

# **Public Involvement Meeting Handout**

**C Rice Lake, Frontage Road  
South Access Road/CTH O Intersection  
Barron County**

**Project ID: 8997-00-47**



**September 16, 2025  
5:00 pm – 7:00 pm  
Lakeshore Room, City Hall  
30 E. Eau Claire Street, Rice Lake**

## **Purpose of the meeting**

The purpose of the public involvement meeting is to inform the public of the proposed project at Frontage Road and South Access Road/CTH O intersection (i.e. north mall entrance) and describe options to improve the intersection. We would like to obtain information about how the proposed changes would affect the local road users to refine and enhance the final intersection design. Objectives of the project are to make the intersection and traffic patterns safe and efficient, minimize construction cost, and reduce environmental impacts. A second public information meeting will be held in spring 2026 to share the final intersection design.

## **Project purpose and need**

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve the safety of the intersection at South Access Road/County O and Frontage Road in the City of Rice Lake. This intersection occurs at a 4-lane, divided highway and a two-lane frontage road which provides access to commercial properties. The crash rate at the intersection is 0.74 mev (million entering vehicles), which is almost 3 times higher than the state average. The need for the proposed project stems from the high crash rate, the negative offset for left-turning vehicles, and an imminent increase in traffic at this intersection.

### High Crash Rate

South Access Road is an east/west 4-lane divided principal arterial street with an AADT of 11,400 vehicles per day (2024). There is a multi-use path along the north side of South Access Road within the project area. South Access Road connects to USH 53 and County SS/Main Street. There are many commercial properties along this 30-mph route.

Frontage Road is approximately 1,200 feet long and extends from South Access Road to an unnamed public right of way that accesses Main Street. Frontage Road provides access to two strip malls anchoring several small commercial businesses and a lumber yard. Large delivery trucks use this route frequently.

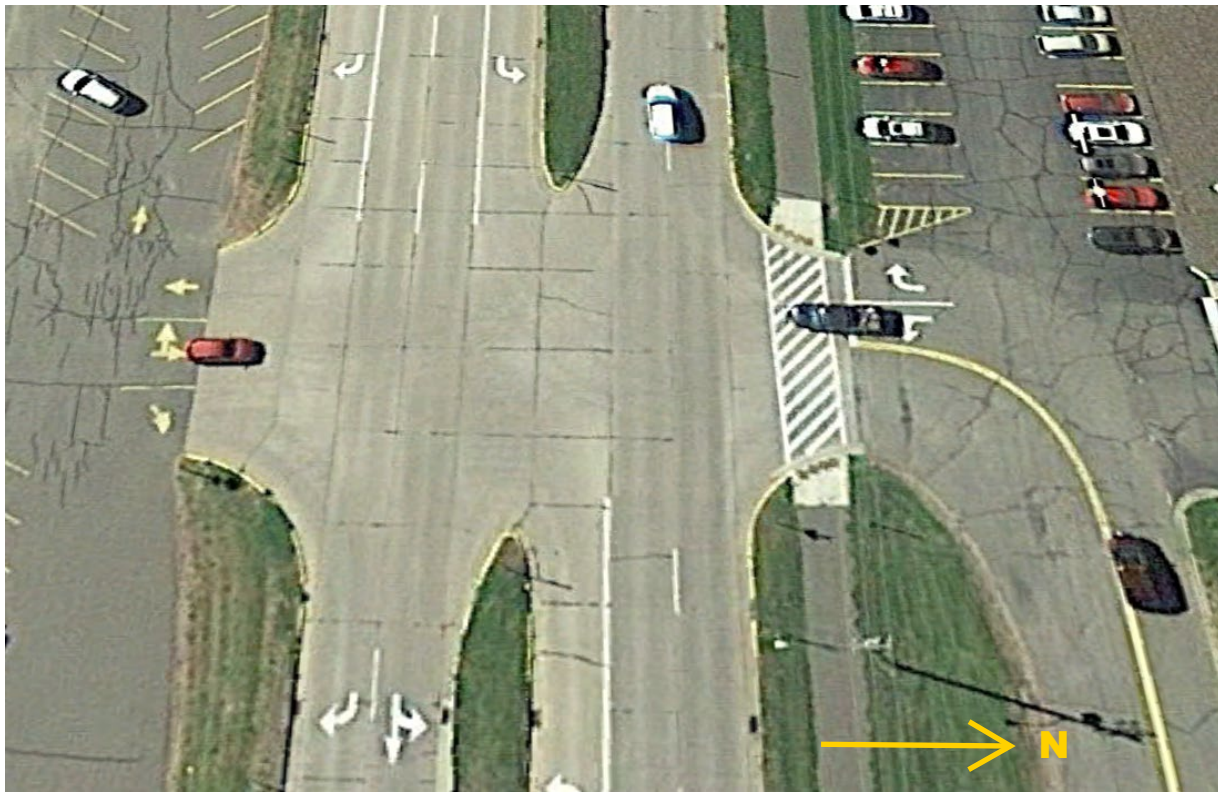
The intersection of these two roads is confusing because of a 90-degree turn on Frontage Road connects at the strip mall driveway leaving a short queue. This intersection is only 250 feet from the Main Street/South Access Road intersection. Turn lanes from both the north and south as well as cross traffic pass the Frontage Road intersection intermittently without a recognized pattern. On the south side of the intersection, the Cedar Mall entrance brings a high peak volume. Traffic from the west on South Access Road becomes visible after a vertical crest over the railroad just 400 feet to the west. Traffic from the west frequently travels at 35 mph having not yet slowed after the decrease in the speed limit at Pioneer intersection. Traffic from the east arrives at intermittent spurts.

