

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

**Public Involvement
Best Practices**

Draft – July 12, 2012



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INTRODUCTION

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) Public Involvement Best Practices document and [matrix](#) provide a review of various public involvement (PI) tools used for transportation projects. They include recommendations on the use of each tool based on an evaluation of costs, benefits and challenges, along with an assessment of the relevance of each tool during the environmental, design and construction phases and whether the tool is most appropriate for standard, high profile or mega projects. The document and [matrix](#) were developed to support department efforts to 'right-size' public involvement processes and costs for transportation projects. The overall goal is to streamline the public involvement planning process, provide a framework to make sure we're using the most effective outreach tools and reduce costs.

FUNCTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Each project is different and the PI approach depends on the specific needs and demands of the project. It is not cost-effective for the department to assign an across-the-board dollar range for PI for projects. A better approach is to use the Public Involvement Best Practices document and [matrix](#) as a functional framework to help review the PI needs of the project, consider the various tools available to meet those needs and then establish a budget range for public involvement activities. There is no expectation that a project will make use of the various tools – some may use only one or two low-cost items.

There is a need for flexibility in the public involvement process to account for different needs during the various stages and to account for unexpected activities/contingencies. Therefore, it is recommended that a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) be developed at the beginning of the study phase before a consultant contract is negotiated. An updated PIP should be developed before final design and construction.

- Step 1: Work in coordination with the communication manager to build a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) at the beginning of the study phase before a consultant contract is negotiated.
- Step 2: Review tools that were used and the costs for other similar projects. Select those that will most effectively achieve PI goals for the identified target audiences.
- Step 3: Set a budget range for public involvement activities.
- Step 4: Remain flexible and allow for some contingencies or unexpected needs. An updated PIP should be developed before moving into final design and construction.

SUMMARY OF PI TOOLS

There is a broad-based shift in the way people are consuming and interacting with media in their daily lives. Consumers of media are largely shifting to mobile platforms and electronic media, and public involvement efforts need to respond accordingly. As a result, Public Involvement Best Practices recommends:

- Eliminating the use of some traditional, costly forms of outreach such as project hotlines, media inserts, print and television advertising.
- Minimizing the routine use of neighborhood specialists and focusing on collecting email contact information for future correspondence.
- Expanding the use of newer tools and technologies such as:
 - Gearing PI towards handheld devices/smartphones, including use of Quick Response (QR) codes
 - Building project websites, social media sites and using email or text blasts
 - Allowing business advertising free-of-charge on the project website as part of In This Together
 - Webcasting public meetings or creating web streaming or videos on high interest topics

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TOOLS

This section highlights the tools that were evaluated by WisDOT's public involvement best practices team.

OUTREACH STRATEGIES

Public Involvement Plan

Application

A public involvement plan (PIP) should be completed at the start of all projects to outline goals and objectives and strategies to achieve the goals. A PIP should be updated annually to reflect the outreach needs of the current project phase and to evaluate how well the goals and objectives are being met.

Benefits

A PIP is an effective way to strategically determine the types of outreach that are needed for a project by identifying affected stakeholders and public concerns early on. A PIP helps allocate resources in a strategic manner and provides a mechanism to measure progress against goals and objectives. Developing an annual public involvement summary will help demonstrate the effectiveness of the PIP and identify new efforts for the upcoming year.

Challenges

The PIP should be tailored for each project to avoid getting caught in a 'one-size fits all' approach. This can be avoided by carefully researching the types of concerns the public will have at the beginning of the project. Early coordination meetings with stakeholders can help frame the issues that will require the most attention.

The audience and the project budget must be carefully considered before recommending strategies. If the budget is not adequate and additional dollars are not available, then the PIP should identify lower-cost options that will provide the most value to stakeholders. Higher-cost options may still be feasible if they provide efficiencies throughout the project.

The effectiveness of a PIP can be difficult to measure. For example, the number of meetings held provides a measure of effectiveness, but does not speak to whether the information at the meetings was conveyed in a manner that could be easily understood by the public. Identifying performance measures early on will help form consensus among the project team on what constitutes success.

Recommendation

The team recommends writing a yearly PIP as a best practice. A PIP helps to manage the expectations of the public and helps evaluate the effectiveness of the outreach activities.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

A PIP is typically considered a lower cost item with few direct costs. However, staff time is required to develop, update and evaluate the PIP on an annual basis.

Relevant Phases: Environmental Preliminary design Final design Construction

A PIP should be in place for all project phases and should reflect appropriate outreach tools for each phase.

Project Types: Standard High profile Mega

A PIP will benefit all project types by providing a strategic direction for outreach activities. The size and complexity of the PIP will change depending on the project's type.

PROJECT IDENTITY

Branding

Application

A brand creates an identity for a project that is more than a look or feel, but a voice that remains consistent throughout all project communications. Project logos, color palettes and typologies help to reinforce the brand and provide consistent and easily-identifiable project materials. The brand is reflected in all project communications that are viewed by the public including advertisements, websites, presentations and print materials. A booklet with design guidelines is typically created to show how to apply the brand consistently.



Benefits

A project brand establishes a project image and helps shape the look and feel of project materials. A brand distinguishes a project, which helps to get the public's attention. Also, the brand helps the public recognize legitimate project information materials and provides a consistent-looking image.

Challenges

Branding a project creates an identity separate from WisDOT which could lead to confusion by the public.

Large projects typically involve multiple organizations including various WisDOT staff and consultants. As a result, it can be difficult to make sure the brand is applied appropriately by the project team especially if the entity that created the brand is no longer actively engaged on the project. As the complexity of the brand increases, the more likely the identity and graphic unity wavers from its original intention.

