

SECTION 7

Comments and Coordination

Section 7 discusses input received from federal, state, and local agencies, information gathered at public information meetings and project advisory committee meetings, as well as other public contacts. This section is divided into two subsections, a description of the public involvement activities during the Draft EIS preparation and activities after the availability of the Draft EIS.

During Draft EIS Preparation

The study team offered several opportunities for the public and state and federal review agencies to be involved in the *Westby-Viroqua Corridor Bypass Study* throughout activities leading to the preparation of the Draft EIS. The public involvement process described below was inclusive of all residents and population groups in the study area and did not exclude any persons because of income, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or handicap.

Public Involvement

Public Information Meetings

Two public meetings were held during the study's engineering and environmental study phase. The public information meetings were announced in the *Westby Times*, *Vernon County Broadcaster*, and *La Crosse Tribune*. The meetings were also announced through individual project newsletters sent to property owners, local officials, agencies, and other interest groups and through local radio announcements.

The first public meeting was held on July 13, 1999, at the Westby Elementary School with about 87 people in attendance. The open house meeting was held from 5 P.M. to 9 P.M. with presentations at 6 P.M. and 8 P.M. The focus of the first meeting was to introduce study team activities and schedules; review the preliminary range of alternatives; find out more about the study's engineering, environmental, and community involvement activities; and obtain input on issues that should be considered in developing and refining the alternatives.

Most people in attendance were familiar with the *1996 Study*, and seemed to understand how the present study is being used to refine the earlier alternatives and to evaluate alternatives and their impacts through the EIS process. There were some questions about the need for a bypass, and some expressed their uncertainty as to whether the future traffic predictions are sufficient to warrant additional capacity.

Those who commented on the bypass alternatives noted that an east bypass of Viroqua would provide the best service to the City's industrial park. Most people supported using as much of the existing highway as possible. Bypass segments that tie back to the existing highway were generally favored over those primarily on a new alignment. Several people noted that a main benefit of a bypass would be to remove truck traffic from downtown

Viroqua and Westby. It was recognized that even with a bypass, there would still be traffic traveling through Westby and Viroqua.

The second public meeting was held on September 29, 1999, at the Viroqua Community Arena, with about 160 people in attendance. It was open house from 5 P.M. to 9 P.M., with presentations at 6 P.M. and 8 P.M. The focus of the meeting was to present the refined alternatives that would be evaluated in detail in the Draft EIS, and discuss why other alternatives were eliminated from further consideration.

Most people agreed that the refined range of alternatives was reasonable. A few people specifically acknowledged support for eliminating earlier alternatives that did not maximize use of USH 14/61 between Viroqua and Westby. There continued to be some questions about the need for a bypass (uncertainty about whether future traffic will be sufficient to warrant additional capacity). Comments for and against the various bypass segments were about equal. Farm owners along Alternatives N-3, N-4, and N-7 were concerned about impacts to farm operations and value, drainage, proximity effects, field severance and effects on contour farming. Several people requested revisiting the proposed roadway layout in the vicinity of the WisDOT wayside, and suggested that it be centered to the extent practicable to minimize impacts on each side. Several people inquired about access to farm parcels that would be split by the new roadway. Some business owners on USH 14/61 inquired about median openings. Several people inquired about the time frame for real estate acquisition.

Local Information Centers

The study team conducted local information centers to allow the public an additional opportunity to provide input on the project, as well as to review the exhibits that were presented at the public information meetings. Three local information centers were held during activities leading to the Draft EIS.

The first local information center was held on July 14, 1999, at the Western Wisconsin Technical College–Viroqua Campus with about 35 people visiting the center. The exhibits on display were the same ones on display at the July 13 public information meeting. Project handouts, copies of the first project newsletter, and copies of the preliminary alignments were also provided.

Most of the individuals who visited the information center did so to gain a better understanding of the project scope and to review the preliminary alternatives. A few individuals expressed concern about the location of the alignments and the potential impacts to their properties.

The second local information center was held on August 31, 1999, at the Western Wisconsin Technical College–Viroqua Campus with 117 people visiting the Center. The display exhibits included items presented at the July 13 public information meeting and refinements to the preliminary alternatives. Take home copies of the refined alternatives were provided.

Most of the individuals who visited the information center did so to review the refinements to the alternatives that were made since the July 13 public information meeting. Some individuals noted that this was the first chance they had to attend any of the public involvement activities. Similar to the first local information center, a few individuals

expressed concern about the location of the alignments and the potential impacts to their properties.

The third local information center was held on September 30, 1999, at the Western Wisconsin Technical College–Viroqua Campus with about 40 people visiting the center. The exhibits on display were the same as those presented at the September 29 public information meeting.

Most of the individuals who visited the information center came to express their concerns about how the bypass will affect their properties, or to support a particular alternative that did not affect their properties. The visitors also came to state which alternative would be best for their property.

