

Wisconsin State Freight Plan

Public Involvement Plan

FINAL

November 6, 2015

This document is the final Public Involvement Plan (PIP) for the Wisconsin State Freight Plan and System-plan Environmental Evaluation (SEE), and incorporates input received during the 45 day comment period held in July and August, 2015.

Background

Enhancing freight mobility is a top priority for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT). Wisconsin's economy is heavily dependent on agriculture, forestry, mining, and manufacturing; current demand for freight services are increasing, and multimodal supply chains are becoming more and more interdependent. WisDOT's multimodal long-range plan, *Connections 2030*, does not provide sufficient freight-specific direction for the department given the complex and dynamic trends affecting the freight transportation industry in Wisconsin.

The *Wisconsin State Freight Plan* and SEE will be the first effort to develop one cohesive vision for an integrated and multimodal freight network. It will help Wisconsin improve its business climate, create jobs, open new markets, and grow the state's economic base.

Current federal surface transportation law, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), encourages states to prepare state freight plans. In order to achieve this, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is developing the *Wisconsin State Freight Plan*, a long-range plan focused on freight transportation.

The *Wisconsin State Freight Plan* will be results-driven, performance-based, and will include:

- A state vision for freight transportation into the future
- An overview and assessment of the state's existing freight infrastructure, including strengths and weaknesses
- Extensive outreach to and input from freight industry representatives including, but not limited to, Wisconsin's Freight Advisory Council (FAC)
- Extensive outreach to and input from Wisconsin residents, businesses, and freight-related stakeholder groups
- Documentation of current and proposed future policies that will guide WisDOT's freight planning, programming, and project development activities into the future
- Establishment of performance measures, performance targets, and performance management strategies that demonstrate the degree to which freight-related investments improve the performance of the freight transportation system
- Creation of a framework for harmonizing freight policy and goals between:
 - Federal and state freight initiatives

- Wisconsin and its neighboring states
- Local, regional, and metropolitan-level freight goals and state freight goals
- Investment strategies that tie freight mobility investments to economic development
- An environmental justice analysis of proposed plan recommendations
- A System-plan Environmental Evaluation (SEE)

The plan horizon will extend to the year 2040. The *Wisconsin State Freight Plan* will build upon existing WisDOT plans, policies and performance measures, but will go beyond previous planning efforts to analyze existing and proposed policies specific to freight.

Goals of the Wisconsin State Freight Plan Public Involvement Plan

Comprehensive public participation is crucial to the success of the *Wisconsin State Freight Plan and SEE*. To ensure broad-based public participation and awareness, WisDOT will:

- Ensure an open and inclusive process
- Educate the public about Wisconsin’s freight transportation system
- Provide opportunities for the public to participate in the planning process
- Facilitate dialogue between WisDOT, the general public and stakeholders to identify the critical issues facing the state’s freight system and develop policies to address these issues
- Schedule public meetings at times and locations that are both convenient and accessible to all people in Wisconsin including ethnic minority and low-income populations and Tribal governments
- Utilize new technologies such as social media and internet-based public involvement applications, including an interactive website with survey tools, Facebook, and other social media outlets, as appropriate.

Target Audience

All Wisconsin residents are encouraged to participate in the *Wisconsin State Freight Plan* planning process.

Outreach Phases

Public and Stakeholder outreach occurs at each of the three phases of plan development:

- Phase 1: Pre Draft plan and SEE development and needs identification
- Phase 2: Draft plan and SEE review
- Phase 3: Final plan and SEE adoption

Phase 1:

Outreach efforts during Phase 1 will focus on needs and issues identification. Efforts will consist of organizing contacts, planning stakeholder meetings, securing and constructing a dedicated website, designing and drafting freight-specific survey tools, and informing the public and stakeholders of the benefits of the *Wisconsin State Freight Plan*. Outreach to EJ populations and consultation with Tribal governments and environmental resource agencies is a key component of outreach in Phase 1. Appendix A describes WisDOT’s process for ongoing consultation with officials in non-metropolitan areas.

Phase 2:

Outreach efforts during Phase 2 will focus on releasing the draft plan and SEE with supporting documentation and outreach materials, and obtaining feedback through comments from the public and key stakeholders. During this phase, WisDOT will solicit feedback on the draft plan and SEE from EJ populations, tribal governments, and environmental resource agencies. To accomplish this, the department will release the draft *Wisconsin State Freight Plan* and SEE for public review and initiate a 45-day public comment period. When the comment period closes, the comments will be analyzed and the plan updated, as appropriate.

