Wisconsin Department of Transportation

US 51 Corridor Study Update

Stoughton to McFarland
I-39/90 to US 12/18, Dane County

July 2015

Contacts

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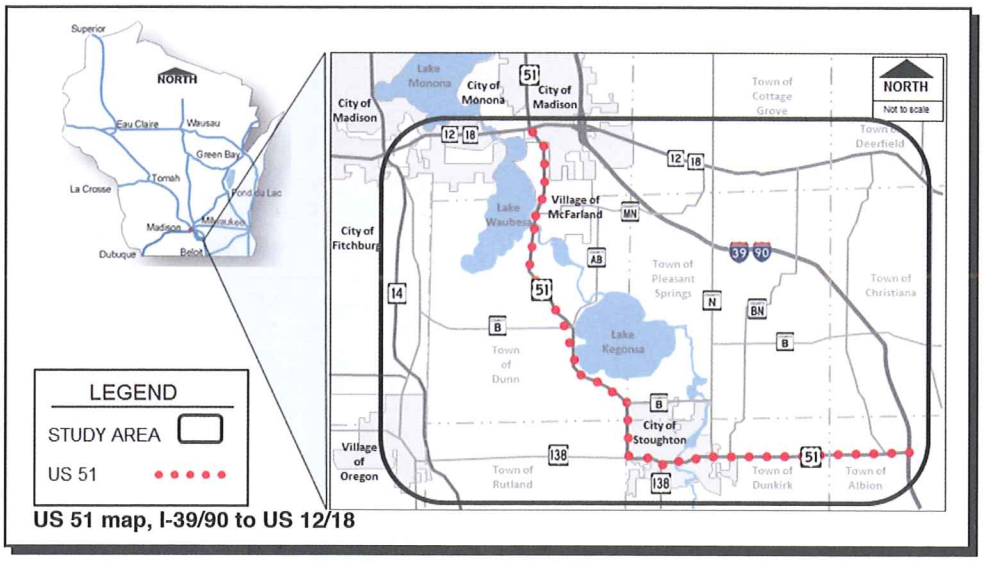
http://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/projects/by-region/sw/5139901218/default.aspx

Mission Statement

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



US 51 map, I-39/90 to US 12/18

Status of US 51 Corridor Study, I-39/90 to US 12/18 (Stoughton – McFarland)

The US 51 Corridor Study, from I-39/90 to US 12/18 (Stoughton to McFarland) is an ongoing study to evaluate alternatives that will improve safety and congestion along the corridor and address needs of bicyclists and pedestrians. The most recent public involvement meeting for the study was held in October 2012. At that time, information about the three corridor alternatives was presented and public comments were recorded for inclusion in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The three alternatives included the following:

- **No Build:** Normal roadway maintenance and currently programmed resurfacing projects only.
- **Alternative A (Low Build):** Safety improvements at various intersections and reconstruction of 2-lane US 51 east of Stoughton.
- **Alternative B (4-Lane Expansion):** 4-lane expansion of US 51 between Stoughton and McFarland, 4-lane Stoughton Bypass, safety improvements in Stoughton and McFarland, and reconstruction of 2-lane US 51 east of Stoughton.

The DEIS was completed at the end of 2013, but it was not published. Due to fiscal constraint requirements for all WisDOT environmental studies, a project must be funded within six years of the approval of the environmental document. Based on statewide priorities, it was determined the US 51 corridor alternatives proposed in the DEIS could not be funded in their entirety within six years.

WisDOT understands there are safety, operations, and pavement issues along the corridor that need to be addressed. The department has worked with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to examine possible options to fund a fiscally constrained improvement project that would address the existing safety, operations, and pavement issues on the corridor while still addressing the purpose and need of the study.

It was decided to modify the existing DEIS into two environmental documents: an Environmental Assessment (EA) to address near-term corridor needs, and a Tier 1 EIS that addresses the long-term corridor needs.

See inside for more information on the EA for near-term improvements and Tier 1 EIS for long-term improvements.

PUBLIC MEETING SCHEDULED

Wednesday, August 26, 2015
5 to 8 P.M.
Stoughton High School
600 Lincoln Avenue • Stoughton, WI

Open-house style format with a formal presentation starting at 6 P.M.

