

PUBLIC HEARING HANDOUT



**Project I.D. 1020-09-01
Menomonie – Eau Claire Road
IH 94/STH 29 Interchange
Dunn County, Wisconsin**

Wednesday, July 29, 2015
5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Elk Mound Middle School
302 University Street
Elk Mound Wisconsin

Welcome to this public hearing concerning the adoption of an Official Map that establishes the location and right-of-way widths for future Interstate Highway (IH) 94 – US 12/WIS 29 interchange improvements. This Action will allow the Department to serve future needs of IH 94 and US 12/WIS 29, and will prevent conflicting and costly economic development on lands needed as future right-of-way for the IH 94 – US 12/WIS 29 interchange.

This handout and the exhibits on display were prepared to help familiarize you with the project details. We encourage you to view the exhibits on display. Representatives of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and consultant design team are available to explain the exhibits and answer questions on an individual basis.

This public hearing is part of the total process of involving the public in transportation-related decisions. It is your opportunity to have a voice in the design of the proposed improvement project under discussion today. Court reporters are available this evening to take down all testimonies which will be entered into the public hearing record along with other public hearing information and materials. Full consideration will be given to all verbal and written testimony.

An open house will be provided from 5:00 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. and the formal hearing will begin at 5:30 p.m.

GUIDELINES FOR PRESENTING TESTIMONY

There are several options for providing testimony which are detailed below. Your testimony will be reviewed and considered by WisDOT as part of the adoption of the Official Map. **Testimony statements and/or opinions should be limited to this evening's public hearing aspects and project.** Questions related to the Map can be directed to WisDOT staff during informal discussions and will not be recorded by the court reporter or included in the public hearing record.

Private Verbal Testimony is an option if you prefer to make your statement privately to the court reporter rather than in front of an audience.

If you wish to provide private verbal testimony...

A court reporter located in Room 112 will be available to take private testimony from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Please complete the *Speaker Registration Form* provided in this packet, providing your name, mailing address, and representing (optional). Proceed to Room 112, wait for an opening, provide the court reporter your *Speaker Registration Form* and present your statement.

Public Verbal Testimony is an option if you prefer to make your statement publicly to the audience.

If you wish to provide public verbal testimony...

Please complete the *Speaker Registration Form* provided in this packet, providing your name, mailing address, and representing (optional). Submit this form to the Registration Table. The hearing chairman will call the names in the order they are received to present your statement. When you are called, please state your name, address, and if applicable, the group, organization, or business you are representing. If you have any special requests, please inform the staff and we will try to accommodate you. **You will have a maximum of three (3) minutes to give your statement.** If there is time, public verbal testimony may be given multiple times by the same person, but you must take a place at the back of the line after each time that you provide testimony.

Written Testimony is an option in addition to, or in place of, private or public verbal testimony.

