

Public Involvement

US 51
US 8 to Bearskin Bridge
Oneida and Lincoln Counties
Project ID: 1170-16-34



Comment Period: April 2 to April 23, 2024

Deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind, and speech-disabled persons should contact the Wisconsin Relay Service for assistance by dialing 711.

Purpose of Public Involvement

WisDOT is seeking your input on the identified needs, proposed improvements, and any information that can help us minimize impacts to the public during construction.

WisDOT public involvement plans and activities are designed to effectively involve the public early and often in the process so that the project decisions made are in the best overall interest. Good public involvement is integral to good transportation planning. Without meaningful public participation, there is a risk of making decisions that have unintended negative consequences. With it, it is possible to make a lasting contribution to the quality of life. It is more than an agency requirement and fulfilling statutory obligations. It is central to good decision-making.

Project Information

The proposed 7.1-mile project is located on US 51 in Lincoln and Oneida Counties. It begins in Lincoln County at the northern edge of the southbound bridge over US 8 and runs northerly in Lincoln and Oneida Counties to the north side of the Bearskin Bridge (**Attachment A: Project Location Map**).

The southernmost 1.1 miles of the project are on the southbound lanes of the four-lane divided US 51. The remaining 6 miles are on the two-lane undivided US 51. The existing pavement is concrete. The roadway has two sections (lengths 0.7 miles and 0.5 miles) of asphaltic pavement overlaying concrete pavement. There is a 1.8 mile long passing lane on the northern end of the northbound lane. There are 4 bridges located within the project limits. The project has the following characteristics:

- US 51 is a Principal Arterial, a National Highway System (NHS) route, a federal/state long truck route and a major recreational corridor.
- Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) in 2027 is estimated at 6,220 vehicles/day with 16.1% trucks.
- Proposed detour route of US 8 to WIS 47 are state long truck routes. US 8 is an Oversized Overweight (OSOW) route. US 51 is an OSOW High Clearance Route.

Project Purpose and Need

- **Purpose** - Maximize the life of the existing pavement structure.
- **Need** - The existing concrete pavement has distresses including linear cracking, spalled joints, and spalled corners. The four bridges need various repairs and the approach slabs at two of the bridges are settling.

Alternatives Considered

- **Concrete joint repair using a detour** - This is a long-term pavement solution, and the project can be completed in one construction year. The concrete pavement is expected to have a long life of approximately 30 years if properly maintained and joint repair work is performed. Another concrete joint repair project would likely be planned for 6 years after 2026 construction to repair any additional joints that have deteriorated in the interim. The future project quantity of joint repair would likely be smaller than the current quantity.
- **Concrete joint repair with staged construction** – This is a long-term pavement solution, but the project would be completed in two construction years. This alternative would use temporary traffic signals during the weekdays only. Signals would be removed so one lane in each direction would be open for weekends to avoid long

queues. Temporary traffic signals have a maximum spacing of 800 feet. There would be multiple traffic signals operating simultaneously over the seven miles of the project and allow the road to be open to traffic with delays. The multiple short work areas, the short work week due to concrete cure time, and requiring lanes open for the weekend, limit the contractor production making this a costly option. As a result of low production, the staged alternative would require two construction years to complete.

- **Mill and asphalt overlay** - This is a short-term solution to the pavement distress issues. The overlay would shorten the current concrete pavement life to approximately 10 years. The overlay would trap moisture between the asphalt and concrete layers leading to rapid concrete joint deterioration.

Proposed Improvements

- Repair deteriorated/failing joints in the concrete pavement
- Replace failing concrete pavement slabs
- Mill existing asphalt pavement and replace with 1 ¾-inches of new asphalt (1.2 miles)
- Bridge B-35-71 Southbound (SB) over US 8
 - Replace north concrete approach slab
 - Replace portion of NW wingwall
 - Minor concrete surface repairs
 - Repair polymer overlay on bridge deck
 - Replace guardrail in northwest quadrant
- Bridge B-43-18 over railroad and Little Rice Creek
 - Replace concrete approach slabs
 - Replace paving notch
 - Minor concrete surface repairs
 - Repair polymer overlay on bridge deck
 - Replace several guardrail posts
- Bridge B-43-20 over County N
 - Minor concrete surface repairs
 - Repair polymer overlay on bridge deck
- Bridge B-43-28 over Bearskin River and trail
 - Minor concrete surface repairs
 - Repair polymer overlay on bridge deck
 - Adjust guardrail height on north side
- Install centerline rumble strips to alert drivers of a lane departure
- Regrade gravel shoulders
- Seal joints and cracks
- Install new pavement markings

Proposed Traffic Impacts

Construction is currently scheduled to start in early April 2026 and be completed in July/August 2026.

During construction, motorists will encounter several different traffic control methods.

- Before Memorial Day – All traffic will be detoured to US 8 and WIS 47 during the majority of the concrete pavement repairs and some of bridge work (**Attachment B: Detour Map**). The detour is anticipated from early/mid-April until Memorial Day.
- After Memorial Day – Motorists can expect to encounter weekday lanes closures, flagging operations, and temporary traffic signals. One lane in each direction will be open on weekends.

US 51 is a full access control roadway. This means there are not any driveway access points along the highway. Thus, there will not be any driveway impacts for residents or businesses adjacent to the project.

Real Estate

No additional real estate will be required for the project.

Project update/next steps

Local officials meeting	March 19, 2024
Public involvement	April 2024
Preliminary plans	Fall 2024
Environmental document	Fall 2024
Final plans	August 2025
Construction currently scheduled	Spring/Summer 2026

Public Input/Comments

Your comments assist us in developing a project that will serve the needs of the traveling public as well as the needs of the local community. Your input is welcome and appreciated throughout the design process.

There are several ways to submit your input by **April 23, 2024**:

1. Complete the fillable online survey on the project website
<https://wisconsin.gov/Pages/projects/by-region/nc/us51oneidabearskin/default.aspx>
2. Email comments or questions to the contact(s) listed below
3. Print the attached comment form. Fill out form and mail to address below

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For more information, please contact:

Michelle Guoin, P.E.
Project Manager
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
510 N Hanson Lake Road
Rhinelander, WI 54501
715-365-5792
michellem.guoin@dot.wi.gov

Fold here

Place
Stamp
Here

Attn: Michelle Guoin
WisDOT North Central Region - Rhinelander
510 North Hanson Lake Road
Rhinelander, WI 54501

To mail, fold here and tape.