Advertising/marketing firms tend to insist on conducting market research prior to creating a brand, which increases the cost of brand development.

Recommendation

The team recommends the use of branding as a best practice because it sets the stage for all project communications. Future projects should consider using CSS for future branding work. The team also advises coordinating with other statewide efforts for market research.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

Branding usually incurs an upfront cost at the start of a project, but is used throughout the life of the project. Costs are incurred again as elements are edited, changed, or as new campaigns arise.

Relevant Phases: Environmental Preliminary design Final design Construction

It is helpful to establish a brand as early as possible so the public learns to identify the brand with the project throughout the life of the project.

Project Types: Standard High profile Mega

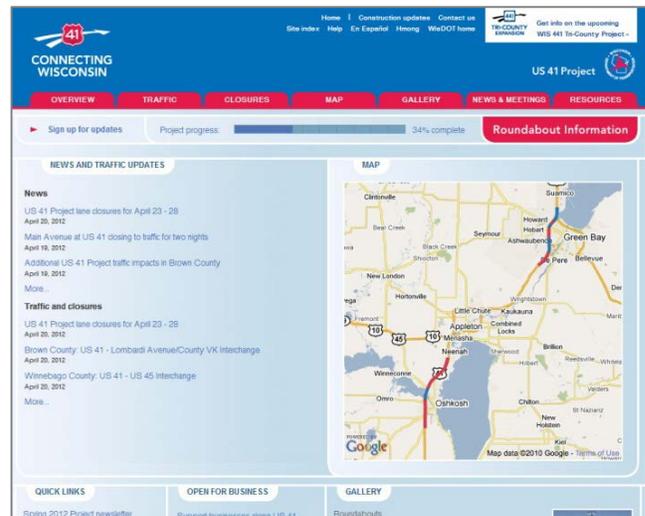
Branding efforts have typically been developed for Mega Projects. The WisDOT brand should be used for standard and high profile projects.

WEB-BASED TOOLS

Project Websites

Application

WisDOT oversees and manages an outside vendor contracted to develop and maintain a website that is created for an individual project. Project websites provide information about the project including schedules, design plans, contact information and other project informational materials. Websites are also used to gather public input and may contain a listserv to collect email and mail information from interested persons. During the construction phase, websites communicate traffic impacts, closures and alternate route information. More sophisticated websites can provide tools that provide driving directions around scheduled closures within the project limits.



Benefits

Websites provide the public with a single source of timely and accurate project information and provide a forum for public feedback. Websites are nearly always accessible to the public and satisfy the public's expectation to obtain information immediately. Websites can be updated frequently to reflect ongoing project activities and are well-suited for posting traffic impacts and closures during construction.

The effectiveness of various website copy and layouts can be tested and measured for different audiences. WisDOT can also track website use and make adjustments to present and position content in the best way.

Websites provide a cost effective way of displaying informational materials because they cut down on the need to print and mail information to large numbers of people. Additionally, meeting materials can be displayed on project websites which gives the public the opportunity to view materials at their convenience.

As more users switch to hand-held devices, a companion mobile website can increase the effectiveness of providing Web-based information.

Challenges

Websites take substantial resources to create and maintain with up-to-date information. Adequate resources must be allocated throughout the duration of the project. Projects also need to be careful to not rely solely on the website to distribute project information and obtain feedback because some stakeholders do not have access to the Internet. Additionally, market trends indicate people are spending less time on personal computers and more time on hand-held devices, increasing the need for high-quality mobile sites.

Recommendation

The team recommends the use of project websites within the determined 511 template. A project needs to allocate sufficient resources to set up initial pages, provide graphics support and maintain the content as long as the website is in use.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

Websites can be expensive due to upfront costs for developing the site and the ongoing hosting fees and staffing resources to maintain content. However, websites create efficiencies by minimizing the amount of printing and mailing that would otherwise be required for a project.

Relevant Phases: Environmental Preliminary design Final design Construction

Planning for a website, including research and strategy, should begin well before the construction phase begins, so users are aware of the website resource prior to construction.

Project Types: Standard High profile Mega

Project websites should typically be reserved for Mega Projects, but can also be used for high profile projects if warranted and resources are available.

Social Media Sites (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube)

Application

Social media sites including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube provide WisDOT with additional web-based tools that are growing in popularity. For social media sites, WisDOT provides oversight and management of the sites that are developed and maintained by an outside vendor. The vendor coordinates with WisDOT to develop messages that are uploaded to Facebook or 'tweeted' to users.

Links to articles and press releases can be posted to Facebook and Twitter, and Facebook Events can be used to announce upcoming public meetings. Videos can be very effective in Facebook as they tend to earn more comments, shares and 'likes' than static or text-only content. YouTube is effective for posting project animations or informational videos.



Benefits

Social media sites provide a direct connection to media and stakeholders who are instantly notified of new content including project status updates and traffic impacts. Social media sites give users a forum for asking questions and allow users to engage with content. This turns WisDOT into an approachable entity, which increases the likelihood that users will return and share the content with their friends.

Social media sites allow WisDOT to obtain statistics on who is viewing the message and if it is being forwarded to other users. Facebook offers a large amount of free information about those who visit a page including the user's age, location and interests. This information provides insights to the targeted audience and helps determine if a demographic group is being missed.

Social media sites are ideally suited for internet-capable hand-held devices, which is important as their use continues to increase.

Challenges

Social media sites will need designated staff to constantly manage and update accounts and respond to comments. Appropriate resources should be allocated to projects that use social media sites.

