

ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION OF FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)

DT2094 1/2016

BASIC SHEET 1 - PROJECT SUMMARY

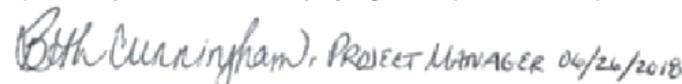
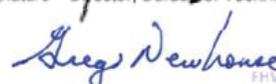
Project ID 1197-00-00 (design) 1197-00-20 (real estate) 1197-00-40 (utility) 1197-00-50/51 (railroad) 1197-00-70 (construction)	Project Termini Spoooner – Minong	Funding Sources (<i>check all that apply</i>) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local								
Route Designation (if applicable) US 53 National Highway System (NHS) Route <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Nearest Community Town of Trego	Estimated Project Cost and Funding Source (state and/or federal). Year of Expenditure (YOE) dollars include delivery cost. \$20.6M in YOE 2021 dollars (STIP 2018-2021)								
Project Title Trego Interchange	Section / Township / Range Section 2 & 3 / T39N / R12W Section 24 & 35 / T40N / R12W	Real Estate Acquisition Portion of Estimated Cost (YOE) \$2.5M in YOE 2018-2021 dollars								
County Washburn	For an ER, indicate the date funding was authorized to begin preliminary engineering. For an EA, indicate the date the Process Initiation Letter was accepted by FHWA. 5/31/2016	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Right of Way Acquisition</th> <th>Acres</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Fee</td> <td>52</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TLE</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PLE</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Right of Way Acquisition	Acres	Fee	52	TLE	3	PLE	1
Right of Way Acquisition		Acres								
Fee	52									
TLE	3									
PLE	1									
Bridge Number(s) (<i>if applicable</i>) P-65-0006 (Lakeside Rd); B-65-0055 (WRST); B-65-0056 (US 63); C-65-0015 (US 53); B-65-0057 (West Frontage Rd)										

Functional Classification of Existing Route (FDM 3-5-2)	Urban	Rural
Freeway/Expressway	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Principal Arterial (US 53 and US 63)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Minor Arterial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Major Collector (County E)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Minor Collector		<input type="checkbox"/>
Collector	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Local (Local Road Connections)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No Functional Class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

WisDOT Project Classification (FDM 3-5-2)		
Resurfacing		<input type="checkbox"/>
Pavement Replacement		<input type="checkbox"/>
Reconditioning		<input type="checkbox"/>
Expansion		<input type="checkbox"/>
Bridge Rehabilitation		<input type="checkbox"/>
Bridge Replacement		<input type="checkbox"/>
"Majors" Project (there are both state and federal majors)		<input type="checkbox"/>
SHRM		<input type="checkbox"/>
Reconstruction		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Preventive Maintenance		<input type="checkbox"/>
Safety		<input type="checkbox"/>
Other-Describe:		<input type="checkbox"/>

FHWA Draft Type 2c Categorical Exclusion (CE)/WisDOT Draft Environmental Report (ER). **No significant impacts indicated by initial assessment.**

FHWA/WisDOT Draft Environmental Assessment (EA). **No significant impacts indicated by initial assessment.**

Stephanie Christensen, Env. Project Manager, EMCS, Inc. (Print – Preparer Name, Title, Company/Organization)	6/19/18 (Date – m/d/yy)	 (Signature – Director, Bureau of Technical Services)	6-26-18 (Date – m/d/yy)
 (Signature, Title)	06/26/2018 (Date – m/d/yy)	 (Signature, Title)	2018.06.26 14:42:25 -05'00' (Date – m/d/yy)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Region <input type="checkbox"/> Aeronautics <input type="checkbox"/> Rails & Harbors		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FHWA <input type="checkbox"/> FAA <input type="checkbox"/> FTA <input type="checkbox"/> FRA	

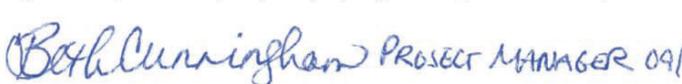
FHWA Final Type 2 Categorical Exclusion (CE)/WisDOT Final Environmental Report (ER). It has been determined **no significant impacts will occur** and a Public Hearing is not required.

