Wisconsin Rapids East Arterial Feasibility Study

Mike O'Meara
WisDOT Project Manager
1681 2nd Avenue South
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495

What's next?

After the first public information meeting, the study team will use public input to assist in refining the preliminary alternatives. Upcoming study activities will include the following:

- Review the input received at the first public information meeting
- Refine the preliminary alternatives
- Develop preliminary intersection concepts
- Develop more detailed river crossing alternatives
- Begin narrowing the range of preliminary alternatives
- Continue work on the environmental document

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

WISCONSIN RAPIDS

East Arterial Study | Wood County

September 2007 Newsletter

Contact Information

For more information about the East Arterial Feasibility Study, contact one of the following study team members:

Mike O'Meara
WisDOT Project Manager
1681 2nd Avenue South
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495
(715) 421-8313
michael.omeara@dot.state.wi.us

Dan Dupies
Consultant Project Manager
CH2M HILL
135 South 84th Street,
Suite 325
Milwaukee, WI 53214
(414) 847-0206
ddupies@ch2m.com

Public Meeting Scheduled

The first public information meeting will be conducted Wednesday, September 26. (see page 3 for details).

Wisconsin Rapids East Arterial Feasibility Study

Introduction

This newsletter is intended to update citizens on the Wisconsin Rapids East Arterial Feasibility Study in Wood County. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), in cooperation with Wisconsin Rapids, Port Edwards, the town of Grand Rapid and Wood County, initiated a study to examine the feasibility of extending an arterial roadway from the intersection of WIS 54/73 (Letendre Avenue) in Port Edwards, to the intersection of WIS 54 and Wood County W in Wisconsin Rapids. The proposed corridor, which would require a new bridge crossing of the Wisconsin River, would follow the Wood County Z corridor across WIS 13 and proceed northeast along 20th Street (see map on page 3).

Study purpose

The purpose of the study is to improve the safety and efficiency of state highways in the Wisconsin Rapids area. In addition, the study is intended to address future traffic demands and improve local and through traffic access for commercial and industrial uses in the study area. The existing state highways in the study area serve not only as important segments of the local street network but also as through routes on the state highway system. This dual function places significance on balancing the need to provide access to local development while providing safe and efficient operations for through traffic.

Need for the East Arterial

The new connection between Letendre Avenue in Port Edwards and Wood County W in Wisconsin Rapids provided by the East Arterial would remove traffic from 2nd Avenue, the Riverview Expressway, and 8th Street. Removing traffic from these roadways has the potential to address two problems with the existing road network. First, traffic volumes on 8th Street are at levels where operational problems are expected. 8th Street has two travel lanes in each direction and a center two-way, left turn lane. According to national research, roads of this type experience operational problems when traffic volumes are between 24,000 and 28,000 vehicles per day. Traffic volumes on most of 8th Street in 2006 ranged from 24,000 to 29,500 vehicles per day. Traffic volumes in 2035, the project's design year, are projected to be between 29,000 and 39,000 vehicles per day. Second, during the 5-year period 2000 through 2004, there were 806 crashes on 2nd Avenue, the Riverview Expressway, and 8th Street. The total crash rate and injury crash rate for those three roads were higher than the statewide average for similar routes—8th Street had the most crashes and the highest crash rate. By removing traffic from 2nd Avenue, the Riverview Expressway, and 8th Street, the proposed East Arterial has the potential to prevent the existing crash situation from worsening.