Maps and exhibits will provide details about the study, needs, alternatives, impacts, and project schedule. WisDOT invites the public to participate and provide comments.

A meeting reminder will be mailed in early August.

US 51 corridor improvements will be developed in two stages

To accommodate the funding limitations, WisDOT will document the US 51 corridor improvements in two stages.

Near-Term Improvements:
In the first stage, WisDOT will prepare an EA for corridor improvements that are anticipated to be funded within six years of completing the document. The EA will document the development of alternatives specific to near-term corridor needs. These alternatives consist of a Low Build and 4-lane expansion options for certain sections and will include intersection improvements (see Figures 1 and 2 on pages 4 and 5). The EA will evaluate the need for the project, compare alternatives, address environmental impacts, and provide opportunities for agency and public input. It is anticipated the EA will be completed at the end of 2016.

In addition to the DEIS alternatives previously identified, the EA will document the development of a new alternative, Alternative H. Alternative H is a "hybrid" that combines aspects of Alternative A (Low Build) and Alternative B (4-Lane Expansion) to address the near-term needs of the corridor. Alternative H will have 2- and 4-lane reconstruction sections and intersection improvements (see Figure 3 on page 6).

Long-Term Improvements:
The second stage uses a Tiered EIS process for corridor improvements that are not anticipated to be funded for construction within six years of the EA approval. The process begins with a Tier 1 EIS document that will analyze the project on a broad scale and identify a preferred corridor location for potential future improvements. When funding becomes available, Tier 2 environmental documents will be prepared with a greater degree of engineering detail for specific improvements.

For US 51, WisDOT will prepare a Tier 1 EIS that evaluates a general corridor location for the potential expansion of US 51 between Stoughton and McFarland and a potential bypass of Stoughton (see Figure 4 on page 7).

The Tier 1 EIS will identify:

- *Selected corridor location:* Selection of the corridor location in Tier 1 will consider the range of potential impacts as well as agency and public input.
- *Corridor width:* Selecting a wide corridor in Tier 1 leaves flexibility for specific alignment options to be determined in Tier 2. The Tier 1 corridor may be widened at potential intersection locations and other areas where needed depending on project features, topography, environmental resources, or other factors.
- *Proposed termini for subsequent projects:* WisDOT will identify possible logical sections for implementation of future Tier 2 improvements.

After completion of the Tier 1 EIS, WisDOT could develop Tier 2 environmental documents for subsections of the corridor; the Tier 2 documents would include detailed analysis and identification of a preferred alternative.

The DOT will present information about this two-stage assessment and documentation plan for the US 51 corridor study at the August 26, 2015 public meeting. Maps of alternatives and summaries of impacts will be available for public comment. Updates of the study corridor crash analysis and traffic modeling and additional evaluation of pavement conditions will also be available. Exhibits showing impacts for each alternative and potential mitigation items for parks and historic sites will be displayed.

Project Schedule

The anticipated project schedule is shown below for the EA and Tier 1 EIS:

Environmental Assessment (EA)

August 26, 2015	Public involvement meeting to address goals and alternatives of EA and Tier 1 EIS
Spring 2016	Draft EA available for public review / Public hearing on the Draft EA
Fall 2016	Final EA; FHWA reviews for Finding of No Significant Impact applicability

Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Fall 2016	Public involvement meeting for Tier 1 EIS
2017	Draft Tier 1 EIS available for public review /Public hearing on the Tier 1 EIS
2018	Final Tier 1 EIS and Record of Decision (ROD)

