



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**Wisconsin Division Office**

April 21, 2014

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[www.fhwa.dot.gov/widiv/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/widiv/)

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-WI

Donald Greuel, P.E.  
Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
4802 Sheboygan Ave., Room 651  
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Mr. Greuel:

On April 14, 2014 you requested Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) engineering and operational acceptability approval of the Interstate Access Justification Report (IAJR) for the I 43/County Line Road interchange in the City of Mequon in Ozaukee County. The I 43 North - South project proposes to reconstruct I 43 from a four-lane to a six-lane facility from Silver Spring Drive in Milwaukee northerly to STH 60 in Ozaukee County and will include reconfiguration or removal of the I 43/County Line Road interchange. The existing County Line Road Interchange is a partial split interchange with ramps in the southern half of the interchange primarily accommodating Milwaukee bound commuters. The northbound off-ramp provides access to County Line Road via a connection to Port Washington Road and the southbound on-ramp connects directly from County Line Road. The existing interchange must be relocated/reconstructed or removed as part of this project due to the close proximity of the northbound on-ramp from Brown Deer Road to the south, the widening of I 43, and the substandard vertical clearances and substandard horizontal curves on the I 43 mainline.

The IAJR and Draft Environmental Impact Statement include analyses of three access alternatives; no access, a partial access interchange, and a full access interchange (a split diamond hybrid interchange, with two design options). WISDOT has requested FHWA engineering and operational acceptability of all three alternatives.

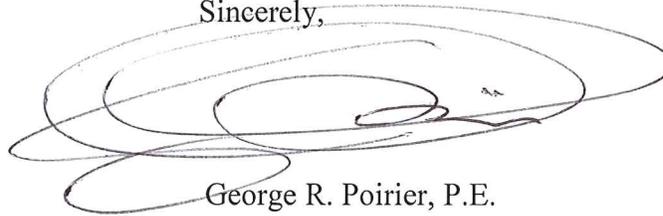
We have reviewed the information provided in the IAJR and are granting engineering and operational acceptability approval of the no access and full access interchange alternatives. Final approval of the proposed changes in Interstate access may be given upon the completion of the environmental process, provided that the scope and design of this proposed project is consistent with the design that is included in the Interstate Access Justification Report. This approval is subject to reevaluation if significant changes occur in the final design or if the construction is delayed (as specified in 23 CFR 771.129). Re-evaluation will also be needed for projects that have not proceeded to construction within 8 years of final access modification approval.

We have considered WISDOT's request for approval of the partial interchange alternative recognizing the local preference to maintain a partial interchange at County Line Road and concerns by local residents about in-direction and traffic in residential neighborhoods. We have also considered the flexibility that can be applied in approving a partial interchange where there are compelling reasons such as local needs, extensive environmental impacts and/or extreme costs. Those compelling reasons have not been demonstrated for this particular interchange alternative. At County Line Road, a design has been developed for a reconstructed full interchange that has very minimal environmental impacts (the same impacts as the partial interchange) and only moderately higher construction costs than a partial interchange. Therefore, based on FHWA regulations, policy, and guidance this request is denied.

While the engineering and operational acceptability for the partial interchange is denied, the local interest and controversy concerning the interchange are acknowledged and FHWA has no objections to continuing to include the partial interchange in further NEPA evaluations. This will allow for further evaluation of the validity of the locals' claims regarding negative impacts associated with changes in travel patterns within the vicinity of the interchange.

If you have any questions about the actions we have taken concerning the I 43/County Line Road interchange please contact Mr. Wesley Shemwell.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George R. Poirier", written over a large, light-colored oval scribble.

George R. Poirier, P.E.  
Division Administrator

Enclosure

ecc: Brian Bliesner, WISDOT  
Manojoy Nag, WISDOT  
Steve Hoff, WISDOT