



North-South  
Corridor

# Corridor

## COMMUNICATIONS

NOVEMBER 2007

*I-94 North-South Corridor study information*

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## Message from Sec. Frank Busalacchi



The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is reaching the final phase of the I-94 North-South Corridor study. We have come a long way since the study of this 35-mile corridor began in January 2006.

The project team worked to create and refine alternatives for this interstate highway spanning from the Illinois border through Kenosha and Racine counties to the Mitchell Interchange in Milwaukee County.

I-94, a primary commerce and tourism route serving growing industrial and residential areas, has deteriorated. Safety issues, design deficiencies and traffic congestion concerns require full reconstruction and redesign. Much of the corridor has been resurfaced three times. Additional resurfacings are not cost effective, and they will not address safety or long-term pavement needs.

The purpose of this newsletter is to keep you informed about the latest activities on the I-94 North-South Corridor.

At the onset of this study, we knew that community involvement was essential. Our

project team has held more than 400 meetings with residents, businesses, community leaders, elected officials and concerned citizens. We continue to listen to concerns and gather input. We encourage you to attend one of the public hearings on Dec. 3, 6, 11 or 12, so you can provide formal testimony about the future of the I-94 corridor.

In this issue, you will find:

- *An overview on the preferred alternatives, cost and schedule to be presented at the public hearings*
- *Air and noise analyses of the freeway system*
- *A summary of the draft environmental impact statement and where it is available*
- *What to expect at the public hearings*
- *Study schedule and contact information*

WisDOT must plan for the future of I-94. Traffic is expected to increase between 12 percent and 48 percent during the next 30 years. The study team has worked diligently to develop a preferred alternative that meets the needs of the transportation system and minimizes impacts to homeowners, businesses and the environment.

The project team hopes to see you at the public hearings.



# Designs under consideration

## What will I-94 look like?

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation recently announced its selection of a preferred alternative - the modernization with capacity expansion alternative. Before selecting this alternative to bring forward to the public hearings, the team studied three options to reconstruct the freeway:

- *Replace-in-kind (six lanes)*
- *Modernization (six lanes)*
- *Modernization with capacity expansion (eight lanes)*

The *replace-in-kind* option essentially removes the existing pavement and replaces it in the current location. It does not address safety and crashes, correct outdated designs or relieve congestion. This option has received very little public support since the beginning of the study process.

Interchanges in Racine and Kenosha counties were identified and approved for modernization under a separate study in 1996.

### Racine and Kenosha counties

The *modernization (six lanes)* option would look much like it does today. This option would:

- Maintain three northbound and three southbound lanes.
- Provide a consistent width for inside and outside shoulders.
- Construct a paved median with a concrete barrier.

- Push out frontage roads on either side of the freeway to create wider ditches. This improves the quality of stormwater runoff from the freeway and provides a buffer between freeway and frontage-road traffic.

The *modernization (eight lanes)* option would:

- Construct four lanes northbound and four lanes southbound.
- Provide a consistent width for inside and outside shoulders.
- Construct a paved median with a concrete barrier.
- Push out frontage roads on either side of the freeway. The frontage roads would be relocated to the same position as the *six-lane* option; the difference is that the slopes between the freeway and frontage roads would be steeper or possibly require retaining walls.

### Milwaukee County

Under either the six-lane option or eight-lane option, the following is proposed in Milwaukee County:

#### Elm Road/27th Street

WisDOT will reconstruct the half-diamond interchange at 27th Street and I-94 to a full-diamond interchange. This interchange will be moved farther north to avoid impacts to the Root River environmental corridor and will improve spacing with

Seven Mile Road. It will be built with a connection to 27th Street. The city of Oak Creek has decided that an eastern connection to 13th Street via Elm Road will not be built at this time.

