

CROSSING CLOSURE STUDY

SMOKEY ROAD CLOSURE STUDY

STOCKTON, WISCONSIN

Parties with Interest

Office of the Commissioner of Railroads (OCR)

Wisconsin Central Limited (WCL)

Town of Stockton, Wisconsin

Date: September 29, 2005
Revised: June 12, 2007
Project No. 13460.002

TKDA
ENGINEERS • ARCHITECTS • PLANNERS

750 Shoreline Drive, Suite 100
Aurora, IL 60504-6192

(630) 499-4110
(630) 499-4119 Fax
www.tkda.com

AURORA, ILLINOIS

SEPTEMBER 29, 2005
REVISED JUNE 12, 2007

**CROSSING CLOSURE STUDY
SMOKEY ROAD - STOCKTON, WISCONSIN**

WISCONSIN CENTRAL LIMITED (WCL)

TKDA PROJECT NO. 13460.002

I hereby certify that this Report was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am a duly Licensed Professional Engineer under the laws of the State of Wisconsin.

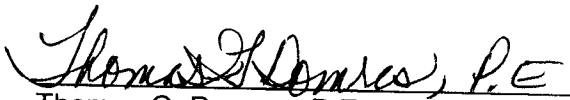

Thomas G. Domres, P.E.
Wisconsin License No. 38627-006

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INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS

Background

The staff and consultants of WCL have investigated the feasibility of closing the public highway crossing of WCL tracks with Smokey Road (DOT #692521A) in the Town of Stockton, Portage County. The Smokey Road crossing is located at Milepost (MP) 239.60 on WCL's Neenah Subdivision. Thomas G. Domres, a TKDA Registered Engineer, reviewed the crossing in August 2005. This report summarizes the findings, analysis and recommendations of this investigation.

Smokey Road (DOT #692521A)


As seen in Figure 1, Smokey Road is a north-south roadway that connects Highway 10 to 6th Street. This facility serves rural residential and agricultural land south of the WCL's track. North of the WCL's track, Smokey Road intersects and terminates at Highway 10. The land between the Smokey Road grade separation and Highway 10 serves as a detention basin for Highway 10. The area north of Highway 10 is a watershed.

In the vicinity of the bridge, Smokey Road is a 22-foot wide bituminous road with 3-foot wide grass shoulders. Smokey Road has no pavement markings and does not have a posted speed limit. The Town Chairman confirmed the speed limit is 55 miles per hour (mph) or less. The Town of Stockton currently classifies Smokey Road as a Rural Local Road. According to the Town Chairman, the weight is restricted to 7 ½ tons during the spring due to frost.

The crossing consists of a bridge for the WCL over Smokey Road, and the posted height for Smokey Road is 14-feet. The road intersects WCL tracks at a 90° angle. Smokey Road is relatively level with little to no slope.

The railroad is elevated in this section (in a fill), and the track curves east of the crossing. The crossing currently consists of one mainline track (115-pound continuous welded rail). There are no warning devices at the crossing due to the grade separation. The bridge over Smokey Road has timber abutments and steel piers.

The WCL timetable indicates that trains currently operate through this area at a maximum timetable speed of 60 miles per hour (mph). During the summer, there is an average of 18.4 through-train movements per day over the Smokey Road Bridge, and an average of 17.9 through-train movements per day over the Smokey Road Bridge during the winter. Approximately 60% of the trains run from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and 40% of the daily through-trains run from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

NO.	DATE	REVISIONS
TKDA		
ENGINEERS • ARCHITECTS • PLANNERS		
		
LOCATION:	Stockton, Wisconsin	
FACILITY:	Smokey Road	
	DOT # 692521A, MP 238.40	
DRAWING TITLE:	Portage County	
DRAWN BY:	ALF	
CHECKED BY:	DWG SEQUENCE:	
DATE:	9/5/2006	PROJECT CODE:
SCALE:	1	13460.002
WORK ORDER:	CE NUMBER:	



Traffic Data

The WCL collected traffic data using tube counters on Smokey Road from Wednesday, May 9, 2007, to Wednesday, May 16, 2007. Smokey Road currently carries an average of 157 vehicles per day. As seen in Appendix B, the morning peak hour is from 7:00 to 8:00 am, and an average of nine vehicles use Smokey Road. The afternoon peak hour is from 4:00 to 5:00 pm, and an average of 13 vehicles use Smokey Road.