The median between the eastbound and westbound traffic is not wide enough to position a vehicle without it being in a lane of traffic. Crash patterns frequently identify angle crashes where a forward traveling vehicle collides with a vehicle in cross traffic. From 2019 to 2023, 12 right angle crashes, one rear-end collision, and two run off road (left) crashes were documented. Three of the 15 accidents had injuries.

### Negative offset for left-turning vehicles

The left-turn lanes along South Access Road/County O have a negative offset. This means that the turn lane is positioned further from the opposing traffic lanes than the adjacent lanes. When the vehicles creep toward their intended path, the vehicles in the turn lane face the opposing vehicles in their respective turn lane. This configuration obstructs the view of both of the drivers attempting to make a left turn. Simultaneous left turns from the north and south onto South Access Road hinder the line of sight for drivers. The configuration leads to longer wait times of traffic in the turn lanes, longer wait times for vehicles on crossroads, and increased chance of misjudging the safety of a turn.

No left-turn lanes exist on the side streets (i.e. Frontage Road and the mall entrance); left-turning vehicles share the thorough lanes, which creates a zero offset for left-turning traffic in the north and south direction.



*Figure 1. South Access Road and Frontage Road Intersection. Notice the position of the turn lanes. Photo west facing.*

The Frontage Road intersection is only 250 feet from the Main Street intersection, and traffic gaps are hard to gauge with traffic coming from multiple directions. With a short timeframe to make decisions, drivers often misjudge speeds or distances and dart through oncoming traffic.

