

7.0 COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

This section discusses community involvement and coordination with state and federal regulatory agencies during the development and evaluation of alternatives for WIS 15. The public involvement process was open in accordance with Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, calling for WisDOT/FHWA to provide low-income, elderly, disabled, and minority populations' opportunities to identify potential impacts, alternatives and mitigation measures.

7.1 PROJECT MEETINGS

The following table is a record of many of the internal, public, and agency meetings that were held during the project.

Date	Entity	Summary
1/02/02	Internal District Meeting	Project introduction and beginning of EIS study.
9/19/02	Local Officials Meeting	Informational meeting, reviewed the recent project history of WIS 15 and provided a timeline for the EIS.
12/11/02	Advisory Committee Meeting	Reviewed EIS process, timeline, and alternatives.
12/12/02	Internal District Meeting	Reviewed the EIS process and timeline.
4/01/03	Agency Scoping Meeting No. 1	Reviewed purpose and need and introduced corridors.
5/28/03	Public Information Meetings (Hortonville)	Reviewed history and provided timeline for EIS and provided opportunity for the public to discuss concerns.
6/03/03	Hortonia Town Board Meeting	Voted in support of the existing Highway 45/15 road corridor from Givens Road to Cross Road.
July 2003	Value Engineering Study	A 40-hour workshop designed to identify the best functional solution to the project's purpose and need.
9/09/03	Advisory Committee Meeting	Reviewed purpose of committee, history, and purpose and need. Shared information about the Value Engineering Study and its importance.
10/01/03	Agency Scoping Meeting No. 2	Reviewed project history, purpose and need, corridor alternatives, comments and discussion, and timetable and goals.
3/03/04	Major Projects Peer Review Committee	Project update and overview.
4/12/04	Internal District Meeting	Discussed alternatives.
6/22/04	Internal District Meeting	Reviewed access and alternatives sections.
9/05/04	Hortonville Board of Trustees Meeting	Discussion by trustees to requires DOT to complete a detailed study/analysis of the alternative southern route.
12/22/04	Internal District Meeting	Alternatives update.
1/19/05	Public Information Meeting	Presented alternatives and answered questions.
12/09/05	Secondary Effects Expert Panel	Local planning officials met to discuss possible secondary effects of the alternatives under consideration.

7.2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Various approaches were used to engage the public throughout the planning process for this project. The following paragraphs describe the main methods used.

A. Newsletters

Periodic newsletters were sent out to all abutting property owners and to others that have requested or signed up at WisDOT meetings. Newsletters were also sent to federal, state, and local officials. The newsletters provided notification of upcoming public meetings and other general information. The newsletters are summarized below. See Appendix D for copies of the newsletters.

1. April 2003

This newsletter provided information about the WIS 15 advisory committee, a corridor map with alternatives, a timeline for the WIS 15 planning process, and other general information about the study process. Additionally, notice was given for the public information meetings held on May 28, 2003.

2. August 2003

The August 2003 newsletter notified residents that the archaeology survey would be taking place and also provided an EIS study corridor update and information on the project web site.

3. December 2004

An update on the WIS 15 EIS progress was provided in this newsletter along with a description and map of the finalized alternative corridors. Residents were notified of the upcoming public information meeting (January 19, 2005). Again, information on the project timeline and the Advisory Committee was provided.

B. Public Information Web Site

WisDOT created a public information Web site to provide an additional source of information to the public. The site became available in late 2003. The Web site contains the WIS 15 expansion study schedule, maps, environmental documents, and information about the project. The Web site address is:

<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/d3/wis15/index.htm>

C. Public Information Meetings

The public meetings were announced in the newsletter as described above. Additionally, posters were hung in area businesses and letters of invitation were sent to all abutting property owners and persons on the project mailing list. Public meetings were held in handicapped accessible buildings and opportunities to request an interpreter/signer were given. The public meetings were held in an open format that allowed one-to-one interaction with property owners and interested parties. Comment sheets were available for written comments.

