

Appendix 2-A: Online Questionnaire Results

Introduction

During development of the draft *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030*, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) developed a questionnaire to obtain public input on rail issues and needs in Wisconsin through 2030. The questionnaire was administered online and available to prospective respondents from March 12, 2010 through April 6, 2010.

The percentages shown are based on the total number of responses to that question—not the total number of people who completed the questionnaire. The total number of responses to each question is shown in parentheses next to the percentage. Percentages are rounded to the nearest percent.

Methodology

The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather input on rail issues and needs from now through 2030 from WisDOT's stakeholders and the general public. To maximize the opportunity for participation, WisDOT sent over 3,000 post cards and over 1,200 emails to stakeholders directing them to WisDOT's web site to complete the survey. WisDOT also distributed a press release to announce the release of the online questionnaire to the general public.

The questionnaire was developed and finalized with input from WisDOT planning staff, rail program staff, and management. It contained 11 multiple choice questions regarding inter-city passenger, freight and commuter rail. It also included one open-ended question for respondents to provide any additional information, and four demographic questions. The results of the online questionnaire are attached in Tables 2A-1 and 2A-2 at the end of Appendix 2-A.

Report structure

This report provides an overview of the descriptive statistics and the results from the demographic, multiple choice and open-ended questions. The data included in the tables throughout the report show the percentages of responses to that specific question and, in parentheses, the total number of responses to that question. These response percentages do not add up to 100 percent because respondents were allowed to choose up to three response choices.

Descriptive Statistics

WisDOT received over 5,300 responses to the questionnaire. Looking at gender, with a ratio of 66 percent to 31 percent, there were twice as many responses from men as from women.

| | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Male | 66% (2,849) |
| Female | 31% (1,310) |
| Prefer not to answer | 3% (131) |

The age ranges of respondents was skewed slightly, with people in the 50 to 59 range accounting for 27 percent of responses, and those 60 to 69 accounting for 20 percent of responses. These were the two largest groups of respondents, totaling just over 2,000 responses.

| | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| <20 | 0 (10) |
| 20-29 | 9% (406) |
| 30-39 | 15% (660) |
| 40-49 | 19% (802) |
| 50-59 | 27% (1,162) |
| 60-69 | 20% (847) |
| 70-79 | 6% (241) |
| 80+ | 1% (30) |
| Prefer not to answer | 3% (149) |

The response rate was higher from the households with higher incomes. Fifty-eight percent of responses came from those with an annual household income of \$50,000 or greater. Nearly 18 percent of the respondents who answered this question chose the ‘prefer not to answer’ choice.

| | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| <\$10K | 2% (65) |
| \$10-25K | 6% (241) |
| \$25-50K | 17% (720) |
| \$50-100K | 37% (1,582) |
| \$100K+ | 21% (906) |
| Prefer not to answer | 18% (751) |

The geographic spread of the results, determined by respondents’ zip codes indicates:

- Responses were received from every county in the state.
- The largest concentrations of responses were from the Madison and Milwaukee areas.
- There was a slightly larger concentration of responses from the eastern side of the state, along Lake Michigan, compared with other broad geographic areas.
- There were concentrations of responses from the La Crosse and Eau Claire areas.
- There was a concentration of responses from the Sheboygan area.

Results from the close-ended multiple choice questions are summarized below, by category: Passenger, Freight and Commuter Rail.

The results of the “level of public investment/level of service” question allow us to examine any differences in the levels of support across the three rail categories.

For each of the rail categories, the highest percentage of respondents favor increased public investment/service: 51 percent for passenger rail, 37 percent for freight rail, and 49 percent for commuter rail.

In other words, within each category, more respondents are in favor of increased investment/service, than the number of those who favor the current level or a decreased level of public investment/service.