After reviewing and addressing substantive public comments, updating the Draft CE/ER or Draft EA and coordinating with other agencies, it is determined this action:

Will NOT significantly affect the quality of the human environment. This document is a Final CE/Final ER.

Will NOT significantly affect the quality of the human environment. This document is a Final EA/Finding of No Significant Impact.

Has potential to significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) required.

Stephanie Christensen, Env. Project Manager, EMCS, Inc. (Print – Preparer Name, Title, Company/Organization)	9/5/18 (Date – m/d/yy)	 (Signature – Director, Bureau of Technical Services)	9-20-18 (Date – m/d/yy)
 (Signature, Title)	09/11/18 (Date – m/d/yy)	 (Signature, Title)	2018.11.14 08:49:48 -06'00' (Date – m/d/yy)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Region <input type="checkbox"/> Aeronautics <input type="checkbox"/> Rails & Harbors		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FHWA <input type="checkbox"/> FAA <input type="checkbox"/> FTA <input type="checkbox"/> FRA	

ENVIRONMENTAL ADDENDUM A

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Alternative: Alternative B - Partial Cloverleaf Interchange at Relocated US 63 and County E

Total Length of Center Line of Existing Roadway: 1.6-miles
Length of This Alternative: 1.6-miles
(distances are shown along US 53)

1. **Date(s) of Public Notice:** July 12, 2018 and August 9, 2018
2. **In (Name of Newspaper):** Spooner Advocate
3. **Dates Environmental Assessment made available to public:**

From: July 12, 2018

To: August 31, 2018

4. **Public Hearing:**

- Was not required, explain:
- Opportunity was given but no hearing was held.
 - No requests for a public hearing were received.
 - Requests for a public hearing were not substantial.
- Was held on August 16, 2018

5. **Summarize comments from the Public Hearing and Public Notice of Availability. Characterize public support or opposition to the project. Include a summary of the changes to the environmental document and the project resulting from comments:** (Note: Alternatives proposed by the public and subsequently rejected should be identified and the reasons for rejecting them included.)