WisDOT currently blocks staff from viewing social media sites. WisDOT staff involved in managing content will need to be unblocked from the sites.

There are practical constraints limiting the use of smartphones while driving.

Recommendation

The team strongly recommends the use of social media sites in tandem with WisDOT's 'Stay Connected' site. An upcoming social media peer exchange hosted by Wisconsin will help identify other states' best practices.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

There is no direct cost to use social media sites, but substantial staff time has to be allocated to develop content and respond to public inquiries throughout the duration of the project.

Relevant Phases: Environmental Preliminary design Final design Construction

Social media sites can be used during all project phases. During the environmental and design phases social media can focus on obtaining public feedback and during the final design and construction phases social media should focus on project updates and traffic impacts.

Project Types: Standard High profile Mega

Social media is typically used only for Mega Projects. However, social media sites could be used for high profile projects if staff and resources are available to maintain the sites.

E-blasts

Application

E-blasts are brief messages sent to a list of email addresses that have been collected for a project. WisDOT project staff develops messages and provides content to an outside vendor who manages the email database and Lyrus / Mail Chimp account and distributes the content. WisDOT collects email addresses from sign-in sheets, door to door outreach efforts, and from the project website and then forwards the email addresses to the vendor.

Benefits

E-blasts are a relatively low-cost method to instantaneously deliver messages directly to stakeholders who have expressed an interest in the project. E-blasts are used most frequently for sending out traffic alerts during the construction phase.

Challenges

Maintaining a sound list of emails is essential for E-blasts to be effective. Maintaining the list can be time-consuming as email addresses change when stakeholders are added or 'opt out' of the list or when email addresses are decommissioned. WisDOT and vendors may be required to utilize the Lyrus database system, which requires training.

Recommendation

The team recommends using E-blasts as an effective best practice tool. Consider using Mail Chimp (or a similar product) to allow distribution of 12,000 emails per month to a list of up to 2,000 subscribers.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

E-blasts are relatively low cost, but will require ongoing resources to manage the database and develop content for messages.

Relevant Phases: Environmental Preliminary design Final design Construction

E-blasts can be used during any project phase, but the frequency of E-blasts will increase during the construction phase as traffic impacts are communicated to the public.

Project Types: Standard High profile Mega

E-blasts are typically used for high profile and Mega Projects.

PAID MEDIA

Radio Live Reads and Produced Spots

Application

Radio live reads and produced spots are used to disseminate information about a project that will affect a large number of people. Also, radio spots could be used to get information to an environmental justice population that is known to listen to a specific radio station.

Benefits

Radio reaches a wide audience and can target specific drive times and demographics. Radio spots are effective for announcing construction activities and encouraging people to go to the project website to obtain the latest construction information.

Challenges

Radio spots require WisDOT to hire an advertising firm to produce and place the advertisements. There's a relatively short timeframe to get the message across and limited control over how the spots are run. Radio stations may play multiple runs of the advertisement within a very short time period, which may not be the most effective application of the ads.

Recommendation

The team strongly recommends using radio advertisements to saturate targeted audiences during the project's construction phase when impacts are the greatest.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

The cost of radio advertisements includes the cost to produce the spot as well as the cost to run the ad on the radio station. The costs will vary depending on the station and the market location.

Relevant Phases: Environmental Preliminary design Final design Construction

Radio advertisements are used during the construction phase to prepare the public for major traffic impacts.

Project Types: Standard High profile Mega

Radio advertisements are most appropriate for Mega Projects.

Television Advertisements

Application

Television advertisements are typically used to announce a construction project that will affect a region by causing major traffic delays.

Benefits

A television advertisement reaches a wide audience and informs drivers before traveling. It is also effective at telling a longer more in-depth story in comparison to online ads and can be used to advertise a project website.

Challenges

Television advertisements can be expensive and it is difficult to gauge their effectiveness due to TiVo and DVR systems. WisDOT needs to hire an advertising firm to produce and place the advertisements on television.

Recommendation

The team recommends discontinuing the use of produced television advertisements. Instead, projects should focus on working with news stations to secure regular updates and exploring cable TV opportunities.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

The costs of television advertisements vary depending on market, but are typically expensive to produce and place on the air.

Relevant Phases: Environmental Preliminary design Final design Construction

If television ads are used, they should be reserved for the construction phase.

Project Types: Standard High profile Mega

Television advertisements are most appropriate for Mega Projects if deemed necessary.

Print Ads

Application

Print ads are typically run in community or multi-cultural papers and can range from a simple one column ad that advertises a public meeting to a full page ad that addresses a unique aspect about a project such as how to drive roundabouts.

Benefits

Print ads typically are less costly than television or radio ads and are able to target specific publications and demographics. Print ads are valuable at reaching people who do not use the internet or who do not have an internet connection. Additionally, print ads are effective at alerting audiences to an upcoming cable appearance or meeting and driving readers to the project website, text message service or social media site.

Challenges

The effectiveness of print ads is decreasing as readers switch from hard copies to online sources. Running print ads in large papers can be expensive.

Recommendation

The team recommends using print ads in community-specific and multi-cultural papers when input is most critical during a project's environmental and design phases, and discontinuing print ads during the project's construction phase.

CONNECTING WISCONSIN

Learn about your highway

Please join us for a public information meeting about the US 41 Project between Memorial Drive and Lineville Road (County M). Topics will include current design alternatives, upcoming planning, engineering and environmental studies.

Wednesday March 3, 2010

5 p.m. - 7 p.m. PRESENTATION 5:15 p.m.