Phase 3:

Upon release of the draft final plan and SEE, WisDOT will publish notice of a 45-day public comment period and conduct a public hearing during the public comment period. After adoption of the final plan and SEE by the WisDOT Secretary, WisDOT will produce an executive summary document that highlights the planning process, results of the outreach efforts, and key components of the plan. The executive summary will be translated into Spanish.

Public Involvement Activities

Phase 1: Pre Draft Plan Development and Needs Identification

During the pre-draft phase of plan development, WisDOT will:

- Publish a Notice of Intent to prepare a long-range statewide freight transportation plan and SEE in the official state newspaper.
- Release proposed Public Involvement Plan for public comment. A notice will be published in the official state newspaper announcing the release and providing details of the comment period. A notice will also be published on the plan's website.
- Combine contact lists from previous planning efforts and freight activities into a master list. WisDOT staff will update the list to include individuals who want to be added and remove individuals when addresses are no longer valid. The master contact list will be updated on a continual basis and be used to keep stakeholders and interested parties informed of freight planning activities.
- Send an email and/or social media announcement to the list that development of the draft *Wisconsin State Freight Plan* has begun.
- Obtain a unique domain name for the *Wisconsin State Freight Plan* planning process. The website will be linked to WisDOT's homepage and will be updated regularly with plan development information, timeline, and meeting locations.
- Use an internet-based public involvement tool to share information about plan events and seek input from the public and stakeholders on a variety of topics in a user-friendly and visually engaging interactive format.
- Meet with key stakeholder groups via sessions open to the public, when possible. Wisconsin's Freight Advisory Committee will serve a critical role in providing input during plan development.
- Hold consultation meetings with federal and state (DNR, DATCP, etc.) agencies and tribal governments as required by MAP-21. (See next section for full discussion of consultation.)
- Hold at least three (3) focus group meetings with EJ populations to gain their input to development of the draft plan and SEE.
- Meet with regional, metropolitan, and local government officials to obtain their input prior to development of the draft plan and SEE.
- Use a process to collect, track and review all comments received. Comments requesting changes to the Plan and SEE will be reviewed for technical accuracy and considered for incorporation into the Plan or SEE.

Phase 2: Draft Plan Review

During the Draft Plan phase, WisDOT will:

- Conduct consultation and outreach with key stakeholder groups.
- Use Urban Interactive Studio, an innovative web-based application, to publish the draft plan and a summary document in a way that is visually stimulating, engaging, and intuitive.
- Establish a 45-day public comment period.
- Conduct at least 5 public meeting(s) throughout the state with at least one geographic location in each WisDOT region (Northwest, North Central, Northeast, Southeast and Southwest). Meetings will include presentation of the draft plan, system-plan environmental evaluation.
- Conduct at least 5 meetings with EJ populations throughout the state, holding at least one meeting in each WisDOT region.
- Meet with Tribal representatives to obtain their feedback on the draft plan and SEE.
- Follow up with MPO and RPC representatives to present the draft plan and obtain their feedback.
- Use visualization techniques, such as maps and charts, to illustrate the main goals of the plan.
- Use a process to collect, track and review all comments received. Comments requesting changes to the Plan and/SEE will be reviewed for technical accuracy and considered for incorporation into the Plan or SEE.
- Inform Wisconsin legislators of the draft plan recommendations.
- Provide presentations, upon request.
- Provide verbal and/or written translations, upon request.
- Inform the media.
- Document the comments received and WisDOT's response.

Individuals will have the opportunity to view the draft plan and SEE, as well as summary documents and other plan-related information at five public meetings, and comments may be submitted by email to bop.dtim@dot.wi.gov or in writing to: Wisconsin State Freight Plan, WisDOT Bureau of Planning and Economic Development, P.O. Box 7913, Rm 901, Madison, WI 53707-7913, or online at wisconsinfreightplan.gov

Phase 3: Final Plan Adoption

During the Final Plan Adoption phase, WisDOT will:

- Hold at least one public hearing on the final draft plan and SEE and provide notice to stakeholders, EJ populations, and tribal governments of the time and place of the hearing.
- Use a process to collect, track and review all comments received. Comments requesting changes to the Plan and SEE will be reviewed for technical accuracy and considered for incorporation into the Plan or SEE.
- Obtain approval by the WisDOT secretary to adopt the *Wisconsin State Freight Plan* and SEE.
- Publish the final, adopted plan and SEE on the Web site.
- Distribute copies of the final adopted plan and SEE to WisDOT Regional offices and various state depositories, per Wisconsin administrative code Trans 400. Copies will also be available upon request.
- Translate the final plan summary materials into Spanish.
- Provide written translations, upon request.
- Inform the media that the final plan has been adopted and has been posted on WisDOT's website.