For passenger and commuter rail categories, the second highest response was for ‘decreased investment/service’—nearly a third for each (31 percent and 33 percent respectively), indicating a more polarized opinion among respondents for these two categories. In contrast, for freight rail, ‘decreased investment/service’ had the *lowest* percentage, at 14 percent, which was even lower than those who responded no opinion/don’t know (16 percent).

| | Decreased Investment/Service | Current Investment/Service | Increased Investment/Service | No Opinion/Don’t Know |
|-----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Passenger | 31% (1,346) | 15% (637) | 51% (2,251) | 4% (158) |
| Freight | 14% (617) | 33% (1,453) | 37% (1,637) | 16% (685) |
| Commuter | 33% (1,464) | 12% (525) | 49% (2,161) | 6% (242) |

Demographic Breakouts

Age

Across the three categories—passenger, freight, and commuter—the youngest respondents (age <20 and age 20 to 29) and oldest respondents (age 70 to 79 and age 80+) favor increased rail investment/service and do not favor decreased rail investment/service. Two of the middle age groups, age 30 to 39 and age 40 to 49, have the lowest percentages of respondents who favor increased investment/service and highest percentages of those who favor decreased investment/service. See Tables A.1 through A.3, attached.

Income

The differences between annual income ranges were smaller than the differences between age ranges discussed above. Also, the *spread within* income ranges among respondents who favor increased, decreased, or current levels of funding, was similar across the income ranges. The lowest income range (< \$10,000/yr) did have a higher percentage of respondents who favor increased investment/service. In general, the highest percentages of respondents who favor decreased rail investment/service are from those in the \$50,000-\$100,000 annual income range. See Tables B.1 through B.3, attached.

Geographic Area

Geographic breakouts were determined by asking respondents for their zip code. The zip codes were then combined for determining breakouts by metropolitan area. In this section, the number of responses is shown in brackets after the percentage.

Passenger Rail

In looking at increased investment/service for passenger rail, respondents from La Crosse (84 percent [59]) and Eau Claire (72 percent [72]) were the top two metropolitan areas. Fully two-thirds of respondents from three other metro areas—Green Bay (69 percent [99]), Madison (68 percent [823]), and Wausau (67 percent [18]) also support increased investment/service for passenger rail.

In looking at support for decreased passenger rail investment/service, Sheboygan was at the top of the list, with nearly half of respondents (47 percent [69]) indicating they favor less passenger rail investment/service. Southeast Wisconsin (which includes the Milwaukee/Racine/Kenosha metro area) was at 40 percent [452], and Fond du Lac, Janesville, and Beloit, each had about one third of the responses in favor of decreased investment/service for passenger rail [10, 15, and 6 responses, respectively].

Freight Rail

In the freight rail category, the percentages of respondents favoring increased investment/service are highest for Janesville (54 percent [25]), Beloit (50 percent [9]), and Green Bay (46 percent [66]), with Eau Claire and La Crosse each at 40 percent [40 and 28 responses, respectively]. Looking at those who favor decreases in investment/service for freight rail, the percentages of respondents from Sheboygan and Superior are the highest, at 21 percent [30] and 20 percent [2] respectively. Wausau has the next highest percentage of responses, at 19 percent [5], followed by Beloit and Southeast Wisconsin both at 17 percent [3 and 191 responses, respectively].

Commuter Rail

The responses for commuter rail roughly follow those for the passenger rail category, although in general, a slightly smaller percentage of respondents favor increased investment/service for commuter rail than for passenger rail. La Crosse had the highest percentage of respondents favoring increased investment/service (74 percent [52]), followed by Eau Claire (66 percent [66]), Madison (65 percent [786]), Green Bay (61 percent [87]), and Superior (60 percent [6]). Less than half of Wausau respondents favor increased investment for commuter rail compared with the two-thirds who favor increased investment for passenger rail (48 percent [13] versus 67 [18] percent).

In looking at respondents favoring decreased investment/service for commuter rail, the results again closely follow the passenger rail results. Sheboygan (51 percent [74]), Southeast Wisconsin (46 percent [519]), Fond du Lac (39 percent [11]), and Beloit (33 percent [6]) have the highest percentage of respondents who favor decreased public investment/decreased service for commuter rail.