1. May 2003 Meetings

Two public informational meetings (PIM) were held on May 28, 2003 to introduce the WIS 15 expansion project and the planning process to the general public. The meetings were held from 2 P.M. to 4 P.M. and 6 P.M. to 8 P.M. at the Hortonville Community Center and were very well-attended with approximately 150 people signed in at the early session and 170 at the later session. The corridor was shown from Greenville to New London with proposed bypass alternatives. The following alternatives were discussed: Black Otter Lake Alternative (removed from study), Givens Road to CTH D Alternative (removed from study), Givens Road to Cross Road Alternative (removed from study), Givens Road/CTH T/Intersection to New London Bypass, Southern Alternative, and a Northern Alternative. A brief summary of the meeting is included in Appendix D.

2. January 2005 Meetings

Two PIM sessions were held from 1 PM to 3 PM and from 5 PM to 7 PM on January 19, 2005, at the Hortonville Community Center. Approximately 101 people attended the early session and about 73 attended the later session. The focus of the meeting was to discuss the final alternatives being brought forward for study in the DEIS and their preliminary impacts. A question and answer session was also held where attendees were able to anonymously write their questions on note cards and the study team answered the questions for everyone. The comments and concerns listed on these note cards are summarized later in this section.

D. WIS 15 Advisory Committee

A public advisory committee (PAC) for the WIS 15 Environmental Study was established to provide local input from citizens and officials. The advisory committee includes the Director of Public Works for Outagamie County, Outagamie County's Planner, and the County Supervisor. In addition to the county members, the committee includes New London's city administrator, Hortonville's village administrator and president, the Town of Hortonville's chairperson, the Town of Dale's clerk, the Town of Ellington's chairperson, the Town of Greenville's city administrator, and the Hortonville School District's Superintendent of Schools. The committee also includes six local citizens and WisDOT and Regional Planning Staff. See Appendix D for a list of members and meeting notes. As of the time of publishing the DEIS, the PAC has met twice. The next PAC meeting will be scheduled after a preferred alternative is selected.

1. December 2002 PAC Meeting

This meeting introduced all the attendees which included Advisory Committee Members, WisDOT, and Regional Planning Staff. The completed Corridor Preservation Study was reviewed along with the EIS process and timelines. Alternatives were reviewed and discussed. See Appendix D for the meeting notes.

2. September 2003 PAC Meeting

Advisory Committee Members, WisDOT, and Regional Planning Staff attended this meeting. The role of the advisory committee was explained and the purpose and need of the WIS 15 project was reviewed. The committee was updated on the EIS process. The value engineering study was also explained along with its importance in the EIS process. A discussion focusing on the bypass took place, and goals for the WIS 15 project were recorded.

E. Summary of Public Comments

The project team received a tremendous amount of public comment. The public meetings in May 2003 and January 2005 were well-attended and area residents completed comment sheets. At the January 2005 meetings, attendees were given the option to anonymously write their questions and concerns on note cards which were addressed project staff during the meeting. Additionally, many citizens wrote letters and sent them to the project staff as well as to their legislators. Project staff received several petitions with hundreds of signatures. This section attempts to summarize these comments.

1. Public Comments from May 2003 PIMs

The following table summarizes comments received during or after the May 2003 PIMs. It should be noted that one comment sheet may have included multiple different comments. The very high number in favor of Alternative 3 results from a preprinted comment sheet sent in by 219 parties. The following table is meant to identify common concerns.

