

WEST CENTRAL REGIONAL FREEWAY SYSTEM

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

In January 2005, a delegation of nine state legislators representing West Central Wisconsin, requested the Department of Transportation to do a comprehensive study of the West Central Freeway system within their legislative area. The request specifically asked for capacity analysis on:

- I-94 within St. Croix, Dunn, and Eau Claire County.
- STH 65 within St. Croix, Polk, and Pierce County.
- STH 63 in St. Croix County.
- STH 35 between River Falls and Hudson in St. Croix County.

This report and attaches studies are the Department's response to that request.

West Central Freeway (WCF) Study

The West Central Freeway (WCF) is a set of inter-dependent highways connecting West Wisconsin and the Chippewa Valley metropolitan area with the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The backbone of the WCF is I-94. On the east end, I-94 connects with USH 53 and STH 29, two intra-state freeway facilities that link the Chippewa Valley with the Fox Valley and Superior/Duluth metro areas. On the west end, STH 35, STH 65, and USH 63 connect the rapidly growing western border counties with I-94. It is this combination of highways that is referred to as the West Central Freeway.

The entire West Central Freeway transportation system is being dramatically impacted by the rapidly expanding Twin Cities metropolitan area, the high rate of urban expansion into West Central Wisconsin, and the fact river crossings place extreme restrictions on how traffic can flow within the system. Since 2000, the Department of Transportation has initiated a number of operational studies on the specific highways within the WCF to assess the effects these impacts are having on the system. This report combines the results of these studies to present the current and future operational issues facing the West Central Freeway System.

The Department has separated the WCF into the 'intense zone' and the 'zone of influence'.

- The 'intense zone' refers to the area within Polk, St. Croix, and Pierce County being 'intensely' impacted by record increases to the population and traffic growth rates over the past 10 years.
- The 'zone of influence' refers to that area in Dunn, Chippewa, and Eau Claire County where the Chippewa Valley metropolitan area is influencing or being influenced by the same factors impacting the intense zone.

The report points out that many portions of the WCF within the intense zone are already suffering from operational and capacity concerns. Within the next 10 years, much of the WCF within the intense zone will be experiencing capacity and operational limitations. Of additional concern is the fact that nearly all of the underlying pavement on I-94 between Hudson and Eau Claire is at or beyond 50 years of age. This will require phased replacement of the pavement structure on I-94 within the WCF. Thus, regardless of whether there is an ability to expand the system to meet the growing capacity issues, there is a for phased replacement of the existing pavement on I-94.

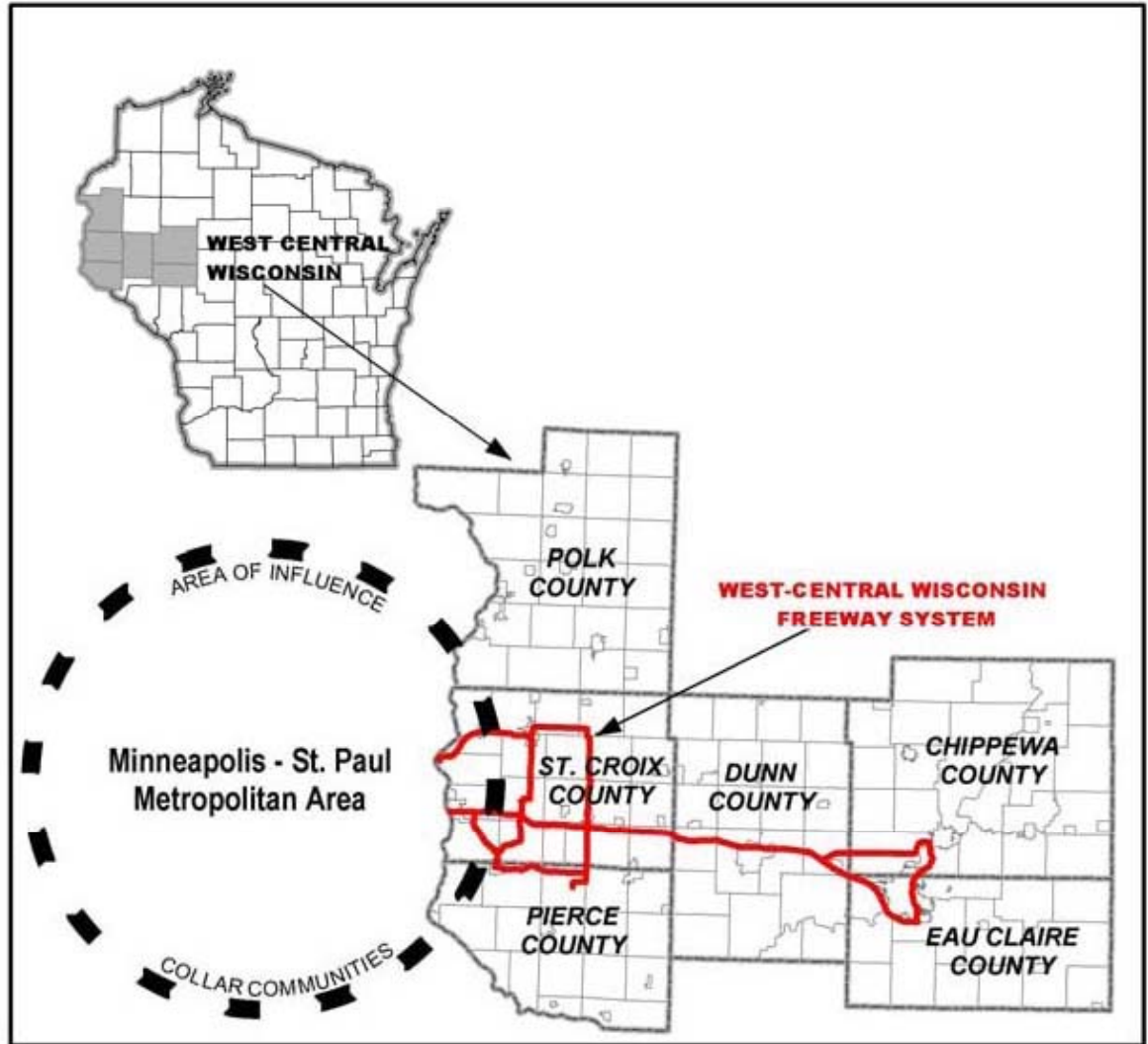


Figure 1

West Central Freeway capacity and operational needs

The Department's studies of the West Central Freeway indicate the following consequences will occur should no additional capacity (i.e. new road or additional lanes) be added to the WCF.

- **I 94 – The ‘Intense Zone’ from St. Croix River to Baldwin**

DO NOTHING CONSEQUENCES

Traffic projections indicate 4-lane capacity will be exceeded on the segment between Baldwin and Hudson within 10 years.

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED

Expansion to a 6-lane facility that includes replacing the interchange at STH 65, upgrading interchanges at USH 12, STH 35, and Carmichael Road, eliminating substance hills, curves, and median widths from Hudson to Baldwin. The estimated cost of this treatment is nearing \$125 million, of which over \$70 million is just to replace the existing, 50 year old pavement structure.

- **I 94 – The ‘Zone of Influence’ from Baldwin to Eau Claire**

DO NOTHING CONSEQUENCES

Traffic projections indicate 4-lane capacity will be sufficient for the next 25 to 30 years. However, the underlying pavements are at least 50 years old and will require pavement replacement in the near future. Failure to replace the pavement will result in ongoing overlay projects with only 5-7 year life expectancies.

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED

Phased replacement of the existing pavement structure between Baldwin and Eau Claire. The cost for this pavement replacement is currently estimated at \$280 million.

- **US 63**

DO NOTHING CONSEQUENCES

Traffic projections indicate the current 2-lane facility could exceed capacity thresholds within 5 years. The rapid commercial and housing growth in the village of Baldwin will continue to grow and add traffic to this WCF feeder. High mainline volumes coupled with multiple urban intersections will cause this segment of US 63 to operate at LOS D and F on a regular basis.

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED

Realign just over four miles of US 63 to the east of existing US 63 within the Baldwin area. The estimated cost for this treatment is \$33 million.

- **WIS 35**

DO NOTHING CONSEQUENCES

Rapid commercial and housing growth in the City of River Falls and the Town of Troy is creating operational problems at the existing at-grade connections. This is resulting in long waits to enter WIS 35 from the few remaining side roads and creating situations for severe side angle collisions at these locations.

