

**TABLE 5-1
PROJECT AREA POPULATION CHANGE**

	2000 Census	2010 Projection	2020 Projection	2030 Projection	Percent Change 2000-2030
MINNESOTA					
City of Stillwater	15,143	17,200	18,300	19,200	27%
City of Oak Park Heights	3,957	4,900	5,400	5,700	44%
Washington County	210,130	245,920	291,900	344,280	64%
WISCONSIN					
Town of St. Joseph	3,436	4,172	4,746	4,957 ⁽¹⁾	44% ⁽¹⁾
St. Croix County	63,155	80,779	95,202	106,026	68%

Sources:

Minnesota: Census 2000, Metropolitan Council Forecasts

Wisconsin: Census 2000, Wisconsin Department of Administration Forecasts

⁽¹⁾ 2025 forecast year data used from the Wisconsin DOA.

5.1.1.2 Socio-Economic Characteristics

Socio-economic characteristics of the study area communities are summarized in Tables 5-2 and 5-3, with Figure 5-1 depicting the census tracts for which data was tabulated. These community characteristics are discussed at length in a discussion of environmental justice issues in the project area found in Section 5.1.2.5.

5.1.2 Environmental Consequences

5.1.2.1 Community Cohesion

Community cohesion analysis is used to determine how the social interaction or potential for social interaction between or among geographically-defined groups of people might be affected by a proposed project.

City of Oak Park Heights

In Oak Park Heights, all proposed Build Alternatives would follow the existing TH 36 and TH 95 roadway corridors and perpetuate the same general physical access between and among locations on either side of the highways. Although existing at-grade access points to TH 36 would be rerouted via frontage roads to grade-separated freeway entrance ramps, these changes would not introduce new social barriers between groups of people. The Build Alternatives could enhance community cohesion by providing improved bicycle and pedestrian accommodations on new interchange bridges and frontage roads, resulting in improved community connections north and south of TH 36. The Build Alternatives also remove congestion from cross-street traffic flow, which may also discourage trips between the north and

**TABLE 5-2
MINNESOTA PROJECT AREA DEMOGRAPHICS, CENSUS 2000 DATA**

Demographic Group	City of Stillwater		Tract 705.02 (Stillwater)		Tract 706.01 (Stillwater)		Tract 706.02 (Stillwater)		City of Oak Park Heights		Washington County	
	Number	Percent of Population	Number	Percent of Population	Number	Percent of Population	Number	Percent of Population	Number	Percent of Population	Number	Percent of Population
HOUSEHOLDS	5,797	100.0	1,604	100.0	1,830	100.0	1,239	100.0	1,528	100.0	71,462	100.0
POPULATION	15,143	100.0	3,986	100.0	4,877	100.0	2,965	100.0	3,957	100.0	201,130	100.0
• White	14,767	97.5	3,885	97.5	4,735	97.1	2,900	97.8	3,602	91.0	188,317	93.6
• Black	48	0.3	13	0.3	21	0.4	3	0.1	175	4.4	3,689	1.8
• American Indian or Alaskan Native	43	0.3	13	0.3	11	0.2	13	0.4	36	0.9	785	0.4
• Asian	86	0.6	21	0.5	38	0.8	9	0.3	51	1.3	4,297	2.1
• Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	3	0.0	2	0.1	1	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.0	66	0.0
• Other	55	0.4	7	0.2	20	0.4	25	0.8	25	0.6	1,216	0.6
• Two or more races	141	0.9	45	1.1	51	1.0	15	0.5	67	1.7	2,760	1.4
• Hispanic ⁽¹⁾	148	1.0	26	0.7	44	0.9	52	1.8	83	2.1	3,892	1.9
	Number	Percent of Population (³)	Number	Percent of Population (³)	Number	Percent of Population (³)	Number	Percent of Population (³)	Number	Percent of Population (³)	Number	Percent of Population (³)
1999 Median Household Income	\$57,154	NA	\$46,596	NA	\$63,598	NA	\$49,915	NA	\$48,425	NA	\$66,305	NA
Persons below 1999 Poverty Level	646	4.3	185	4.8	204	4.2	160	5.4	115	3.4	5,765	2.9
Persons for Whom Poverty Status Is Determined ⁽²⁾	14,991	NA	3,822	NA	4,854	NA	2,965	NA	3,419	NA	197,986	NA

⁽¹⁾ By definition, individuals represented in the Hispanic Origin group are also represented in one of the other racial groups (white, black, American Indian, Asian, other).

⁽²⁾ Due to differences in reporting, numbers are slightly lower than the total population.

⁽³⁾ Persons for whom poverty status is determined

Note: City of Stillwater includes Census Tracts 705.01, 705.02, 706.01 and 706.02 and City of Oak Park Heights includes Census Tracts 707.01, 707.03 and 708.02.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**TABLE 5-3
WISCONSIN PROJECT AREA DEMOGRAPHICS, CENSUS 2000 DATA**

Demographic Group	Tract 1204.00 (Town of St. Joseph)		St. Croix County	
	Number	Percent of Population	Number	Percent of Population
HOUSEHOLDS	2,755	100.0	23,410	100.0
POPULATION	7,636	100.0	63,155	100.0
• White	7,455	97.6	61,796	97.8
• Black	22	0.3	177	0.3
• American Indian or Alaskan Native	24	0.3	159	0.3
• Asian	46	0.6	389	0.6
• Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	6	0.1	14	0.0
• Other	18	0.2	141	0.2
• Two or more races	65	0.9	479	0.8
• Hispanic ⁽¹⁾	54	0.7	483	0.8
	Number	Percent of Population ⁽³⁾	Number	Percent of Population ⁽³⁾
1999 Median Household Income	\$64,402	NA	\$54,930	NA
Persons below 1999 Poverty Level	235	3.1	2,493	4.0
Persons for Whom Poverty Status Is Determined ⁽²⁾	7,621	NA	62,185	NA

⁽¹⁾ By definition, individuals represented in the Hispanic Origin Group are also represented in one of the other racial groups (white, black, American Indian, Asian, other).

⁽²⁾ Numbers are slightly different from population numbers due to differences in reporting.

⁽³⁾ Persons for whom poverty status is determined

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 5-1 – Census Tract Boundaries (8.5x11 – b/w)

south side of TH 36 under the No-Build condition. As discussed in Section 5.2, a number of residential and commercial properties in Oak Park Heights would be acquired under all Build Alternatives, which would result in short-term local social disruption. However, these acquisitions would not result in substantially isolating or disrupting an identified neighborhood or group of people.

City of Stillwater

All of the Build Alternatives follow the existing alignment of TH 95 and therefore would not introduce any new social barriers between groups of people. Reduction of congestion in downtown Stillwater and on current diversion routes of regional traffic through Stillwater under the Build Alternative would encourage more local use of these streets and provide an improved environment for pedestrians and bicyclists. Build Alternatives B-1_b and E, which both provide for continued vehicular traffic on the Lift Bridge, would not have as great an effect on improving bicycle and pedestrian connectivity in Stillwater.

Wisconsin

In Wisconsin, unlike in Minnesota, there are more marked differences between the Build Alternatives in terms of whether they are proposed to use existing roadway alignment or not. Build Alternatives B-1_a, B-1_b, and C are proposed for construction on new alignment; however, this alignment is through an area where properties are generally isolated and no disturbance to an identified neighborhood or group of people is anticipated to result. There would be some social disruption to individuals due to the acquisition of several private properties, isolation of remaining individual properties, and more circuitous access. Under these alternatives, most through-traffic would bypass Houlton, resulting in easier movement for vehicles and pedestrians within Houlton. Alternative B-1_b, which allows for vehicular use of the Lift Bridge, would result in the least change to Houlton in terms of vehicular connectivity to the community of Stillwater. This connectivity is also an option under Build Alternative C, although the analysis of traffic operations was only completed for Alternative B-1_b, as results were anticipated to be similar. Build Alternatives B-1_a, B-1_b, and C would introduce a new physical barrier between some existing farms and rural residences. Access changes to residences are discussed in Section 4.3.5 and access and operational impacts on farms are discussed in Section 6.2.1.3. Because the alignments of these alternatives would not traverse a heavily populated or urban area, however, they would not create a physical barrier to interaction between neighborhoods or social groups.

Build Alternatives D and E would have the potential to create social disruptions in the community of Houlton. These disruptions would occur as a result of expanding State Trunk Highway (STH) 64 in its existing alignment and the consequence of changing its alignment to provide an interchange with a realigned STH 35. As a result of these improvements, a total of 16 homes would be acquired in Houlton. Residential acquisitions under these Build Alternatives occur in a cluster of homes located near the existing intersection of STH 35/STH 64, in addition to other residences located in the Houlton area (clustered adjacent to STH 64 and west of STH 35).

Project Area Community Cohesion

Under Build Alternatives B-1_a, B-1_b, C, and D, the potential for cohesion among communities in Minnesota (Stillwater and Oak Park Heights) and Wisconsin (Houlton and Town of St. Joseph) could be enhanced by improved motor vehicle access resulting from decreased congestion and increasing safety on the new bridge alignments and roadways. At the same time, the cohesion between communities in Minnesota and Wisconsin could be disrupted to some degree, depending on the future of the Lift Bridge. Alternative B-1_b, under which the Lift Bridge would remain accessible to motorized vehicles, would have the least amount of impact in terms of changing motor vehicle connectivity of any of the Build Alternatives. Alternatives B-1_a, C, and D would allow for improved bicycle and pedestrian connectivity between Minnesota and Wisconsin; however, with the removal of vehicle traffic from the Lift Bridge, vehicle access from Houlton to downtown Stillwater would be more circuitous, possibly discouraging some socially-related trips between the two communities. Alternative E, under which the Lift Bridge would continue to serve as a state trunk highway for westbound traffic, would have the least potential for any beneficial impacts to community cohesion based on decreased levels of congestion on current diversion routes in Stillwater and improved bicycle and pedestrian connectivity.

With the No-Build Alternative, no changes in community cohesion would result. To the extent they exist today, current barriers to community cohesion resulting from traffic congestion on the bridge and approach roadways would be perpetuated.

5.1.2.2 Travel Patterns and Accessibility

Potential consequences to travel patterns and accessibility are discussed in Chapter 4.

5.1.2.3 Community Facilities and Services

Overall, the Build Alternatives would have a positive impact on community services and facilities as a result of decreased travel time resulting from decreased motor vehicle congestion during peak travel periods. Figure 5-2a depicts selected community facilities in the project area.

Schools and School Districts

The locations of schools are shown in Figure 5-2a. Small changes in school enrollment could result if school-age children are living in any of the residential properties to be relocated in Minnesota and Wisconsin. In addition, some school bus routes could change as a result of the changes in roadway layout. Alternative B-1 and Alternative C (Option 1) would result in decreased traffic near the Houlton Elementary School with the conversion of the present County Highway E alignment in that area to a local access road (see Figures 3-5 and 3-11). Alternatives D and E would also result in decreased traffic volumes at the Houlton Elementary School with County Trunk Highway (CTH) E used only for local access, and through traffic re-routed to the realigned STH 35.

Figure 5-2a – Community Facilities (8.5x11 – b/w)

Police, Fire, and Medical Services

The locations of police, fire, and medical services within the project area are shown in Figure 5-2a. Of these three services, the Build Alternatives would have the most beneficial impact on emergency medical service for the Town of St. Joseph, which relies on Stillwater's Lakeview Hospital and uses the Lift Bridge for much of its ambulance service. Alternatives B-1_a, B-1_b, C, and D would substantially improve emergency access to and from the Town of St. Joseph by providing a bridge connection across the St. Croix River not subject to occasional closure. It should be noted that under Alternative B-1_b emergency vehicles would continue to be able to use the Lift Bridge, should they choose to do so. Under Alternative E, emergency service vehicles traveling to Lakeview Hospital would continue to use the Lift Bridge for westbound trips to the hospital. Although congestion would be eased under this alternative from No-Build conditions, delays caused by raising of the Lift Bridge and closure of the Lift Bridge for repairs would continue to occur along with the resulting delays to emergency vehicles. Fire service from St. Joseph Town Hall to Houlton would remain virtually unchanged from what it is presently; to the north, access would be more circuitous with local road access removed from STH 35/64.

With construction of TH 36 to interchange-only access on the Minnesota side of the project area, emergency medical service to Lakeview Hospital from Oak Park Heights to the south would become circuitous. However, the benefits of eliminating traffic signals at at-grade intersections with TH 36 would likely outweigh any time lost because of this change of access. Conversations with hospital administrators revealed that there were no major concerns on their behalf regarding proposed access changes.

Fire service in Stillwater is provided from the Stillwater City Hall and Fire Department (see Figure 5-2a) and would not be adversely affected by any of the proposed Build Alternatives and could actually benefit from the reduction in congestion on current diversion routes. Oak Park Heights contracts for their fire service with Bayport (see Figure 5-2a). Similar to emergency medical services to Lakeview Hospital, there would be some change in access to fire service to the portion of Oak Park Heights located north of TH 36 under the proposed Build Alternatives; however, the associated benefits of replacing at-grade intersections with traffic signals with grade-separated interchanges would likely outweigh any adverse impacts associated with this change in access.

With the No-Build Alternative, emergency service between Stillwater and the Town of St. Joseph as well as downtown Stillwater and Oak Park Heights south of TH 36 would continue to be affected by periodic delays resulting from congestion on the Lift Bridge and approach roadways.

