

US 51 Stoughton to McFarland
WisDOT ID: 5845-06-03
January 2021

The US 51 Stoughton to McFarland Environmental Assessment (EA) study extends approximately 18 miles from I-39 east of the city of Stoughton to the US 12/18 Beltline in Madison. The corridor goes through the city of Stoughton and the Village of McFarland. The US 51 study corridor is an important commuter route in southeastern Dane County. **Safety issues, deteriorated pavement, travel demand concerns, and a lack of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations require improvements to the roadway.** A summary of the primary corridor needs is listed below.

Project Timeline

- 2004 – Needs Assessment completed
- 2005 – WisDOT authorized to begin environmental study develop options to address corridor needs
 - Due to the scope of the improvement alternatives that were considered, and the potential impacts an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was determined to be the appropriate form of environmental documentation
- May 2006 – Public Involvement Meeting (PIM) to present alternative concepts
- May 2009 – PIM to present refined alternatives for public comment
- April 2011 – PIM to provide study update and gather public comment on refined and dismissed alternatives
- October 2012 – PIM to provide study update and gather public comment on refined alternatives
- December 2013 – Draft EIS ready to be published; study put on hold due to federal fiscal constraint requirements
- 2014 – WisDOT & the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) develop and propose a tiered EIS approach to completing the environmental document
 - Stage 1 – Environmental Assessment (EA) to address near-term corridor needs that could be funded (intersection safety and operations, pavement deterioration, bicycle/pedestrian accommodations)
 - Stage 2 – Tier 1 EIS to address longer-term corridor needs that would be funded at some point in the future (potential capacity expansion)
- August 2015 – PIM to present tiered approach and gather public comment
- November 2015 – WisDOT identifies Alternative H as the preferred alternative for the corridor
- December 2015 – WisDOT proposes the removal of the Tiered EIS process from the US 51 study documentation because funding for Tier 1 EIS improvements was not anticipated to occur within the planning horizon
- March 2016 – EA ready to be published; study put on hold due to statewide priorities and funding limitations
- March 2019 – Study restarted after it was determined that funding would be available for construction of the preferred alternative
- September 2019 - PIM to provide an update on the study and gather public input
- October 2020 – Virtual PIM to provide study update and gather public input
- November 2020 – EA document signed by FHWA

- December 2020 – US 51 Study approved for funding by the Transportation Projects Commission (TPC)
- January 2021 – Notice of EA document availability and opportunity to request a public hearing sent to project stakeholders
- March 2021 – Public hearing (if requested)
- Spring/Summer 2021 – Anticipated Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) by FHWA, completion of study
- Construction for all segments within the corridor will occur between 2025 and 2029.
 - Final design is usually nailed down about 2 years before the project letting at the Design Study Report stage to allow for utility coordination and real estate acquisition.
 - Project letting is usually 2-5 months before the construction starts depending on the letting month.

Project Needs

- Safety – Several areas along the corridor have total crash rates and injury crash rates higher than the statewide average for similar roadways. Safety-related comments and concerns for the US 51 corridor have been expressed frequently by the public throughout the study, with the majority of comments about unsafe rural intersections and the difficulty in getting onto and off of US 51 safely during peak travel times.
- Pavement – For the majority of the US 51 corridor, the underlying pavement structure is near or surpassed its useful life. Underlying pavement age along US 51 varies from 0 to 59 years old. Distressed pavement is visible as extensive longitudinal and transverse pavement cracking. Cracks in the pavement have propagated to the surface from the underlying, failing pavement structure.
- Travel Demand – In the design year (2045), without improvements, the anticipated congestion along US 51 will either be at or near a level considered undesirable by WisDOT standards. Under these conditions, delays at side road approaches and resulting driver frustration could lead to an increase in unsafe driving behavior and potential crash concerns.
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations – The lack of bicycle facilities in the rural areas, and lack of, or discontinuous, network of existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities in urban areas limit the use of nonmotorized travel modes in the US 51 corridor. Public input has indicated support for improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the corridor.

