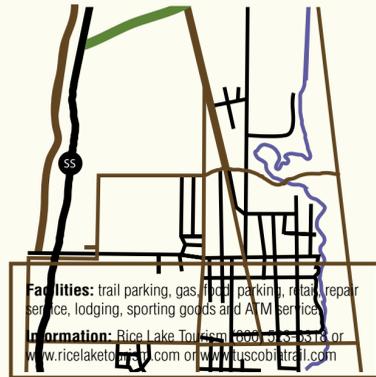
*The Tuscobia has a variety of offerings as you travel from one end to the other, through each individual community. Due to the different land uses for the trail, it's history and geography, you could spend a significant amount of time in one section. You may also explore the entire trail, with many amenities and overnight accommodations along the route.*

## Rice Lake



The western terminus is at Rice Lake, Wisconsin, in Barron County. From the western end to Angus, this stretch of the trail is part of the 1,000-mile Ice Age National Scenic Trail. Rice Lake provides users with a variety of amenities including trail

parking, lodging, restaurant, retail and service establishments. For more information, contact the Rice Lake Tourism Commission at **1-800-523-6318**.

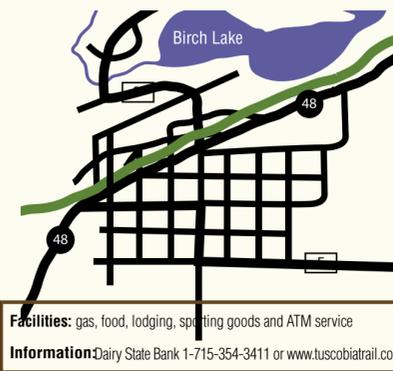


**Facilities:** trail parking, gas, food, parking, retail, repair service, lodging, sporting goods and ATM service  
**Information:** Rice Lake Tourism 1-800-523-6318 or [www.ricelaketourism.com](http://www.ricelaketourism.com) or [www.tuscobiatrail.com](http://www.tuscobiatrail.com)

## Birchwood



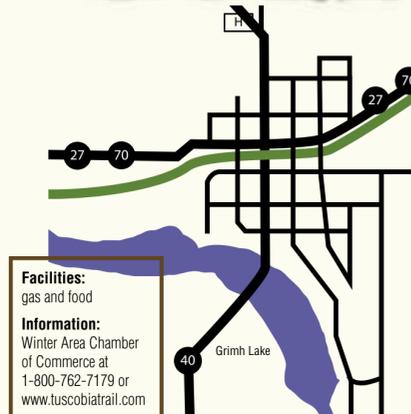
From Rice Lake to Birchwood, you'll travel through open farmland, numerous pothole lakes and creeks with various recreational activities, such as hiking, fishing (particularly trout fishing), and nature studies, as well as several interesting historical sites. Birchwood offers gas, food, lodging, sporting goods and ATM service. For more information contact the Dairy State Bank **1-715-354-3411**.



**Facilities:** gas, food, lodging, sporting goods and ATM service  
**Information:** Dairy State Bank 1-715-354-3411 or [www.tuscobiatrail.com](http://www.tuscobiatrail.com)

## Couderay/Radisson

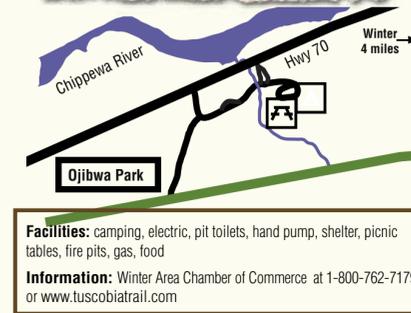
On this stretch of the Tuscobia, discover the beauty of the Blue Hills: eroded roots of ancient mountains that might have been as high as the Rockies! The Couderay River is also near the trail. Learn more about the history of the railroad and the logging industry at the historical sites when you visit Radisson, which also offers gas and food options. For more information contact the Winter Area Chamber of Commerce at **1-800-762-7179**.



**Facilities:** gas and food  
**Information:** Winter Area Chamber of Commerce at 1-800-762-7179 or [www.tuscobiatrail.com](http://www.tuscobiatrail.com)

## Ojibwa

Take advantage of the scenic Chippewa River Valley, where this portion of the trail veers from being open to forested and has large populations of deer, grouse and songbirds; watch for bald eagles! The Chippewa River is very popular for canoeing and fishing. Ojibwa Park is located at the halfway point directly across the highway from the Chippewa River with facilities including camping, electric, pit toilets, hand pump, shelter, picnic tables and fire pits. Ojibwa also has gas and food options. For more information contact the Winter Area Chamber of Commerce at **1-800-762-7179**.

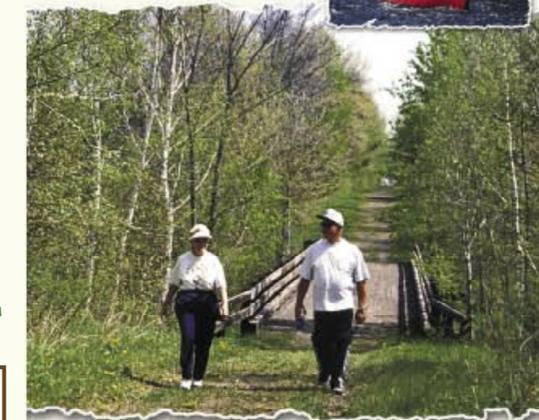


**Facilities:** camping, electric, pit toilets, hand pump, shelter, picnic tables, fire pits, gas, food  
**Information:** Winter Area Chamber of Commerce at 1-800-762-7179 or [www.tuscobiatrail.com](http://www.tuscobiatrail.com)

# Tuscobia State Trail



...a trail for all time



[www.tuscobiatrail.com](http://www.tuscobiatrail.com)

## History of the Trail



The Tuscobia Trail is a symbol for the development of Northern Wisconsin and is owned by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Conceived as a railroad line in 1899, construction lasted for 15 years, concluding in 1914 when the rail-line reached Park Falls. For nearly 70 years, the rail, known as the "Omaha line", served as the lifeblood for the area through logging and farming opportunities, as well as the service industries that developed along the route.



By the 1940s, the decline of the railroad was apparent with logging no longer viable. In 1967, the dismantling of the old wooden bridges began. Citizens surrounding the old railway were interested in turning the grade into a functioning trail system that would serve as a representation of the area's history and provide an opportunity for people to learn about the area and experience the beauty that is available along the route.

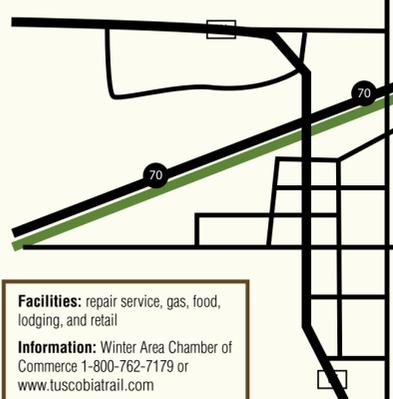
Development of the 74-mile Tuscobia Trail to its present use began in 1968.

— Indicates connecting routes and trails  
 — Marks the Tuscobia State Trail

## Winter



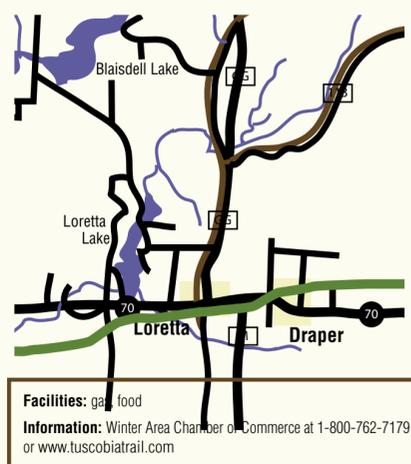
The Brunet River is located along the Tuscobia Trail east of Winter and offers excellent trout and musky fishing and numerous low rapids. Large old pine stumps suggest the size and frequency of the area's original timbers. Visit the original railroad station in downtown Winter. Winter offers repair service, gas, food, lodging, and retail. For more information, contact the Winter Area Chamber of Commerce at **1-800-762-7179**.



**Facilities:** repair service, gas, food, lodging, and retail  
**Information:** Winter Area Chamber of Commerce 1-800-762-7179 or [www.tuscobiatrail.com](http://www.tuscobiatrail.com)

## Loretta/Draper

From Winter to Loretta/Draper you enter what was once the heart of the logging industry along the Tuscobia Trail. History will be a constant presence, as you will notice the old railroad ties under the sod of the trail. The Loretta/Draper area offers gas, and food. The Chequamegon National Forest is just north of the Tuscobia and offers camping. For more information, contact the Winter Area Chamber of Commerce at **1-800-762-7179**.



**Facilities:** gas, food  
**Information:** Winter Area Chamber of Commerce at 1-800-762-7179 or [www.tuscobiatrail.com](http://www.tuscobiatrail.com)

## Park Falls

At the eastern end of the trail is Park Falls. You'll find terrain perfect for ATVing and snowmobiling with options for gas, lodging, camping, restaurant, retail and service establishments. The Park Falls-Tuscobia Trailhead County Park offers ample parking, an ATV loading ramp and seasonal flush toilets. Smith Lake County Park & Campground, just west of Park Falls, has direct access to the trail. For information contact the Park Falls Area Chamber of Commerce at **1-800-762-2709** or the Price County Tourism Department at **1-800-269-4505**.



**Facilities:** gas, lodging, camping, restaurant, retail, service establishments  
**Information:** Park Falls Area Chamber of Commerce at 1-800-762-2709 or the Price County Tourism Department at 1-800-269-4505 or [www.tuscobiatrail.com](http://www.tuscobiatrail.com)

...a trail for all time

**Tuscobia State Trail**  
 Wisconsin's Longest State Trail  
 Barron, Washburn, Sawyer and Price Counties  
 ATV riding, Snowmobiling, Hiking, Canoeing, Bird watching  
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**WISCONSIN**  
[travel.wisconsin.gov](http://travel.wisconsin.gov)

## **Appendix E**

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### **Native American Correspondence**



# Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska

305 North Main St., Reserve, KS 66434  
Phone: (785) 742-7471 Fax: (785) 742-3785

February 15, 2007

Marc Bowker  
WisDOT Project Manager  
Northwest Region - Spooner Office  
PO Box 282  
Spooner WI 54801

Dear Mr. Bowker

Thank you for your letter, which is in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and Section 110.

The Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska do not have an interest in this site:

Us 53/Haugen Conversion Study – Barron and Washburn County line

There are two other bands of Sac and Fox that also need to be contacted, the Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma and the Sac and Fox of the Mississippi in Iowa.

Johnathan Buffalo, Sac and Fox of the Mississippi in Iowa  
349 Meskwaki Rd.  
Tama, IA 52339-9629

Sandra Massey, Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma  
Rt. 2, Box 246  
Stroud, OK 74079

If you have any questions, please contact me at the number or address above.