Businesses

Business relocations in Minnesota would be necessary under all the proposed Build Alternatives. Under Alternatives B-1, and C, a total of 20 commercial parcels (including one vacant parcel) or 30 businesses in Oak Park Heights would be acquired adjacent to TH 36. Seven of these businesses are restaurants, five are gas stations, auto parts, or other automobile-related

businesses, and the others include a hotel, a child/family center, a Goodwill, a realty office, a rental management office, a mini-storage building, a paint store, a branch office of a bank, and an office building that includes five financial management businesses, a law office, and three businesses in the health sector. Also, under Alternatives D and E, two additional businesses would be acquired in Stillwater. There would be some initial social disruptions that result from business acquisitions in Oak Park Heights; however, in the long term, it is anticipated that redevelopment opportunities afforded by the improved access and increased safety will offset any short-term social impacts suffered from the loss of businesses. No social impacts are anticipated to result from business acquisitions in Stillwater. More information on business relocations and acquisitions is provided in Section 5.2.

In Wisconsin, two businesses would be relocated as a result of Alternatives D and E (a nightclub and a liquor wholesaler/distributor), with no business relocations necessary under Alternatives B-1 or C.

Although no businesses would be relocated under the No-Build Alternative, further development of the commercial business area in Oak Park Heights would be constrained by the capacity limitations of the current system of frontage roads and at-grade access points to TH 36.

Potential economic impacts on businesses in the project area are discussed in Section 5.3.

Churches and Cemeteries

The proposed action would result in the partial acquisition of both church and cemetery property. In total, less than one acre of property in such use would be acquired. Approximately 0.5 acre of property would be acquired from the Salem Lutheran Church cemetery in Oak Park Heights, and approximately 0.15 acre would be acquired from the Fairview Cemetery in Stillwater. There are no gravesites in any portion of the cemetery property to be acquired. Approximately 0.2 acre of property would be taken from the First Presbyterian Church in Oak Park Heights (located at the intersection of Osgood Avenue North and 62nd Street North). These acquisitions would be strip takings at the edge of the church's parking lot. Due to the limited amount of church and cemetery property acquisition, no social impacts are anticipated to result from the proposed action.

5.1.2.4 Parks and Recreation Areas

As shown in Figure 5-2b, a number of parks and recreation areas are located near the project area. Of these, five could be affected by the proposed Build Alternatives: the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, the Stillwater Municipal Barge Facility Property (a planned park), Kolliner Park (also a planned park), and Lowell Park, and the New Stillwater Park (located at the southeast quadrant of the Nelson Street and South Second Street intersection at the top of the Minnesota bluff). Potential impacts of the project on each of these facilities are described in appropriate chapters throughout this document. In addition, Draft Section 4(f) Evaluations have been completed for each of the five resources listed above (see Appendix E). Potential social impacts on the five parks and recreation areas are described as follows.

Figure 5-2b – Parks and Recreation Areas (8.5x11 – b/w)

Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway

The Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway is a narrow corridor that runs along the Minnesota/Wisconsin boundary from Taylors Falls, Minnesota/St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin, to its confluence with the Mississippi river at Point Douglas, Minnesota/Prescott, Wisconsin. The Riverway is managed by the Lower St. Croix Management Commission (LSCMC), which consists of representatives from the NPS, the MnDNR and the WisDNR. The Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway is split into two management zones. The State zone, administered by the MnDNR and WisDNR through the LSCMC, extends from the Stillwater Boomsite downstream to the Mississippi River confluence. The federal zone, administered by the NPS, extends from the Stillwater Boomsite upstream to the dam at Taylor's Falls/St. Croix Falls. Potential impacts of the Build Alternatives on the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway will be evaluated under Section 7(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act independently by the NPS.

Social impacts to this resource are anticipated to be limited to aesthetic impacts resulting from the visual effects of a new bridge structure spanning the river; there will be no anticipated changes to the ability of persons to access the river to enjoy any of the recreational opportunities currently afforded. Under the No-Build Alternative, no new bridge would be constructed and there would be no associated social impacts to this resource.

Stillwater Municipal Barge Facility Property

Under all Build Alternatives, property would be acquired from a portion of the Stillwater Municipal Barge Facility Property (known previously as the Aiple property), a planned Stillwater riverfront park. Under Alternative B-1, a slight amount of the total property would be acquired to construct a new access road to the south end of the property from TH 95 (as shown in the park Master Plan). Although the majority of the park plan could still be implemented under Alternative B-1, the new road would result in visual impacts for visitors to the park. Under Alternative C, a total of approximately 3.6 acres would be acquired from the property to construct a roadway to a bridge abutment, park access road, and, potentially, a bridge pier. This acquisition would not limit the ability to develop the remaining portions of this resource such that people could access or use it; however, there would be visual effects, including the shadow cast from the bridge pier as well as the physical effects resulting from taking portions of the park property for purposes other than recreational use. Under Alternatives D and E, as much as 58 percent of the property would be acquired. This acquisition for Alternatives D and E would have a substantial impact on the ability to implement the park Master Plan; however, because the Stillwater Municipal Barge Facility property has not yet been developed as a park, there is the potential to reconsider potential uses and master planning for the remaining parkland at the south end of the property. Refer to the draft Section 4(f) evaluation and Figures E-7a to E-7d in Appendix E for additional discussion of the Stillwater Municipal Barge Facility property.

No direct impacts to this property would result from the No-Build Alternative.

Lowell Park

No interference with the social activities or purposes of Lowell Park are anticipated to result from the proposed Build Alternatives. Under all Build Alternatives, there would be changes to the visual setting of the park with construction of a new bridge spanning the St. Croix River. Alternatives B-1_a, C and D would result in improved pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to this resource, with the Lift Bridge closed to motorized vehicle traffic and used as a pedestrian/bicycle facility. With the Lift Bridge used as a pedestrian/bicycle facility, vehicular traffic would no longer use Chestnut Street to access the Lift Bridge; Chestnut Street currently bisects Lowell Park. Removal of vehicular traffic through Lowell Park via Chestnut Street would improve pedestrian safety and access between the north and south ends of the park.

Kolliner Park

Depending upon the final future of the Lift Bridge (whether it is open to motorized vehicles or not) social impacts may be anticipated to result to this resource from the various Build Alternatives. If the Lift Bridge is closed to motorized vehicles, as it would be under Alternatives B-1_a, C, and D, then access changes to the park would affect both users and maintenance staff. Although there would be enhanced connections from Stillwater for pedestrians and bicyclists under these alternatives, motorists and maintenance staff would have to use more circuitous routes in order to access the park. Should the Lift Bridge remain open to motorized vehicles (under Alternatives B-1_b and potentially under Alternative C), no social impacts to this resource are anticipated to result.

Under Alternatives D and E, there would be no ability for motorized vehicles to access Kolliner Park. There would be opportunities to serve the park via trails for pedestrian and bicycle users, including enhanced access for Houlton and the Town of St. Joseph; however, there would be no direct access from STH 64 due to grade separation, potentially affecting the implementation of the adopted Master Plan for the site. In addition, under these alternatives, STH 64 would continue to bisect Kolliner Park with the associated affects of vehicle noise and visual disturbance. Refer to the draft Section 4(f) evaluation and Figures E-10a and E-10b in Appendix E for additional discussion of Kolliner Park.

In addition, the City of Stillwater, as owners of the park site, have questioned restoring the park to a natural state, which would affect implementation of the Master Plan under all Build Alternatives.

The No-Build Alternative would have no direct impact on Kolliner Park; however, the park would continue to be affected by vehicles using the Lift Bridge. Because STH 64 bisects Kolliner Park, future visitors to the park, if it is ever developed, would experience noise and visual disturbance from vehicles on the highway. Congestion along STH 64 is expected to continue to increase if no transportation changes are made.

New Stillwater Park

The New Stillwater Park (as yet unnamed) is located at the southeast quadrant of the Nelson Street and South Second Street intersection at the top of the Minnesota bluff near downtown Stillwater. The New Stillwater Park is about 0.4-acre in size and is also located within the Stillwater Commercial Historic District and the Stillwater Cultural Landscape District.

No interference with the social activities or purposes of this resource are anticipated to result from the proposed Build Alternatives; however, there would be the aesthetic impact resulting from a new bridge spanning the St. Croix River. Under No-Build Conditions, the impacts associated with congestion in downtown Stillwater, namely noise, visual intrusion, difficult access, and emissions, may intrude upon the pleasurable use of this resource.

5.1.2.5 Environmental Justice

Environmental justice in the context of highway project development began with an Executive Order issued on February 11, 1994 the purpose of which was to ensure that federal agencies “[i]dentify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of federal policies, programs, and activities on minority and low-income populations.” The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) issued their final Order on Environmental Justice on April 15, 1997. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) published draft guidance for Mn/DOT planning and project development activities shortly thereafter, in June 1997. The following environmental justice determination is consistent with Mn/DOT’s *Environmental Justice Guidance*, furthermore, is consistent with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation’s environmental justice procedures, as discussed in their *Facilities Development Manual*.

Step 1: Minority and Low-Income Population Determination

The first step in the environmental justice determination process is to determine whether any population of minority or low-income persons is present in the project area. To assess the potential for this project, census data were examined to determine broad demographic conditions. In addition, information from the Washington County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) regarding use of federal low-income housing assistance within the project area was examined. Finally, discussions with local officials and residents were undertaken in an effort to determine whether environmental justice populations were present in the project area.

- **Minority Populations:** The initial conclusion based on census data, as summarized in Tables 5-2 and 5-3 (Pages 5-3 and 5-4), was that no minority populations were present in the project area. This was confirmed during discussions with elected officials, staff persons, and residents of Stillwater, Oak Park Heights, and Houlton.
- **Low-Income Populations:** In discussions with Stillwater city staff, it was determined that no low-income populations in Stillwater resided in the study area. In the City of Oak Park Heights, city staff and an elected official believed there may be the potential for low-income persons to reside in some of the apartment buildings in the study area. Since income information is a privacy concern, it was determined that federal low-income housing

assistance (Section 8 housing assistance or vouchers) would be used as a proxy for likelihood of low-income populations. Property addresses along the TH 36 corridor in Oak Park Heights were sent to the Executive Director of the Washington County HRA whose staff then searched the County's database to determine use of, or presence of, Section 8 housing/vouchers. Based on communications with Washington County HRA, it was determined that no Section 8 housing in the City of Oak Park Heights was present in the project area, nor were there any persons residing in the area affected by construction currently using Section 8 vouchers. Therefore, the conclusion was reached that no populations of low-income persons were present on the Minnesota side of the project area.

On the Wisconsin side of the project area, there were concerns regarding the potential for the presence of low-income populations, specifically in the community of Houlton. The potential for low-income populations in Houlton was initially assessed doing a "windshield survey" of the community. There is a mobile-home community near the existing intersection of STH 35/64 in Houlton. In addition, the character of the development and the housing type in Houlton is notably different than that found in either the cities of Stillwater or Oak Park Heights in Minnesota. Discussions with the Director of Planning for St. Croix County led to recommendations to contact local residents and staff in order to discuss whether there were low-income populations present in Houlton. In discussions with these persons, there was a universal acknowledgement that low-income populations were present in Houlton.

Minority and Low-Income Population Findings (see Tables 5-2 and 5-3)

1. No minority populations are present in the project area.
2. No low-income populations are present on the Minnesota side of the project area.
3. There is the potential that a low-income population exists in the community of Houlton. There are no other populations of low-income persons in the remainder of the Wisconsin project area.

Step 2: High, Adverse, and Disproportionate Impacts to Minority and Low-Income Populations

The second step in the St. Croix River Crossing SDEIS environmental justice determination process was to determine whether any high or adverse environmental impacts disproportionately borne by the identified environmental justice population would occur as a result of the proposed project. Since the identified population resides in Houlton, the following discussion applies only to that portion of the overall project area.

- **High Impacts:** High impacts, as defined in Mn/DOT's *Environmental Justice Guidance* are considered to be "[a]ny impact which exceeds a state or federal standard." Based on the results of air quality and noise analysis, "high" impacts are anticipated to result under some Build Alternative conditions. Noise standards will be exceeded under Build Alternative D and E conditions at noise receptor W-10. Under Build Alternative D conditions, noise receptor site W-11 is anticipated to experience an increase of 15 decibels from No-Build to Build conditions. For the remaining noise receptor sites considered part of the Houlton area (W-3, W-4 and W-5), no "high" noise impacts from any of the proposed Build Alternatives

are anticipated. No exceedance of air quality standards in the Houlton area is anticipated to result from any of the proposed Build Alternatives.