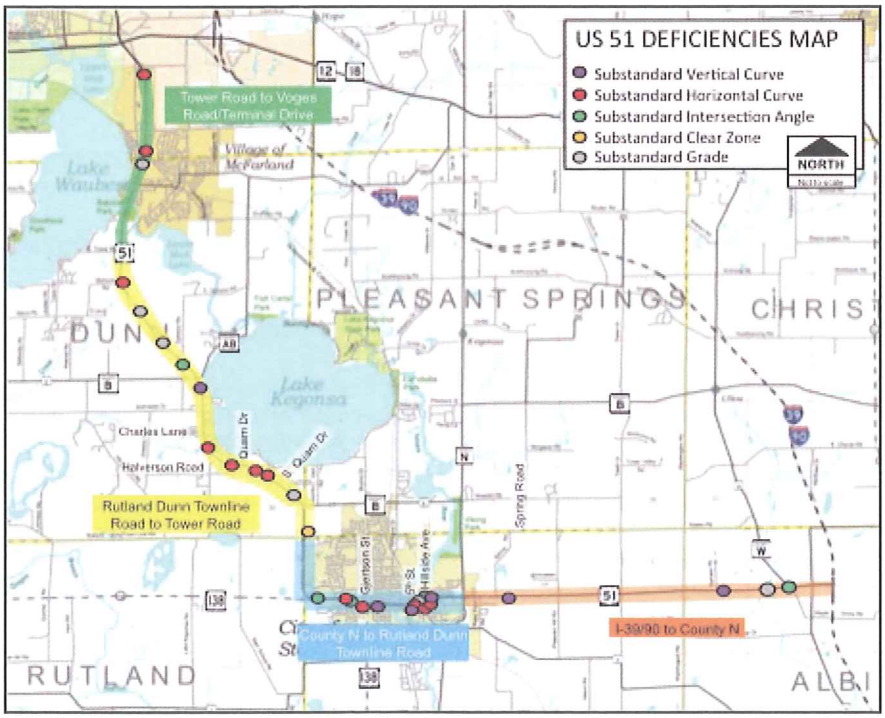
Project purpose and need

The purpose of this project is to provide a safe and efficient transportation system in the US 51 corridor that serves present and long-term travel demand while minimizing disturbance to the environment. The first five primary needs factors were established during the US 51 Needs Assessment in 2003. Since that time, a sixth need factor concerning pavement conditions has been added. The six primary need factors are described as follows:

- Safety should be improved because crash analysis indicates crash rates are above the statewide average in one or more categories.
- Travel demand and capacity should be addressed because traffic projections and traffic modeling indicate travel within the US 51 corridor will deteriorate with the projected increasing volume of vehicles.
- Roadway deficiencies that may impact safety and mobility were identified at 22 locations. See the Deficiencies map below.
- Long-Term Planning and Corridor Preservation are needed to preserve a functional corridor to carry the US 51 route between its rational endpoints (the termini of I-39/90 and US 12/18) and also meet the requirements of a principal arterial and National Highway System route.
- Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations are lacking or discontinuous, limiting the use of nonmotorized travel modes in the US 51 study corridor.
- The corridor pavement is aging and needs replacement.

View of US 51 looking north toward County B/AB.

View of US 51 through historic downtown Stoughton.