According to the Federal Railroad Administration's database, there have not been any reported crashes at the Smokey Road crossing.

Approaching Sight Distance

The approaching sight distance does not apply to the Smokey Road crossing due to the grade-separation.

Clearing Sight Distance:

The clearing sight distance does not apply to the Smokey Road crossing due to the grade-separation.

Area Characteristics

Additional information was collected from the Town of Stockton, Tomorrow River School District, Portage County Planning and Zoning, and Emergency Management Services. This section provides a summary of emergency management services, area growth, and school bus services.

Emergency Services

The Town of Stockton relies on the Portage County Sheriff for police services. The Portage County Sheriff is located in the City of Stevens Point, which is to the northwest of the Town approximately 15 miles. In talking with Sheriff John Charewicz, the Sheriff's Department would oppose the closure of this underpass as they use Smokey Road to connect to Highway 10, which runs directly to Stevens Point and is a major connecting road. would oppose the closure of this underpass because they use Smokey Road to connect to Highway 10, which runs directly to Stevens Point and is a major connecting road. The Patrol is random due to the nature of the calls; however, the Sheriff said the opposition would be more out of convenience sake than necessity. The Patrol Units could use the other crossings in the area, but for the Sheriff's Department, Smokey Road is convenient. The response times would also be increased by at least one mile using alternative crossings.

In talking with Fire Chief, Victor Voss, the Fire Department would not oppose the closure of this underpass even though they use the crossing to respond to calls. He feels the other crossings in the area could be used just as easily. The Fire Chief mentioned the Department could use County Road K or County Road J in order to traverse the tracks and still connect to Highway 10.

Smokey Road

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However, the Fire Chief said the Wisconsin Department of Transportation last informed the Fire Department that Smokey Road was not going to be given access onto Highway 10, and it was going to be made into a cul-de-sac. As seen in Appendix C, TKDA attempted to contact Chief Voss to update this report in August 2006; however, TKDA could not reach Chief Voss for further comment.

TKDA contacted Ms. Sandra Curtis on Tuesday, August 29, 2006. Ms. Curtis, who is the Director of Emergency Management for the Town of Stockton, indicated that the Town of Stockton is serviced by the Village of Plover Fire Department which covers the area west of Burbank Road. The Plover Fire Station is located at 2400 Post Road in Plover.

The Town of Stockton currently relies on the Town of Amherst's Fire Department to cover the area east of Burbank Road, which would handle the Smokey Road calls. The Town of Amherst's Fire Department is a volunteer force based in the Town of Amherst, and is funded by the local municipalities. The Amherst Fire Station is located at 4585 Fairground Road, which is approximately 8 miles away from Smokey Road. The Town of Amherst also has a volunteer rescue group called "First Responders." They are located in the same building as the Fire Station.

According to Ms. Curtis, the Town of Stockton started the Volunteer Fire Department in 2005. The station is located at 7252 6th Street. When this information was gathered, this department is still in the development stage and is not fully functional, but has hired Assistant Chief Mike Spencer. The Town of Stockton has trained 16 volunteer firemen for rescue and fire services.

The hospital that serves these fire departments is St. Michael's Hospital located at 900 Illinois Avenue in Stevens Point. Ms. Curtis didn't see any issues with rerouting traffic if either of these crossings were to be closed, but says they would need plenty of notice in order to reroute emergency calls.

Area Growth

The Town of Stockton is located east of the City of Stevens Point. The Town of Stockton has estimated the Town population to be approximately 3016 residents. At the time of this report, the Town had not projected population growth as of yet. Most residents of the Town work in Stevens Point.

Smokey Road is a north-south facility between 6th Street and Highway 10. Other roads that provide access to Highway 10 in the immediate area include County Road K (to the east) and Custer Road (to the west). There is some concern about removing the Smokey Road Grade Separation. Township Supervisor, Jeanie Dodge, feels that Smokey Road provides access for the residents in the area. Ms. Dodge felt that closing the Smokey Road Grade Separation might have a negative impact on the Smokey Bar and Grill.