Issues Needs and Concerns

The next section looks at issues, needs, and concerns for passenger rail, freight rail and commuter rail. Note that throughout this section of the questionnaire, respondents could choose up to three responses. Therefore, the percentages will not add up to 100.

Passenger Rail

Issues

The top five passenger rail issues WisDOT should consider through 2030 are shown. The top three responses, all with a response rate above 40 percent—relate to cost/funding issues.

- Funding for capital projects/investments (i.e., the cost to construct a new rail line) 45% (2,064)
- Ongoing costs for infrastructure maintenance and operation 43% (1,993)

- Cost versus benefit 40% (1,841)
- Location of passenger rail stations/terminals 29% (1,345)
- Mobility needs for the state's population 24% (1,119)

Needs

Of the five most frequently chosen passenger rail needs in Wisconsin, three relate to train travel: routes, terminals, and travel times. Funding was also cited, with 26 percent of responses.

- More routes 30% (1,394)
- Multimodal terminals
(i.e., rent a car and access transit/bus and passenger rail in same terminal) 27% (1,228)
- Dedicated sources of state and federal funding for passenger rail projects 26% (1,217)
- Decreased travel times to destinations compared with current travel times 23% (1,051)
- No passenger rail needs require attention through 2030 22% (1,002)

Concerns

Here, costs received the greatest percentage of responses, with 52 percent of respondents choosing initial construction costs and 44 percent choosing ongoing costs for maintenance and operation. Also, 21 percent chose the response, “benefits from increases in passenger rail travel will not offset the additional costs.” Connectivity was a concern indicated by slightly over a third of respondents (35 percent).

- Cost to construct passenger rail projects 52% (2,387)
- Ongoing costs for maintenance and operation of passenger rail lines 44% (2,024)
- Lack of convenient connections to transit, intercity bus, ferries, and park-and-ride lots 35% (1,586)
- Schedule for passenger rail implementation too slow or not extensive enough 21% (975)
- Benefits from increases in passenger rail travel will not offset the additional costs 21% (967)

Freight Rail

Issues

The two most frequently mentioned freight issues relate to ongoing costs for maintenance and operations, chosen by nearly half of respondents (45 percent), and funding for capital projects, chosen by over a third (36 percent). Capacity was chosen by a quarter (25 percent) of respondents and environment by 15 percent.

- Ongoing costs for infrastructure maintenance and freight operations 45% (1,993)
- Funding for capital projects/investments (i.e., the cost to construct a new rail line) 36% (1,604)
- System-wide capacity needs 25% (1,093)
- Environment 15% (674)
- No opinion/don't know 18% (793)

Needs

The top five freight needs chosen by respondents include the increasing need for infrastructure repair/replacement (28 percent), the need for more intermodal transfer facilities (26 percent), the need for greater capacity (24 percent), and more routes in Wisconsin (17 percent).

- Increasing need for infrastructure repair/replacement 28% (1,262)
- More facilities where freight can be transferred between trains, trucks and ships 26% (1,139)
- Greater capacity—ability to accommodate more freight on railroads 24% (1,060)
- More routes between manufacturing and retail areas in Wisconsin 17% (751)
- No opinion/don't know 21% (950)

Concerns

Nearly one-third of respondents chose as their key concerns the lack of distribution centers in Wisconsin (31 percent) and reduced freight rail service to some businesses and communities (31 percent); nearly as many chose safety at rail crossings (28 percent). A quarter of respondents indicated a concern with freight traffic causing delays and restrictions for passenger rail.

- Not enough distribution centers in Wisconsin where freight can be transferred between trains and trucks 31% (1,380)
- Reduced freight rail service to some Wisconsin businesses and communities 31% (1,372)
- Safety at rail crossings 28% (1,253)
- Freight traffic on freight-owned shared tracks causing delays and service restrictions for passenger rail 25% (1,123)
- No opinion/don't know 19% (824)

Commuter Rail

The questionnaire did not ask respondents about needs and concerns related to commuter rail. It did ask about commuter rail issues and included a larger number of response choices than for passenger and freight rail. The results are spread across a larger number of topics—with a greater number of responses chosen by respondents. Thus, the top 12 responses are included in the table below.

