

# Public Involvement Meeting Handout

**US 53  
US 63 at Trego  
Washburn County**

Project ID: 1197-00-00



**July 13, 2016  
5:30 – 7:30 p.m.  
(Trego Town Hall, W5690 Trego River Street, Trego)**

## **Purpose of the meeting**

Welcome to the US 53 – US 63 Trego project public involvement meeting.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is planning improvements to US 53 and US 63 in the Town of Trego to improve traffic safety for the traveling public and maintain the operational efficiency of these highways. The project limits include US 53 from Mackey Road to River Road.

This is the second public involvement meeting for the project since the project moved into the design phase from the previously completed planning study. Our primary objectives for today's meeting are to:

1. Provide a project update summarizing additional concept alternative development and analysis that has taken place since the last public involvement meeting in October, 2016.
2. Present updated concept alternatives for a new US 53 - US 63 interchange in Trego, Wisconsin.
3. Obtain your input on the current concept alternatives to address the existing and future transportation needs of the traveling public, local community and adjacent businesses in the Trego area.

## **Project Update**

In response to comments received during the first public involvement meeting held on October 20, 2015, WisDOT conducted a Design Charrette in December 2015. This meeting was attended by a variety of project stakeholders and served as a “working meeting” to discuss in detail local concerns, project challenges, and potential minor modifications to Alternative 4 from the previously completed corridor preservation study that was conducted from 2007 to 2014.

During the meeting many comments were received. In addition, a community resident proposed a new interchange design alternative and requested the alternative be considered by the Department for construction. Following is a summary of the public comments received and a general response to each.

Consideration of all comments is ongoing as the preliminary design continues and the alternatives are evaluated. Final resolution of these comments cannot be made until all environmental impacts are considered and a preferred alternative is selected.

### **1 – Public Comment**

The planning study Alternative 4 does not provide adequate ATV/snowmobile access from the Town of Trego to the Wild River State Trail.

#### **Response**

All alternatives will accommodate crossings of US 53 and US 63 for ATV and snowmobile users within/near the Town of Trego. The final layout and locations of these crossings will be determined after a preferred alternative has been selected.

Under planning study Alternative 4, an ATV/snowmobile crossing will be allowed on US 63 near the existing Wild Rivers Trail parking lot to allow access to and from the residential streets of Trego. Additionally, an at-grade crossing will be permitted at the US 53 – Mackey Road intersection to maintain access to the businesses and trails on the west side of US 53.

Under the Local Interchange Concept alternative, an at-grade ATV/snowmobile crossing will be permitted at the US 53 – Mackey Road intersection to maintain access to the businesses and trails on the west side of US 53.

## **2 – Public Comment**

Elimination of at-grade intersections along US 53 in addition to construction of the realigned US 63 divides the Town of Trego into three parts.

### **Response**

To improve traffic safety for the traveling public, both County E and US 63 at-grade intersections with US 53 will be closed for all alternatives proposed. The closure of these intersections will require Trego residents to cross US 53 via a newly constructed interchange. Although the travel distance will be more than existing, the new interchange will provide a safer crossing for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

Under planning study Alternative 4, two alternative intersection configurations have been recently developed that involve constructing the proposed at-grade intersection of a realigned US 63 with Oak Hill Drive as a four-leg intersection. These revised intersection designs provide the desired east-west connectivity within the Town of Trego while maintaining existing access to the Wild River State Trail. Constructing the proposed US 63/Oak Hill Drive intersection as a four-leg intersection would eliminate the proposed East Frontage Road.

## **3 – Public Comment**

Planning study Alternative 4 results in loss of parking at local business.

### **Response**

Local businesses that are currently using on-street parking can continue to do so after construction is completed as long as the roadway travel lanes are not adversely impacted.

## **4 – Public Comment**

Roundabouts are confusing for motorists and truckers will avoid them, resulting in loss of business.