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED

Complete the freeway conversion of WIS 35 as identified in the original EIS from over 30 years ago. This would include one additional interchange, two overpasses, and removal of several private accesses. The estimated cost of this treatment is \$15 million dollars.

- **WIS 65**

DO NOTHING CONSEQUENCES

Traffic volume on WIS 65 will meet warrants for a 4-lane facility within 10 years which will create substantial peak hour delays. While addition of traffic signals may enhance some operational aspects, it will result in long delays for through traffic WIS 65.

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED

Realignment of WIS 65 between I-94 and USH 12 on the east side of the Village of Roberts and expanding to 4-lanes between USH 12 and the City of New Richmond. The estimate for this treatment is \$33 million.

WEST CENTRAL FREEWAY PAVEMENT NEEDS

The major concerns on pavements within West Central Freeway system are those on I-94 between Hudson and Eau Claire. With the exception of small segments within the Hudson area, the remainder of the underlying pavement structure is over 50 years old. Current efforts to overlay the existing pavement structure are experiencing shorter and shorter life cycles and are currently estimated to last no more than 5-7 years.

CONSTRUCTION PHASING

The combination of finite construction seasons and maintaining functional operational ability on existing routes during construction will require a multi-year phased construction effort. As an example, WIDOT has determined that reconstruction of I-94 between Baldwin and Hudson will require nine separate construction projects. Likewise reconstruction on each of the feeder routes must also have a phased implementation with that on I-94.

The construction phasing constraints for operational issues in turn creates a natural phasing for financing this effort. Only so much money can be spent in a given year since only so much construction can occur. On average each construction project or phase is estimated to cost \$15 million. If only one project is constructed per year it will take approximately 15 years to complete the needed work. Until replacement is completed, serviceability will be maintained with pavement overlays.

ECONOMIC STUDY

WisDOT's commodity flow analysis shows a large volume of truck freight moving into, from, and through the Wisconsin I-94 study corridor region, illustrating the region's economic significance. Consumers and producers in the four-county area receive and transport over 15 million tons of freight. Moreover, the Interstate highway system is responsible for handling another 38 million tons of freight that just passes through the region. This overhead tonnage (38 million tons) represents 84% of all of the freight shipped by trucks through the state

TRAFFIC MODELING

A travel demand model is being developed based on the statewide model. This model is expected to be completed in June of 2006.

A micro-simulation model will use the information obtained from the travel demand model to analyze planned improvements to the WCF.

Factors Impacting the West Central Freeway System

Twin Cities Impact

The Twin Cities Metropolitan area has a population of approximately 3 million people. For reference purposes, this is about twice the size of the Greater Milwaukee Metro Area. The Twin Cities area is projected to grow by 33%, or more than 1 million people, in the next 25 years. The impacts from such a large metropolitan area coupled with the high growth rates are, and will continue to be, significant to the transportation system in West Central Wisconsin.

Urban Expansion Impact

During the 1990's, urban expansion from the Twin Cities moved beyond the Seven County Metro area to a collar area of western Wisconsin that includes Polk, St. Croix, and Pierce County.

Prior to 1990, population growth, housing starts and highway use grew at relatively consistent and moderate rates similar to other rural areas in Wisconsin. However, since 1990 those trends have increased sharply, growing at some of the fastest rates not only in Wisconsin but also in the entire United States. 2004 Department of Administration's figures show St. Croix County as the fastest growing County in the State, and the City of Hudson as the fastest growing City in the State.

The following growth rates for communities within the Wisconsin collar area of the Twin Cities' urban expansion reflects the desire to live in West Central Wisconsin and work in the Twin Cities.

<u>CITIES</u>	<u>2000 –2004 GROWTH</u>
Hudson	20.25%
New Richmond	14.80%
River Falls	4.04%

<u>Villages</u>	<u>2000 –2004 Growth</u>	<u>Towns</u>	<u>2000 –2004 Growth</u>
Roberts	31.58%	Hammond	35.90%
Hammond	41.89%	Richmond	28.79%
Somerset	29.43%	Hudson	16.11%
Baldwin	21.97%	Oak Grove	16.29%
Star Prairie	11.85%	Osceola	23.65%
Ellsworth	4.79%	Somerset	15.13%

The ultimate impact of these growth rates is the creation of a significant commuter shed of daily traffic moving between the Wisconsin collar area and the Twin Cities.

River Crossing Impact

The impacts of the commuter shed created by the urban expansion of the Twin Cities are exacerbated by the fact that West Central Wisconsin is separated from the Twin Cities by the St. Croix and Mississippi Rivers, requiring all traffic to cross at a handful of bridge locations. This forces all traffic to 'funnel' toward these bridge crossings impacting not only the highway upon which the bridge crossing occur, but also on all adjacent intersecting state highways.

Due to the high-speed, high-volume nature of the I-94 crossing, the majority of commerce and commuter traffic flows to this border/river crossing. The significance of the confluence of traffic at this location are shown by the following statistics:

- The I-94 crossing is the second busiest border crossing location in the entire state, trailing only the I-94 crossing at Kenosha.
- 84% of all truck commerce (freight shipped) in the entire State of Wisconsin uses this segment of I-94.
- 45% of all the traffic using any of the border bridges between Wisconsin and Minnesota uses the I-94 crossing.

Chart 1 shows the relative volume of traffic at each of the I-90 or I-94 border crossings.

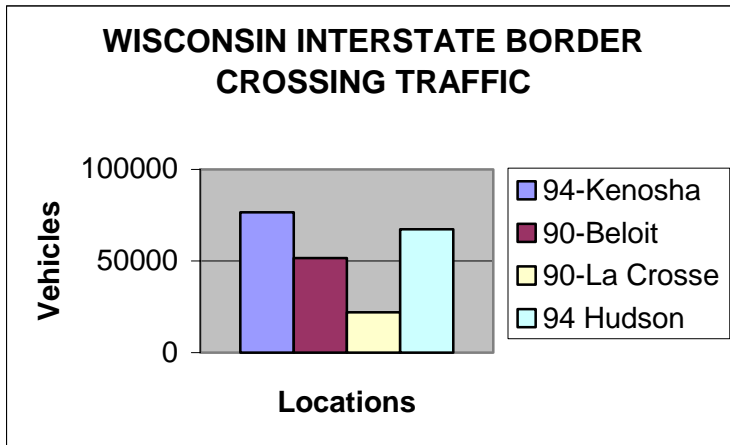


Chart 1

Chart 2 demonstrates how the bridge crossing at Hudson creates the ‘funneling’ effect on I-94. Note how the ADT on I-94 increases at each of the state highway intersections east of the I-94 St. Croix River crossing.

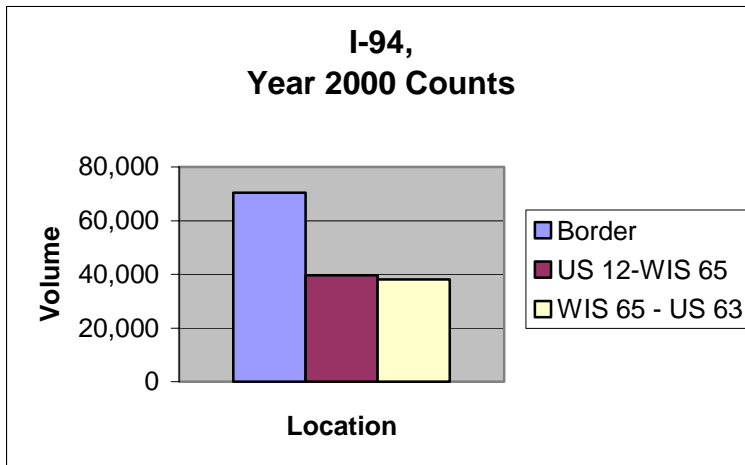


Chart 2

Chart 3 provides another frame of reference on size of the ADT on I-94 within the West Central Freeway by comparing it to the rural segments of I-94 between Madison and Milwaukee.

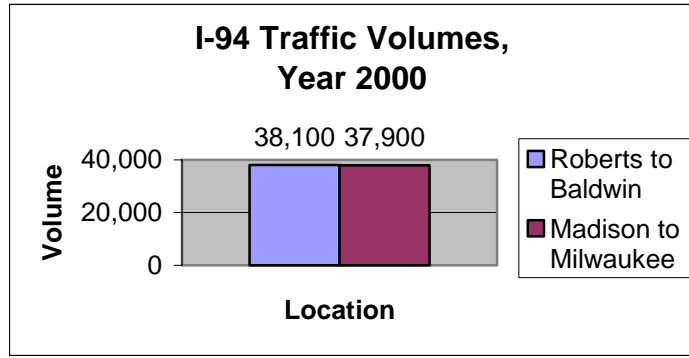


CHART 3

The ‘funneling’ effect likewise impacts a number of feeder routes that connect Western Wisconsin communities with I-94. It is this combination of feeder routes intersecting with I-94 in this intensely growing area that is referred to as the West Central Freeway (WCF) system.