- **Adverse Impacts:** Adverse impacts can generally be understood as all those impacts, such as relocation or economic or social impacts, for which standards are not set, but which may be understood as “adverse” by the affected population. Since adverse impacts are, almost by definition, qualitative in nature, public involvement and outreach is critical to their definition. As referenced in Mn/DOT's Environmental Justice Guidance and in the original USDOT order, "meaningful opportunities for public involvement, including the identification of potential effects, alternatives, and mitigation measures" is an important part of this process. An Environmental Justice Public Informational Meeting in Houlton was conducted on July 20, 2004, the purpose of which was to share the results of technical analyses and to receive input from the affected population on adverse impacts resulting from some of the Build Alternatives under consideration. Houlton area residents (approximately 130) received a notice of invitation to attend the environmental justice meeting in the mail. Notice of the meeting was also published in a local area newspaper. Approximately 40 people attended the meeting; however, based on comments received, it was apparent that the attendees included residents from outside the Houlton area as well (see Appendix D for a depiction of the Houlton Area included in the comment form). Information about the proposed Build Alternatives and the resulting potential impacts was shared with meeting attendees. Concerns expressed related to the negative impacts of noise on residents' quality of life, as well as on residential property values; the nature and potentially negative outcome of the acquisition process; and the dismay that residents felt realizing that Wis/DOT does not pay damages for “proximity” impacts to properties (i.e., noise impacts, visual impacts, etc.) but only the acquisition of right-of-way or direct impacts on property. Other concerns (not as directly related to individual property impacts) had to do with the long-term effects on Houlton residents if land values increased in their area due to the increased level of access afforded by a new St. Croix River bridge to the Twin Cities. One attendee worried that rising land values may mean that current residents could not afford to live in the Houlton area in the future. Yet another attendee discussed the deteriorating condition of the present Lift Bridge and the perception that it was beyond its useful life and money spent fixing it would be wasted.

The Houlton area environmental justice meeting, as described above, allowed attendees' to express their concerns in a public setting. However, for those people who may not have been comfortable speaking in public or who were unable to attend the meeting, a questionnaire was developed and distributed querying residents regarding their perceptions of impacts resulting from the Build Alternatives. Approximately 22 questionnaires were completed and submitted (via self-addressed, stamped envelope) to Wis/DOT by the submission deadline. It must be acknowledged that the amount of input received (40 meeting attendees and 22 questionnaire responses) relative to the total population identified (approximately 130) is not sufficient to result in a level of confidence to extrapolate attitudes

about adverse Build Alternative impacts to Houlton area. However, initial results are presented below, and provide some illustrative information regarding the perceptions of Houlton area residents relative to the impacts of the proposed Build Alternatives.

Questionnaire results are summarized as follows:

Houlton Area Residents: A total of 16 (approximately 70 percent) of the 22 respondents indicated they lived in the Houlton area.

Residential Acquisition: A total of 7 of the 22 respondents indicated a belief that, based on information presented at the public information meeting, their home would be acquired as part of the right-of-way acquisition process. It is important to note that, based on the responders' indication of where their home was located, 6 of the 7 responders lived in areas where no residential acquisitions are anticipated under any of the Build Alternative conditions.

Benefits of the Residential Acquisition Process: None of the 7 responders who believed their home would be acquired perceived any benefits from the acquisition process.

Residential Acquisition Concerns: Concerns about the residential acquisition process noted most frequently by respondents who believed their home would be acquired were as follows:

- Not being able to find comparable housing nearby;
- Not being reimbursed for all the costs associated with moving; and,
- Having to pay higher rent/mortgage payments.

Adverse Impacts of Build Alternatives: All of the 22 respondents indicated a belief that at least one of the proposed Build Alternatives had the potential for adverse impacts on the Houlton area.

Relative Adversity of Build Alternatives: Of the 16 responders living in the Houlton area (defined as the environmental justice population being queried as to the adversity of proposed Build Alternative impacts), Build Alternatives D and E were described most frequently as having the potential to result in "Very Adverse" impacts, with a total of 13 responders so indicating. A total of 9 responders indicated that Build Alternative C with Option 2 had the potential for "Very Adverse" impacts, with 8 responders indicating the same for Alternative C with Option 1. Build Alternatives B1-a and B1-b had 4 responders each indicating the potential for "Very Adverse" impacts.

Quality-of-Life Concerns: Questionnaire responders were asked to indicate their level of concern (Very Concerned, Somewhat Concerned, Not Concerned) with the potential for the proposed Build Alternatives to affect them personally. The greatest number of Houlton area responders indicated they were "very concerned" or "somewhat concerned" with the potential of the Build Alternatives to change the character of the Houlton area (15 responders). Responders indicated they were "Very Concerned" with the potential for the Build Alternatives to require their neighbors to sell their home (8 responders) eliminate the ability to drive their car on the Lift Bridge, and increase traffic noise heard from their property (7 responders each).

- **Disproportionate Impacts:** Both high and adverse impacts have been identified as affecting the environmental justice population of Houlton. The final step in the environmental justice determination is to discuss whether the high and adverse impacts are disproportionately borne by the environmental justice population. However, in making this finding, all identified mitigation strategies, enhancements, and off-setting benefits to the affected population must be taken into consideration (Mn/DOT's Environmental Justice Guidance). At this point in the process, mitigation strategies have been identified at a generalized level, with the development of a specific mitigation package occurring upon selection of a Preferred Alternative (see Chapter 14). Upon selection of a Preferred Alternative, and any identified mitigation strategies, a final environmental justice determination will be made and documented in the SFEIS.

Preliminary Environmental Justice Finding

No populations of low-income or minority persons is found on the Minnesota side of the project area. There is a high likelihood of a low-income population existing in the community of Houlton, Wisconsin. Under Alternative D, one of the five (W-3, W-4, W-5, W-10 and W-11) noise modeling and monitoring sites in the Houlton area is anticipated to exceed state standards (W-10), while another receptor site (W-11) is anticipated to experience an increase of 15 decibels from No-Build to Build Conditions. Under Alternative E, one site (W-10) is anticipated to exceed state standards for noise. No exceedance of air quality standards in the Houlton area is anticipated to result from any of the proposed Build Alternatives. Adverse impacts resulting from the project, which include all impacts for which standards have not been established at either the Federal or State level, were discussed with area residents at a Public Information Meeting and surveyed using a public comment sheet distributed at the meeting. Based on these preliminary results, Houlton area residents indicated that Build Alternatives D and E had the greatest potential for “very adverse” impacts. A final environmental justice determination will be made upon identification of a Preferred Alternative, and any associated mitigation strategies agreed upon, in keeping with both USDOT and Mn/DOT environmental justice guidance. This finding will be documented in the SFEIS.

5.1.3 Mitigation of Social Impacts

As no significant adverse impacts are anticipated, no mitigation is proposed with respect to impacts on community cohesion or community facilities and services. Mitigation of impacts on parks and recreation areas will be documented in the SFEIS upon identification of a Preferred Alternative. Mitigation on identified environmental justice populations will also be documented in the SFEIS.

5.2 RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION AND RELOCATION

This section describes the amount of right-of-way acquisition that would be acquired for the Build Alternatives, as well as any resulting impacts. This description includes the identification of residential, business, and farm property acquisitions and relocations needed for construction of the Build Alternatives. It should be noted that all acreage and property figures noted in this section are approximate pending the establishment of final limits.

During the initial implementation of the 1995 Final EIS Preferred Alternative, a number of residential and commercial properties were acquired before the process was halted in 1996. The impacts of these relocations were described and evaluated in the 1990 Draft EIS and the 1995 Final EIS. Although these acquisitions have already occurred and, as such, are not a direct impact of the proposed Build Alternatives currently under consideration, they are, nevertheless, part of the overall impact resulting from the project and are discussed below, as appropriate.

5.2.1 Affected Environment

The affected environment here is limited to those areas adjacent to the proposed alignments of the alternatives that would be acquired or used as part of the construction process. For a further discussion and understanding of the project environment, including the characteristics of land uses adjacent to the corridor, and potential direct or indirect impacts the Build Alternatives might have on adjacent land use, please refer to Chapter 6.

5.2.2 Environmental Consequences

Depending upon the Build Alternative, construction of the proposed project will require approximately 279 to 305 acres of right-of-way, including right-of-way acquired as part of the 1995 Final EIS process, and excluding excess right-of-way available upon completion of the proposed project. Table 5-4a provides a summary of right-of-way needed for the various Build Alternatives, in addition to right-of-way previously acquired for the 1995 Final EIS Preferred Alternative. Upon completion of the proposed project, a portion of the right-of-way initially acquired will be in “excess”. This excess right-of-way is summarized in Table 5-4a by alternative. The future of excess right-of-way is guided by state law which requires offering a purchase opportunity to the prior owner. Subsequently, the land may be offered at fair market value to the jurisdiction in which it lies and could be used at that time for redevelopment purposes.

Tables 5-4b and 5-4c provides a summary of the number of properties that will need to be acquired to construct the Build Alternatives. Total and partial parcel acquisitions in the Minnesota portion of the project are depicted in Figures 5-3a through 5-3e, in addition to excess right-of-way available for redevelopment upon construction of the project. Figures 5-4a through 5-4e depict right-of-way and excess right-of-way acquired in Wisconsin.

5.2.2.1 Minnesota

Figures 5-3a through 5-3e show full and partial parcel acquisitions in the Minnesota portion of the project area. These acquisitions include residential, commercial, cemetery and church, and vacant properties. These parcels are further described in Tables 5-4b and 5-4c.

In Minnesota, approximately thirteen residential properties (six single-family, two multi-family and five vacant lots) would need to be acquired in addition to partial acquisition, which would not require relocation, of either 23 (Alternative C with Option 2) or 27 (Alternatives B-1, C with Option 1, D or E) single-family properties (see Tables 5-4b and 5-4c).

**TABLE 5-4a
RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITIONS (IN ACRES) REQUIRED FOR BUILD ALTERNATIVE**

MINNESOTA

	1	2					3									
	Previous Acquisitions (for 1995 Final EIS Preferred Alternative)	New Acquisitions					Excess Right-of-Way ⁽¹⁾					Total Right-of-Way Required (Column 1+2-3)				
		Alt B1	Alt C - Option 1	Alt C - Option 2	Alt D	Alt E	Alt B1	Alt C - Option 1	Alt C - Option 2	Alt D	Alt E	Alt B1	Alt C - Option 1	Alt C - Option 2	Alt D	Alt E
Total Area to be Acquired for Right-of-Way																
Acres	73	57	59	59	66	64	20	26	26	25	25	110	106	106	114	112

WISCONSIN

	1	2					3									
	Previous Acquisitions (for 1995 Final EIS Preferred Alternative)	New Acquisitions					Excess Right-of-Way ⁽¹⁾					Total Right-of-Way Required (Column 1+2-3)				
		Alt B1	Alt C - Option 1	Alt C - Option 2	Alt D	Alt E	Alt B1	Alt C - Option 1	Alt C - Option 2	Alt D	Alt E	Alt B1	Alt C - Option 1	Alt C - Option 2	Alt D	Alt E
Total Area to be Acquired for Right-of-Way																
Acres	133	99	82	139	112	112	45	37	99	54	54	187	179	173	191	191

⁽¹⁾ That portion of acquired right-of-way remaining after construction is completed and available for sale as excess right-of-way.

⁽²⁾ For illustration of sub-alternatives see Figures 5-3a through 5-3e and Figures 5-4a through 5-4e.

⁽²⁾ See Chapter 6 for complete discussion of farmland impacts.

**TABLE 5-4b
NUMBER OF PROPERTIES ACQUIRED THROUGH TOTAL TAKES FOR BUILD ALTERNATIVES**

	MINNESOTA						WISCONSIN					
	Previous Acquisitions (for 1995 Final EIS Preferred Alternative)	New Acquisitions					Previous Acquisitions (for 1995 Final EIS Preferred Alternative)	New Acquisitions				
		Alt B1	Alt C - Option 1	Alt C - Option 2	Alt D	Alt E		Alt B1	Alt C - Option 1	Alt C - Option 2	Alt D	Alt E
Residential Properties												
• Single family	61	6	6	6	6	6	0	2	2	1	16	16
• Multi family	4*	2**	2**	2**	2**	2**	0	0	0	0	-	-
Commercial Properties***	4	19	19	19	21	21	0	0	0	0	2	2
Cemetery/Church	NA	0	0	0	0	0	NA	0	0	0	0	0
Agricultural Properties	NA	0	0	0	0	0	NA	1	0	0	0	0
Vacant Lots	2						1					
• Residential	NA	5	5	5	5	5	NA	0	0	11	1	1
• Commercial	NA	1	1	1	3	3	NA	0	0	0	1	1
Total	71	33	33	33	37	37	1	3	2	12	20	20

* 10 units (households) total.

** 44 units (households) total.

*** In Minnesota approximately 30 businesses will be acquired for Alternatives B1 and C and 32 businesses will be acquired for Alternatives D and E.

**TABLE 5-4c
NUMBER OF PROPERTIES ACQUIRED THROUGH PARTIAL TAKES* FOR BUILD ALTERNATIVES**

	MINNESOTA					WISCONSIN						
	Previous Acquisitions (for 1995 Final EIS Preferred Alternative)	New Acquisitions					Previous Acquisitions (for 1995 Final EIS Preferred Alternative)	New Acquisitions				
		Alt B1	Alt C - Option 1	Alt C - Option 2	Alt D	Alt E		Alt B1	Alt C - Option 1	Alt C - Option 2	Alt D	Alt E
Residential Properties												
• Single family	0	27	27	23	27	27	4	16	19	19	33	32
• Multi family	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-
Commercial Properties	0	64	67	64	67	67	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cemetery/Church	NA	3	3	3	3	3	NA	0	0	0	0	0
Agricultural Properties	NA	0	0	0	0	0	NA	21	21	12	12	12
Vacant Lots	9						10					
• Residential	NA	0	0	0	0	0	NA	0	0	0	0	0
• Commercial	NA	0	0	0	0	0	NA	0	0	0	0	0
Total	9	94	97	90	97	97	14	37	40	31	45	44

* Data provided should be considered at the maximum number of partial takes. Efforts to reduce the number and amount of partial takes will continue through the final design process.