What the study includes

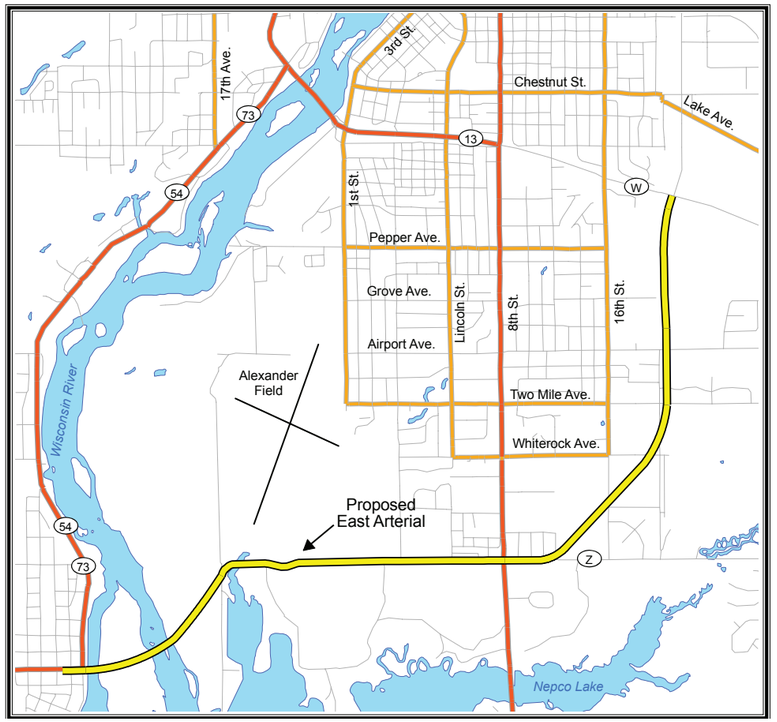
Key study activities include the following:

- Data gathering – evaluate existing transportation facilities, inventory land uses in the study area, and review area development plans
- Alternatives – refine alternatives from the 2025 South Wood County Area Transportation Study, develop new alternatives, screen preliminary alternatives and select a recommended alternative
- Environmental studies – determine whether there are threatened and endangered species, archaeological and historic properties, or hazardous materials along the proposed East Arterial
- Agency coordination – obtain input from state and federal review agencies
- Community involvement – coordinate with local officials, establish a project advisory committee, hold public information meetings, distribute newsletters and conduct interest group meetings

Information meeting scheduled, public invited to attend

WisDOT invites the public to attend the first public information meeting for the Wisconsin Rapids East Arterial Feasibility Study on **Wednesday, September 26, 2007**. This meeting will be conducted between 5 and 7 p.m. at the McMillan Memorial Library (All Purpose Room), 409 East Grand Avenue, Wisconsin Rapids. The meeting will be open house and interested persons may stop in between 5 and 7 p.m. to visit with the project team, learn more about the study, review displays and share ideas and concerns. If you cannot attend the meeting, but would like to receive information about the study, contact one of the project team members (See page 1 for contact information).

The library is wheelchair accessible. Hearing impaired persons needing assistance may call Mike O'Meara via the Wisconsin Telecommunication Relay System by dialing 711. To allow time for arranging assistance, please call no later than September 21, 2007.



WISCONSIN RAPIDS

East Arterial Feasibility Study | Wood County

Public Information Meeting

Meeting No. 1

September 26, 2007

Wisconsin Rapids
Port Edwards
Town of Grand Rapids
Wood County

WISCONSIN RAPIDS

East Arterial Feasibility Study | Wood County

Welcome to the first public information meeting for the Wisconsin Rapids East Arterial Feasibility Study. The purpose of today's meeting is to:

- Introduce the study team
- Review the study scope and purpose
- Present the results of our data gathering efforts
- Obtain your comments and thoughts on the preliminary range of alternatives

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), in cooperation with Wisconsin Rapids, Port Edwards, the town of Grand Rapids and Wood County, are studying the feasibility of a new road known as the Wisconsin Rapids East Arterial. The concept of the East Arterial goes back to the mid-1970s. It is currently shown on Wisconsin Rapids' official street map.

The East Arterial would extend from the intersection of WIS 54/73 (Letendre Avenue) in Port Edwards to the intersection of WIS 54 and Wood County W in Wisconsin Rapids. The proposed corridor, which would require a new bridge crossing of the Wisconsin River, would follow the Wood County Z corridor across WIS 13 and proceed northeast along the 20th Street corridor (see map on page 2).