### **Response**

The final selection of the traffic control at the interchange ramp terminals (stop signs, signals, or roundabouts) takes into consideration several design parameters including safety, traffic operation, cost, and the final roadway layout. The Department's traffic engineers who determine the intersection control type have been made aware that the local preference is stop signs or traffic signals.

Recent analysis has confirmed that both two-way stop sign control and roundabout

control should provide acceptable traffic operation at the interchange ramp terminals. However, the use of two-way stop sign control is not feasible for each final roadway concept when taking into consideration required traffic signing and intersection sight distance (i.e. stop sign control is not feasible at the ramp terminals under the Local Interchange Concept alternative due to the close proximity of the west frontage road)

#### **5 – Public Comment**

The proposed West Frontage Road as shown in planning study Alternative 4 has too many curves.

##### **Response**

Multiple design refinements have been developed to straighten the roads as much as possible. Several design considerations need to be evaluated before a final decision is made, including intersection spacing, available sight distance, intersection control, and minimizing impacts to private property and/or the environment . Final layout of the roadways will ultimately be a balance of all design considerations.

#### **6 – Public Comment**

The proposed horizontal curve for a realigned US 63 does not provide adequate sight distance to the National Park Service (NPS) entrance creating traffic safety concerns for pedestrians crossing US 63 in this area.

##### **Response**

Analysis has been completed for alternatives with a center refuge island and a crossing without an island. Additional coordination with the NPS is required to discuss potential options to address this concern.

#### **7 – Public Comment**

The distance pedestrians would have to walk to cross US 53 via the planning study Alternative 4 interchange is too far.

##### **Response**

To address intersection traffic safety concerns, pedestrians will no longer be allowed to directly cross US 53 in either of the alternatives being studied. Pedestrians crossing US 53 at County E and US 63 were counted over the course of a week during the summer of 2015. During this weeklong count, 20 and 15 pedestrians were counted crossing at the existing County E and US 63 intersections, respectively.

Under planning study Alternative 4, a grade separated crossing of US 53 via a box culvert/tunnel at the existing US 53/US 63 intersection was evaluated. The existing topography and relative proximity of the Namekagon River pose some challenges with respect to the alignment of the trail connecting Leisch Road with the box culvert entrance as well as stormwater quality and drainage.

#### **8 – Public Comment**

The proposed at-grade ATV/snowmobile crossing of US 53 at Mackey Road is unsafe so consideration should be made to construct a grade-separated crossing at the existing US 53/US 63 intersection.

**Response**

A grade separated crossing of US 53 via a box culvert/tunnel at the existing US 53/US 63 intersection was evaluated. Construction of the structure has been estimated at approximately \$800,000. As noted above, the existing topography and relative proximity of the Namekagon River pose some challenges with respect to the alignment of the trail connecting Leisch Road with a box culvert entrance as well as stormwater quality and drainage.

**9 – Public Comment**

The proposed interchange will increase routine maintenance and snow removal requirements.

**Additional Response**

The ultimate interchange configuration will be further discussed with Washburn County and the Town of Trego officials. As part of the construction project, local roadway agreements with the Town of Trego and Washburn County will be made that will add the mileage of the new roadways to the County and Town maintenance agreements.

**10 – Public Comment**

The planning study Alternative 4 interchange configuration that proposes the realignment of US 63 to the southeast results in lost visibility to area businesses from the highway.

**Response**

A completely new interchange configuration was presented to the Department by an area resident. A preliminary layout of this Local Interchange Concept was presented at the December 2015 Design Charrette. This alternative has been further evaluated from a three-dimensional (vertical and horizontal) perspective to identify associated impacts and costs.

**Real Estate**

Although the ultimate preferred alternative and associated impacts have not been determined, additional right-of-way will be required for this project. Meetings with impacted property owners is currently scheduled to begin in the summer 2017.

