

Wisconsin STH 15/USH 45 Corridor Preservation Report

The STH 15/USH 45 corridor from the Town of Greenville to the city of New London (Wisconsin) is a vital transportation facility from local, regional, and state perspectives. The corridor has experienced great changes over the past 40 years. Ultimately envisioned to be a high-speed, access controlled freeway facility connecting the Fox Cities with the city of New London, the corridor's role has evolved in response to changes in land use, demographics, growth/development, and transportation needs within the Fox Cities area and the state as a whole. Current WisDOT plans no longer envision the existing STH 15/USH 45 corridor to assume the role of a high-speed freeway but rather a multi-lane connector facility that accommodates a growing and suburbanizing area.

Originally designed as a rural highway to connect distinct and separate communities, the corridor is transitioning into a suburban commuter corridor. Over the past 40 years farmland has gradually transformed into suburban-type development. Changes in the land uses surrounding the STH 15/USH 45 corridor have placed competing needs on the facility. Not only is it accommodating the increase in through traffic, but it is also carrying the increase in local traffic due to a deficient local transportation system. These competing needs and influences have created challenges between local and through traffic on the existing facility.

Due to the importance of this corridor and the challenges being placed upon it, WisDOT District 3 contracted with a consultant to conduct an 18-month study of the existing STH 15/USH 45 corridor, a distance of approximately 11 miles. The study process consisted of a combination of active and participatory public involvement techniques, comprehensive data collection, and intense technical analysis. The study culminated with the STH 15/USH 45 Corridor Preservation Report. The major findings, strategies, and recommendations are:

- STH 15/USH 45 needs a major upgrading,
- Long-term funding sources need to be explored and defined,
- Corridor access management strategies need to be implemented,
- Adequate setbacks need to be planned,
- Short-term corridor improvements need to be programmed,
- Local communities need to balance land use and transportation,
- Adjacent communities need to adopt local circulation plans,
- Adjacent communities need to enact corridor preservation ordinances, and
- An active and participatory public involvement strategy needs to be developed.

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