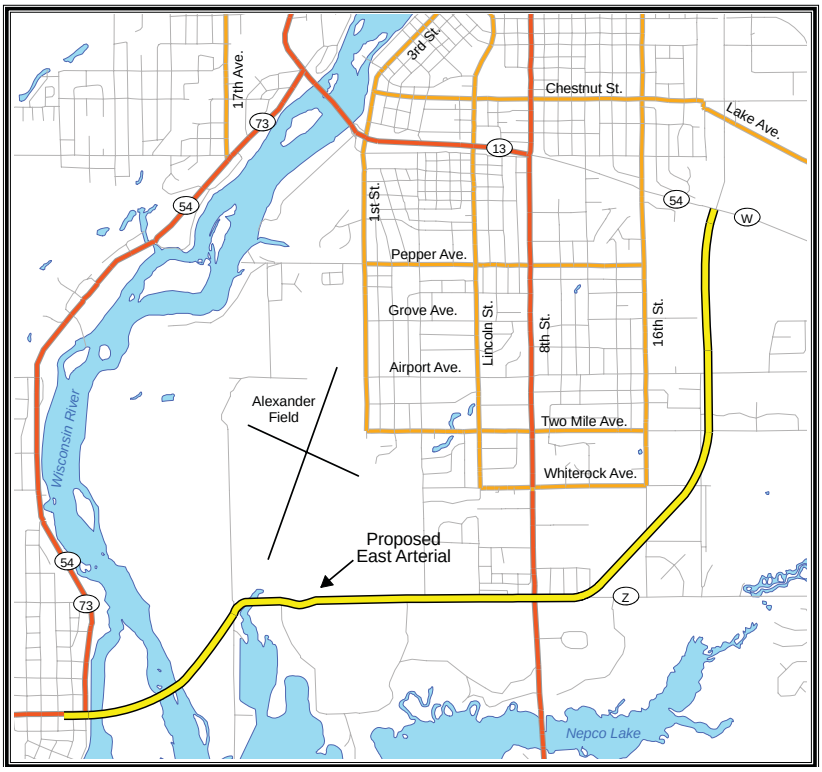
WisDOT representatives are here to discuss the study and to listen to your thoughts. The exhibits at tonight's meeting describe challenges with the existing road network that the East Arterial would address.

Please review the displays, ask questions, and share your ideas, suggestions, or concerns. If you would like to provide written comments, please fill out the comment sheet at the back of this handout and leave it with us today or mail it in by October 10, 2007.

Thank you for participating in this important study.

Why the study is being done

The purpose of the study is to improve the safety and efficiency of the state highways in the Wisconsin Rapids area. In addition, the study is intended to address future traffic demand and improve local and through traffic access to commercial and industrial uses in the study area. The existing state highways in the study area serve not only as important segments of the local street network, but also as through routes on the state highway system. This dual function requires balancing the need to provide access to local development with providing safe and efficient operations for through traffic.



Need for the East Arterial

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Traffic volumes on 8th Street are at the point where operational problems are expected. 8th Street has two travel lanes in each direction and a center two-way, left turn lane. According to national research, roads of this type experience operational problems when traffic volumes are between 24,000 and 28,000 vehicles per day. Traffic volumes on most of 8th Street in 2006 ranged from 24,000 to 29,500 vehicles per day. Traffic volumes in 2035, the project's design year, would be between 29,000 and 39,000 vehicles per day.

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What the study includes

Key study activities include the following:

- Data gathering – evaluate existing transportation facilities, inventory land uses in the study area, and review area development plans
- Alternatives – refine alternatives from the 2025 South Wood County Area Transportation Study, develop new alternatives, screen preliminary alternatives and select a recommended alternative
- Agency Coordination – obtain input from state and federal review agencies
- Community Involvement – coordinate with local officials, establish a project advisory committee, hold public information meetings, distribute news letters and conduct interest group meetings
- Environmental Studies – determine whether there are threatened and endangered species, archaeological and historic properties or hazardous materials along the proposed East Arterial

Environmental studies conducted as part of this study

Listed below is a brief description of the environmental field studies conducted as part of this project. The purpose of the field studies was to identify resources along the study corridor that should be avoided to the extent practicable by the East Arterial alternatives.