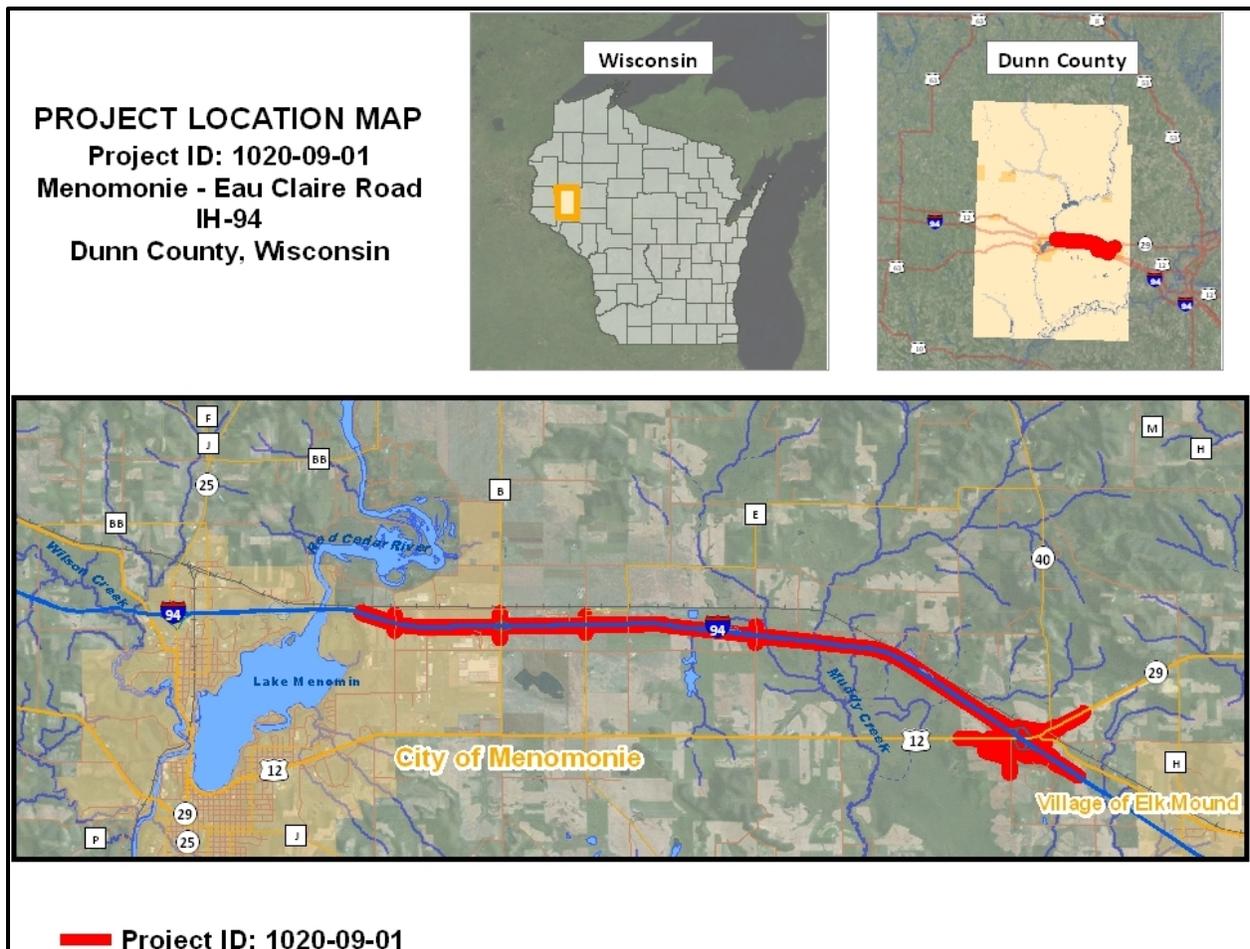
If you wish to provide written testimony...

Write out your statement using the *Comment Form – Public Hearing Written Testimony* form provided in this packet, and place it in the comment box OR email OR mail your statement to the address on the back of the form. All statements postmarked by Friday, August 14, 2015 will become part of the public hearing transcript.

Project Statement

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is considering future Freeway improvements of the IH 94 – US 12/WIS 29 interchange in Dunn County, Wisconsin under Section 84.295(10), Wisconsin State Statutes.

The Proposed Action consists of the adoption of an Official Map that establishes the location and right-of-way widths for future interchange improvements. This Action will allow the Department to serve future needs of IH 94 and US 12/WIS 29 interchange and will prevent conflicting and costly economic development on lands needed as future right-of-way for the IH 94 – US 12/WIS 29 interchange. This Action does not include immediate programming of construction funds for the future interchange. The project location is shown on the map below.



Land owners within the mapped areas are required to contact the Department prior to any construction of any improvements within these areas. Once contacted the Department will have sixty days to respond to the notification and decide whether or not to proceed to purchase the property or depending on the type and cost of the improvement purchase the lands at the time of construction.