Those highways with the most significant impacts are:

- WIS 35, River Falls to I-94
- WIS 65, I-94 to New Richmond
- US 63, I-94 to WIS 64

As shown on Chart 4, the historical growths on the feeder routes inside the influence zone have consistently outpaced the statewide average for rural state trunk roadways over the past 15 years. Many local roadways in St. Croix County such as CTH F, CTH C, CTH A, and CTH I all carry traffic similar to the statewide average for rural state trunk highways.

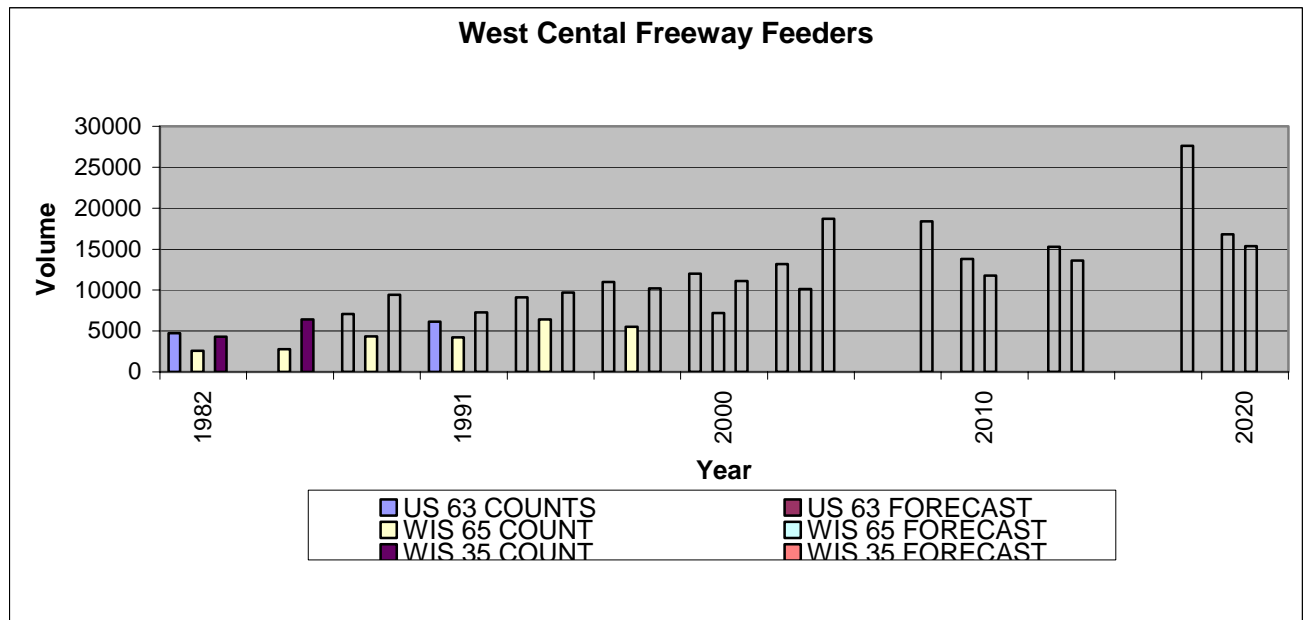


CHART 4

Zone of Influence Impacts

While the commuter shed impacts from the Twin Cities urban expansion has created significant impacts on the West Central Freeway, significant traffic impacts are also being created from as far away as the Eau Claire-Chippewa Falls and the Fox Valley metropolitan areas.

The WCF also serves as the critical link between the Twin Cities and these significant Wisconsin metropolitan centers that rely upon it for serving their commuter and commercial traffic needs.

Consider the following data:

- With limited airfreight out of the Twin Cities, this segment of I-94 serves as a critical economic link for moving good via truck to and from the Twin Cities area.
- The 2004 Origin-Destination Study for the Eau Claire-Chippewa Falls CERT model revealed that 20% of daily trips on all highways in the Eau Claire-Chippewa Falls area have an origin or destination of the Twin Cities.
- With the impending completion of the last segments of STH 29 between the Fox Valley and Eau Claire, as well as the new US 53 Freeway connections in Eau Claire, the ability to move high volumes of people and freight from points east of Eau Claire on STH 29 to the Twin Cities area, has increased dramatically.

Thus the zone of influence of the WCF extends as far east as the Eau Claire- Chippewa Falls area, having significant impact on the economic vitality of the region.

Corridor Studies within the West Central Freeway area

The unique nature of the WCF configuration requires a study effort that looks at each affected highway separately, but in conjunction with all other highways within the WCF. Between 2000 and 2005, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation initiated and completed a number of operational, capacity, economic, and freeway conversion studies on I-94, WIS 35, WIS 65, and US 63. The Department has continued to meld these studies together to create a contiguous planning study of the WCF as a whole.

An important consideration for the WCF is the relationship between the construction project schedules and project funding. For example, the department could not expect to reconstruct the entire Interstate between Hudson and Baldwin in one construction season. Having to maintain operational viability of I-94 during construction combined with reasonable construction staging, requires the segment be broken into 9 separate construction projects. 7 of those 9 projects will still require at least a 2-year construction timeframe.

The feeder route (i.e. USH 63, STH 65, STH 35, and Carmichael Road) projects must also follow a succession from west to east. The US 63 and WIS 65 segments both contain community bypasses that must be constructed prior to the other segments. Whether the feeder route reconstruction should precede or follow the I-94 construction is also a major consideration.

All of these project phase-ability issues place natural constraints on the amount of dollars that can be utilized in any single construction year. While this constraint offers an opportunity to phase in actual construction funding over a period of years, it must be understood that once the first phase starts, it is essential that there is a funding commitment for all phases to be completed in successive years.

The estimated cost for the average project is 15 million dollars. If only one project is constructed per year it will take approximately 15 years to complete the needed work. The following chart details the necessary construction succession.

Highway, Segment	From Termini	To Termini	Type	Length	Year	2005 Estimate*	WCF Study Estimate**
I-94, Hudson Area	STH 35 N	USH 12	RECST	4	1	\$15,000,000	\$15,000,000
I-94, Hudson to Roberts	USH 12	STH 65	RECST	6.5	2 & 3	\$34,130,645	\$25,500,000
I-94, Roberts to Hammond	STH 65	CTH T	RECST	5.5	4 & 5	\$29,318,722	
STH 65	I-94 Interchange		RECST	1	3	\$6,552,000	\$10,500,000
I-94, Hammond to Woodville	CTH T	CTH B	RECST	7.5	6 & 7	\$37,901,942	
STH 35, Freeway Conversion	STH 65	I-94	RECST	5	3	\$5,460,000	\$5,460,000
STH 65, Roberts Bypass	I-94	Richmond Way	RECST	10	4	\$32,760,000	\$32,760,000
USH 63, Baldwin Bypass	I-94	CTH E	RECST	6	8	\$32,760,000	\$32,760,000
I-94, Woodville to Knapp	CTH B	CTH Q	PVRPL	8	8 & 9	\$31,825,746	
I-94, Knapp to Menomonie	CTH Q	USH 12	PVRPL	9	1 & 2	\$37,643,831	
I-94, Menomonie to Elk Mound	Red Cedar	STH 29	PVRPL	8	3 & 4	\$35,129,210	
STH 29	I-94 Interchange		RECST	1	5	\$9,901,842	
I-94, Elk Mound to Eau Claire	STH 29	STH 124	PVRPL	6	6 & 7	\$21,621,600	
STH 124	I-94 Interchange		RECST	1	8	\$7,371,000	
I-94, Eau Claire Area 1	STH 124	STH 37	PVRPL	5	9 & 10	\$34,909,476	
I-94, Eau Claire Area 2	STH 37	USH 53	PVRPL	5	5 & 6	\$21,594,682	
Total						\$393,880,696	\$121,980,000
<p>NOTES:</p> <p>* 2005 estimates generated by inflating 2002 estimate by 3% per year (1.092 factor).</p> <p>** West Central Freeway (WCF) includes I94 (Hudson - Baldwin) & STH feeder connections</p>							