Consultation with Tribal Governments, State and Federal Environmental Resource Agencies, Environmental Justice Populations, and Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Regional Planning Commissions

To develop the *Wisconsin State Freight Plan*, WisDOT will adhere to the coordination and consultation requirements defined under MAP-21.

Consultation is defined as respectful, effective communication in a cooperative process that works towards a consensus before a decision is made or an action is taken. Consultation means more than simply informing people and groups about department initiatives. It is a back and forth process to discuss issues and considerations; it is not a guarantee of agreement on outcomes. While dedicated to implementing constructive consultation practices, the department hopes to go beyond issue-specific consultation, with a goal of achieving mutually beneficial priorities, programs, and activities.

MAP-21 requires consultation with three groups: 1) non-metropolitan local officials; 2) federal, state and tribal environmental, regulatory, and resource agencies; and 3) freight transportation industry representatives and providers of freight transportation services. While all consultation processes apply to public involvement, the individual processes may be different.

Consultation with local officials in non-metropolitan areas is defined under 23 CFR 450.104, which states:

“One or more parties confer with other identified parties in accordance with an established process and, prior to taking action(s), considers the views of the other parties and periodically informs them about action(s) taken. This definition does not apply to ‘consultation’ performed by the States and the MPOs in comparing the long-range statewide transportation plan and the metropolitan transportation plan, respectively, to State and Tribal conservation plans or maps or inventories of natural and historic resources.”

Appendix A describes WisDOT’s process for ongoing consultation with officials in non-metropolitan areas and is included for reference.

MAP-21 requires consultation with Federal, State, and Tribal environmental, regulatory, and resource agencies in the development of statewide transportation plans. Specifically, consultation includes a comparison of transportation plans with conservation plans or maps, if available, and a comparison with inventories of natural and historic resources, if available (23 CFR 450.214(i)). MAP-21 also requires that the discussion of possible mitigation activities be developed in consultation with the above agencies. WisDOT will hold consultation meetings with federal, state environmental, regulatory and resource agencies, and tribal governments.

WisDOT will meet with Wisconsin’s 14 metropolitan planning organizations and nine regional planning commissions to ensure the *Wisconsin State Freight Plan* correctly reflects the recommendations identified in the MPO and RPC long-range transportation plans. WisDOT will either conduct separate meeting(s) with the MPOs and RPCs or include consultation activities as part of regularly scheduled quarterly MPO and RPC director meetings.

Finally, MAP-21’s language recommends that statewide freight plans include consultation with representatives from the freight transportation industry including: railroads, ports and waterway operators, air cargo operations, trucking representatives, pipelines, and other freight transportation service providers. MAP-21 also encourages state DOTs to form freight advisory committees as a method for fulfilling this consultation requirement. Wisconsin’s Freight Advisory Committee and regular freight industry outreach efforts will help WisDOT achieve this goal, and could include attending regular meetings of industry groups to address specific issue areas.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT/ACTIVITIES

Background

WisDOT's policy is to incorporate environmental justice in all planning, programming and projects decisions. As part of long range plan development, WisDOT will conduct an environmental justice analysis on the *Wisconsin State Freight Plan* and seek public input from a variety of stakeholders.

Environmental justice is focused around three principles:

- Avoid, minimize or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority and low-income populations.
- Ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- Prevent the denial of, reduction of or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

WisDOT will demonstrate its commitment to environmental justice by adhering to these principles throughout its planning activities and outreach during the development of the *Wisconsin State Freight Plan*.

