

You're invited!

Information meetings scheduled for Kenosha, Racine, Oak Creek and Milwaukee

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) will conduct public information meetings in Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha counties to present concepts and ideas on possible improvements to the I-94 North-South Corridor, extending from the Mitchell Interchange area in Milwaukee to the Illinois state line.

This series of public information meetings will build on the previous community workshops held in January and February. WisDOT will present information on the purpose and need for a potential reconstruction project. Participants will be able to view design concepts for I-94 based on ideas presented by the public at the community workshops. There will also be updated information on the I-94 interchange projects in Kenosha and Racine counties.

The information meetings will follow an open-house format similar to the community workshops. The events will include a short presentation given hourly (or as needed) through the evening. Traffic information, other exhibits and maps of concepts will be on display. Planners, engineers and real estate specialists from the study team will be available to answer questions, explain displays and discuss specific project issues. As with the workshops, participants will be encouraged to provide comments and ideas directly on corridor maps and displays.



Oak Creek workshop, Feb. 7, 2006

The public is encouraged to attend to ask questions, exchange information and offer suggestions relating to the corridor. Plan to attend any or all of these meetings as they come to your area!

Kenosha area

May 30, 5:00 - 8:00
Mahone Middle School
6900 60th Street
Kenosha

Racine area

June 1, 5:00 - 8:00
CATI Center
2320 Renaissance Boulevard
Sturtevant

Oak Creek / Franklin

June 6, 4:00 - 8:00
West Middle School
8401 S 13th Street
Oak Creek

Milwaukee

June 8, 4:00 - 8:00
Best Western Airport
5105 S Howell Avenue
Milwaukee

Why is the corridor being studied? Understanding purpose and need

In transportation project planning like the I-94 North-South Corridor study, the eventual Environmental Impact Statement will include what is known as a "purpose and need statement." The "purpose" of a proposed project defines the transportation problem to be solved and outlines goals and objectives that should be included as part of a successful solution to the problem. The "need" provides data to support the purpose.

The purpose and need statement sets the stage to develop reasonable alternatives for a project. The requirement for purpose and need statements and Environmental Impact Statements began in 1970 with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires agencies to consider impacts of their actions on the environment.

The initial review of the I-94 North-South Corridor reveals a combination of factors that call for reconstruction.

Aging pavement

The I-94 North-South Corridor was built between the late 1950s and mid-1960s. The original concrete pavement has been subjected to more than 40 Wisconsin winters, studded snow tires, heavy trucks and more traffic than it was designed to handle. WisDOT has resurfaced most sections of the I-94 North-South Corridor between two and four times since they were built. Each resurfacing lasts a shorter and shorter time because the pavement under it continues to deteriorate. It is no longer cost-effective to resurface I-94; the pavement needs to be replaced.

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U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration



Crashes

Crash rates at several locations on I-94, particularly in Milwaukee County, are above the statewide average for urban freeways. The crash rate on I-894 between 35th Street and the Mitchell Interchange is also above average, including some locations that are over twice the statewide average. Most of the ramps in the Mitchell Interchange exceed the statewide average for crash rates.

One significant safety issue on the I-94 North-South Corridor is the Plainfield Curve, located on I-43/94 just south of Howard Avenue. This tight curve has been the site of several severe crashes, many involving trucks.

In all, there is an average of 2.8 crashes per day on the I-94 North-South Corridor, with nearly two per day in the Milwaukee County study area alone.

Outdated design

Freeways are designed differently today than they were in the 1950's and 1960's. The Mitchell Interchange is a mix of left- and right-hand exits and entrances with tight curves in some locations. This requires quick merging and weaving across several traffic lanes for the 27th Street and Airport

Spur (WIS 119) exits. The scissor ramp system where entrance and exit ramps connect directly with the frontage roads in Kenosha and Racine counties is also a safety design concern.

Traffic

The I-94 North-South Corridor is one of the most heavily traveled freeways in the state. The Mitchell Interchange handles about 209,000 vehicles a day (2004), and over 156,000 vehicles a day travel I-94 near Grange Avenue in Milwaukee County. I-94 in Kenosha County is the busiest highway crossing a Wisconsin state border, with about 82,000 vehicles per day. Traffic volumes on I-94 have grown between 17% and 31% since 1994. These traffic volumes and growth trends call for the study to evaluate future traffic handling capabilities for the freeway.

Provide your input

The upcoming public information meetings will allow the public to examine detailed information about these and other purpose and need factors and provide their own input. Participants will be able to view crash location maps, traffic data (both existing and forecast) and displays discussing pavement deterioration.

Community workshops draw 540 participants

A total of 540 people attended a series of four community workshops on the I-94 North-South Corridor study earlier this year. The workshops allowed the public to interact with the study team and share ideas and concerns about the freeway corridor, as well as explore possible solutions. Citizens were encouraged to ask questions, mark their thoughts on freeway maps, exchange information, offer suggestions and present known problems relating to the corridor.