WEST CENTRAL FREEWAY CORRIDORS

I-94 SEGMENT 1

St. Croix River to US 12
Hudson Area, St. Croix County

Location

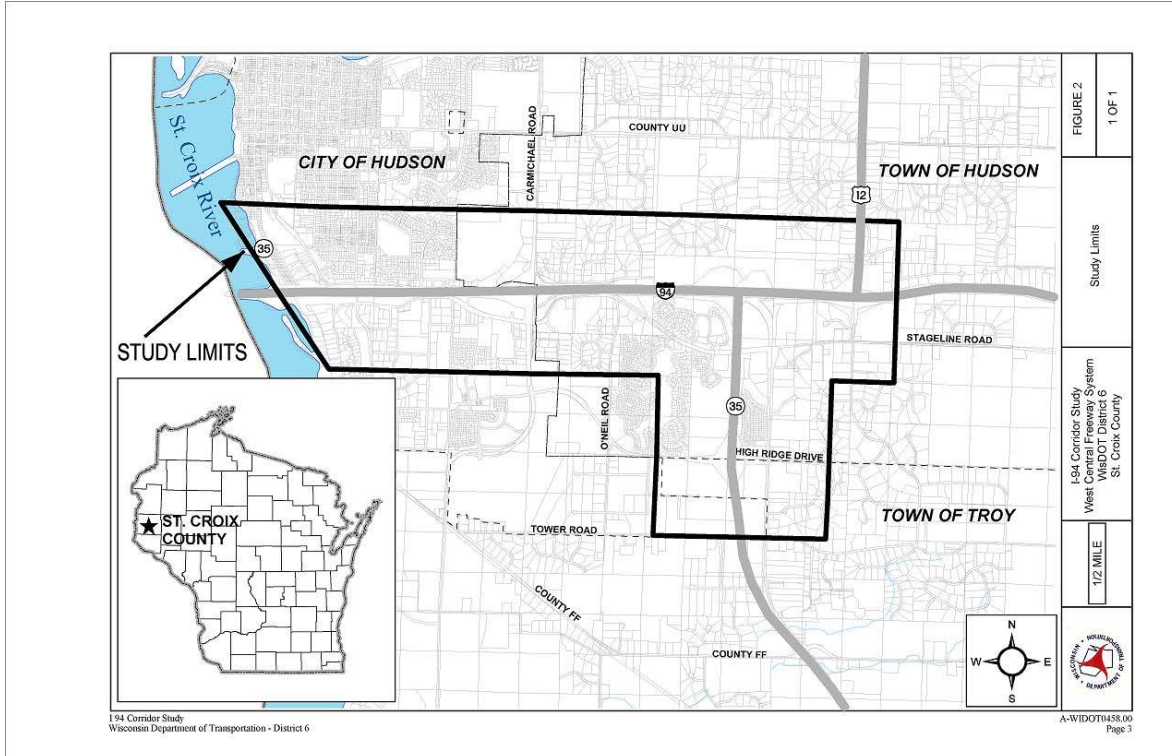


Figure 2

Project Description

The limits of the Hudson Area I-94 Corridor Study area begin 0.6 miles east of the St. Croix River bridge and end 0.9 mile east of the I-94/US 12 interchange, a distance of approximately 4.17 miles. The WIS 35 South corridor is also part of the study and includes the portion of WIS 35 South, beginning at High Ridge Road and ending at the I-94/WIS 35 South interchange, a distance of approximately one mile. The width of the study area extends approximately 0.5 miles from either side of both facilities for a total corridor width of one mile.

The study area is located in St. Croix County. The West Central Region, including St. Croix County, is one of the fastest growing areas in the state of Wisconsin. Polk County, Pierce County, and St. Croix County contain communities that are considered as collar communities to the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area (Twin Cities). The Twin Cities have a significant influence on development, movement of goods and services, and traffic related issues within these counties.

Corridor Function

Part of the Federal Interstate System providing freeway connections between metropolitan area of Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison, and Eau Claire with the Twin Cities. In conjunction with STH

29, it also provides freeway/expressway connections to the Fox Valley area of eastern Wisconsin. Identified as part of the State's C2020 and C2030 Backbone System of highways.

Type of Traffic

Interstate commerce, recreation, and local commuter.

Management Techniques

Designated and constructed as a Freeway with limited interchanges.

Growth History

I-94 regional growth rates at the Automatic Traffic Recorder near Hersey on the east side of St. Croix County have shown a 20 year growth rate significantly higher than the statewide average. This traffic growth is predominately regional non-commuter trips. When the urban sprawl and commuter influence from the Twin Cities Metro area are added to this already rapidly growing regional traffic the growth is very significant. As one travels west along I-94 in St. Croix County the traffic volumes increase noticeably at every interchange. For comparison the segment between Hudson and Roberts has more traffic than the segment between Madison and Milwaukee.

Study Status

The scope of this study was to develop a footprint for the necessary lane additions in the Hudson area. The study was completed in June of 2005. Further environmental documentation will be required prior to construction.

Do Nothing Consequences

Hudson Area,

- The current 2001 traffic on I-94 is approaching the existing capacity of the corridor causing delays and congestion during the morning and evening peak travel times.
- Under the current rate of development in the West Central Region, and assuming a linear growth rate, traffic on I-94 and WIS 35 South would be projected to double by the year 2030. Traffic volumes could result in moderate to severe congestion of this portion of the I-94 facility as early as 2006.

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED The *I-94 Corridor Study* identifies alterations to the I-94 and WIS 35 South corridors to address the emerging capacity needs on this segment of the West Central Regional Freeway System. The proposed alterations from this study are considered as the build alterations and include a phased construction approach with three stages along westbound I-94 and one stage for eastbound I-94 including the I-94/WIS 35 South interchange ramps. A brief summary of the stages and the capacity improvements include:

- Additional westbound lanes along the north side of the I-94 corridor including changes to on-ramps and exit ramps from WIS 35 North to 1,200 feet west of the I-94/US 12 interchange.
- Additional lane on the I-94/WIS 35 interchange for the WIS 35 South NB to I-94 WB movement.
- Additional I-94 eastbound lane along the south side of I-94 to the I-94/WIS 35 South interchange.
- Additional lane on the I-94/WIS 35 South interchange for the I-94 EB to WIS 35 South SB movement. This lane extends to the WIS 35/High Ridge Drive interchange (to be constructed in 2005 – separate project).

- Required retaining wall between I-94 and existing frontage road just west of the I-94/Carmichael Road interchange.

A rough estimation of construction costs for the build alterations from this study include:

- Westbound I-94 lanes located east of the WIS 35 Interchange - \$3.1 Million
- Eastbound I-94 lanes and WIS 35 South lanes - \$2.8 Million
- Westbound I-94 lanes located west of the WIS 35 Interchange - \$9.0 Million
- **Total Project Cost – \$14.9 Million**

I 94 Segment 2
US 12 to WIS 65
Hudson to Roberts, St. Croix County

Project Description

This segment of I-94 runs between the communities of Hudson and Roberts in St. Croix County. This segment will warrant additional lanes between 2010 and 2015.

Corridor Function

Part of the Federal Interstate System providing freeway connections between metropolitan area of Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison, and Eau Claire with the Twin Cities. In conjunction with STH 29, this corridor also provides freeway/expressway connections to the Fox Valley area of eastern Wisconsin. Identified as part of the State’s C2020 and C2030 Backbone System of highways.

Type of Traffic

Interstate commerce, recreation, and local commuter.

Management Techniques

Designated and constructed as a Freeway with limited interchanges.