#### Ryan Road, Rawson Avenue and College Avenue

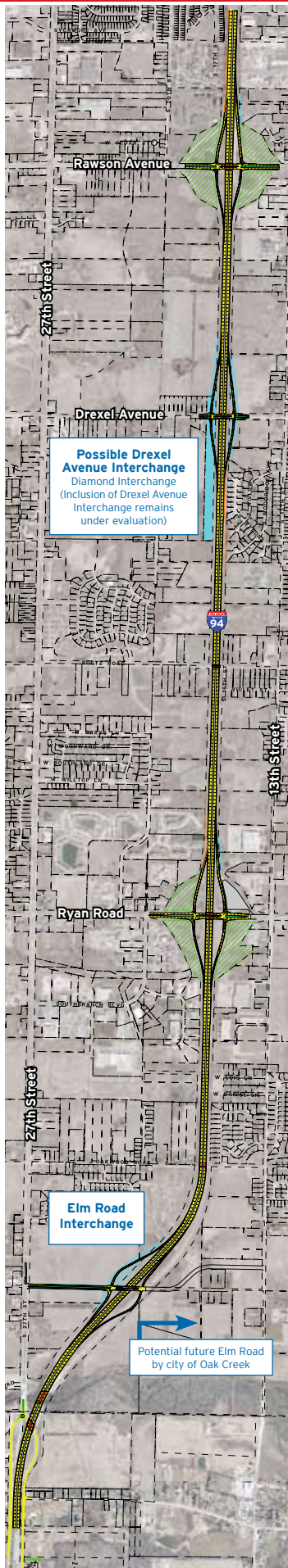
Ryan Road, Rawson Avenue and College Avenue are proposed to be reconstructed as tight diamond interchanges with I-94. This means that ramp connections with the cross street will be brought closer to I-94. This allows more space between the ramp and the adjacent cross streets – 13th Street and 20th Street, for better traffic operations. Each ramp intersection with the cross street will be signalized. At College Avenue and Ryan Road, the existing park and ride lots will be reconstructed.

#### Drexel Avenue

The Federal Highway Administration currently is reviewing WisDOT's request for a new interchange at Drexel Avenue and I-94. The interchange is proposed as a tight diamond configuration. Construction would require the acquisition of two homes on the west side of the freeway. Traffic signals also will be installed at the intersection of Drexel Avenue and at the ramps on either side of the freeway. Because this is a new freeway interchange, the city of Oak Creek will be responsible for 50 percent of the cost to construct this interchange.

#### Airport Spur

The interchange of I-94 and the Airport Spur will be





# What you can expect at the public hearings

The public hearings for the I-94 North-South Corridor study gives you the opportunity to share input for important decisions on this corridor. Public hearings are an integral part of the public involvement process.

At the public hearings, exhibits will be on display of WisDOT's recommended designs for the corridor. Members of the study team will be on hand to discuss potential impacts and answer questions. Representatives from WisDOT's real estate team also will be available.

After reviewing the exhibits, you can submit your input in several ways. Court reporters



will be available at the hearings to record your oral testimony. Give your name and address to the court reporter and comment on aspects of WisDOT's recommendations that you support or don't support and why.

You can also provide written testimony at the hearings or use a pre-addressed comment form. Comment forms should be mailed to WisDOT no later than

Dec. 31, 2007. You can also e-mail your comments to [dotseffreeways94nsc@dot.state.wi.us](mailto:dotseffreeways94nsc@dot.state.wi.us) by Dec. 31, 2007.

Your comments will be reviewed by WisDOT and the Federal Highway Administration, or FHWA, as part of the decision-making process. Your input is important to ensuring that all voices are heard and that the I-94 North-South Corridor project meets the needs of Wisconsin's residents and businesses.

WisDOT and FHWA will decide on the course of action for the corridor after the official 45-day comment period.

Download the exhibits by visiting [www.seffreeways.org](http://www.seffreeways.org).

## Public hearing dates and locations:

### OAK CREEK/FRANKLIN

Dec. 3, 4-8 p.m.  
West Middle School  
8401 13th St.  
Oak Creek  
Bus Routes: #15, #48

### KENOSHA AREA

Dec. 6, 5-8 p.m.  
Mahone Middle School  
6900 60th St.  
Kenosha  
Bus Routes: #6, #3 North, #3 West, #5 South

