

COULEE REGION TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Innovative Solutions for the 21st Century

STUDY GOALS, OBJECTIVES FINALIZED; WILL GUIDE COULEE REGION STUDY

Following months of collaboration among stakeholders, area officials and the public, the Coulee Region Transportation Study has finalized the problem statement, goals and objectives that will guide the next steps of the study process. It marks the first significant benchmark in the year-long Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL) process.



“This is a critical first step in the process because the problem statement, goals and objectives will serve as criteria for the transportation strategies evaluated throughout the remainder of the PEL,” said study manager Andy Winga. “As we move forward, specific proposals will be evaluated by how well they meet the goals and objectives. Potential solutions determined to not meet the goals and objectives will be dismissed. Those showing promise for addressing the identified issues will be carried forward and form the foundation for the environmental impact analysis that will follow the PEL process.”

The goals and objectives were developed among the study’s technical and community advisory groups, and through public involvement events and meetings with stakeholders and local officials.

The full document can be viewed at www.couleeregionstudy.dot.wi.gov.

Public involvement and stakeholder outreach will continue throughout the year. The evaluation and screening of strategies addressing transportation needs in the region is scheduled to occur in the summer and fall of 2015. The PEL final report is expected in early 2016.



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U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration



WHAT IS TRAFFIC METHODOLOGY?

Estimating Future Transportation Needs

The Coulee Region Transportation Study will soon be identifying future transportation needs for the area. Two key components of the planning study include forecasting travel demand and applying those onto the current roadway capacities throughout the region.

What is a forecast?

Transportation forecasting is the process of estimating the number of people or vehicles that will use a specific transportation facility in the future. Forecasts explain what the needs of the future might be and provide benchmarks for proper design and efficient transportation system operation.

Why do we use forecasts?

Transportation forecasts are fundamentally important inputs in developing infrastructure – from developing overall transportation policy, to planning studies, to the engineering design of specific projects. Example applications of forecast information include:

- Estimation of the financial and/or social viability of projects (e.g., developing benefit-cost analyses and/or social impact assessments)
- Calculation of environmental impacts, such as air and noise pollution
- Development of infrastructure capacity and design calculations (e.g., the operations of an existing or proposed roadway or bridge, or the thickness or type of roadway pavements)

How are forecasts created?

Traffic forecasts look at local trends and historic traffic counts on each roadway.

Additionally, the forecasts developed for the Coulee Region Transportation Study will be based on the La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC) travel demand model. The model uses future estimates of population, employment, and household data to project the demand.

How are trends incorporated into forecasts?

Trends are important to consider, but they may not be relevant to forecasts for individual projects. National trends are often not representative of the state of Wisconsin, and state trends are often not representative of counties or cities in Wisconsin. Even local trends may not represent what's occurring on a particular roadway. This is to say that while statewide (or county-wide, etc.) travel may decrease over the span of several years, traffic may have increased on any particular corridor during that span and vice-versa. WisDOT traffic forecasts look at local trends and historic traffic counts on each roadway to best reflect the most relevant information.

Capacity

How we calculate

Capacity is described in terms of Level of Service (LOS). Level of Service is a quantitative measure of the quality of

service of the transportation facility. The LOS measure is divided into six letter grades, 'A' through 'F' with 'A' being the best and 'F' being the worst. Each facility type has a defined method for assessing capacity and LOS. Example criteria used for varying facilities is travel speed and density on freeways, delay at intersections, and speed and ability to pass on rural highways. The Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) methodology is the primary way of determining LOS values. Additional traffic analysis software such as Synchro/SimTraffic and Sidra are used to assist in determining LOS.

What it means

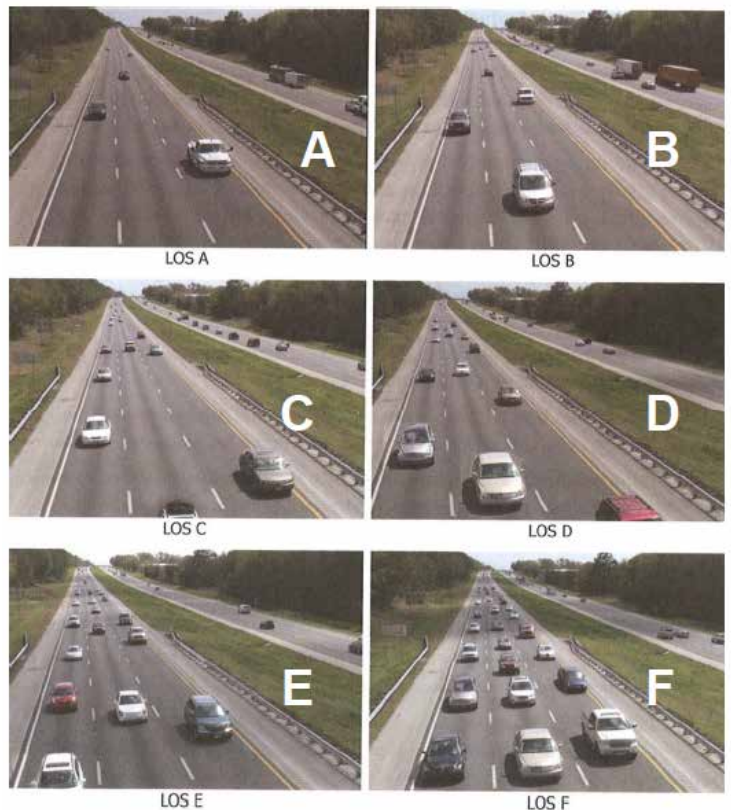
Level of service (LOS) values equate to varying levels of congestion. See table for LOS vs congestion comparisons.