Sincerely,

Deanne Bahr  
Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska  
NAGPRA Contact Representative



Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation  
Government Center

July 25, 2006

**Marc Bowker**  
**Division of Transportation System Development**  
**P.O. Box 282**  
**Spooner, Wisconsin 54801**

Dear **Mr. Bowker:**

I am writing to inform you that I am in receipt of your recent National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Section 106 and Section 110 correspondence.

After reviewing the contents of your recent mailing we would like to inform that we have no objections to the following project(s):

**Project(s): 1197-22-00**

At this time we are unaware of any historical cultural resources in the proposed development area. However, we do request to be immediately contacted if any inadvertent discoveries are uncovered at anytime throughout the various phases of the project.

Please feel free to call me at (785) 966-4008 or additional information can be faxed to (785) 966-4009. We look forward to working with you.

Respectfully,

Tracy Standoff  
Tribal Chair  
NAGPRA Representative  
Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation

TS/Kgc



## Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska

305 North Main Street • Reserve, Kansas 66434  
Phone (785) 742-7471 • Fax (785) 742-3785

September 21, 2006

Marc Bowker  
WisDOT Project Manager  
Division of Transportation  
Northwest Region - Spooner Office  
PO Box 282  
Spooner WI 54801

Dear Mr. Bowker

Thank you for your letter, which is in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and Section 110.

The Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska do not have an interest in this site:

Us 53 corridor – Barron and Washburn Counties

There are two other bands of Sac and Fox that also need to be contacted, the Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma and the Sac and Fox of the Mississippi in Iowa.

Johnathan Buffalo, Sac and Fox of the Mississippi in Iowa  
349 Meskwaki Rd.  
Tama, IA 52339-9629

Sandra Massey, Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma  
Rt. 2, Box 246  
Stroud, OK 74079

If you have any questions, please contact me at the number or address above.

Sincerely,

Deanne Bahr  
Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska  
NAGPRA Contact Representative



LAC DU FLAMBEAU BAND OF LAKE SUPERIOR CHIPPEWA INDIANS  
TRIBAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Division of Historic Preservation

August 3, 2006

Marc Bowker  
WisDOT Project Manager  
Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Northwest Region  
PO Box 282  
Spooner, WI 54801

SUBJECT: WisDOT ID: 1197-22-00 in Washburn and Barron Counties, Wisconsin

Dear Mr. Bowker:

In response to your letter dated July 21, 2006, the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians would like to express concerns with any impacts to historic properties located within the project area of potential effect for the project mentioned above. This project is located within areas that have previously been occupied by the Northern Ojibwe Bands.

There are places that are significant because of natural features and not necessarily because of man-made features. Archeological investigation would not typically be the proper tool to identify these types of properties. Therefore, the Tribes need a direct role in determining what methods will be used to identify historic properties within an area of potential effect. This would require agencies to work with tribes before hiring a consultant and that archaeologists be required to work directly with tribal experts when identifying and evaluating historic properties. We recommend your agency seek an archaeological firm that is experience with working with Tribes.

In addition, the Lac du Flambeau Band would like a copy of the Archaeological Report and an opportunity to participate in the treatment of any resources and/or sites identified in the Archaeology review. We would request consultation pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, for any impacts or effects to historic properties as a result of this project.

If requested, the Lac du Flambeau Tribal Historic Preservation Office is available to assist in the identification of cultural resources or an archaeological/historical assessment under a contract or service fee. We will gladly conduct an archival review for a fee, as this type of review is time consuming and requires professional tribal services.

Due to the nature and sensitivity of many of our historical and cultural sites, the Lac du Flambeau Historic Preservation Office does not openly list and share that type of information with agencies, without a signed confidentiality agreement. As such, there are many sites significant to the Lac du Flambeau Tribe that are not listed on the State Historical Society's database. Therefore, we would encourage you to use other methods beyond archeology, such as conducting oral interviews, to assist with identifying the potential effect this project may have on the area.

P.O. Box 67  
Lac du Flambeau, WI 54538

Phone: 715 588-2139 or 588-2270  
Fax: 715 588-2419  
E-Mail: ldthpo@nnex.net

\*\*\*\*\*  
*It is the mission of the Lac du Flambeau Cultural Committee and the Lac du Flambeau Tribal Historic Preservation Office to promote, educate, enhance, identify, encourage, and preserve cultural and traditional activities, materials, and areas for the benefit of future generations. We shall also defend all ancestral burials and traditional cultural properties from disinterment or desecration.*

August 3, 2006

Please contact Rebecca Maki or myself if you have any questions or concerns at (715) 588-2139. Please forward the report to:

Tribal Historic Preservation Office  
P.O. Box 67  
Lac du Flambeau, WI 54538

Sincerely,

*Rebecca L. Maki for*  
Kelly S. Jackson-Golly  
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer



## Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma

R.R. 1, Box 721  
Perkins, Oklahoma 74059  
(405) 547-2402  
Fax: (405) 547-5294

August 2, 2006

Division of Transportation  
System Development  
Northwest Region – Spooner Office  
PO Box 282  
Spooner WI 54801-0282

Dear Program Director:

Please update your mailing list to include the revised official contact for the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma. Thanks for including our nation in your mailings. We appreciate the information and networking.

E. Bernadette Huber, Tribal Chairman  
Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma  
RR1 Box 721  
Perkins, OK 74059  
Telephone: 405-547-2402 ext. 243

**Please remove all other names for our Tribe from your database.** We are receiving numerous mailings from your agency addressed to several individuals who are no longer tribal representatives. In the interest of conservation, please save some trees and postage by updating your mailings.

Sincere regards,

E. Bernadette Huber  
Tribal Chairman

**Appendix F**

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**Section 106 Form**

**SECTION 106 REVIEW  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
DT1635 11/2006

**SHPO  
RECEIVED**

AUG 20 2008

DIV HIST PRES

For instructions, see FDM Chapter 26

**I. PROJECT INFORMATION**

Project ID 1197-22-00	Highway - Street US 53 Haugen Interchange Location and Freeway/Expressway Conversion	County Barron and Washburn Counties
Project Termini 26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue in Barron County to 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue at the Barron/Washburn County Line, a distance of approximately 4.2 miles		Region - Office
Regional Project Engineer - Project Manager		Area Code - Telephone Number
Consultant Project Engineer - Project Manager Darren Fortney, SEH		Area Code - Telephone Number (608) 274-2020
Archaeological Consultant Katie Egan-Bruhy, CCRG		Area Code - Telephone Number (715) 358-5686
Architecture/History Consultant Rachel Bankowitz, CCRG		Area Code - Telephone Number (517) 788-3550 ext 22
Date of Need		SHSW # <i>08-0688/BN/INB</i>
Return a signed copy of this form to:		

**II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Project Length 4.2 miles	Land to be Acquired: Fee Simple 98.1 acres	Land to be Acquired: Easement acres
-----------------------------	---	--

Distance as measured from existing centerline	Existing	Proposed	Other Factors	Existing	Proposed
Right-of-Way Width Measured from the Centerline of the NB Roadway	Varies 179'-400'	Varies 179'-450'	Terrace Width	N/A	N/A
Shoulder As measured from the Centerline of each roadway	Varies 6' - 10'	Varies 6' - 10'	Sidewalk Width	N/A	N/A
Slope Intercept Measured from the Centerline of the NB Roadway	Varies 169'-390'	Varies 169'-440'	Number of Lanes	4	4
Edge of Pavement As measured from the Centerline of each roadway	Varies 15' - 20'	Varies 15' - 20'	Grade Separated Crossing	0	3 - located at 26 <sup>th</sup> Ave, CTH V (28 <sup>th</sup> Ave) and 30 <sup>th</sup> Ave
Back of Curb Line	N/A	N/A	Vision Triangle acres	N/A	N/A
Realignment	N/A	N/A	Temporary Bypass acres	N/A	0
Other - List:	N/A	N/A	Stream Channel Change	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Attach Map(s) that depict "maximum" impacts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Tree topping and/or grubbing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Brief Narrative Project Description - Include all ground disturbing activities. For archaeology, include plan view map indicating the maximum area of ground disturbance and/or new right-of-way, whichever is greater. Include all temporary, limited and permanent easements.

One interchange at the intersection of County V and US 53 would be constructed and would require high fills and significant cuts. Three overpasses would be constructed and would require large fill slopes at the crossing locations. Some Town road relocations would also require some modest cut and fill slopes along the realigned roads.

**III. CONSULTATION**

How has notification of the project been provided to:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Property Owners	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historical Societies/Organizations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Native American Tribes
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Information Meeting Notice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Information Meeting Notice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Info. Mtg. Notice
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Letter - Required for Archaeology	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Letter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Letter
<input type="checkbox"/> Telephone Call	<input type="checkbox"/> Telephone Call	<input type="checkbox"/> Telephone Call
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Archaeologist spoke to landowners present at time of survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

\*Attach one copy of the base letter, list of addresses and comments received. For history include telephone memos as appropriate.

**IV. AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS - APE**

**ARCHAEOLOGY:** Area of potential effect for archaeology is the existing and proposed ROW, temporary and permanent easements. Agricultural practices do not constitute a ground disturbance exemption.

**HISTORY:** Describe the area of potential effects for buildings/structures.  
The APE for this project includes those properties in or adjacent to areas within the proposed freeway/expressway conversion (i.e., one strategically located interchange, overpasses, cul-de-sacs, and arterials).

**V. PHASE I ARCHEOLOGICAL OR RECONNAISSANCE HISTORY SURVEY NEEDED**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ARCHAEOLOGY</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Archaeological survey is needed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Archaeological survey is not needed - Provide justification  <input type="checkbox"/> Screening list (date).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HISTORY</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture/History survey is needed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Architecture/History survey is not needed  <input type="checkbox"/> No structures or buildings of any kind within APE  <input type="checkbox"/> Screening list (date).</p>
---	---

**VI. SURVEY COMPLETED**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ARCHAEOLOGY</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO archaeological sites(s) identified - ASFR attached</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO potentially eligible site(s) in project area - Phase I Report attached</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Potentially eligible site(s) identified-Phase I Report attached  <input type="checkbox"/> Avoided through redesign  <input type="checkbox"/> Phase II conducted - go to VII (Evaluation).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Phase I Report attached - Cemetery/cataloged burial documentation</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HISTORY</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO buildings/structures identified - A/HSF attached</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Potentially eligible buildings/structures identified in the APE - A/HSF attached</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Potentially eligible buildings/structures avoided - documentation attached</p>
--	--

**VII. DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY (EVALUATION) COMPLETED**

<p><input type="checkbox"/> No arch site(s) eligible for NRHP - Phase II Report attached</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Arch site(s) eligible for NRHP - Phase II Report attached</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Site(s) eligible for NRHP - DOE attached</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No buildings/structure(s) eligible for NRHP - DOE attached</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Building/structure(s) eligible for NRHP - DOE attached</p>
---	--

**VIII. COMMITMENTS/SPECIAL PROVISIONS - must be included with special provisions language**

WisDOT will ensure that archaeological investigations are conducted on all properties that archaeologists were denied access during the current investigation.