The two most frequently chosen issues are: local governments' share of commuter rail project costs (28 percent) and the State of Wisconsin's role in developing commuter rail (27 percent). Other frequently chosen issues include residential access (22 percent), affordability (18 percent), potential to reduce road congestion (18 percent), ongoing funding sources (17 percent), and availability of an alternative to road travel (17 percent).

- How local governments pay for their local share of commuter rail projects (generally 25 percent of total project cost) 28% (1,251)
- The state taking a more active leadership role in developing commuter rail in urban areas of Wisconsin 27% (1,198)

| | |
|--|-----------|
| • Improving access to commuter rail in residential areas | 22% (949) |
| • Affordability of fares/tickets | 18% (786) |
| • Potential to minimize road congestion if some traffic is diverted from cars to commuter rail | 18% (780) |
| • Creation of ongoing funding sources for commuter rail | 17% (767) |
| • Availability of an alternative to traveling on congested roadways | 17% (766) |
| • Improving access to key destinations (e.g., health care, employment and retail centers, educational institutions, government facilities, etc.) | 15% (680) |
| • Energy efficiency of commuter rail | 12% (533) |
| • Mobility for people who cannot or choose not to drive | 12% (512) |
| • Potential traffic delays at rail crossings while commuter trains pass | 11% (499) |
| • Other | 15% (639) |

Qualitative Results

Also included in the questionnaire was an open-ended question asking participants if they had any other feedback. There were nearly 2,000 responses to this question. The range of topics addressed generally reflects those included in the multiple choice questions. Many responses specifically reference the Milwaukee-Madison intercity passenger rail project. This is not surprising given the fact that the federal funding was awarded shortly before the questionnaire was made available. The list below highlights the range of topics included in these responses:

- Funding – funding sources, funding levels, public funding mechanisms, private funding opportunities, self-sustaining/user-based
- Costs – initial cost, ongoing costs, capital costs, operations and maintenance costs, costs versus benefits
- Demand – level of current need for rail transportation, potential for future need/growth, inflexibility of rail
- Benefit – local, statewide, direct benefits for rail users, indirect benefits for non-users, property values near tracks/stations, regional/multistate benefits
- Connectivity between passenger rail, commuter rail, and local transit
- Rail routes and station locations within the state
- Tradeoffs between rail traffic and road traffic, both for passenger travel and freight shipping
- Ecological/Environmental issues, efficiency of passenger and freight rail
- Opinions about local, state, and federal government, in general

Next Steps

The results of this questionnaire was used along with the other public and stakeholder input WisDOT received during the development of *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030*. This information helped guide the development of the final draft plan before adoption.

Table 2A-1: Level of Support for Public Investment in Rail and Rail Service in Wisconsin by Age

The number of responses and percentage of responses for each age range are shown in the tables below.

Public Investment for PASSENGER Rail, by Age

| | < 20 yrs | | 20-29 yrs | | 30-39 yrs | | 40-49 yrs | | 50-59 yrs | | 60-69 yrs | | 70-79 yrs | | 80+ yrs | | prefer not | | No | | Total | |
|--------------------|--------------------|----|------------------|----|------------------|----|------------------|----|------------------|----|------------------|----|------------------|----|----------------|----|-------------------|----|-----------|----|--------------|----|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| More \$ | 7 | 70 | 219 | 54 | 309 | 47 | 394 | 49 | 596 | 51 | 443 | 52 | 143 | 60 | 14 | 48 | 79 | 53 | 27 | 59 | 2231 | 51 |
| Current \$ | | 0 | 58 | 14 | 112 | 17 | 117 | 15 | 150 | 13 | 132 | 16 | 28 | 12 | 6 | 21 | 15 | 10 | 10 | 22 | 628 | 14 |
| Less \$ | 3 | 30 | 120 | 30 | 221 | 33 | 267 | 33 | 361 | 31 | 241 | 29 | 58 | 24 | 8 | 28 | 46 | 31 | 8 | 17 | 1333 | 31 |
| No Opinion | | 0 | 9 | 2 | 18 | 3 | 21 | 3 | 51 | 4 | 29 | 3 | 11 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 149 | 3 |
| No Response | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | 1 | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | 1 | 1 | | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Total # | 10 | | 406 | | 660 | | 800 | | 1158 | | 845 | | 240 | | 29 | | 149 | | 46 | | 4343 | |