### RACINE AREA

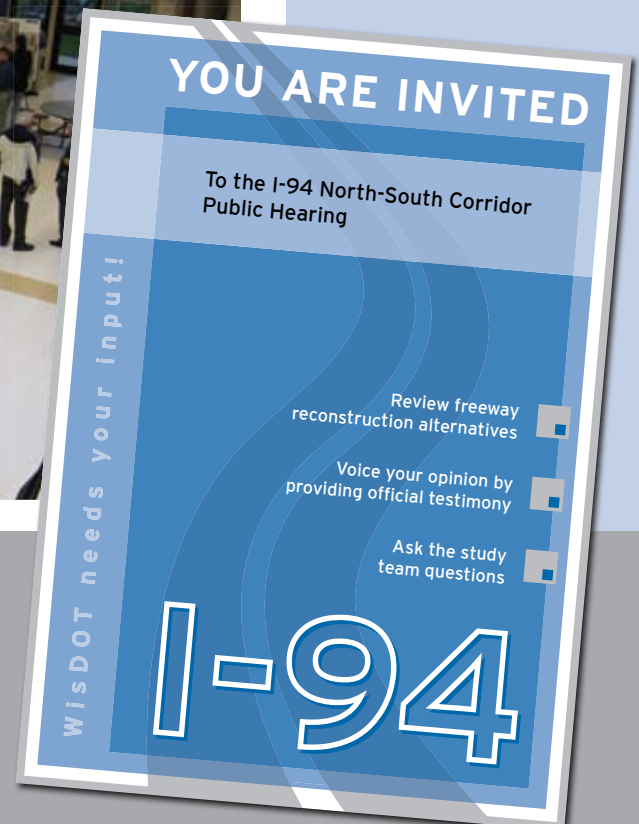
Dec. 11, 5-8 p.m.  
CATI Center  
2320 Renaissance Blvd.  
Sturtevant  
Bus Route: #27

### MILWAUKEE

Dec. 12, 4-8 p.m.  
Best Western Airport  
5105 S. Howell Ave.  
Milwaukee  
Bus Routes: #80, #11



**Contact:** WisDOT Southeast Region  
PO Box 798  
Waukesha, WI 53187-0798  
Phone: (262) 548-8721  
Fax: (262) 548-5662  
TDD: (262) 548-8801



"Designs under consideration" continued from previous page ...

### Recap of the Milwaukee County options

The *modernization* and *modernization with capacity expansion* options – if the Drexel Avenue interchange is built – require the acquisition and relocation of four homes in Milwaukee and two homes in Oak Creek. Safety, cost and reducing congestion are the main differences between these two options. *Modernization* improves safety, but does little to relieve congestion. *Modernization with capacity expansion* improves safety and significantly reduces congestion on the freeway.

- Moves ramp exits to the right side of the freeway.
- Minimizes current and future congestion, which results in fewer crashes, less waiting time and safer driving on the freeway.
- Replaces deteriorating pavement and structures with new designs.
- Minimizes impacts to local residents and the environment.
- Provides aesthetic treatments for those who live adjacent to the freeway.

### WisDOT's preferred alternative

After months of carefully analyzing the options listed above, WisDOT selected the *modernization with capacity expansion* alternative for the I-94 corridor. This alternative:

- Improves safety more than the *modernization* option.

WisDOT submitted to the Federal Highway Administration, or FHWA, a request to construct a new interchange at Drexel Avenue to provide a connection to this important corridor and foster economic development. FHWA is reviewing the proposal.

Although the final decision rests with the FHWA, WisDOT

### Costs\* for each of the options are as follows:

County	Replace-in-kind (six lanes)	Modernization (six lanes)	Modernization with capacity expansion (eight lanes)
Milwaukee	\$0.60	\$0.85	\$0.95
Racine	\$0.40	\$0.40	\$0.45
Kenosha	\$0.40	\$0.45	\$0.50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1.40</b>	<b>\$1.70</b>	<b>\$1.90</b>

\*Cost estimates in billions

wants feedback on this preferred alternative and encourages you to attend one of the public hearings to voice your opinions.

has pavement, safety and design issues that have to be addressed.

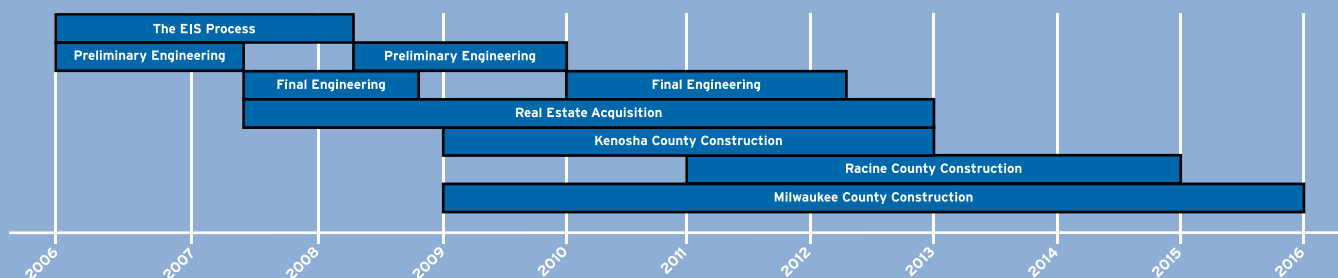
Late last year, Gov. Jim Doyle announced that the next improvement project will take place on the Zoo Interchange, which is the connection between I-94, I-894 and US 45 in western Milwaukee County. Construction of the Zoo Interchange is scheduled to begin in 2012.