Figure 5-3a – Minnesota TH 36 (TH 5 to Osgood Avenue) – Build Alternatives Right of Way Impacts (11x17 – b/w)

BACK

**Figure 5-3b – TH 36 & TH 95 Interchange Area – Alternative B-1 Right of Way Impacts
(11x17 – b/w)**

BACK

**Figure 5-3c – TH 36 & TH 95 Interchange Area – Alternative C Right of Way Impacts
(11x17 – b/w)**

BACK

**Figure 5-3d – TH 36 & TH 95 Interchange Area – Alternative D Right of Way Impacts
(11x17 – b/w)**

BACK

**Figure 5-3e – TH 36 & TH 95 Interchange Area – Alternative E Right of Way Impacts
(11x17 – b/w)**

BACK

Figure 5-4a – Wisconsin STH 35/64 – Alternative B-1 Right of Way Impacts (11x17 – b/w)

BACK

**Figure 5-4b – Wisconsin STH 35/64 – Alternative C Right of Way Impacts (Option 1)
(11x17 – b/w)**

BACK

**Figure 5-4c – Wisconsin STH 35/64 – Alternative C Right of Way Impacts (Option 2)
(11x17 – b/w)**

BACK

Figure 5-4d – Wisconsin STH 35/64 – Alternative D Right of Way Impacts (11x17 – b/w)

BACK

Figure 5-4e – Wisconsin STH 35/64 – Alternative E Right of Way Impacts (11x17 – b/w)

BACK

Approximately 20 commercial properties (19 commercial properties with a total of 30 businesses and one vacant lot) would need to be acquired for Alternatives B-1 and C, with approximately 24 (21 commercial properties with a total of 32 businesses and three vacant lots) acquired under Alternatives D and E. Table 5-5a lists the addresses of commercial and residential properties that will be acquired through total acquisition for each of the Build Alternatives. As many as 450 employees would be affected by these acquisitions (see Section 5.3 for a full discussion of commercial business impacts). For these acquisitions, the following factors will be considered when determining the availability of properties or sites to meet the needs of the property to be displaced:

- Highway access;
- Visibility;
- Type of business;
- Dependence on drive-by customers;
- Dependence on walk-by customers;
- Has neighborhood trade area;
- Has sub-regional trade area; and,
- Has metropolitan-wide trade area

Approximately 64 commercial properties would be partially acquired (minor amounts not requiring relocation) under Alternative B-1 and C with Option 2, with 67 commercial properties partially acquired under Alternatives C with Option 1, D and E. No farm properties would be affected in Minnesota.

In total, a little over 100 acres of right-of-way would need to be acquired to construct the Build Alternatives in Minnesota (see Table 5-4a), with exact amounts ranging from 106 to 114 acres. It is important to note that approximately 25 acres (exact amounts ranging from 20 to 26 acres depending on Build Alternative) of excess right-of-way will be available for redevelopment upon completion of the proposed project.

5.2.2.2 Wisconsin

Tables 5-4b and 5-4c depict full and partial parcel acquisitions in the Wisconsin portion of the project area. In Wisconsin, the number of properties and right-of-way area to be acquired varies, to a greater extent than in Minnesota, depending on alternative and interchange sub-alternative (see Figures 5-4a through 5-4e). These differences are highlighted in Tables 5-4a, 5-4b and 5-4c.

For Alternatives B-1 and C, which avoid the community of Houlton, residential relocations are more limited. Of these, Alternative C with Option 2 avoids the greatest number of residential acquisitions, requiring only one residential relocation. Alternatives B-1 and C with Option 1 would require the relocation of two residences. Additionally, one agricultural property will also be acquired under Alternative B1 in Wisconsin.

A total of 17 residential properties (includes one vacant lot) will be acquired under Alternatives D and E; this would result in 16 residential relocations in the community of Houlton. In addition, three commercial properties (includes one vacant lot) will be acquired for Alternatives D and E. The addresses of residential properties being acquired through total takes are shown in Table 5-5b.

**TABLE 5-5a
BUSINESSES AND RESIDENCES ACQUIRED IN MINNESOTA FOR BUILD
ALTERNATIVES**

Businesses

No.	Address of Property	Current Use	Alt B1	Alt C-Option 1	Alt C-Option 2	Alt D	Alt E
TH 36 BUTTONHOOK AREA							
1	1750 Frontage Road W., Stillwater, MN 55082	Best Western Inn	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	2000 Northwestern Ave., Stillwater, MN 55082	Wells Fargo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	14410 60th St. S., Stillwater, MN 55082	Golden Crown Restaurant	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	14430 60th St. N., Stillwater, MN 55082	Edina Realty	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	14450 60th St. S., Stillwater, MN 55082	Sherwin Williams Paint, Enterprise Car Rental	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	14460 60th St., Stillwater, MN 55082	Goodwill, Early Childhood Family Center	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	14493 60th St. N., Stillwater, MN 55082	Super America	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	14529 60th St. N., Stillwater, MN 55082	Taco Bell	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	14545 60th St. N., Stillwater, MN 55082	McDonalds	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	14563 60th St. N., Stillwater MN 55082	Pizza Hut	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	14587 60th St. N., Stillwater, MN 55082	Stone Lake Restaurant	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	14621 60th St. N., Stillwater, MN 55082	Subway, Motor Sport	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	14661 60th St. N., Stillwater, MN 55082	Stillwater Tire & Auto	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	5995 Oren Ave. N., Stillwater, MN 55082	Office Building*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	5900 Osgood Ave. N., Stillwater, MN 55082	Citgo Mister Car Wash	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	14520 60th St. N., Stillwater, MN 55082	Fred's Tires Co Inc	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
17	14575 61st St. Ct. N., Stillwater, MN 55082	Action Rental Mini Storage	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
18	14524 61st St. Ct. N., Stillwater, MN 55082	Kingwood Management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
19	14450 60th St. N., Stillwater, MN 55082	Wendys	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TH 95 AND TH 36 INTERCHANGE AREA							
20	425 Nelson St. E., Stillwater, MN 55082	St Croix Boat & Packet Company				✓	✓
21	806 Main St. S., Stillwater, MN 55082	Bait Shop and Oasis Cafe				✓	✓

*The office building includes nine individual businesses – Rheinberger Law Office, Weyer Insurance Agency, Theodore Johnson DDS, Edward Jones, Hear USA Audiology, Day Spring Development, Waisley Chiropractic, Margaret Rivers Fund, Castle Guard Construction.

Residences

No.	Address of Property	Single or Multi Family	Alt B1	Alt C-Option 1	Alt C-Option 2	Alt D	Alt E
TH 36 BUTTONHOOK AREA							
1	6208 Osgood Ave. N., Stillwater, MN 55082	Single Family	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	6148 Osgood Ave. N., Stillwater, MN 55082	Single Family	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	6130 Osgood Ave. N., Stillwater, MN 55082	Single Family	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	14759 and 14779 62nd St. N., Stillwater, MN 55082	Multi Family	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	14625, 14643, 14655, 14669, 14687, 14707, 14715 62nd St. N., Stillwater, MN 55082	Multi Family	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TH 95 AND TH 36 INTERCHANGE AREA							
6	1315 S Main St., Stillwater, MN 55082	Single Family	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	1323 S Main St., Stillwater, MN 55082	Single Family	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	6447 St. Croix Trail N., Stillwater, MN 55082	Single Family	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**TABLE 5-5b
BUSINESSES, RESIDENCES, AND FARMS ACQUIRED IN WISCONSIN FOR BUILD
ALTERNATIVES**

No.	Address of Property	Alt B1	Alt C- Option 1	Alt C- Option 2	Alt D	Alt E
1	1270 Hwy. 35, Hudson, WI 54016	✓				
2	1266 Hwy. 35, Hudson, WI 54016	✓				
3	1273 Hwy. 35, Hudson, WI 54016 ⁽¹⁾	✓				
4	1321 Hwy. 35, Hudson, WI 54016		✓			
5	49 132nd Ave., Hudson, WI 54016		✓	✓		
6	Lot #12 Settler's Glen Development ⁽²⁾			✓		
7	Lot #13 Settler's Glen Development ⁽²⁾			✓		
8	Lot #14 Settler's Glen Development ⁽²⁾			✓		
9	Lot #15 Settler's Glen Development ⁽²⁾			✓		
10	Lot #16 Settler's Glen Development ⁽²⁾			✓		
11	Lot #17 Settler's Glen Development ⁽²⁾			✓		
12	Lot #28 Settler's Glen Development ⁽²⁾			✓		
13	Lot #29 Settler's Glen Development ⁽²⁾			✓		
14	Lot #30 Settler's Glen Development ⁽²⁾			✓		
15	Lot #31 Settler's Glen Development ⁽²⁾			✓		
16	Lot #32 Settler's Glen Development ⁽²⁾			✓		
17	1399 Main St., Houlton, WI 54082				✓	✓
18	1398 Haggerty St., Houlton, WI 54082				✓	✓
19	1397 Main St., Houlton, WI 54082				✓	✓
20	1396 Haggerty St., Houlton, WI 54082				✓	✓
21	1395 Main St., Houlton, WI 54082				✓	✓
22	1394 Haggerty St., Houlton, WI 54082				✓	✓
23	1393 Main St., Houlton, WI 54082				✓	✓
24	1391 Main St., Houlton, WI 54082				✓	✓
25	1389 Main St., Houlton, WI 54082				✓	✓
26	1387 Main St., Houlton, WI 54082				✓	✓
27	1385 Main St., Houlton, WI 54082				✓	✓
28	1379 Main St., Houlton, WI 54082				✓	✓
29	1379 Main St., Houlton, WI 54082				✓	✓
30	26 Rainbow St., Houlton, WI 54082				✓	✓
31	26 Rainbow St., Houlton, WI 54082				✓	✓
32	1289 Hwy. 35, Hudson, WI 54016				✓	✓
33	1275 Hwy. 35, Hudson WI 54016				✓	✓
34	10 Rainbow St., Houlton, WI 54082 ⁽³⁾				✓	✓
35	1400 Hwy. 64, Houlton, WI 54082 ⁽³⁾				✓	✓
36	512 Frances Ave., Hudson, WI 54016 ⁽⁴⁾				✓	✓

Note: All residential properties that are being acquired through total takes in Wisconsin appear to be single-family homes.

⁽¹⁾ Property No. 3 is an agricultural property.

⁽²⁾ These residential parcels in Houlton are still under development.

⁽³⁾ Property No. 34 is a commercial property. Property No. 35 is a commercial property.

⁽⁴⁾ Property No. 36 is a vacant commercial property with a billboard. Address provided is mailing address.

Partial acquisition (minor amounts not requiring relocation) also varies by alternative. Alternatives B-1 would affect the fewest number of residential parcels, with partial acquisition necessary from 16 single-family homes for Alternative B-1, 19 homes for Alternative C. Alternatives D and E would require a greater number of partial takes from residences; a total of 33 partial takes for Alternative D and 32 partial takes for Alternative E.

No commercial properties would need to be acquired through partial acquisition for any of the Build Alternatives in Wisconsin.

Area of land that would be acquired for right-of-way in Wisconsin under various Build Alternatives is shown in Table 5-4a.

5.2.2.3 Conclusions

The Build Alternatives require similar overall right-of-way requirements, with Alternative D needing the greatest amount of right-of-way at 305 acres and Alternative C (Option 2) requiring the least amount with 279 acres (see Table 5-4a).

A much more appreciable difference amongst Build Alternatives can be seen when examining relocation impacts, particularly on the Wisconsin side of the project area. On the Minnesota side, there are no differences amongst the Build Alternatives, with a total of 8 residential acquisitions, involving 6 single-family homes and 2 multi-family dwellings (with a total of 44 dwelling units). In Wisconsin, Alternatives B-1 and C require much less residential relocation in comparison to Alternatives D and E. Alternative C with Option 2 requires one residential relocation, with Alternatives B-1 and Alternative C with Option 1 requiring 2 relocations. Alternatives D and E would require substantially greater numbers of residential relocations, with a total of 16 single-family homes being acquired under these alternatives.

Section 5.3 of the SDEIS includes a discussion of the anticipated economic impacts that may result from property acquisitions in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

5.2.3 Mitigation

5.2.3.1 Generalized Relocation Criteria

Potential acquisition and relocations were minimized by designing the Build Alternatives within the existing state and locally-owned right-of-way limits to the extent possible. Where additional right-of-way acquisition was unavoidable, the Build Alternatives were designed to be as efficient as possible, minimizing the need to acquire right-of-way.

Mitigation strategies will be finalized upon identification of a Preferred Alternative, and discussed at length in the SFEIS, with a detailed determination (this will happen after final design determines construction limits) of the availability of comparable housing and business opportunity sites made prior to commencement of relocation activities. However, the discussion that follows encapsulates the policies that would be effective for relocation assistance and would guide both Mn/DOT's and Wis/DOT's actions in this matter.