The fourth and final local information center was held on February 10, 2000, at the Western Wisconsin Technical College – Viroqua Campus with 59 people visiting the center. Exhibits included copies of the Draft EIS and a 1 to 1,000 scale aerial map with the reasonable alternatives.

Most of the individuals who visited the information center came assuming that the project team had selected the preferred alternative. The project team reminded these individuals that no decision would be made on the preferred alternative until after the public hearing. Several visitors made no specific comment other than to state that the east Viroqua Bypass (S-2) seemed more logical because it provided better service to the industrial park.

Project Advisory Committee

A Project Advisory Committee (PAC) was established to provide local input to the study team and to serve as a local link between area citizens and the study team. The PAC includes local officials and state and federal agency representatives (see Exhibit 7-A). A list of the PAC members was provided in the project newsletters and at the public information meetings to encourage local dialogue and contacts.

Three PAC meetings were held during preparation of the Draft EIS. The purpose of the first meeting, held on July 6, 1999, was to present the study team's preliminary range of alternatives, provide an update on project activities and schedule, and to discuss preparations for the public information meeting on July 13.

The second meeting was held on September 15, 1999. The purpose of this meeting was to review public input from the July 13 public information meeting, discuss refinements to the alternatives, and to discuss preparations for the second public information meeting on September 29. The PAC members were also asked for their input on the study team's recommendations regarding alternatives to be eliminated from further consideration.

The third PAC meeting was held on December 7, 1999. The purpose of this meeting was to review and discuss local road connections to the bypass alternatives, and to present additional refinements made since the September 29 public information meeting.

Property Owner Contacts

Following the public information meetings and local information centers, several individual and group meetings were held with affected property owners in an attempt to address their specific concerns about the bypass alternatives. In addition, there were numerous contacts

via e-mail and letters. This individual input resulted in several refinements to the alternatives.

Newsletters

Newsletters were sent to local officials, agencies, interest groups, and area residents to keep the public updated on project activities announce upcoming meetings, summarize community issues and concerns, and to encourage continued public participation in the study. Two newsletters were sent during the Draft EIS activities.

The first newsletter was sent in July 1999 to announce the first public information meeting and to provide information about study, the PAC, and the study schedule. The second newsletter was sent in September 1999 to announce the second public information meeting and to provide information about the refined range of alternatives and upcoming activities.

Press Releases, Newspaper Ads, Update Articles

News releases and advertisements were placed in the *La Crosse Tribune*, *Vernon County Broadcaster* and the *Westby Times* to announce meetings and to inform the public about the status of the study. The WisDOT and consultant project managers also responded to media questions about the project. Periodic newspaper update articles were printed in the *Vernon County Broadcaster* and *Westby Times* to apprise citizens about ongoing project activities.

Public Information Web Site

A public information web site was established to disseminate project information. The web site contains study information and updates and links to key project communications (minutes from public information sessions and pertinent committee meetings, etc.), the Viroqua and Westby web sites as well as the Draft EIS for public and agency review.

Telephone Information Line

A toll-free information number was established at the start of the study so that interested persons could contact the consultant team to discuss ideas and concerns, and to provide input to development and refinement of the alternatives. Telephone calls were logged, issues and concerns were summarized, and follow-up contacts were made as needed. Phone numbers for WisDOT team members were also made available for contacts.

Agency and Local Government Coordination

The Notice of Intent to prepare a Draft EIS for the *Westby-Viroqua Corridor Study* was published in the Federal Register on June 25, 1999.

Agency coordination for purposes of the Draft EIS began in summer 1999 and continued throughout development and refinement of alternatives and preparation of the Draft EIS. Table 7-1 summarizes key agency coordination activities.

In addition to the PAC meetings discussed earlier, several meetings were held and contacts made with local government representatives and local groups during development and refinement of alternatives and preparation of the Draft EIS.