Bay View Middle School
Commons and Auditorium
1217 Cardinal Lane

QUESTIONS?
(920) 492-4109
Kris Schuller

PROJECT MANAGER
(920) 492-4120

WWW.US41WISCONSIN.GOV

To request interpretation services for the hearing/panel, please call 214, the Wisconsin Relay and Captioning System, at least three working days prior to the hearing and the communication coordinator to contact Kris Schuller at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation at (920) 492-4109.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

Print ads are typically less costly in small community papers and in multi-cultural papers, but are more costly in larger newspapers. The size of the ad will also influence the price.

Relevant Phases: Environmental Preliminary design Final design Construction

Print ads could be used in the environmental and design phases, but are less effective during the construction phase.

Project Types: Standard High profile Mega

Print ads could be used for any project type.

Digital Banner Ads

Application

Digital banner ads are placed with online media sources. They are typically used to advertise public meetings and to drive people to the project website and social media profiles.



Benefits

Digital banner ads provide a high level of analytical information and allow WisDOT to track the number of impressions and clicks. Digital banner ads are effective at encouraging people to click-through to the project website with the latest information. The ads can be placed on a range of websites to target specific stakeholder groups. Digital banner ads can be pulled or swapped on short notice.

Challenges

Trends show that the numbers of people clicking on banner ads are declining as more ads appear online. Also, some users disregard online ads.

Recommendation

The team recommends the use of digital banners as a best practice when the demographics suit the technique.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

The costs range depending on the market and the size of the ad. Production costs increase with animation.

Relevant Phases: Environmental Preliminary design Final design Construction

Digital banner ads are appropriate for all project phases to advertise meetings, but may be most effective during the construction phase to drive people to the project website.

Project Types: Standard High profile Mega

Digital banner ads are most appropriate for high profile and Mega Projects.

FREE MEDIA

News Releases

Application

News releases announce information about a project and are used to encourage the media to report on certain topics. News releases are prepared for a variety reasons including meeting announcements, traffic impacts, and

construction milestones. WisDOT posts the news release on their website or the project website and distributes it to a list of media sources.

Benefits

News releases distribute information directly to targeted media and enables WisDOT to proactively convey the message in an accurate and timely manner.

Challenges

To be effective, the media must pick up news releases. Experience has shown that news releases for long-term traffic impacts are rarely picked up by the media. Also, most stakeholders do not monitor WisDOT's website for news releases. News releases are not well suited for communicating detailed project information which can be overwhelming and change frequently.

Recommendation

The team recommends discontinuing weekly news releases related to construction activities. Instead, major traffic impacts and events should be communicated via traffic alerts that are posted on the website and social media tools. News releases should still be used to advertise public meetings especially during the environmental and design phases.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

News releases do not have any direct costs associated with their distribution, but require staff time to prepare.

Relevant Phases: Environmental Preliminary design Final design Construction

The team suggests discontinuing weekly news releases. News releases should be used in the environmental and design phases and limited during the construction phase as they tend to be less effective for communicating traffic impacts.

Project Types: Standard High profile Mega

News releases could be used for any project type.

Cable Public Access Shows

Application

For this tool, WisDOT would partner with local public access cable stations to create a forum for discussing the project. Some cities have a public access channel used to broadcast government programming such as city council, plan commission and board of education meetings as well as other government-related information, which could be used to display project information.

Benefits

Air time on cable TV is less expensive than network television and typically allows a more in-depth conversation about the project or an element of the project. This tool is most effective when local municipalities or organizations are already using public access channels to broadcast local information.

Challenges

The downside to cable access channels is that it may only reach a small number of viewers who watch public access versus the large number of people who watch network TV. Also, not all stakeholders have cable television in their homes. Advertisements may be required to draw more viewers to the cable show.

Recommendation

The team recommends exploring opportunities to utilize public access cable shows to communicate information.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

Cable access shows often do not have a direct cost for air time. However, staff is required to produce information for the shows and the cost is likely to vary. Uploading a pre-developed presentation would require minimal direct

cost for WisDOT. On the other hand, having staff participate on a regularly scheduled show would require additional staff resources.

Relevant Phases: Environmental Preliminary design Final design Construction

This tool could be used during any project phase.

Project Types: Standard High profile Mega

This tool is most likely to be used for high profile and Mega Projects, but could be used for a standard project if a local government already has a cable channel in place.

PRINT MATERIALS

Newsletters

Application

Newsletters are typically prepared at major project milestones to provide the public with detailed information about alternatives, project impacts and design plans. They can also provide an opportunity to announce an upcoming public meeting and let the public know how to provide feedback.



Benefits

The newsletter format allows more room to convey information and provides sufficient space to provide detailed facts and a variety of in-depth content about the project's status, alternatives, impacts and design plans.

Challenges

Newsletters require the collection and summarization of a large amount of information that can be outdated relatively quickly. Printing and mailing newsletters can be costly. Newsletters distributed electronically only reach a subset of stakeholders.

Recommendation

The team recommends using newsletters during the planning and design phases of a project when more discussion of alternatives is needed. Limit the use of printed newsletters during construction. Consider translating newsletters into other languages according to the demographics of the audience.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

Newsletters require the collection and summarization of a large amount of information which can be outdated relatively quickly. Printing and mailing newsletters can be costly. Newsletters distributed electronically only reach a subset of stakeholders.

Relevant Phases: Environmental Preliminary design Final design Construction

Newsletters are most effective during the environmental and design phases when public feedback is most critical. Hard copy distribution of newsletters should be limited during the construction phase.

Project Types: Standard High profile Mega

Newsletters can be used for any type of project.

Get Around Guides/Rack Cards

Application

Get around guides / rack cards provide the public with important traffic impacts, alternate routes, and access information during construction.

