



I-94 North South Corridor News

January 2006

What's in store on I-94?

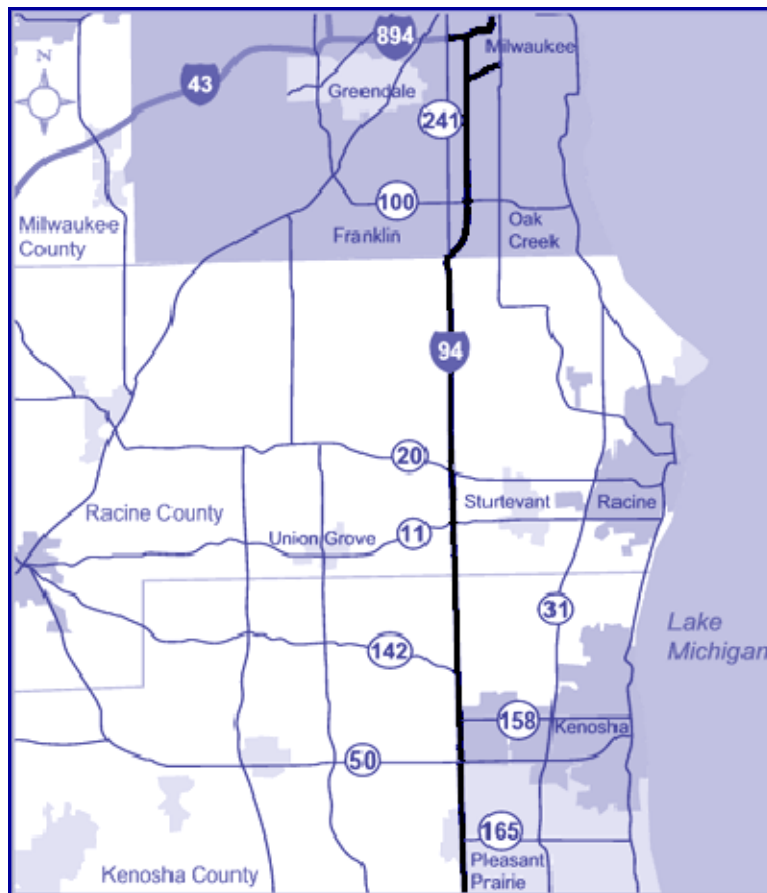
Learn about the study and get involved

The I-94 North South Corridor stretches from the Mitchell Interchange area to just south of the Illinois state line. This freeway corridor has 40-year-old pavement structure, safety issues, design deficiencies and traffic congestion that may require redesign and reconstruction.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is conducting engineering and planning work to ensure that the corridor meets the needs of the region and alleviates impacts to surrounding areas. The study is starting in January 2006 and will continue for two to three years.

WisDOT will involve residents, businesses and communities in the study process through workshops, newsletters, e-mails and other outreach materials.

No decisions have been made yet regarding improvements in the corridor. WisDOT wants to involve you in this project from the start and work with you to help plan the future of this key economic link in Wisconsin.



Sign up for the project mailing list.

E-mail dotseffreeways94nsc@dot.state.wi.us or call (262) 548-8721.

Brainstorming workshops to be held in Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha counties

WisDOT will conduct workshops in Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha counties to exchange ideas on possible improvements to the I-94 North South Corridor.

WisDOT staff, planners, traffic engineers, and real estate specialists will be on hand to work with the community to listen to concerns about the freeway and to explore possible solutions. Residents will have the opportunity to make suggestions and sketch out alternatives

Workshop dates and locations

Racine area

January 31, 4:00 - 8:00
CATI Center
2320 Renaissance Boulevard, Sturtevant

Kenosha area

February 2, 4:00 - 8:00
Kenosha County Center
19600 75th Street, Bristol

Oak Creek / Franklin

February 7, 4:00 - 8:00
West Middle School
8401 S 13th Street, Oak Creek

Milwaukee

February 8, 4:00 - 8:00
Ronald Reagan Middle School
(formerly Sholes MS)
4965 S 20th Street, Milwaukee

for possible improvements. Once the workshops are completed, WisDOT will assemble the alternatives and refine them. These alternatives will be further reviewed and refined with the community through small group meetings, public officials and community based organizations over the course of the spring and early summer 2006.

Plan to attend any or all of these workshops as they come to your area!



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration



What does it all mean?

Deciphering the alphabet soup of transportation projects

The I-94 North South Corridor study will provide an exhaustive look at a number of engineering, traffic, socio-economic and environmental factors for the freeway corridor. Much of the process is dictated by federal planning requirements that help guide the decision making for the eventual freeway design. For the benefit of all who are involved in the I-94 North South Corridor, here is a basic summary of some key terms and how they apply to this study:

NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

NEPA represents the basic framework for good environmental planning from a public perspective. The stated goal of NEPA is to “encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment.”