TABLE 7-1
Agency Coordination Summary

June 12, 1999—Letter from DNR Bureau of Endangered Resources (see Appendix C, page C-1)	Provided information on state-listed threatened and endangered resources potentially occurring in the study area.
June 23, 1999—Letter from Menomonee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin (see Appendix C, page C-2)	Indicated the Menomonee Tribe has no known (archaeological) sites in the study area; requested notification of any sites discovered during archaeological investigations for the study.
June 28, 1999—Letter from Ho-Chunk Heritage Preservation Department (see Appendix C, page C-3)	Discourages implementation of highway improvements; although Ho-Chunk records do not indicate any known prehistoric or historic sites in the study area, they are concerned about the potential for such resources being affected.
June 29, 1999—Letter from State Historical Society (see Appendix C, page C-4)	Concurred in proposed methodology for conducting archaeological investigations.
July 8, 1999—Letter from Forest County Potawatomi Community (see Appendix C, page C-5)	Expressed interest in the results of the archaeological survey; noted that even if sites are not discovered, such resources could be discovered during construction.
August 20, 1999—Letter from USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (see Appendix C, page C-6)	During data gathering, provided input on area streams, flood control structures, sinkholes, drainage districts, and agricultural practices in the study area.
August 23, 1999—Letter from City of Westby (see Appendix C, page C-7)	During development and refinement of alternatives, voiced opposition to Alternatives C-1 and N-1 (see Exhibit 2-G in Section 2). These alternatives were subsequently eliminated from further consideration.
August 24, 1999—Letter from Vernon County Zoning Administrator (see Appendix C, page C-8)	During data gathering, provided input on zoning, wetland mapping, and floodplain mapping in the study area.
August 25, 1999—Letter from WisDOT Bureau of Aeronautics(see Appendix C, page C-9)	Provided comments on the initial range of alternatives relative to the Viroqua Municipal Airport.
September 8, 1999—Letter from DNR La Crosse Service Center (see Appendix C, page C-10)	During development and refinement of alternatives, provided information on streams and wildlife resources in the study area; and requested that secondary impacts be evaluated in the Draft EIS.
September 10, 1999—Letter from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (see Appendix C, page C-11)	Concurred in initial range of alternatives, and recommended that NRCS maps be reviewed for any farmed wetland areas.
September 15, 1999—Letter from City of Westby (see Appendix C, page C-12)	Expressed opposition to Alternative N-6 (through-town alternative); concerned about safety and street parking loss; also requested that Alternatives N-3, N-4, and N-7 include efficient access into Westby.
September 29, 1999—Letter from Westby Chamber of Commerce (see Appendix C, page C-13)	Indicated a resolution was passed opposing Alternatives N-1, C-1, S-1, N-3, and C-5); expressed opinion that a bypass alternative should be located as close as possible to the city, and that efficient access should be provided.
September 30, 1999—Letter from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (see Appendix C, page C-14)	Provided information on federally listed threatened and endangered species known to occur in Vernon County.
December 14, 1999—Letter from Advisory Council on FHWA on Historic Preservation (see Appendix C, Page C-15)	The ACHP requests notification regarding further actions to comply with 36 CFR 800.
April 25, 1996—Letter from State Historical Society of Wisconsin (see Appendix C, page C-16)	Provided comments on historic resources inventory for the 1996 Study. Indicated the Cunningham (Cina) Farmstead is

TABLE 7-1
Agency Coordination Summary

potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register, and recommended that a Determination of Eligibility be done.

Following Draft EIS Availability

This section summarizes public and agency input received as a result of the public hearing, availability of the Draft EIS for review and comment, and other coordination activities during preparation of the Final EIS.

Public Involvement

Public Hearing

The public hearing was held at the Westby Community Center, from 11 A.M. to 3.00 P.M. and the Church of Christ (fellowship hall), Viroqua, from 5.00 P.M. to 9.00 P.M. on Thursday, March 23, 2000. The public hearing format was open house, and representatives from the WisDOT and the consultant team were available to explain project alternatives, answer questions, and explain procedures for providing testimony. Two formats were available for providing testimony - oral presentations to a court reporter and written comment forms at the hearing. The comment forms could also be mailed in after the public hearing.

The notice announcing the public hearing and availability of the Draft EIS was published in the *Westby Times*, the *Vernon County Broadcaster*, and the *La Crosse Tribune* on February 24, March 3, and March 23, 2000. In addition, the notice was sent to the project's mailing list, which includes about 806 individuals.

Exhibits at the public hearing included:

- 1" = 400' scale aerial map showing project study area with the reasonable range of alternatives
- Impact summary board
- Computer enhanced oblique color photos of project study area showing the reasonable range of alternatives
- Roadway typical sections – proposed roadway dimensions for alternatives
- Crash data board
- Traffic trends board
- Traffic volumes boards for east bypass, west bypass, and No-Build Alternatives
- Schedule board and information on upcoming project activities
- Court reporter signs and information on how to give testimony
- Draft EIS available for review

A handout was provided that included a summary of project purpose and need; alternatives

and their impacts, property acquisition and relocation assistance, project schedule and contacts; information on how to provide testimony; and a comment form.

Summary of Oral and Written Comments

As summarized in Table 7-2, 64 people commented on the proposed project during the Draft EIS availability period and public hearing activities, of which 3 people expressed support for more than one alternative. Of that total, 18 people supported the recommended east Viroqua Bypass Alternatives (S-2 and C-4); 2 people supported the west Viroqua Bypass Alternatives (S-1 and C-5); 6 people supported Westby Bypass Alternative N-3; 16 people supported the recommended Westby Bypass Alternative N-4; and 4 people supported Westby Bypass Alternative N-7. Four people expressed support for the project without identifying a preferred alternative.