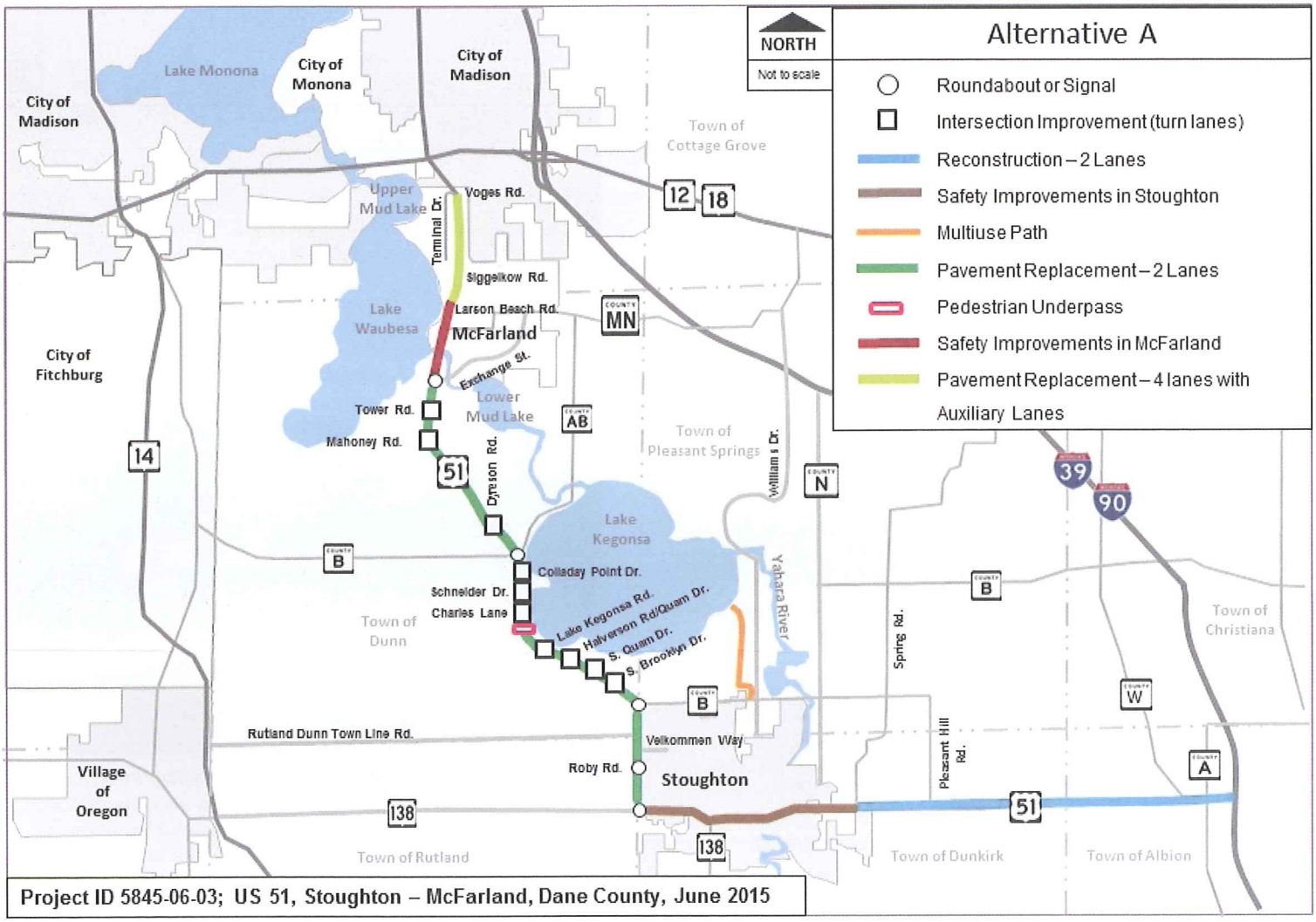


Figure 1 - Alternative A (Low Build)

Alternative A would provide for the improvements listed below. This alternative meets fiscal constraint requirements.

- Reconstruction of 2-lane US 51 east of Stoughton.
- Safety improvements in Stoughton.
- Roundabout or signal at five intersections.
- Other intersection improvements.
- Rural pavement replacement (Stoughton to McFarland).
- Safety improvements in McFarland.
- Pavement replacement between Larson Beach Road and Terminal Drive/Voges Road in McFarland, Siggelkow Road interchange ramp improvements and addition of auxiliary lanes north of Siggelkow Road.
- Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

