**Chairperson’s Packet**

The following is a general outline of the traditional-style portion of the hybrid-style hearing format:

1. Welcome

2. Project Presentation and Question/Answer Session

3. Opening Statement

4. Information for the Record

5. Project Statement

6. Invitation of Testimony

7. Closing Statement

The content of each part of the traditional-style portion of the hybrid-style hearing is typically as follows:

1. **WELCOME**

CHAIRPERSON: Welcome, my name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (title). I will be serving as the Hearing Chairperson. Thank you for attending this public hearing.

Other project team members here with me are (names and titles).

(Any other special introductions such as Senators and Representatives should now be made.)

**When a Court Reporter has been hired**

CHAIRPERSON: Before proceeding further, I would like to introduce the court reporter, (name), who is taking down these proceedings for the official public hearing record. If you would like to obtain a copy of the transcript of this public hearing, you should make arrangements with (her) (him) to do so after the public hearing.

**When the Proceedings are taped**

CHAIRPERSON: These proceedings are being recorded for the official record. If you would like to obtain a copy of the transcript of this public hearing, please make arrangements with our staff after the public hearing.

1. **PROJECT PRESENTATION and QUESTION/ANSWER SESSION**

The project presentation and question/answer session should occur prior to the reading of the Opening Statement. The Court Reporter should be instructed to transcribe the project presentation. The court reporter should also be instructed to discontinue transcription during the question/answer session and resume transcription when the reading of the Opening Statement is started.

The Hearing Chairperson should explain to the public that the question/answer portion of the project presentation is for the purpose of assisting the public in preparing their formal testimony and will not be part of the official public hearing record. If members of the public are making statements during the question/answer session, they should be encouraged to include those statements in their official testimony. The Hearing Chairperson should limit the question/answer portion of the project presentation to a reasonable length.

PowerPoint or other technologies such as Google Earth should be used as part of the project presentation to effectively share project information and data.

1. **OPENING STATEMENT**

CHAIRPERSON: I will now proceed with the opening statement.

This public hearing is being conducted on behalf of the Department of Transportation as part of the comprehensive consideration of the (location, design, environmental, state trunk highway change, etc.) aspects of the proposed improvement of Highway (name or number) (brief description).

The objective of this public hearing is to give you full opportunity to express your opinions about the (location, design, etc.) aspects of this proposal. You may also present questions as part of your testimony for the Department's consideration as the total concept of the proposal is reviewed prior to arriving at a decision.

If you wish answers to special questions or clarification of any aspect of this proposal, you may remain after this traditional-style portion of the hybrid-style hearing is closed to meet with project team staff, or you may contact the project team at (address).

I emphasize that this public hearing has the basic purpose of getting the most complete expression of public opinion and your individual viewpoints on record so that they can be considered along with all other judgments and opinions to be reviewed by the Department before further decisions are made.

We will now proceed by having the official notice of public hearing and other articles entered into the record, after which I will call upon (name) to identify and describe the exhibits before you and to present the project.

Following this I will call anyone who may have an interest in this project and wishes to present individual evidence or views. I would like to call your attention to the Hearing Handout Packet provided when you signed in. The last sheet of the packet is a registration slip for verbal testimony. Anyone wishing to testify should fill it out, and present it to a project team member who will bring it up here. If you would rather not make a verbal statement, you may submit a written statement, which will also be entered into the public hearing record.

Written statements or other exhibits, in place of or in addition to the testimony presented at this public hearing, will be included in the official public hearing record if postmarked no later than (date). Mail this additional testimony by using the prepaid mailer available (at the table in the back) (on the back of the Hearing Handout Packet) to (name), Project Manager of the (name) Region Office at the address listed in the Hearing Handout Packet.

1. **INFORMATION FOR THE RECORD (Verbal Statement)**

CHAIRPERSON: I now ask (name) to present the information for the record.