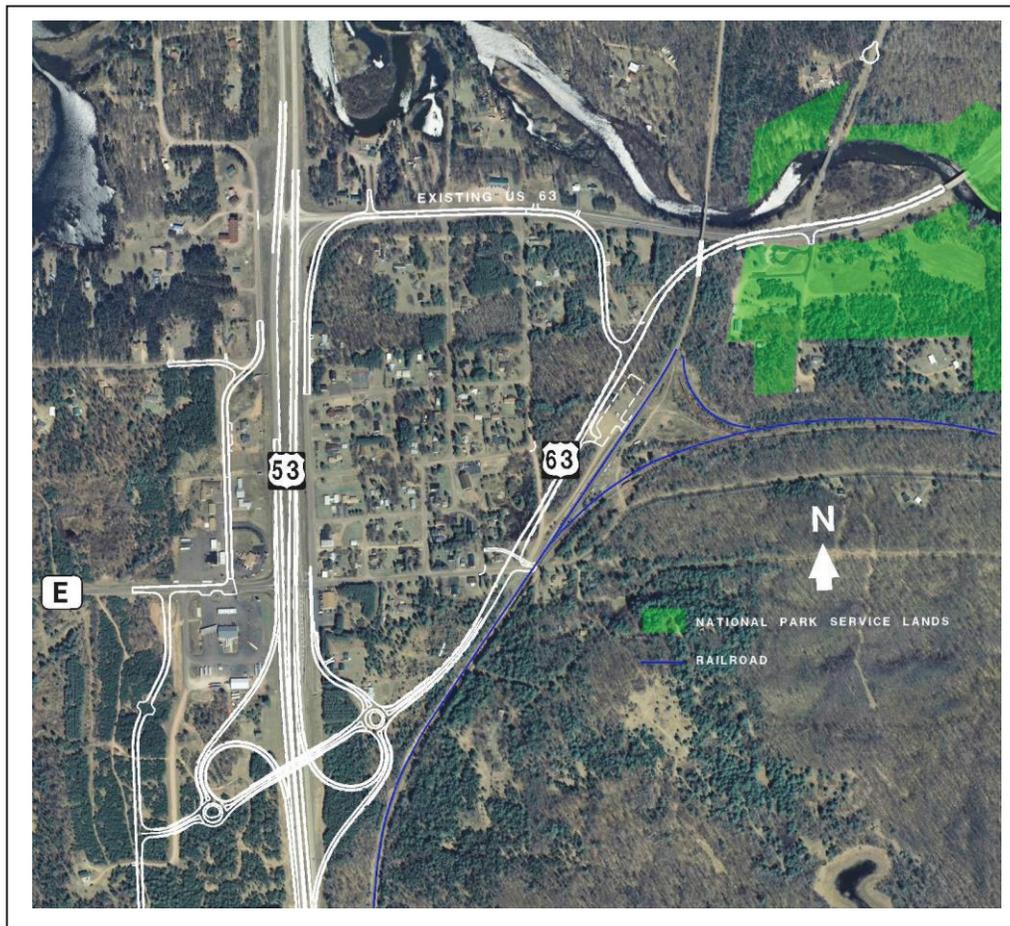
The following is a summary of verbal and written testimony received during the public hearing and public availability period for the environmental document. No changes were made to the Preferred Build Alternative B (Partial Cloverleaf Interchange at Relocated US 63 and County E) based on the testimony received. Follow up coordination will occur with property owners to resolve questions presented and the project will attempt to further minimize impacts, where feasible during final design.

- August 7, 2018 – written email response to a request for the preferred alternative exhibit during the document availability period indicated that the respondent “liked the design”.
- August 16, 2018 – written testimony received at the hearing requested that US 63 be routed further east of the railroad beginning at Oak Hill Road and be located through the National Park Service property (see the aerial map on following page for overview of the proposed interchange in relation to the railroad and National Park Service Lands).

The Proposed Action did not evaluate proposed US 63 alignments east of the railroad since they would have required possible relocation of the National Park Service visitor and maintenance facilities, conversion of Section 4(f)/6(f) property (see definitions below) to highway right-of-way, fragmentation of upland wooded habitat areas, and new crossings of the railroad and Wild Rivers State Trail. Alternatives to avoid National Park Service lands would require a new crossing of the Namekagon River.

- Section 4(f) Resource - Section 4(f) refers to the original section within the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 which provided for consideration of park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites during transportation project development.
- Section 6(f) Resource - Section 6(f)(3) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (LWCF, formerly LAWCON) requires that property acquired or developed with LWCF funds shall not be converted to uses other than for public outdoor recreation uses.

The National Park Service lands are a Section 4(f) and a Section 6(f) resource. Projects which could potentially impact these resources requires that the alternatives evaluated attempt to avoid these valuable resources. Also, any permanent taking of Section 6(f) requires replacement with similar lands.



Aerial Map of Build Alternative B Adjacent to Railroad and National Park Service Lands

While alignments east of the railroad may be feasible, the impacts resulting from further shifting of US 63 away from US 53 would not be considered prudent since relocation of US 63 further east could result in potentially significant impacts. As documented in the Draft Environmental Assessment, the project did evaluate various alignment options near the National Park Service Visitor's Center (see page 72 of the Draft Environmental Assessment). The National Park Service did not support the alignments which required permanent incorporation of the Section 4(f)/6(f) lands into the Proposed Action.

