



# WIS 29 Preservation Plan

## Ringle to Wittenberg

Spring 2008

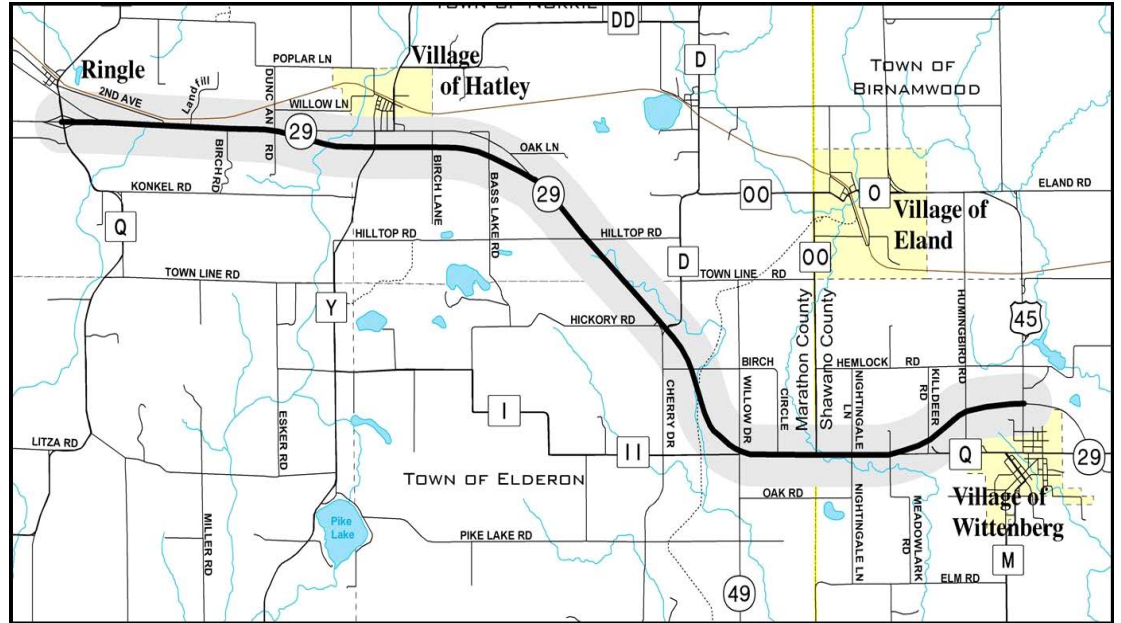
### Contact Information

#### Kelly Nicolaus

WisDOT Project Manager  
Phone: (715) 421-8051  
kelly.nicolaus@dot.state.wi.us

#### Darren Fortney

SEH Project Manager  
Phone: (800) 732-4362  
dfortney@sehinc.com



The WIS 29 Preservation Plan's study area extends from Marathon County Q in Ringle to US 45 in the village of Wittenberg, a distance of approximately 14 miles.

## Alternatives developed for WIS 29

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is continuing its study of WIS 29, from Marathon County Q in Ringle to the western intersection of US 45 in Wittenberg. Traffic volume on this segment of WIS 29 increased 46 percent since 1990 and is anticipated to climb another 36 percent by 2040. The corridor currently has 62 at-grade intersections and as traffic increases, local users will likely encounter increasing difficulty and danger in entering, exiting, and crossing the highway. In the future, it is likely that this segment of WIS 29 will need to be converted into a freeway in order to ensure long-term regional mobility, while planning for local access and circulation. The ultimate purpose of the freeway conversion plan is to:

- Maintain an efficient corridor for travel as traffic volumes increase
- Address emerging safety issues along this segment of the highway
- Provide a level of certainty for future growth and development that is consistent with the regional mobility function of WIS 29

#### WisDOT Mission Statement

To provide leadership in the development and operation of a safe and efficient transportation system.



The WIS 29 Preservation Plan's goal is to develop a long-term vision for a local transportation network that will balance safety, access and mobility.