Benefits

Get around guides / rack cards are effective print materials that convey the project's traffic impacts. Guides / rack cards are distributed at public places throughout the community and delivered to residences and businesses along target corridors; they effectively reach stakeholders without internet access. Guides / cards drive readers to websites or social media profiles and target stakeholders directly affected by construction.

Challenges

Get around guides / rack cards typically have a limited shelf life and require commitments from construction contractors to maintain timeframes listed. Distribution of guides / cards can be time-consuming and costly. The number of guides to be printed needs to be accurately estimated to limit waste.

Recommendation

The team recommends using get around guides / rack cards as a best practice. WisDOT needs to diversify outreach techniques for stakeholders who do not have access to the internet. To reduce costs, estimate rack card print quantities accurately. Consider translating guides into other languages according to the demographics of the audience.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

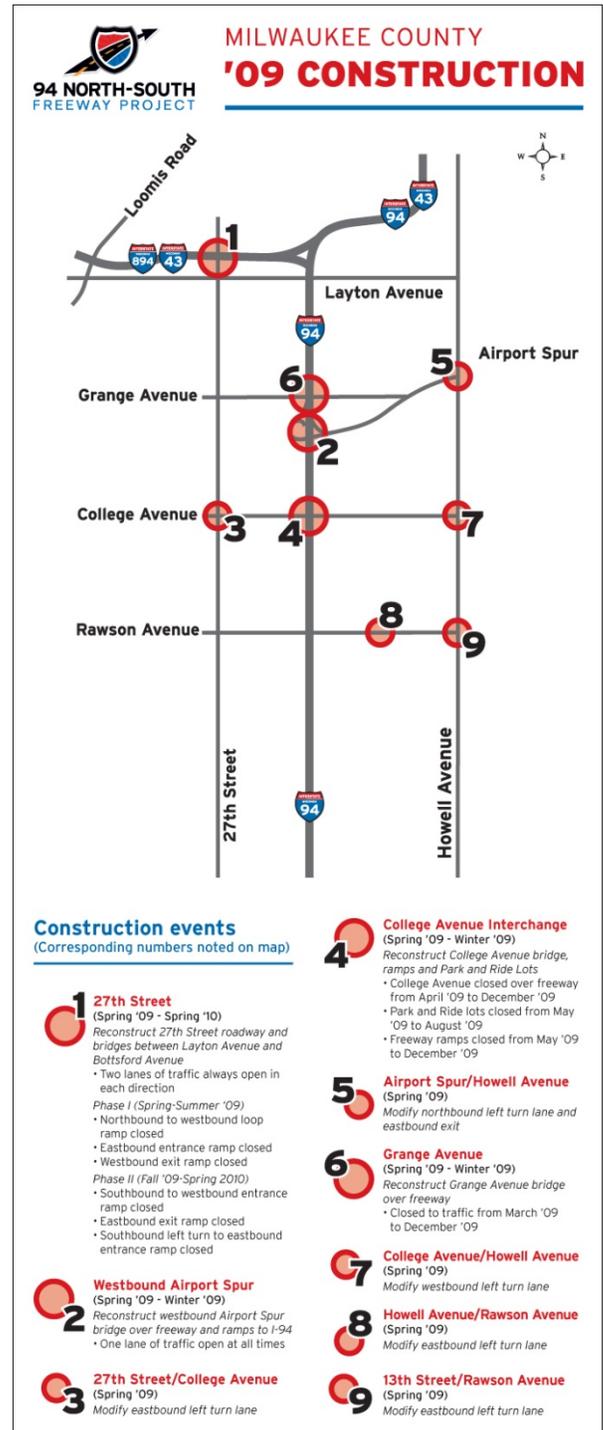
Get around guides can be costly to produce, print and distribute. Distributing get around guides / rack cards via email or posting on the web is less costly.

Relevant Phases: Environmental Preliminary design Final design Construction

Get around guides and rack cards are only relevant to the construction phase.

Project Types: Standard High profile Mega

Typically used for Mega Projects.



Project Briefs

Application

Project briefs are one-page factsheets or letters that provide concise area-specific construction information. Project briefs include an overview of the transportation improvements, a summary of the traffic impacts, schedule and alternate routing information.

PROJECT BRIEF

Shawano Avenue/Taylor Street Roundabout

Schedule: April 2011 through November 2013

Location: Intersection of Shawano Avenue and Taylor Street, Brown County

About the US 41 Project: Construction work on the US 41 Project will take over 14 miles in Brown County from 2012-2017 and 17 miles of highways in Winnebago County from 2010-2014.

The project includes:

- traffic lanes expanded from four to six lanes
- reconstruction of 12 interchanges
- improvements to 18 interchanges
- 41 roundabouts
- 21 traffic signals installed
- widening the Lane Butler Ave. Metro Commons to eight lanes, plus a shoulder and sidewalk with lighting

Questions?

- Visit the project website online at www.41freeway.org
- Call the project hotline at: (702) 492-4222

Shawano Avenue/Taylor Street Roundabout

Project Overview: Overview April 2011 through November 2013

All the intersection of Shawano Avenue and Taylor Street in Brown County, WI DOT will:

- Replace the current signalized intersection with a multi-lane roundabout.
- Build a bypass around from Taylor Street across from Butler Street to the west and northward to allow access for traffic between WIS 29 and Taylor Street.
- Shawano Street will remain open during this project.