Growth History

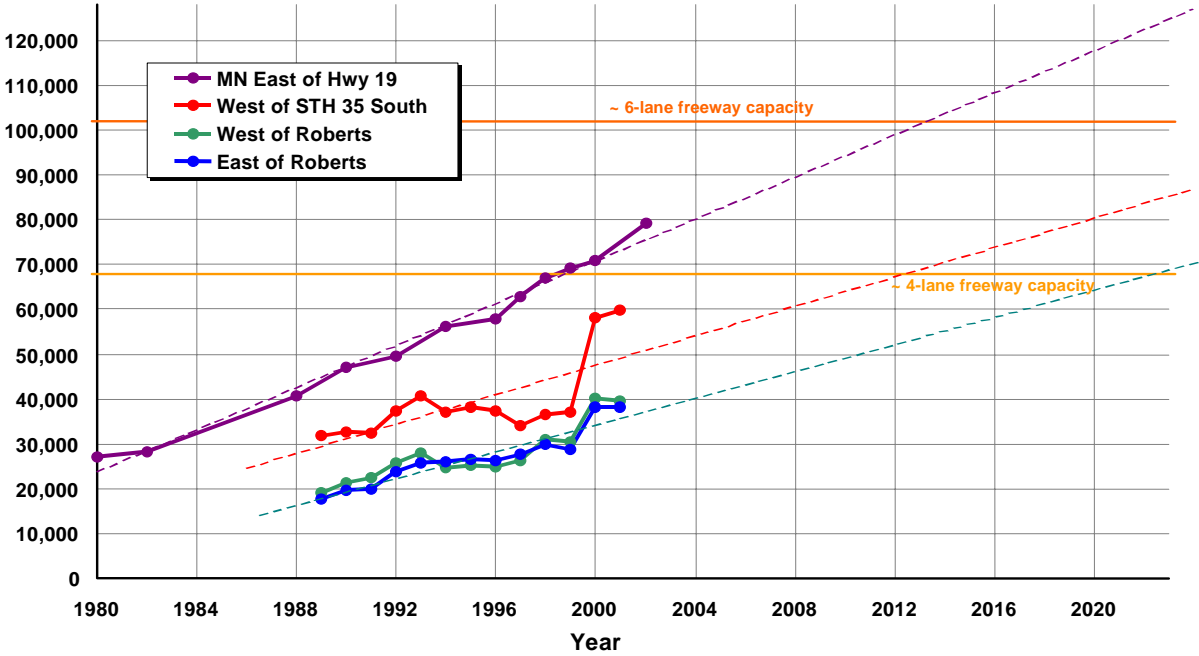


Figure 3

Study Status

The scope of this study was to develop a footprint for the necessary lane additions in the Hudson area. The study was completed in November of 2005. Further environmental documentation will be required prior to construction.

Do Nothing Consequences

Under the current rate of development in the West Central Region, and assuming a linear growth rate, traffic on I-94 would be projected to double by the year 2030. Conservative traffic projections estimate a need to add lanes around the year 2020. Traffic projections that reflect historical growth rates over the past 10 years suggest need to add lanes as early as the year 2008.

This segment has an above average freeway crash rate. This is due to the traffic volumes approaching the upper range of 4-lane capacity. There is also a substandard hill just west of the WIS 65 interchange that makes it difficult to see vehicles slowing down to exit to WIS 65.

Until additional capacity is added and the substandard hills are corrected, the operations and safety of this segment of I94 will continue to degrade.

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED

Add a third lane in each direction. The current median width is adequate to construct the additional lane in the median for both directions for the majority of the project. 4 structures over local roads will be replaced, and the WIS 65 interchange will be reconstructed. The estimated cost for this project is 36 million dollars.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>I-94 Segment 3</u> WIS 65 to US 63 Roberts to Baldwin, St. Croix County</p>
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Project Description

This segment of I-94 runs between the communities of Roberts and Baldwin in St. Croix County. This segment will warrant additional lanes between 2012 and 2020.

Corridor Function

Part of the Federal Interstate System providing freeway connections between metropolitan area of Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison, and Eau Claire with the Twin Cities. In conjunction with STH 29, this corridor also provides freeway/expressway connections to the Fox Valley area of eastern Wisconsin. Identified as part of the State's C2020 and C2030 Backbone System of highways.

Type of Traffic

Interstate commerce, recreation, and local commuter.

Management Techniques

Designated and constructed as a Freeway with limited interchanges.

Growth History

See Figure 3

Study Status

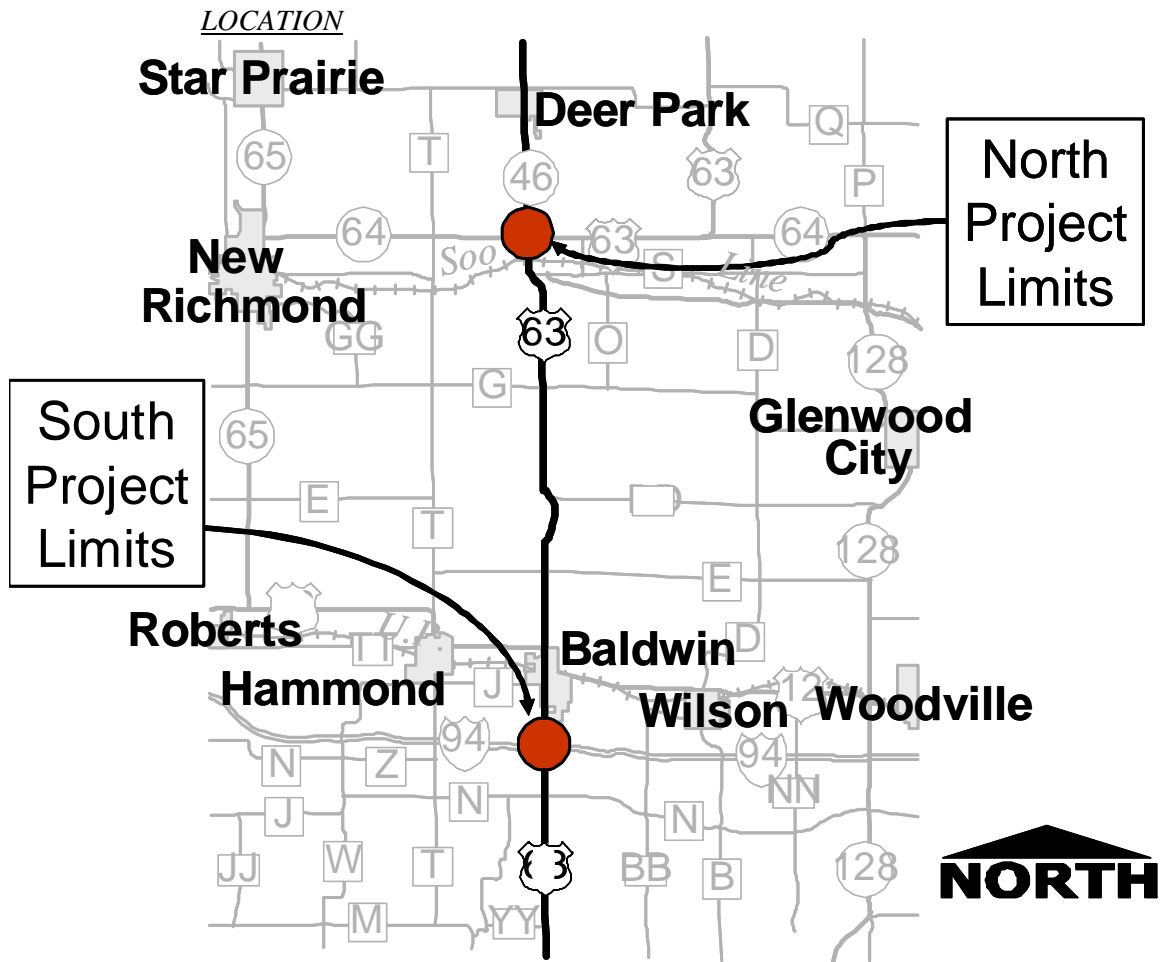
The study to identify the recommended treat will be commencing in early 2006.

Do Nothing Consequences

Under the current rate of development in the West Central Region, and assuming a linear growth rate, traffic on I-94 would be projected to double by the year 2030. Conservative traffic projections estimate a need to add lanes around the year 2020. Traffic projections that reflect historical growth rates over the past 10 years suggest need to add lanes as early as the year 2010.

IMPROVEMENT NEEDEDReconstruct this segment to a 6-lane freeway. Minor ramp changes are expected at the CTH T interchange in Hammond. The improvement is estimated at 40 million dollars.

**US 63
I94 to WIS 64**



Project Description

The limits of the corridor study were I-94 on the south and WIS 64 on the north. The immediate congestion concern is in the Baldwin area, however to avoid segmentation issues the project limits were extended to WIS 64.

Corridor Function

US 63 serves two distinct purposes. One function of the corridor is to provide Baldwin and other area commuters and business connection to the Twin Cities Metro. Another function is the recreational and commercial connection from Iowa, and southern Minnesota to northern Wisconsin. The segment north of WIS 64 is a designated Corridors 2020 connector route. The other segments of the corridor are proposed for connector designation in Corridors 2030.