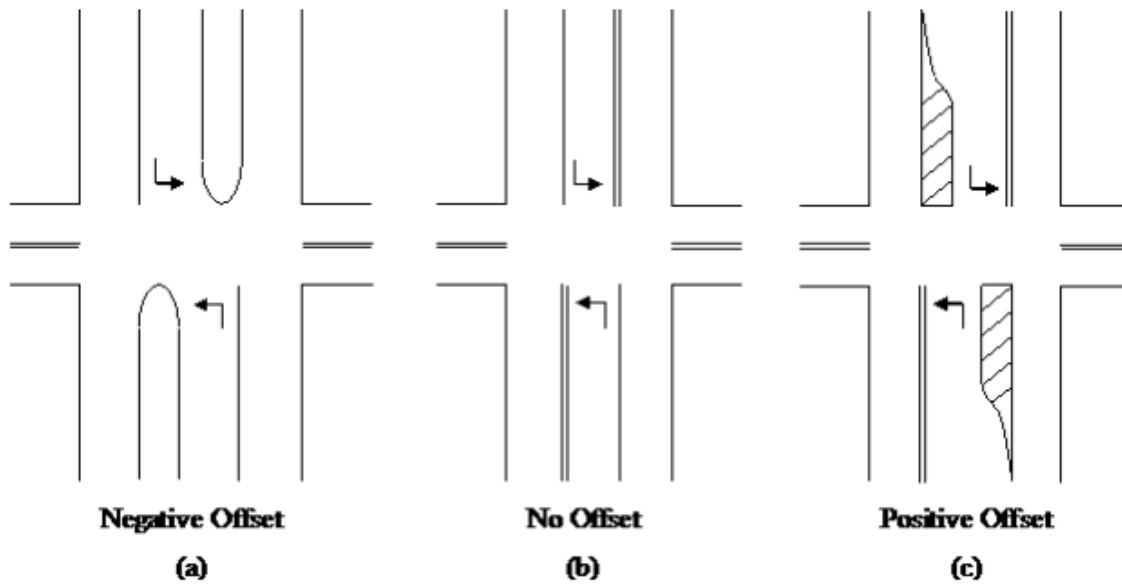


Figure 2. Illustration of negative, no, and positive offset left-turn lanes. From Federal Highway Administration <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/09036/index.cfm>

#### Imminent Increase in Traffic

South Access Road is renamed Kern Avenue east of Main Street. Kern Avenue was extended/constructed circa 2019, and several housing developments have been built which connect to Kern Avenue. Continued development and an increase in traffic is expected. Traffic volumes on South Access Road were analyzed by TADI and are expected to generate an additional 5,360 trips daily (16,760 AADT). The increase in traffic is expected to create more accidents at the South Access Road and Frontage Road intersection.

### **Conceptual solutions that could address the purpose and need**

Solutions to address the safety of the intersection would be to retrofit the intersection with a different configuration, close off the intersection to any cross traffic, or signalize the intersection to better control the vehicle maneuvers.

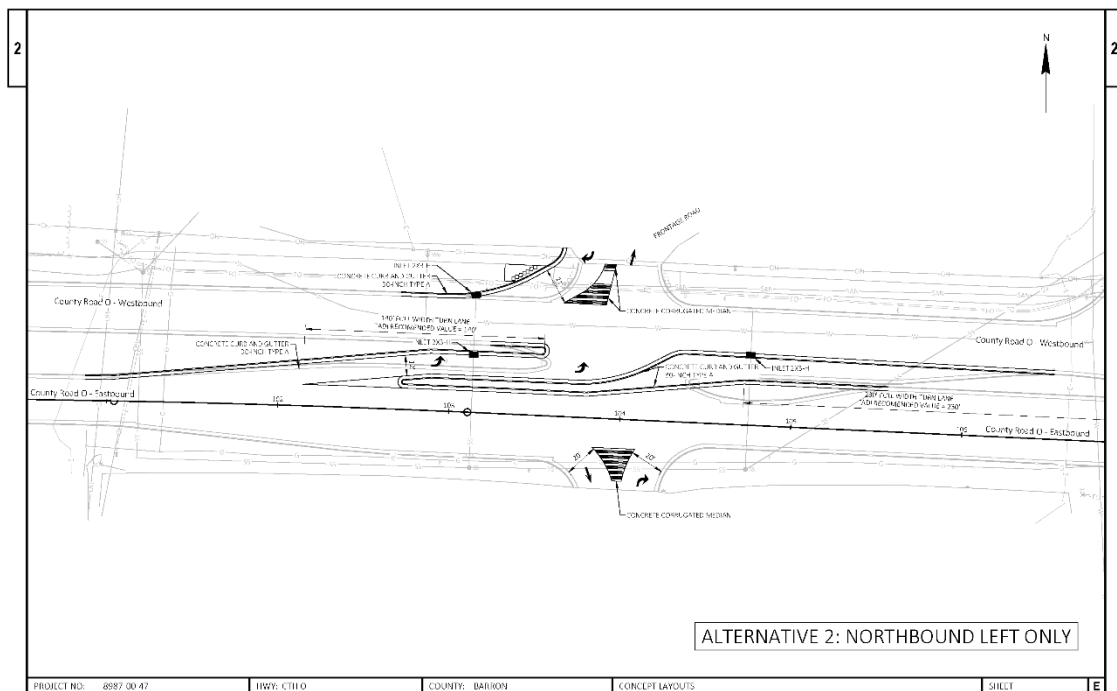
Two alternatives are currently being evaluated. The City of Rice Lake prefers Alternative 2 because this alternative would address the safety issues with the current configuration, would provide the highest level of service, and would minimize delay times in the local area.

