

COULEE REGION TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Innovative Solutions for the 21st Century

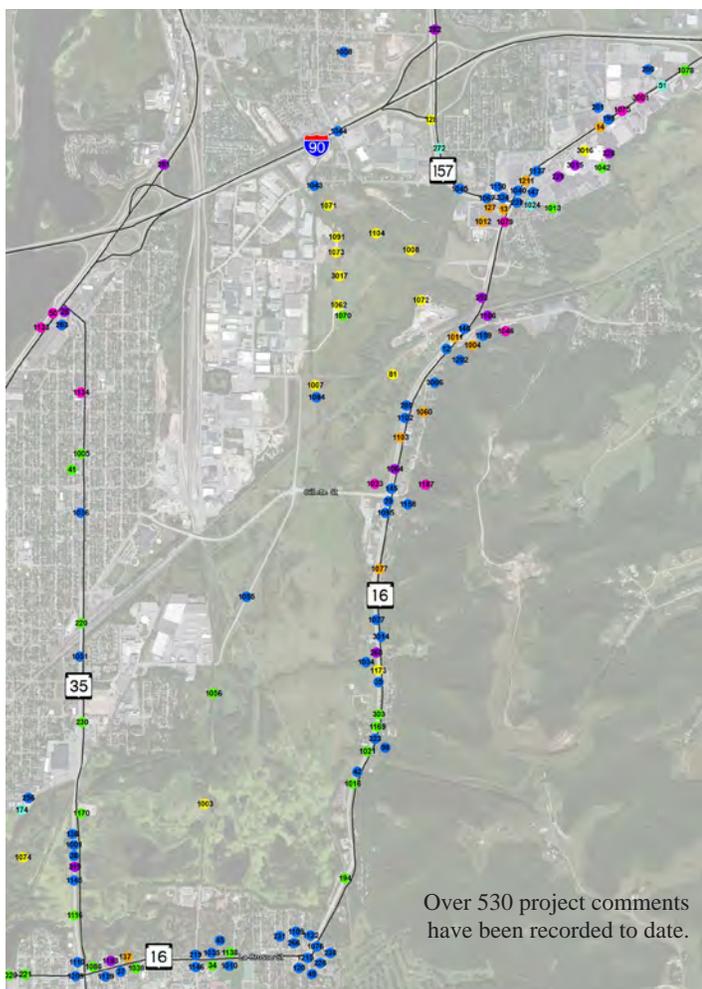
SECOND ROUND OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT GATHERS WIDE RANGE OF INPUT

The second round of public involvement meetings for the study took place on June 9 & 10 at Eagle Bluff Elementary School in Onalaska and Central High School in La Crosse. Attendance for the meetings was excellent. Prior to these meetings, the study had focused on existing conditions in the Coulee Region. These meetings shifted the focus toward looking at the future with a presentation that highlighted a diverse set of data on future conditions. Topics covered at the meeting included future population, employment, traffic forecast, road capacity, traffic congestion, bicycle, pedestrian, transit, freight and infrastructure data.



A stakeholder input station was set up at the meeting which allowed attendees to provide comments on transportation strategies they would like to see considered for the future. Attendees were encouraged to map the location of their comments on posters provided at the meeting. This exercise was also conducted at Community and Technical Advisory Group meetings and a meeting with the La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce. Comments were also gathered from previous focus group meetings held by the La Crosse Area Planning Committee. In total, over 350 comments were recorded from these meetings. These comments have been sorted by broad strategy type and entered into a Geographic Information System (GIS), which will serve as an important tool for the study team to develop strategies for the future using input from the public. The map to the left shows a sample of some of the mapped comments collected so far. Over 200 additional comments were gathered from specialized focus group meetings, totaling over 550 project comments in all. Full maps and lists of comments are posted on the study website:

www.couleeregionstudy.dot.wi.gov



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT CONTINUES TO PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE

Two New Focus Groups

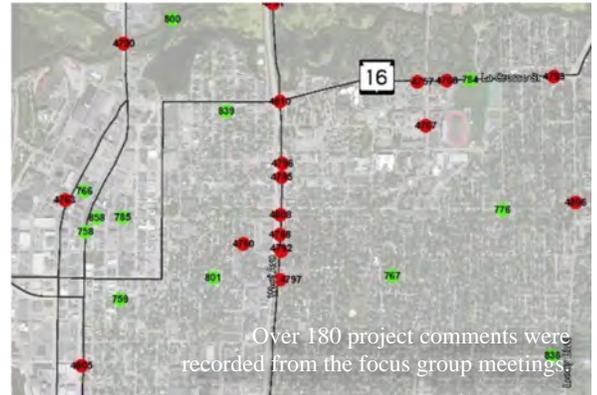
Public outreach is critical for the success of the study. In an effort to gain more input on specific areas, two new focus groups have been formed: a Transit Focus Group and a Bicycle & Pedestrian Focus Group. The focus groups, which have 12 members each, have met once so far and have another meeting scheduled for August. At the first meetings, focus group members were asked to identify assets and deficiencies of the existing bicycle/pedestrian network and transit system. They were encouraged to map their ideas on posters provided at the meeting, as well as offer up strategies that they felt might address some of the deficiencies discussed at the meetings. From the meetings WisDOT obtained over 200 of the study's 550 total mapped comments to date.

Additional Public Outreach

WisDOT has continued to meet with community groups and organizations to share information about the study and gather feedback. Throughout the study, WisDOT has met with a variety of groups including:

- Healthy Living Collaboration
- La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce
- Lower Northside and Depot Neighborhood Association
- Grandview Emerson Neighborhood Association
- La Crosse Area Builders Association
- UWL Student Senate
- Outdoor Recreation Alliance
- Several Area Businesses

If you are part of a community group or neighborhood association and are looking to learn more about the study and provide feedback, we want to meet with you! Contact Andy Winga at 608-785-9061.



UPCOMING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MEETINGS

Wednesday, September 23, 5-7 p.m.
Eagle Bluff Elementary School
200 Eagle Bluff Court
Onalaska, WI 54650
Gymnasium

Thursday, September 24, 5-7 p.m.
La Crosse Central High School
1801 Losey Blvd
La Crosse, WI 54601
Room 124 (Cafeteria)