When a project uses federal funds (as the I-94 North South Corridor would), NEPA establishes three key requirements for the sponsoring agency, in this case the state of Wisconsin:

1. The agency must give appropriate **consideration to environmental factors** in making a decision, along with economic and technical considerations
2. The agency should make diligent efforts to **involve the public** in the environmental analysis. This calls for the state to invite and solicit comment from anyone affected or interested in the project.
3. The agency needs to **write detailed statements** that clearly describe potential environmental impacts of an action. These statements should be in plain language and clearly present the rationale for a decision.

EIS – Environmental Impact Statement

For the I-94 North South Corridor, the NEPA process will require the preparation of an EIS. The EIS presents a full record of the environmental analysis that will inform the public, serve as a vehicle for comment, provide data for the decision-making process and provide a record that NEPA processes have been fulfilled.

The EIS covers three key issues:

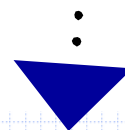
- It will outline **the purpose and need of the project**;
- It will define the **area that will be affected**; and
- It will describe **environmental consequences** of the proposed action in language accessible to both the public and decision-makers.

During the I-94 North South Corridor process, the EIS will be created in both a draft format for public comment, and in a final format that incorporates comments and is submitted to the federal government for review.

EA – Environmental Assessment

While a new EIS will be created for the I-94 North South Corridor, WisDOT is also working to review and update an EA that was created in 1996. This document solely addressed improvements to 13 interchanges along I-94 in Kenosha and Racine counties. The conclusion of the EA found that no significant impacts would occur as a result of the improvements recommended for the interchanges.

During the I-94 North South Corridor process, the reevaluated EA will be circulated in draft format for public comment before any decisions have been made and in a final format that incorporates comments.



For additional explanation of these terms, visit:

WisDOT
www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/env/index.htm

Federal Highway Administration
<http://environment.fhwa.dot.gov/projdev/index.htm>

Glossary: technical terms revealed



What is a “scissor ramp”?

In the ongoing Marquette Interchange Project, one of WisDOT’s major design goals is to eliminate left-hand on and off ramps that have proven to create traffic flow and safety problems. In the I-94 North South Corridor, one of the prevailing design concerns in Kenosha and Racine counties is the use of scissor ramps.

But what exactly is a scissor ramp? A scissor ramp integrates a freeway off-ramp or on-ramp directly with a parallel frontage road. Unlike a traditional diamond interchange, where off-ramps or on-ramps connect directly to the cross road, the scissor ramp first connects with a frontage road, then proceeds to connect with the cross road. (See photo.)

A scissor ramp is a safety and design concern because it creates conflicts between fast-moving ramp traffic and lower speed traffic on the frontage roads. The ramp-road intersection typically uses stop signs or yield signs that require motorists on the frontage road to look carefully before proceeding.

In 1992, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) published a study finding that left-hand ramps had the worst crash rates of 10 different designs. The second most accident-prone ramps were scissor ramps.

Currently, eight of the I-94 interchanges in Kenosha and Racine counties use scissor ramps. The 1996 Environmental Assessment calls for improving these interchanges by separating ramps and frontage roads and creating more traditional diamond interchange ramps. Coincidentally, the FHWA study cited diamond ramps as the safest type of freeway ramp.



Photo courtesy Google Earth

Corridor Web site features new “frequently asked questions” section

One of the primary information tools supporting the I-94 North South Corridor study is the project Web site www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/d2/i94. The site features a variety of background information on the corridor, including maps, a project timeline, description of current conditions and contact information.

The site also provides a scanned copy of the 1996 Environmental Assessment (EA) of the I-94 service interchanges in Kenosha and Racine counties. This existing work will help WisDOT to begin construction on selected interchanges as early as 2009.

A new feature of the Web site provides a series of frequently asked questions (FAQs). There are three initial FAQ topics:

- * **Real estate** FAQs relating to properties that *could* be impacted by a future project and resources for property owners.
- * FAQs on the **SEWRPC study** provide information on the 2003 freeway analysis completed by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC).
- * **Traffic and safety** FAQs provide updated statistics on key traffic and crash data for the corridor.

Use the Web site as a reference and check back regularly for updates, new FAQ sections and announcements for upcoming meetings and events.



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(formerly Sholes MS)

4965 S 20th Street, Milwaukee

Contact information

We will meet with you any time, any place, any where. Call or e-mail to schedule a presentation:

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