

1630-08-00  
Coulee Region Transportation Study  
Coulee Region PEL  
**DRAFT** Problem Statement, Goals, and Objectives  
March 24, 2015

## **Introduction**

Using the Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL) process, the problem statement developed in the study is the foundation for the purpose and need statements in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. The problem statement reflects the identified needs, whereas the goal and objectives reflect the project purpose. The problem statement, goal, and objectives are used to develop screening criteria that evaluate alternatives and monitor performance. The problem statement, goal, and objectives for the Coulee Region PEL were developed using a collaborative process that involved focus groups, committees, and public meetings. Elected officials, community staff, federal and state agencies, and community members all contributed. Multiple strategies will be developed and evaluated to determine the extent to which they address the screening criteria based on the project objectives. Strategies that are screened out during the PEL process will not be evaluated in the NEPA process. Strategies that are moved forward in the PEL process will be further evaluated during the NEPA process.

## **Draft Problem Statement**

The Coulee Region is comprised of the City of La Crosse, Onalaska, Holmen, West Salem, La Crescent and the surrounding communities. The rivers and bluffs create a unique challenge for the transportation system in the Coulee Region. The Region's hub is in the south end of the region and surrounding communities with population growth areas are to the north. The three major roads that connect the Coulee Region communities, businesses and neighborhoods are US 53, WIS 35 and WIS 16. US 53 is identified in the WisDOT Corridors 2030 plan as an existing connector route. Corridors 2030 places a high priority on protecting highway investments that connect major economic population centers and carry long-distance, statewide traffic. These connections are important for the movement of goods, people and services within the state and region. These three facilities are the gateways to the cities of Onalaska and La Crosse and should take the burden off of the local community roads and provide a safe and efficient means of transportation.

The Coulee Region Transportation Study, Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL) study focuses on existing and long-term transportation challenges in the Coulee Region. The purpose of the study is to identify strategies that address safety, infrastructure deterioration, congestion, multimodal deficiencies, environment and support economic development and livability in the Coulee Region.

## **Draft Goal**

Improve the long term movement of people and goods, safely and efficiently, in a manner that accommodates economic development, incorporates community plans, and limits adverse environmental impacts and social effects, in ways that support the natural beauty and livability and contributes positively to the Region's quality of life.

## **Draft Objectives**

The Coulee Region PEL Study will investigate strategies to satisfy the goal and objectives. Specific, measurable objectives for the Coulee Region include the following:

1. Provide transportation system improvements that address safety.
2. Provide transportation system improvements that address existing infrastructure deficiencies.
3. Provide transportation system improvements that address transportation congestion and travel reliability.
4. Provide transportation system improvements that incorporate and improves multi-modal travel options and encourages alternatives to the single occupancy vehicle.
5. Provide transportation system improvements that support economic and population changes.
6. Integrate land use and transportation planning to ensure long-term compatibility between meeting travel demand, protecting environmental resources, and enhancing existing and planned land use changes.
7. Implement long-term corridor preservation measures to protect future transportation rights-of-way in conjunction with land designated for economic and recreational development, and natural resource enhancement.
8. Provide transportation system improvements that limit the adverse impacts to the La Crosse River Marsh, bluffs, businesses and neighborhoods.
9. Provide transportation system improvements that enhance area livability.

The previous stated objectives were condensed to the following root objectives and desired outcomes. The root objectives and desired outcomes provide a basis for the screening criteria used in strategy evaluation.

Root Objective	Desired Outcome
1. <b>Safety</b>	Reduce rate and severity of pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular crashes.
2. <b>Infrastructure</b>	Address pavement, structural, geometric deficiencies and utilities.
3. <b>Improve Congestion and travel reliability</b>	Provide comfortable, direct, reliable and convenient access for all modes of transportation.
Multimodal (Pedestrian/Bicycle/Transit)	Promote/encourage the use of alternate modes of travel.
Motor vehicles	Provide reliable travel times for both reoccurring and nonrecurring congestion.
	Reduce motor vehicle use during peak periods.
4. <b>Plan for future transportation needs</b>	Promote smart growth that considers all transportation modes along with changes to land use.
5. <b>Limit impacts to community's resources</b>	Consider strategies that balance transportation needs with protection of the environmental and communities resources.