PRESENTER: Thank you (Mr.) (Ms.) Chairperson. (Other introductory remarks as desired can be made)

I would like to enter several articles into the record.

In addition to the testimony provided at this public hearing, all exhibits, handouts, audio/visual presentations and displays for viewing at this public hearing will be included in the official public hearing record. Page (number) of the Hearing Handout Packet contains a complete list of these materials. Other materials, along with written testimony received after the public hearing, will be added to the official public hearing record provided they are received prior to the end of the environmental document availability period which is (date).

The environmental document for this project proposal has been made available to the public and copies are here for your review.

(Mr.) (Ms.) Chairperson, I request that the published public hearing notice, environmental document, brochures, and the Hearing Handout Packet which contains a description of all exhibits, handouts, audio/visual presentations and displays for viewing at this public hearing be entered into the record as exhibits.

CHAIRPERSON: It is so ordered. Thank you (name).

1. **PROJECT STATEMENT**

Project statements may be delivered either in person or as an audio/visual presentation. Whatever method is used, the Project Statement must include the following:

 1. Descriptions of the public hearing exhibits.

 2. A description of each project alternative being presented for consideration, including the extent of potential property acquisitions and the number and character of potential relocations involved with each alternative.

 3. Reference to any issues that are pertinent to the presentation.

 4. Discussion of property acquisition procedures and relocation assistance program as appropriate.

The detailed project statement should be included in the Hearing Handout Packet and project presentation. A summary will be presented.

CHAIRPERSON: The Hearing Handout Packet and project presentation given earlier serve as the extended version of the Project Statement. A summary of the Project Statement has also been read and transcribed into the record shortly before the beginning of this traditional-style portion of the hybrid-style hearing. Is there any objection to dispensing with the reading of the Project Statement and moving directly to the Invitation of Testimony.

CHAIRPERSON (If no objection made): Hearing no objection, we will proceed directly to the Invitation of Testimony.

CHAIRPERSON (If objection made): As an objection has been made, I will now call on (name) to present the Project Statement about the proposal.

PRESENTER: As (name) state previously, the Hearing Handout Packet and project presentation given earlier serve as the extended version of the project statement. I will summarize the purpose and need for the project and the project alternatives including the number and character of any potential property acquisitions associated with the alternative.

[Summary]

If one or more project alternatives would be located in wetlands, the wetland involvement must be clearly shown on the public hearing exhibits and must be presented in the Project Statement. Also, if any project alternative is located within the limits of a 100-year flood plain, this involvement must be clearly identified on the public hearing exhibits and in the project statement.

Certain information on relocation assistance and property acquisition (see Sec 23 CFR 710) is required to be provided at all federal-aid public hearings. Although the "relocation assistance" brochure is made available if one or more project alternatives involve the relocation of people or businesses, and the "eminent domain" brochure is made available if one or more alternative involves property acquisition, the project statement presentation must also include an appropriate discussion of these matters to fulfill federal requirements.

For the typical public hearing, the following paragraphs have been developed to meet minimum requirements. As appropriate to the project, these paragraphs - or reworded or expanded versions of them - **MUST** be included in the project statement presentations. Special attention to this requirement must be given to ensure that it is not overlooked at a public hearing presented by local units of government or their consultants.

Include the following paragraph if any right of way is to be acquired**:**

"Before any property acquisition activities are initiated, members of the Region Real Estate staff will contact the property owner to explain the details of the acquisition process and Wisconsin's Eminent Domain Law. All (any) properties to be acquired will be inspected and appraised by one or more professional appraisers. The property owner will be asked to accompany the appraiser during inspection of the property to be acquired, to assure that its value is recognized in the appraisal. Based upon the appraisal or appraisals made, the fair market value of the property to be acquired will be determined, and that amount will be offered to the owner."

