



WHRP

**Wisconsin Highway Research Program
2016-2020 Strategic Plan**

April 2015

Wisconsin Highway Research Program Strategic Plan 2016-2020

Mission:

Facilitate the identification, execution and implementation of applied research to address the current and future needs of Wisconsin's transportation system

Vision:

WHRP-sponsored research that provides transportation professionals with innovative solutions to deliver a safer, more durable, efficient and affordable Wisconsin transportation system.

Values:

- **Accountability** – Being individually and collectively responsible for providing quality, cost-effective and value-added solutions to our partners and the public.
- **Collaboration** – Creating a collaborative environment between the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, universities, the construction industry and consultants through communication and teamwork.
- **Excellence** – Providing quality applied research through innovation and constant improvement.
- **Integrity** – Building trust and confidence in all relationships through honesty, a positive attitude and respect.

Goal 1: Streamline the research cycle

Strategy – Improve project scoping

- Action: Conduct literature searches in early stages to avoid duplication and leverage other research.
- Action: Develop better (i.e., more clear) definition(s) of research problem(s).
- Action: Identify any special needs (e.g., field testing, traffic control, use of special DOT equipment) up front.
- Action: Include potential for implementation in scoping – anticipate and include where results are expected to be used (e.g., standards, specification changes, etc.).

Strategy – Improve project management

- Action: Conduct Lean project of research cycle.
- Action: Add a check back to the scope during the course of the research.
- Action: Explore project management tools (e.g., develop checklist for project management for project oversight committees (POCs).
- Action: Define roles and responsibilities of POCs.

Strategy – Shorten existing research cycle

- Action: Conduct Lean project of research cycle.
- Action: Align research cycle with other related cycles (e.g., academic calendars and availability of graduate students, funding availability).
- Explore dual research cycles (including a fast track cycle).

Goal 2: Ensure timely implementation of valid research findings

Strategy – Define implementation process

- Action: Form a work group to define WHRP roles and responsibilities for implementation.
- Action: Have technical oversight committees (TOCs) hand off research findings to an individual champion or functional areas identified in the research process.
- Action: Add an implementation topic to the TOC meeting agenda framework.
- Action: Communicate to proposers in RFPs anticipated standards or specification changes, etc., and ask them to include implementation items related to those items in their responses to the proposal.

Strategy – Evaluate roadblocks

- Action: Identify roadblocks (e.g., legislation, cost-benefit, policy, technology, pilot planning budget, support, procedures) to implementation during scoping.
- Action: Begin to analyze future projects to identify and categorize roadblocks.

Strategy – Engage internal and external partners in implementation

- Action: Identify and involve key personnel in closeout presentation.
- Action: Establish a 6- and 12-month post-closeout check in with “implementers.”
- Action: Engage Wisconsin members of relevant standards committees (e.g., American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials).
- Action: Present findings at professional conferences.
- Action: Communicate with the Federal Highway Administration, as needed.

Goal 3: Develop and strengthen partnerships

Strategy – Enhance existing partnerships and identify gaps

- Action: Conduct a survey to identify gaps, identify needs and evaluate impediments to partnerships (e.g., industry, professional engineers, Wisconsin universities, new WisDOT engineering staff, WisDOT regional staff).

Strategy: Communicate the value of WHRP

- Action: Define roles and responsibilities.
- Action: Develop a communications plan to enhance visibility, include new strategies for communication (e.g., social media, regional communication managers, press releases).
- Action: Develop a brand.

Goal 4: Leverage Funding Resources

Strategy – Explore matching funds

- Action: Explore pooled fund options.
- Action: Explore other national grant programs (e.g., National Academies of Sciences, National Cooperative Highway Research Program, Transportation Research Board).
- Action: Explore national private foundation grants.
- Action: Explore using private funding as a match.
- Action: Investigate the matching fund policies of other states’ research programs.

Strategy – Improve management of current funds

- Action: Improved tracking of available funds (i.e., budget vs. expenditures).
- Action: Develop a list of contingency projects when “use it or lose it” funding is available.