Proposed Improvements

WisDOT has identified a preferred alternative, Alternative H, for the corridor. Alternative H focuses on rebuilding the existing roadway with the addition of safety and operational improvements at intersections. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are improved where feasible. Below is a summary of the improvement concepts included in Alternative H:

- Reconstruction of 2-lane US 51 east of Stoughton, which includes replacing the pavement structure and improving vertical curves and intersections to design standards. In addition, a passing lane is added in the eastbound direction between Tower Drive and Washington Road.

- Reconstruction of 2- and 4-lane US 51 through downtown Stoughton. Sidewalk is proposed where it does not currently exist.
- Urban 4-lane reconstruction of US 51 along the west side of Stoughton, which includes expansion of the 0.8-mile section from Roby Road to County B (east) from 2 to 4 lanes. Sidewalk is proposed on both sides of US 51 through this area.
- Reconstruction of the 2-lane rural US 51 between Stoughton and McFarland, which includes the addition of left and right turn lanes at lower volume intersections and roundabouts at the County B (east) and Exchange Street intersections. In addition, the intersection of US 51 and County B/AB intersection will be converted to a roundabout as a separate, stand-alone project scheduled for construction in 2024. This project was removed from the US 51 study because it qualified for safety funding.
- Urban 4-lane reconstruction in McFarland from Exchange Street to Larson Beach Road. Sidewalk is proposed on both sides of US 51 through this area.
 - Construction Scheduled in 2029, Advanceable to 2028
 - Delivery of the project will be based on the Advanceable construction dates. Design Study Report and Transportation Plat to be delivered February 2025. This will allow 31 months for the purchase of real estate and relocating utilities prior to construction. Final plan set will be delivered October 2027.
- Pavement replacement in McFarland between Larson Beach Road and Terminal Drive/Voges Road. Includes intersection control improvements, either signals or roundabouts, at the Siggelkow interchange ramp terminals, the addition of auxiliary lanes north of the Siggelkow interchange, and the replacement of the southbound bridge over Taylor Road.
 - Construction Scheduled in Fall of 2025.
 - Design Study Report and Transportation Plat to be delivered in October 2022. This will allow 24 months for the purchase of real estate and relocating utilities prior to construction. This delivery schedule is expedited. Final plan set will be delivered in October 2024.

Project Cost

The total project cost for the preferred alternative for the corridor was determined after completing a FHWA led Cost Estimate Review (CER) in January 2020. The total estimated cost for the project, including design, construction, real estate, and utilities, is \$174.1 M (\$2020).

Key Stakeholders

A technical advisory committee (TAC) and a policy advisory committee (PAC) were formed to assist with the alternative analysis and identification and implementation of a preferred alternative for the corridor.

TAC consists of representatives from:

- Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Department of Natural Resources
- Federal Highway Administration
- Dane County Highway and Planning Departments
- City of Stoughton
- Village of McFarland
- Town of Dunn
- Town of Rutland

PAC consists of elected officials from:

- City of Stoughton
- Village of McFarland
- Dane County Highway Department
- Town of Albion
- Town of Dunkirk
- Town of Dunn
- Town of Pleasant Springs
- Town of Rutland

Meetings and Correspondence with the Village of McFarland

- Policy Advisor Committee (PAC)
 - 15 meetings (Village representatives attended 6 meetings)
 - Village President, Administrator attended
- Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
 - 15 meetings (Village representatives attended 9 meetings)
 - Public Works Director attended
- Agency Meetings
 - 2 meetings (Village representatives attended 1 meeting)
 - Village Administrator attended
- Individual Village Meetings
 - 5 meetings
 - Village President, Administrator, Public Works Director, Chamber of Commerce, etc.

Regular recurring meetings are scheduled with the Village for the 4th Wednesday of every month starting on January 27th. For the time being meetings are being conducted through Microsoft Teams.



Alternative H – WisDOT Preferred Alternative