**IX. PROJECT DECISION**

No historic properties (historical or archaeological) in the APE.

No historic properties (historical or archaeological) affected.

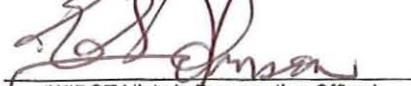
Historic properties (historical and/or archaeological) may be affected by project;

Go to Step 4: Assess affects and begin consultation on affects

Documentation for Determination of No Adverse Effects is included with this form. WIDOT has concluded that this project will have No Adverse Effect on historic properties. Signature by SHPO below indicates SHPO concurrence in the DNAE and concludes the Section 106 Review process for this project.

  
 (Regional Project Manager)

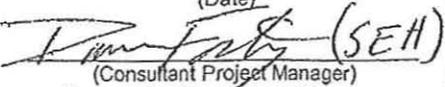
7-30-2008  
 (Date)

  
 (WIDOT Historic Preservation Officer)

8/20/08  
 (Date)

  
 (State Historic Preservation Officer)

9/4/08  
 (Date)

 (SEH)  
 (Consultant Project Manager)

7-29-08  
 (Date)

## **Appendix G**

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### **Noise Notification Letter**

December 6, 2007

RE: US 53 Haugen Interchange Location and  
Freeway/Expressway Conversion Study  
Noise Evaluation  
Barron and Washburn Counties, Wisconsin  
WisDOT Project ID # 1197-22-00  
SEH Project No. A-WIDOT0623.00

«First\_Name» «Last\_Name»  
«Professional\_Title»  
«Organization»  
«Address»  
«City», «State» «Zip\_Code»

Dear «First\_Name» «Last\_Name»:

A highway improvement project is being developed for the above-referenced project. In the process, we have evaluated sound levels for developed lands and minimized their impacts on these lands as much as practical.

We believe it is vitally important to do all we can to ensure that the future sound levels we foresee along this corridor are compatible with future development on presently undeveloped lands. Accordingly, we are providing you with information which will help us to achieve this goal.

Local governments have traditionally been responsible for exercising land development controls and zoning within their jurisdictions. Through its authority in these areas, local governments can do much to ensure that future land uses and developments are compatible with the noise environment of a collector roadway.

We have included with this letter a graph that shows the future sound levels at varying distances from the proposed highway. Many variables influence the level of sound impacting a receiver, including roadway elevation, surrounding terrain elevation, distance from all noise sources, noise sources in the community other than traffic noise, and ground cover.

Noise predictions will vary somewhat at each separate location. The graph we are including as an attachment was chosen to represent a "worst case" prediction in the project area. To predict these sound levels, we used traffic volumes at a Level of Service C for the proposed typical section. The Level of Service C operational conditions produce "worst case" sound levels for a given typical section. These distances are approximated from the pavement edge of the future improvements.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has adopted a sound level of 67 dBA Leq for residential areas and 72 dBA Leq for commercial/industrial areas as our noise abatement criteria. Any location along a highway capacity or new interchange project with a noise level which approaches or exceeds this threshold due to traffic noise must be investigated for feasible and reasonable noise abatement measures in the development of the project. Wisconsin has determined "approach" to be defined as 1 dBA less than the noise abatement criteria. Noise abatement measures will not be included in this project due to the low number of affected properties compared to the high cost of abatement.

The enclosed graph may be helpful in understanding the noise levels that could be expected in the vicinity of the roadway or interchange. Local governments may find it prudent to avoid permitting certain kinds of uses in close proximity to the highway and interchange because of expected noise levels. You can use this sound level information to ensure that the desired compatibility between future development and anticipated highway sound levels is achieved.

Keep in mind that the predicted levels of noise on the attached graph *only represent traffic noise*. Future ambient noise from the community is *not* included in the prediction. On undeveloped land, we recommend that no future noise sensitive development be constructed within the areas that will approach or exceed the criteria.

There are several types of administrative controls available, including the use of exclusive zoning, public ownership, and various forms of legal controls such as building codes, subdivision regulations, health codes, etc. These and others are described in a publication produced by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) entitled "Entering the Quiet Zone." The purpose of this publication is to assist local government officials, developers, and designers in dealing with noise-sensitive land uses near highways.

For your convenience, we have included a copy of this booklet with this letter. It is an excellent tool to assist local government officials by indicating ways in which local government officials can guide the development of undeveloped land in the vicinity of existing highways. More detailed information about noise-compatible planning can be found at the FHWA website:  
<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/ncp/index.htm>

In summary, we urge you to use the enclosed sound level information to the greatest extent possible in the interest of ensuring a less noisy environment for all.

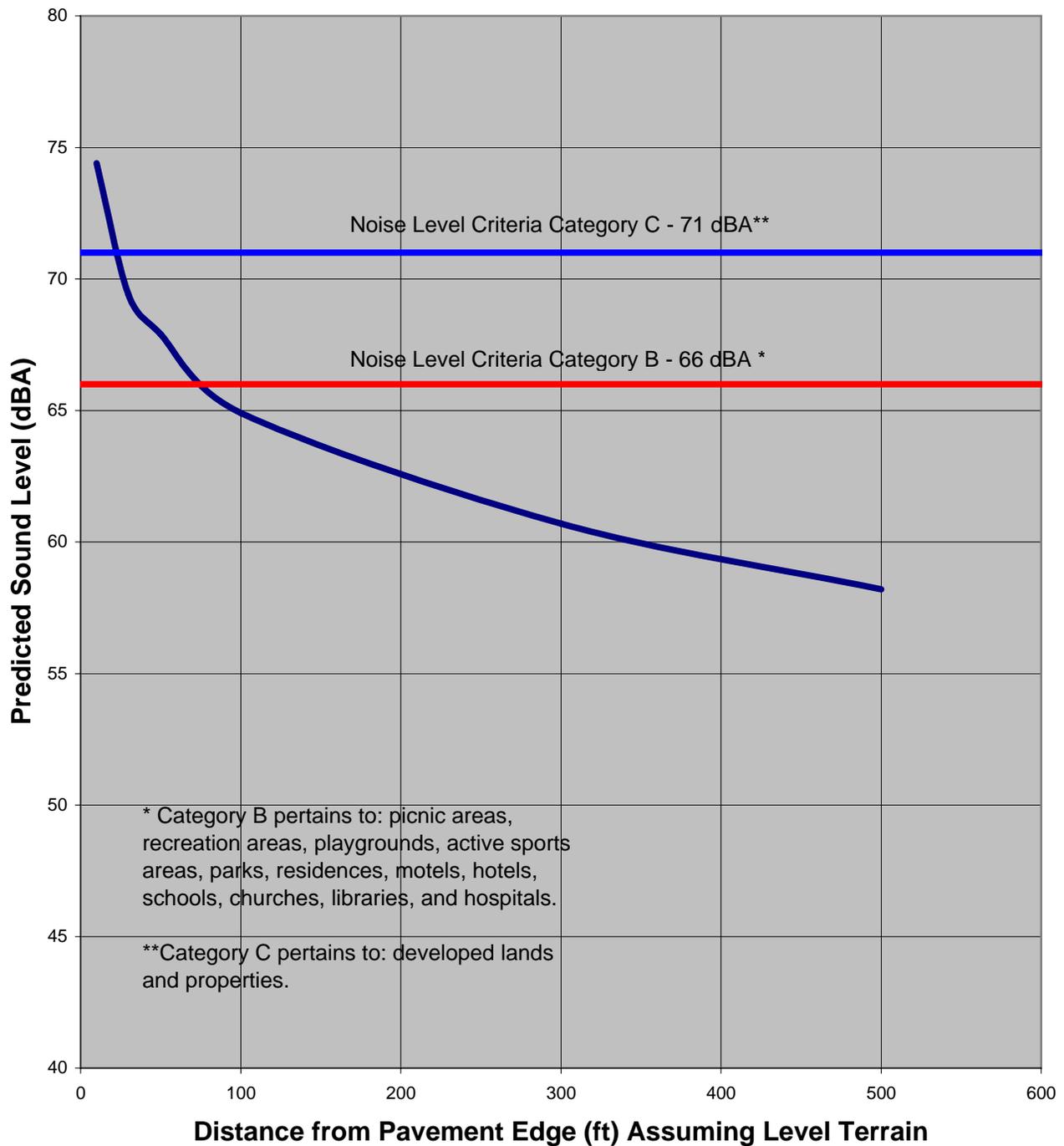
If you have any further questions in regard to this subject or regarding this project in general, please feel free to contact me at 715.225.9306.

Sincerely,

Marc Bowker  
WisDOT Project Leader

Enclosure

# PREDICTED SOUND LEVEL (dBA) SURROUNDING THE US 53 CORRIDOR WISDOT I.D. 1197-22-00



## **Appendix H**

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### **Agricultural Impact Notice**

Proposing Agency Wisconsin Department of Transportation		
Project ID 1197-22-00	Highway US 53	County Barron County
Project Title US 53/Haugen Interchange Location & Freeway/Expressway Conversion Study		Project Length Approximately 4.2 miles
Type and Status of Environmental Document Environmental Assessment		
Proposing Agency Wants to Review Pre-Publication Draft of AIS? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		AIS Needed by What Date? N/A

**1. Project Description**

**a. Describe existing facility - Include existing right of way width.**

US 53 is a four-lane divided highway facility with a right of way (ROW) that varies in width from 250 to 350 feet. The current facility between 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue provides direct access via numerous at-grade intersections with public roads and private driveways. There is an overpass currently in place at 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue just south of the project area, however, no interchanges are constructed between 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue. See Exhibit 1, Study Location Map.

**b. Describe proposed action - Include anticipated right of way width and any easements.**

The Proposed Action would officially designate US 53 between 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue as a freeway/expressway via the process established in Wisconsin State Statutes (Wis. Stats. 84.295). The statute includes long-term planning, official mapping, and preservation tools available to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) to help protect and preserve ROW for future transportation needs. The proactive tool allows WisDOT to address safety, operation, and mobility/capacity issues in advance of impending long-term needs.

The Proposed Action would include the conversion of the existing four-lane divided facility to a freeway/expressway through the removal or relocation of the existing at-grade intersections with public roads and private driveways. The existing intersections would be reconstructed as cul-de-sacs or grade separations. In addition, one interchange would be constructed and local connecting roadways constructed to provide access. The ROW for the US 53 mainline would not change but additional ROW would be purchased for construction of the interchange, overpasses and local connecting roads. The ROW width needed for the new local roads is anticipated to be 60 to 80 feet.