Type of Traffic

- Daily Commuting
- Regional Commercial
- Interstate Recreation

Management Techniques

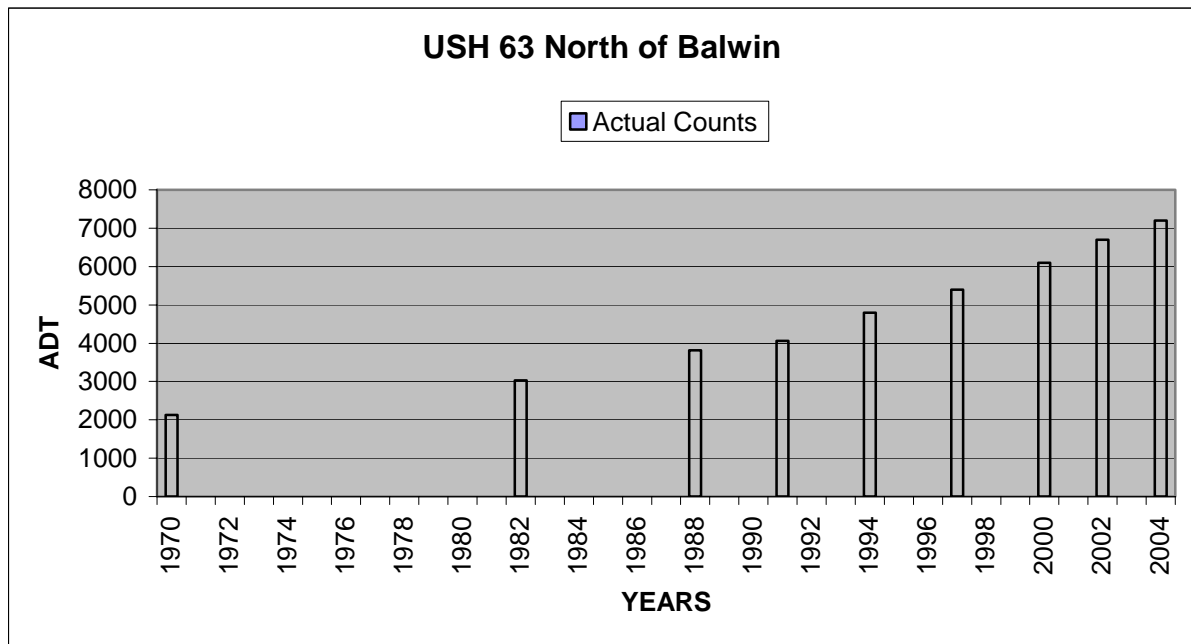
Statutory access control from the State line to US 8

Corridor Study from I-94 to Polk County line that include the following items.

- Baldwin realignment
- Staged Capacity Improvement Plan
 - Intersection Improvements
 - Passing Lanes
 - 4-Lane Expansion Footprints
 - Grade Separation locations
- Environmental Documentation

Growth History

The following graph shows the typical historical growth rate for US 63 in St. Croix County north of I-94. From 1970 to 1982 the growth rate followed the typical statewide growth rates for rural State trunk highways. Between 1982 and 1988 the growth rates begins to increase. Some time around 1991 the growth again increased, and has maintained that rate to the present time.



Study Status:

Access management statute 84.25 has been applied to the segment and will aid in preserving the mobility of the corridor.

US 63 north of I-94 was studied from 2000 thru 2003 and an Environmental Assessment was completed for a mobility improvement thru the village of Baldwin up to the intersection with WIS 64. Please see the attached Environmental Assessment for details on the purpose and need, alternatives studied, public involvement and agency coordination used to select the preferred alternative.

The village of Baldwin is preserving the identified footprint by including the corridor in its Comprehensive Plan. The Town of Baldwin is preserving the corridor by including the footprint into the towns Official Map.

Do Nothing Consequences

If historical traffic growth remains the same mobility improvements will need to be made to this Baldwin area by 2015. A construction project is planned for US 63 that will convert the roadway from a 2 lane with parking to a 3-lane roadway. The center lane will provide a continuous left turn lane in the areas with high driveway concentrations. This improvement is an interim treatment and is expected to last until approximately 2015. After 2015 significant congestion is expected in the peak hours, especially on Friday afternoon and Sunday afternoon when the tourist are using this roadway to get up north.

North of the village of Baldwin (CTH E) historical growth rates indicate capacity will be needed in the distant future.

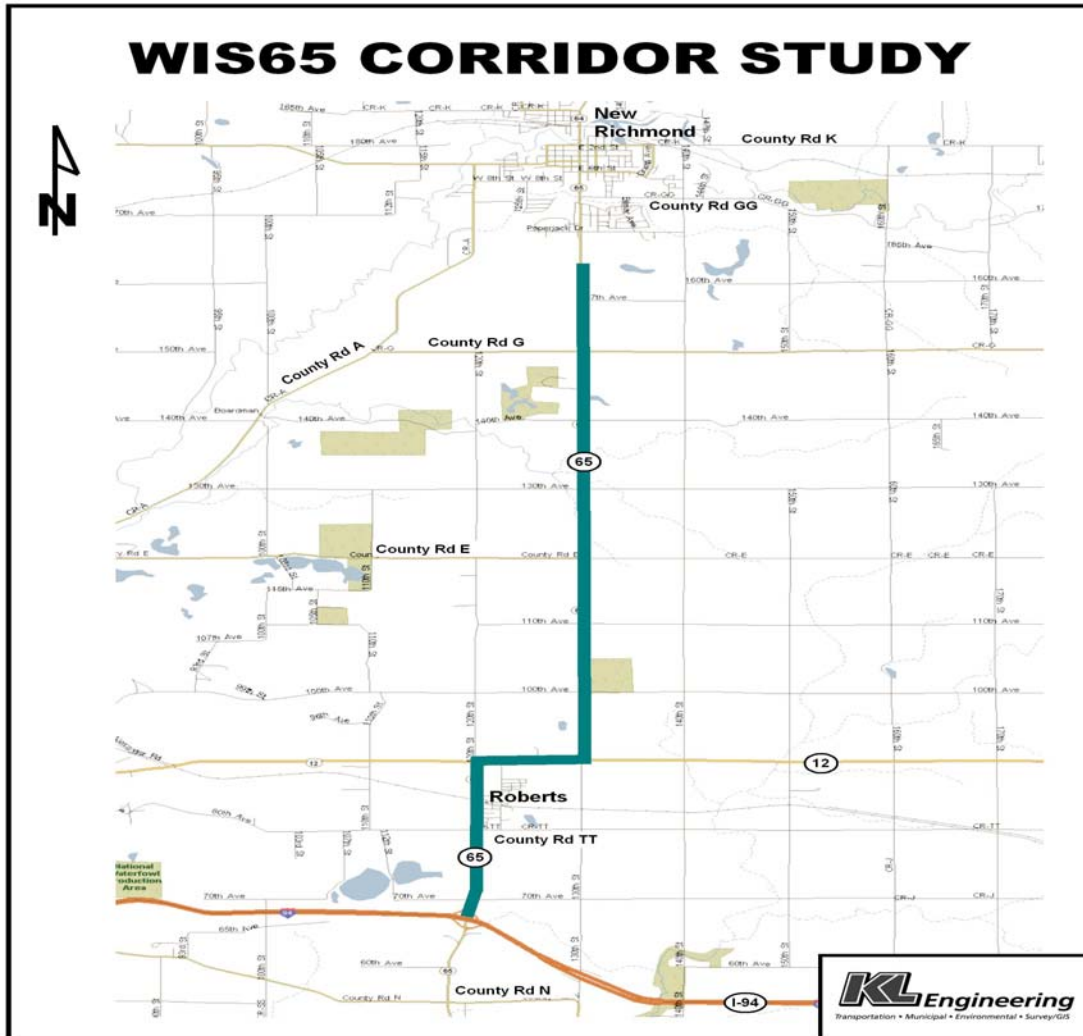
Needed Improvements:

The environmental assessment identified the best alternative for mobility improvements as a freeway bypass of the village of Baldwin to the east. The east bypass will provide access to the village of Baldwin and the towns of Eau Gaille, Hammond, and Baldwin at two interchange locations. The bypass begins just north of I-94 and ends just south of CTH E, as distance of approximately 5 miles. Diamond interchanges are planned for the connection with old 63 and US 12; a jug-handle interchange is planned for CTH E. A preliminary estimate of a 4-lane bypass is approximately **\$30 million**.

Relocation of US 12 was suggested by the village of Baldwin and is also included in the Environmental Assessment. The 30 million dollar estimate includes the relocation of approximately 3 miles of US 12.