- August 16, 2018 – written testimony received at the hearing provided a comment that the proposed US 63 alignment may result in proximity and noise impacts to one home that will remain along Second Street. The Draft Environmental Assessment evaluated traffic noise (see Factor Sheet D-3 of the Draft Environmental Assessment) and documented that noise mitigation is not reasonable for the two impacted receptors along the west side of the proposed US 63.

Per Wisconsin Administrative Code TRANS 405, noise walls are considered reasonable if they:

- Reduce noise levels by at least 8 dB
- Do not exceed \$30,000 per benefited receptor

As documented in Factor Sheet D-3 of the Draft Environmental Assessment, two receptors along proposed US 63 would exceed the Noise Abatement Criteria as specified in Wisconsin Administrative Code TRANS 405. A noise wall was evaluated for the two impacted receptors. A 13-foot high noise wall would reduce noise about 8 dB at an estimated cost of \$74,000 per receptor. While the noise abatement is feasible, noise abatement is not reasonable per Wisconsin Administrative Code TRANS 405.

Evaluation of any proximity impacts will be determined and coordinated during the real estate acquisition process with the property owner who provided testimony. Impacts will be minimized, where feasible.

- August 16, 2018 – private verbal testimony received at the hearing provided comment that two interchanges should be considered with one interchange for US 63 located north of Trego (north of Namekagon River) and one interchange for County E in the approximate location of the proposed interchange in Build Alternative B. The

property owner provided testimony about the concern for dissecting the Trego area and surrounding the cemetery with the proposed relocation of US 63 east of US 53. Also, the testimony indicated opposition to the removal of Lakeside Road bridge indicating possible historic characteristics of the bridge and the desire for the bridge to remain for pedestrian traffic use. The testimony also provided concerns with increase of truck noise due to engine braking on hills and at intersections.

The Proposed Action did not evaluate two separate interchanges since both design standards and traffic patterns do not warrant consideration of two separate interchanges to serve both US 63 and County E traffic.

- County E is an east-west highway that terminates at US 53. US 63 is a north-south highway that runs concurrent with US 53 south of Trego.
- Access spacing standards between interchanges is two to five miles for US 53.
- Locating a US 63 interchange north of the Namekagon River would provide for less than one mile between interchanges unless US 63 is located at least 1.5-miles north of its current intersection with US 53.
- Also, County E is forecasted to carry about 1,500 vehicles per day and US 63 is forecasted to carry about 5,300 vehicles per day both in the design year of 2042. Interchanges are typically warranted when the design year traffic of the side road exceeds 2,000 vehicles per day.

Two interchanges would require less than desirable access spacing along US 63 or potential mis-direction of US 63 to meet access spacing standards, potentially significant impacts, fragmentation of upland habitat areas, and a new crossing of the Wild Rivers State Trail north of the Namekagon River. While this alternative may be feasible, evaluation of this concept was not considered prudent to address the safety and traffic needs that are present in the project at the existing intersections.

As documented in the Draft Environmental Assessment, historic and archaeological (cemetery) evaluations have been completed and there will be no impacts to any resources that are potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places which requires any federal undertaking to consider the effects of a project on historic properties under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. No work will occur within any cemeteries. The Lakeside Road bridge over the Namekagon River was surveyed and determined not to be a historic resource. The Town of Trego does not have the funds to continue maintenance of the deteriorated Lakeside Road bridge and they have proposed to remove the bridge with or without the US 53/US 63 and US 53/County E improvements included in the Proposed Action. As documented in the Draft Environmental Assessment, the removal of the Lakeside Road bridge is being addressed by the Proposed Action since it will be used as a detour for the Wild Rivers State Trail during a portion of the construction. Addressing the Lakeside Road bridge removal as part of the Preferred Build Alternative B has also allowed for consistent and streamlined coordination with the National Park Service for the proposed work in the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.