People displaced as a result of the acquisition of their property are eligible for relocation benefits as described in Mn/DOT and Wis/DOT relocation policies². All persons legally occupying acquired properties would be relocated in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

² Right-of-way relocation manual is available on the project website:
<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/stcroix/index.html>

Mn/DOT and Wis/DOT will relocate individuals based on the Relocation Assistance Program derived from the Federal and state regulations established by the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. Relocation resources will be made available to all resident and business relocatees without discrimination.

The relocation assistance program is committed to making the relocation process flow as smoothly as possible for displacees. Residential displacees are entitled to reimbursement of costs associated with relocation, including moving costs, relocation housing costs, etc. Any person may appeal the department's determination of eligibility for relocation assistance or for the determined payment amount.

Mn/DOT and Wis/DOT will assure that each displaced household is relocated into comparable housing that is decent, safe, and sanitary, and is affordable within the financial means of the household. If the available housing inventory is not sufficient, additional measures will be taken to assure that comparable housing is provided. If applicable, the provisions of Last Resort Housing, which provides additional or alternative assistance to persons, including upgraded housing, will be applied.

Relocation assistance is available for businesses, farms, and non-profit organizations. Reimbursement may be made for reasonable and actual moving and related expenses. A displaced business may be eligible for a fixed payment instead of the moving-related and reestablishment expenses. All affected tenants or owners of businesses will be contacted to fully explain the relocation program as soon as possible following the establishment of construction limits. However, general information about relocation assistance is public knowledge and available for any interested person to review.

Mn/DOT and Wis/DOT will provide relocation payments and services as discussed in the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

Coordination with the cities of Stillwater and Oak Park Heights and with Town of St. Joseph and other appropriate agencies would be undertaken prior to commencement of any relocation activities, with the goal of reducing any general and/or specific impacts related to property acquisition and relocation.

5.3 ECONOMIC IMPACTS: COMMERCIAL

This section examines anticipated broad effects on businesses in various portions of the project area that would result from the Build Alternatives as well as the No-Build Alternative. The discussion is summarized in large part from the special study, "Economic Impact Analysis: St. Croix River Crossing, Minnesota TH 36/Wisconsin STH 64," completed as part of this Supplemental Draft EIS process. The project area includes Stillwater (both the downtown and TH 36 commercial areas) and Oak Park Heights in Washington County, Minnesota, and the unincorporated community of Houlton, in the Town of St. Joseph, St. Croix County, Wisconsin.

In addition to business data, surveys and interviews of business owners in the area, as well as research on the economic impacts of transportation projects in communities, the study of economic impacts is informed by a number of observations about the relationship between automobile traffic and business activity.

5.3.1 Affected Environment

5.3.1.1 Overview of Washington County and the Stillwater Area Economies

Stillwater has over 1,000 business establishments employing over 10,000 workers. Table 5-6 shows a profile of employment at the state, county, and city levels. The substantial percentage of employment in retail and services reflects the role of the Stillwater area as a commercial center serving residents of a broader region. The primary sectors of the Stillwater area's economy – retail and service activities – are concentrated in two areas (see Figure 5-5):

- The TH 36 retail corridor, which includes automobile-oriented shopping centers and strips, large discount stores, building materials and garden supplies, supermarkets, automotive dealers, gasoline stations and fast food restaurants.
- Downtown Stillwater, which offers specialty retail goods (crafts, art, antiques, gifts, new and antiquarian books, clocks, etc.) as well as clothing accessory stores, bed-and-breakfast establishments, and eating and drinking establishments.

**TABLE 5-6
EMPLOYMENT PROFILE FOR THE STATE OF MINNESOTA,
WASHINGTON COUNTY, CITY OF OAK PARK HEIGHTS, AND THE CITY OF
STILLWATER**

<u>Economic Sector (see note 1)</u>	<u>Minnesota</u>	<u>Washington Co.</u>	<u>Stillwater City</u>	<u>Oak Park Heights City</u>
<u>Number of Employees</u>				
Agric. Services	67,883	452	9	8
Construction	153,267	6,120	307	110
Manufacturing	419,271	19,165	1,327	367
Wholesale	92,854	4,092	250	40
Retail (see note 2)	307,714	12,372	1,167	203
Trans, Comm & Utilities	131,683	6,263	331	104
Information Processing	65,460	2,968	179	39
Finance, Insur & Real Est.	184,874	10,340	652	93
Services (see note 2)	1,070,498	41,511	3,409	756
<u>Public Administration</u>	<u>86,542</u>	<u>5,521</u>	<u>503</u>	<u>100</u>
Total (see note 3)	2,580,046	108,822	8134	1820
<u>Percent of All Jobs</u>				
Agric. Services	2.6	0.4	0.1	0.4
Construction	5.9	5.6	3.8	6.0
Manufacturing	16.3	17.6	16.3	20.2
Wholesale	3.6	3.8	3.1	2.2
Retail (see note 2)	11.9	11.4	14.3	11.2
Trans, Comm & Utilities	5.1	5.8	4.1	5.7
Information Processing Sector	2.5	2.7	2.2	2.1
Finance, Insur & Real Est.	7.2	9.5	8.0	5.1
Services (see note 2)	42.0	38.2	42.0	41.6
<u>Public Administration</u>	<u>3.4</u>	<u>5.1</u>	<u>6.2</u>	<u>5.5</u>
Total (see note 3)	100%	100%	100%	100%

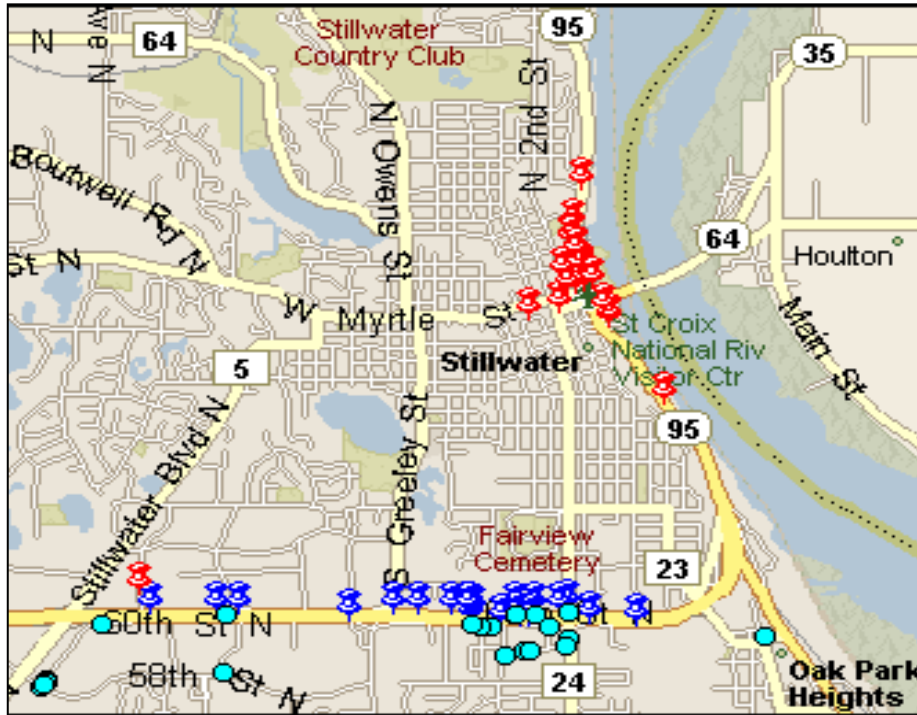
Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Economic Census for Year 2000

Note 1: The economic categories are based on the new North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS), which replaced the old Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system for economic sectors.

Note 2: The new NAICS groups that are shown here place eating and drinking establishments within Services, which differs from their old SIC assignment within Retailing. The new NAICS also moves computer data and information-based industries into a separate category, which differs from its old SIC inclusion within Services.

Note 3: This table excludes approximately 70,000 additional farm jobs and 300,000 additional government jobs in the State of Minnesota, 600 additional farm jobs and 4,000 additional government jobs in Washington County, and roughly 1,700 additional government jobs in the City of Stillwater.

**FIGURE 5-5
LOCATION OF RETAIL ACTIVITIES IN STILLWATER AND
OAK PARK HEIGHTS**



Note: “Pushpins” denote retail establishments in Stillwater; “Circles” denote retail establishments in Oak Park Heights. Source: Info USA business database.

**TABLE 5-7
PROFILE OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN THE TH 36 CORRIDOR**

Industry	Establishments		Employment (full-time equiv)	
	Stillwater	Oak Park Hts	Stillwater	Oak Park Hts
Construction & Utilities	4	3	19	52
Manufacturing/Warehouse	7	0	759	0
Retail Trade	12	22	564	825
Eating & Drinking	5	12	120	474
Finan, Insur, Real Estate	11	13	170	68
Lodging	4	1	42	15
<u>Services</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>178</u>	<u>181</u>
TOTAL	77	83	1,851	1,614

Source: Establishments from drive-by inventory; employment derived from Info USA and Dun & Bradstreet business databases.

Overall, the TH 36 commercial corridor (including both sides of the highway) features:

- Newer “big box” chain stores, including Wal-Mart and Target (general merchandise), Menards (hardware) and Cub Foods (grocery), with a Kohls (apparel) under construction;
- Vacant areas left by departed “big box” retail chains, such as K-Mart;
- Older shopping centers, many with large vacancies, including: St. Croix Mall, Oak Park Ponds, Valley Ridge and Stillwater Marketplace;
- Specialty retailers in smaller shopping centers and strips, selling goods such as liquor, pets, insulation, flowers, baked goods, kitchen equipment and appliances, medical equipment, and hardware;
- Stand-alone, auto-oriented businesses such as a car/truck dealership, gas stations, auto body and transmission repairs, and auto parts;
- Services, such as banking, insurance, taxes, publishing, real estate brokerage, construction, heating/electrical contracting, travel agents, medical/dental and chiropractic care, equipment rentals, personal storage, and recycling;
- Motel lodgings, and numerous restaurants, including most of the well-known national fast food chains.

Tracing the list of businesses occupying this corridor over time, it is apparent that the corridor has seen changes in its commercial business occupancy, much of which reflects national trends in retailing. Some chain and local independent stores have closed over time, due in part to mergers and consolidation now common in many lines of retailing. Another factor is the movement towards a few “big box” retailers (with a higher rate of sales per sq. ft.) entering an area to operate at the expense of a number of smaller specialty stores, which then close. The rise of internet-based shopping has also affected specialty stores. All of these trends tend to make some of the older and smaller shopping centers and strips functionally obsolete and more difficult to fill. The current national economic downturn has also added to the level of vacancy in shopping centers and retail strips. Some of the storefronts are now being partially filled by social service agencies, community fraternal clubs and other non-profit organizations who need the space but cannot afford to be in “high rent” retail districts. However, the bottom line is that structural changes in retailing are likely to generate continuing opportunities for redevelopment of retail parcels and buildings as the industry evolves over time, and this churning will tend to keep the physical supply of available land and buildings adequate to meet demand for commercial land and building space in the corridor for the foreseeable future.

Finally, there are also some differences between the north and south sides of Highway 36. The majority of the local population is located in the City of Stillwater directly north of the corridor. This population base has more direct street connections to the north side of the commercial strip, which tends to feature a relatively greater number of finance, insurance and real estate services, as well as personal care services (barber/hairstyling, massage) and medical/dental services

catering to local residents. The south side of the commercial strip, on the other hand, has a greater number of businesses catering to regional shoppers coming in to visit the area (from Wisconsin or closer to the Twin Cities). This includes big specialty stores and restaurants.

5.3.1.2 Downtown Stillwater

For purposes of this analysis, the downtown business district is defined as the area that has historically comprised the center of Stillwater since the 1850s – extending approximately from Pine Street on the south to Elm Street on the north, and from the St. Croix River on the east to Third Street on the west. Within this district today are found most of the major traffic arteries, including Main and Chestnut Streets, which connect to the Lift Bridge as well as public parking areas. Also within the area are most of Stillwater's downtown businesses (retail, services, food and drink, lodging) as well as some industrial uses, and several historic districts and public parks. Stillwater's City Hall is located one block west of this area. Numerous buildings in the downtown area, as well as the bridge itself, are listed on, or have been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. (For a thorough discussion of Stillwater's import as an historic resource and the potential of the proposed project to affect this resource, refer to Chapter 11 of the SDEIS.)

Table 5-8 shows a profile of the retail and selected service economy of downtown Stillwater compared to the rest of the city. It shows that downtown has a high representation of restaurants, apparel/accessories, furniture/antiques, jewelry and specialty retail. However, the rest of the city (including the northern side of the Highway 36 corridor) has the higher representation of apparel, grocery, automotive, sporting goods and hardware stores. This reflects the role of downtown Stillwater as a specialty destination center for outside visitors. (That role is discussed further in the next section.)

Downtown Stillwater also has some important office employment functions (including the city hall offices as well as the headquarters office of Cub Foods) and it is also the location for a few legal and accounting offices, but the total level of downtown office activity is small relative to the core retail activity.