STH 65 I94 to New Richmond

Location



Project Description

The corridor study projects limits are I-94 on the south to Richmond Way in the City of New Richmond. The project also includes the consideration of a locally planned bypass of the Village of Roberts. The goal of the study is to utilize as much of the existing corridor as possible, guide development away from future roadway needs, and preserve and enhance the safety and operation of the roadway.

Corridor Function

STH 65 primary function is providing commuter commerce connection from Roberts and New Richmond to I-94. STH 65 is Roberts and New Richmond's only direct access to I-94.

Type of Traffic

Commuter and commercial.

Management Techniques

Statutory access control in St. Croix County.

Corridor Study from I-94 to New Richmond;

Roberts realignment

Staged Improvement Plan

Intersection Improvements

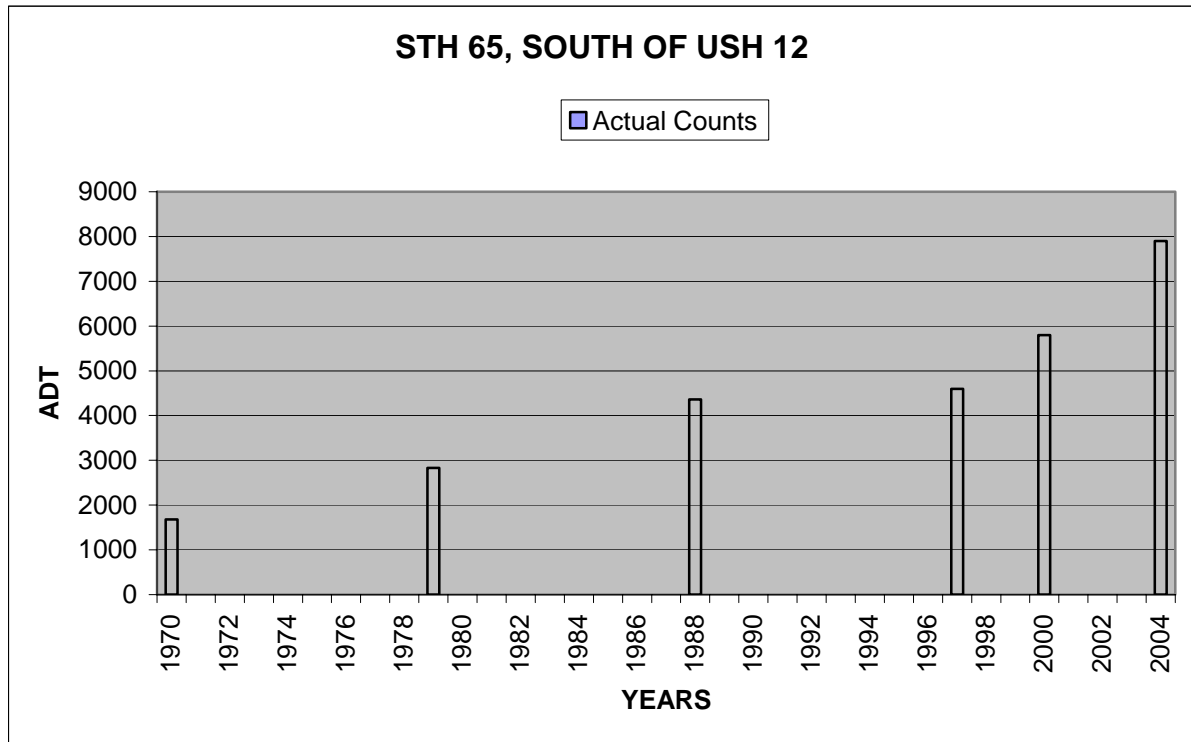
4-lane footprint

Environmental Documentation

Land use study that identified the affects of land conversion to STH 65.

Growth History

STH 65 growth history shows steady increases from 1970 to 1988. The growth slows for a period from 1988 to 1997, however since 1997 the growth rate has increased substantially. This is probably due to the unrestricted residential growth in the City of New Richmond and the Town of Richmond. The Village of Roberts is forced limited residential expansion by sever capacity constraints. These constraints will be removed by 2005, and residential growth similar to New Richmond can be expected in the Roberts area.



Studies Completed:

An Environmental Assessment (EA) is underway at this time. The Department expects to have an environmental decision on the preferred alternative by April of 2006. The EA includes studying multiple alternatives for the Roberts bypass, locating the best place for additional lanes, agency coordination, and public involvement comments on the planned expansion alternatives.

Do Nothing Consequences

When historical growth rates are applied to the existing traffic volumes, the congestion levels will become unacceptable between 2012 and 2015 for most parts of the corridor. Safety issues are beginning to arise at the existing connections along the corridor. This is indicative of an emerging operational issue. If the ultimate operational project is not completed connections will need to be controlled with signals or roundabout to prevent severe crashes. Traffic signals reduce the severity of the crashes, but usually leads to a higher overall crash rate. Also when the intersections are controlled it will reduce New Richmond's attractiveness to industry because the travel time will increase for traffic attempting to get to and from New Richmond to I-94.

Needed Improvements:

A 3 mile enhanced expressway bypass of the Village of Roberts is necessary along with an enhanced expressway north to New Richmond is necessary to improve the mobility and safety of the corridor. An enhanced expressway is a multilane roadway that has interchanges and at-grade connections. The at-grade connections are limited to right turns only to prevent crashes and preserve the free flow characteristics desired by the public. A diamond interchange is planned for the US 12 connection. Jug-handle interchanges are planned for Division Street, CTH E, and CTH G.

STH 35 **I-94 to River Falls**

Project Description

The corridor limits are WIS 65 on the south to I-94 on the north. The corridor was expanded to 4 lanes in the late 1990's. Several at-grade connections were built with the 4-lane project. Planned land use near these connections will require the need for interchange construction in the future. A freeway conversion plan is being completed to address the future traffic growth.

Corridor Function

From STH 65 to I-94, STH 35 provided a direct link from Ellsworth and River Falls to the Twin Cities metro area.

From I-94 to US 8, STH 35 serves a predominately sub regional function similar to a high-class county highway.

Type of Traffic

From STH 65 to I-94, STH 35 experiences heavy commuter pressure and is heavily utilized for commercial and educational traffic.

From I-94 to US 8, the commuter traffic is more balanced with local business and agricultural use.

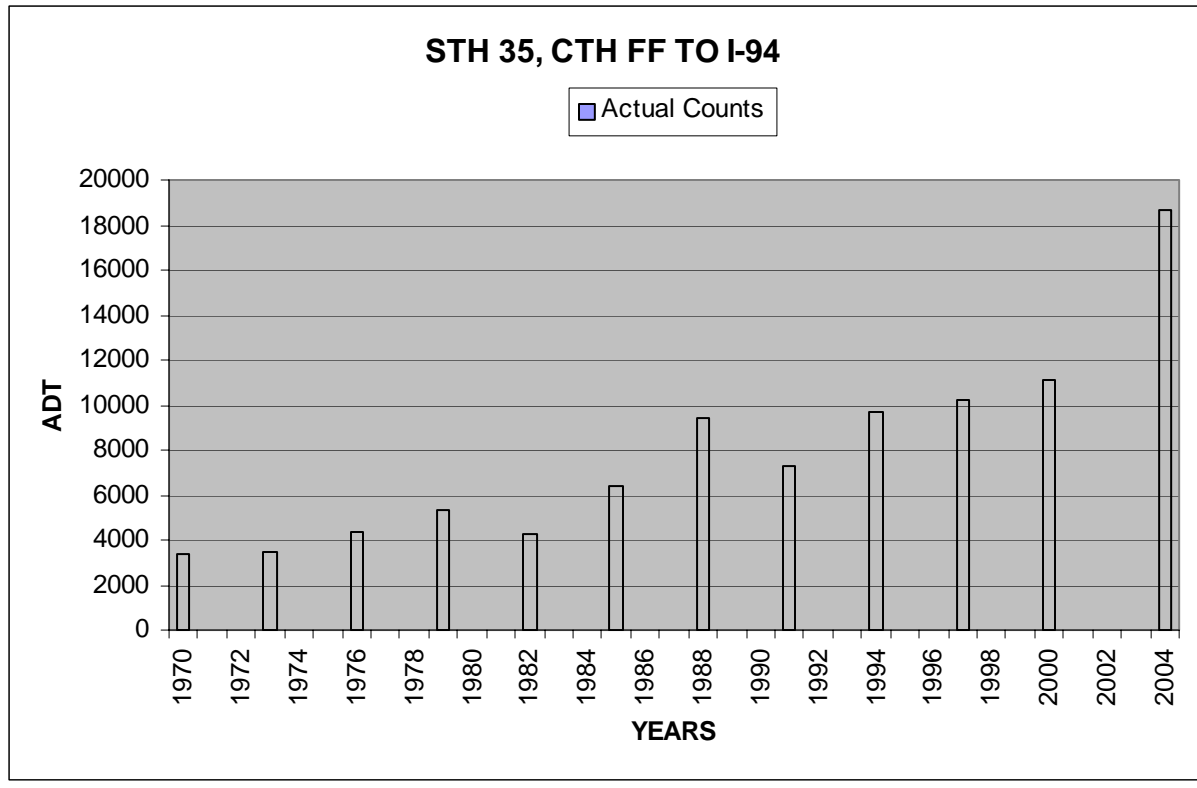
Management Techniques

From STH 65 to I-94, STH 35 will be declared a freeway and will ultimately be access controlled through interchange connections.