**Project Schedule**

The current project schedule is:

|                                  |                  |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Third Public Involvement Meeting | Fall 2016        |
| Finalize Environmental Document  | Summer 2017      |
| Begin Right-of-Way Acquisition   | Spring 2018      |
| Final Design Completed           | Summer 2019      |
| Construction                     | As early as 2020 |

## Public input/comments

We encourage you to talk to the project representatives and ask them questions. Attached to this handout is a sheet for your written comments and input regarding the proposed project. Please mail any written comments about the project before August 1, 2016 or leave them in the comment box tonight. You can also e-mail your comments to the contacts listed below.

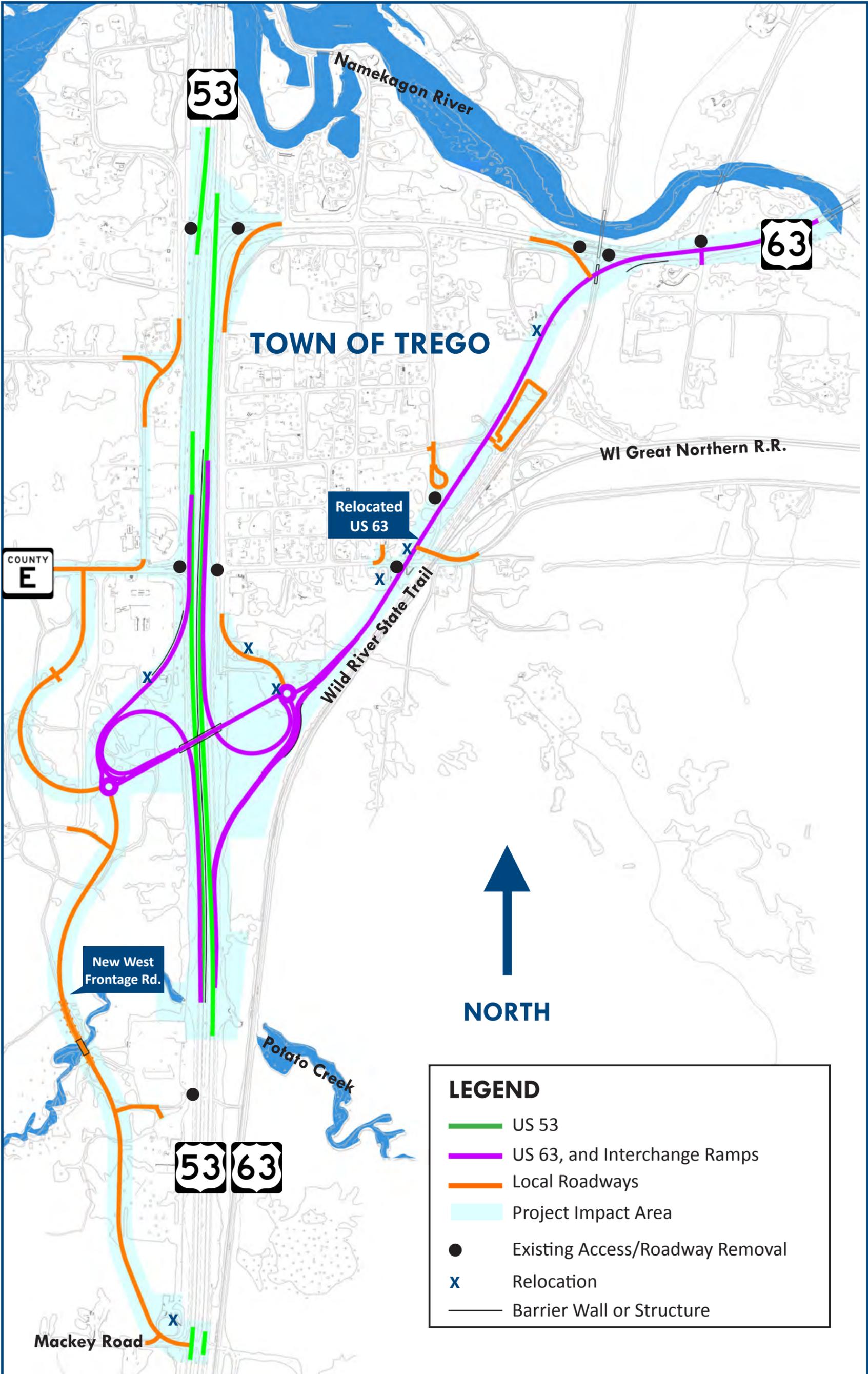
Your comments assist us in developing a project that will serve the needs of the traveling public as well as the needs of the local community. Your input is welcome and appreciated throughout the design process.