- The project team evaluated whether there is suitable nesting and breeding habitat for the state threatened Red-Shouldered Hawk, Blanding's Turtle and Wood Turtle in the Wisconsin River crossing area and adjacent to Wood County Z and Nepco Lake. While suitable habitat for the species exists, none of the species were observed in the project area.
- An archaeology study was conducted with particular emphasis on Domtar Island, the Wisconsin River and the area adjacent to Nepco Lake and County Z. Two known prehistoric sites in the area of the Wisconsin River were reconfirmed. Areas of high, medium and low archaeological potential were identified. Areas of high probability were identified along the shoreline of Domtar Island, the east bank of the Wisconsin River and an area adjacent to One Mile Creek.
- A historic structures survey was conducted to determine whether any project-area structures are potentially eligible to the National Register of Historical Places. Structures at the intersection of WIS 54 (Letendre Avenue) and Wisconsin River Drive and the Griffith State Nursery may be eligible.
- The project team evaluated upland and wetland habitat in the study area. The upland evaluation included developing a list of dominant plant species and general description of wildlife habitat suitability. The wetland evaluation identified wetlands boundaries on Domtar Island, the east bank of the Wisconsin River and an area adjacent to Nepco Lake
- The project team investigated the potential for hazardous material to be located along the proposed East Arterial. Meetings were conducted with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and representatives from Domtar.

What's next?

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- Continue work on environmental document

Study contacts

To keep informed about the Wisconsin Rapids East Arterial Feasibility Study, you may contact one of the following study team members.

Michael O'Meara, P.E.
WisDOT Project Manager
1681 2nd Avenue South
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495
(715) 421-8313
michael.omeara@dot.state.wi.us

Dan Dupies, Consultant Project Manager
CH2M HILL
135 South 84th Street, Suite 325
Milwaukee, WI 53214
(414) 847-0206
ddupies@ch2m.com

WISCONSIN RAPIDS

East Arterial Feasibility Study | Wood County

Public Comment Form

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You may either leave the completed form with us today or mail it in by October 10, 2007. Thank you for your interest and assistance with this important study.

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WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____

Fold on Dashed Lines, Tape, Stamp, and Mail

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Place
Stamp
Here

Mike O'Meara
WisDOT Project Manager
1681 2nd Avenue South
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495

WISCONSIN RAPIDS

East Arterial Feasibility Study | Wood County

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Date 9-26-07

I CAN SEE PROBLEMS WITH GRIFFITH (Z) MERGING INTO PEDERSON ST. BETWEEN WAL-MART AND MY NEIGHBORHOOD. MOST GRIFFITH TRAFFIC AND TRUCKS WOULD COME DOWN MY 2-WAY STREET AND ACCESS FOR MY FAMILY WOULD BE DANGEROUS AND HARD TO CROSS ON TO PEDERSON FROM 12TH 11TH 10TH & 9TH ST. SO. WHICH WOULD BE DEAD ENDED AND REQUIRED TO GO NORTH.

ALSO A LIGHT WOULD BE NEEDED AT 8TH ST AND PEDERSON.

NO TRUCK TRAFFIC IS ALLOWED ON PEDERSON NOW EXCEPT TO DELIVER GOODS. WITH THIS DESIGN IT WOULD MEAN MORE TRUCKS.

ALSO, A NOISE BARRIER TREES, WALL, ? WOULD HELP FOR NOISE IF TRAFFIC NOISE IS HEAVY.