One person opposed Westby Bypass Alternative N-7 and 1 person opposed Alternative N-3. Six people suggested other bypass route variations; eight people either indicated no preference for a particular alternative or expressed opposition to an alternative that would directly affect their properties; and one person opposed all Westby Bypass Alternatives and does not think the project is needed. The Viroqua City Council (see Appendix D) voted unanimously in favor of supporting the east Viroqua Bypass Alternative. The City of Westby (see Appendix D) did not state a preference for any particular alternative but opposed Bypass Alternative N-7.

TABLE 7-2
Summary of Public Hearing Testimony and Input Received during Public Comment Period

Commenter	Key Issues/Comments
Resident Route 2, Westby	Opposes Westby bypass alternative that is aligned in front of her house (Alternative not mentioned). Concerned about children's safety.
Westby Area School Board Representative	Concerned about the financial situation of the area's schools if large amounts of productive farmland are taken off the city's tax rolls as well as the impact to already struggling farmers. Concerned that the bypass would be for the convenience of commuters from La Cross to Viroqua and trucks would still go through Westby to reach Highway 27. Believes that the issue of Highway 27 traffic in downtown Westby and the Industrial Park have been inadequately addressed.
Resident Hwy 14, Viroqua	Concerned about not being relocated, the amount of right-of-way acquired from the property, the impacts on the value of the property due to the close proximity of the proposed highway, relocation of the septic system and removal of access to Highway 14/61. Desires to be relocated.
Resident County Y, Viroqua	Concerned about the close proximity of traffic to the property under the proposed west Viroqua bypass. Concerned about the amount of fill needed with the west bypass for the new CTH Y, potentially blocking access to the property. Concerned about the proposed median width for the east Viroqua bypass and water drainage from CTH Y to Springville Road. Concerned about water seepage in the fill of existing Highway 14/61 south of the junction of CTH Y, and how this will be handled for the new roadway.
Resident Route 2, Westby	Agrees with the need for a solution to control the current traffic situation. Concerned with impacts of Westby Bypass Alternative N-3 on property owners and farmland. Supports Bypass Alternative N-4 due to its limited impact on property owners. Concerned about splitting family farms and the danger resulting from the flow of traffic through this area.

TABLE 7-2
Summary of Public Hearing Testimony and Input Received during Public Comment Period

Commenter	Key Issues/Comments
Resident Melby Street, Westby	Supports using existing USH 14/61 as much as possible. Supports Westby Bypass Alternative N-4 as it would be quicker for travelers than Bypass Alternative N-7. Agrees N-7 would benefit Westby providing more opportunity to enter the city.
Resident Route 2, Westby	States the need for traffic coming off Highway 27 to be addressed. Supports Westby Bypass Alternative N-7 as it would be least invasive, closest to Westby and use some existing roadbed.
Business Owner West State Street, Westby	Concerned about the accessibility to Westby and visibility of Westby from the new highway. Supports the Bypass Alternative N-7 with access near Accelerated Genetics. Opposes Westby Bypass Alternatives N-3 and N-4 as they are located further away from Westby.
Resident Ontario	Concerned about Hwy 27 traffic not being taken into consideration in this project. States that Highway 131 should be the recreation tourism corridor; Highway 27 and USH 14/61 should be the commercial/industrial corridors.
Farm Owner Westby	Supports Westby Bypass Alternative N-3. Stresses the need to determine if building a bypass is necessary versus improving existing highway using signalization to control traffic flow. Also supports the Westby Bypass Alternative N-4 as it runs along property lines minimizing impacts.
County Board Member	Opposed to Westby Bypass Alternative N-7 due to its close proximity to Westby, thus restricting any westward development for Westby. Also, opposed to Alternative N-7 as it bisects valuable farmland in this area. Supports Alternative N-4 because it follows property lines and will not require removal of buildings as compared to Alternative N-3.
Resident Spring Coulee Ridge Road	Supports Westby Bypass Alternative N-3 as it uses Tristate Road right-of-way the most and minimizes farmland impacts. Alternative N-7 is likely to create a natural boundary for Westby for annexation and is a longer route. Alternative N-4 is likely to impact more farmland. Concerned about the future status of Highway 27 or USH 14/61 to the west of Westby. Prefers this road being maintained under the state jurisdiction rather than being designated as a county road.
Residents Route 2, Westby	Concerned of the impacts of Westby Bypass Alternative N-7 on property as well as diverting farmland to other uses. No compensation will offset the inconvenience created by Alternative N-7. Support N-3 due to the large amount of already existing right-of-way being used as compared to Alternative N-4. Alternatives N-3 and N-4 are also shorter routes than Alternative N-7.
Resident Crestline Drive, Viroqua	Supports the east Viroqua Bypass Alternative due to its proximity to the industrial park. This Alternative is likely to encourage growth in the Industrial park area, which is desirable.
Resident Viroqua	Concerned about the east Viroqua bypass splitting property and not following property lines. Concerned about safety when hauling heavy equipment across proposed highway.
Resident Oakwood Lane, Viroqua	Supports east Viroqua bypass due to its proximity to the industrial park, as long as Lewison Road is retained as a service road.
Residents Hwy 14, Viroqua	Opposes east Viroqua bypass because it would acquire their house. Support west bypass since it avoids relocation. In favor of straightening the angle of Alternative C-4); to existing highway to avoid relocation.
Resident County J, Viroqua	Supports the east Viroqua Bypass Alternative due to close proximity to the industrial park.