For more information, please contact the individuals noted below or visit the project website at: <http://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/projects/by-region/nw/us53trego/default.aspx>

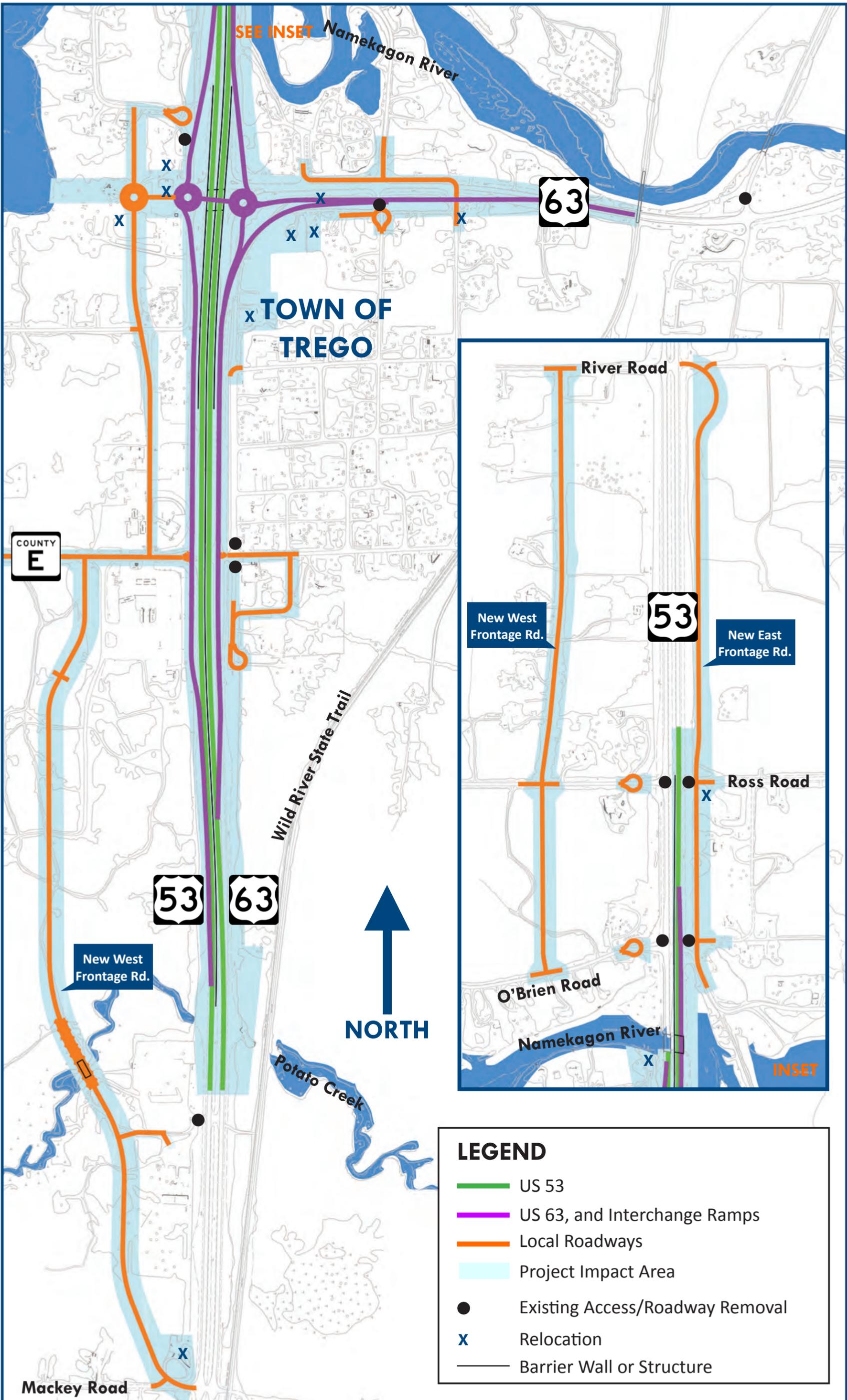
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**ID 1197-00-00 | US 53-US 63 Trego Project  
 Alternative 4 from Previously Completed Corridor  
 Preservation Study (2007-2014) (with some minor modifications)**