Property acquisition is not scheduled; the intent of the project is to preserve right-of-way for future construction at a date that is not yet determined.

Hearing exhibits and description

1. Public hearing handout. Describes the hearing this evening and includes the *Speaker Registration Form* and the *Comment Form – Public Hearing Written Testimony*.
2. Project Location Map
3. Approved Interchange Alternative aerial overview
4. Interchange Map – Designated Freeway Map (9 pages)
5. Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact
6. Brochure describing land owner rights under Wisconsin's Eminent Domain Law.
7. Legal notice. This notice was published in the Eau Claire Leader and Dunn County New Shield.

Purpose

The purpose of this project, consistent with Wisconsin State Statute 84.295 (10)(a), is to preserve needed future right-of-way in the corridor for the reconstruction of the IH 94 – US 12/WIS 29 interchange. This action will result in an official map under Wisconsin State Statute 84.295 (10)(a), which allows the Department of Transportation (WisDOT) to more adequately serve the present and anticipated future needs of highway travel in the corridor and prevent conflicting and costly economic development on lands needed for future highway ROW. At a minimum, any future actions resulting from this project will require additional environmental evaluation and documentation, as specified in Wisconsin Administrative Code Trans 400.

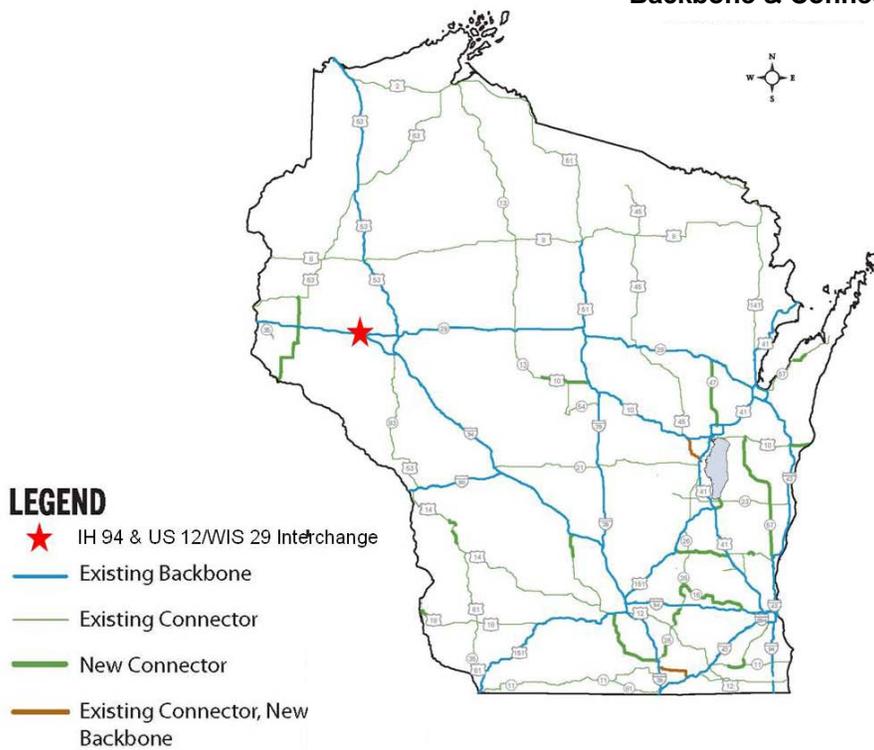
Need

A. System Linkage and Route Importance

IH 94 Mainline

IH 94 is the northernmost east–west Interstate Highway in the United States and is part of the National Strategic Highway Network and National Highway System (NHS). In Wisconsin, it is a four- to six-lane Interstate Freeway in the WisDOT Northwest Region and is identified in the Wisconsin Department of Transportation *Connections 2030* (2009) plan as an existing backbone route. The Backbone System includes the highest value multi-lane (or planned multi-lane) divided highways, which connect all regions and major economic centers in the state and are tied to the national transportation network. *Connections 2030* places a high priority on protecting highways that connect major economic/population centers and carry interstate, intrastate, and freight traffic. Backbone and Connector routes identified in *Connections 2030* are shown below.