The Draft Environmental Assessment evaluated traffic noise (see Factor Sheet D-3 of the Draft Environmental Assessment) and documented that noise mitigation is not reasonable for the two impacted receptors along the west side of the proposed US 63 realignment (see explanation of reasonableness above). Proposal and enforcement of any engine braking is determined by WisDOT policy. If the Town of Trego desires to post signs for no engine braking within the town, the Town would also need to provide an action plan to enforce the ordinance with law enforcement. Further action would be required by the Town of Trego during final design or upon completion of the project, if desired, to implement a no engine braking ordinance.

- August 16, 2018 – private verbal testimony received at the hearing provided comment that the Proposed Action would fragment the Town of Trego into three sections and that the new interchange would result in further loss of business in the Trego area due to changes in traffic patterns and visibility. The testimony provided comment about a previous petition opposing the Proposed Action.

The Draft Environmental Assessment documents the unlikelihood of the Proposed Action to result in any major land use changes since the proposed interchange will replace the existing unsafe at-grade intersections. The Proposed Action does not provide for new access but a change in type of access from high-speed US 53. Typically land use conversions would be anticipated to occur where new access is provided to vacant land of one use (i.e. cropland, woodland, etc.) which then is converted to other uses (commercial, residential, institutional, etc.) due to accessibility to the regional transportation. The project area is generally developed, and local governments control any future changes in land use, typically through zoning regulations. The proposed interchange would result in safer access to the developed Trego area and provide for a safe crossing of high-speed US 53 for vehicles, occasional pedestrians, and recreational traffic. While there will be some changes to visibility from US 53 and US 63 due to vertical and horizontal roadway changes, the interchange is not anticipated to result in major changes to the visibility of existing businesses along US 53.

As documented in the Draft Environmental Assessment, a petition was submitted to the Town of Trego resulting in a formal resolution by the Town of Trego on October 19, 2015 requesting that WisDOT study a local interchange concept (Build Alternative C – Diamond Interchange at Existing US 53/US 63 Intersection) with some modifications provided by the public and project advisory committee. This alternative was evaluated in the Draft Environmental Assessment and eliminated from further consideration as documented in Basic Sheet 3 of the Draft Environmental Assessment.

- August 27, 2018 – written testimony received during the document availability period provided a comment that various at-grade intersection changes made along US 53 by WisDOT under separate actions (i.e. County B intersections in Washburn and Douglas Counties that were modified to restricted turn intersections/J-turns) are leading to more confusion than the standard existing at-grade intersections. Also, the testimony provides that a stop light would be a more reasonable, simple, and cost-effective solution. The Draft Environmental Assessment documents various at-grade intersection configurations restricting turning movements and signalization are not prudent or effective solutions that would result in the appropriate safety improvements for these high-speed intersections (see pages 20 to 22 of the Draft Environmental Assessment).
- August 29, 2018 – written testimony received during the document availability period provided comments that the proposed Lakeside Road cul-de-sac may result in illegal parking for those wanting to access the National Park Service property north of the Namekagon River and the Namekagon River itself, the cul-de-sac may result in visual impacts due to tree removal on the adjacent residential property, and that sound-scaping may be desired to eliminate noise that may occur from those parking in the cul-de-sac (i.e. car door slamming). Also, the property owner provided a request that Ross Road should be paved since more local traffic may use Ross Road to access Lakeside Road. Finally, the property owner requested documentation on how adjoining property owners have rights to any potential vacated right-of-way, if the Town of Trego would vacate the existing roadway right-of-way along the closed portion of the Lakeside Road. The property owner provided comment that they are not opposed to the removal of the Lakeside Road bridge over the Namekagon River.

The National Park Service has indicated that the area north of the Namekagon River is used infrequently and that direct access via automobile is no longer desired. Foot traffic would be maintained through the existing right-of-way along Lakeside Road from the proposed cul-de-sac to allow access to public property and the Namekagon River by periodic users. Some parking may occur within the existing roadway at the Lakeside Road cul-de-sac, but it is not anticipated to increase above any existing conditions. There have been no comments received from other property owners, stakeholders, the Town of Trego, or the National Park Service that current parking within the existing roadway is problematic along Lakeside Road. Posting of any parking restrictions on this local roadway is the jurisdiction of the Town of Trego and would require an ordinance by the Town if they choose to implement any parking restrictions along Lakeside Road.