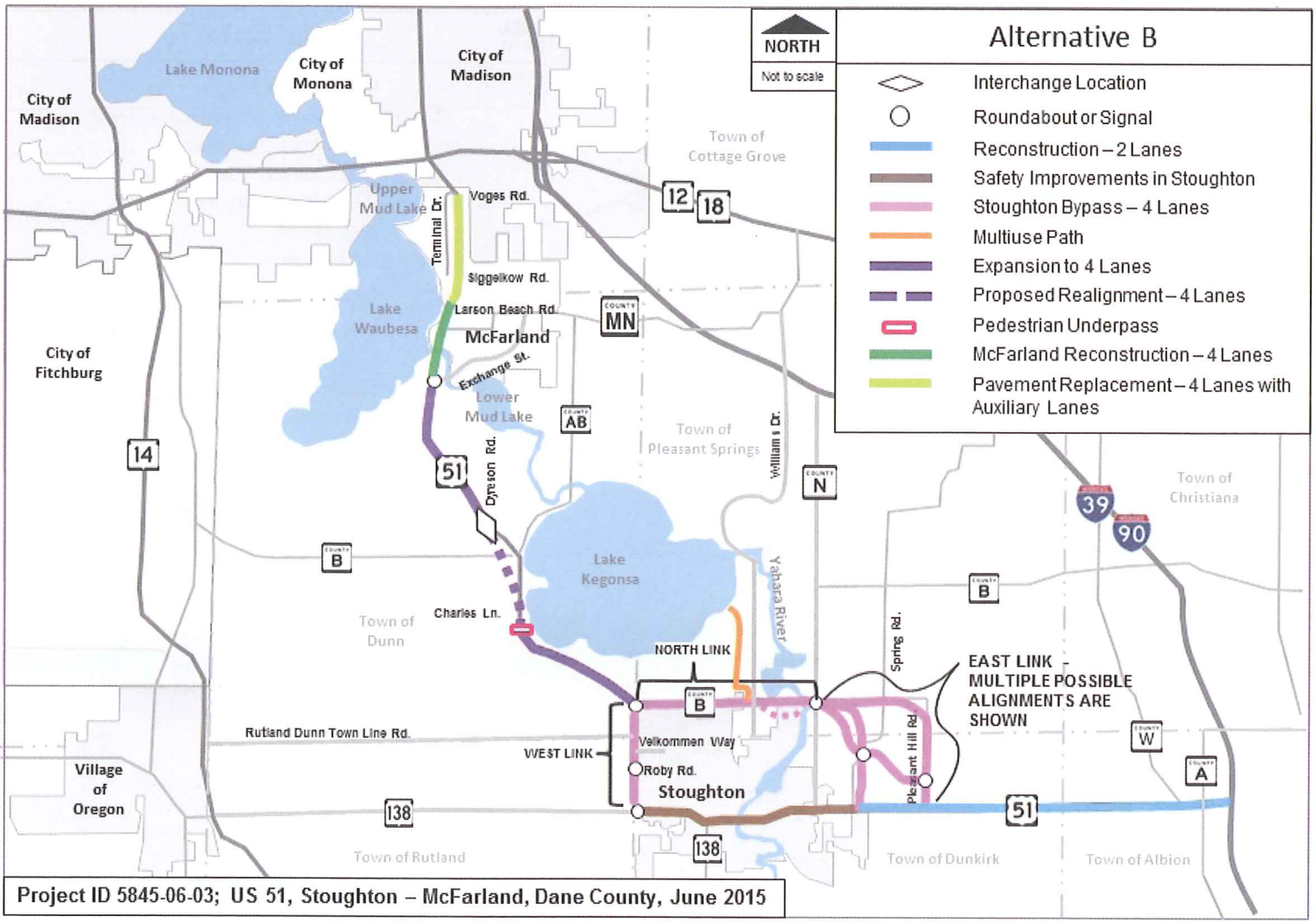


Figure 2 - Alternative B (4-Lane Expansion)

Alternative B would provide for the 4-lane expansion of US 51. This alternative does not meet fiscal constraints. It provides the following improvements:

- Reconstruction of 2-lane US 51 east of Stoughton.
- Safety improvements in Stoughton.
- Construct 4-lane Stoughton Bypass. There are multiple options considered at different locations along the Stoughton Bypass. The Stoughton Bypass would become US 51 from the intersection with County B (east) to the reconnection point on US 51 east of Stoughton.
- Rural 4-lane expansion (Stoughton to McFarland).
- Urban 4-lane reconstruction in McFarland.
- Pavement replacement between Larson Beach Road and Terminal Drive/Voges Road in McFarland, Siggelkow Road interchange ramp improvements and addition of auxiliary lanes north of Siggelkow Road.
- Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