Comment	Number of Occurrences
In Favor of Alternative 3 because the cost of it should be significantly less.	233
In Favor of Alternative 3 because it impacts the fewest number of homeowners and farmers.	230
In Favor of Alternative 3 because it has the least negative environmental impacts.	223
In Favor of Alternative 3 (northern route).	223
In Favor of Alternative 3 because the rural nature of the large southern area can be maintained.	219
In Favor of Alternative 3 because it minimizes the negative impacts on Hortonville businesses and schools.	219
In Favor of a Southern route, Alternative 2 or 4, they will increase traffic to the industrial park and take traffic away from the schools.	6
In Favor of Alternative 3 because it will provide easy access to the schools.	4
In Favor of Alternative 1, most economical and least impacts to environment.	4
In Favor of making a bypass farther north close to Hwy S.	3
In Favor of Alternative 3 because it would use 70 to 75 percent of the existing roadbed (more economical).	1
In Favor of Alternative 3 because it would be more streamlined improving traffic flow and safety.	1
In Favor of staying on alignment, Alternative 1.	1
In Favor of Alternative 1 because it is shorter, straighter, less hilly, and less disruptive of homes and businesses.	1
In Favor of Alternative 2 because it bypasses the community.	1
Opposed to Alt. 3 because it is too close to the elementary school and other schools. Concerned about speeds and student safety.	7
Opposed to Northern route (3) (Givens Rd) because it will ruin farmland, wetlands, wildlife habitat, safety and peaceful living.	6
Opposed to Southern Route, (Alt 2 or 4) because of the environmental and cost impact with Black Otter lake and the bicycle trail.	2
Opposed to Alt. 3 because of environmental concerns.	2
Concerned with southern routes (Alt. 2 or 4) because of low flying airplanes from two private airstrips.	1
Opposed to Alternative 3.	1
Consider Spring Rd as an alternative to Alt. 3.	1
Opposed to Alt. 3 because it cuts the Wildwood Subdivision, this is in the Village, from the Community (dividing the community).	1
Opposed to Alternative 3 because it would limit development and harm the economy.	1
Too many bypasses are already in the area, unclear if another one is needed, US 10 and US 45.	8
Will MM, the "rustic rd." be preserved with Alt. 3?	2
Opposed to any bypass.	2

2. January 2005 Meetings

The following table summarizes comments received on comment sheets during or after the January 2005 PIMs. It should be noted that one comment sheet may have included multiple different comments. The following table is meant to identify common concerns.

Comment	Number of Occurrences
Overall, in favor of Alternative 3, closer to town and schools.	4
Opposed to Alternative 3 because of safety concerns with area schools.	3
Overall just concerned and opposed to Alternative 3.	2
Alternative 2 is the best because it is close to the Industrial Park.	2
Opposed to Alternative 3 because of increased noise and air pollution.	1
Opposed to Alternative 3 because it is aesthetically displeasing to homeowners in the area.	1
Alternative 3 is the most cost-effective.	1
Will MM, the "rustic road," be preserved with Alternative 3?	1
Use as little land as possible.	1
Overall, opposed to Alternative 1.	1
In favor of Alternative 1 because of what has been done with Greenville's Main Street.	1
Alternative 1 is the most cost-effective.	1
In favor of Alternative 2 because it avoids Hortonville.	1

As well as submitting comments on comments sheets, PIM attendees also had the opportunity to submit questions and concerns on note cards during the meeting. The questions were addressed by the project staff at the meeting. The following is a list of questions and comments from these note cards. Some of the questions have been paraphrased.

Development Patterns and Pressures

- Why are land parcels that are in the proposed study areas allowed to be sold for development?
- I've heard the village board has given approval for a development north of the school (the northern route). Is this correct?
- When will you have updated the maps to show all the new growth along the routes?

Economic and Environmental Impacts

- Do these financial estimates include ongoing maintenance needs?
- It appears the most cost-effective route would be directly through Hortonville, with the next being Route 3. Why does the village favor the most expensive route (No. 4) and how much influence do they have?
- If a southern route is chosen, how large of a contingency fund will be set aside for "property value impairment" settlements?
- When will all the areas of historic sites be put on the map considering the pottery and other artifacts that were found?
- Is consideration given to toxic chemicals on our roadway?

Access Concerns

- Will the bypass be four lanes from Greenville to New London? How many accesses to new roads and where? What happens to cross roads along the way?
- Will there be an interchange at 15 to 45 and if so what are the details?
- Why is County M not going to have access to new route? It is a major feeder from and to new 96 and 54.
- If northern route is chosen, will County MM be closed? That is a main route into Hortonville. Will traffic be rerouted through Wildwood?