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Name WILLIAM McMAHON

Address 4621-11TH ST. SO

City WIS. RAPIDS State WI

Zip 54494

WISCONSIN RAPIDS

East Arterial Feasibility Study | Wood County

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Date 9/26/07

I believe the Hwy. should come down 32nd St. as originally proposed.

Name Shirley Kotty

Address 4630 Whip-or-Will

City W. R. State WI

Zip 54494

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Date 9-26-07

Do not agree w/ plans + suggestions for alternate route -
No need for this entire project. Traffic is OK as present.
Leave the roads as they are - all suggestions are not necessary - People living in the area do not need this additional noise + congestion - All this does is relieve one area problem + pass it on to another area -
Another stupid govt idea -

Name John Lacis
Address 4630 Wisconsin Ave
City W. Rapids State WI
Zip 54494

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Date 9-26-07

my feeling about opening Grove Could be a mistake, as you Travel East on Grove Their are alot of Homes and a very quite area - I don't feel it would be beneficial To open The Intersection.

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Name Don Bemke

Address 3021 21st Pl. S.

City Wis. Rapids. State Wis.

Zip 54494

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Date 9/26/07

As proposed - not supportive
Reasons: too many subdivisions will be compromised
Lovewood, Cook, Shamrock Lane, Rosewood, Ridges, and
the newest one off Airport Ave (to the N. of Airport).

The state will have to pay MEGA $ to build berms
and sound barriers), as happened when the
Expressway expanded to the east.

** Look at using Cty. Trk U to Cty Trk. Z.
In 20-25 years that will be the edge of town).

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Name Jane Nathan
Address 1921 Cook Ave
City Wi Rapids State WI
Zip 54494

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Date 9/26/7

Totally against:

1) Bypass belongs outside city NOT Through middle
2) Destroys Animal habitat
3) Destroys property value
4) Destroys Lincoln school forest
5) Impacts many people who have built their livesaround there property + homes
6) Why would anyone want to propose a bypass through so many properties
7) Use Co. U has the rightway already to County Z Redesign 54 & U intersection, Redesign County Z intersection Co Z. Get the traffic out of a congested area already.
8) Eliminate so many dead end city streets which is already happened with much of expressway where traffic moves through several stop & go lites Too make the 1st green go 17 mph to 2nd light 73 mph 3rd lite 47 mph 4th light 1[illegible] mph 4th light, ect.
9) This project is far too effensive to go through with.
10) The whole project would have to have millions of dollars worth of burms to ~~Estimate~~ elimate the noise polution
11) Wetland habitat area
12) Crossing Navitable Streams
13) Cross trout streams

Name RONALD NATZKE

Address 1921 COOK Ave.

City WI RAPIDS State WI

Zip 54494

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Date 9-26-07

Having lived a mile and a half from an interstate in the past, I am concerned about sound/sound barriers, etc.

Has any consideration been given to keeping these highways out of town? My thoughts about using U + D rather than going through or near existing subdivisions?

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Name Weinie Jeffers

Address 1915 Bob-O-Link Cir.

City Wis. Rapids State WI

Zip 54494

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Date 9/26/07

① Bridge should enter Port Edwards at Le tendre

② On Griffith Ave – take land from DNR Nursury and not from private owners on the north side of the street.

③ Project should be on ~~af~~ the fastest possible schedule

Name James Custer

Address 1471 Wisconsin River Dr

City Port Edwards State WI

Zip 54469

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Date 9/26/07

I can see the justification or desirability of constructing a bypass around 8th st to go from Highway 54 E to Rt 13 S but I cannot see the justification for a bridge across the river in Port Edwards. I live on Wis. River Dr in Port Edwards and it sure doesn't appear that the traffic volume justifies an expensive bridge and the subsequent maintenance costs

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Name Richard Hess

Address 1050 Wes. River Dr

City Port Edwards State WI

Zip 54469

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Date 9/26

Alternate 1-B makes the most sense to me. It's a good plan. I am very much in favor of a bridge in Port Edwards. L'Endre Ave. is the logical river crossing point. A bridge in Port Edwards is long over due. We make frequent trips to the south side of Wisconsin Rapids and have a son living in Saratoga. I would also probably use this crossing to drive to my the farm in Big Flats, Adams County!

