

# **Driver Safety at the Intersection of Highways 53 and 77 in Minong, Washburn County**

## **THE CITIZENS OF NORTHWEST WISCONSIN REQUEST**

Highway 53 is a well-traveled corridor in Northern Wisconsin, and the main artery between Eau Claire and Superior. For this reason, this road holds great value to the economic development of the northern counties. Because it is heavily used, safety is a great priority for drivers. The citizens of Northwest Wisconsin request that additional measures be taken by the Department of Transportation to decrease total accidents and injuries at the intersection of Highway 53 and 77 in Minong, Washburn County, Wisconsin. A study has been conducted on the possibilities to improve the Washburn County section of Highway 53, but as of yet, there is no construction activity planned.

(<http://www.wisconsin.gov/projects/nwregion/53corridor/minong/index.htm>)

We encourage the Department of Transportation to officially map the area for the prepared interchange configuration outlined in the official long-term corridor study. This mapping will allow for the land designated for the future interchange to be preserved until the future interchange can be funded and built.

## **BACKGROUND**

Traffic has increased at the intersection of Highway 53/77 since the construction of a convenience store/gas station in 1997. The rise in traffic and development has created safety issues on this corridor, particularly at the higher volume intersections with stop signs. According to Department of Transportation 2010 statistics, over 14,000 drivers pass this intersection every day.

DOT statistics (1998-2004) show that there were 30 accidents in a five-year span, including five fatalities and fifteen serious injuries. DOT statistics (2004-2010) show 17 crashes and two fatalities. DOT statistics (2011-2013) show 10 crashes. Many of these were a "right angle" crash, which means the vehicles pulled out from the stop signs on Hwy 77 and were struck by a through vehicle traveling on Highway 53.

A long-term corridor study has been conducted to consider all alternatives, such as over/underpasses, cul-de-sacs, and J-turns which will better balance the safety needs of the area. However, the cost to purchase real estate and construct the interchange has not been planned, and no funding has been dedicated towards this project. Until this construction is complete, the danger to all drivers in the area will continue.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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