From these workshops, WisDOT assembled the ideas and comments and will refine them into concepts to be presented at the upcoming public information meetings.

"I like these sessions - keep this up. It helps to let citizens speak their opinions - you are doing this the right way."

Comment sheet remarks from Oak Creek workshop

*Didn't have the opportunity to attend a workshop?
Get copies of the presentations and handouts on the Web at
www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/d2/i94/meeting.htm.*



Kenosha workshop, Feb. 2, 2006



Milwaukee workshop, Feb. 8, 2006



Glossary: technical terms revealed Introducing the single-point urban interchange

It looks a little like a bow tie and is better than a diamond, but it is not some new wardrobe accessory on “Dancing With the Stars.” Instead, the “single-point urban interchange” is a different type of freeway interchange that is new to Wisconsin but could play a role in the I-94

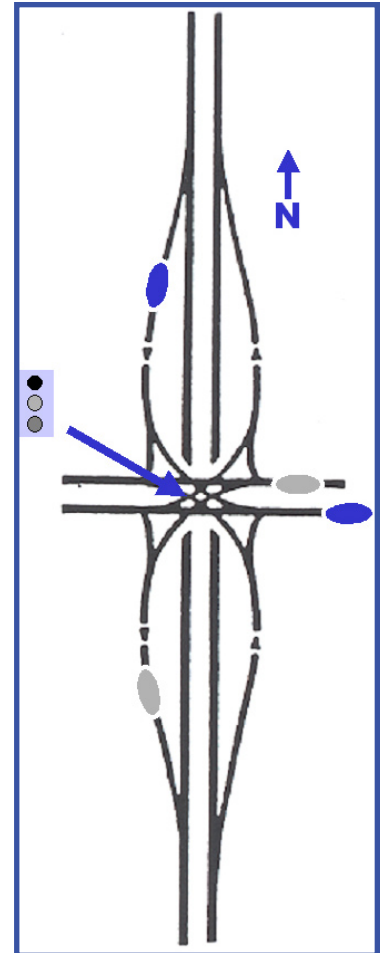
North-South Corridor planning.

Many motorists are familiar with a diamond interchange, where a freeway is connected with a crossing highway by four ramps – two on-ramps and two off-ramps. While the design is familiar and moves traffic relatively well, a diamond interchange has two key drawbacks: first, it requires two sets of traffic signals on the crossing highway; and second, it requires a relatively large amount of space.

A single-point urban interchange, or SPUI, can actually handle more traffic than a diamond interchange by requiring only one central intersection and reducing the overall space needed. A SPUI reduces the number of conflict points and traffic signal phases in an interchange, thus improving safety and increasing the ability to move large volumes of traffic through the interchange.

To understand how a SPUI operates, view the diagram at the right. In this example, the blue vehicle is heading south and exits the freeway to head east. At the top of the ramp, it turns left at the single traffic signal. The gray vehicle is heading west on the cross street. It uses the same traffic signal to turn left and gain access to the southbound freeway on-ramp.

Wisconsin opened its first SPUI on the new US 53 freeway in Eau Claire late last year (see diagrams and a short video at www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/d6/us53/singlept.htm). The I-94 North-South Corridor team may evaluate SPUIs at various interchanges in Kenosha, Racine or Milwaukee counties. In its evaluation, the team will need to consider a variety of factors, including traffic flow, safety, construction cost and space needs. More data on how and where the SPUI may be evaluated will be available at the public information meetings.



What's new on the Web

The I-94 North-South Corridor Web site is a great way to get information about the study and stay up-to-date on events. Here are some recent updates to the site:

- The study team has added a Spanish language page, featuring translations of this newsletter and the January 2006 edition.
- The Web site provides a summary of the comments and feedback from the community workshops held earlier this year, with copies of all handouts distributed to the public.
- The site reviews public involvement



activities, with a list of more than 50 elected officials, municipalities and community groups that have met with the I-94 North-South Corridor study team.

- Computer users may also subscribe to an e-mail listserv that will provide automatic updates on study meetings, news and other events.
- Finally, the site includes information about the service interchange projects in Kenosha and Racine counties.

Check out these and other features at www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/d2/i94.

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Interstate highways mark 50 years

The I-94 North-South Corridor is part of the national Interstate Highway System that is celebrating its 50-year anniversary in 2006.

In 1956, President Dwight Eisenhower signed federal legislation that initiated development of what many consider our nation's greatest public works achievement. Today, the U.S. Interstate system stretches some 46,775 miles - including 743 miles in Wisconsin - and serves a crucial economic role in supporting the safe and efficient movement of people and commerce.

WisDOT is joining transportation agencies throughout the nation in recognizing the 50-year anniversary of the Interstate highway system. Learn more about the history of Interstate highways in Wisconsin on the Web at **www.dot.wisconsin.gov/library/history/50/index.htm**.

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