### Schedule

The I-94 corridor is not the only section of southeast Wisconsin's freeway system in need of repair. Built in the 1960s, the entire system

## Reconstruction Time Line

WisDOT divided the corridor's reconstruction into two parts. The first part updates 11 interchanges along the corridor in Racine and Kenosha counties based on recommendations from a separate study. The second addresses the stretch of the I-94 freeway from the Mitchell Interchange in Milwaukee through the Illinois border.



## The EIS Process

- Public Information Meetings
- Preparation of Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)
- Community Workshops
- Development of Alternatives
- Analysis of Alternatives

Recently, however, WisDOT has decided to advance construction in Milwaukee County to begin in 2009 in order to ensure that the Mitchell Interchange and the Zoo Interchange are not under construction at the same time. This schedule has many benefits, including:

- Ensuring that Milwaukee will remain open for business.
- Allowing WisDOT to work on the two highest crash-prone sections of the project first – the Mitchell Interchange and the Plainfield Curve. Preparatory work that will not affect the freeway will take place during 2009 and 2010. Reconstruction of the Mitchell Interchange would end in 2012.
- Maintaining the time frame of completing the 35-mile corridor reconstruction by 2016. Work will begin on Kenosha County frontage roads in 2009.

Construction will be staged to minimize disruption.

**Kenosha County:**  
2009-2013

**Racine County:**  
2011-2015

**Milwaukee County:**  
2009-2016

## Environmental impact statement

*What is it, and why is it important?*

An environmental impact statement, or EIS, is the “decision document” for a proposed highway project like the I-94 North-South Corridor study.

The EIS for a proposed project explains impacts the project might have to natural and human environments, and it recommends a future course of action based on these findings. Wisconsin and national environmental policy acts require an EIS for projects with potentially significant social, economic, natural resource and other impacts.

For this project, the Federal Highway Administration, or FHWA, is the lead agency for the EIS. Before any project can move forward to construction, FHWA must address and comply with laws related to the environment.

The environmental study has been ongoing for 22 months, and the draft EIS is now available for public review. Items addressed include:

- Purpose and the need for this project
- Alternatives considered
- Environmental impacts and mitigation
- Impacts on aesthetic resources, public lands, agricultural resources

- Air quality, including analyses on ozone, carbon monoxide, particulate matter and mobile source air toxics

- Local government and public input

- Preferred alternative

The I-94 corridor has numerous environmental resources including wetlands, streams, environmental corridors, plants, wildlife, parks, and farmland. Avoiding impacts to these resources to the extent possible needs to be considered when developing and evaluating the transportation improvement alternatives.

The draft EIS is available at various locations beginning Nov. 16, 2007 (see sidebar at right). Comments on the EIS should be postmarked by Dec. 31, 2007, and sent to:

**WisDOT Southeast Freeways Team**  
141 NW Barstow St.  
Waukesha, WI 53187

**E-mail:**  
[dotsefreeways94nsc@dot.state.wi.us](mailto:dotsefreeways94nsc@dot.state.wi.us)

**Fax:** 262-548-5662

You can view the draft EIS at: [www.sefreeways.org](http://www.sefreeways.org).

**The complete draft EIS document will be at the following locations:**

**Bureau of Equity and Environmental Services**  
4802 Sheboygan Ave.  
Madison, WI 53705

**WisDOT SE Region Office**  
141 NW Barstow St.  
Waukesha, WI 53187-0798

**Milwaukee Public Library Central Branch**  
814 W. Wisconsin Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53233

**Milwaukee Public Library Tippecanoe Branch**  
3912 S. Howell Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53207

**Greenfield Public Library**  
7215 W. Cold Spring Road  
Greenfield, WI 53220

**Oak Creek Public Library**  
8620 S. Howell Ave.  
Oak Creek, WI 53154

**Franklin Public Library**  
9151 W. Loomis Road  
Franklin, WI 53132

**Racine Public Library**  
75 Seventh St.  
Racine, WI 53403

**Kenosha County Library – Southwest**  
7979 38th Ave.  
Kenosha, WI 53142

**Graham Public Library**  
1215 Main St.  
Union Grove, WI 53182

**Zion-Benton Public Library**  
2400 Gabriel Ave.  
Zion, IL 60099

Public Agency Review of DEIS

**We Are Here**

Preparation of Final Environmental Impact Statement

Public Review of DEIS

Public Hearing

**Record of Decision**



## Creating structures that enhance community character

### Community sensitive design in Racine and Kenosha counties

Community sensitive design, or CSD, is a community based approach to create a transportation project that not only moves vehicles safely and efficiently, but is also in harmony with the community context and its surroundings.

