



WIS 15 Project Report

Greenville to New London

December 2004

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

Update on WIS 15 EIS progress

A year ago at this time, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) had anticipated having a Draft Environmental Impact Study (EIS) submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for approval this fall. However, certain elements of the EIS process have contributed to a substantial change in the EIS progress.

As a federal document, the EIS is required to meet FHWA standards, one of which is concurrence from regulatory agencies of the alternatives brought forward in the study. As seen in the newsletter from last fall, new alternatives have been proposed. WisDOT has needed to evaluate these alternatives before recommending them to the regulatory agencies for approval. This process has taken longer than originally projected with all of the regulatory agencies



having just approved the alternatives for study this fall.

Additionally, the archaeological field work started in 2003 has carried over to 2004. The archaeological work should be finishing up this fall, with the newer alternatives having been studied.

Included in this issue:

- Updated on WIS 15 EIS progress
- Corridors finalized
- Corridors considered
- What is next?
- Timeline
- Public information meeting

Version 2.0

Corridors finalized for study

The corridors shown on the following page have been approved by the required federal agencies for inclusion in the Draft Environmental Impact Study (EIS). These corridors will be evaluated individually for their impacts on social, economic, and agriculture factors, and natural effects to the air, land, and water within the various corridors.

At last year's Public Information Meeting, several alternatives were presented for comments to help decide which would be carried forward in the Draft EIS. As shown in last September's newsletter, some corridors were changed or brought forward. Since then, WisDOT has evaluated similar corridors to identify those which could best serve the need of the WIS 15 in the

future. With these corridors now approved by the regulatory agencies, the Draft EIS can be completed. Once the Draft EIS is approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) sometime next year, the procedure of selecting a preferred corridor can be initiated.

Corridors to be considered in the Impact Study

After a long and challenging process of determining the alternatives to be studied, WisDOT is progressing forward in the next stage of the Environmental Impact Study (EIS).

The alternatives shown in the map below have been chosen for comparative impact study after public involvement, corridor refinement, preliminary study, and regulatory agency approval.

In the next public information meeting, preliminary estimates of impacts of all of the below corridors will be shown. These impacts will be evaluated in greater detail in the Draft

EIS. The Draft EIS will likely be presented to the Federal Highway Administration this coming winter for approval.

The corridors seen below are broken up into sections east and west of County Highway T, which is on left third of the map below.

The east corridors include:

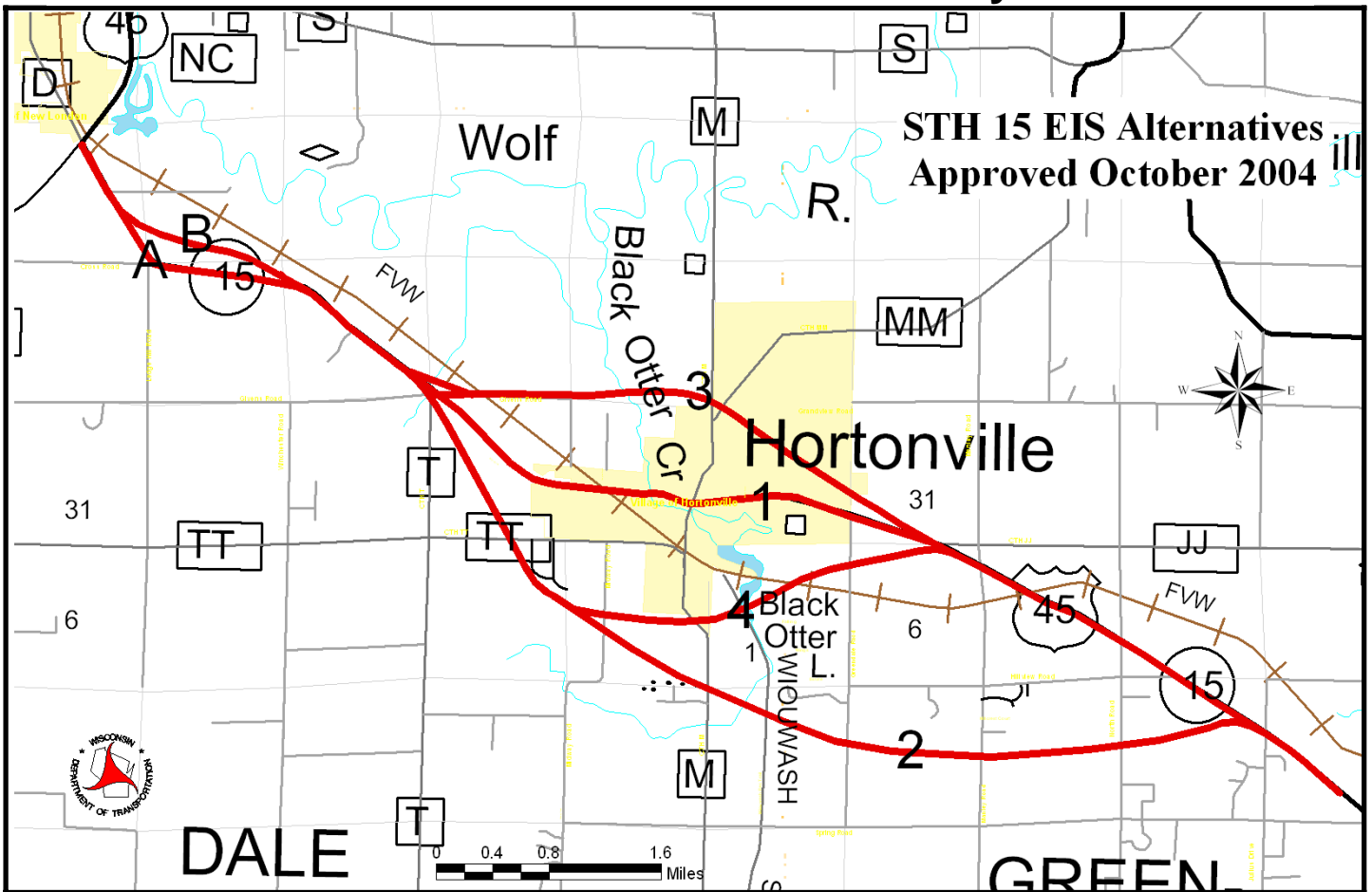
- Alternative 1 (exiting highway)
- Alternative 2 (south bypass)
- Alternative 3 (north bypass)
- Alternative 4 (lake bypass)