This idea has been talked about for many many years. John Alexander was looking into this - probably in the 30's or 40's.

Name Don Kirkle

Address 340 Tyler

City Port Edwards State Wi.

Zip 54469

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Date 9/26/07

I would very much like to see the bridge ~~built~~ built not only for the traffic problems, but also the availability for residents of the Village of Port Edwards getting to neighboring Wisconsin Rapids (a closer route), as well as the possibilities for the Village to grow on the East side of the Wisconsin River. My favorite crossing would be at LeTendre or LaVigne in Port Edwards.

Name Gary L. Allworden

Address 541 Market Avenue

City Port Edwards State Wi

Zip 54469

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Date 9-26-07

THROUGH TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS IN THE WIS RAPIDS AREA CONTINUE TO BECOME MORE CONGESTED BECAUSE OF INCREASING LOCAL TRAFFIC. ANY OF THE PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES WILL SIGNIFICANTLY SEPARATE THROUGH TRAFFIC FROM VEHICLES OPERATING LOCALLY.
PLEASE DO YOUR BEST TO COMPLETE THIS CORRIDOR STUDY AND SEEK FUNDING TO ENABLE CONSTRUCTION AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME. ALL ROAD USERS WILL BENEFIT FROM TIME SAVINGS AND IMPROVED SAFETY.

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Name Dave Barth

Address 8311 State Hwy 13 South No. 13

City WIS RAPIDS State WI

Zip 54494

WISCONSIN RAPIDS

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Date 9/26/2007

The sooner this can be accomplished the better for us

Name Jerome Krofta

Address 4132 16th St So

City Wisconsin Rapids State WI

Zip 54494

[redacted], WE ALSO TALKED ON THE TELEPHONE ABOUT THIS STUDY. THANKS FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION. - JOHN CLARK

WISCONSIN RAPIDS

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Date 9/29/07

Instead of using the proposed 8th Street arterial from Two Mile to Kuhn, I would like to see the East Arterial moved more to the West toward 16th Street on the current vacant wooded land.

I would also request that noise barriers be proposed and developed near the Ridge's Subdivision and golf course.

Major concern is also traffic congestion on Griffith and 8th Street that already exists. If the proposed East Arterial is built, accidents are moving from one area of Wis Rapids to another. Should the State rethink the entire Highway 54 as it exists? — utilize unpopulated land on the outskirts of the city.

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Name Sandy Clark

Address 4110 Ridgeview Lane

City Wis. Rapids State WI

Zip 54494

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Date 10-3-07

While reviewing alternative #1 for the options for 20th St at Airport Ave, I noticed that the aerial photo utilized did not show my detached garage that was recently built. The proposed route from Airport Ave to Shamrock Lane goes right in the area of my garage, which is located west + north of my residence at 1911 Shamrock Lane.

I would not support this alternative for that reason. Alternative #2 would be more acceptable to me, if in fact the 20th street access to Shamrock Lane has to be abandoned.

Thank you.

Name Marvin Krzykowski

Address 1911 Shamrock Lane

City Wis. Rapids State Wi

Zip 54494

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Date 10-9-2007

I beleive the best route is to use the existing corridor of LeTender Ave because of noise concerns with making turns by large trucks. All the other alternatives would also eventually involve rebuilding the intersection of Wisconsin River Drive and Letender Ave. Alternative #3 would increase traffic on VerBunken Ave. Alternative #3 would involve a bridge North of the Existing Dam and some intresting artifacts from early river use remain. For lack of a better name I remember a type of Dam made of logs standing vertically together with an opening in the center possibly for diverting logs into the main channel.

