



Coulee Region Transportation Study

"Innovative Solutions for the 21st Century"

Planning and Environment Linkages

WisDOT Project ID 1630-08-00

La Crosse County, WI



Public Involvement Meeting #4.1 & 4.2

November 10, 2015
5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Onalaska High School
700 Hilltopper Drive
Onalaska, WI 54650
Cafeteria

November 12, 2015
5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
La Crosse Central High School
1801 Losey Blvd
La Crosse, WI 54601
Room 124 (Cafeteria)

Meeting #4.1 Attendees

Public: 24 members of the public

WisDOT: Andy Winga, Francis Schelfhout, Steve Vetsch, Steve Flottmeyer, Angela Adams

SEH: Darren Fortney, Nate Day, Marty Falk, Jeremy Tomesh, Sarah Morrison, Josh Woller

Meeting #4.2 Attendees

Public: 77 members of the public

WisDOT: Andy Winga, Francis Schelfhout, Steve Vetsch, Steve Flottmeyer, Angela Adams, Rosie Meer

SEH: Darren Fortney, Nate Day, Marty Falk, Jeremy Tomesh, Sarah Morrison, Jim Hanson

Meeting Opening

- From 5:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. people arrived at the meeting, signed in/received handouts, viewed workstations, provided comments using the input forms, and talked with study staff.

Presentation - PEL Process and Strategy Packages

- Steve Vetsch, Andy Winga, and Steve Flottmeyer presented the PowerPoint, which started with a welcome and introduction of study staff. The presentation lasted for approximately one hour, which included a brief period at the end for questions.

Exhibits

- Final Strategy Package maps and dismissed strategies were shown to facilitate the presentation and discussion.

Meeting #4.1 Questions and Comments

Q: Every plan has intersection improvements, but what do these consist of and what is the scope of these plans?

A: WisDOT has identified the intersections that will need improvement after the road improvements have been made. This will vary for each strategy.

Q: I noticed E2 has two bridges. That sounds expensive.

A: WisDOT is trying to identify the best plan for the community. If that strategy is picked as the best solution, WisDOT will identify possible funding sources.

Q: I am against all build solutions. Strategy H is the only strategy without a new road. Would WisDOT be able to fund such a solution? Is WisDOT working on things like policy changes? How much can WisDOT do in that area?

A: Unfortunately WisDOT can only suggest solutions. It is ultimately up to the municipality to change their policy.

Q: How do these strategies compare to the one that was voted down in the 1990's?

A: That solution was very similar to our current strategy F4. There are some differences, such as around the Indian Hill neighborhood and on 6th and 7th streets.

Comment: I think you need to work harder to improve the bike accommodations in these renderings; the sidewalks look very nice but I think there isn't enough being done for cyclists. I ride my bike on 2nd avenue, and I do not feel safe there. I hope what WisDOT develops for these strategies is better than that.

Comment: Improving one large high capacity route will not help. I don't think it will help the area, I can understand how it looks good from an engineering standpoint but in terms of how people will behave, I don't think it's a good idea. I am all for improving multiple facilities and enhancing the grid. WisDOT can't keep using past solutions to fix future problems, need to be more forward thinking than that. Distributed capacity is the way to go.

Comment: The renderings appear to show improvements to existing facilities. I don't see why we can't focus on that sort of solution rather than building new roads.

Meeting #4.2 Questions and Comments

Q: Would people who live on Bainbridge St lose street parking with E2?

A: It is too early to say, these renderings are only concepts at this point.

Q: Can't we just improve what we already have? We have so much crumbling infrastructure.

A: The Coulee Region Transportation Study is looking out to the needs of 2050 and projections are based on future land use plans.

Q: Will new roads decrease property values?

A: WisDOT has no evidence to suggest that it would do that.

Q: Do traffic projections factor in new technologies such as driver-less cars?

A: At this time, no. It's likely too far in the future to reasonably add it to our projections.

Q: If everything is based off projections for 2050, isn't it reasonable to assume technology will have changed? It's hard to predict what is going to happen that far in the future.

MINUTES

A: It is indeed hard to predict, but WisDOT doesn't know what will happen. WisDOT will continue to check back in every few years and make adjustments as necessary.

Q: Why is NEPA done after this? We need to study the options first so we know if they are feasible before we eliminate things. What if the option WisDOT takes forward is deemed too impactful?

A: WisDOT takes several strategies forward so that all our options are not eliminated by NEPA.

Q: People avoid taking Lang Dr. because of its condition and end up taking 16 instead. Being negligent of our current roads is partially causing this problem in the first place.

A: The city is responsible for maintaining those roads.

Q: Thank you for including Strategy H and listening to public comment after the last PIM. H would solve many problems without increasing bottlenecks. My question is, would F increase lanes on 7th street and remove parking?

A: Yes, it's currently planned to increase the lanes on 7th St.

Q: Why don't these options work with other plans? Why is there no county comprehensive plan?

A: There is a county comprehensive plan and WisDOT is trying our best to work with other plans that are in place.

Q: Why isn't F4 being eliminated due to its marsh impact?

A: The DNR will have to help decide what the best option is.

Q: The DNR will use mitigation land and dollars if the marsh is impacted, but will that stay here or be moved somewhere else?

A: The money does get used at bank sites, however there are many in the area. The money doesn't necessarily go elsewhere. WisDOT is overseen by many agencies in order to best decide how to handle these sorts of situations.

Comment: I wish WisDOT would take the Minnesota exits into consideration. Several people already use those roads to reduce travel time.

Q: Do new roads even reduce congestion? Or do they just increase traffic?

A: Population increases drive traffic volumes, however newly expanded roads could induce more traffic or draw it away from other facilities.

Additional Comments

Comments were collected during the meetings via comment boxes. In addition to the comments submitted during the meetings, some comments were received after the meetings were concluded. All comments can be found in detail in a separate pdf document.