Goals of EJ Activities

The specific goals of the *Wisconsin State Freight Plan* EJ activities include:

- Identifying EJ (minority and/or low-income) populations across the state
- Conducting an EJ analysis to determine if any of the plan's policies or actions result in significantly disproportionate impacts on EJ populations
- Conducting outreach to engage EJ populations in discussions regarding the *Wisconsin State Freight Plan*
- Building relationships with EJ populations

The EJ analysis will include GIS mapping and quantitative analysis techniques to compare concentrations of EJ populations with locations of freight facilities and WisDOT's potential future freight-related activities to ensure plan compliance with EJ principles

Because environmental justice activities include an outreach component, they are considered as part of the overall public involvement activities for the long range plan.

A combination of WisDOT and consultant staff will accomplish these tasks.

EJ Populations

Executive Order 12898 covers persons belonging to any of the following groups:

- Black – a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa
- Hispanic or Latino – a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
- Asian American – a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent
- American Indian & Alaskan Native – a person having origins in any of the original people of North America, South America, or Central America, and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander - people having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
- Low-Income – a person whose household income is at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines.

Methodology

The *Wisconsin State Freight Plan* is a statewide system plan. As a result, analysis and public outreach efforts are focused at the statewide system level. Public outreach efforts will include focused discussions around the state, with minority populations and low-income populations, on the plan's proposed policies and actions. When possible, WisDOT will use existing meetings of organizations that serve EJ populations locally. These organizations include, but are not limited to, the YMCA/YWCA, the League of United Latin American Citizens, Wisconsin Hmong Mutual Assistance Associations, and the Urban Leagues of Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha, Madison, and Beloit, Centro Hispano, and minority chambers of commerce.

To enhance participation of minority populations and low-income populations, efforts will be made to:

- Hold meetings at transit accessible locations (when available)
- Provide translators, upon request
- Translate the *Wisconsin State Freight Plan* fact sheets and executive summary into Spanish (other languages available, upon request)

Phase 1: Pre-draft Outreach Meetings

WisDOT will conduct at least three (3) EJ focused outreach meetings around the state in the following geographic areas:

- Milwaukee-Racine-Kenosha

- Eau Claire
- Janesville-Beloit

These meetings will likely be held in the fourth quarter of 2015 and first quarter of 2016. When possible, WisDOT will attempt to coordinate outreach with existing, regularly held meetings of local groups. Examples of existing meetings include the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission EJ Task Force, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Urban League, etc.

TRIBAL INVOLVEMENT/ACTIVITIES

WisDOT is committed to government-to-government consultation with Federally-recognized tribes on actions that affect identified tribal rights and issues. During the pre-draft phase of plan development, WisDOT will consult with the members of the eleven Federally-recognized tribes who have ancestral homelands within in Wisconsin. WisDOT will use regular meetings of groups such as WisDOT's Tribal Task Force and events such as the Tribal Transportation Conference, when possible, and will schedule additional meetings with tribal planning representatives as requested by WisDOT or by individual tribes. It is anticipated these meetings will be held in the fourth quarter of 2015 and first quarter of 2016.

Phase 2: Draft Plan Public Involvement meetings

It is anticipated the draft plan phase will commence in the summer and continue through fall 2016. After the draft plan and SEE have been developed and released for public comment, WisDOT will schedule up to five EJ-focused meetings throughout the state, with a goal of scheduling them in conjunction with the general public meetings. WisDOT will schedule at least one consultation meeting with Tribal representatives, with additional meetings upon request. This feedback will help WisDOT ensure that they have accurately represented the input from EJ populations in developing the draft plan, policies and actions.

During Phase 2, WisDOT will also meet with representatives from the tribal nations to present the draft plan and SEE and seek feedback on proposed policies and future actions. .

Phase 3: Final Plan and Adoption

WisDOT will hold three public hearings with the release of the draft Final Plan. Each will be held in a different geographic area of the state. WisDOT will publish notice of the public hearings on the final draft *Wisconsin State Freight Plan* and SEE and ensure that

freight stakeholders, EJ populations, and tribal governments are made aware of the hearing.

Meeting Accessibility

MAP-21 requires that to the maximum extent practicable, public meetings should be held at locations and times that are convenient for and accessible by all people including EJ populations and people with disabilities. Further, notice of public meetings and other forms of outreach will be provided through means that encourage participation by EJ populations (i.e., Freight Plan information sheets in local business or public venues).

Visualization Techniques

To the maximum extent possible, states are encouraged to use visualization techniques to describe the proposed long-range transportation plan. WisDOT will continue to use maps and graphics, whenever possible, in its planning processes. Other techniques may be used, if feasible.