Name Dick Dombrowski

Address 991 3rd. Street

City Port Edwards State WI

Zip 54469-1547

WISCONSIN RAPIDS

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Date Oct. 9, 2007

Our family has owned and resided at the home at 511 Wisconsin River Drive for the past 13½ years. As you see by this address, we are greatly impacted by the east arterial/bridge project. We love our home and its history, and we have worked hard to maintain its historical quality, both inside and out.

Our primary request is that you keep us informed of the status of this project and to consider all alternatives. The bridge option that crosses at Ver Bunker Avenue seems to have less of an environmental impact + perhaps less expense because the bridge is much shorter. There is also more land on the east side of Wis. River Dr., and it's also already a public right-of-way.

As I said, we would greatly appreciate your open and honest communication with this project. We want to be treated fairly and to know all of our options. Thank you for your consideration.

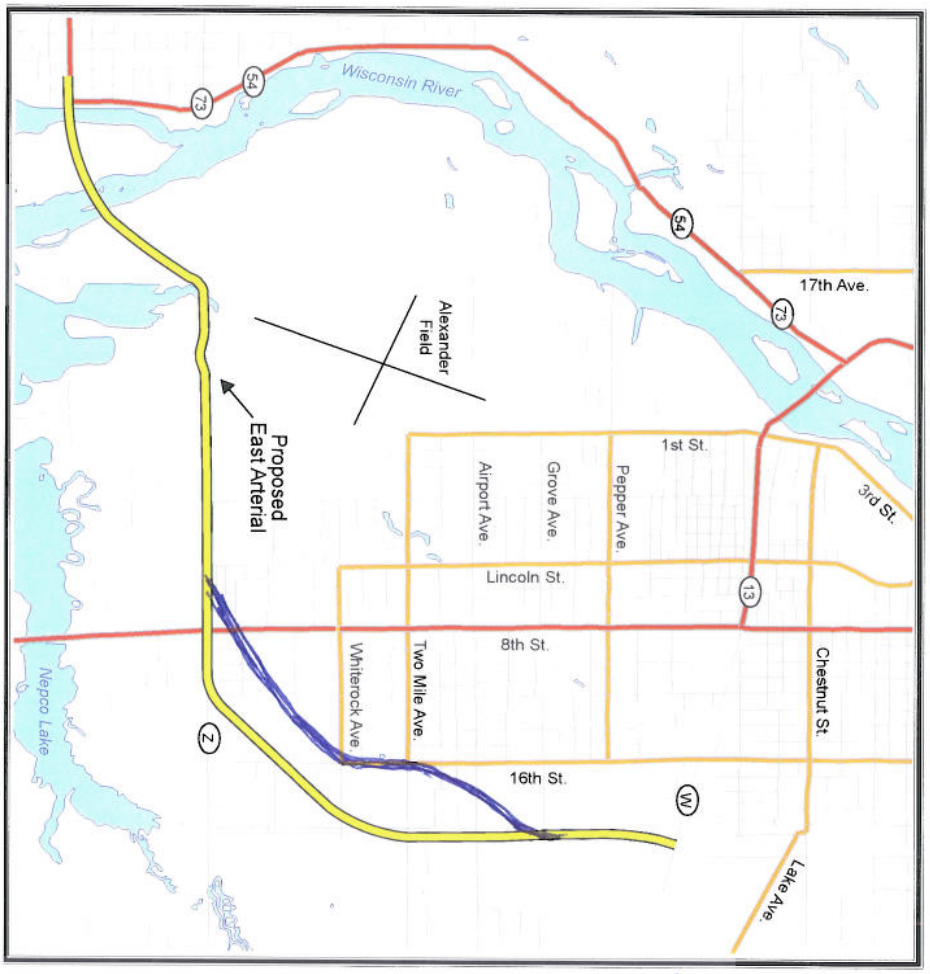
WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Name Michelle L. Smith

Address 511 Wisconsin River Drive

City Port Edwards State WI

Zip 54469



a better route –
– less impact & noise

Shirley Kolter 4630 Whip-or-Will W.R.