HOW TO CONTACT US

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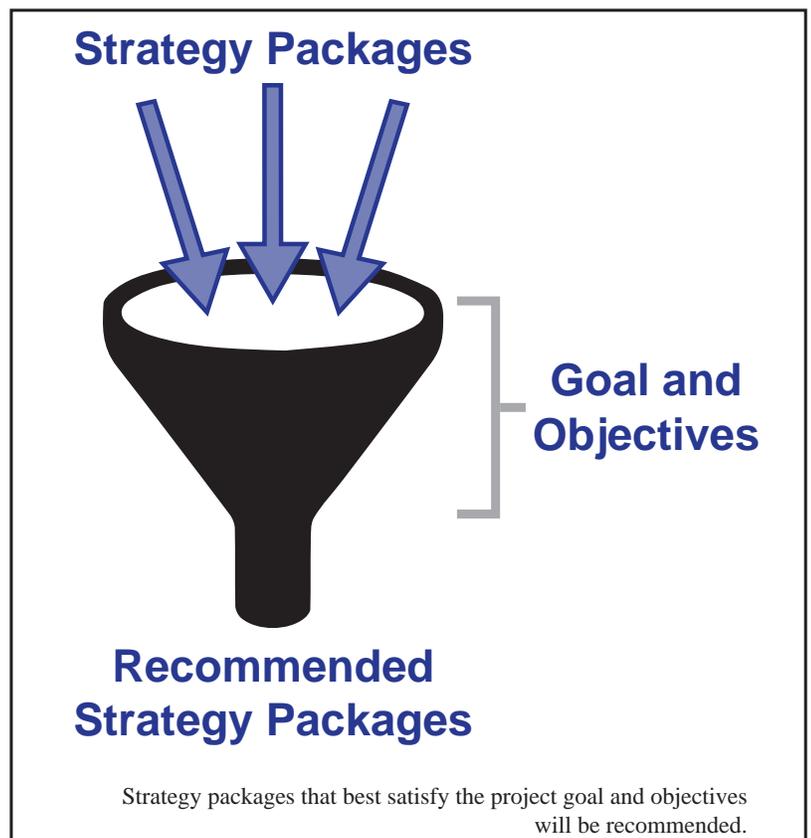
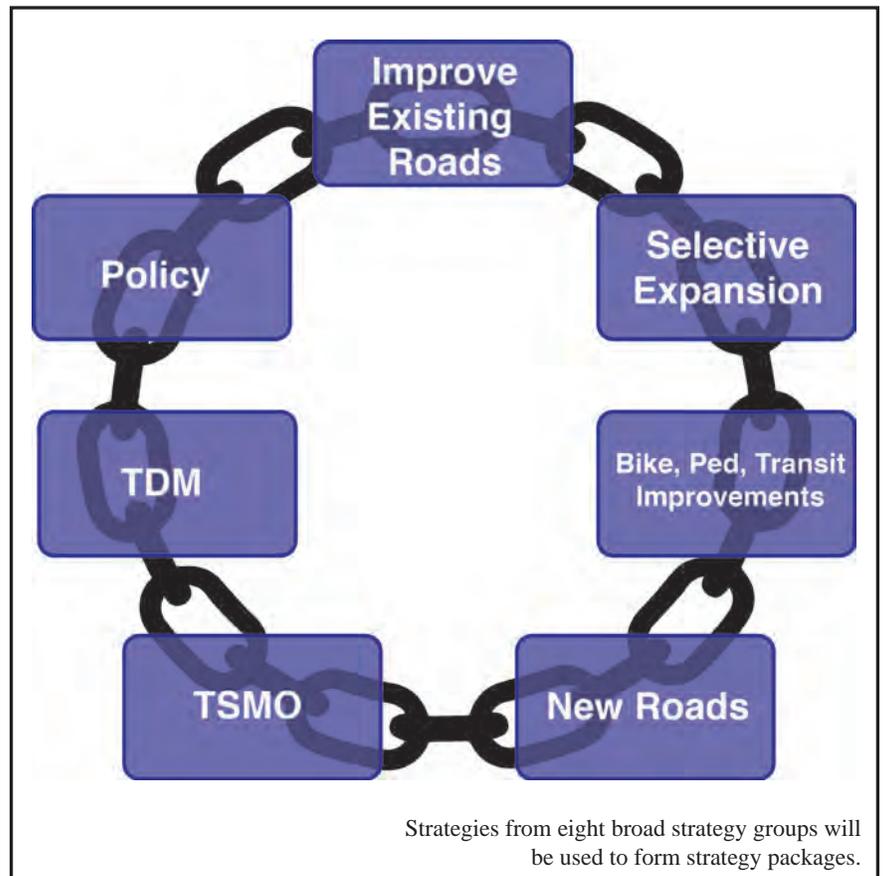
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THE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PHASE

Through the public outreach process, WisDOT has documented hundreds of suggested strategies for addressing transportation needs in the future. So how will WisDOT determine which is the right solution for the region going forward? In all likelihood, there won't be one single strategy that will address all of the region's future needs. WisDOT & local communities will need to link multiple strategies together, much like a chain, to provide more comprehensive strategy packages that the region can move forward with. Strategy packages will be formed with strategies from eight broad strategy groups, which include:

- Improve existing roads
- Selective expansion of existing roads
- Bicycle and pedestrian improvements
- Transit improvements
- Construct new roads
- Transportation system management operations (TSMO) & technology
- Travel demand management (TDM)
- Policy and legislation