**LEGEND**

- US 53
- US 63, and Interchange Ramps
- Local Roadways
- Project Impact Area
- Existing Access/Roadway Removal
- X Relocation
- Barrier Wall or Structure

Alternative Matrix  
I.D. 1197-00-00  
US 53 - US 63 Trego Project  
Washburn County  
(July 2016)

| Criteria<br><br>Alternative                                    | R/W ACQUISITION BY LAND USE TYPE       |                         |                    |                  | RELOCATIONS                       |                                       | ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS               |   |   |  | ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COST<br>****<br>(\$ million) |
|--|--|-------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
|  | Upland/Woodland/ Open Space<br>(acres) | Agricultural<br>(acres) | Wetland<br>(acres) | Total<br>(acres) | Residential Homes<br>**<br>(each) | Commercial Businesses<br>**<br>(each) | Estimated Wetland Impacts<br>(acres) | Noise Impacts<br>(# receptors impacted) | Concern   | Mitigation   |   |
| Alternative 4 from US 53 - Corridor Preservation Study (2014)* | 51.2                                   | 0.0                     | 0.9                | 52.1             | 7                                 | 1                                     | 0.6                                  | 1                                       | 1. Potato Creek (new stream crossing)                                   | 1. New crossing of Potato Creek required to accommodate frontage road; minimize impacts to adjacent wetlands and Potato Creek itself with maximum slopes; relocate any impacted mussels within waterway.   | 15.2  |
|  |  |                         |                    |                  |                                   |                                       |                                      |   | 2. Namekagon River - Wild and Scenic River - Section 4(f)/6(f) Resource | 2. Work in the Namekagon River for the removal of the deficient Lakeside Road structure; relocate any impacted mussels within waterway. No Section 4(f)/6(f) land conversion required. Removal of the Lakeside Road bridge will aid in enhancing usership around the NPS visitor center and the river while restoring the river to a natural condition with removal of the bridge. |   |
|  |  |                         |                    |                  |                                   |                                       |                                      |   | 3. Namekagon River - Wild and Scenic River - Section 4(f)/6(f) Resource | 3. Treat project area stormwater prior to discharge with rural ditches and select stormwater management areas to minimize impacts to the Namekagon River. No Section 4(f)/6(f) land conversion required.   |   |
|  |  |                         |                    |                  |                                   |                                       |                                      |   | 4. National Park Service Property - Section 4(f)/6(f) Resource          | 4. No direct work on National Park Service Property; avoid direct impact with a retaining wall; coordinate access during construction; include project considerations for pedestrian crossing near visitor center. No Section 4(f)/6(f) land conversion required.  |   |
|  |  |                         |                    |                  |                                   |                                       |                                      |   | 5. DNR Wild Rivers State Trail  | 5. Maintain trail during reconstruction of the existing bridge over US 63; reconstruct the existing trailhead parking lot due to the realignment of US 63.   |   |
| Local Interchange Alternative (May 2016)                       | 57.8                                   | 0                       | 0.9                | 58.7             | 8                                 | 3                                     | 0.7                                  | ***                                     | 1. Potato Creek (new stream crossing)                                   | 1. New crossing of Potato Creek required to accommodate frontage road; minimize impacts to adjacent wetlands and Potato Creek itself with maximum slopes; relocate any impacted mussels within waterway.   | 23.2  |
|  |  |                         |                    |                  |                                   |                                       |                                      |   | 2. Namekagon River - Wild and Scenic River - Section 4(f)/6(f) Resource | 2. Work in the Namekagon River for the removal of the deficient Lakeside Road structure and construction of new NB US 53 structure; relocate any impacted mussels within waterway. Removal of the Lakeside Road bridge will aid in enhancing usership around the NPS visitor center and the river while restoring the river to a natural condition with removal of the bridge.     |   |
|  |  |                         |                    |                  |                                   |                                       |                                      |   | 3. Namekagon River - Wild and Scenic River - Section 4(f)/6(f) Resource | 3. Treat project stormwater prior to discharge; the proposed freeway section with barriers along US 53 will require a more extensive storm sewer system which concentrates sediment in the stormwater discharge. Real estate acquisition required for stormwater ponds to ensure adequate stormwater treatment prior to discharge to the Namekagon River.                          |   |
|  |  |                         |                    |                  |                                   |                                       |                                      |   | 4. Namekagon River - Wild and Scenic River - Section 4(f)/6(f) Resource | 4. Work in the Namekagon River for construction of new NB US 53 structure. While no Section 4(f)/6(f) land conversion will occur, work within the river will require extensive federal permitting and coordination through NPS to construct a new footprint within the river.  |   |