- Install a center raised median on South Access Road to prevent left turns and straight movements from the mall entrance to Frontage Road.
- Extend the Main Street left-turn lane for eastbound traffic from 140 feet to 450 feet.
- Traffic maneuvers would be right-in, right-out only at the mall entrance and Frontage Road.
- Construct a corrugated concrete island or pavement markings on the side street approaches.
- Install a No U-Turn sign at Main Street.



## Alternative 2. Retrofit the intersection to allow left-hand turns onto Frontage Road from eastbound traffic

- Modify the center median to allow left-turn movements from the eastbound traffic only. Westbound left turns would not be allowed. Eastbound left-turn, right-turn movements would be allowed. At the mall entrance and Frontage Road, traffic maneuvers would be right-in, right-out only.
- Lengthen the inside eastbound left-turn lane from 140 feet to 230 feet with a 100-foot taper. The left-turn access would have a raised median taper on both sides to prevent any attempts at left turns from westbound traffic.
- Install a corrugated concrete island or pavement markings on side street approaches.
- Install a No U-Turn sign at Main Street.



## Real estate

No additional right of way will be required for this project. All of the proposed improvements would occur within the current right-of-way.

## Traffic impacts

Construction is anticipated in 2027. Construction would take place under traffic with one lane in each direction open. Further details on proposed traffic impacts during construction will be discussed at the second public information meeting in Spring 2026.

## Project update/next steps

To date, a traffic analysis which included the following intersections has been completed by TADI, Inc.:

- S. Access Road with Pioneer Avenue
- S. Access Road with west Frontage Road/Cedar Mall driveway
- S. Access Road with S. Main Street
- S. Main Street with Cedar Mall driveway/Lehman's Supper Club driveway
- S. Main Street with Frontage Road access next to O'Reilly Auto Parts.

TADI recommended Alternative 2 as the preferred solution. Alternative 2 would address the causes of the high crash rate at the S. Access Road and Frontage Road intersection, would modify the left turn situation and position of vehicles at the intersection, and would accommodate the anticipated increase in traffic to provide a safe and efficient roadway.

The next steps in the project are to coordinate with local utilities, prepare a design study report, complete the environmental document, and complete the final design plans. Utility coordination is ongoing. The environmental report and design study report will be submitted in Spring 2026. Final road plans are due September 2026. The plans, specifications, and project estimates will be submitted to WisDOT in November 2026 for 2027 construction.

Project information can be found on the City of Rice Lake's website at <https://www.ci.rice-lake.wi.us/>.

## Public input/comments

We encourage you to talk to the project representatives and ask them questions. Attached to this handout is a sheet for your written comments and input regarding the proposed project. Please mail any written comments about the project before October 14, 2025, or leave them in the comment box tonight. You can also e-mail your comments to the contacts listed below.

Your comments assist us in developing a project that will serve the needs of the traveling public as well as the needs of the local community. Your input is welcome and appreciated throughout the design process.