WisDOT will work with the property owner who provided testimony during final design and the real estate acquisition process to adequately demonstrate the required property. Also, the final design will attempt to minimize tree removals and changes in existing conditions to the extent practical near the proposed cul-de-sac. It is estimated that approximately 0.06-acre of new right-of-way will be required for the cul-de-sac from the property owner providing testimony. The proposed location of the cul-de-sac provides similar to impacts to both adjacent property owners.

The vacation of existing right-of-way along Lakeside Road is a decision of the local municipality (Washburn County owns the right-of-way) and vacation is independent of the Proposed Action. If vacation of the existing right-of-way occurs, Washburn County could pursue this after construction of the Proposed Action. Per Wisconsin state law, vacated right-of-way is split in half with adjacent property owners. WisDOT will coordinate with the adjacent property owner who provided testimony to answer their questions regarding this issue during final design and the real estate acquisition process.

Finally, existing Lakeside Road is estimated to carry less than 100 vehicles per day from US 63. With closure of Lakeside Road at US 63, local traffic will be required to use Ross Road north of the Namekagon River to access Lakeside Road. Ross Road is also estimated to carry less than 100 vehicles per day. The changes in traffic patterns do not warrant paving this local roadway as part of the Proposed Action.

6. Describe selected alternative:

- Selected alternative is the same as that described on form DT2094, Environmental Evaluation of Facilities Development Actions.
- Selected alternative is different from that described on form DT2094, Environmental Evaluation of Facilities Development Actions. Explain changes and why another alternative was selected.

The preferred alternative (Build Alternative B) is the same as that described in the Draft Environmental Assessment approved on June 26, 2018 by FHWA. Design refinements have been made to avoid full reconstruction of Oak Hill Road through the railroad (construction limits shortened to match the existing newer railroad crossing) and to further reduce residential relocation impacts from the those shown on Basic Sheet 6. The revised relocation impacts are shown in the table below. Overviews of the build alternatives are shown in a revised Attachment 8 (see **Attachment 8-REV**).

PROJECT PARAMETERS	Unit of Measure	Alternatives/Sections		
		No-Build Alternative A	Build Alternative B (Preferred)	Build Alternative C
REAL ESTATE				
Number of Farms Affected	Number	0	0	0
Total Buildings Required	Number	0	6 ⁽⁷⁾	10 ⁽⁸⁾
Housing Units Required	Number	0	4 ^{(5) (6)}	7 ⁽⁵⁾
Commercial Units Required	Number	0	1 ⁽³⁾	3
Other Buildings or Structures Required	Number	0	1 ⁽⁴⁾	0

(3) One commercial unit contains two active business tenants.

(4) A natural gas utility substation will require relocation.

(5) Further design refinements results in avoiding one additional residential relocation near Mackey Road.

(6) Further design refinements results in avoiding one additional residential relocation on the East Frontage Road.

(7) Total relocations reduced by two from the Draft Environmental Assessment.

(8) Total relocations reduced by one from the Draft Environmental Assessment.



E



SCALE, FEET 0 400 800

BUILD ALTERNATIVE B OVERVIEW

LEGEND

-  EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY
-  PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION
-  PROPOSED EASEMENTS
-  NAMEKAGON RIVER (ST. CROIX NATIONAL SCENIC RIVERWAY)
-  WISDOT BUREAU OF RAILS AND HARBORS LANDS
-  RELOCATION



BUILD ALTERNATIVE C OVERVIEW

LEGEND

- EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY
- PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION
- PROPOSED EASEMENTS
- NAMEKAGON RIVER (ST. CROIX NATIONAL SCENIC RIVERWAY)
- WISDOT BUREAU OF RAILS AND HARBORS LANDS
- X RELOCATION