The Proposed Action does not include immediate programming of construction funds. Improvements would be funded and constructed incrementally as safety/operational issues occur over time. The Proposed Action includes a long-term vision and management strategy so that a system-wide, comprehensive approach results once all of the improvements are completed.

**2. Alternatives considered - Identify the preferred alternative if any, and if other alternatives are no longer under consideration include the reasons why they are not proposed for adoption.**

***No Action Alternative***

The No Action Alternative would include performing routine maintenance only. This alternative would not address safety and operational issues at intersections within the project area. At-grade access along expressway corridors can lead to increased safety issues as traffic volumes increase over time. As gaps in traffic for entering and crossing vehicles decrease, the incidence of high-risk driver behavior can increase.

The No Action Alternative does not support the function of a Corridors 2020 backbone route to provide safe and efficient regional mobility and is not consistent with other improvements to other US 53 highway system segments.

***Build Alternatives***

Three corridor alternatives were developed for comment and input in the first stage of the project. The alternatives include:

- System Alternative 1 – One interchange located just slightly north of the existing County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection with US 53
- System Alternative 2 – One interchange located approximately ¼ mile north of the existing County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection with US 53
- System Alternative 3 – One interchange located at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue/US 53 intersection

See Exhibit 2 for a conceptual diagram of each of the alternatives.

#### System Alternative 1 – (Preferred Alternative)

This alternative would provide access to US 53 via a partial cloverleaf (parclo) interchange located on a modified County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue alignment located just north of the existing US 53/County V/28<sup>th</sup> Street alignment. Exhibit 3 shows the alternative in detail.

The interchange would require a shift in alignment further north of the existing at-grade intersection to avoid extensive fill and wetland impacts. The alignment shift addresses placement challenges at the existing intersection caused by a depression located in the southeastern quadrant of the intersection. The parclo design avoids the southwest quadrant of the intersection where a small manufacturing business is located. In addition, 19<sup>th</sup> Street would be realigned to provide greater separation of the 19<sup>th</sup> Street/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection from the new interchange ramps. The realignment would also create intersection geometry with four perpendicular legs and avoid intersection skew and associated sightline issues.

This alternative would include the following elements:

- Local road connecting 19<sup>th</sup> Street to 18 ¾ Street/29 ¾ Avenue
- Local road connecting 29 ¾ Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Cul-de-sac at the north intersection of US 53/County SS
- Cul-de-sacs at both sides of the US 53/ 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection; on the east side of US 53 a local connection would be constructed north to 19<sup>th</sup> Street
- Grade-separated crossing of US 53 at 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Grade-separated crossing of US 53 at 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Local connections and access to US 53 for locations north of 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue would be determined in a future study.

System Alternative 1 has been selected as the Preferred Alternative.

#### System Alternative 2

This alternative would provide access to US 53 via a diamond interchange connecting 28th Avenue on the south side of US 53 to a new local road on the north side of US 53, connecting to County SS. The interchange would be located approximately ¼ mile north of the existing County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection with US 53.

This alternative would include the following elements:

- Local road connecting 19<sup>th</sup> Street to 18 ¾ Street/29 ¾ Avenue
- Local road connecting 29 ¾ Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Cul-de-sac at the north intersection of US 53/County SS
- Cul-de-sacs at both sides of the US 53/ 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection; on the east side of US 53 a local connection would be constructed north to 19<sup>th</sup> Street
- Grade-separated crossing of US 53 at 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Grade-separated crossing of US 53 at 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Closing of the existing US 53/County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection and creation of a T intersection for the County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 19<sup>th</sup> Street intersection

Local connections and access to US 53 for locations north of 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue would be determined in a future study.

System Alternative 2 is not proposed for adoption.

### System Alternative 3

This alternative would provide access to US 53 via an interchange at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The interchange would provide a southern access to the Village of Haugen and surrounding areas. The interchange would be constructed as a parclo type interchange to provide adequate spacing between the ramps and the curve along US 53 south of 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

This alternative would include the following elements:

- Local road connecting 19<sup>th</sup> Street to 18 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> Street/29 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> Avenue
- Local road connecting 29 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Cul-de-sac at the north intersection of US 53/County SS
- Grade-separated crossing of US 53 at 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Grade-separated crossing of US 53 at 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Grade-separated crossing of US 53 at 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Local connections and access to US 53 for locations north of 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue would be determined in a future study.

System Alternative 3 is not proposed for adoption.

### **3. Maps and Exhibits**

Exhibit 1: Project Location map showing the project's limits

Exhibit 2: Project Alternatives, including Preferred Alternative

Exhibit 3: Preferred Alternative (detail)

Exhibit 4: Preferred Alternative with Land Cover



## Farm Operation Interest Over 5 Acres

Parcel Number 240 / Parcel Num: 032070027000 235 / Parcel Num: 032070020000	Project ID 1197-22-00
Owner Konop, Michael G	Operator (If different from owner)

Type of Land	Acres			Remaining
	Before	Acquired		
		Fee Simple	Easement	
Cropland and pasture	59.33	21.18	0.00	38.15
Woodland	6.98	0.55	0.00	6.43
Land of undetermined or other use	4.6	3.2	0.00	1.40
Total Acres of Farm Operation	70.91	24.93	0.00	45.98

**Description of farm operation and nature of acquisition - Discuss as appropriate any resulting severances, changes in access, expected changes in land use, effect on farm structures, effect on cattle or livestock passes or crossings, roadway obliteration (if any) etc.**

The Proposed Action will affect 25 acres of this 71 acre property. The acquisition will provide the necessary ROW to construct an interchange at County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The proposed interchange will eventually be the only access point to the local roadway system on US 53 between 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue, a distance of 4.2 miles.

The acquisition comprises 25 acres, some of which has been field-identified as wetland. It does not appear that the parcel to be acquired is being farmed at this time. The entire Konop property, currently encompassing 71 acres, would be reduced to 46 acres, including 38 acres of open land. The proposed acquisition would not require any building acquisitions.

Implementing the Proposed Action would reduce the parcel area by approximately 35%. At the time the Proposed Action may be implemented, it would be necessary to work with the property owner to determine whether a farming operation on this property is a tenable alternative.

## Farm Operation Interest Over 5 Acres

Parcel Number 237 / Parcel No: 032070023000 238 / Parcel No: 032070024000	Project ID 1197-22-00
Owner Uchytel, Patrick J.	Operator (If different from owner)

Type of Land	Acres			Remaining
	Before	Acquired		
		Fee Simple	Easement	
Cropland and pasture	15.03	10.99	0.00	4.04
Woodland	19.78	5.35	0.00	14.43
Land of undetermined or other use	0.26	0.26	0.00	0
<b>Total Acres of Farm Operation</b>	<b>35.07</b>	<b>16.60</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>18.47</b>

**Description of farm operation and nature of acquisition - Discuss as appropriate any resulting severances, changes in access, expected changes in land use, effect on farm structures, effect on cattle or livestock passes or crossings, roadway obliteration (if any) etc.**

The Proposed Action will affect 17 acres of this 35 acre property. The acquisition will provide the necessary ROW to construct an interchange at County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The proposed interchange will eventually be the only access point to the local roadway system on US 53 between 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue, a distance of 4.2 miles.

The acquisition comprises 11 acres of open lands and 5 acres of wooded lands. The property, currently encompassing 35 acres, would be reduced to 18 acres. The proposed acquisition would not require any building acquisitions. It does not appear that the property is being actively farmed, or that wood is being harvested from the property.

The Proposed Action would reduce the parcel area by approximately 47.3%.

## Farm Operation Interest Over 5 Acres

Parcel Number 236 / Parcel No: 032070022000 243 / Parcel No: 032070029000	Project ID 1197-22-00
Owner Konop, Benedict	Operator (If different from owner)

Type of Land	Acres			Remaining
	Before	Acquired		
		Fee Simple	Easement	
Cropland and pasture	15.32	9.78	0.00	5.54
Woodland	46.13	0.00	0.00	46.13
Land of undetermined or other use	0.47	0.47	0.00	.47
Total Acres of Farm Operation	61.92	10.25	0.00	51.67

**Description of farm operation and nature of acquisition - Discuss as appropriate any resulting severances, changes in access, expected changes in land use, effect on farm structures, effect on cattle or livestock passes or crossings, roadway obliteration (if any) etc.**

The Proposed Action will affect 10 acres of this 62 acre farming operation. The acquisition will provide the necessary right of way to construct ramps at the new interchange location.

The acquisition comprises 10 acres of open lands. Most of the remaining property is woodlands. The property, currently encompassing 62 acres, would be reduced to 52 acres, a reduction of 17%. The proposed acquisition would require the acquisition of one residence, one shed, and a barn that is currently unusable due to a collapsed roof. A Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan has been prepared for the residence.

It does not appear that the property is being actively farmed at this time.

## Farm Operation Interest Over 5 Acres

Parcel Number 33 / Parcel No: 032170013000 35 / Parcel No: 032170014000	Project ID 1197-22-00
Owner Stodola, Ivan	Operator (If different from owner)

Type of Land	Acres			Remaining
	Before	Acquired		
		Fee Simple	Easement	
Cropland and pasture	311.32	8.15	0.00	303.17
Woodland	27.73	0.00	0.00	0.00
Land of undetermined or other use	1.54	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Acres of Farm Operation	340.59	8.15	0.00	332.44

**Description of farm operation and nature of acquisition - Discuss as appropriate any resulting severances, changes in access, expected changes in land use, effect on farm structures, effect on cattle or livestock passes or crossings, roadway obliteration (if any) etc.**

The Proposed Action will affect 8 acres of this 341 acre dairy farming operation. The acquisition will provide the necessary right-of-way to construct a local road connection between 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The proposed interchange will eventually be the only access point to the local roadway system on US 53 between 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue, a distance of 4.2 miles.

The Proposed Action will minimize impacts on woodland areas and avoid all wetland areas. The acquisition comprises of 8 acres currently used as cropland and cattle pasture. The property, currently encompassing 341 acres, would be reduced to 332 acres, including 303 acres of cropland. The proposed acquisition would not require any building acquisitions.

Implementing the Proposed Action would likely have a minimal effect on this dairy farming operation. It would reduce the parcel area by approximately 2%. The remaining area in the parcel would be large enough to support its current dairy farming operation.