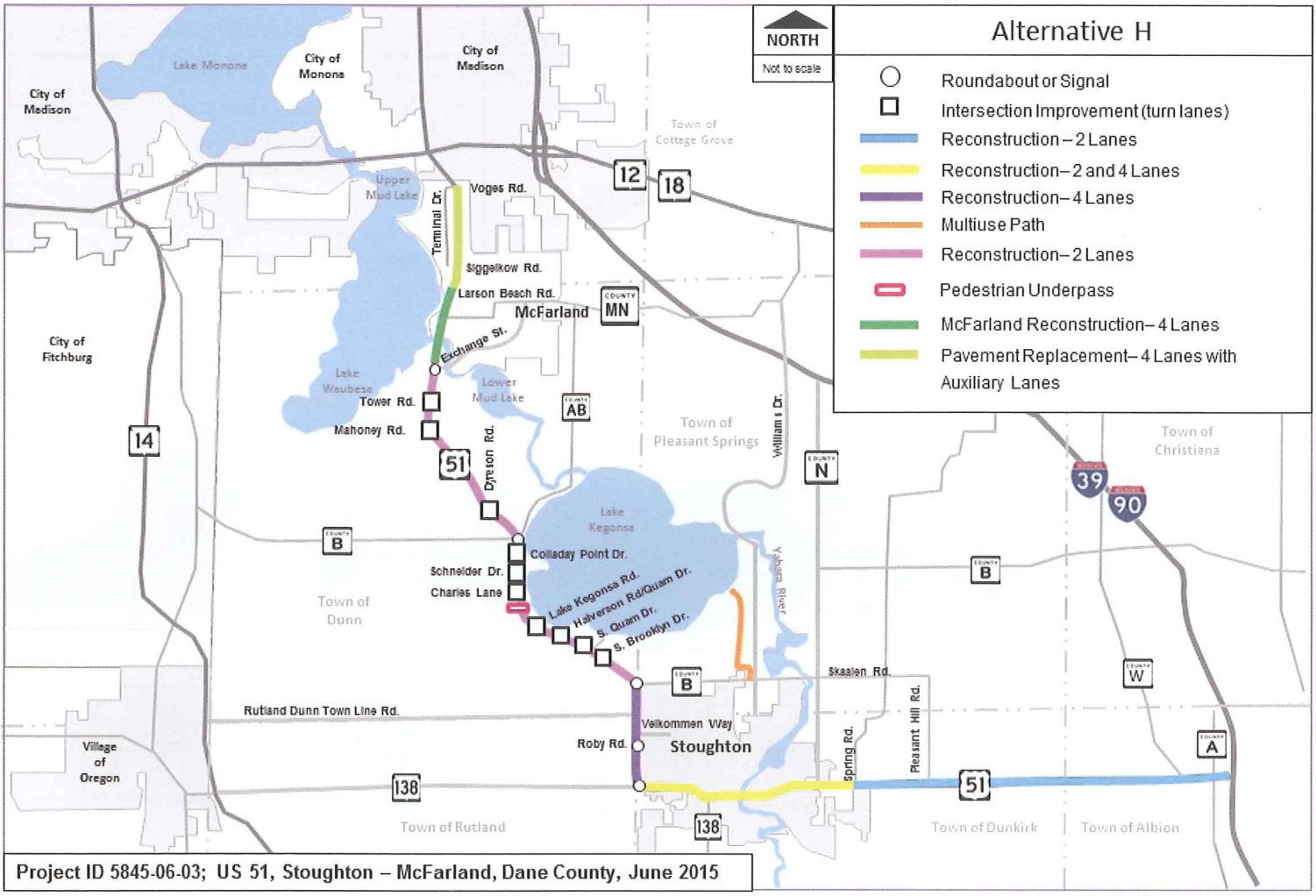


Figure 3 - Alternative H (Hybrid)

Alternative H is a "hybrid" of the Alternatives A and B. It provides for a 4-lane roadway between WIS 138 (west) and County B (East) on the west side of Stoughton, but does not increase the number of lanes elsewhere. This alternative meets fiscal constraint requirements. It provides the following improvements:

- Reconstruction of 2-lane US 51 east of Stoughton.
- Reconstruction of existing 2- and 4-lane US 51 through downtown Stoughton.
- Urban and rural 4-lane reconstruction along the west side of Stoughton.
- Reconstruction of rural 2-lane US 51 (Stoughton to McFarland) with intersection improvements.
- Urban 4-lane reconstruction in McFarland.
- Pavement replacement between Larson Beach Road and Terminal Drive/Voges Road in McFarland, Siggelkow Road interchange ramp improvements and addition of auxiliary lanes north of Siggelkow Road.
- Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