TABLE 7-2
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Commenter	Key Issues/Comments
Resident Olson Drive, Viroqua	Supports the east Viroqua Bypass Alternative because of its location near the industrial park. Opposed to the west Viroqua Bypass Alternative because of its location near the high school.
Resident Williams Street, Viroqua	Supports the east Viroqua Bypass Alternative due to efficient access to the industrial area of the city. Concerned about the potential development near the golf course that might not occur because of this Alternative. Opposed to Alternative C-4); going through the county farm.
Resident Viroqua	Supports DOT's decision on this project, based on common sense rather than influence of special interest groups.
Resident Hwy 14, Viroqua	Supports project in general.
Resident Oak Knoll Drive, Viroqua	Supports the project especially with the changes to the wayside area where the existing lane was moved east to resolve the problem of entrance to this area.
Residents Tri-State Road, Westby	Concerned that the proposed bypass will not address truck traffic problems from Highway 27. Supports the Westby Bypass Alternative N-4 as it follows property lines and is closer to Westby. Opposed to Bypass Alternative N-3 due to safety concerns for farmers who use the existing road, its close proximity to several driveways, demolition of homes, division of property resulting in small portions of land being unusable, safety concerns for recreational activities, and farther distance from Westby than the other alternatives.
Resident Route 2, Westby	Opposed to Westby Bypass Alternative N-3 due to the high volume of trucks and farm equipment already traveling on the Tristate Road. Supports Bypass Alternative N-4.
Resident Knitt Road, Viroqua	Supports the east Viroqua Bypass Alternative due to its proximity to the industrial park, Wal-Mart and other businesses on the north end of Viroqua. Supports the 4-lane connection between Viroqua and Westby.
Resident Route 2, Westby	Opposed to the Westby Bypass Alternative N-3 due to loss of properties and homes, property value losses, and noise impacts.
Residents Tri-State Road, Westby	Supports Westby Bypass Alternative N-4. Concerned about the impacts caused to farmland by the project as well as the safety hazard caused by heavy farm machinery mixing with through traffic.
Residents Route 2, Westby	Opposed to Westby Bypass Alternative N-3 because of proximity of the traffic to residence, potential destruction of farms, safety concerns due to curve off of USH 14/61 and concerns regarding drainage on property. Supports Bypass Alternative N-4.
Resident West Fork, Viroqua	Supports east Viroqua Bypass Alternative as it uses the least productive land and avoids the busy areas and high school on the west side. Supports Alternatives C-4); /C-5 between Viroqua and Westby. Supports the Bypass Alternative N-4 because it will impact the least amount of properties, and follow property lines.
Family owns farm on Tri-State Road, Westby	Opposed to Westby Bypass Alternative N-3 because it divides farmland and due to the safety concerns for farmers hauling equipment across the highway. Supports Bypass Alternative N-4 because it runs along property lines, has a lesser impact on properties, and is closer to Westby.
Business Viroqua	Supports the project in general and the east Viroqua Bypass Alternative because of its location near the industrial park and other businesses on the east side.
Resident	Concerned with amount of right-of-way being taken from property and the removal of

TABLE 7-2
Summary of Public Hearing Testimony and Input Received during Public Comment Period