For more information, please contact:

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715-234-7008  
[ascharf@cooperengineering.net](mailto:ascharf@cooperengineering.net)



## Public Involvement Meeting Comment Form

Project ID 8997-00-47  
C Rice Lake, Frontage Road  
South Access Road/CTH O  
Barron County

September 16, 2025

Please place this form in the comment box or mail by October 14, 2025, to the address on the back of this sheet. Comments can also be e-mailed to [ascharf@cooperengineering.net](mailto:ascharf@cooperengineering.net). Your comments assist us in developing a project that will serve the needs of the traveling public as well as the needs of the local community. Your input is welcome and appreciated throughout the design process.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address:

Daytime Phone Number (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Please Print Comments (attach additional sheets if necessary)

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

*The information in this document including names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and signatures is not confidential, and may be subject to disclosure upon request, pursuant to the requirements of the Wisconsin open records law, sections 19.31 - 19.39 of the Wisconsin Statutes.*

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*[Stamp or Pre-paid Postage]*

Cooper Engineering Company, Inc.  
Aaron Scharf, P.E., Project Manager  
P.O. Box 230  
Rice Lake, WI 54868

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# 8997-00-47 C Rice Lake, Frontage Road South Access Road/CTH O Intersection



## Legend: (some map layers may not be displayed)

- City or Village
- County Boundaries
- County and Local Roads
- County HWY
- Local Road
- Railroads
- Latest Leaf Off Imagery

## Notes:



Map: 0 300 600 Feet  
0 80 160 Meters

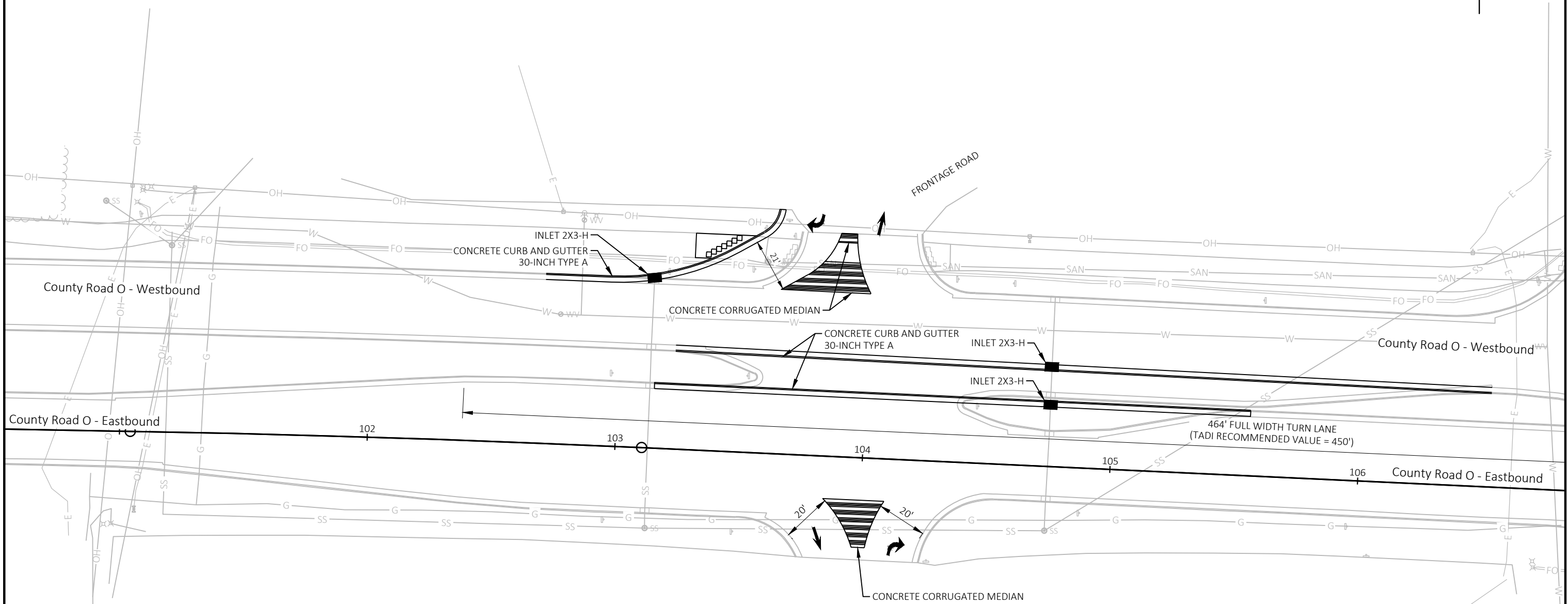
Service Layer Credits:  
Latest Leaf Off, Cities, Roads & Boundaries, Surface Water (Cached): WiDNR, USGS, and other data