## Farm Operation Interest Over 5 Acres

Parcel Number 262 / Parcel No: 032080014000 264 / Parcel No: 032080016000	Project ID 1197-22-00
Owner Graese, Leroy and Mary	Operator (If different from owner)

Type of Land	Acres			Remaining
	Before	Acquired		
		Fee Simple	Easement	
Cropland and pasture	282.99	8.13	0.00	274.86
Woodland	7.75	0.00	0.00	7.75
Land of undetermined or other use	4.46	0.00	0.00	4.46
Total Acres of Farm Operation	295.2	8.13	0.00	287.07

**Description of farm operation and nature of acquisition - Discuss as appropriate any resulting severances, changes in access, expected changes in land use, effect on farm structures, effect on cattle or livestock passes or crossings, roadway obliteration (if any) etc.**

The Proposed Action will affect 8 acres of this 295 acre farming operation. The majority of the farm would be unaffected and still farmable. The acquisition will provide the necessary right-of-way for the construction of ramps and provide a local road connection to 19<sup>th</sup> Street.

The acquisition comprises 8 acres currently used as cropland and cattle pasture. The property currently encompassing 295 acres, would be reduced to 287 acres, including 275 acres of cropland. The proposed acquisition would not require any building acquisitions.

Implementing the Proposed Action would likely have a minimal effect on this dairy farming operation. It would reduce the parcel area by approximately 3%. The remaining area in the parcel would be large enough to support its current dairy farming operation.

## Farm Operation Interest Over 5 Acres

Parcel Number 032060006000	Project ID 1197-22-00
Owner Lalond, Devereaux	Operator (If different from owner)

Type of Land	Acres			Remaining
	Before	Acquired		
		Fee Simple	Easement	
Cropland and pasture	230.27	8.05	0.00	222.22
Woodland	143.84	1.16	0.00	142.68
Land of undetermined or other use	3.95	0.00	0.00	3.95
Total Acres of Farm Operation	378.06	9.21	0.00	368.85

**Description of farm operation and nature of acquisition - Discuss as appropriate any resulting severances, changes in access, expected changes in land use, effect on farm structures, effect on cattle or livestock passes or crossings, roadway obliteration (if any) etc.**

The Proposed Action would affect 9 acres of this 378 acre dairy farming operation. The acquisition would provide the necessary right of way to construct a local road connection between 29 3/4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and the overpass at 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

As shown in Exhibit 3, Preferred Alternative, the ROW acquisition for the connecting roadway will divide the cropland/grazing area south of 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue but both remaining parcels will still be farmable and accessible. The acreage needed for the overpass would be a strip taking along 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The proposed overpass at 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue would provide a safer crossing to the owner's property on the west side of US 53 than the current at-grade crossing. The proposed acquisition would not require any building acquisitions.

Implementing the Proposed Action would likely have a minimal effect on this dairy farming operation. It would reduce the parcel area by approximately 2.5%. The remaining area in the parcel would be large enough to support its current dairy farming operation.

## **Appendix I**

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### **Meeting Minutes**

# Minutes

## US 53/Haugen Interchange Location & Freeway/Expressway Conversion Study (26<sup>th</sup> Avenue - 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue) Barron and Washburn County Public Information Meeting (PIM)

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WisDOT Project ID 1197-22-00

August 29, 2006

5:00 p.m.

Haugen Elementary School

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### *Attending:*

- WisDOT - Marc Bowker, Jeff Emerson, Tom Beekman
- SEH - Darren Fortney, Mark Koehler
- Public - Approximately 50 members of the public were on hand for the meeting. Mary Hubler from the State Legislature and Senator Robert Jauch were present. Media members from Channel 18 (ABC) News, Rice Lake Chronotype and WHSM Radio attended the meeting.

### *Materials Distributed:*

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Input Forms/Stickers

### *Action Items:*

- SEH to add and update names in mailing database.

### *Meeting Agenda:*

- The meeting was an informal open house. Maps were on display depicting areas and parcels on and around the corridor. Attendees were asked to review the maps and place numbered stickers on the maps where they had questions or concerns. Those that desired to comment were asked to write out their corresponding comments on a Public Input Form. The comments were then entered into a database for future review and analysis. Team members from WisDOT and SEH were available to address questions.

- A brief presentation by SEH included introductions of the study team and their roles, project scope and background, study area, limits, schedule, and answers to frequently asked questions. Following the presentation, comments and questions were taken from attendees.
- The PIM continued in open-house format following the question-and-answer session, with attendees participating in a mapping exercise to pinpoint areas of concern while interacting with project staff. These concerns/comments are listed below:
  - A few individuals thought the local place for an interchange would be at/near County V
  - One person suggested an interchange at County V and have County V underpass US 53.
  - One person suggested a spot speed reduction down to 55 mph in this segment. It was explained why this was not feasible.
  - One person asked if she could log her property in the next year or so in the SE quadrant of US 53/County V intersection. WisDOT informed her that she could.
  - Several comments were made regarding 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue in that it serves as a high traffic east/west connection and carries a good amount of local traffic. This road would be a good candidate for a grade separation.
  - It was mentioned that WisDOT appears to own some property north of County V. An interchange utilizing property in this area should be explored.

The following are comments that were made via comment forms at the meeting. The comments are located on the hard copy maps and are compiled in a database.

- Cut down the hill north of County V (southbound lane) and widen the median.
- We have installed a \$15,000 driveway on our new property. We also have an approved building permit for our new home. Are we able to continue with our building plans or does WisDOT wish to acquire our property now/later? We do not wish to live on the property if any portion of it is acquired. Scott & Donna Belcher, 2217 11th Avenue, Chetek, WI 54728, Home Phone - 715.924.2076
- Move northbound traffic to the east to get separation and so crossing vehicles only need to deal with one direction of traffic at a time. Provide wider turn lanes like at Trego; they help.

- I was involved in an accident at this intersection. I was heading west - I was new to the area - An eye-witness stated that he saw me stop in the median and wait. I pulled out right in front of a mustang that fit in the molding of my minivan - The median is on an incline, which I hope will be addressed. Thank you for your time and interest in this planning.
- 27th Avenue - Since my accident (1996) is my first choice that I will always use when traveling northbound on US 53 - When I frequent my local Haugen businesses.
- I use County V allot because I live in Haugen. I use the US 53/County V intersection frequently for church, businesses, and allot of my family lives east of US 53. Closing this intersection would be a disaster for me.
- Why can't the US 53/County V intersection move 1/8th mile north to cross roadway at a 90 degree angle and the ravine. Ben Konop, 8878 28th Avenue, Rice Lake, WI 54868.
- I hope you folks will leave low traffic intersections as is. Most intersections like this historically have good visibility for cars entering the highway and few if any accidents.
- The funding for this proposed project is important and using the funding economically is very important. I hope you are reluctant to use property like the wild rivers trail for frontage roads if that would save the taxpayers money.
- Why is making US 53 a freeway sooner vs. later such a priority? Sounds like if you fix the US 53/County V intersection making it safer, that would postpone the huge expense of making this four mile section of US 53 a freeway.
- Blind curve going south. You cannot see cars entering the highway until you are around the curve.
- I was present at your meeting at the Haugen School in 1994 and I made the suggestion then to build an overpass at the US 53/County V intersection. I was told that it would cost \$3,000,000 for that kind of project. I asked the board members "What is one life worth to you?" No one would answer that question. Why wasn't something started back in 1994 when they asked for our input. Would it be less expensive and feasible to lower the terrain on the southbound lane north of the US 53/County V intersection? Roger Forcey, 311 Gardner Street, Haugen, WI 54841.
- We have a retail business on 28th Avenue. Our business decisions have been based on the current traffic patterns. We have invested allot of money and feel a change in traffic patterns would be devastating to our livelihood.

- Keeping 28th Avenue open for businesses from Haugen east is very important as it is the main thoroughfare from Haugen businesses to Brill-MiRanch-Birchwood-Homes on Cedar Lake- and points east.
- As postmaster of Haugen I can see issues that would arise from changes to the US 53/County V intersection. Highway contract drivers have routes that are very exact. Any change would cause contracts to be reissued. These routes have been based on the most timely way to move the mail. Changes would affect all residents as well.
- If the new interchange will hurt our substantial retail from US 53 tourists, I would prefer to be acquired by the interchange footprint. We need good access to US 53 traffic for our business if our property is not acquired.
- Washburn County maintenance vehicles turn around at 30th Avenue which is also a through route.
- KOA and Lake Lot Development continues - Only access
- Owns property here - lives in Haugen and hauls wood back to town from this 40 acre parcel on County V via tractor.
- Monday Lake Kennel Grounds and training area use US 53 to move between these locations (see also 112)
- Training grounds (see also 111)
- We use this intersection to avoid the US 53/County V intersection.
- We use this intersection to avoid the US 53/County V intersection.
- County V in the Haugen Business District is important to our business (village grocery). Altering the flow of traffic will be very devastating for our business and all the others in downtown Haugen.
- We need entrances and exits to and from the village of Haugen for our businesses.
- You can not see to the north far enough to get out into US 53 traffic.
- We need this exit to Haugen for our community.
- Many of the people and businesses need the US 53/County V intersection to remain open for access from tourism.
- A short-term solution may be to reduce the intersection angle and widen the distance between lanes.
- The median is not wide enough between the northbound and southbound US 53 lanes. The fancy curve from the north was not necessary. There is not enough time to cross at the intersection, especially during holidays.
- The town board of Oak Grove strongly feel that the US 53/26th Avenue intersection will need and overpass.

- The school district desires easy access to Haugen and between the two communities of Haugen and Rice Lake.
- Bear Lake-Haugen EMS. If there would be something done with the S curve on US 53 by the Stodola farm. In icy conditions people slide off the roadway.
- I farm west of the village of Haugen and rent land on the east side of US 53. We use County V for travel. We would like to keep it open.

The following comments were made via email from individuals who were unable to attend the meeting:

- I live on 18 ¾ Street where the KOA Campground is located. I am glad to hear that you are looking at the entire area for reevaluation and possible redevelopment. The exit from US 53 on to our road is very dangerous too and it only seems logical that the complete area is studied. Would it be possible to have the project maps and traffic counts for the intersection emailed or sent to me? We have a local lake owner's page and I would like to add the study information to the web page. If the project will have a web link, that could be added too. Our page can be found at [www.lowerdevilslake.com](http://www.lowerdevilslake.com).
- I am not able to attend the meeting in Haugen tomorrow night due to other commitments. I am not happy to miss this meeting due to the importance of it. I hope by e-mailing you, I can get my concerns expressed whether it means anything or not I still have to express my feelings.