The Town is working with the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department to work through future plans for the Town of Stockton. The Town of Stockton has proposals to develop certain areas of the Town residentially, commercially, and industrially. The Town Chairman reported the Town of Stockton is the fastest growing town in Portage County. For about the last six years, approximately 20 new houses have been built per year. Recently, there have been 200 new lots open for sale and 300 build-able lots open for development. New subdivisions have been put in and there are a few proposals for more subdivisions to be built.

Smokey Road

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School Bus Service

The Smokey Road area is located in the Tomorrow River School District. The Tomorrow River School is located on Main Street in the Town of Amherst, approximately 7.5 miles away from Smokey Road. The Transportation Manager indicated the Tomorrow River School contracts out bus services. The buses use Smokey Road two times per day, once in the morning and once in the evening, during the school year. The buses approach the underpass from the north from Highway 10 (to the north).

Closure Analysis

There are several options for providing alternative access to the residences and business affected by the Smokey Road closure. The access options are identified in Figure 2 and are summarized below. Travel times for these alternative access options are provided in this section.

County Road K - Public At-Grade Grade Crossing (DOT #692520T)

County Road K is a north-south roadway that connects County Road B in the south to County Road Q in the north. County Road K crosses the WCL track 125 feet south of the Highway 10/County Road K intersection. This at-grade crossing is the next public crossing to the east of the Smokey Road grade separation and is located at MP 238.40. The crossing is in a cut section, and County Road K crosses the tracks at a 65° skew.

County Road K is a 22 foot bituminous road with 3 foot gravel shoulders. Traveling northbound through the crossing to Highway 10, the road slopes at a constant -2%. The crossing surface is asphalt. The warning devices at the crossing include flashing lights and gates, one bell, painted stop-bars, and advanced warning signs.

Custer Road – Grade Separation (DOT #692526J)

To the west of the Smokey Road grade separation is the Custer Road grade separation. Custer Road connects County Road B in the south to County Road I in the north, and Custer Road serves as the main road through Custer, Wisconsin. Since it is the main road, it serves residences and farms south of the track and some small restaurants/taverns/commercial establishments north of the track. Custer Road is an 18 foot bituminous road with 3 foot grass shoulders.

Custer Road intersects the WCL tracks at MP 241.68. Height restrictions are posted at 14 feet. The current bridge span is 22 feet wide across Custer Road. The grade separation is currently under construction.

Travel Times

Travel time analysis is a method used to determine the impacts of a crossing closure by measuring and comparing travel times for various alternative routes. Each route is displayed on the map on Figure 2. Route times were collected in the field in August of 2005 and the results summarized in Table 1. The analysis assumes a common starting location at the 6th Street/Smokey Road intersection. The following routes/alternatives were investigated:

Smokey Road



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Route A – This route is the existing travel path from the Smokey Road grade separation to the Highway 10/Custer Road intersection. Travel times will measure the trip times for vehicles heading west toward Custer and Stevens Point.

Route B – This route is an alternative to the west if the crossing is closed. This alternative assumes using a combination of 6th Street and Custer Road.

Route C – This route is the existing travel path from the Smokey Road grade separation to the Highway 10/County Road K intersection. Travel times will measure the trip times for vehicles heading east toward Amherst Junction and Amherst.

Route D – This route is an alternative to the east if the crossing is closed. This alternative assumes using a combination of 6th Street and County Road K.

NO.	DATE	REVISIONS
 TKDA ENGINEERS • ARCHITECTS • PLANNERS		
 Wisconsin Central Limited		
LOCATION:	Stockton, Wisconsin	
FACILITY:	Smokey Road	
	DOT # 692521A, MP 238.40	
DRAWING TITLE:	Portage County	
DRAWN BY:	ALF	
CHECKED BY:	ALF	
DATE:	9/5/2006	PROJECT CODE: 13460.002
SCALE:	FIGURE: 2	WORK ORDER: CE NUMBER:

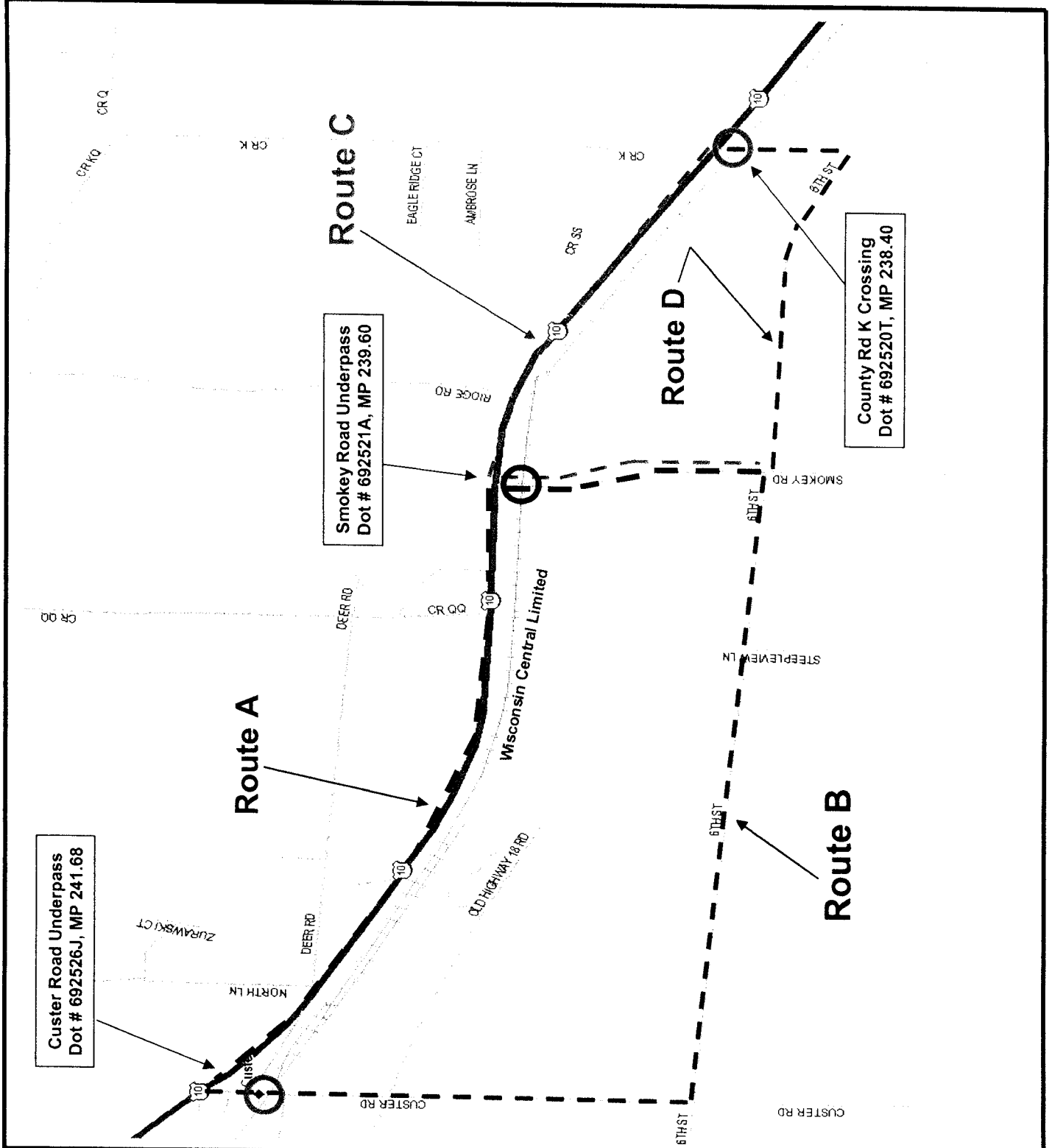


Table 1: Travel Time Analysis

Route	From	To	Time (minutes)
A	<u>Existing – West</u> Smokey Road/6th Street Smokey Road/Hwy 10	Smokey Road/Hwy 10	1.2
		Custer Road/Hwy 10	2.3
		Total	3.4
B	<u>Alternative – West</u> Smokey Road/6th Street Custer Road/6th Street	Custer Road/6th Street	2.2
		Custer Road/Hwy 10	2.2
		Total	4.4
C	<u>Existing – East</u> Smokey Road/6th Street Smokey Road/Hwy 10	Smokey Road/Hwy 10	1.2
		County Road K/Hwy 10	1.3
		Total	2.5
D	<u>Alternative – East</u> Smokey Road/6th Street 6th Street/County Road K.	6th Street/County Road K	1.5
		County Road K/Hwy 10	0.6
		Total	2.1