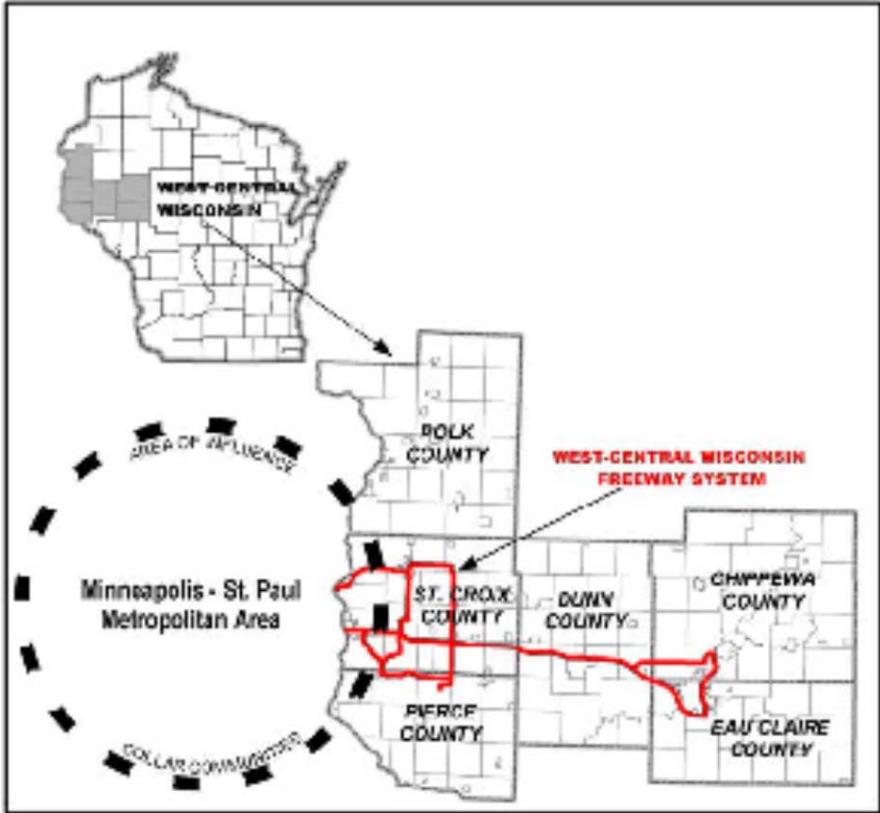
Connections 2030 Routes: Backbone & Connector



IH 94 and WIS 12/29 Interchange

WIS 29 is a NHS route and a WisDOT *Corridors 2030* Backbone Route to the east of IH 94. To the west of IH 94, WIS 29 is classified as a minor arterial. East of IH 94, US 12/WIS 29 is designated as a freeway, and a two-lane rural highway west of IH 94. As noted above, WIS 29 has regional significance as a component of the West Central Freeway transportation system (see figure below).

West-Central Wisconsin Freeway System



Interchange Deficiencies

IH 94 – US 12/WIS 29 Interchange

The IH 94 – US 12/WIS 29 interchange needs to be reconstructed in the next 20 years primarily due to the age of the IH 94 pavement and structures over US 12/WIS 29.

A March 2007 *Backbone Interchange Needs and Improvement Study* detailed the results of a comprehensive evaluation of the IH 94 – US 12/WIS 29 interchange. The existing interchange was reviewed and analyzed for traffic, operational, safety, geometric, and structural deficiencies. Although the interchange is operating well and in general has excess capacity even at peak hours, it suffers from several substandard conditions and safety concerns.

Interchange Design Standards

During coordination with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), WisDOT was advised to design any future interchange reconfiguration to meet freeway interstate design standards for Interstate to Interstate connection.