Timeframe and Schedule

- Are the routes displaced on the maps the final choices or could another route still be chosen or considered?
- What is the most important factor in selecting the final route?
- When will homeowners be notified that their properties are in line with the highway?
- After the last information meeting, I thought they had narrowed it down to two routes to avoid doing further costly study on all four alternatives. Now I see it's still the original four proposed routes – what happened?
- When is the final decision due?
- Was the traffic impact study done before or after the Hwy 10 expansion? If before, will a new study be conducted? Will any new findings affect the timeline or continuing of this project?

3. Letters of Comment to WisDOT Staff and State Legislators

WisDOT staff received many letters commenting on the project. The following table summarizes these comments. It should be noted that one comment sheet may have included multiple different comments. The following table is meant to identify common concerns.

Comment	Number of Occurrences
Opposed to the Northern Route because it would endanger the wildlife and habitat.	3
Opposed to the Northern Route because it is so close to the school and children.	2
Supports Alternative 1, existing route.	2
Support the Northern Route because it's the least expensive route, shorter, straighter, affects less citizens requires fewer bridges, and the route would not cross the Wiouwash nature trail or Black Otter wetlands.	1
Opposed to the north route because it would affect peaceful living.	1
Opposed to the north route because it would affect more than 20 families and two group homes for the mentally ill.	1
Opposed to a bypass because it would significantly hurt the already struggling businesses.	1
Opposed to the Northern Route because it would bring industrial traffic through residential neighborhoods.	1
Opposed to the Northern Route because it will negatively affect the future growth of Hortonville.	1
Opposed to the southern routes because they would cut across vital farmland and wild habitats.	1
Opposed to the Northern Route affecting Givens Road because of homes, wetlands, plants and animals affected.	1

Area residents also sent letters to State Senator Michael G. Ellis. The following table summarizes these comments. It should be noted that one comment sheet may have included multiple different comments. The very high number in favor of Alternative 3 results from a preprinted comment sheet sent in by 115 parties. The following table is meant to identify common concerns.

Comment	Number of Occurrences
Support the Northern Route, (Alternative 3).	115
Support the Northern Route because it would cost less because it's the shortest route, would not require bridges, and impacts the fewest number of people.	115
Support the Northern Route because it would impact less homes and farmers.	115
Support the Northern Route because it would have the least environmental impact.	115
Support the Northern Route because it is close to the businesses and schools.	115
Support the Southern Route	1
Support the Southern Route to preserve the quality of life for Givens Rd.	1
Support the Southern Route to protect the environment and wildlife habitats.	1
Support the Southern Route because it will be the most cost-effective in the long run	1
Against southern or northern routes (any bypass) because they would cut across farmland and wildlife habitat.	1
Against a bypass because US 45 expansion should relieve the WIS 15 traffic.	1

4. Organized Petitions

WisDOT project staff received six organized petitions. The petitions are described below.

- A letter dated December 18, 2003 was sent to project staff with 140 signatures in support of the statement: *"I am hereby opposed to the northernmost bypass alternative of WIS 15 Study from New London, WI to Greenville, WI as documented in the WisDOT Transportation District 3 August 12, 2003 Newsletter."*
- A petition was received in December 2003 by WisDOT project staff. The petition contained 139 signatures in support of the statement: *"We feel the northern by-pass proposal would adversely impact the safety, health, and welfare, of the children of the Hortonville School District. We are opposed to the northern by-pass option. We strongly encourage investigation of alternate solutions."*
- A letter of petition was received in June 2003 by WisDOT project staff. The petition was written from 23 residents along Givens Road. The letter expresses opposition to the off-alignment alternative that, "...follows Givens Road for a short distance and then veers north traversing the ledge and then reconnects with Hwy 45 at Cross Road." These residents prefer that the route is kept on the current alignment in the west section.
- A petition was received by WisDOT project staff with 209 signatures in support of the statement: *"I strongly oppose southern bypass options for Hwy 15 around Hortonville. The southern routes being considered have significantly higher costs, adverse environmental impacts, and negatively impact more homeowners and farmers than the northern route."*
- A petition was received by the Outagamie County Executive in June 2003 with 31 signatures of Town of Hortonville residents. The letter expresses concerns with the reasons for the Town Board's recent resolution in support of a northern alternative and states opposition to the northern alternative.
- A petition was received by the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in September 2003 with 15 signatures of residents owning property between the Wolf River, Givens Road, and WIS 15. The letter provided information on the Wolf River Basin Biotic Inventory Report and requested that the uplands as well as wetlands in this area be recognized as important.