Unique Features of Downtown Stillwater. The pattern of highway-oriented growth and consequent change in a downtown area can be seen in smaller cities throughout the United States. Many older downtowns that were unable to find a new role and a clear identity have effectively suffered economic death. Unlike many of these failed downtown areas, Stillwater has defined a successful niche for its downtown area as a center of destination retailing, tourism, recreation, and cultural activities. To do so, the city has capitalized on key economic assets:

- The area's location, which is less than an hour away from the Twin Cities and its airport,
- Striking natural amenities – forests, farms, recreational opportunities afforded by the St. Croix River, and abundant wildlife,
- A rich history as the birthplace of Minnesota and a booming center of the lumber industry during the 1880s, and

- A vivid context of historic commercial buildings, homes, parks, monuments and the present bridge across the St. Croix River including the Stillwater Commercial Historic District with 57 contributing buildings representing national architectural trends popular between 1870 and 1940, including Italianate, Queen Anne, Richardsonian, Classical Revival and Early 20th century Commercial and the Stillwater Cultural Landscape District containing 250 properties that contribute to its significance, including residences, commercial buildings, public stairways, buildings, parks, and an historic archaeological site. (See Chapter 11 of the SDEIS for a thorough discussion of historic resources in the City of Stillwater.)

**TABLE 5-8
PROFILE OF STILLWATER RETAIL AND SERVICE EMPLOYMENT: DOWNTOWN
AND REST OF CITY**

Type of Business*	Employment		Percent of Total		Ratio of Shares: Downtown/ Rest of City
	Down-Town	Rest of City	Down-Town	Rest of City	
Retail – Hardware stores	5	35	0.4%	1.3%	0.3
Retail – Apparels stores	17	53	1.4%	1.9%	0.7
Retail – Furniture stores	25	39	2.0%	1.4%	1.4
Retail – Grocery & Convenience	37	392	3.0%	14.4%	0.2
Retail – Used Merchandise stores	3	22	0.2%	0.8%	0.3
Retail – Specialty stores	108	51	8.9%	1.9%	4.8
Retail – Misc. stores	40	486	3.3%	17.8%	0.2
Retail – Sporting goods	8	51	0.6%	1.9%	0.3
Retail – Jewelry stores	13	4	1.0%	0.1%	7.0
Retail – Toys & Hobbies stores	4	1	0.3%	0.1%	3.2
Retail – Gifts & Florist shops	20	108	1.6%	3.9%	0.4
Retail – Eating & Drinking	771	738	63.4%	27.1%	2.3
Services – Hotels & Motels	129	0	10.6%	0.0%	9.9
Services – Personal services	14	180	1.1%	6.6%	0.1
Services – Amusement services	11	358	0.9%	13.1%	0.7
Services – Personal & Household	14	211	1.2%	7.8%	0.2
Total	1215	2727	100%	100%	1.0

Source: Info USA and U.S. Bureau of Census.

Note: Total employment shown here does not exactly match citywide retail and service figure shown in Table 2-1 due to differences in data sources and years, as well as exclusion of retail offices and selected services from this table.

Retail Specialization - Downtown Stillwater today is widely recognized as a center for antiques, books and art. There are reportedly a "half-million books and antiques for sale within six blocks of downtown Stillwater," offered by sixteen antique businesses (including two antique malls), three booksellers and six art galleries. Downtown is also known as a center for specialty dining. There are 32 restaurants in the downtown area, most of which are fine dining or wine bars. The downtown also features specialty stores, including ten gift shops, eight outdoor recreation supply shops and seven candy/food/liquor shops. In all, there are 87 retail stores and restaurants, of which only one (Starbucks) is a national chain. These features distinguish downtown Stillwater from the Highway 36 retail corridor as well as from other communities in the region.

Special Events - A key to the success of downtown Stillwater in its new economic role has also been the creation of an exhaustive schedule of destination events, most of which are not dependent upon pass-through traffic. These include art shows and gallery openings, the Rivertown Art Fair, the Stillwater Art Crawl, farmers' markets, Victorian house tours, the Rivertown Restoration Annual Home Tour, the Victorian Bed and Breakfast Inn Tour and Tea, the Taste of Stillwater and other food and wine tastings, musical performances, theatrical and dance events, the Music on the Waterfront Concert Series, the Fall Colors Fine Art and Jazz Festival, fireworks on the 4th of July, the St. Croix Valley Pottery Tour, the St. Croix Garden Tour, Lumberjack Days, the Stillwater Antiquarian Book Fair, the Washington County Fair, the Teddy Bear Tea at the Warden's House Museum, and numerous Christmas holiday season events.

Recreation - Recreational activities making downtown Stillwater a destination for visitors include trolley rides, "steamboat" excursions, and the Minnesota Zephyr (a dinner train with five restored dining cars). Other nearby recreation activities include walking, jogging, biking, driving, kayaking and canoeing, hiking, camping, fishing, boating, bird watching, swimming, golfing, hot air ballooning, skiing, ice skating and snowmobiling.

5.3.1.3 Overview of St. Croix County and the Houlton Community

Houlton is an unincorporated community in the Town of St. Joseph in St. Croix County, Wisconsin. It has 26 private businesses, employing approximately 116 persons (out of the county-wide business employment base of over 15,000). Houlton is also the site of an elementary school and a veteran's building. A profile of Houlton's businesses is shown in Table 5-9. The largest sector of Houlton's economy is seven construction companies, two of which are the only local private businesses with more than 20 employees each. There are also several retail stores and service businesses. The only consumer-oriented activities located along the existing STH 64 route (leading to the Lift Bridge) are a nightclub, and gas station/convenience store. There is also a liquor wholesaler/distributor, bank, liquor store, real estate agent, kennel, and small auto dealer located on other roads in the Houlton area.

**TABLE 5-9
PROFILE OF HOULTON, STATE AND COUNTY EMPLOYMENT**

Economic Sector (see note 1)	Wisconsin	St. Croix Co.	Houlton*
<u>Number of Employees</u>			
Agric. Services	75,418	1,093	-
Construction	161,625	2,581	60 (7)
Manufacturing	606,845	8,268	2 (1)
Wholesale	87,979	837	6 (1)
Retail (see note 2)	317,881	3,761	16 (4)
Trans, Comm & Utilities	123,657	2,131	2 (1)
Information	60,142	610	--
Finance, Insur & Real Est.	168,060	2,471	8 (2)
Services (see note 2)	1,037,170	12,036	22 (10)
<u>Public Administration</u>	<u>96,418</u>	<u>1,117</u>	<u>--</u>
Total (see note 3)	2,734,925	34,905	116 (26)
<u>Percent of Employees</u>			
Agric. Services	2.8%	3.1%	--
Construction	5.9%	7.4%	51.7%
Manufacturing	22.2%	23.7%	1.7%
Wholesale	3.2%	2.4%	5.2%
Retail (see note 2)	11.6%	10.8%	13.8%
Trans, Comm & Utilities	4.5%	6.1%	1.7%
Information	2.2%	1.7%	--
Finance, Insur & Real Est.	6.1%	7.1%	6.9%
Services (see note 2)	37.9%	34.5%	19.0%
<u>Public Administration</u>	<u>3.5%</u>	<u>3.2%</u>	<u>--</u>
Total (see note 3)	100%	100%	100%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000 (except Houlton, which is estimated from U.S. Dept. Of Commerce, Zip Code Business Patterns, 2001.

* Because of the small size of Houlton, its employment numbers are estimated from data on number of establishments by employment size category, as reported by Zip Code Business Patterns. Numbers in parentheses indicate total number of establishments.

Note 1: The economic categories are based on the new North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS), which replaced the old Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system for economic sectors.

Note 2: The new NAICS groups that are shown here place eating and drinking establishments within Services, which differs from their old SIC assignment within Retailing. The new NAICS also moves computer data and information-based industries into a separate category, which differs from its old SIC inclusion within Services.

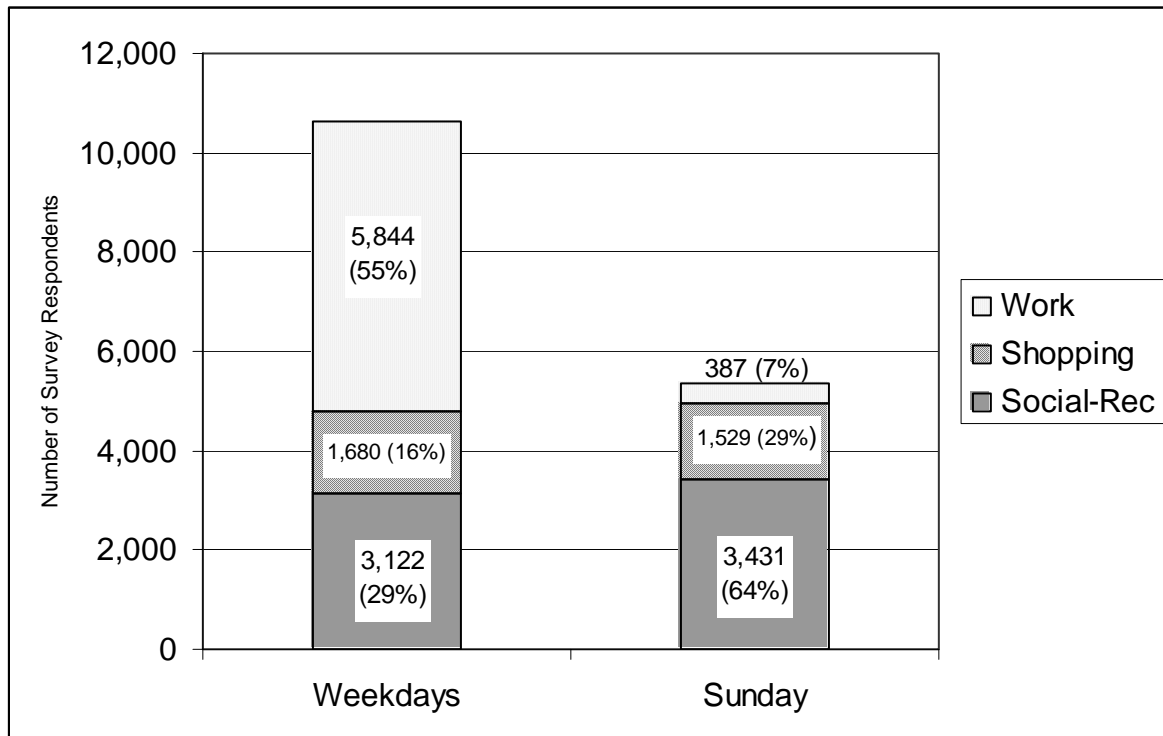
Note 3: This table excludes approximately 60,000 additional farm jobs and 290,000 additional government jobs in the State of Wisconsin, as well as roughly 1,400 additional farm jobs and 2,200 additional government jobs in St. Croix County.

5.3.1.4 Origins and Destinations of Stillwater Lift Bridge Travelers

During the summer of 1998, a survey of Lift Bridge users was conducted to determine the origins and destinations of Lift Bridge travelers. For both a weekday and a Sunday, an intercept survey stopped random vehicles using the Lift Bridge (in either direction) and asked the travelers to report their origin, destination, and trip purpose. The responses were obtained from 12,235 vehicles on a weekday (compared to an average weekday traffic count average of 15,100), and 5,347 vehicles on a Sunday. The survey of bridge users indicates the effect of the current Lift Bridge traffic on Stillwater businesses, and hence provides insight into the potential effects of the Build Alternative bridge and approach roadways that bypass downtown Stillwater.

The breakdown of Lift Bridge-crossing traffic by trip purpose is shown in Figure 5-6. It shows that work trips (i.e., trips to and from work) account for 55 percent of the bridge traffic on weekdays and 7 percent on Sunday.

**FIGURE 5-6
TRIP PURPOSE FOR STILLWATER LIFT BRIDGE CROSSING TRIPS**



Source: 1998 Lift Bridge User Survey

The daily volumes of shopping trips (between 1,500 and 1,700) and social/recreation/personal trips (between 3,100 and 3,450) did not vary substantially between weekdays and Sunday during this survey period. However, the numbers of both shopping and recreation trips would be expected to be larger during peak weekends (i.e., during events).

The break-down of 1998 Lift Bridge crossing trips by origin and destination shows that most (87 percent) of the trips were “home-based”; that is, involving travel between home and a destination. Among those trips:

- The majority (59 percent) of work trips were from homes in Wisconsin to workplaces in Minnesota outside of the city of Stillwater.
- The majority (54 percent) of shopping trips were from homes in Wisconsin to stores in the City of Stillwater.
- The social/recreation trips were evenly split (49 percent – 51 percent) between trips from homes in Minnesota to destinations in Wisconsin, and trips from homes in Wisconsin to destinations in Minnesota. However, the majority (62 percent) of these trips had neither origin nor destination in Stillwater.

It was not possible to use the Lift Bridge survey to further distinguish traffic headed for downtown Stillwater (which would be bypassed by a new bridge) from traffic headed to other parts of Stillwater (which would not be bypassed by a new bridge). Interviews with Wisconsin residents confirmed that most of the traffic from Wisconsin to Stillwater is headed to the supermarkets, discount department stores, and shopping centers located along the TH 36 corridor rather than to downtown Stillwater. This finding is consistent with results of the downtown customer survey which indicated that most of the downtown Stillwater customer base comes from Minnesota rather than from across the bridge in Wisconsin.

Finally, the Lift Bridge survey examined the extent to which travelers passing through Stillwater on their journeys from elsewhere in Minnesota to Wisconsin (or vice versa) stop in Stillwater along the way. As shown in Figure 5-7, the survey found that among weekday trips that had neither origin nor destination in Stillwater, 92 percent did not stop in Stillwater while 8 percent did stop in Stillwater. This 8 percent includes both stops along the TH 36 retail corridor as well as retail stops in downtown Stillwater. Results (percentages) were similar for the Sunday survey.