Interchange Safety

Crash data from 2000-2004 indicate an average of nearly 10 crashes annually associated with the interchange. The worst crash location is the IH 94 eastbound off-ramp, with 3.4 annual average crashes. The IH 94 westbound off-ramp has 2 annual average crashes. Both of these ramps are located on the narrow IH 94 bridges over US 12/WIS 29. While the crash rate is below the state-wide average, increases in traffic volume coupled with sub-standard design have the potential to increase crash rates.

Existing Interchange Deficiencies

There are four major geometric deficiencies of this interchange. Specific interchange deficiencies and their locations are shown on the following page.

- **IH 94 Entrance Ramp Lengths:** The existing merge lengths of the IH 94 entrance ramps are shorter than current design standards.
- **Site Distance:** The intersection sight distance at the eastbound ramp terminal connection with US 12/WIS 29 is less than the minimum 8 seconds when looking east.
- **Access Spacing:** The distance between the IH 94 on-ramp and the US 12/WIS 29 – Frontier Road intersection is severely sub-standard. Drivers are confused by the proximity of Frontier Road to the ramp and occasionally turn onto Frontier Road instead of the ramp.
- **Bridge Clearance:** The lateral clearance of the existing bridges does not meet standard because they are too narrow. The vertical clearance of the bridges does not meet clearance standards, as a result, there is a history of vehicles hitting the structures.
- **Inability to replace the existing bridges in a six-lane configuration at the current layout.**

IH 94 – US 12/WIS 29 Interchange Deficiencies



Environmental Impacts

Environmental impacts of the alternatives were evaluated and are discussed in great detail in the Environmental Assessment, which is available for review here tonight. Impacts in the assessment were divided into economic factors, social/cultural factors, natural system factors, and physical factors.

Real Estate Acquisition

Before any property acquisition is initiated, the region real estate staff will contact the property owner to explain the details of the acquisition process and Wisconsin's Eminent Domain Law. A brochure is available this evening to persons whose property may be affected by the proposed improvement. All properties to be acquired will be inspected and appraised by one or more professional real estate appraisers. The property owner will be asked to accompany the appraiser during the inspection of the property to be acquired to assure that its value is recognized during the appraisal. Based on the appraisal or appraisals made, the fair market value of the property to be acquired will be determined and that amount will be offered to the property owner.

Public Involvement

The State of Wisconsin strongly encourages continued input from the public on this project. The official comment period for the official mapping is through Friday, August 14, 2015.

Proposed Project Schedule

There is no proposed construction schedule for the project at this time.

Project Contacts

If you have any questions regarding the information provided in this handout or presented here today, please contact one of the following individuals listed below.

WisDOT Project Manager

Mr. Jeff Abboud
Wisconsin Department of Transportation Northwest Region Office
718 W. Clairemont Avenue
Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54701
Phone (715) 855-7661

WisDOT Real Estate Contact

Heather Dresel
Wisconsin Department of Transportation Northwest Region Office
718 W. Clairemont Avenue
Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54701
Phone (715) 836-4517

SPEAKER REGISTRATION FORM

Name (please print): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Representing (optional): _____

Please note that the verbal testimony during the formal hearing will be limited to three (3) minutes.

This form must be returned to the Reception Table in order to complete registration.

**COMMENT FORM – PUBLIC HEARING
WRITTEN TESTIMONY** (Wednesday, July 29, 2015)



**Project I.D. 1020-09-01
Menomonie – Eau Claire Road
IH 94
Dunn County, Wisconsin**

You may leave the completed form in the Comment Box at the Registration Table, email (delivered by August 14, 2015) to Jeffry.Abboud@dot.wi.gov or mail (postmarked by August 14, 2015) to:

WisDOT Northwest Region Office
ATTN: Jeff Abboud
718 W. Clairemont Avenue
Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54701

Name (please print): _____

Mailing Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Representing (optional): _____

Comments:

Please use additional sheets, if necessary.