7.3 LOCAL GOVERNMENT COORDINATION

Coordination with local government officials occurred throughout the project. Local officials attended public meetings and also were in contact with the project staff about their concerns and recommendations as well as to help WisDOT understand their community's dynamics and provide information about the community for the environmental document. There has been one local officials meeting as well as one expert panel meeting where local officials were invited. These meetings are described below.

A. Local Officials Meeting

On September 19, 2002, WisDOT held a local officials meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to review the recent project history of WIS 15 and to provide a timeline for the EIS. This included an explanation of the Corridor Preservation Study, the Transportation Projects Committee (TPC), and the Environmental Impact Study (EIS) processes. Issues about the bypass were discussed, and it was decided that WisDOT will create a public advisory committee. Appendix D contains the minutes for this meeting.

B. Expert Panel Meeting for Secondary and Cumulative Effects Analysis

This study solicited the input of a 13-person Expert Panel to determine the potential indirect and cumulative effects of each proposed alternative. The Panel was made up of local and regional government planners, elected officials, and economic and community development professionals. Many of the individuals selected to serve on the Expert Panel were already members of the Highway 15 Advisory Committee and, therefore, were already familiar with the project details. Other Panelists were selected based on recommendations from Advisory Committee members or because they possessed a unique knowledge or perspective of the study area. A detailed description of the secondary and cumulative effects analysis is provided in Section 4.7 of this document.

C. Local Government Correspondence

As stated above, the study team has interacted with local governments through the study process. The following table summarizes the comments and preferences of the local governments

Municipality	Type of Correspondence	Comment
Town of Dale	April 2003 Resolution	Supports a northern alternative (Alternative 3)
Town of Greenville	February 2003 Resolution	Supports a northern alternative (Alternative 3)
	October 2003 Letter	Supports a northern alternative and is concerned that the Village of Hortonville may be unfairly influencing the process towards a southern alternative that will primarily impact town residents, rather than village residents.
Town of Hortonia	June 2003 Resolution	Supports a northern alternative (Alternative 3) and opposes a southern alternative (Alternatives 2 and 4)
Village of Hortonville	August 2004 Letter from Village Administrator	Request for detailed study of alternate southern route that would closely parallel the southern boundary of the business park as well as the proposed annexed property located just to the west of the park. (Segment H)
	Undated Note from Village Trustee	Rough calculations show that the northern alternative results in a loss of potential taxable property income of about 3 times that of the southern alternative.
Outagamie County	March 2003 Letter from County Executive	Supports a northern alternative (Alternative 3)
	October 2004 Letter from County Executive	Supports a northern alternative (Alternative 3)
	January 2005 Letter from County Executive	Urges a timely decision on a preferred alternative.

Copies of most letters and resolutions are included following this section.

7.4 AGENCY COORDINATION

In cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, WisDOT has followed the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/404 process for concurrency. This process began with Regulatory Agency coordination (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service (F&W), and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)) along with state review agencies and Native American tribes.

The paragraphs below describe the scoping meetings that were held. In addition, the project team has received letters from various agencies that express their comments and concerns. These letters are briefly summarized in this section and are also included in full after the summaries.

A. April 2003 Scoping Meeting

The first agency scoping meeting was held on April 1, 2003. The purpose of this meeting was to review the purpose and need for the expansion of the project and to introduce possible corridors for study. An explanation of the history of the Corridor Preservation Study, the Transportation Projects Commission (TPC) selection, and the Environmental Impact Study timeline were presented. A summary of the meeting is included in Appendix D.