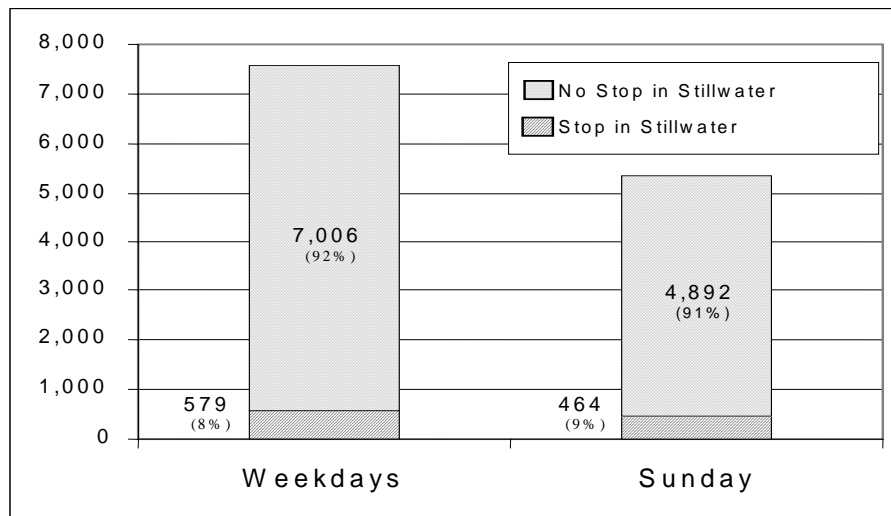
5.3.2 Environmental Consequences

This section describes the commercial economic impacts of the Build Alternatives, and, where relevant, compares them to the impacts of the No-Build Alternative. The discussion of impacts is divided geographically to include downtown Stillwater, the TH 36 commercial corridor, Houlton, and the Twin Cities region.

Literature reviews, conversations with local business representatives, and experience around the country indicate the following key conclusions about how commercial business activities are affected by traffic changes:

1. ***Businesses that depend primarily on drive-by traffic*** include gasoline stations, fast food restaurants, motels, and convenience stores. These businesses tend to experience revenue growth or shrinkage in direct proportion to increases or decreases in *traffic volumes*.

**FIGURE 5-7
STILLWATER STOPS FOR TRIPS BETWEEN REST OF MINNESOTA
AND WISCONSIN (WEEKDAYS)**



Source: 1998 Lift Bridge User Survey

2. ***Businesses that are specific destinations*** include sellers of consumer durables (e.g., furniture), specialty merchandise (e.g., antiques, books), and specialty (e.g., theme) restaurants. These businesses tend to experience revenue growth or shrinkage in proportion to changes in their strength as an attraction, and the perceived speed and ease of access to their sites.
3. ***Businesses that cater to everyday family shopping needs*** include department stores, grocery stores, and apparel stores in shopping centers. These businesses operate in highly competitive markets where they need both traffic volume and ease of access to survive.

Results of the business profiles confirm that downtown Stillwater is characterized largely by specialized merchandise, restaurant, and lodging establishments that together represent category No 2. In contrast, the TH 36 commercial corridor is dominated by mass market retailers in category No. 3 and highway-oriented businesses in category No. 1. The relatively few Houlton businesses represent some of each category.

5.3.2.1 Consequences to Downtown Stillwater

Results of the Lift Bridge user survey and traffic analyses confirm that relatively little of the current Lift Bridge traffic is bound for downtown Stillwater. Downtown Stillwater is a destination that draws trips from a wide area, but mostly to the west (rather than across the Lift Bridge to the east). For that reason, downtown Stillwater has a very limited ability to gain from drive-by Lift Bridge traffic, while it has a very real need to reduce traffic backups and delays in order to maintain accessibility from its major market area.

While few of the downtown businesses are strong destination attractions by themselves, the combined mix of businesses in the downtown retail district represent a regional destination attraction. It draws people from a wide area who are interested in the downtown's historic atmosphere (including the Lift Bridge, antique shops, waterfront views, recreational attractions, restaurants, and/or book shops). For these functions, speed and ease of accessibility to downtown Stillwater's attractions are important.

Interviews were conducted with representatives of the Stillwater Regional Chamber of Commerce and other business persons in the city. While these parties differed in their perceptions of the best solution to the problem, they concurred that current downtown traffic conditions are far from ideal. In particular, there was widespread agreement that the current downtown traffic condition is characterized by congestion and travel delays, undesirable truck noise, increased air pollution, a difficult pedestrian environment for crossing Main Street, perceptions of difficulty in parking, sometimes poor access for service and emergency vehicles, difficulty for residents circulating through the city, and unwanted traffic using neighborhood streets to avoid downtown congestion. These conditions are at their worst during peak tourism and recreation season, which reportedly discourages some local people from visiting downtown Stillwater more often. Other impacts, such as pass-through truck traffic, are an ongoing issue.

The current traffic congestion is already widely perceived as a factor discouraging more visits to downtown Stillwater during peak summer periods. Future increases in traffic crossing the Lift Bridge would worsen that problem. A new bridge and approach roadways are anticipated to decrease downtown traffic delay by eliminating from downtown streets the traffic that does not stop in the downtown area.

However, the potentially positive impact on downtown growth will depend in part on the new bridge and its highway connections being accompanied by: (1) a clearly marked and easy-to-understand turnoff to downtown Stillwater, (2) a direct access route to downtown, (3) sufficient parking for additional visitors, and (4) an easy return route back to the highway. Those needs, in addition to the need to reduce traffic delay, comprise the necessary components of good accessibility to the area, with respect to economic activity.

Highway-oriented businesses in the downtown Stillwater area are essentially limited to just one gas station/convenience store on Main Street. That business, located one block north of the TH 36 bridge access route, would continue to serve north-south traffic along TH 95 under both Build and No-Build conditions. Since traffic volumes do not change substantially at this location from Build to No-Build conditions, the business would not be expected to be adversely affected by the Build Alternatives, and may actually benefit insofar as the Build Alternatives would reduce traffic backups in the area.

Under Build Alternative D and E, two businesses located on Main Street south of downtown would be acquired and relocated. It is anticipated that both these business activities (a small bait shop/restaurant and a boat company ticket sales booth) could potentially relocate, if desired. In any event, due to the very limited number of business acquisitions, no adverse commercial business impacts to the downtown Stillwater area are anticipated to result.

5.3.2.2 Consequence to the TH 36 Commercial Corridor

Economic impacts resulting from changes to commercial businesses along the TH 36 corridor differ substantively from those anticipated to result in downtown Stillwater. In part, this has to do with the character and nature of the commercial businesses, but this is also true because of the much greater number of business acquisitions anticipated to result under all proposed Build Alternatives. Potential impacts are summarized here for the three major potential impact categories; a) changes in traffic volumes, b) business acquisition and relocation, and c) access changes.

Changes in Traffic Volumes: The Lift Bridge user survey made it clear that, while downtown Stillwater is not strongly dependent on Lift Bridge traffic, some of the major employers on the Minnesota side of the river, as well as large retailers along the TH 36 commercial corridor are dependent on access across the river. With a new bridge and highway connection, improved access and travel time savings will accrue to shoppers from Wisconsin through avoidance of the current congestion and delays experienced while passing through downtown Stillwater. To the extent this congestion in downtown Stillwater increases in the future under No-Build conditions, this could result in negative commercial impacts on the TH 36 corridor.

As a result of projected speed and travel time improvements, the traffic projections for TH 36 (see Chapter 4) indicate that future (2030) volumes will increase by over 50 percent from future No-Build conditions. This increase in traffic represents a very substantial opportunity for greater business sales in both the City of Stillwater (which encompasses land along most of the north side of the highway) and the City of Oak Park Heights (which encompasses land along the south side of the highway and some parts on the north side). Increases in business sales generally translate into proportional growth in jobs, wages and tax revenues to the cities. However, the ability of businesses to capture spending from this traffic will depend on:

- (a) The existence of appropriate advance signage for shoppers to access businesses at these interchanges, with clearly marked routes for ease of travel off of interchanges and to access stores that can be seen from the highway and frontage roads; and,
- (b) A physical environment along the route and its interchanges that is perceived by shoppers to be safe and attractive for visiting businesses in this district.

Business Acquisition and Relocation: Under all Build Alternatives, a total of 20 commercial parcels (includes one vacant lot) along the TH 36 corridor would be acquired, requiring the relocation of the businesses resident thereon. There would also be partial acquisition from 64 to 67 commercial parcels (depending on Build Alternative, see Table 5-4c) along the corridor. These partial takings typically involve acquiring a small portion of land and would not prevent businesses from continuing to operate at those locations.

Table 5-10 summarizes the characteristics of the 20 commercial parcels identified for acquisition along the TH 36 commercial corridor. It includes information on the total land area and estimated market value of these properties, as well as estimates of the numbers of affected employees.

**TABLE 5-10
CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMERCIAL PARCELS TO BE ACQUIRED
(TH 36 COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR)**

	Stillwater	Oak Park Heights	Total
<u>Number of Parcels</u>			
Commercial	7*	13	20
<u>Commercial Parcels</u>			
Area (Sq. Ft.)	446,924	560,027	1,006,951
Area (Acres)	10.3	12.9	23.2
Value of Land	\$3,035,100	\$3,707,600	\$6,742,700
Value of Buildings	\$2,716,500	\$3,818,500	\$6,535,000
Total Property Value	\$5,751,600	\$7,526,100	\$13,277,700
<u>Displaced Businesses</u>			
Establishments	8	22	30
Employment	138	270	408

Source: Parcel data provided by SRF Consulting, 2004; counts of establishments are based on observed activity as of March 2004; employment data derived from Info USA business database.

* Includes one vacant commercial parcel.

The ability of displaced businesses to relocate depends on both the type of business activity and the available supply of alternative sites:

- The seven parcels in Stillwater have eight business establishments - a hotel, bank, rental car company, restaurant, real estate agent, specialty retail store, a Goodwill, and a family center. To relocate, these activities generally require either a small site available elsewhere in the area or in a strip shopping center with available vacancy.
- The 22 establishments on the Oak Park Heights side can be classified into three categories:
 - (a) Six restaurants, of which six are fast food establishments. These businesses largely depend on drive-by traffic at high visibility sites.
 - (b) Nine businesses classified as “finance, insurance and real estate” or within the category of “personal services” (including dental, health care, and storage services). These businesses generally require office or storefront locations that are accessible to local clients, but do not require high levels of access to drive-by traffic.
 - (c) Five specialty retail, one construction business and one rental storage that together serve regional clientele making a special trip to visit them. These businesses require stand-alone buildings, and the retailers need sites that can be easily seen and accessed, though they do not require high levels of access to drive-by traffic.

The profile of business activity within the TH 36 commercial corridor indicates that there is currently vacant land as well as available building space within various strip shopping centers and small office buildings along the corridor. The clear turnover of space within these shopping centers and office buildings also indicates a capacity to absorb over time many of the displaced businesses in both Stillwater and Oak Park Heights. However, due to the relatively large magnitude of land takings proposed within Oak Park Heights and the smaller land base of that city, additional analysis was conducted to measure the potential for relocation of businesses within that city.

Stakeholder Involvement Process for Business Owner Impacts on TH 36: An exhaustive stakeholder interview process involving business owners, landowners, and tenants of properties on the TH 36 commercial corridor was undertaken by the Minnesota Department of Transportation. The business owners, landowners, and tenants of parcels considered for total acquisitions were contacted. At the end of this process, which took place from April through June 2004, a total of 36 contacts were made and a total of 31 interviews conducted (some stakeholders declined to be interviewed). The purpose of the interviews was twofold; to provide business owners information about proposed project activities and schedule, and to get input from the businesses as to their current operations and plans in light of the potential for acquisition and discuss the right-of-way acquisition process. Noteworthy information, in terms of assessing the potential for economic impacts on commercial businesses is summarized below:

- Three of the stakeholders indicated that, regardless of the proposed project's impacts on their property, they were planning on closing their business anyway.
- One property owner, whose building currently has nine tenants, indicated that they would not look for an alternative site in Oak Park Heights or Stillwater as land prices were too high.
- A total of 21 of the stakeholders indicated that they would attempt to relocate within the TH 36 commercial corridor or elsewhere nearby.
- Five stakeholders declined to respond when queried as to their relocation plans.

The stakeholders were queried as to the most important attributes of their current site for their business operations.

- A total of 21 indicated that direct access/visibility to TH 36 was important for their operations.
- Fifteen stakeholders felt that proximity to downtown Stillwater/St. Croix River was important.
- Nine stakeholders indicated that an important attribute of their current site was its proximity to the home of the business owner.

- A total of 19 stakeholders indicated that proximity to adjoining/supportive businesses was critical to their operations.
- Other attributes described as being important included the long time (20 years) that the business had been in its current location, proximity to patients and ease of parking, and its central location to school. (Separate issues described by three separate stakeholders.)