Commenter	Key Issues/Comments
Knitt Road, Viroqua	trees in the proposed right-of-way that would buffer the property from the highway. Concerned about the removal of the newly installed septic system in the proposed right-of-way. Concerned about proposed 60-foot median width and 150-foot right-of-way width along proposed highway.
Resident Abbey Lane, Viroqua	Supports the east Viroqua bypass due to its location near the industrial park. Supports Westby Bypass Alternative N-3 because of its rural location and fewer displacements. Concerned about safety at intersections with the bypass and USH 14/61.
Resident RockView Lane, Viroqua	Supports the east Viroqua Bypass Alternative due to the proximity to the industrial park. The west Viroqua Bypass Alternative is likely to interfere with future residential growth in this area, where sanitation and water are already available.
Resident Mahoney Road, Viroqua	Concerned about safety at the intersections of the proposed Bypass Alternatives and USH 14/61. In favor of eliminating USH 14/61 from the bypass option and having a bypass either on the west or east side of Viroqua that just continues north and does not rejoin Hwy 14/61. Concerned that changes will need to be made to USH 14/61 again in the future.
Resident Location not provided	Supports the west Viroqua Bypass Alternative.
Resident County Road J, Viroqua	Supports the east Viroqua Bypass as it allows a direct route to the industrial park, allows for possible expansion of the airport, will not disturb the golf course, and for own children's and elderly neighbors' safety.
Resident Route 2, Westby	Opposed to Bypass Alternative N-7 due to its close proximity to the city of Westby and its impact on future residential development and valuable farmland. Opposed to Bypass Alternative N-4 as it impacts more prime farmland than Bypass Alternative N-3 and has potential of interfering with future residential development. Supports Bypass Alternative N-3 as it is the best in preserving farmland.
Resident Railroad Avenue, Viroqua	Prefers the east Viroqua bypass to be located through the woods on the property rather than the cropped land.
Member Viroqua Partners Economic Restructuring Committee	Commenting on behalf of Viroqua Partners Economic Restructuring Committee who surveyed Viroqua businesses. Of the 200 letters sent, 23 businesses responded. Five businesses support the west Viroqua Bypass Alternative due to a shorter distance to La Crosse and 18 businesses support the east Viroqua Bypass Alternative due to its proximity to the industrial park. Representative supports east bypass for the same reason. With the west Bypass Alternative, concerned about the safety, noise, and pollution that may result from truck traffic remaining on Main Street, Viroqua.
Resident Dahl Road, Viroqua	Opposed to the west Viroqua Bypass because it would disrupt plans to develop property as subdivision. Supports east Viroqua Bypass due to proximity to the industrial and commercial areas on the east side of Viroqua, minimizes truck traffic through town, avoids the high school, lower cost, better support Viroqua's businesses, and would use county land versus using more private land.
Resident Hwy 14, Viroqua	Supports east Viroqua Bypass as it will direct traffic away from property. Opposed to west bypass because it will impact property.
Resident County Road B, Viroqua	Supports the east Viroqua Bypass, as it will not impact property. Opposed to the west Viroqua Bypass Alternative because it will impact property creating an unsafe environment for children playing outdoors.
Resident	Supports the east Viroqua Bypass because of its location near the industrial park.

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Commenter	Key Issues/Comments
Pine Street, Viroqua	
Resident Route 2, Westby	Supports Westby Bypass Alternative N-7 because it would cost less, impact less land, relocate no residences and there would be less highway to maintain. Opposed to Bypass Alternatives N-3 and N-4 as it would be difficult and unsafe to cross with heavy machinery, difficult to farm land split by proposed highway, and may be unsafe with cattle getting out on to the highway.
Resident Prairie Edge Road, Westby	Supports utilizing the existing USH 14/61 between Viroqua and Westby to address traffic needs. Believes the Westby bypass should be based on the least amount of land impacted as well as farmland taken out of production. Supports the east Viroqua Bypass in Viroqua due to its proximity to the industrial park, and it uses the county farm.
Resident Melby Street, Westby	Supports using as much of existing USH 14/61 as possible because it would be the least expensive and most sensible option.
Residents Neprud Road, Westby	Opposed to all Westby Bypass Alternatives. Believed the Westby bypass was no longer going to occur a couple of years ago. Concerned about a Westby bypass because of its impact to property, which has been in the family for over 150 years. Concerned about access to Westby being cut off by bypasses, impact to contour-stripped farmland and impact of noise from highway traffic on residents and animals.
Resident Route 3, Westby	Believes the widening of USH 14/61 to four lanes is necessary due to the large number of cars turning into Wal-Mart and frequently passing each other. Opposed to Westby Bypass Alternative N-7.
Residents Hwy 14, Westby	Recommends re-investigating Barstad Road as a viable alternative to improving USH 14/61, and studying the soil conditions for the Viroqua bypass C-4); Alternative more thoroughly. Believes other improvements should be made to USH 14/61 such as emergency pullouts, waysides and bike paths to enhance safety and recommends consideration to slow moving farm equipment and access to farm fields.
Business Westby	Supports the Westby N-4 Bypass Alternative as it is the safer option and is closer to the city of Westby. Opposes the N-3 Bypass Alternative because of the negative effects of mixing large farm machinery, recreational use, private homes and driveways with the additional truck and car traffic on the proposed highway.
Resident Route 3, Westby	Disagrees with the need for a Westby bypass due to minimal traffic problems in Westby and because it will affect only 11% of the through heavy truck traffic in Westby. Opposed to Alternatives N-3 and N-4 as they are longer routes and have higher environmental, political, economic and social impacts. Concerned that the township roadways, which will be used for Alternatives N-3 and N-4 were not intended for highway use. In favor of Alternative N-7 because it minimizes roadbed construction and has the lowest impacts to farmland, relocations, recreation, etc. Believes no bypass to Westby is needed at present on USH 14/61 and suggests considering a bypass of Highway 27.
Member of Environmental Interest Groups	Concerned about impacts of increased nocturnal lighting on the environment. Recommends a thorough analysis of all lighting alternatives to choose light fixtures and sources that follow the guidelines of the International Dark Sky Association, not allowing any direct beam illumination beyond the DOT's easement. Concerned that the Viroqua community has not comprehensively addressed long-term planning issues and the uncontrolled development that may occur with either the east or west Viroqua bypasses. Recommends selecting an alternative based on a well thought-out plan with open dialogue on impacts and future development of the proposed alternatives.