Notes:

- 1) All travel times were collected in the field in August 2005.
- 2) All travel times were collected by driving at posted speeds. When speeds were not posted for a given facility, the speed of the facility was assumed to be 30 mph.

As seen in Table 1, the travel time for Route A (trips to the west) is approximately 3.4 minutes. Route B has a travel time of 4.4 minutes. The difference in travel time between Route A and Route B is 1.0 minute.

For trips to the east, Route C has a travel time of 2.5 minutes. Route D, on the other hand, has a travel time of 2.1 minutes. It takes less time (a savings of approximately 0.4 minutes) for drivers to use Route D, the alternative, than Alternative C.

Both alternative routes have comparable times to the existing routes.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the closure analysis, TKDA recommends Smokey Road for closure. The reasons for closing the Smokey Road crossing are the following:

1. Smokey Road is classified as a Local Rural Road and serves traffic to residences and farms south of the grade separation. Smokey Road does not extend north past the Highway 10/Smokey Road intersection.
2. Access across the WCL is already provided at two other locations: the County Road K public at-grade crossing and the Custer Road grade separation. It must be noted that travel times for either route are comparable or better than the existing route.
3. WISDOT will benefit from the closure as they will not need to construct turn lanes and other geometric improvements for the Smokey Road/Highway 10 intersection.
4. The Amherst Fire Department supports closing Smokey Road since other routes are available.
5. The Portage County Sheriff Department opposes the closure but admits the Department could use other crossings/routes to respond to emergencies.

APPENDIX A

Federal Railroad Administration (FRA's) Data

**U.S. DOT - CROSSING INVENTORY INFORMATION
AS OF 8/11/2005**

Crossing No.: **692521A** Update Reason: **Changed Crossing** Effective Begin-Date of Record: **10/01/04**
 Railroad: **WC Wisconsin Central Ltd. [WC]** **Current Record**
 Initiating Agency **State** Type and Position: **Public RR Over**

Part I Location and Classification of Crossing

Division:	MIDWEST	State:	WI
Subdivision:	NEENAH	County:	PORTAGE
Branch or Line Name:	NEENAH-OWEN	City:	Near CUSTER
Railroad Milepost:	0239.60	Street or Road Name:	SMOKEY RD
RailRoad I.D. No.:		Highway Type & No.:	
Nearest RR Timetable Stn:	CUSTER	HSR Corridor ID:	
Parent Railroad:	CN Canadian National - North America	County Map Ref. No.:	PRL
Crossing Owner:	CN [CN] Canadian National - North America [CN]	Latitude:	44.4642500
ENS Sign Installed:		Longitude:	-89.3858300
Passenger Service:		Lat/Long Source:	Estimate
Avg Passenger Train Count:	0	Quiet Zone:	
Adjacent Crossing with Separate Number:	Yes		

Private Crossing Information:

Category:	Specify Signs:	Public Access:	Specify Signals:
	ST/RR A ST/RR B ST/RR C ST/RR D		
Railroad Use:			
State Use:			
Narrative:			
Emergency Contact: (800)616-3432	Railroad Contact:	State Contact:	

Part II Railroad Information

Number of Daily Train Movements:	Less Than One Movement Per Day:	Yes
Total Trains: 0 Total Switching: 0	Day Thru: 0	
Typical Speed Range Over Crossing: From 0 to 0 mph	Maximum Time Table Speed:	0
Type and Number of Tracks: Main: 0 Other: 0	Specify:	
Does Another RR Operate a Separate Track at Crossing?		No
Does Another RR Operate Over Your Track at Crossing?		No

