

Cranberry Interchange Project near Tomah (Project ID 1023-02-01/81)

Southwest Region Low Bid Design-Build Project

WisDOT's Southwest Region is planning the replacement of two bridges carrying IH 94 eastbound at the IH 90 / IH 94 interchange east of Tomah. The first bridge (B-41-024) carries IH 94 eastbound over the ramp from IH 90 eastbound to IH 94 westbound. The second bridge (B-41-044) carries IH 94 eastbound over IH 90 westbound. No associated roadway work is planned except as necessary to accommodate the bridge replacement. A low bid design-build contract is planned to deliver this project.

What is design-build and why is it used?

Design-build is an alternative project delivery method where WisDOT awards a single contract to a design-build team that will both design and construct the project. This procurement methodology allows for many advantages including:

- Early contractor input allowing for design optimizations and construction efficiencies
- Allows WisDOT to distribute risks to the project participant best suited to manage specific risks
- Expedited delivery as construction and design activities may occur simultaneously
- Ability to advance project letting dates
- Encourages designers and contractors to propose efficient and innovate concepts in a competitive environment
- Creates a single point of accountability between the contractor and design team
- Earlier schedule and cost certainty for WisDOT to manage their program

What is a low bid design-build contract?

A low bid contract is one of three procurement methodologies WisDOT may use to award a design-build contract under Wisconsin's alternative project delivery legislation ([§ 84.062](#)). Using this approach, the design-build contract is awarded to the lowest qualified responsible bidder. This is different than that used on WisDOT's previous design-build projects (WIS 125/College Avenue and WIS 130/Lone Rock) which were procured using a best value contract. Following a best value approach, the design-build contract is awarded to the qualified responsible bidder with the highest adjusted score based on their technical proposal and cost proposal.

A low bid design-build contract allows WisDOT to take advantage of the benefits design-build offers for smaller projects with unique characteristics. Examples include projects with complex staging where contractor input is desired or projects with compressed delivery schedules. Larger projects with more complexities are often better suited for a best value procurement. The decision to use a specific procurement method is made between the WisDOT region delivering the project and the Alternative Contracting Section.

Why are we using a low bid procurement?

Wisconsin's alternative project legislation notes that "the department shall administer a pilot program under which not more than six contracts are awarded for design-build projects." Additionally, the legislation requires one of the six awarded projects be delivered as a low bid contract with an estimated value of not more than \$25M. The Cranberry Interchange project was selected as part of the pilot

program due to its size and opportunity for contractor input. WisDOT seeks to gain valuable insight on best practices using a low bid contract that can be used on future projects.

For the Cranberry Interchange project, the design and construction are anticipated to follow typical WisDOT practice with limited opportunities for innovation. However, given the high volume of traffic and multiple traffic movements present, the project offers an opportunity for contractor input regarding traffic staging. This delivery method allows contractors to evaluate traffic staging and other project elements during procurement to identify construction efficiencies that would benefit WisDOT and Wisconsin travelers. It also allows the contractor to consider alternative construction approaches near the adjacent wetlands and coordinate proposed work with permitting agencies. Collectively, these considerations could result in faster construction with less disruption to the travelling public and less environmental impacts. For these reasons, a low bid design-build procurement was selected.