# The future shape of WIS 29

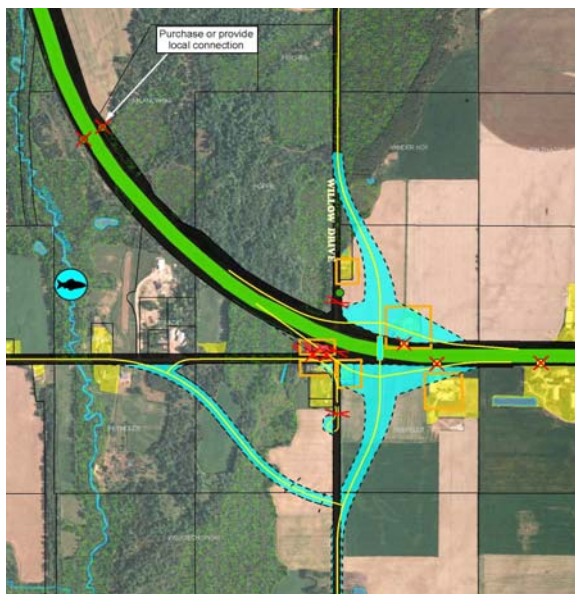
## History/background on selecting preferred alternative:

Since spring 2006, project staff have been working with citizens, agricultural operators, business owners, property owners, local officials, bicycle and snowmobile advocates, and others who use the transportation system in eastern Marathon and western Shawano counties.

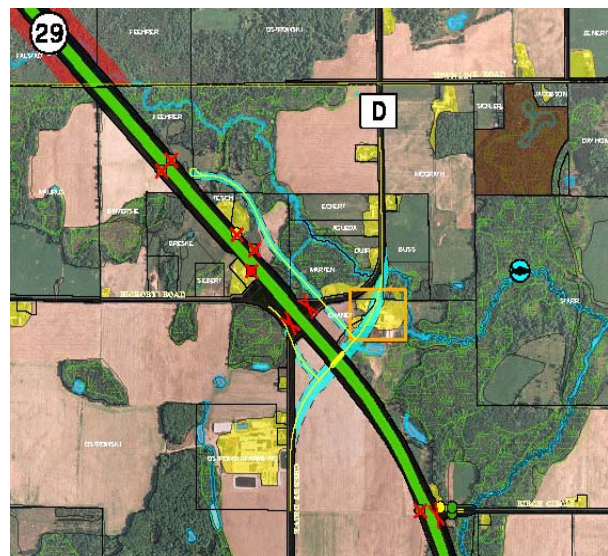
In fall 2007, WisDOT selected a Preferred Alternative after consultation with local officials, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and other state and federal agencies. The Preferred Alternative best balances costs and environmental/social impacts with regional transportation goals. No funds are programmed at this time to begin the conversion of WIS 29 into a freeway. However, if safety or capacity issues arise, WisDOT will be better positioned to respond.

The Preferred Alternative would relocate local access points, such as driveways, intersecting streets and field access from WIS 29 to local roads. The alternative includes an interchange at WIS 49, which would allow for safe and convenient use of WIS 29. Overpasses would be planned for Hilltop Road, County D, and Nightingale Lane. New local connecting roads would enhance existing circulation along this segment of WIS 29. The Wiouwash Trail would be made safer via an overpass allowing bicycles, snowmobiles, and pedestrians to safely cross WIS 29.

Even though improvements would likely be phased and constructed incrementally over the years, the ultimate plan will preserve the WIS 29 corridor to meet long-term, system-wide needs.



Draft concept of the future WIS 29/49 interchange. The interchange alternative is designed to minimize impacts to wetlands by shifting the intersection east of its present location.



Overpass at County D: At-grade local road connections would be constructed and direct access to WIS 29 would be removed. More than 60 side roads and driveways intersect WIS 29 between Ringle and Wittenberg. These are likely to become more dangerous as traffic volumes increase.

**What's happening now**

The WIS 29 Corridor Preservation Plan is entering its final stages. Corridor analysis – including reviews of environmental, historical, archaeological, and societal conditions will be complemented by more survey and detailed engineering of the freeway improvements. An Environmental Assessment (EA) is also under way, which evaluates and documents all of the plan's impacts. A formal public hearing will likely occur in mid- to late 2008.

**EA process and Wisconsin Statute 84.295**

Upon completion of an EA, WisDOT will pursue preservation of the corridor through the use of Wisconsin State Statute 84.295 (Wis. Stats. 84.295). This proactive tool allows WisDOT to officially designate and preserve highway corridors for long-term conversion to a freeway. It also allows WisDOT to develop an Official Map for the location and approximate right of way needed for future improvements. It allows landowners, the public, and local agencies to plan for the future to ensure long-term land use and transportation integration.