**U.S. DOT - CROSSING INVENTORY INFORMATION
AS OF 8/23/2005**

Crossing No.: **692526J** Update Reason: **Changed Crossing** Effective Begin-Date of Record: **10/01/04**
 Railroad: **WC Wisconsin Central Ltd. [WC]** **Current Record**
 Initiating Agency **State** Type and Position: **Public RR Over**

Part I Location and Classification of Crossing

Division:	MIDWEST	State:	WI
Subdivision:	NEENAH	County:	PORTAGE
Branch or Line Name:	NEENAH-OWEN	City:	In CUSTER
Railroad Milepost:	0241.68	Street or Road Name:	CUSTER RD
RailRoad I.D. No.:		Highway Type & No.:	
Nearest RR Timetable Stn:	CUSTER	HSR Corridor ID:	
Parent Railroad:	CN Canadian National - North America	County Map Ref. No.:	PRL
Crossing Owner:	CN [CN] Canadian National - North America [CN]	Latitude:	44.4585400
ENS Sign Installed:		Longitude:	-89.4262160
Passenger Service:		Lat/Long Source:	Estimate
Avg Passenger Train Count:	0	Quiet Zone:	
Adjacent Crossing with Separate Number:	Yes		

Private Crossing Information:

Category: _____ Public Access: _____
 Specify Signs: _____ Specify Signals: _____

	ST/RR A	ST/RR B	ST/RR C	ST/RR D
Railroad Use:				
State Use:				
Narrative:				

Emergency Contact: **(800)616-3432** Railroad Contact: _____ State Contact: _____

Part II Railroad Information

Number of Daily Train Movements:
 Total Trains: **0** Total Switching: **0** Less Than One Movement Per Day: **Yes**
 Typical Speed Range Over Crossing: From **0** to **0** mph Day Thru: **0**
 Type and Number of Tracks: Main: **0** Other: **0** Maximum Time Table Speed: **0**
 Specify: _____
 Does Another RR Operate a Separate Track at Crossing? **No**
 Does Another RR Operate Over Your Track at Crossing? **No**

**U.S. DOT - CROSSING INVENTORY INFORMATION
AS OF 8/23/2005**

Crossing No.: **692520T** Update Reason: **Changed Crossing** Effective Begin-Date of Record: **02/10/05**
 Railroad: **WC Wisconsin Central Ltd. [WC]** **Current Record**
 Initiating Agency **State** Type and Position: **Public At Grade**

Part I Location and Classification of Crossing

Division:	MIDWEST	State:	WI
Subdivision:	NEENAH	County:	PORTAGE
Branch or Line Name:	NEENAH-OWEN	City:	Near CUSTER
Railroad Milepost:	0238.40	Street or Road Name:	
RailRoad I.D. No.:		Highway Type & No.:	K-CTH
Nearest RR Timetable Stn:	CUSTER	HSR Corridor ID:	
Parent Railroad:	CN Canadian National - North America	County Map Ref. No.:	PRL
Crossing Owner:	CN Canadian National - North America	Latitude:	44.4919300
ENS Sign Installed:		Longitude:	-89.3631740
Passenger Service:		Lat/Long Source:	Estimate
Avg Passenger Train Count:	0	Quiet Zone:	No
Adjacent Crossing with Separate Number:	Yes		

Private Crossing Information:

Category: _____ Public Access: _____
 Specify Signs: _____ Specify Signals: _____

ST/RR A ST/RR B ST/RR C ST/RR D

Railroad Use: _____
 State Use: _____
 Narrative: _____

Emergency Contact: **(800)616-3432** Railroad Contact: _____ State Contact: _____

Part II Railroad Information

Number of Daily Train Movements:

Total Trains:	25	Total Switching:	0	Less Than One Movement Per Day:	No
Typical Speed Range Over Crossing:	From 30 to 60 mph	Day Thru:	15	Maximum Time Table Speed:	60
Type and Number of Tracks:	Main: 1 Other 0	Specify:			

Does Another RR Operate a Separate Track at Crossing? **No**
 Does Another RR Operate Over Your Track at Crossing? **Yes: CN FVW**

APPENDIX B

Field Review