I know the past is exactly that the past but it sure would have been nice to have overpasses on all the roads connecting to the Expressway 53 back when they built it. I am sure everyone that has lost family at the V intersection would attest to that. I live one mile from the Expressway on 27th Ave. Thank God that there hasn't been any accidents on our intersection. I don't allow my family to go to the V and 53 intersection. That is off limits to me and my family that is how that is. I read all the letters in the Chronotype about how they cannot slow traffic on 53 for those 4 miles. Wow can you believe that? I drive that road twice a day and you cannot believe the speeds and rudeness that is involved. When I am heading North from Rice Lake and turning onto 27th Ave I turn my signal on when I get just past the big curves and they practically push me off the road. We used to have a State Patrol Officer that sat on our road. I have not seen anyone there since he retired. It has been at least 3 years since I have seen an officer sitting there. Did they give up on us? It just blows my mind when I read that they cannot control the speed. Living here and reading that is just mind boggling to me. In the summer time you had better drive 70 just to stay alive...I am breaking the law doing that but it seems that your a hazard if you don't do what they do just to keep from getting run over. The

bottom line is if you slowed the traffic down to 55 mph for those 4 miles you could save us a hell of a lot of money and please don't tell me that is can't happen. How much would it cost to pay two officers to sit there 24-7? You could take that money they collect from the speeders down South and buy a new freeway and pay them and their families a very nice wage for doing us a service. I just cannot understand why they are scared to tell those people to slow down. Is that going to harm the tourist industry, or they just don't care about us hicks in the North. I have heard talk that they want to close off our road. So they would make me and my neighbors drive 5 miles out of the way to get to the expressway? So if we need an emergency vehicle they will have to drive 5 more miles to get to us? I just cannot understand why someone would put my life and the lives of my family in jeopardy because they cannot slow down the traffic to a safe level. That extra 5 miles might be the difference in life and death. I would have a very hard time in dealing with something like that without having someone pay for that stupidity. So what will the buses do? Drive another 5 miles or just forget about that service? Are we going to be paid for the extra gas we have to burn to get somewhere because the road was closed off because the speeds cannot be controlled? I am sorry but I just don't get it. I remember when the speeds were 55. Well ok 60 to 65 because that was allowed. Now it is 65 or 73 which is allowed. How many accidents were there when it was 55? Please think before you react to whatever plans you may have. My family and I depend on you to make the right decisions. An overpass or slowing the traffic is the only answer. I hope I have not wasted your time. Thank You, Tony Drost

# Minutes

## US 53/Haugen Interchange Location & Freeway/Expressway Conversion Study (26<sup>th</sup> Avenue - 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue) Barron and Washburn County Progress Meeting

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WisDOT Project ID 1197-22-00

January 29, 2007

9:00 a.m.

SEH - Rice Lake

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*Attending:*

- WisDOT - Marc Bowker, Jeff Emerson, Tom Beekman
- SEH - Darren Fortney, Greg Weyandt

*Action Items:*

- Label and name alternatives as “system alternatives” not system concepts.
- The study name should be called: “US 53/Haugen Interchange Location & Freeway/Expressway Conversion Study”
- The alternatives will be labeled as follows:
  - System Alternative 1A (interchange at County V)
  - System Alternative 1B (interchange at northern relocated County V)
  - System Alternative 2 (interchange at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue, jug-handle at 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue)

*Discussion Items:*

- System Alternative 1B (interchange at WisDOT Property should design a “T” intersection at County V/SS and County V/28 ¾ Avenue. The possibility of a roundabout was discussed at these intersections.
- The PowerPoint presentation for the upcoming LOM/PIM should be able to “turn on” and “turn off” various local roadway improvements in the presentation that would better help the public understand what might be needed if certain overpasses were not constructed. This will help the public understand the pros/cons of various improvements and the choices that certain roads versus grade separations offer.
- One of the cons to System Alternative 2 is that the curves on US 53 will be difficult to design diamond interchange ramps at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Therefore loop ramps maybe better options for this interchange location.

- One of the cons of System Alternative 2 is that it would likely require all three structures to be constructed during the same stage/phase. These improvements consist of grade separations at County V and 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue and an interchange at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- The LOM and PIM will have three sets of exhibits, one for each alternative. Two stations should be set up for a total of six exhibits.
- All alternatives will involve some indirection for local property owners. WisDOT's primary concern is highway safety. Unfortunately, some indirection will be created in order to achieve a safer transportation facility. The upcoming presentation should address this up front with the public.

# Minutes

## US 53/Haugen Interchange Location & Freeway/Expressway Conversion Study (26<sup>th</sup> Avenue - 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue) Barron and Washburn County Ice Age Trail Meeting

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WisDOT Project ID 1197-22-00

February 21, 2007

9:00 a.m.

SEH Conference Room

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*Attending:*

- WisDOT - Marc Bowker (via conference call)
- SEH - Darren Fortney, Charles Wade
- WDNR – Brigit Brown
- NPS – Thomas Gilbert

*Action Items:*

- Brigit will email Marc and Darren information on trail funding sources for the Wild Rivers State Recreation Trail to aid in determining possible 4(f) coordination.
- Verbiage relating to the timing of specific design issues relating to multi-modal accommodations on the structures and/or approaches will be included in the EA. It would indicate that the issue would be re-evaluated closer to the time of final design/construction.
- SEH will provide NPS and WDNR a concept design for shifting the Wild Rivers State Trail at 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue in conjunction with the layout of the overpass.

*Discussion Items:*

- Project background information was provided including the long-term purpose of the project as preserving right-of-way for future improvements when they become needed and/or funding becomes available.
- The US 53 corridor is part of the upcoming Corridors 2030 plan and WisDOT is currently determining if converting the entire expressway section between 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the city of Superior to a freeway is appropriate. Eventually the entire segment will be studied by WisDOT with the portion between 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Spooner likely initiated near 2010.
- The Ice Age Trail is designated as a non-motorized trail only with the goal of not following motorized routes such as roads and trails where vehicles and

ATV's are allowed. Currently 50 percent of the trail is constructed with negotiations for the rest of the trail in progress at varying stages. A trail can not be designated as the Ice Age Trail if motorized vehicles such as ATV's are allowed. Snowmobiles are exempt from this restriction.

- The Ice Age Trail currently has a gap between the Tuscobia Trail and the Phillips Scout Ranch within the study area.
- A portion of the Tuscobia Trail outside of the study area currently allows ATV's and therefore cannot be designated as part of the Ice Age Trail. ATV users would like to use the nine mile segment currently designated as Ice Age Trail, to close a gap in their trail system. NPS is open to the idea of shifting the trail off of the Tuscobia Trail only if an alternate corridor can be found and acquired. Past discussions have not yielded much success in finding an alternate route.
- WDNR has earmarked funds to construct a new Ice Age Trail corridor if a route for the trail can be secured.
- There was a discussion of closing the gap between the Wild Rivers Trail and US 53 at 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue to allow for a structure that would span both facilities and remove the at-grade intersection with the trail. All at the meeting felt that this proposed change would be a "net benefit" for the trail and its users. By shifting the trail, a shorter, less expensive structure could be constructed.
- WisDOT is currently using rural design standards in determining the type of local road connections, structures, and interchanges. If bike/pedestrian needs change in the future, the design could be modified to accommodate those needs if appropriate.
- The Environmental Assessment (EA) would have the following and/or similar verbiage in the Basic Sheets, Environmental Commitments, and Unique Areas Factor Sheets: "Specific design issues relating to the accommodation of multi-modal needs would be determined closer to the time of final design or construction if/when the Ice Age Trail corridor is determined". The agency coordination matrix will also show the meeting and concurrence on the verbiage.
- It was thought that NPS has to make approval for 4(f) impacts, but SAFETEA-LU has shifted some of the approval authority to FHWA.
- Sight line distance, ADA, and grooming equipment are all requirements that must be addressed during design of the shifted trail near 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Darren will have a rough concept design created for the area where the proposed trail shift is to occur and email it to NPS and WDNR.
- A scanned image of the Ice Age Trail Atlas will be an exhibit to the EA for reference.

# Minutes

## US 53/Haugen Interchange Location & Freeway/Expressway Conversion Study (26<sup>th</sup> Avenue - 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue) Barron and Washburn County WDNR Coordination Meeting

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WisDOT Project ID 1197-22-00

January 29, 2007

11:00 a.m.

SEH – Rice Lake

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*Attending:*

- WisDOT - Marc Bowker
- WDNR – Amy Cronk
- SEH - Darren Fortney, Greg Weyandt

*Purpose of meeting:*

- Purpose of the meeting was to provide WDNR on the status of the study as well as to present the various system alternatives for review and comment.

*Action Items:*

- SEH will send Amy a set of exhibits of the alternatives by the end of next week.
- Amy would like to have a chance to check in with WDNR on various issues. She will get back to WisDOT with a response by mid-March.

*Discussion Items:*

- Amy suggested a field visit with USACE Jason Berkner (Hayward office) to review corridor wetlands.
- Amy would like to be kept informed of any developments involving the Ice Age Trail.
- Amy indicated that the corridor has numerous high quality wetlands adjacent to it.
- There was some discussion as to whether or not some wetlands may be able to be avoided if various frontage/access roads did not have to run the entire length near the county line.
- System Alternative 1 and 2 will have varying effects and implications as to where the frontage roads would be located and/or the direction of vehicular travel as they move towards future corridor access points.

# Minutes

## US 53/Haugen Interchange Location & Freeway/Expressway Conversion Study (26<sup>th</sup> Avenue - 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue) Barron and Washburn County Local Official Meeting

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WisDOT Project ID 1197-22-00

February 22, 2007

1:00 p.m.

Village of Haugen

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Attendees:

- WisDOT
  - Marc Bowker, Tom Beekman, Jeff Emerson, Tammy Williamson, Troy Stapelmann
  
- SEH
  - Darren Fortney, Grey Weyandt, Mark Kohler
  
- WDNR
  - Terry Jordan
  
- Barron County
  - Jess Miller, Tom Richie
  
- Village of Haugen
  - Donald Dahle, Steve Salmi, Sharon Thrumbel,
  
- Town of Bear Lake
  - Jerry Kaczmarek
  
- Town of Oak Grove
  - Ed Haughian, Joe Juza
  
- Others in attendance
  - John Heffernan, Sue Zahrbock, Marv Prestrud, Pat Blackaller, Nancy Frank, Mark Servi, Louis Willger

### Materials Distributed

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Agenda
- Input Form/Stickers
- Matrix

### Action Items Summary

- Add comments from input form and stickers to exhibits
- Tally 'most desirable' locations from Input Form
- Add Sharon Thrumbel to mailing database

### Discussion/Meeting Items

- Approximately 21 local officials attended the meeting.
- Darren Fortney (SEH) gave a brief presentation outlining project details. Maps were on hand with a range of alternatives.
- Local officials participated in an Input Form exercise where some added comments on the range of alternatives and preferred alternatives.
- Five written comments were made regarding the support for System Alternative 1. No other comments were made regarding any other alternatives. The comments for alternative 1 are listed below:
  1. We prefer #1 with the idea of keeping 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue open until funds are available for overhead.
  2. I feel County V and US 53 are in the proper location.
  3. I prefer #1 because business owners would like to see County V open to US 53 for access. Boy Scouts and tourists use County V and US 53.
  4. Option 1 has the least impact on local traffic/residence/business and takes care of safety concerns.
  5. I feel the County V interchange is the most logical option. The relocated County V is my second preferred alternative.
- Results of the most desired system alternatives are tallied below: (Most desired locations equal 1, second desired location equals 2, and the third choice equals a rank of 3). A total of fourteen responses were recorded.