Public Investment for FREIGHT Rail, by Age

| | < 20 yrs | | 20-29 yrs | | 30-39 yrs | | 40-49 yrs | | 50-59 yrs | | 60-69 yrs | | 70-79 yrs | | 80+ yrs | | prefer not | | No | | Total | |
|--------------------|--------------------|----|------------------|----|------------------|----|------------------|----|------------------|----|------------------|----|------------------|----|----------------|----|-------------------|----|-----------|----|--------------|----|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| More \$ | 6 | 60 | 177 | 44 | 248 | 38 | 279 | 35 | 418 | 36 | 304 | 36 | 97 | 40 | 8 | 28 | 65 | 44 | 21 | 46 | 1623 | 37 |
| Current \$ | 2 | 20 | 128 | 32 | 220 | 33 | 272 | 34 | 391 | 34 | 297 | 35 | 73 | 30 | 11 | 38 | 34 | 23 | 15 | 33 | 1443 | 33 |
| Less \$ | 1 | 10 | 54 | 13 | 101 | 15 | 126 | 16 | 160 | 14 | 111 | 13 | 25 | 10 | 6 | 21 | 16 | 11 | 6 | 13 | 606 | 14 |
| No Opinion | 1 | 10 | 47 | 12 | 91 | 14 | 122 | 15 | 189 | 16 | 133 | 16 | 45 | 19 | 4 | 14 | 33 | 22 | 4 | 9 | 669 | 15 |
| No Response | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | 1 | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | 1 | 1 | | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Total # | 10 | | 406 | | 660 | | 800 | | 1158 | | 845 | | 240 | | 29 | | 149 | | 46 | | 4343 | |

Public Investment for COMMUTER Rail, by Age

| | < 20 yrs | | 20-29 yrs | | 30-39 yrs | | 40-49 yrs | | 50-59 yrs | | 60-69 yrs | | 70-79 yrs | | 80+ yrs | | Prefer not | | No | | Total | |
|--------------------|--------------------|----|------------------|----|------------------|----|------------------|----|------------------|----|------------------|----|------------------|----|----------------|----|-------------------|----|-----------|----|--------------|----|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| More \$ | 7 | 70 | 207 | 51 | 305 | 46 | 369 | 46 | 586 | 51 | 425 | 50 | 140 | 58 | 10 | 34 | 70 | 47 | 22 | 48 | 2141 | 49 |
| Current \$ | | 0 | 47 | 12 | 91 | 14 | 101 | 13 | 116 | 10 | 102 | 12 | 22 | 9 | 6 | 21 | 24 | 16 | 8 | 17 | 517 | 12 |
| Less \$ | 3 | 30 | 132 | 33 | 242 | 37 | 287 | 36 | 384 | 33 | 274 | 32 | 65 | 27 | 11 | 38 | 43 | 29 | 12 | 26 | 1453 | 33 |
| No Opinion | | 0 | 20 | 5 | 22 | 3 | 42 | 5 | 72 | 6 | 44 | 5 | 13 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 11 | 7 | 4 | 9 | 230 | 5 |
| No Response | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | 1 | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | 1 | 1 | | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Total # | 10 | | 406 | | 660 | | 800 | | 1158 | | 845 | | 240 | | 29 | | 149 | | 46 | | 4343 | |

Table 2A-2: Level of Support for Public Investment in Rail and Rail Service in Wisconsin by Income

The number of responses and percentage of responses for each income range are shown in the tables below.