B. October 2003 Scoping Meeting

The second agency scoping meeting was held on October 1, 2003. The purpose of this meeting was to review the purpose and need for the expansion of the project and to review the possible corridors for study. The TPC has approved this project for EIS study. A brief review of the project history was discussed including the Corridor Preservation Study, the May 2003 Public Informational Meetings, and the Value Engineering Study. A summary of the meeting is included in Appendix D.

C. Agency Correspondence

As part of the NEPA process for concurrency, WisDOT sent letters in September of 2003 and May of 2004 to the agencies requesting concurrence on the purpose and need for the project as well as on the project corridors being moved forward for study in the EIS. The following list identifies the agency correspondence letters and e-mails received by the project team:

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Letter or E-mail Date</u>
US Environmental Protection Agency	June 4, 2004
US Environmental Protection Agency	June 16, 2004
US Environmental Protection Agency	October 21, 2004
US Environmental Protection Agency	October 25, 2004
US Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service	September 30, 2003
US Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service	June 8, 2004
US Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service	October 25, 2004
US Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers	November 3, 2004
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	October 7, 2004
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	May 12, 2005
Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection	December 8, 2004
Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection	October 6, 2005
Natural Resource Conservation Service	January 23, 2006
WisDOT Environmental Services	May 26, 2006

1. US Environmental Protection Agency Correspondence

The USEPA letter dated June 4, 2004, expressed concurrence with the project's purpose and need for additional highway capacity based on the level of service, the above-average fatalities, and the high number of access points. The letter also mentioned that USEPA has concerns about access control on the future WIS 15 and would like to know what the access control policies are before they submit concurrence with the alternatives. USEPA wants WisDOT to encourage the local communities to finish their land use plans so that the plans can help guide the preferred alternative choice for WIS 15.

The USEPA letter dated June 16, 2004, indicates that they encourage strict access control and desire a commitment in the DEIS that any access control proposed be more stringent than the Tier 3 category. Without strict access control, a bypass could promote sprawl and increases in traffic volume. USEPA also expressed their concurrence with the alternatives under study.

In an e-mail sent October 21, 2004, USEPA addressed amendments to the alternatives. USEPA requested that if Segment H is added back in as an option to be considered (as requested by the Village of Hortonville), that a wetland delineation be done of the entire area between segments E and H. Currently, Segment H has large wetland impacts, and a wetland delineation would provide information useful in the decision-making process. *[Note that segment H is not being brought forward for any further consideration in the DEIS]*. Also, WisDOT dismissed Segment M (in the west section) because it was determined that Segment I (staying on alignment between Givens Road and where the options diverge) was sufficient to carry four lanes and keep access to the houses. While USEPA appreciates the fact that potential impacts to unique wetlands that would be associated with Segment M would be avoided, they are also concerned that using Segment I would require strong access control so that it will not require a future bypass. USEPA requests more information pertaining to their concerns before they issue their concurrence with the amended alternatives.

In an e-mail sent October 25, 2004, USEPA comments that, in a telephone conversation, WisDOT answered the questions posed in the October 21 e-mail. Regarding the dismissal of Segment M, USEPA concurs with this amendment since WisDOT assured them that if the segment was changed to four lanes and no further access was allowed, that it should still be rated LOS A in 30 years. USEPA can only concur with the addition of Segment H if another segment is also added into the study alternatives. This new segment would be south of the Village's planned industrial park and north of the wetlands that Segment H encroaches upon. *[Note that segment H is not being brought forward for any further consideration in the DEIS]*.

2. US Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service Correspondence

In a letter dated September 30, 2004, USFWS expressed their concurrence on the project's purpose and need.