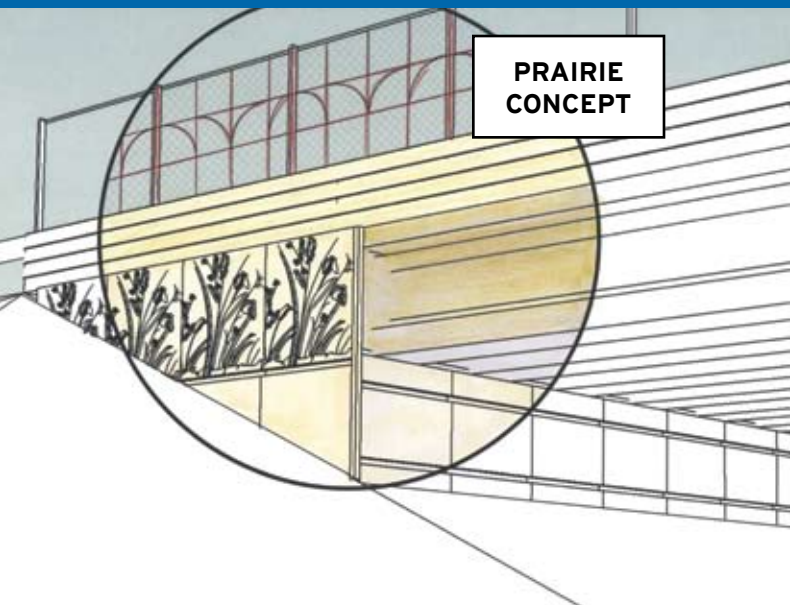
A CSD committee was formed earlier this year in Racine and Kenosha counties. The committee comprises planners, community leaders and businesses to help WisDOT better understand the character of the community and identify desired aesthetic treatments that best reflect that character.

Committee discussions revealed an interest in:

- A cohesive look between the two counties.
- Keeping aesthetic treatments simple and easy to maintain.
- A buff color scheme, similar to the new Marquette Interchange.
- An identity that reflects a rural theme while still promoting growth.

Ultimately, the committee decided on the prairie concept (below). Results from the May public information meetings showed positive feedback and support for this concept.

CSD efforts will begin soon in Milwaukee County.



## Air and noise: maintaining quality of life along I-94

WisDOT understands that the I-94 North-South Corridor affects the quality of life in the communities that surround it.

Some residents and businesses are concerned about the effects of pollutants and noise from the freeway. Through careful design and planning, WisDOT will ensure the corridor reconstruction project meets all state and federal standards for clean air and acceptable noise levels.

WisDOT studied the current and future air quality in the corridor. Designs that help alleviate congestion also help reduce emissions of most pollutants from vehicles.

Also, newer, cleaner-burning, fuel-efficient vehicles will replace older vehicles and