Public Investment for PASSENGER Rail, by Annual Household Income

| | < \$10K | | \$10-25K | | \$25-\$50K | | \$50-\$100K | | \$100K+ | | Prefer not to | | No Response | | Total | |
|----------------|-----------|----|------------|----|------------|----|-------------|----|------------|----|---------------|----|-------------|----|-------------|----|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| More \$ | 39 | 60 | 126 | 52 | 379 | 53 | 758 | 48 | 477 | 53 | 406 | 54 | 46 | 52 | 2231 | 51 |
| Current \$ | 8 | 12 | 37 | 15 | 107 | 15 | 234 | 15 | 119 | 13 | 103 | 14 | 20 | 23 | 628 | 14 |
| Less \$ | 15 | 23 | 72 | 30 | 208 | 29 | 536 | 34 | 271 | 30 | 210 | 28 | 21 | 24 | 1333 | 31 |
| No Opinion | 3 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 25 | 3 | 48 | 3 | 37 | 4 | 29 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 149 | 3 |
| No Response | | | | | | | 1 | 0 | | 0 | 1 | 0 | | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Total # | 65 | | 241 | | 719 | | 1577 | | 904 | | 749 | | 88 | | 4343 | |

Public Investment for PASSENGER Rail, by Annual Household Income

| | < \$10K | | \$10-25K | | \$25-\$50K | | \$50-\$100K | | \$100K+ | | Prefer not to | | No Response | | Total | |
|----------------|-----------|----|------------|----|------------|----|-------------|----|------------|----|---------------|----|-------------|----|-------------|----|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| More \$ | 32 | 49 | 110 | 46 | 269 | 37 | 566 | 36 | 335 | 37 | 278 | 37 | 33 | 38 | 1623 | 37 |
| Current \$ | 17 | 26 | 76 | 32 | 249 | 35 | 542 | 34 | 284 | 31 | 247 | 33 | 28 | 32 | 1443 | 33 |
| Less \$ | 8 | 12 | 28 | 12 | 94 | 13 | 233 | 15 | 129 | 14 | 100 | 13 | 14 | 16 | 606 | 14 |
| No Opinion | 8 | 12 | 27 | 11 | 107 | 15 | 235 | 15 | 156 | 17 | 123 | 16 | 13 | 15 | 669 | 15 |
| No Response | | | | | | | 1 | 0 | | 0 | 1 | 0 | | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Total # | 65 | | 241 | | 719 | | 1577 | | 904 | | 749 | | 88 | | 4343 | |

Public Investment for PASSENGER Rail, by Annual Household Income

| | < \$10K | | \$10-25K | | \$25-\$50K | | \$50-\$100K | | \$100K+ | | Prefer not to | | No Response | | Total | |
|----------------|-----------|----|------------|----|------------|----|-------------|----|------------|----|---------------|----|-------------|----|-------------|----|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| More \$ | 37 | 57 | 121 | 50 | 361 | 50 | 734 | 47 | 458 | 51 | 391 | 52 | 39 | 44 | 2141 | 49 |
| Current \$ | 10 | 15 | 27 | 11 | 78 | 11 | 195 | 12 | 94 | 10 | 98 | 13 | 15 | 17 | 517 | 12 |
| Less \$ | 14 | 22 | 82 | 34 | 242 | 34 | 573 | 36 | 294 | 33 | 220 | 29 | 28 | 32 | 1453 | 33 |
| No Opinion | 4 | 6 | 11 | 5 | 38 | 5 | 74 | 5 | 58 | 6 | 39 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 230 | 5 |
| No Response | | | | | | | 1 | 0 | | 0 | 1 | 0 | | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Total # | 65 | | 241 | | 719 | | 1577 | | 904 | | 749 | | 88 | | 4343 | |