It is important to note that Wis. Stats. 84.295 does not include the purchase of property. Owners with property in the mapped right of way would be notified by letter and the official map recorded with the county register of deeds. Wis. Stats. 84.295 requires property owners to notify WisDOT within 60 days in advance of any alteration to the property or structures within the mapped right of way. WisDOT would then have the opportunity to purchase the property from the owner at fair market value or, take no action or allow the property owner to make the alteration and compensate the owner for the changes in the property later, if/when the right of way is needed.

Figure 1 - Alternative Selection Process and Implementation

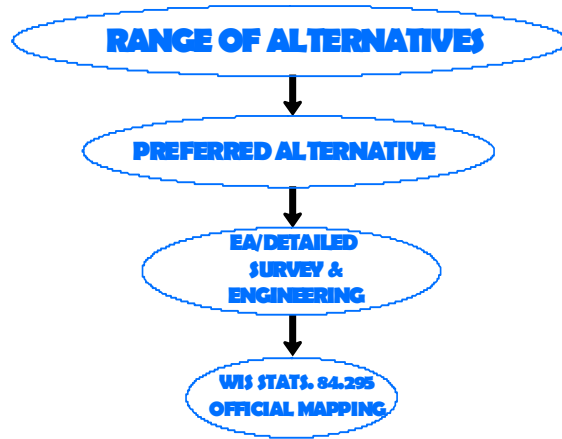


Figure 1— Alternative Selection Process and Implementation illustrates the how the Preferred Alternative was selected and next steps in the scheme of the project.



Figure 2—Example of an Official Map

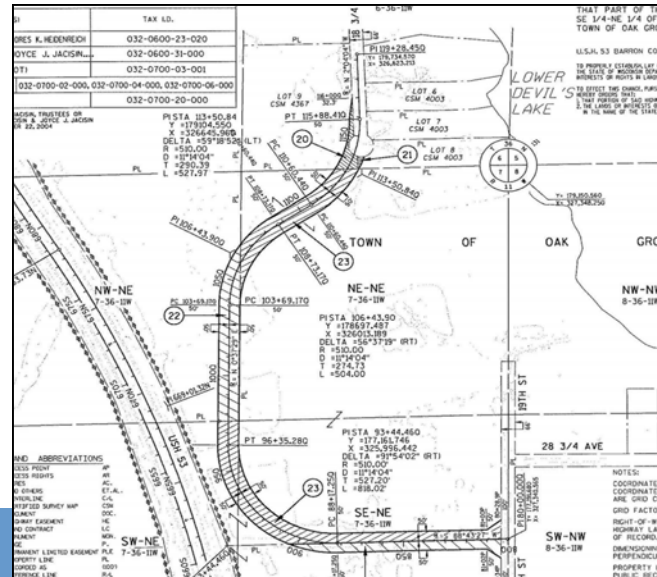



Figure 2— Detailed engineering with precise measurements and locations will be developed for all planned improvements.

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Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
1681 Second Avenue South  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495  
(715) 421-8301  
www.dot.wisconsin.gov



## Upcoming activities and implementation of the WIS 29 plan

### Schedule/next steps

In spring 2008, the WIS 29 Preservation Plan Team will host meetings to share details regarding the Preferred Alternative. Further survey and detailed engineering are in progress to determine precise impacts of the planned improvements. When completed, a Local Officials Meeting will be conducted to communicate the specifics of the Preferred Alternative. Following meetings with local officials, the public will have an opportunity to review and comment on the Preferred Alternative at a public information meeting.

WisDOT is interested in hearing your ideas, concerns, and questions about this planning process. Please contact staff at the telephone numbers and e-mail addresses listed on the cover of this newsletter if you have any comments.

Please attend the next  
**Public Information Meeting**  
for the WIS 29 Corridor Preservation Plan

Wednesday, May 21, 2008  
**5 to 7 p.m.**  
**Hatley Community Center**  
*(Marathon County Y north of WIS 29, Hatley)*

The meeting will be conducted in open house format, with a brief presentation scheduled to begin at 5:30 p.m. WisDOT staff will present the preferred alternative for the future of transportation in the WIS 29 corridor, and will be available to answer questions and take comments.