The contractor of this roundabout is part of the larger project to rebuild the US 41 corridor between Koshong Road and Lenoire Road in Brown County. The WIS 29-41 interchange in Brown County, along with WIS 29 connector County Road Taylor Street, is included with this contract. The US 41/WIS 29 interchange will be improved to a multi-lane system, incorporating both free-flow alternative ramp access for US 41 and WIS 29.

(See other side for traffic impacts)

Project BRIEF

1-94 North-South Corridor project information

Mitchell Interchange lighting update

ABOUT THE PROJECT

- Stretches 35 miles between the Mitchell interchange in Milwaukee, through Racine and Kenosha counties to the Illinois State line.
- The \$1.9 billion program will expand the interstate to four lanes in each direction and redesign 17 interchanges.
- Construction will begin in 2009 and end in 2016.
- Visit the project Web site online at www.94freeway.org

Mitchell Interchange lighting update

As part of the I-94 North-South Corridor freeway reconstruction project, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) will be conducting a staged removal of existing high mast lighting in the Mitchell interchanges and replacing it with more energy-efficient lighting. No new high mast lighting units will be erected in the project area between Howard Avenue in Milwaukee County south to the Illinois State line.

As part of the ultimate removal process, three high mast lighting towers in the Mitchell interchange will be relocated in 2008 and 2009. The three light towers that will be relocated are shown in the map above. These relocations are temporary, as all units will be replaced with permanent, WisDOT street-level lighting between 2010 and 2012. All high mast lighting will be removed from this area by the 2012 construction season.

Questions?

If you have questions about the high mast lighting or lighting plans for the I-94 North-South Corridor project, you may contact the project team at (608) 548-8721 or by e-mail at 94infreeway@dnrc.state.wi.us. You can also visit us on the Web at www.94freeway.org to view the latest project information or to sign up for periodic mail and e-mail updates.

For additional information about the project, contact:

Steve Thelen
I-94/90 Communications Specialist
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
(608) 446-2618
139-90@Project94Dot.org

www.139-90.wi.gov

39/90 PROJECT BRIEF

IMPROVING a gateway to Wisconsin

I-39/90 PROJECT INFORMATION

Background

Interstate 39/90 is vital to the state's economic future by serving as a major corridor for the transportation of people and commerce, and as a gateway to many tourism and recreational destinations across Wisconsin.

I-39/90, between the Illinois state line and Madison in Dane and Rock counties, is experiencing significant traffic slowdowns and backups, particularly during peak travel times. By the year 2038, with no corrective action, all sections of I-39/90 are expected to operate at unacceptable levels of service, resulting in poor traffic flow and increased safety problems.

In order to address these safety and congestion concerns, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) will reconstruct and expand the I-39/90 corridor from four to six lanes.

WisDOT is currently in the design phase of the project. During the design phase, public meetings will occur throughout the project area to give the public an opportunity to provide input, and ask questions regarding this expansion project.

As one of the most important transportation corridors in Wisconsin, the Interstate will remain open to traffic during the construction phase, although some inconvenience and slowdowns may occur.

Improvements

- Reconstruct and expand I-39/90 from four to six lanes.
- Reconstruct the 11 interchanges within the corridor to update configurations including ramps to current design standards.

Project Schedule

- 2011 - Design process started
- 2012 - Public meetings to occur throughout project area
- 2013 - Reconstruct I-39/90 (Racine St. interchange) and possible alternate route construction
- 2015 - Construction along I-39/90 scheduled to start
- 2021 - Construction expected to be completed

For additional information about the project, contact:

Steve Thelen
I-39/90 Communications Specialist
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
(608) 446-2618
139-90@Project94Dot.org

www.139-90.wi.gov

Benefits

Project staff develops project briefs which can easily be updated as the project advances. Project briefs are distributed with a variety of methods including mail, email, door to door, and at meetings. It is also effective to post project briefs on project websites. Additionally, stakeholders can easily print copies and distribute the briefs by handing out copies or sending PDF's via email to their members (school districts, large corporations, clubs, etc.)

Challenges

The material presented in the brief can have a limited shelf-life. To be most effective, the briefs may need to be distributed via literature drops because the information is time-sensitive. The brief requires the careful distillation of detailed information into a clear and concise message.

Recommendation

The team recommends continuing the use of project briefs as a best practice. The team also recommends that attempts be made to obtain email information from residents and businesses, which will allow for more efficient distribution of information.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

Developing a project brief is a low cost tool, but the cost of distribution varies.

Relevant Phases: Environmental Preliminary design Final design Construction

Project briefs are used during the construction phase.

Project Types: Standard High profile Mega

Project briefs could be effective for any project type. Standard and high profile projects may not have resources to deliver project briefs via literature drops and would have to distribute the briefs on the WisDOT website or at meetings.

Media Inserts

Application

Media inserts are used to insert project print materials into newspapers.

Benefits

Media inserts allow WisDOT to distribute information materials such as get around guides and rack cards to a wide audience. In addition, inserts help integrate the outreach campaign by increasing awareness of other outreach resources such as the project website and social media sites.

Challenges

Some stakeholders object to the use of media inserts. Information that is placed in a media insert needs to be relevant for a long period of time. Media inserts can be costly especially with larger newspapers.

Recommendation

The team recommends minimizing the use of media inserts. If media inserts are deemed necessary, the project should concentrate insertions into small or medium-sized newspapers to maximize cost-effectiveness.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

Media inserts can be costly as they require staff time to produce and print the materials and to place the inserts in the newspapers.

Relevant Phases: Environmental Preliminary design Final design Construction

Media inserts are used during the construction phase to communicate traffic impacts.

Project Types: Standard High profile Mega

Media inserts should be reserved for use on high profile and Mega Projects.