The west corridors include:

- Alternative A (existing highway)
- Alternative B (straightens the curves)



Finalized alternatives for study



What comes next?

We will hold a Public Information Meeting on January 19, 2005. This meeting will update the public with the preliminary impacts on the alternatives shown on the opposite page. There will be an opportunity to ask questions to WisDOT staff and comment on the alternatives.

Final data and reports on the alternatives will be submitted to WisDOT soon and the Draft Environmental Document (EIS) submittal for approval to the Federal Highway Administration will follow.

A public hearing will be held after the Draft EIS is approved. Depending upon the speed of the approval, the public hearing could be held in summer 2005.

WisDOT will then use comments from the public hearing, input from the Highway 15 Advisory Committee, considerations from local officials, and recommendations from regulatory agencies to select a preferred alternative. This selection should occur 3

to 5 months after the public hearing.

When a preferred alternative is selected, a Final EIS can be completed. WisDOT is then required to complete 30 percent of the design work toward the ultimate project before it can be approved for construction. Once this work is completed, WisDOT can present the project to the Transportation Projects Commission (TPC) for approval.

The TPC meets in even number years and 'enumerates' or approves major highway projects for construction. WIS 15 will be competing for funding against other major highway projects in Wisconsin. The TPC cannot enumerate a project unless funding is available to begin work within six years.

Project History and Timeline

The following is a WIS 15 history and projected timeline.

- **February 2001**—Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc. (SEH), consultants for WisDOT, complete the New London to Greenville corridor plan.
- **August 2002**—SEH completes a second corridor plan along the WIS 15 corridor, from Greenville to US 41.
- **Winter 2002/2003**—WIS 15 alternates developed with cooperation of the advisory committee and presented to cooperating agencies.
- **Spring 2003**—Newsletter published and public meeting conducted.
- **Summer/Fall 2003**—Information gathering begins to help evaluate the possible alternatives for the (EIS).
- **Fall 2003**—WIS 15 advisory committee meets. Newsletter update mailed out.
- **Winter/Spring 2003/2004**—WisDOT gathers and evaluates data for alternatives.
- **Summer 2004**—Alternatives refined and resubmitted to regulatory agencies for approval. Data gathering continues.
- **Fall 2004**—Agency approval, newsletter published and Public Information Meeting to update project progress.
- **Fall/Winter 2004**—Newsletter published and public meeting conducted.
- **Winter 2005**—Draft EIS document submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for approval.
- **Summer 2005**—Draft EIS approved by FHWA, followed by a open period allowed for comments and a Public Hearing held and on the draft EIS.
- **Fall 2005**—WisDOT meets with WIS 15 advisory committee, local officials, and regulatory agencies to help determine a preferred alternative.
- **Fall/Winter 2005**—WisDOT selects preferred transportation alternative and presents choice to the public. Newsletter published.
- **2007**—Final EIS approved.
- **2010 or later**—The Transportation Projects Committee determines possible approval of WIS 15 expansion against other state highway projects.

Highway 15 Advisory Committee members

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 Mike Hendrick
County Planner 920-832-5255
 Marvin Obry
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Project on the Web:

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Address

Public information meeting scheduled for January

You are invited to attend a public information meeting about WIS 15. WisDOT will hold two public meetings to provide information and hear public comment regarding the WIS 15 environmental study.

The two duplicate sessions are scheduled for your convenience and will feature the same information. The meetings are being held in an open-house format with maps and exhibits of the proposed alternatives.

Information displayed at the public meeting will include:

- Highway alternatives
- Traffic data
- Environmental areas
- Land use

WisDOT staff will be available to answer questions.

Meeting Schedule:

Wednesday January 19, 2005

Session 1	Session 2
1 p.m. to 3 p.m.	5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Hortonville Community Center
312 West Main Street