<b><u>Alternative</u></b>	<b><u>Rank</u></b>
1	(1,1,1,1,1,1,1,2)
2	(1,2,3)
3	(2,3,3)



# Minutes

## US 53/Haugen Interchange Location & Freeway/Expressway Conversion Study (26<sup>th</sup> Avenue - 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue) Barron and Washburn County Public Information Meeting

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WisDOT Project ID 1197-22-00

March 15, 2007

5:00 p.m.

Haugen Elementary

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### Attendees:

- Approximately 60 members of the public attended the meeting.
- WisDOT
  - Marc Bowker, Tom Beekman, Jeff Emerson,
- SEH
  - Darren Fortney, Grey Weyandt, Mark Kohler
- Ice Age Trail
  - Nancy Frank
- Media
  - Eric Quade (Barron News), Eileen Nimm (Rice Lake Chronotype), Joe Lancello (WHSM Radio)

### Materials Distributed

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Input Form/Stickers
- Matrix

### Action Items Summary

- Add comments from input form and stickers to exhibits
- Tally 'preferred alternative' locations from Input Form
- Send .pdfs to lake owners at [www.lowerdevilslake.com](http://www.lowerdevilslake.com)
- A request was made to contact Lu Anne Johnson and Gene Bergman to discuss project alternatives.
- Add several names to mailing database

53 is a low volume which is another reason why the 30th Ave. overpass may not be done right away. By expanding the entrance and exit lanes at 30th it will keep that access safe and viable for a number of years until it is necessary to close the road.

4. The new proposal would limit the number of vehicles that travel near the lake. In the current proposal eventually all traffic north of 30th Ave. would have to drive through the lake area to get to Hwy 53. This could do a great deal of damage. It would also keep the large camping trailers from disrupting the land/lake area on their way to the campsite. With this proposal the campers would stay on Hwy 53 longer and exit closer to the campsite rather than driving through the lake area.

5. Lake property would maintain and increase in value since the traffic issue will be eliminated.

6. It would assist in keeping Wegmans Garden Center a viable business.

7. A 100+ year old family farm will not be destroyed and the lake property would maintain its value

I hope you will take the time to investigate this option

Best Regards

Lu Anne Johnson

Lower Devils Lake Homeowner

***Response to comment from Marc Bowker:***

As part of this project the completed plan will have to show the connection since it would be a necessary part of the entire freeway conversion, without the connection the misdirection for some would be extensive. How this actually is phased for construction, what is built when, will not be determined at this time. What will determine the timing of what is built when would be the availability of funding. If funds are allocated for the entire conversion of this segment to a freeway it would need to be built entirety, but if a smaller amount of funds are available it would be determined what would be necessary to be completed at that time. For example if funds become available for the construction of the interchange there would be a few required closures of streets and driveways, but depending on which alternative becomes the preferred one would depend on which ones.

If concept 1 does become the preferred alternative then the connection through the Johnson farm may not need to be constructed until the point at which the overpass needs to be constructed at 30th Ave. Another alternative to that would be to construct the connection across the Johnson farm, close 29 3/4 Ave. and not construct the connection to 30th Ave. reducing the traffic around the lake to only those you have a destination in the area rather than through traffic.

We will definitely record your comment in our documentation of the project so it will not be lost.



## MINUTES

USH 53 Haugen DNR Meeting, 1197-22-00

March 29, 2007

9:00 AM

Haugen

**Attending:** Troy Stapelmann-DOT, Amy Cronk-DNR, Greg Weyandt-SEH

- A. 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue Overpass Comments (System Alternates 1, 2 and 3)
  - 1. Prefer realignment to north (cattails) and avoid wetlands to the south (Tamarack).
  - 2. How much impact to agriculture?
  
- B. 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Interchange (System Alternate 3)
  - 1. Loss of approximately 20 acres of farmland.
  - 2. Seems to have less pavement and natural resource impacts but would require an additional overpass to project.
  
- C. Frontage road From 27<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> Street (System Alternatives 1 and 2)
  - 1. Prefer minimizing distance between US 53 and frontage road.
  - 2. Possible conifer plantings to shield headlights. This would save on forest. Is it possible to bury the electric transmission line?
  
- D. Interchange at County V (System Alternative 1)
  - 1. Issue regarding drainage to Bear Creek. Might want to retain stormwater with ramps. Amy will talk to DNR Specialists regarding what to do with drainage to Bear Creek.
  - 2. Possible on-site wetland mitigation potential near the frontage road
  - 3. Possible benefit of treating run-off from farmland/roadway before Bear Creek.
  
- E. Interchange at DOT Property North of CTH V (System Alternative 2)
  - 1. Considerable wetland and drainage issues.
  - 2. Osprey nest at north end of 19<sup>th</sup> Street. (Construction timing will be an issue in the spring.)
  
- F. Local Road Connection from 19<sup>th</sup> Street to 18 ¾ (System Alternative 1, 2 and 3)
  
  
- G. Local Road Connection from 29 ¾ to 30<sup>th</sup> Street (System Alternatives 1, 2 and 3)
  - 1. Move connection to higher ground (closer to shed).
  - 2. Osprey nest (another nest separate from the 19<sup>th</sup> Street nest).

- H. Overpass at 30<sup>th</sup> Street (System Alternatives 1, 2 and 3)
  - 1. Wetland issues near intersection.
  - 2. Access issues to garden center.
  - 3. Issues with trail and 4(f).DNR. Trail needs to be preserved for future railroad use. DOT would need to go through 4(f) and build a bridge that could span trail in future (higher & special abutment).
  - 4. DNR will most likely request span of exiting trail location.
  
- I. General Comments System Alternative 1
  - 1. Consolidates commercial to where commercial already exists.
  
- J. General Comments System Alternative 2
  - 1. May promote commercial development in current rural setting.
  
- K. General Comments System Alternative 3
  - 1. Appears to have the least impact on wetlands.
  - 2. May promote commercial development in current rural setting.
  
- L. Other Comments
  - 1. Contact Dan Munson with ACOE for comments.
  - 2. Send Amy costs per alternative and/or PIM powerpoint.
  - 3. Provide Amy with DTM's of project so she can use to consult with runoff/drainage DNR Specialists.
  - 4. Construction limitations with Osprey nests.
  - 5. Wetland delineation recently completed near old KOA on 29 3/4<sup>th</sup>.
  - 6. What does NRCS have classified as prime farmland?
  - 7. ARCH survey?

# Minutes

## US 53/Haugen Interchange Location & Freeway/Expressway Conversion Study (26<sup>th</sup> Avenue - 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue) Barron and Washburn County Progress Meeting

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WisDOT Project ID 1197-22-00  
April 30, 2007  
SEH - Rice Lake

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### Attendees:

- WisDOT
  - Marc Bowker, Tom Beekman, Jeff Emerson
  
- SEH
  - Darren Fortney, Grey Weyandt, Mark Kohler

### Purpose of Meeting

- The purpose of the meeting was to review the public and local official comments on the range of alternatives with WisDOT.

### Action Items Summary

- SEH should coordinate with the town and county on the connection between 19th and 29 ¾ Avenue.
- SEH should prepare automated exhibits for describing how traffic patterns would be altered with respect to the freeway conversion, especially around the Upper and Lower Devils Lake area. A before and after scenario should be developed. Use orange arrows to show traffic flow.
- ADT's of all known roads should be displayed on the maps of the alternatives and future meeting exhibits.
- SEH should identify what functional roadway classification future roadway corridors should be mapped to.
- SEH should contact the two property owners directly on the US 53 corridor to obtain their input on how they wish their property to be handled in the future.
- All exhibits emailed to stakeholders should be stamped "draft."

- Mark Kohler, Darren Fortney, and Marc Bowker each had a follow up item with various property owner requests for more information.
- SEH should look at the cost for the buy-out of the two properties near the intersection of County V/County SS providing a frontage road. DOT will do the estimate for buying property and SEH will provide the cost to provide the frontage road.
- SEH will look at the intersection of County V/County SS in Haugen to determine if the geometrics are adequate to handle larger vehicles.
- Comment/dot number 158 needs to be added to map in downtown Haugen.
- It was decided that Alternative 1 would be carried forward as the "Preferred Alternative."



## MINUTES

Haugen Study, Progress Meeting, Project 1197-22-00

Location: Wisconsin DOT – Eau Claire Office

June 7, 2007

1:00 PM

**Attending:** Marc Bowker, Troy Stapelmann, Tom Beekman, Terry Pederson, Jeff Emerson, Darren Fortney, Greg Weyandt

- A. Discussed DNR letter dated May 10, 2007. Response letter is attached. (SEH will provide initial responses captured at the meeting for DOT to base letter on.)
- B. Add blue line for Bear Creek on System Alternate 1 Exhibit. (SEH Responsibility)
- C. SEH is to move ahead on the noise analysis and design for the preferred alternative. (SEH Responsibility)
- D. No extension of the study is required to the north. (No Action. Gray box area on the exhibit)
- E. Contact will need to be made with the property owners to coordinate driveway and local road placement. (DOT or SEH Responsibility?)
- F. Contact township to determine if new local roads are required to be paved. (DOT or SEH Responsibility?)
- G. Traffic forecasts need to be requested for each of the system alternates. (DOT Responsibility)

# Minutes

## US 53/Haugen Interchange Location & Freeway/Expressway Conversion Study (26<sup>th</sup> Avenue - 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue) Barron and Washburn County Public Information Meeting

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WisDOT Project ID 1197-22-00

October 4, 2007

5:00 p.m.

Haugen Elementary

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### Attendees:

- Approximately 45 members of the public attended the meeting.
- WisDOT
  - Marc Bowker, Tom Beekman, Jeff Emerson
- SEH
  - Darren Fortney, Greg Weyandt
- State of Wisconsin
  - Mary Hubler (State Representative)
- Media
  - Eric Quade (Barron News)

### Materials Distributed

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Input Form/Stickers

### Action Items Summary

- Add comments from input form and stickers to exhibits
- Assemble and mail map to Donald and Carole Ott

### Discussion/Meeting Items

- Darren Fortney (SEH) gave a brief presentation outlining project details. Maps were on hand displaying the preferred alternative.
- Attendees participated in an Input Form exercise. Three comments on the preferred alternative and maps were made. The comments are listed below.

1. A sound wall should be erected near the cul-de-sac at County SS.
2. Please print map (smaller size) from County V to ¼ mile north of 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Barron County line) and send to Donald and Carole Ott, 2326 Coral Ct NE, Rochester, MN 55906 (Please include east to encompass Upper and Lower Devils Lake
3. Owners of the landscape business off of 30th Ave were concerned about long-term loss of access from US 53 to their property. Property owners were informed that overpass at 30th Ave would likely be a lower priority (and therefore potentially constructed later in the partial build scenario). The property owners also had some more specific questions about how Wis. Stats. 84.295 would affect their property and business.