OUTREACH TOOLS

Neighborhood Specialists

Application

Neighborhood specialists are contracted to carry out on-the-ground outreach for a project. Neighborhood specialists typically live near the project area and help to facilitate public meetings, staff festivals and conduct small group meetings, door to door outreach and literature drops. Neighborhood specialists also reach out to community organizations that represent environment justice groups and Native American Tribes.

Benefits

Neighborhood specialists lend credibility to the project and establish public trust by making contacts with community leaders and organizations. Neighborhood specialists help encourage input by establishing and maintaining open lines of communication with neighborhoods, businesses and environmental justice groups.

Challenges

Specialists have been challenged by identifying appropriate leaders. Neighborhood specialists can be difficult to implement in less densely populated areas. Since each specialist requires their own contract, more training and administration costs can be incurred.

Recommendation

The team recognizes that there may be some aspects of Mega Projects that are met with high public concern and resistance. The neighborhood specialist approach has worked well on some Mega Projects, but was not as effective on others. The team recommends that WisDOT focus on building relationships with community leaders as a best practice.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

Neighborhood specialists are higher cost due to the cost of labor.

Relevant Phases: Environmental Preliminary design Final design Construction

Specialists are used during the design phase to collect contact information and reach out to local organizations. During the construction phase, specialists can be used to address construction related impacts that affect neighborhood or business areas.

Project Types: Standard High profile Mega

Limit the use of neighborhood specialists for Mega Projects.

Festivals

Application

Project booths are displayed and staffed to provide project information at festivals and community events. Booths can also be used at multicultural events, business expos and conferences.

Benefits

Festivals allow project staff to communicate directly with the public at events held in their community. This enables staff to reach a wide range of stakeholders who typically don't attend public meetings. Also, festivals allow WisDOT to target specific groups such as multicultural or tribal organizations who are traditionally underserved.



Challenges

Booths at festivals need to be updated regularly and tend to require a great deal of staff time. Staff time is spent moving and setting up booth displays and staff must typically be assigned to the booth during all operating hours of the festival. Staffing the booth can be a challenge, since most festivals occur over weekend and evening hours.

Unstaffed or self-service booths lack personal interactions, which could reduce the effectiveness of the outreach. Also, unstaffed booths are not always feasible because most festivals require the booths to be attended during operating hours.

Recommendation

The team recommends the use of festivals as a best practice, but encourages the investigation of self-service booths to minimize staff commitments. Multi-cultural / ethnic festivals should be considered to reach traditionally-underserved groups.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

The cost of festival outreach can vary widely. Booths can be simple with a single staff person sitting at a table distributing informational materials over a one or two day event. On the other hand, booths can be quite elaborate with multiple people staffing a large display that contains project videos and physical models over a week to ten-day period. The cost will also depend on the fees required by the festival organizers.

Relevant Phases: Environmental Preliminary design Final design Construction

Festival outreach is most appropriate during the design phase when public input is critical. Festivals should be limited during the construction phase.

Project Types: Standard High profile Mega

Festival outreach is typically used for Mega Projects.

Door to Door Outreach

Application

Project representatives canvass a pre-determined area to personally deliver time sensitive project information to the most affected stakeholders. Examples of information include project briefs, get around guides and meeting invites.

Benefits

Door to door outreach ensures information is getting to the correct location or person. It provides opportunities for direct interaction with stakeholders and an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss concerns with project staff. Door to door outreach is effective for obtaining accurate contact information and emails for future correspondence. Staff conducting door to door outreach is generally the same staff charged with staffing booths at festivals, attending special events and assisting WisDOT staff at technical presentations.

Challenges

Door to door outreach is time consuming and may require the use of lower-cost labor such as students or neighborhood specialists to be cost effective. Managers need to train door to door staff to make sure they understand the project message that is being conveyed. Additional contracts result in more administration and oversight costs.

Recommendation

The team recommends limiting the use of door to door outreach when possible. The approach should be reserved for neighborhoods and areas of particular concern and should include the collection of email addresses for future correspondence.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

Door to door outreach can be costly due to the amount of staff time that is required.

Relevant Phases: Environmental Preliminary design Final design Construction

Door to door outreach is most appropriate for the design phase. The need for door to door outreach should be evaluated during the construction phase.

Project Types: Standard High profile Mega

Door to door outreach is most appropriate for Mega Projects.

Business Toolkit

Application

Business toolkits customize WisDOT's "In This Together" program for specific projects. The toolkit is based on past best practices and shares techniques that help businesses maintain customers during construction. The kits are assembled online on either WisDOT's website or the project website. The kit contains communication materials that help businesses advertise and keep in touch with their customers and suppliers during construction.

Benefits

WisDOT's "In This Together" program and templates benefit businesses and increase community awareness of the project, and of the ways WisDOT is trying to help the community. The toolkits can be customized to individual projects and business corridors. Toolkits serve as a forum for businesses along a corridor or within a district to coordinate advertising and signage.

Challenges

Need to dedicate resources to keep materials updated at least once per year.

Recommendation

The team recommends the use of business toolkits as a best practice when applicable.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

WisDOT's primary cost for business toolkits is staff time to coordinate with businesses. Direct costs for signage and advertising are paid for by businesses.

Relevant Phases: Environmental Preliminary design Final design Construction

Business toolkits are only relevant during the final design and construction phases.

Project Types: Standard High profile Mega

Business toolkits can be used for any project that will have construction impacts that may affect access to businesses.

VISUALIZATION TOOLS

Drive-Through Animations

Application

Drive-through animations are computer generated animations that show what the transportation facility will look like from the driver's perspective. Animations are typically used for viewing on the website, at public meetings, booth displays and for presentations.



