

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Public Involvement Plan

for the

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

November 2016

Background

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) lists all transportation projects within Wisconsin proposed to receive federal funding for the next four years. The STIP includes projects identified in Wisconsin's 14 Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPOs)¹ Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP), the Federal Lands Highway Program and Tribal Transportation Program, as well as all roadway and transit projects located outside MPO areas (see map below) that receive federal funds.

The STIP Public Involvement Plan relies on the ongoing public involvement efforts of:

- State Trunk Highway System project development and Six-Year Highway Program meetings
- MPO public meetings regarding the MPO's TIPs (Reference the individual MPO Public Participation Plans for specific information)
- Local government meetings for transit projects in non-MPO areas (ongoing)
- Local government hearings on local road projects in non-MPO areas (ongoing)

Consultation

Federal regulations require WisDOT to cooperate and consult with local officials and tribal governments in non-metropolitan areas. In March 2016, WisDOT reaffirmed efforts to cooperate and consult in the updated *Documentation of Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Process of Cooperation and Consultation with Local Officials and Tribal Governments in Non-Metropolitan Areas*, which is available at



¹ Metropolitan Planning Organizations are responsible for transportation planning activities in urbanized areas with populations of at least 50,000.

<http://wisconsin.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/planning-orgs/local-con.aspx>. WisDOT follows these processes as they relate to the public involvement within the STIP and project selection process.

Information Availability

The website for WisDOT's STIP is located at: <http://wisconsin.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/astnce-pgms/highway/stip.aspx>. The website includes the STIP, as well as all amendments to the STIP. Copies of the draft and final STIP are available in paper and electronic format.

STIP Public Involvement Process

Draft STIP

WisDOT posts the draft STIP on the STIP website. Interested individuals also have the opportunity to request a printed copy. WisDOT provides a 30-day public comment period. WisDOT announces the start of the public comment period by:

- Publishing a legal notice in the Wisconsin State Journal.
- Sending an email to each MPO, Regional Planning Commission (RPC), County Highway Commissioner, and transit operator.

WisDOT may provide the opportunity for an individual to request a formal public hearing on the STIP. If a public hearing opportunity is provided, WisDOT:

- Publishes a legal notice announcing the public hearing at least 14 days prior to the hearing.
- Sends an email to each MPO, RPC, County Highway Commissioner, and transit operator informing them of the upcoming public hearing.

Final STIP

WisDOT posts the final STIP on the STIP website. Printed copies are available upon request. WisDOT documents the comments received and WisDOT's response to those comments.

STIP Amendment Process

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approve the STIP. The STIP can be administratively modified or officially amended at any time.

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) definitions for administrative modifications and amendments to the STIP (23 CFR 450-104 *Definitions*):

Administrative modification means a minor revision to a ... STIP that includes minor changes to project/project phase costs, minor changes to funding sources of previously included projects, and minor changes to project/project phase initiation dates. An administrative modification is a revision that does not require public review and comment, re-demonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination (in non-attainment and maintenance areas).

Amendment means a revision to a ... STIP that involves a major change to a project included in a ... STIP, including the addition or deletion of a project or a major change in project cost, project/project phase initiation dates, or a major change in design concept or design scope (e.g., changing project termini or the number of through traffic lanes). Changes to projects that are included only for illustrative purposes do not require an amendment. An amendment is a revision that requires public review and comment, re-demonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination (for ... “non-exempt” projects in non-attainment and maintenance areas).

Administrative Modifications are considered a minor revision to the STIP. Administrative Modifications are processed within the existing WisDOT programming structure.

Examples of Administrative Modifications include:

- Minor changes to project/project phase costs – less than 20% and \$2 million.
- Minor changes to funding sources for previously included projects.
- Minor changes to project/project phase initiation dates within the same calendar year.

Additionally, to be considered an Administrative Modifications the changes must not impact:

- Conformity in non-attainment/maintenance areas, or
- Fiscal constraint of the STIP – any accumulative impacts from the administrative modifications to fiscal constraint will be determined by the WisDOT Bureau of Planning and Economic Development.

Any changes that do not fall under the definition of an administrative modification are considered an amendment to the STIP and are required to be published on the web site for a 15-day period prior to FHWA/FTA approval. In addition, emails are sent to each MPO, RPC, transit operator and County Highway Commissioner.

For projects located within metropolitan planning areas, the MPO is responsible for amending the TIP (reference the individual MPO’s Public Participation Plan for a description of the TIP amendment process). Once a TIP amendment has been approved the MPO’s Policy Board, the amendment is submitted to the WisDOT Secretary. The WisDOT Secretary forwards his approval of the TIP amendment to the FHWA and FTA. The TIP Amendment is incorporated by reference within the current STIP.

Additional Public Involvement Activities

WisDOT continues to improve the STIP public involvement process. Continued activities include:

- Maintaining the STIP email distribution list of those interested in receiving updates on the STIP, including the availability of the draft and final STIP, as well as STIP amendments.
- Working with Wisconsin's 11 tribal governments to identify ways to improve tribal involvement in the STIP process.

Amending the STIP Public Involvement Plan

WisDOT reviews the STIP Public Involvement Plan each year. If changes are made, WisDOT provides a 45-day public comment period.² WisDOT announces the start of the public comment period by:

- Publishing a legal notice in the Wisconsin State Journal.
- Sending an email to each MPO, RPC, transit operator, and County Highway Commissioner.
- Posting the draft STIP Public Involvement Plan on WisDOT's website.
- Documenting any comments received and the agency's responses to those comments.

² 23 CFR 450, http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title23/23cfr450_main_02.tpl