Information Availability

WisDOT will create and update an exclusive website for the *Wisconsin State Freight Plan*, wisconsinfreightplan.gov. Draft and final printed materials will also be available upon request at Regional Offices throughout the state.

Appendix A

Documentation of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Process for Consultation with Local Officials in Non-Metropolitan Areas (2010)

Introduction

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) continually consults with local officials in areas of the state not served by metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). The central office in Madison and each of the five transportation Regional Offices have worked hard to develop strong relationships with local and tribal governments throughout Wisconsin.

In response to the FHWA final rule defining local consultation in areas not served by MPOs, WisDOT is submitting this document as a description and documentation of the agency's local consultation process. It also highlights successful practices from the central office and the transportation region offices and reviews the steps in the local consultation process for a few select WisDOT plans and programs. Lastly, it provides a description of the review process for this local consultation documentation and outlines the steps WisDOT will take to ensure the process is reevaluated in the future.

WisDOT's Non-Metropolitan Local Consultation Process

WisDOT's local consultation process is built upon a strong tradition of cooperation. For years, WisDOT has incorporated local governments and officials into the transportation planning and programming decision-making process. The agency has always been committed to working closely with local officials to understand and meet their transportation needs. WisDOT advises on, but does not set, local priorities.

WisDOT's existing planning process provides opportunities for statewide public input and review. This extensive outreach effort continues as WisDOT develops its current freight transportation plan, *Wisconsin State Freight Plan*. Information regarding *Wisconsin State Freight Plan* is available online or by contacting the WisDOT Bureau of Planning and Economic Development (BPED). Information regarding previous planning efforts and/or the STIP is also available by contacting WisDOT's Bureau of Planning and Economic Development.

Consultation with Tribal Governments

WisDOT, the Wisconsin Division of FHWA, and Wisconsin's eleven Federally-recognized tribes entered into a partnership agreement to "create and define processes by which WisDOT and FHWA will work in collaboration with Wisconsin's eleven sovereign Indian

Nations. This agreement is designed to acknowledge and support the government-to-government relationship between tribes and state and federal agencies and to support American Indian sovereignty.” As part of the partnership agreement, WisDOT has established a WisDOT Tribal Task Force that includes representatives from WisDOT, FHWA and each individual tribe. Part of the task force’s goal is to create a document that defines tribal consultation for both projects and planning.

WisDOT will consult with tribes who have ancestral homelands within the state boundaries on all decisions that may affect tribal rights and interests in regard to long and short range transportation planning. WisDOT is committed to government-to-government consultation with tribes on actions that affect identified tribal rights and issues.

Consultation means respectful, effective communication in a cooperative process that works towards a consensus, before a decision is made or an action is taken. Consultation means more than simply informing affected tribes about what the department is planning to do. WisDOT acknowledges that consultation is a process, not a guarantee of agreement on outcomes. While dedicated to implementing constructive consultation practices, the department hopes to go beyond issue-specific consultation. The goal is to achieve mutually beneficial priorities, programs and interests.

Given the number of tribes, the extent of tribally reserved rights, and the size and complexity of WisDOT, the department may not be able to identify in advance all issues that may be appropriate subjects for tribal consultation. However, WisDOT will begin the planning consultation process, as follows:

- 1) The Bureau of Planning and Economic Development and the WisDOT tribal liaison shall review tribal long-range transportation plan documents whenever WisDOT and/or a tribe update their respective long-range transportation plan.
- 2) When WisDOT is developing a long-range transportation plan, the WisDOT Bureau of Planning and Economic Development will hold:
 - a. A meeting with representatives from the tribal planning departments of all 11 tribal Nations in Wisconsin, planning representatives from each WisDOT region, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and FHWA, to discuss the transportation issues and needs
 - b. A statewide follow-up meeting to discuss the draft plan
 - c. A meeting at any other time as requested by individual tribes or WisDOT

- 3) WisDOT shall hold one regional planning meeting annually in each WisDOT transportation region with tribes located within that region. The meeting shall focus on short-range and specific planning goals within WisDOT's Six-Year Highway Improvement Program.

Highlights from the Local Consultation Processes in WisDOT Regions

For years, WisDOT's central office and five transportation regions have been very successful in consulting with local officials regardless of whether or not they were served by MPOs. The following section highlights examples of these local consultation efforts. Not all of the listed functions are performed in every region, as the level of consultation can vary depending on region size, number of local officials, local need, etc.