Potential Relocation of Business Activity in Oak Park Heights: The 13 commercial parcels to be acquired within Oak Park Heights together represent 12.9 acres of land. Table 5-11 summarizes the range of potential alternative sites that are within the TH 36 commercial corridor and within Oak Park Heights; Figure 5-8 provides a depiction of their location. They include:

- Land in six vacant and commercial zoned properties and one vacant and residential zoned property (totaling 42.9 acres), plus two large vacant parcels (not currently zoned commercial) and located further south of the TH 36 corridor;
- Land in six parcels that are suitable to be redeveloped for future stand-alone commercial uses (totaling 9.4 acres);
- Land in eleven parcels that are not big enough to be redeveloped on their own, but which could be used for expansion of commercial uses on adjacent parcels (totaling 5.6 acres);
- Three shopping centers and one office building that have large vacancies, and one former retail building that is now closed. These facilities had an estimated 132,080 sq. ft. of building space available for occupancy (as of March 2004).

In each of the above-cited categories, some of the parcels face frontage roads and others face cross streets within a block of the frontage roads. Sites facing the frontage roads may be particularly important for fast food restaurants and gas stations. Some of the other types of businesses are less sensitive to drive-by traffic and could function at any of the sites. Of course, this profile of available land represents one point in time (March 2004). In the future, some of these sites are likely to be sold, leased and otherwise filled, while other land and buildings will likely be available for redevelopment or reuse. However, the basic finding here is that there does appear to be land available within Oak Park Heights that could be suitable to accommodate displaced businesses, though the cost of relocating has not been established and some of those businesses may still opt to either relocate or redirect their investments elsewhere.

Access Changes: As part of all proposed Build Alternatives, new frontage roads will be constructed further away from the highway. This has the effect of moving the access location for approximately 34 property parcels, affecting an estimated 23 businesses with 340 employees. All of the affected parcels are in Oak Park Heights. For many of these parcels, the frontage road itself is moved from the front of the property to behind it, with new access provided to the front of the property via spur roads leading off of the new frontage road.

Figure 5-8 – Minnesota TH 36 (TH 5 to Osgood Avenue) – Parcels Available for Redevelopment (11x17 – color)

BACK

**TABLE 5-11
CHARACTERISTICS OF AVAILABLE PROPERTY FOR RELOCATED AND
NEW BUSINESSES WITHIN THE OAK PARK HEIGHTS COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR**

	Stillwater	Oak Park Heights	Total
<u>Vacant Commercial Parcels</u>			
Total Land Sq. Ft. (No. of Parcels)	173,756 (2)	1,695,163 (5)*	1,868,919 (7)
<u>Redevelopment Parcels</u>			
Total Land Sq. Ft. (No. of Parcels)			
Stand Alone Parcels	148,669 (2)	258,715 (4)	407,384 (6)
<u>Ancillary Parcels</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>243,331 (11)</u>	<u>243,331 (11)</u>
Total Redevelopment Parcels	148,669 (2)	502,046 (15)	650,715 (17)
<u>Underutilized Commercial Buildings</u>			
Available Bldg. Sq. Ft. (No. of Bldgs)	102,510 (2)	29,570 (3)	132,080 (5)

Source: Parcel data by SRF Consulting, 2004; table calculations by Economic Development Research Group.

* Includes one vacant residential-zoned parcel.

These changes could be both positive and negative for property owners. In some cases, this new arrangement provides an opportunity to develop business activities facing the front and back sides of a single property. In the long run, the development of both sides of a property could increase the number and density of operating business activities on those parcels, increasing economic growth in the community and increasing both income and value for the property. In the short run, businesses that prefer to remain unchanged will still have highway visibility and accessibility via the spur roads, though that will be less direct than the old situation in which their access was simply via a curb cut in the frontage road.

Conclusions: Based on the characteristics of available properties along the TH 36 Commercial Corridor, there is land available within Oak Park Heights that could be suitable for relocated and new businesses (See Tables 5-10 and 5-11). Summaries of impacts anticipated to result from Build Alternatives and the No-Build Alternative are described below:

Summary of Build Alternative Impacts:

- Beneficial impacts resulting from the Build Alternatives may be realized by commercial businesses with a substantial increase in the volume of travelers who pass through this corridor. The increase in traffic provides an opportunity for existing business growth and new business development. The construction of interchanges and frontage and local access roads provides an unparalleled opportunity for enhancement of signage, landscaping and aesthetic improvements of the commercial area. If these elements are accomplished as part of the construction of Build Alternative improvements, the project could have a beneficial impact on the economy of both Stillwater and Oak Park Heights.

- Adverse impacts include the acquisition and relocation of 30 businesses and access changes to at least 23 remaining commercial businesses. In order to mitigate any potential adverse impacts associated efforts should be made to: (a) accommodate some new and relocated businesses along the new frontage and access spur roads, and (b) provide needed signage and landscaping to attract visitors to businesses located along the newly configured frontage and access roads.

Summary of No-Build Impacts:

- Under the No-Build alternative, there would be no need to acquire or relocate any businesses, nor would there be any associated access changes to remaining businesses in Oak Park Heights and Stillwater.
- Failing to invest in a more efficient transportation facility, one whose benefits exceed its costs, with grade-separated access and a more coherent system of frontage roads, could very well retard growth in the City of Oak Park Heights over the long term. This could have an effect on the long-term viability of the businesses in the area, as well as potentially negative effects on the city's tax base.

5.3.2.3 Consequences to Houlton, Wisconsin

All proposed Build Alternatives would be accompanied on the Wisconsin side with a realignment of Wisconsin Highway 64, which links the bridge to Somerset and New Richmond. Build Alternatives D and E would require the acquisition of three (includes one vacant parcel) commercial properties: a liquor wholesaler/distributor, night club and a vacant parcel housing a billboard. While the clientele of these businesses were not surveyed, it would be expected that the liquor wholesaler/distributor and night club businesses are primarily destinations for the surrounding population rather than conveniences for drive-by traffic. Build Alternatives B-1 and C would cause the primary cross-river traffic to bypass the Houlton highway segment now leading to/from the Lift Bridge. However, businesses on that section of road are primarily engaged in manufacturing, construction, repair or warehousing activities. With the exception of the gas station/convenience store, those activities are not greatly dependent on the volume of drive-by traffic, and hence their activity would not likely be greatly affected by the associated change in traffic access under Build Alternatives B-1 and C. Under all Build Alternatives, there would be changes in the level of access to the gas station/convenience that may have an impact on the desirability of this site for such a business use.

Other commercial businesses in Houlton, which are near (but not on) the existing STH 35/64 segment in Houlton (including the bank, liquor store, kennel and real estate agent) are not dependent on drive-by traffic from the existing road, and would maintain their accessibility to the surrounding areas (in Wisconsin and Minnesota) under all Build Alternatives. Therefore, no major business impacts on those businesses would be expected to occur with a new bridge.

With the No-Build Alternative, businesses in Houlton would continue to experience some negative impacts (e.g., traffic backups) associated with congestion on the Lift Bridge and approach roadways. These negative impacts would affect consumer-oriented businesses the most, in particular the gas station/convenience store that depends in part on drive-by traffic. Conditions for other businesses would be generally unchanged with the No-Build Alternative, except to the extent that congestion decreases the ease of access by local vehicles.

5.3.2.4 Consequences to the Regional Economy

Regional-level economic impacts occur primarily to the extent that there are changes affecting the ability of the metropolitan region (relative to elsewhere in the U.S.) to attract, expand and/or retain businesses and workers. The proposed St. Croix River Crossing project takes place within the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, which is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau to include a region of 13 counties (including the Minnesota counties of Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Hennepin, Isanti, Ramsey, Scott, Sherburne, Washington and Wright, plus the Wisconsin counties of Pierce and St. Croix). The metropolitan area also represents a labor market area as defined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Local-level economic impacts, in contrast, occur to the extent that some parts of the metropolitan area have changes in their ability to attract, expand and/or retain businesses and workers.

The proposed Build Alternatives would lead to shifts in the location of traffic movements, and also improve levels of accessibility to various locations. In particular, the Build Alternatives can create opportunities for improving access to downtown Stillwater from the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, as well as improving access for Wisconsin residents who commute to work in Minnesota and shop along the TH 36 commercial corridor. Such access improvements can enhance the attractiveness of those areas as places to work, shop or visit. The existence of such access impacts would depend not just on a new bridge itself, but also on the nature of highway signage, turnoffs and access routes. Some existing businesses also would be affected by changes in the volume and nature of drive-by traffic. All of these potential economic impacts, though, would be classified as local-level effects. That is because they would represent locational redistributions of business activity, affecting the relative attractiveness and growth of business activity occurring in downtown Stillwater and along the Highway 36 commercial corridor, compared to elsewhere in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Since the Twin Cities metropolitan area includes both the Wisconsin and Minnesota sides of the river, all of the proposed changes in vehicular traffic patterns resulting from the proposed Build Alternatives would be internal to the region, and hence classified as localized. There is no indication that the scale of the projected traffic routing shifts is large enough to substantially change the overall cost of living or cost of doing business within the metropolitan area (relative to the rest of the U.S.), or the net flow of visitor dollars coming into the metropolitan area (from elsewhere in the U.S.). For that reason, the project would not be expected to affect aggregate regional business attraction, expansion or retention. Thus, no major change in total metropolitan-wide income, employment or business output is projected to occur as a result of any of the proposed Build Alternatives.

5.3.3 Conclusions

The economic viability of commercial areas is partially affected by visibility, access and traffic volumes on adjacent roadways. The type of retail activity also affects the degree and type of effect. For example, retailers selling convenience or travel-related goods, such as fast food or gasoline, are highly dependent on these conditions. The number of potential customers traveling adjacent roadways, the visibility of the retailer to the roadway traveler, and the ease with which the traveler can access the retailer all affect business for the convenience retailer. These retailers are most affected by changes in traffic patterns.

Specialty good retailers, such as “big box” grocery stores, and automobile or furniture sales, draw from a larger customer base and largely depend on purposeful, rather than impulse, spending. While access and visibility affect the viability of such businesses, they are not as dependent on drive-by traffic for their customer base as those businesses discussed above. A subset of these specialty retailers would be those retailers dependent on tourists as their primary customer base. Their customers will purposefully seek out a concentrated area of recreational activities, eating and lodging facilities, and retail shops. Again, while visibility and accessibility is important to these retailers, they are not dependent on drive-by traffic. Further, the degree to which increased traffic and congestion negatively affect the setting of a tourism area can also be a deterrent to a potential customer base.

The discussion that follows indicates that downtown Stillwater is a regional destination attraction and thus not strongly dependent on through-traffic via downtown. As a result, to the extent that the Build Alternatives remove through traffic from downtown Stillwater and alleviate congestion, they are anticipated to increase the attractiveness of visitation. Convenient and well-marked highway access is also an important consideration.

Impacts of the Build Alternatives on the TH 36 retail corridor include benefits realized by improving access and the existing frontage road geometrics and the consequent increases in levels of safety associated with eliminating at-grade access. Build Alternative impacts also include the acquisition of a number of existing businesses, necessary to construct the frontage roads, interchanges, and local access routes. However, the basic finding is that there does appear to be land available within Oak Park Heights that could be suitable to accommodate displaced businesses. The proposed project is forecast to result in a 50 percent increase in traffic volumes along TH 36 by the year 2030. The benefits of increased levels of traffic passing by highway-oriented businesses and the associated improvements of decreased congestion and increased levels of safety are anticipated to accrue to the commercial businesses that remain and relocate to the TH 36 commercial corridor. In the long term, that represents a substantial increase in market potential for existing businesses to grow and for new businesses to open up in the area. It can lead to increases in business sales, jobs and local tax base. However, there is a risk of economic loss to Oak Park Heights, particularly in the short term, due to commercial property acquisitions required for all proposed Build Alternatives. The risk of economic loss can be mitigated if planning efforts are made to accommodate new and relocated businesses along the new frontage roads and local access roads. Mitigating strategies can include signage and landscaping to attract visitors to businesses located along the newly configured frontage and access road systems.

On the Wisconsin side of the project area, most businesses are not dependent on drive-by traffic, and are not likely to be greatly affected by any of the proposed Build Alternatives. Other businesses in Houlton, not on STH 35/64 are not expected to experience adverse impacts from the Build Alternatives.

As described below, the main commercial impact of the No-Build Alternative would be delays and restricted access to businesses as a result of continued and increased congestion.

5.4 ECONOMIC IMPACTS: FISCAL

Fiscal impacts analysis assesses effects to the tax base resulting from property acquisitions required for this project. The analysis does not attempt to determine economic impacts on specific properties.

As discussed in Section 5.2 and 5.3, a total of 13 commercial parcels have been identified for acquisition within the City of Oak Park Heights with an estimated market value of approximately \$7.5 million. These parcels represents 1.8 percent of the city's taxable market value (for year 2003), as certified by Washington County records. Assuming that these properties also contribute 1.8 percent of the City's property tax revenue, they represent the source of roughly \$41,000 of annual tax revenue for the city. A total of seven commercial parcels will be acquired in Stillwater for all Build Alternatives; under Build Alternatives D and E, an additional two commercial parcels will be acquired just south of Downtown Stillwater adjacent to TH 95. Altogether, these parcels have an estimated market value (for year 2003) of approximately \$5.8 million.

The ability of Oak Park Heights and Stillwater to make up these losses will depend on their ability to either: (a) relocate or replace the affected business revenue generators within the city or (b) offset the losses by obtaining higher taxes from other properties that experience higher values due to increased business sales, generated as a consequence of greater traffic volume along the corridor. The potential for relocating businesses in the same area is discussed in Section 5.3.2.2.