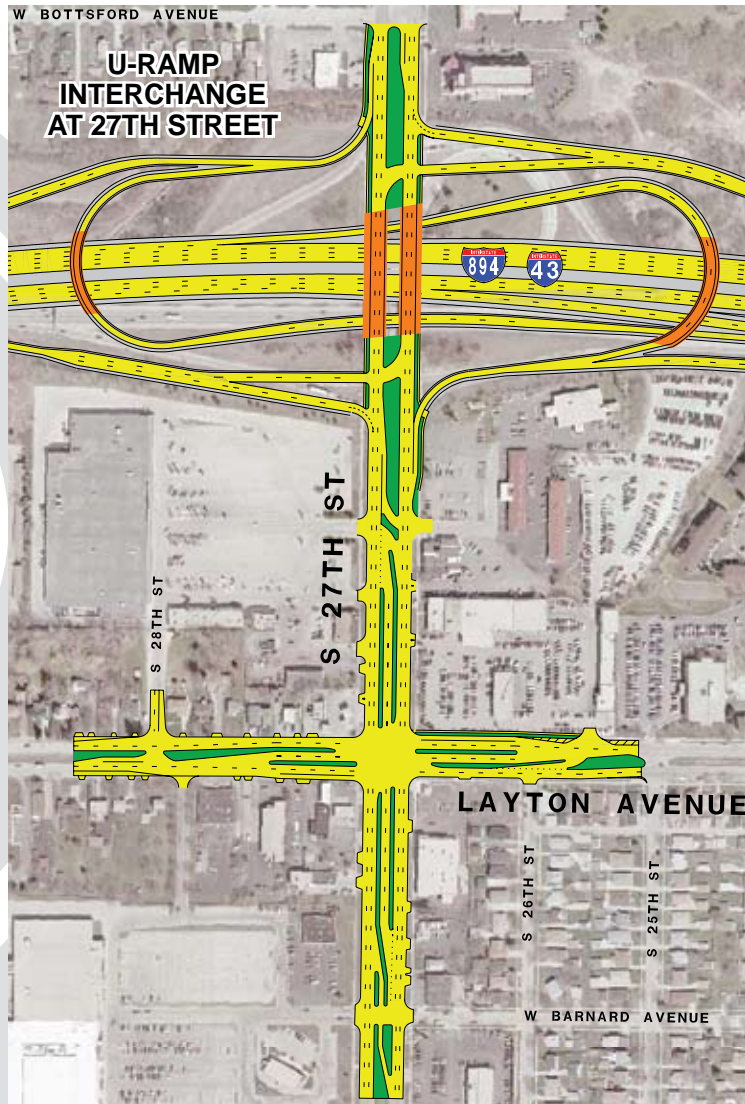
help reduce air pollution. As a result, WisDOT expects air quality to improve along I-94 regardless of which alternative is selected.

WisDOT also studied the noise level along the freeway. Where the noise will likely exceed state-defined limits for acceptable noise levels, WisDOT might implement sound barriers. If sound barriers meet the reasonable and feasible criteria for installment, communities will decide whether to install the barriers.

More information about air quality is available at [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov).

Residents can learn more about sound barriers by visiting [www.legis.state.wi.us](http://www.legis.state.wi.us) and searching for "Trans 405."





reconstructed in its existing configuration and built to look like a parkway. It will include a grassy median with a curb, and the outside edges of the spur will have a screening berm. The spur's existing interchange with Howell Avenue also will be reconfigured.

#### **Edgerton, Grange and Ramsey avenues**

Each roadway will remain open to local traffic passing over or under the freeway.

#### **Layton Avenue**

The Layton Avenue interchange will be reconstructed into a tight diamond configuration. New traffic signals at the

northbound and southbound ramp terminals will be installed on Layton Avenue. The tight diamond design will improve traffic operations on Layton Avenue between the northbound ramps and 13th Street. The existing southbound on-ramp intersection at 20th Street will be relocated to Layton Avenue.

#### **Mitchell Interchange**

Under the *modernization (six lanes)* option, two freeway lanes are provided for all major movements in the interchange. With the *modernization (eight lanes)* option, a third lane is added on I-94 (south of the Mitchell Interchange) to and from the I-894 bypass.



The 27th Street interchange will be reconstructed with *U-ramps* (see above exhibit). This configuration will significantly improve traffic flow through the interchange. All vehicles will enter the freeway via right-hand turns off of 27th Street. The only cross traffic with 27th Street will be vehicles that are turning left onto 27th Street after exiting the freeway. One of the more significant changes is relocating the maneuver to and from 27th Street and southbound I-94. This maneuver is accommodated by utilizing the Layton Avenue interchange to access 27th

Street. The 27th Street/Layton Avenue intersection will be improved by adding dual left-turn lanes on the eastbound and westbound approaches to the intersection. Some median openings will be closed or relocated to improve safety and operations of the intersection.

WisDOT proposes to realign the Plainfield Curve near Howard Avenue to a smoother single curve. This change will significantly improve the safety problem that exists today. The new curve will have a posted speed limit of 55 mph.

*"Designs under consideration"  
continued to next page ...*





WisDOT  
PO Box 798  
Waukesha, WI 53187-0798

## Stay informed

Your input and involvement is important to ensure that I-94 will meet the current and future needs of your community.

Call the project team at **(262) 548-8721** with questions, concerns or comments, or e-mail us at **[dotsefreeways94nsc@dot.state.wi.us](mailto:dotsefreeways94nsc@dot.state.wi.us)**.

Visit us online at **[www.sefreeways.org](http://www.sefreeways.org)** for the latest project updates.

WisDOT is continually updating the project mailing list, so please contact us if your mailing information has changed.