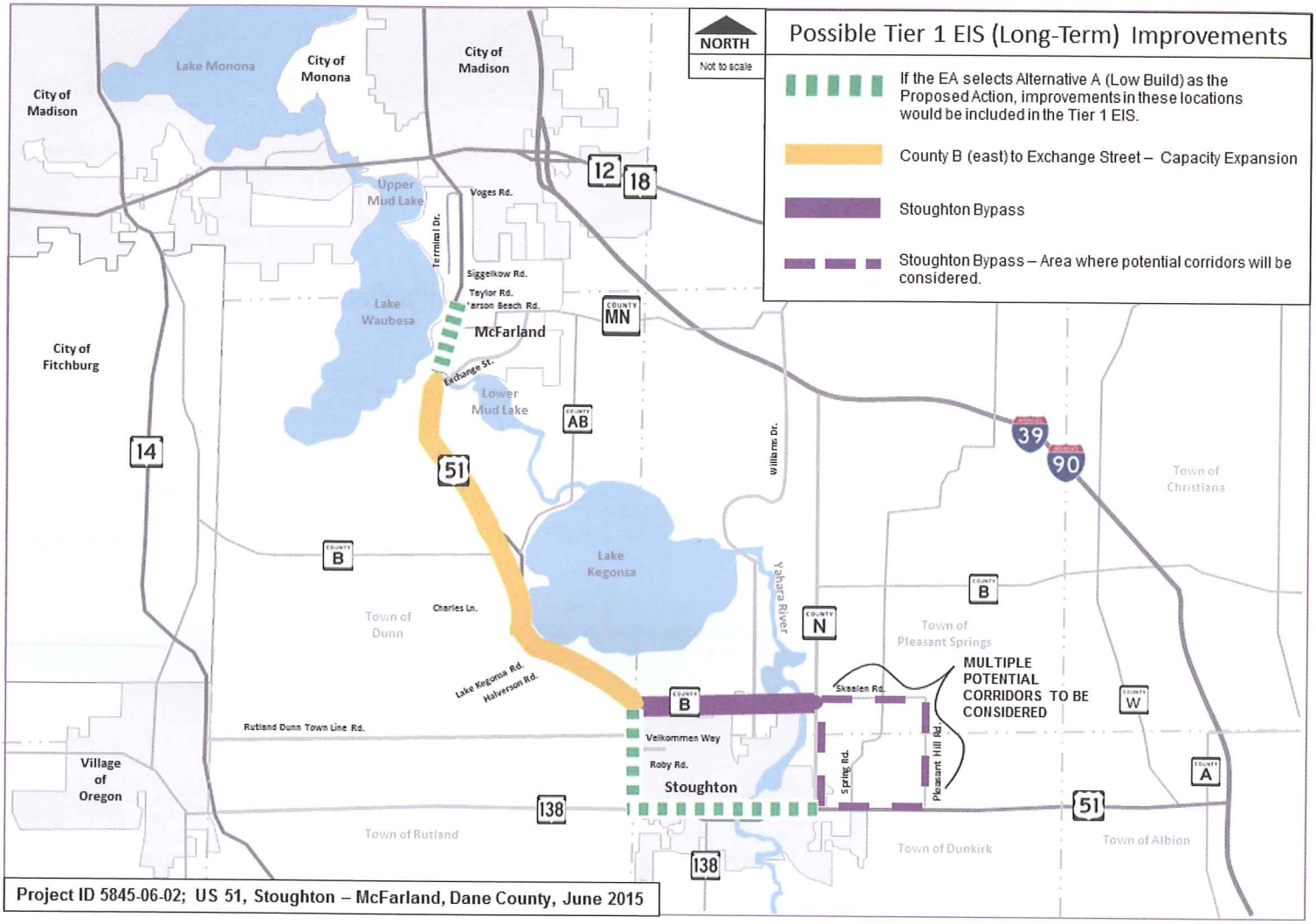


Figure 4 - Long-Term Improvements

The possible long-term improvements shown in Figure 4 would address the need factors of safety, travel demand, and corridor preservation. The Tier 1 EIS would identify a proposed corridor for additional future improvements following the completion of the EA. Corridors explored in the Tier 1 EIS could include bypass options in the areas identified in Figure 4.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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Inside: Notice of public meeting on August 26, 2015

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