

APPENDIX A

Process Initiation Letter

WisDOT Division of Transportation System Development
Bureau of Technical Services
Environmental Process and Documentation Section
4822 Madison Yards Way, 5th Floor South
PO Box 7965
Madison, WI 53707

Governor Tony Evers
Secretary Craig Thompson
wisconsindot.gov
Telephone: (920.492.7738)
Email: Michael.Helmrick@dot.wi.gov



May 31, 2024

Nick Perna
Federal Highway Administration
City Center West
525 Junction Road, Suite 8000
Madison, WI 53717

Nick,

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) proposes to initiate the environmental review process for the following project:

Project ID: 5410-08-01

Route: Principal Arterial

NHS Route: Yes

Initial Study Termini: WIS 30 to I-39/90/94

Length: 5.5 miles

County and Location (see attached project location map): Dane County, City of Madison, Town of Burke

Brief Description/Type of Work:

The purpose of the study is to accommodate existing and future travel demand with a focus on safety issues that affect travel on Stoughton Road.

The need for transportation improvements throughout the US 51 (Stoughton Road) North Study corridor is demonstrated through the following factors:

- Safety, including bicycles and pedestrians
- Travel Demand and Traffic Operations
- Roadway and Geometric Deficiencies

The study will investigate US 51 mainline and intersection options throughout the corridor, including the potential for grade-separating US 51 in specific locations to address safety and operational issues.

Anticipated Federal Permits:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Section 404 permit
- Approval and coordination related to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act
- Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act
- Section 4(f) of the US DOT Act

Anticipated Timeframe to Initiate the Environmental Review Process:

- EA Start Date: May 30, 2024
- EA Notice of Availability: October 3, 2024
- Public Hearing: November 7, 2024
- Anticipated FONSI: March 10, 2025
- Final design begins: May 5, 2025
- Right-of-way acquisition begins: August 9, 2027
- Utility relocations begin: August 9, 2027
- Construction begins – September 11, 2028

Dates included above are dependent on project approval by the Wisconsin Transportation Projects Commission (TPC).

Project Funding: Anticipated State and Federal funds through the Majors Highway Program

The study is listed in the Madison Metropolitan Area and Dane County 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program - US 51/Stoughton Road (WIS 30 to WIS 19) for Preliminary Engineering through completion of the Environmental Document. Project ID 5410-08-01 was authorized in 2022 for \$4 million in state design funds for Planning and Administration in the STIP. The study has not yet been assigned a STIP number for Design and Construction. A project number for these phases will be listed in the STIP prior to FHWA approval of the Environmental Assessment.

Preliminary Project Cost Estimate: Initial project estimate is \$175,000,000

Proposed Environmental Document Type (check the appropriate designation):

_____ It is proposed that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will serve as the environmental document for the proposed project.

 X It is proposed that an Environmental Assessment (EA) will be prepared to determine the appropriate environmental document.

In general, Environmental Assessments that are terminated with a "Finding of No Significant Impact" (FONSI) are not subject to the EIS procedures outlined in 23 USC 139. In some instances, however, FHWA and WisDOT may decide to prepare an EA using the more formal EIS procedures in 23 USC 139. In these instances, prior coordination with FHWA and WisDOT BTS-EPDS is necessary.

 X This EA will be prepared in the usual manner, following the EA procedures in 23 CFR 771.119 and WisDOT's FDM.

_____ Previous coordination between FHWA and WisDOT BTS-EPDS has led to a decision that the more formal environmental documentation process in 23 USC 139 **WILL** be used in preparing the Environmental Assessment for this project.

Please provide confirmation of your receipt of this letter and supporting documentation. If you have questions, please call Mike Helmrick at (920) 492-7738 or email michael.helmrick@dot.wi.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Barry Paye

3F13053827A84D7

Barry Paye, Director

Bureau of Technical Services

cc: Lisa Hemesath, Environmental Protection Specialist - FHWA Wisconsin Division Office
Michelle Gehrke, Transportation Engineer – FHWA Wisconsin Division Office
Dave Platz, Major Projects Oversight Manager – FHWA Wisconsin Division Office
Glenn Fulkerson, Division Administrator – FHWA Wisconsin Division Office
Linda Swann, Deputy Division Administrator – FHWA Wisconsin Division Office
Mike Helmrick, WisDOT Region Liaison BTS-EPDS
Jessica McDonald, WisDOT SW Region Environmental Coordinator
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Michelle Howe, WisDOT SW Region Major Studies Supervisor
Van Walling, WisDOT SW Region Liaison BPD
Travis Buros, WisDOT SW Region Liaison BPD
Jim Oettinger, WisDOT SW Region Project Development Chief
Mike Finkenbinder, WisDOT Major Studies Program Manager

Enclosures: Study location map
Updated Schedule

Dan Schrum

From: Berens, Jeff - DOT <Jeff.Berens@dot.wi.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 12:22 PM
To: Dan Schrum
Subject: FW: US 51 Stoughton Road North - Project Initiation Letter (Project ID# 5410-0801)
Attachments: Stoughton Road PIL.pdf

From: Hemesath, Lisa (FHWA) <lisa.hemesath@dot.gov>
Sent: Monday, June 03, 2024 4:25 PM
To: Paye, Barry - DOT <Barry.Paye@dot.wi.gov>; Berens, Jeff - DOT <Jeff.Berens@dot.wi.gov>; Helmrick, Michael - DOT <Michael.Helmrick@dot.wi.gov>
Cc: Gehrke, Michelle <michelle.gehrke@dot.gov>; Perna, Nicholas <nicholas.perna@dot.gov>; Fulkerson, Glenn (FHWA) <Glenn.Fulkerson@dot.gov>; Swann, Linda - FHWA <linda.swann@dot.gov>; Forlenza, Mary (FHWA) <mary.forlenza@dot.gov>
Subject: US 51 Stoughton Road North - Project Initiation Letter (Project ID# 5410-0801)

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Thank you for the submittal of the Process Initiation Letter for the US 51 Stoughton Road North. FHWA acknowledges and accepts the letter as the initiation of the EA.

As you know, I and Michelle, have been assigned to work with WisDOT to advance the project.

We understand that the current project schedule indicates NEPA will be initiated in May 2024 and completed by March 2025. Should at any time in this NEPA project development we determine that there are significant impacts, we will need to pause the project and initiate the 23 USC 139 process for EISs.

I look forward to working with you and the project team on this project.

Regards,

Lisa Hemesath
Environmental Protection Specialist/FHWA Tribal Liaison
FHWA – Wisconsin Division Office
City Center West
525 Junction Road, Suite 8000
Madison WI 53717

(608) 829-7503