\* Information in matrix for this alternative takes into consideration modifications to original EA Alternative (i.e. West Frontage Road not extending south of Mackey Road, no east or west access roads north of Namekagon River, etc..).

\*\* The estimated number of relocations are Preliminary and subject to change.

\*\*\* Full noise evaluation will be required; potential impacts due to grade raise at interchange and proximity of receptors

\*\*\*\* Construction cost does not include right of way or relocation costs.

Alternative Matrix (West Frontage Road Only)  
I.D. 1197-00-00  
US 53 - US 63 Trego Project  
Washburn County  
(July 2016)

| Criteria<br><br>Alternative  | R/W ACQUISITION BY LAND USE TYPE       |                         |                    |                  | RELOCATIONS                       |                                       | ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS               |   |                                       |  | ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COST<br>****<br>(\$ million) |
|--|--|-------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--|---|
|  | Upland/Woodland/ Open Space<br>(acres) | Agricultural<br>(acres) | Wetland<br>(acres) | Total<br>(acres) | Residential Homes<br>**<br>(each) | Commercial Businesses<br>**<br>(each) | Estimated Wetland Impacts<br>(acres) | Noise Impacts<br>(# receptors impacted) | Concern                               | Mitigation   |   |
| West Frontage Road (per Alternative 4 Interchange concept from Wild River Sports Access to Southbound Ramp Terminal) | 12.6                                   | 0                       | 0.9                | 13.5             | 1                                 | 0                                     | 0.6                                  | 0                                       | 1. Potato Creek (new stream crossing) | 1. New crossing of Potato Creek required to accommodate frontage road; minimize impacts to adjacent wetlands and Potato Creek itself with maximum slopes; relocate any impacted mussels within waterway. | 1.5   |
| West Frontage Road (per Local Interchange concept from Wild River Sports Access to County E)                         | 17.2                                   | 0                       | 0.9                | 18.1             | 1                                 | 0                                     | 0.6                                  | 0                                       | 1. Potato Creek (new stream crossing) | 1. New crossing of Potato Creek required to accommodate frontage road; minimize impacts to adjacent wetlands and Potato Creek itself with maximum slopes; relocate any impacted mussels within waterway. | 1.6   |