Planning Studies and Land Use Issues:

- Creating advisory committees, work groups, expert panels, websites, newsletters, and brochures (committees include professional staff, municipal representatives, local leaders, and other interested parties)
- Assisting local officials in developing long-range comprehensive plans, including discussion of local and regional land use, transportation, and access management
- Assisting local officials with the transportation element of their comprehensive plans
- Working with consultants on public involvement issues, including organizing meetings and focus groups
- Developing a Local Program Guidebook that outlines the various state and federal programs (acting as a reference for evaluating projects for funding eligibility)

Six-Year Highway Improvement Program:

- In consultation with WisDOT Regional staff, organizing meetings with county highway committees to review program additions, and any changes in the schedule of the projects
- Discussing potential candidate projects with cities, counties and tribes
- Staffing local meetings to answer any questions regarding process or projects
- Distributing the Six-Year Highway Improvement Program to county clerks throughout the state
- Maintaining a Six-Year Highway Improvement Program website and providing a contact for questions regarding the program

Local Program Notification:

- Providing Surface Transportation Program-Urban notification and statewide eligibility criteria for all eligible municipalities with populations between 5,000 and 50,000 vying for statewide projects
- Providing Bridge and Surface Transportation Program-Rural notification and statewide eligibility criteria to county highway commissioners, who set priorities within their regions and vie for projects statewide
- Notifying local jurisdictions of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program funding availability in eligible non-attainment areas of the state (SE and portions of NE Wisconsin)
- Conducting local program forums throughout the state to provide information on various state and federal programs at the local level
- Participating in statewide local association conferences and conventions to provide information on various state and federal programs available to local communities
- After project approval, regional project development staff and management consultants coordinate with local officials to ensure completion of the project from design to construction

Other Local Consultation Practices:

- Working with the state's local associations (Wisconsin Counties Association, Wisconsin Towns Association, Urban Alliance and League of Wisconsin Municipalities) on major policy issues, funding formulas and related topics for federal and state funded local improvement and assistance programs
- Involving local officials in the project development process
- Working with the regional planning commissions, cities and counties to stay informed on local issues
- Responding to requests by local governments to attend various meetings
- Participating in quarterly Safety Commission meetings
- Holding meetings with county highway commissioners to discuss topics such as programming and schedules for state trunk highway improvement and maintenance projects
- Holding meetings on corridor planning projects, access management issues, or major highway development issues that could ultimately impact program delivery
- Consulting with local officials during the enumeration and scheduling of projects ahead of letting
- Partnering, educating and training county highway commissioners and other local officials with regard to state funded Local Roads Improvement Program guidelines, policies, applications and other key information

- Consulting with local officials with regard to state funded Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA) projects during initial application and construction
- Coordinating access management and local road connection issues with various municipalities. This coordination includes direct contact or attendance at public meetings

The Local Consultation Process for Select WisDOT Programs and Plans

The following section briefly lays out the steps in the local consultation process for some of WisDOT's major programs and statewide transportation plans.

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP):

WisDOT's public involvement activities for the STIP are very extensive. Opportunities for the public to comment on local projects and programs before they become part of the final STIP are promoted and maximized. In brief, the public outreach for STIP contains the following major components:

1. Statewide 30-day public comment period
2. State highway system program hearings¹
3. Local informational meetings and public hearings for the Six-Year Highway Improvement Program including:
 - Meetings with local officials and the public in their communities to obtain project requests, understand local needs, and address local concerns
 - Meetings to inform the public of the proposed Six-Year Highway Improvement Program and the range of modal alternatives that were explored in its formation, and to receive comments on its projects
 - Public hearings every two years in each WisDOT transportation region to elicit public comment on the program and the range of modal alternatives
4. Small urban centers and rural transit program and project hearings
5. Local project hearings

WisDOT notifies stakeholders, the general public, MPOs and RPCs that the draft STIP is available on our website. A 30-day opportunity to provide WisDOT with any comments for final STIP incorporation is offered. This outreach is conducted on an annual basis.

Ultimately, from conception to completion, all transportation projects and programs included in STIP benefit from significant local input.

¹ In some regions, hearing may be informal.

Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP):

In addition to federal improvement programs, LRIP is a state-funded entitlement and discretionary program provided by WisDOT and targeted specifically to aid local units of government with improvements to their roads. The program includes the following six components:

- County Highway Improvement Program (CHIP)
- Town Road Improvement Program (TRIP)
- Municipal Street Improvement Program (MSIP)
- County Highway Improvement Discretionary Program (CHIP-D) for high-cost county projects
- Town Road Improvement Discretionary Program (TRIP-D) for high-cost town projects
- Municipal Street Improvement Discretionary Program (MSIP-D) for high-cost municipal projects

In general, the steps in the local consultation process include:

1. Working with local association leadership on program policies and elements
2. Notification to local jurisdictions of program eligibility and funding availability, as solicited by each WisDOT region office, is coordinated statewide with county highway commissioners who play an integral role in program implementation and implementation
3. Local review, prioritization and selection of projects
4. Project selection by groups made up of:
 - Town road committees and municipal street committees for municipalities with populations less than 20,000. Counties and municipalities with populations over 20,000 select their own projects (LRIP entitlement projects – CHIP, MSIP, TRIP).
 - Statewide committee consisting of six Wisconsin Towns Association district directors and six members at large (TRIP-D).
 - Statewide advisory committee consisting of members of the League of Wisconsin Municipalities and the Wisconsin Alliance of Cities (MSIP-D).
 - Committees established in each of the five Transportation Regions made up of all county highway commissioners within the region. (CHIP-D).

The discretionary components each have distinct regional and statewide processes for project review, selection and recommendation for approval. Eligibility is based on community type. Detailed information is available on WisDOT's website at: wisconsindot.gov/freightplan.

The Local Transportation Programs and Finance Section of WisDOT's Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Railroads and Harbors manage all local highway, bridge and multi-modal programs other than Scenic Byways and TEA. These various programs provide funding for specific projects.

Modal and Multimodal Plan Development:

Since 1994, WisDOT has developed multimodal transportation plans and a number of other modal plans. Throughout the development of these plans, WisDOT works with local jurisdictions to ensure their input is included in the plan development process. A similar process is being followed in the development of the department's new multimodal plan, *Wisconsin State Freight Plan*. In brief, the steps in the planning process include:

- Extensive public outreach including informational meetings and presentations to groups such as:
 - Chambers of commerce
 - Town associations
 - MPOs and RPCs
 - Environmental advocacy groups
 - Local governments
 - Tribal governments

- Development of plan alternatives with Bureau of Technical Services consultation
- Additional public outreach to garner comments on alternatives
- Development of draft plan
- Draft plan outreach meetings and teleconferences throughout state
- Development of final plan
- Public hearing on final plan
- Adoption by WisDOT Secretary

Review of WisDOT Local Consultation Process Documentation

This document has been distributed to, and reviewed by, numerous associations, agencies, commissions and organizations throughout the state. Revisions were made based on comments received. The list of reviewers included:

- WisDOT management and staff
- WisDOT regions
- Wisconsin Towns Association
- Wisconsin Counties Association
- League of Wisconsin Municipalities
- MPOs and RPCs serving affected areas of the State

In general, comments received during the development of previous plans were positive. Additionally, they backed WisDOT's position that its consultation process with local officials in areas of the state that are not served by MPOs is comprehensive and appropriate.

Future Evaluation Process

WisDOT will continue to review and improve the local consultation process. This effort is not intended to be a one-time occurrence. The department is committed to continuing its efforts to improve and update its process to achieve its goal of ensuring that all local entities in areas not served by MPOs have sufficient input in the transportation planning process. To make sure the local consultation process remains current and effective, WisDOT will:

- Periodically request comments on the process from towns and counties associations, municipal leagues, MPOs, RPCs, local and tribal governments, and the LSRC.
- Internally assess the success of various tools and techniques used to acquire input. Assessments may address the level of input, the type of input received and/or the role the input had in the process.
- Continue to monitor best practice activities developed in Wisconsin and around the country. WisDOT will implement best practices that are applicable and relevant for our activities.
- Review and solicit comments for at least 60 days at least once every five years.
- Apply the process to both statewide planning and STIP
- Integrate questions about the consultation process into our current outreach efforts with transportation stakeholders, community groups, tribal governments and the general public in order to periodically reevaluate the process.

Summary

WisDOT believes its demonstrated process of consulting with local officials meet the requirements of the FHWA rule. WisDOT's practices have been very successful over the years, and therefore, will remain in place. As mentioned, WisDOT will continually monitor its local consultation activities to ensure the process remains current and successful.