## **Appendix J**

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### **Indirect and Cumulative Effects – Pre-screening Analysis**

**Indirect and Cumulative Effects  
Prescreening Analysis  
US 53 Haugen Interchange Location and Freeway Conversion Study  
Barron and Washburn Counties, Wisconsin  
WisDOT Project ID 1197-22-00  
*Rev 2-10-09***

**Project Description**

US 53 is classified as a principle arterial highway with the primary purpose of providing interstate and interregional mobility and was designated as a backbone route in the WisDOT Corridors 2020 Plan. This plan included a network of existing and improved roadways that consist of a backbone network and connector highways. The backbone network consisted of divided highways that connect each region of the state and major economic centers. The connector highways tie economic and tourism centers to that backbone. The plan achieves its objectives by striving to ensure that these routes have adequate capacity and provide an adequate Level of Service (LOS).

US 53 functions as the primary north/south route on the western side of the state, connecting the cities in the west and south to northern Wisconsin. US 53 is the only facility on the western side of the state that provides four-lane access to northern Wisconsin and the Great Lakes port city of Superior.

The Proposed Action is a plan for the conversion of the current expressway for US 53 between 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Barron and Washburn Counties) to a freeway. The proposed improvements resulting in freeway conversion would be officially mapped under the process established in Wisconsin Statutes, 84.295 to help protect and preserve right of way (ROW) for future transportation needs. This portion of US 53 would officially be designated as a freeway. Thus, the long-term aspect of the Proposed Action is the plan for eventual conversion to a freeway, while the short-term aspect is official mapping and freeway designation.

The Proposed Action and the actual steps of right of way purchase, final design, or construction would result in the ultimate conversion of the existing four-lane divided expressway to a freeway facility by removing existing at-grade public and private intersections from the facility in this section of USH 53. The existing intersections would be reconstructed as cul-de-sacs or grade separations. One interchange would be constructed at County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue. In addition, several segments of the existing local roadway system would be reconstructed or altered to insure internal local road system continuity and access to the freeway system.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to develop a long-term highway access plan for this portion of US 53, officially map the proposed improvements and officially designate this section of US 53 as a freeway in order to address three needs:

- Long-term highway planning and corridor preservation
- Emerging operational and existing safety concerns
- Land use/transportation planning and coordination

The Proposed Action would not be likely to affect speeds on the highway – its primary operational effect would be to improve safety. Thus, travel times would not be improved for through-travelers. There may be some minimal improvement in travel times for travelers using the new interchange to enter or exit US 53, but this improvement could be offset by the

increased indirection caused by the closure of existing access points.

### **Community Context**

The 4.24 mile section of the USH 53 corridor lies in the Village of Haugen and the Towns of Bear Lake and Oak Grove in Barron County and the Towns of Sarona and Long Lake in Washburn County. According to data from the Wisconsin Department of Administration, the population of Barron County increased from 44,963 in 2000 to 47,727 in 2008 – an annual rate of increase of less than one percent. In Washburn County, the population increased from 16,036 in 2000 to 17,646 in 2008, an annual increase of 1.25 percent.

The table below shows DOA forecasts for the period of 2005 to 2025. The data shows that the annual population increase is expected to be less than 1 percent annually in both counties.

<b>County</b>	<b>2005 Population</b>	<b>2025 Population</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>Annual % Change</b>
Barron County	46,915	753,173	13.33%	.66%
Washburn County	17,056	19,950	16.97%	.84%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration

The existing land uses surrounding the US 53 corridor include rural wooded uplands and wetlands, agriculture, low density residential, and limited commercial/industrial development. The Village of Haugen has higher density residential and commercial uses in comparison to the other unincorporated communities in the study area.

The majority of residential land uses can be classified as widely distributed, low density uses with on-site septic systems typical of rural, agricultural areas. Higher concentrations of residential development include recreational homes located along shoreland lake areas and higher density suburban style housing in the Village of Haugen.

Commercial activities within the study area include limited services such as a restaurant and a general store, and industrial activities in rural areas primarily consisting of large quarry operations or managed forest lands. Other commercial/industrial activities include a pool cue manufacturing business and a landscaping business.

A significant portion of the land uses in the study area include forested lands. Agricultural activities are also a significant land use activity that occurs within the area. Agricultural activities are located both east and west of US 53.

In Barron County, the Town of Bear Lake has recently completed its comprehensive plan as part of a joint planning effort with the county. Barron County released the multi-jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan in May 2005. The Town of Oak Grove and the Village of Haugen did not participate in the county-sponsored effort and do not currently have local plans. Barron County has a land use ordinance for unincorporated and shoreland areas of the county. Currently the Town of Oak Grove follows county zoning. The Town of Bear Lake does not follow a comprehensive zoning ordinance. The Village of Haugen has adopted its own zoning ordinance.

In Washburn County the Town of Sarona and the Town of Long Lake have completed comprehensive plans with the assistance of Washburn County and North West Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NWRPC). The county zoning ordinance covers the

unincorporated areas of the county. Both the Town of Long Lake and the Town of Sarona follow the county zoning ordinance.

The Proposed Action is not in conflict with any of the community plans.

### **Indirect Effects**

At the present time, the potential exists for development to locate adjacent to any one of the numerous existing at-grade intersections. After the freeway conversion and long-term preservation is completed, the direct access from US 53 would be eliminated at all but one access point (County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue interchange), and any development on the lands near these existing intersections would be accessed via alternative local road connections. Traffic on these local roads would not be enough to alter their current roadway functionality or capacity.

By removing direct access to nearly all of US 53, it would minimize the potential for indirect and cumulative development at these locations, especially from a highway-dependent development perspective.

Access to US 53 from lands adjacent to the County V/28<sup>th</sup> Avenue would be via the future interchange that would be constructed in that location. Development potential at this location would likely remain unchanged with or without implementation of the Proposed Action as access would be provided under either the build or no-build scenarios.

Officially mapping the proposed improvements may affect the level of interest in the commercial development of properties that currently have nearby access to US 53, and would not have such access after the freeway conversion is complete. Potential developers may decide to not make investments in these locations, knowing that eventually access would be changed. However, it should be noted that these areas currently have not been a focus of development interest.

In general, the communities in the vicinity of the Proposed Action support the changes because of safety concerns related to the existing at-grade access points on the highway. No concerns were expressed during the public outreach process that the project would have unwanted effects on land use in the area. There is no expectation that the Proposed Action would attract development at any different rate, pace, or location than what current markets and conditions already allow.

### *Conclusion Regarding Indirect Effects*

Through screening analysis using WisDOT's pre-screening for indirect effects procedure and FDM guidance on indirect effects, it is concluded that the factors of the project, its location and other conditions do not warrant further detailed analysis of the potential for indirect effects.

The project would not have the likelihood to result in *significant* indirect effects as defined by the National Environmental Policy Act. This conclusion was based on the evaluation for 10 pre-screening factors including: project design concepts and scope; project purpose and need; project type; facility function (current and planned); project location; improved travel times to an area; local land use and planning considerations; population and demographic considerations; rate of urbanization; and public/agency concerns. The data and evaluation supporting this conclusion are presented above. Therefore, further detailed evaluation of indirect effects in a detailed analysis is not warranted. If changes are made to the project design or alternatives, this screening will be re-examined for sufficiency.

## **Cumulative Effects**

The conversion of US 53 to a freeway by removal of direct access is one of several actions or forces that could cumulatively affect the resources that would be affected by the Proposed Action – that is, wetlands and agricultural lands. Other past, present, and future actions/forces and their potential effects are described below.

### Conversion of US 53 to a Four-lane Highway

The conversion of the US 53 corridor between Eau Claire and Superior from a two-lane to a four-lane highway began in the late 1960s. In 1976, US 53 was expanded from US 8 at Cameron to just south of Haugen, where it merged back into the existing two-lane highway. In 1988, the US 53 corridor from the northern end of the existing freeway near Haugen northerly to Trego was converted to expressway, partially on new alignment and partially on existing alignment. The Haugen and Spooner bypasses were built at that time. By 1999 the four-lane expansion between Eau Claire and Superior was completed, with some portions of the highway constructed as freeways and some as expressways.

The expansion of US 53 to four lanes likely did have some effects on land conversions in northern Wisconsin. The improved travel conditions may have had the effect of encouraging additional tourists to visit the northern part of the state, thus leading to new or expanded businesses to serve those travelers. The improved access to the interstate highway system may have made some other non-tourist businesses in the northern part of the state more viable or successful. Some of these effects may have been experienced in the Haugen area, in the vicinity of the Proposed Action.

### Economic Conditions and Energy Prices

Conditions in the US economy fluctuate from year to year. These fluctuations affect the economic activities that, in turn, affect land resources. Economic conditions that favor business development or home building can result in greater land conversions to these uses. Tourist promotional activities likely have the effect of leading to land conversions for tourist-related businesses. Similarly, a downturn in economic conditions could slow the pace of land conversions.

The recent increases in energy costs are likely to affect the choices of individuals regarding travel and vacations plans; these choices in turn could affect land conversions for development in the tourist sector. It is difficult to predict the effects of high energy costs that result in less disposable income for vacationing. There are two plausible scenarios: because of having less disposable income and the high cost of gasoline, individuals could decide to forego vacationing in northern Wisconsin and stay home. Others may forego vacations in more distant locations and decide to take more economical vacations closer to their homes.

The effects of the economy and energy prices on the tourist trade would be more pronounced in the areas of Wisconsin north of the Haugen area that attract larger numbers of tourists compared to the Haugen area itself. The Haugen area could experience effects to the extent the conditions result in the expansion or contraction of businesses, which in turn affects the number of individuals/families that seek to live in the area.

### Other Highway Studies and Projects

WisDOT is currently carrying out the following studies on highways that serve some of the travelers that use the portion of US 53 under study:

- Freeway conversion of US 53 between Trego and Spooner
- Freeway conversion of US 53 between Trego and Wascott

- Detailed studies for long-term expansion of US 8 between Barron and St. Croix Falls

The conversion of US 53 to a freeway makes travel on the highway safer but is not likely to significantly affect the amount of traffic on US 53 itself.

The expansion of US 8 to four lanes is proposed to accommodate expected increases in travel, and address safety issues; it is not expected to result in a significant increase in traffic. Additionally, timeframes for both US 8 and US 53 improvements (construction) would not likely be realized for decades to come.

#### *Conclusion Regarding Cumulative Effects*

The above activities and forces can have some effects on the conversion of wetlands or agricultural lands to other uses. The greatest effects are due to economic conditions and energy prices, over which the state has limited control. For this reason, further cumulative effects analysis is not warranted.