Level of Service

- A
- B
- C
- D
- E
- F

Congestion

- Not congested
- Not congested
- Minimal congestion
- Moderate congestion
- Severe congestion
- Extreme congestion



How it relates to safety

Maintaining a desirable LOS is important to the safety of people that use the transportation network. As LOS decreases and congestion increases, crash rates generally increase, leading to increased safety concerns along the transportation network.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT A KEY PART OF STUDY PROCESS

Public Involvement Meetings

March 11-12, 2015

The first series of public involvement meetings was held in March to begin gathering input on the future of transportation planning in the Coulee Region. Approximately 80 members of the public attended the meetings at Central High School in La Crosse and Eagle Bluff Elementary in Onalaska. The presentation (available for viewing at the study website) provided an overview of existing conditions, and comments were gathered using a variety of public involvement tools. To view the meeting materials or provide your thoughts and comments, please visit www.couleeregionstudy.dot.wi.gov. The next round of public meetings is scheduled for June 9 & June 10. We hope to see you there!



Advisory Group Meetings

February 5, March 5, and April 2, 2015

Two advisory groups are working to provide additional perspective and insight from key stakeholders in the Coulee Region. The Technical Advisory Group consists of approximately 25 community members with technical backgrounds, and the Community Advisory Group contains 25 members representing residents, community organizations and businesses. Three meetings have been held to date, and several more are scheduled throughout the course of this year. Advisory group members are committed to their roles as community ambassadors, sharing group discussions with colleagues, family, friends and neighbors and bringing important feedback to the meetings.

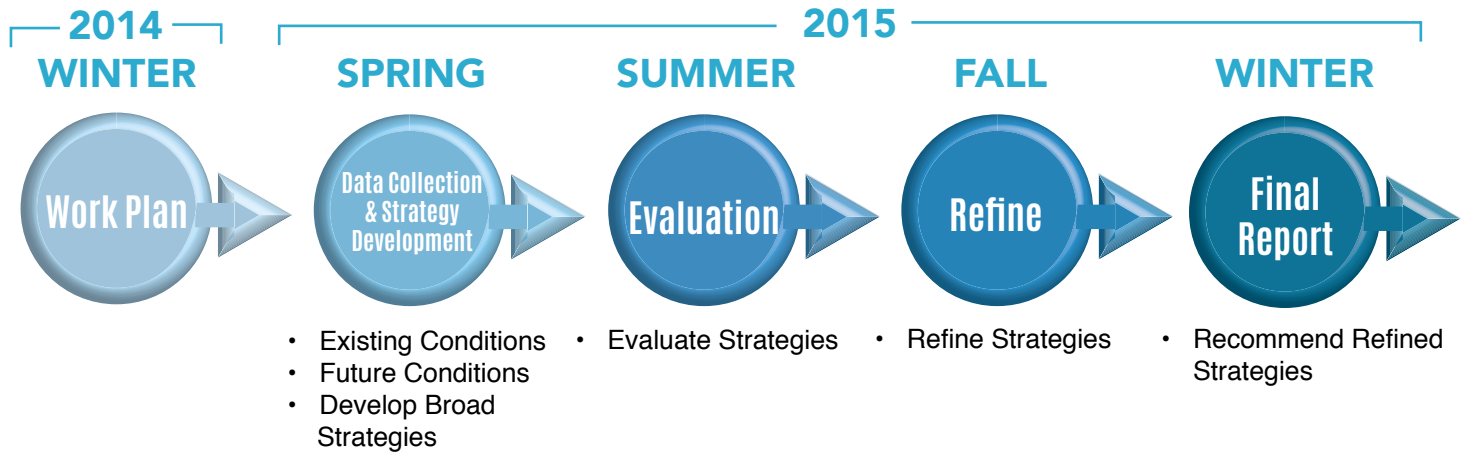
Grandview-Emerson Neighborhood

Association (GENA) Meeting March 24, 2015

Members of the study team spoke at a recent meeting of the Grandview-Emmerson Neighborhood Association to discuss how the study relates to the neighborhood and gather input from residents. It's part of the comprehensive public outreach effort being conducted by the Coulee Region Transportation Study. If you are part of neighborhood association or group looking to learn more about the study and provide feedback, we want to meet with you! Contact Andy Winga at 785-9061.



COULEE REGION PEL STUDY SCHEDULE



UPCOMING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MEETINGS



June 9, 5-7 p.m.
Eagle Bluff Elementary School
200 Eagle Bluff Court
Onalaska, WI 54650
Gymnasium



June 10, 5-7 p.m.
La Crosse Central High School
1801 Losey Blvd
La Crosse WI, 54601
Room 124 (Cafeteria)

Focus: Future Conditions of
the Coulee Region

HOW TO CONTACT US

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