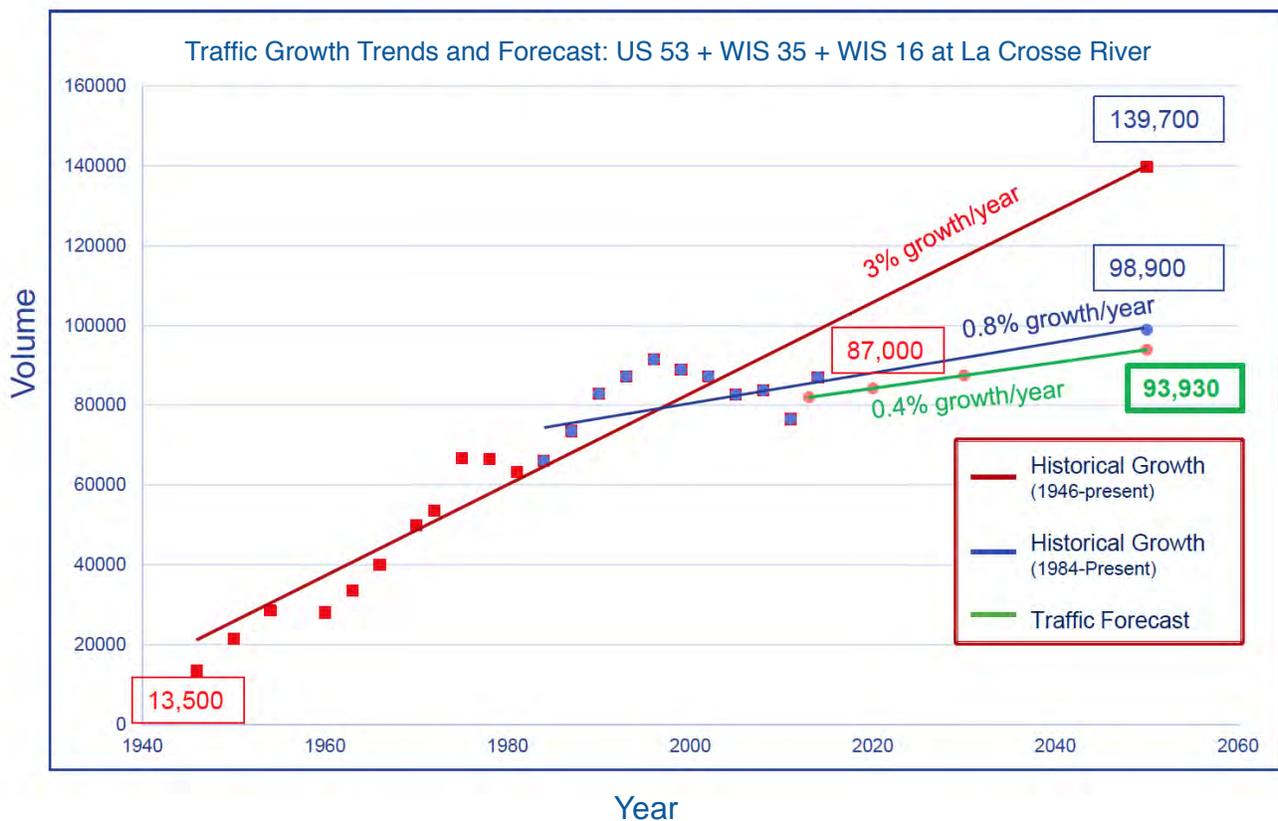
Once strategy packages have been developed, they must be evaluated to determine to what extent they satisfy the goal and objectives established earlier in the study process. The goal and objectives act as a funnel for strategy packages, where the input is a larger number of strategy packages, but only the ones that best satisfy the goal and objectives pass through. This process also helps identify the weaknesses for each strategy package, which could be modified and sent back for reevaluation.



FORECASTING: LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

Using Past Data to Make Informed Decisions

During the first phase of the study, WisDOT compiled a variety of data on traffic in the Coulee Region. This data can be used to paint a picture of what traffic trends have looked like over the last several decades. These trends can also be projected out into the future to help form estimates of what traffic will be like moving forward. However, traffic trends have not been consistent over the past several decades, and using different timeframes in the past to form future projections can lead to very different results. The red and blue lines on the chart below are a perfect example of this.



A More Comprehensive Model

To form accurate predictions of traffic trends in the future, WisDOT uses a more comprehensive forecast model. The model uses estimates of population, employment and household data to project demand and combines this with historic traffic data to predict traffic volumes in the future. The result is shown by the green line in the graph above. These volumes can be used to help inform transportation decisions in the future.

Because this is a long term study, implementation/construction of any strategies will not take place for many years. Many changes in the data that makes up the model can occur before that happens. Because of this, WisDOT will revisit the model periodically, and the forecasts may change. However, the current model acts a starting point for predicting future conditions and forming strategies that address these conditions. Strategies can be adjusted as needed as the project evolves and moves toward implementation/construction.