In a letter dated June 8, 2004, USFWS reiterated their concurrence with the project's purpose and need and also expressed concurrence with the corridors proposed for study. USFWS also noted, however, that there may be impacts to the Karner blue butterfly, a federal-listed species, within the east section of the corridor. USFWS requested that WisDOT conduct surveys for wild lupine, the habitat for this species. If wild lupine is found, surveys for the Karner blue butterfly should be performed. Additionally, prior to construction, the affected area should be reassessed to determine whether there have been any changes in the impacts to threatened and endangered species. USFWS also noted that every effort should be made to avoid and minimize impacts to wetlands through planning and design. Where wetland loss or disturbance cannot be avoided, a wetland mitigation plan should be developed. The proposed mitigation plan should be provided to USFWS for comment prior to submitting the Section 404 permit application to the Corps of Engineers.

In a letter dated October 25, 2004, USFWS expressed their concurrence with the amended alternatives to be carried forward for detailed study and also reemphasized their preference that impacts to wetlands and other natural areas be minimized. USFWS notes that at this time, Alternative 1 and 3 appear to be least damaging to fish and wildlife habitat. USFWS reiterated their comments regarding the Karner blue butterfly and wetland impacts.

3. US Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers Correspondence

In a letter dated November 3, 2004, the Corps expressed their concurrence with the project's purpose and need. The Corps also concurs with the alternatives to be carried forward into the DEIS based on the additional information provided on September 30, 2004. The Corps noted that the southern alternatives, Alternatives 2 and 4, are not likely to be permissible under Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines (40 CFR 230.10) due to the large quantity of wetland impacts.

4. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Correspondence

In a letter dated October 7, 2004, the DNR indicates that though they cannot comment on their preferred alternative because of pending field reviews, they concur with moving forward with the proposed alternatives. The DNR discussed their preference for alternatives that minimize land disturbance and that promote controlled development coinciding with active land use planning. The DNR has concerns regarding the need for the project and recommends that traffic continues to be monitored. The DNR believes that the on-alignment improvements seem to have the least amount of environmental impacts and avoids loss and fragmentation of wetlands, farmlands, and wildlife habitat. The department also indicated that though there are unique natural areas both to the north and south of Hortonville, the alternatives seem to avoid these areas. The LWRBNRA should be carefully avoided.

In a letter dated May 12, 2005, the DNR indicated that they are continuing to delineate wetlands. They also identified several important environmental features such as Black Otter Lake and its associated wetlands, area uplands, and the Wiouwash Trail. The DNR reiterated their concern that future land use and the possible indirect and cumulative effects are studied. They also reiterated their concern regarding the justification for the project in light of the recent improvements on other surrounding highways.

5. Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection Correspondence

In a letter dated December 8, 2004, DATCP expressed their preference for the No Build Alternative since it would not require acquisition of any farmland and therefore no other direct impacts to farms. After the No Build Alternative, Alternative 1 and Option A appear to have the fewest negative impacts. DATCP's primary concerns include the loss of farmland, the number of farm parcels to be severed, changes in the access to farmland, the loss of farm buildings, and the impacts on drainage. In this letter, DATCP summarized their understanding of the agricultural impacts and also stated that an Agricultural Impact Statement (AIS) will be prepared for the project after the preferred alternative is identified.

In a letter dated October 6, 2005, DATCP commented that they believe adequate information has not been provided to document the need for expanding the highway to four lanes for the defined corridor. With regard to their preferred alternative, DATCP continues to prefer the No Build Alternative overall and, of the build alternatives, prefers Alternative 1 and Option A, the on-alignment alternatives.

6. National Resource Conservation Service – Farmland Conversion Impact Rating

The Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form was completed and sent to the National Resource Conservation Service for review on December 27, 2005. NRCS reviewed and completed the FCIR form and returned it on January 23, 2006. The form will be re-submitted once a preferred alternative is selected. The process was completed because the proposed project may convert farmland to nonagricultural uses, as defined in the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA).

7. WisDOT Environmental Services Correspondence

In an e-mail dated May 26, 2006, a representative from WisDOT's Bureau of Equity and Environmental Services certified that he conducted a survey of the project area for the presence of Wild Blue Lupine, the habitat of the endangered Karner blue butterfly. No Wild Blue Lupine was found and therefore no Karner blue butterflies are expected to exist in the project corridor.