Include the following paragraph if no relocations will occur under any alternate**:**

"It is not anticipated that any homes or businesses will need to be acquired as a result of this project. The acquisition of necessary rights-of-way for this project is scheduled to begin in (date). Depending upon the availability of funding, construction could begin in (date) if a build alternative is selected.”

Include the following paragraphs if relocations will occur under any alternate**:**

"Relocation assistance will be made available to anyone displaced by this project. In this regard, a survey of available (housing) (business locations) was made on (date). This survey indicates that there will be sufficient (housing, rental units, mobile home sites, farms, business locations etc. as appropriate) available in the project vicinity at the time of the proposed relocations, within the means of the relocatees and meeting the requirements for replacement housing (etc.)."

"The "Relocation Assistance" brochure made available to you has been prepared to answer many of the general questions frequently asked concerning relocation assistance. Note that in addition to the cost of replacement (housing, business locations, etc.), additional monies are available to cover moving expenses, increased rental and mortgage payments and interest rates, and any closing costs incurred."

"It is emphasized that no person shall be displaced unless a comparable and/or adequate replacement (dwelling, business location, etc.) has been provided or made available. In the event a relocated person is dissatisfied with the decision as to eligibility for payments or amounts offered under the relocation assistance program, he or she will be promptly advised of the procedure to follow in making an appeal."

"Property acquisition for this improvement is scheduled to begin in (date).”

“Depending upon the availability of funds and the anticipated completion of relocations by (date), construction could begin in (date) if a build alternative is selected.”

Include the following paragraph for hearings that include an s. 84.295 action**:**

“This segment of highway shall have freeway status relative to Statute 84.30 related to outdoor advertising upon the conclusion of the public hearing.

*Note: The foregoing paragraphs are considered to provide the minimum level of information necessary to adequately inform the public of project aspects involving property acquisition and relocation assistance.*

1. **INVITATION OF TESTIMONY**

The Hearing Chairperson calls for testimony. Those wishing to testify are normally called in the order that registration slips for verbal testimony are received by the chair. If some other "order of call" is to be used, it should be generally agreeable to persons in attendance and should be described by the Hearing Chairperson before proceeding to call witnesses.

WisDOT public hearings are structured but largely informal events, held at the convenience of the majority of potential attendees and for the purpose of receiving and documenting citizen input. Cross examination of witnesses is not permitted. A determination of whether to answer questions received as part of the traditional-style portion of the hybrid-style hearing testimony and whether to answer them during or after the public hearing is left to the discretion of the Hearing Chairperson. Questions of a more general nature and which may be of interest to those in attendance are typically answered during the traditional-style portion of the hybrid-style hearing, whereas those questions which may only be of interest to the particular individual are typically answered by staff at the "back of the room" or during the informal session following the traditional-style portion of the hybrid-style hearing adjournment. The Hearing Chairperson’s preference and the atmosphere of the public hearing will generally dictate the manner of handling questions; however, it has usually proven the best approach is to publicly answer questions to the best of staff ability without subjecting staff to cross examination.

CHAIRPERSON: When your name is called, please approach the microphone and state your name and address. You may also provide the name of any organization or business you are representing if so desired. We ask that you please limit your verbal testimony to (number) minutes so everyone has an opportunity to present their testimony. Once everyone has had an opportunity to present verbal testimony, you may present additional testimony as time allows. You may also present additional verbal testimony individually to a court reporter anytime during the public hearing.

I now call on (name) to present their verbal testimony. (If there are many people planning to testify, the Hearing Chairperson should call several names so people can be prepared to come to the microphone.)

1. **CLOSING STATEMENT**

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you for taking time to participate in this public hearing. You may provide individual verbal testimony to a court reporter until the end of this hybrid-style hearing. Also, a reminder that any written testimony you would like to become part of the public hearing record should be postmarked or received no later than (date). The traditional-style portion of the hybrid-style hearing is now formally adjourned.

After the close of the traditional-style portion of the hybrid-style hearing, project team members should remain to informally discuss the project and answer questions from interested persons.