Map projection: NAD 1983 HARN Wisconsin TM

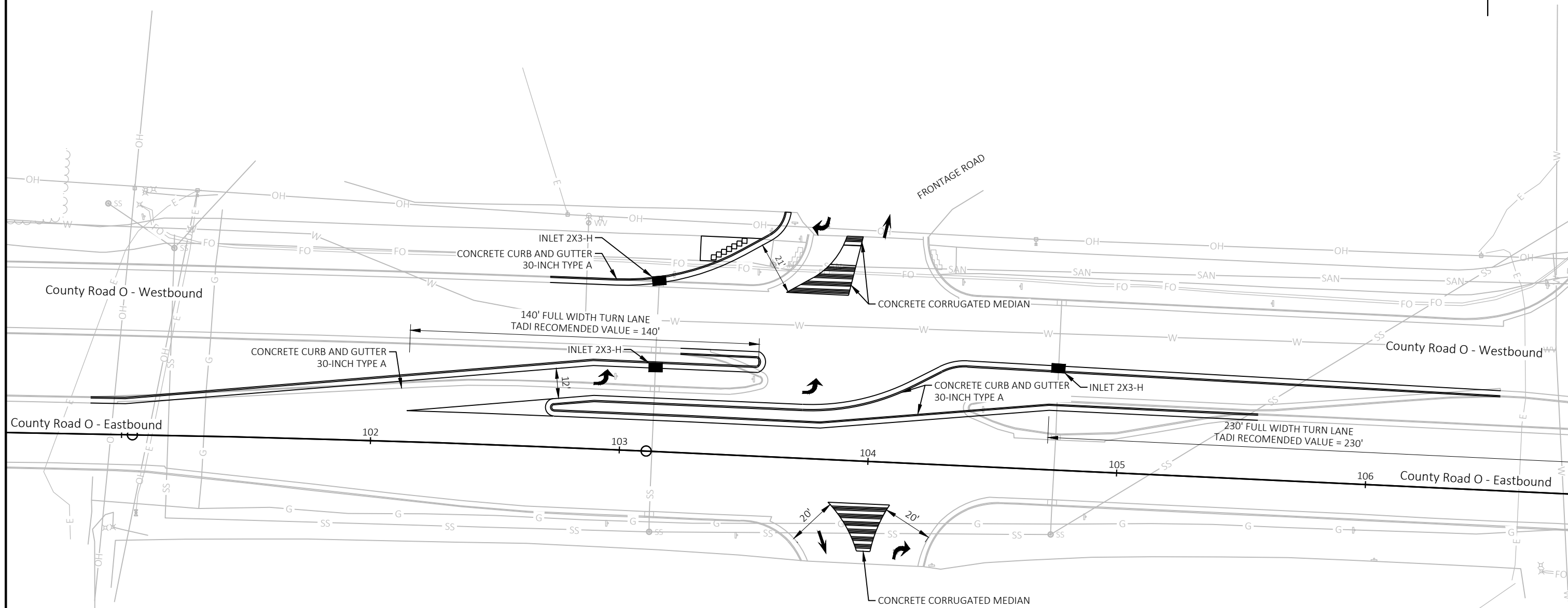
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ALTERNATIVE 1: FULL CLOSURE



ALTERNATIVE 2: NORTHBOUND LEFT ONLY