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 Summary of Public Hearing Testimony and Input Received during Public Comment Period

Commenter	Key Issues/Comments
Residents Route 2, Westby	Oppose the Westby N-3 Bypass Alternative because this option is unsafe with heavy farm equipment likely to be mixed with fast moving traffic, school bus stops along this road and people using this road for recreation; it impacts properties; and negatively impacts businesses in Westby due to lack of visibility. Supports the N-4 Bypass Alternative as it safe for farmers, busses and local homeowners; minimal impact to properties; supports businesses in Westby by providing a view of downtown.
Resident County Road N, Coon Valley	Supports project overall due to existing unsafe travel conditions between Westby and Viroqua.
Resident Westby	Opposes the Westby N-7 Bypass Alternative as it may be unsafe due to proximity to Westby. Concerned that with this alternative, Highway 14 would be relocated in this area for the third time. Supports Bypass Alternatives N-3 and N-4 as they are safer options and serve the purpose of this project better.
Resident Hwy 14, Westby	Overall, supports No Action Alternative, as traffic growth on USH 14/61 is not significant. Opposes the Westby N-7 Bypass Alternative due to mixing of heavy farm machinery with through traffic and bus stops along this route. Supports the N-4 Bypass Alternative.
Resident Hwy 14, Westby	Supports the Westby N-4 Bypass Alternative due to minimal impacts to properties. Opposes the N-7 Bypass Alternative as it impacts more properties and limits Westby's growth. Supports a combination of Viroqua and Westby Bypass Alternatives – C-5 to C-1 to USH 14/61.
Resident Route 2, Westby	Opposes the Westby N-7 Bypass Alternative as it may restrict future expansion of Westby. Supports the N-4 Bypass Alternative.
Resident Route 2, Westby	Supports the Westby N-4 Bypass Alternative.
Resident, representing the City's 4th Ward on the City Council South Street, Viroqua	Believes emphasis should be on maintaining roads, improving enforcement of traffic laws and improving safety through relatively minor changes such as intersection modifications on busy highways based on place-sensitive design and thorough analysis of land use impacts. Supports an in-town alternative from the 1996 Study versus a new highway corridor outside the City. Believes the east Viroqua Bypass Alternative should be designated as a through truck route due to its severe aesthetic and land use impacts. Recommends purchasing scenic easements along the bypass corridor to avoid billboards and other strip development; limiting driveways; and eliminating some at-grade intersections with the only access being at Highway 56/82. Disagrees that this Bypass Alternative will have minimal land use impacts and is concerned about the impacts on good quality agricultural land. Believes that project traffic counts in Westby does not justify a bypass. Supports 4-lane highway between Westby and Viroqua with a guardrail median to reduce right-of-way take. Recommends improving traffic flow in Westby by eliminating some parking spaces at intersections and signaling busy intersections.
Resident Broadway Street, Viroqua	Supports the east Viroqua Bypass as it provides travelers with the option of traveling through the City or taking the bypass; provides trucks a faster and safer route around the City; enhances safety of pedestrians in the City and may positively impact downtown shopping.
Residents Rogers Avenue, Viroqua	Opposed to the east Viroqua Bypass; prefer widening existing highway to avoid disruption of natural environment and existing land use.
City of Westby Official	No preferred alternative. Recommends an exit close to the south City limits. Westby Bypass Alternative N-7 was not favored by majority as it was considered to be expensive and redundant to existing Hwy 14.

Agency Comments

Agency comments on the Draft EIS are found in Appendix D, along with comment responses as applicable. The numbers on the agency letters correspond to the comment responses that follow each letter. Table 7-3 summarizes comments received from State and Federal review agencies and local government.