Benefits

Animations are relatively easy to update in comparison to physical models and can easily be uploaded onto websites, compact discs and PowerPoint presentations. Animations are easy to transport to meetings or festivals for display on a computer screen. When narrated, videos communicate the approved message every time the video is played.

Challenges

Animations must be developed and updated by outside vendors. Projects need to balance the quality of the animation with the cost.

Recommendation

The design and complexity of a Mega Project should drive the need for a video.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

The cost for an animation will vary depending on its image quality.

Relevant Phases: Environmental Preliminary design Final design Construction

Animations should be developed during the design phases and used through the construction phase.

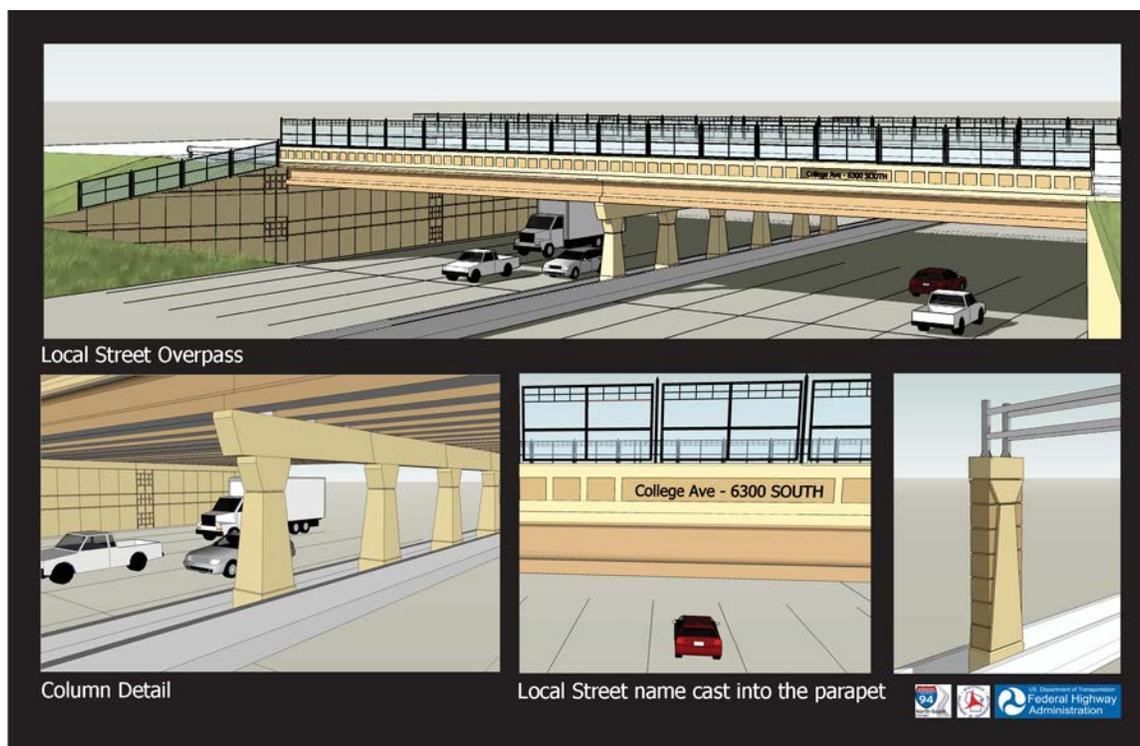
Project Types: Standard High profile Mega

Typically used for Mega Projects.

Renderings

Application

Renderings are graphics developed on a computer that show what the transportation project will look like in the future. It may feature an expanded highway, a bridge, an interchange or community sensitive design features.



Benefits

Renderings are very flexible and come in an easy to use digital format such as .jpg or .pdf. Renderings can be used for many different applications including website postings, display boards at meetings and at festival booths.

Challenges

Renderings must be developed and updated by outside vendors.

Recommendation

The design and complexity of a Mega Project should drive the need for renderings.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

The cost of the rendering will vary depending on the quality and detail, but it is the least costly visualization tool in comparison to animations and physical models.

Relevant Phases: Environmental Preliminary design Final design Construction

Renderings are typically developed and updated during the environmental and design phases and used for informational purposes during construction.

Project Types: Standard High profile Mega

Renderings may be appropriate for all project types depending on budget and need to convey information.

COMMITTEES

Advisory Committees: Technical, Citizen/Community, CSS

Application

Advisory committees are used to assemble relatively small groups of stakeholders and interest groups to obtain feedback on alternatives and design plans.

Benefits

Committees provide a productive way to obtain input from a select group of stakeholders when alternatives are being considered and when feedback is needed on the design plans. Committees may help reduce the number of individual meetings that are required to seek feedback. Also, the committee members are encouraged to see the bigger picture and consider the needs of neighboring jurisdictions and/or groups.



Challenges

Utilizing advisory committees can be time-intensive, including identifying participants, planning for and conducting the meetings. If the project spans multiple jurisdictions, multiple committees may be needed to make sure the meetings remain productive and to ensure participants attend the meetings.

Recommendation

The team recommends utilizing an advisory committee during the environmental and design phases when input is most critical. Projects should communicate with advisory committee members via email during the construction phase.

Cost: \$ \$\$ \$\$\$

Advisory committees are low cost in the sense that they do not incur direct costs, but staff time to manage a committee can be substantial.

Relevant Phases: Environmental Preliminary design Final design Construction

Committees are most relevant during the environmental and preliminary design phases when input is needed.

Project Types: Standard High profile Mega

Advisory committees can be used for any project type.