Growth History

From STH 65 to I-94, the growth history has been well above the statewide average. The cities of Hudson and River Falls and Village of Ellsworth have all allowed rapid residential growth.

From I-94 to US 8, the growth has been near the statewide average. Communities served by this segment have better alternative to access the Twin Cities Metro area.



Studies Completed:

Freeway conversion study was completed in October of 2005. An Environmental has been review by FHWA and the Department has received a Finding of No Significant Impact.

Needed Improvements:

The DOT recommended improvements include constructing a diamond interchange at the current Radio Road connection north of the City of River Falls. A half diamond interchange will be constructed at Glover Road, and an overpass bridge will be constructed at Tower Drive. All other access will be removed from WIS 35. The estimate for the recommended treatment is 15 million dollars.

Other Studies

I-94 ECONOMIC STUDY

Executive Summary

Overview and Methodology

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the economic significance of Wisconsin Interstate Highway 94, a freeway segment consisting of 92 miles, connecting Eau Claire to Hudson. Due to the corridor's economic importance to Wisconsin and the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Statistical Area, the analysis also included Washington County in Minnesota.

In February 2005, Wisconsin Department of Transportation District 6 received a formal legislative request to study infrastructure needs in West Central Wisconsin. Consequently, as part of a broad-comprehensive review of West Central Freeway System highways by District 6, the Department's Economic Planning & Development Section conducted this study to evaluate the economic significance of the I-94 west corridor.

This report begins with a county-level socioeconomic profile of the region. Data used in the economic analysis was gathered from U.S. Census and other state government sources. A survey tool was used to gather information from Wisconsin cities, villages, and towns along the study corridor on their perceptions of the economic impact of the I-94 corridor on their community.

Included in the study is an economic forecast of the transportation district and commodity flow analysis, using an analysis tool to evaluate the tonnage and types of freight commodity flows of goods moving in, out, and through the region. Detailed survey responses, a summary of county comprehensive planning efforts and economic development organizations, and other local data are provided in the appendices.

The following are the study's primary findings about the communities and counties located along the study corridor:

Population

The combined total population in the 35 communities along the study corridor has grown by 32% between 1990 and 2000, substantially faster than the Wisconsin and Minnesota statewide growth rates as a whole (10% and 12%, respectively). St. Croix County's population grew at the second highest rate in Wisconsin.

Employment

Between 1990 and 2000, in communities on both the Wisconsin and Minnesota sides of the study corridor, employment grew at significantly higher rates than statewide (27% along the Wisconsin side, in comparison with 15% statewide in Wisconsin, and 70% on the Minnesota side, in comparison with 18% statewide in Minnesota).

Commuting

Slightly more than a third of Washington County's residents work within county borders and less than one percent commute east across the Minnesota state border to work in St. Croix County. By contrast, in 2000, 49% of the St. Croix County labor force stayed within county borders. The remaining 51% commuted primarily southwest to Wisconsin's Pierce County and west to Minnesota's Washington, Ramsey, and Hennepin Counties.

During the 1990-2000 period, Washington County, Minnesota experienced the highest absolute growth (10,302) in the number of incommuters (people traveling to jobs in one county while residing in another county). In Wisconsin, Dunn County showed the highest percentage increase in the number of incommuters (108%).

Per Capita Income

Between 1990 and 2000, St. Croix and Washington Counties' per capita income levels and ten-year increases were slightly higher than statewide in Wisconsin and Minnesota. At the very least, per capita income along the I-94 study corridor has kept pace with Minnesota and Wisconsin growth rates.

Housing

During the 1990-2000 analysis period, the number of housing units along the Interstate 94 study corridor in Washington County, Minnesota rose by 14,506, a 76% increase. The number of housing units added in communities along the study corridor in Wisconsin was substantially lower at 7,375, a 19% increase. These growth rates, in communities along the Interstate, were higher than statewide totals in both Wisconsin (13%) and Minnesota (12%).

Traveler Expenditures

Between 1994 and 2003, St. Croix County's percent increase in tourism expenditures was higher than Wisconsin's statewide growth, while the remaining three Wisconsin counties' ten-year growth rates were lower. St. Croix County's proximity to the Twin-Cities Metropolitan Region accounts for some of the rapid growth in traveler expenditures.

Economic Forecast

WisDOT's economic forecast model forecasts population growth in the region to be slow: only 3% between 2000 and 2015. Major growth is expected in the Computer & Machinery industry and in the Electrical Equipment sector. Wholesale Sales is also projected to grow significantly. Both the Machinery & Computer Manufacturing industry and the Wholesale Sales industry are expected to generate significant increases in trucking activity. The neighboring Twin Cities region is also expected to show similar growth patterns.

Commodity Flow Analysis

WisDOT's commodity flow analysis shows a large volume of truck freight moving into, from, and through the Wisconsin I-94 study corridor region, illustrating the region's economic significance. Consumers and producers in the four-county area receive and transport over 15 million tons of freight. Moreover, the Interstate highway system is responsible for handling another 38 million tons of freight that just passes through the region. This overhead tonnage (38 million tons) represents 84% of all of the freight shipped by trucks through the state.

Average Daily Traffic

The most recent traffic counts show Average Annual Daily Traffic volumes ranging between 67,300 at the Minnesota state line in St. Croix County and 20,000 west of US 53 in Eau Claire County. A vehicle classification site east of US 63 in St. Croix County indicates that 21% of the overall volume is considered heavy trucks. Depending upon the location of the traffic counters, the volume of trucks is estimated at 4,200 to 14,000 trucks per day along various sections of the Interstate system.

Survey Results

Surveyed Wisconsin communities provided the following facts regarding the economic impact of the Interstate 94 study:

Washington County in Minnesota and the western portion of the Interstate 94 study corridor in Wisconsin are areas of high economic growth. Most of the interviewed communities believed in the relationship of the Interstate highway to retail, services, and industrial developments.

- The Interstate has opened up business opportunities for companies along the study corridor and also expanded the job market for workers, particularly Wisconsin workers commuting to jobs in Minnesota.
- Interviewed communities felt that besides proximity to the Interstate, businesses also based their location choices on factors including proximity to the Twin Cities, the regional economy, the Wisconsin business climate, and preferences for a small-town, affordable Wisconsin location.
- Commercial development is attracted by some communities along the Interstate because it offers workers and shoppers faster commutes and access to shopping, along with the ability to lead a smaller-town lifestyle at more affordable land prices than in the Twin-Cities, Menomonie, and Eau Claire. High traffic volumes along the Interstate are also attractive to many companies.
- Some communities believed that the Interstate drove the housing boom; while others felt that the residential growth was more attributed to peoples' desire to live in small, more affordable communities and commute to surrounding jobs.
- A small number of communities believed that the Interstate had either no significant economic impact or very little impact on their economy.
- Reported negative impacts associated with Interstate 94 include:
 1. Loss and splitting of prime farmland,
 2. Business losses,
 3. Remote interchange locations, offering no direct access to the community,
 4. Town financial responsibility, without reimbursement for fires and accidents along the Interstate,
 5. A rise in robbery incidents because the highway provides a quick escape route for criminals, and
 6. Cases where the growth and development stimulated by the Interstate has put intense demand pressures on infrastructure, facilities, and city/village staffing and payroll.

St. Croix Count Traffic Modeling

A travel demand model is being developed based on the statewide model. This model is expected to be completed in June of 2006. The travel demand model will take into account socio-economic information to pattern traffic movement in St. Croix County.

A micro-simulation model will use the information obtained from the travel demand model to analyze planned improvements to the WCF.