TABLE 7-3
Agency Comment Summary

Agency	Key Comments/Issues
U. S. Department of Commerce (Appendix D, page D-1)	Provided information on geodetic control monuments; requested notification if any monuments would be disturbed during construction.
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, La Crosse Service Center (Appendix D, page D-2)	Offered comments on Section 3, Affected Environment, and Section 4, Environmental Consequences.
U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (Appendix D, page D-3)	Recommended minimizing impacts to the maximum possible extent. Noted Final EIS should include information on capacity improvements, if any, planned for other segments of USH 14/61 as part of the highway's designation as a Connector in Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Corridors 2020 Plan.
U. S. Department of the Interior (Appendix D, page D-4)	Agreed Alternative C-4); would have no adverse impact on the historic Cina farmstead. Notes that if the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Officer determines that Alternative C-4 would have an adverse effect on the farmstead, then Section 4(f) concurrence on this alternative cannot be provided.
City of Viroqua (Appendix D, page D-5)	Letter with minutes of April 11, 2000 City Council meeting indicating City of Viroqua's support for the Viroqua East Bypass Alternative.
State Historical Society of Wisconsin (Appendix D, page D-6)	Concurred in results of screening level archeological investigations for Draft EIS and eligibility of Bert and Mary Cunningham farmstead (Cina farm) to National Register of Historic Places.
State Historical Society of Wisconsin (Appendix D, page D-7)	Concurred in finding of No Adverse Effect on Bert and Mary Cunningham farmstead (Cina farm) with Viroqua East Bypass Alternative.

Project Advisory Committee (PAC) Meetings

The fourth PAC meeting was conducted on June 30, 2000. The purpose of this meeting was to present the project's recommended alternative, provide information about the upcoming Transportation Projects Commission (TPC) hearing, and discuss the project schedule. The recommended alternative was identified as the east Viroqua Bypass comprising of Alternatives S-2, C-4); and Westby Bypass Alternative N-4. The reasons for selecting these alternatives were presented. The functional plan phase of the project was then briefly described during which the project team would refine the horizontal and vertical alignments and provide more detailed analysis of the right-of-way requirements and intersection treatments. The project team also updated PAC members on Final EIS activities

including archeological review of the recommended alternative, availability of the Final EIS for public review, completion of functional plans and the project's Record of Decision as well as the next public information meeting and PAC meeting.

The fifth and final PAC meeting was conducted on November 29, 2000. The purpose of this meeting was to update the PAC members of the study team's efforts since the last PAC meeting, discuss the implications of the TPC decision not to enumerate the Westby-Viroqua project, review functional plans for the recommended alternative, and provide a preview of the December 7, 2000 public information meeting (PIM). The project team suggested that the Westby-Viroqua project be re-submitted for the 2002 TPC with a stronger showing of public support, and preferably with the assistance of an organization such as the Transportation Development Association of Wisconsin. PAC members were given a copy of the 90-percent complete functional plans and the key features of these plans were discussed. PAC members were also updated on the date, venue and format of the next PIM and the displays to be presented at this meeting.

Public Information Meeting

The third and final Public Information Meeting was conducted on December 7, 2000 at the Church of Christ (fellowship hall), 825 Nelson Parkway, Viroqua from 4 to 8 P.M. The session was held in an open house format with brief presentations by the project team at 5:30 and 7 P.M. Meeting announcements were published in the *Vernon County Broadcaster*, the *Westby Times*, and the *La Crosse Tribune*. In addition, the meeting was announced with a postcard to those on the project's mailing. Approximately seventy-five people attended this meeting.

The following displays/materials were available at the meeting:

- Aerial map showing recommended alternative
- Functional plans showing details of recommended alternative
- Set of mark-up functional plans for recording comments
- Computer enhanced photos showing recommended alternative at various locations
- Simulation video for corridor "drive-through"
- Comment forms
- Draft Environmental Impact Statement

The purpose of this meeting was to present the recommended alternative functional plans and obtain comments on proposed design details such as right-of-way needs, local road access, intersection design, residential and business relocations, median openings, and field entrance locations. Most comments concerned suggested modifications or design questions at spot locations along the recommended alternative. The project team received a number of comments opposing proposed cul-du-sacs at Neprud Road and Tristate Road. The comments noted that the cul-du-sacs would create problems for area residents, local businesses, and emergency service providers. Other design-related comments included questions about the proposed intersection designs at the intersection of the bypasses and USH 14/61 near Westby and Viroqua, and future driveway locations.

Update Article

A project update article was published in January 2001 in the *Vernon County Broadcaster* and the *Westby Times*. The article summarized the input received at the December 7, 2000 public

information meeting and discussed the project activities during the development of the project's Final EIS. The article noted that exhibits from the December 7 public information meeting such as the recommended alternative functional plans, computer enhanced images of the recommended alternative, and a "fly-through" video of the recommended alternative were available for review at the McIntosh Memorial Library, 118 Jefferson Street, Viroqua.

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7-A	Westby-Viroqua PAC List
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