

Public Involvement Plan (PIP)

Coulee Region Transportation Study

“Innovative Solutions for the 21st Century”

Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL)

WisDOT Project I.D. 1630-08-00

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"Innovative Solutions for the 21st Century"
Planning and Environment Linkages

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Public Involvement Plan (PIP)

Coulee Region Transportation Study

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This plan will summarize, in general, the public involvement efforts for the CRTS. It is a living document and not necessarily all inclusive due to the extent, and changing nature, of the outreach.

The Coulee Region Transportation Study's Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is multi-faceted to meet the needs of a diverse range of issues, milestones and stakeholders on this important study. Components include scheduled Public Involvement Meetings (PIMs), Local Officials Meetings (LOMs), Agency Coordination Meetings, Community Advisory Group Meetings (CAGs), Technical Advisory Group Meetings (TAGs), community presentations, and stakeholder meetings.

The Coulee Region is comprised of numerous municipalities including the cities of La Crosse, WI, Onalaska, WI, and La Crescent, MN, as well as surrounding towns and villages including Campbell, Holland, Holmen, Medary, Shelby, West Salem, and Onalaska.

2.0 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The PIP will serve as a guide to ensure timely, accurate, concise and useful information to the public as well as local and state officials through a range of media communications and grassroots outreach. The goals include:

- To establish trust and credibility within the communities impacted.
- To seek public involvement and input before and during the PEL process.
- To provide transparency in the process.
- To be the immediate and best source of information about the study.

To meet the plan's goals, the following objectives have been established:

- Provide study information to the local public, interested parties, special interest groups/organizations, traveling public, business and industry, tourism, state and federal agencies, local and state officials and any other interested stakeholders on a timely and regular basis through a variety of methods including, but not limited to, meetings, websites, the media, and via e-mail distribution lists.
- Inform stakeholders about the CRTS and encourage participation/feedback as part of the public process.
- Design and implement media/communications strategies to create and maintain study awareness.

Public involvement activities will be coordinated by the project team which includes WisDOT's Southwest Regional Communications Manager (RCM). The public involvement activities will be driven by study schedules, milestones and other study-related issues.

Examples of milestones and study-related events/issues include, but are not limited to: community survey results, PIMs, CAG/TAG meetings, Agency Coordination Meetings, concept evaluation/plans, draft/final report, etc.

3.0 STAKEHOLDER LIST

Stakeholders are a key to the success of this study. Assembling and managing lists of stakeholders and maintaining regular communications with them will create a high level of public awareness. In addition to all residents in the Coulee Region, the following stakeholders have been identified.

Federal Agencies

FHWA
USACE
US EPA
USDOI-USFWS
USDA-NRCS
USHUD
USFTA
USDOI NPS
USDOI-Bureau of Indian Affairs

State Agencies

WisDOT SW Region
WisDOT Central Office
WDNR
DATCP
SHPO

City, Village, and Town Representatives

La Crosse County
City of La Crosse
City of Onalaska
City of La Crescent
Village of Holmen
Village of West Salem
Town of Campbell
Town of Medary
Town of Onalaska
Town of Shelby

Local and Elected Officials

La Crosse County Administrator
La Crosse County Supervisors
La Crosse County Highway Department
La Crosse County Health Department
La Crosse County EMS
La Crosse County Clerk's Office
La Crosse County Sheriff
La Crosse County Historical Society
La Crosse County UW Extension
La Crosse County Land Conservation

La Crosse County Planning
MPO (LAPC)
MRRPC
State Senator Office
State Assembly Person's Office

Business/Civic/Special Interest Groups

Dairyland Power
Livable Neighborhoods, Inc.
State Board for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration
Coulee Partners for Sustainability
7 Rivers Region Outdoor Recreation Alliance
La Crosse River Marsh Coalition
Gundersen Health System
Coulee Region United Soccer Club
Viterbo University
UWL Onalaska Area Business Association
Mayo Clinic Health System
Wal-Mart
La Crosse Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce
Sierra Club – Coulee Region Group
Trane
Kwik Trip
Mississippi Valley Conservancy
Bike Federation of Wisconsin
Central High School (Student)

Neighborhood Associations

Grandview Emerson
Washburn
La Crosse Neighborhood Revitalization Commission
Lower North Side and Depot

Native American Tribes

Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
Forest County Potawatomi
Ho-Chunk Nation
Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma
Menominee Indian Tribe
Prairie Island Indian Community Minnesota Mdewakanton Sioux
Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma
Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska
Sac and Fox of Mississippi in Iowa
Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation
Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians

Emergency Services

La Crosse County Sheriff's Dept.
La Crosse County EMS
City of La Crosse Police & Fire Depts.
City of Onalaska Police and Fire Depts.

Schools

La Crosse Area School District
Onalaska School District

Transit Groups

La Crosse Municipal Transit Utility

4.0 AGENCY COORDINATION

The PEL process will interact with federal, state, and local agencies as well as Native American tribes. There will be regular and continuous interaction with these entities. For local governments, there will be two types of coordination. A Technical Advisory Group (TAG) made up of staff from local governments will be used to provide technical input on objectives, screening criteria, and evaluate alternative strategies. The TAG will provide guidance on local government structure and committees.

Local Officials Meetings (LOM) will be used to review objectives and screening criteria and evaluate alternative strategies from a community perspective. Agency Coordination Meetings will also be utilized throughout the CRTS to keep participating and coordinating agencies up-to-date.

4.1 Listing of Agencies Invited to Participate

Table 1 is a list of Agencies Invited to Participate.

	Entity	State/Federal Agency Coordination	Technical Advisory Group	Local Officials Group	Community Advisory Group
FEDERAL	FHWA	X	X	X	
	USACE	X	X	X	
	USEPA	X		X	
	USDOJ-USFWS	X		X	
	USDA-NRCS	X		X	
	USHUD	X		X	
	USFTA	X		X	
	USDOJ-Bureau of Indian Affairs	X		X	
STATE	WisDOT SW Region	X	X	X	
	WisDOT Central Office	X		X	
	WDNR	X	X	X	
	DATCP	X		X	
	DOA	X		X	
	SHPO	X		X	
TRIBES	Coordinate with those that accept invitation to participate	X		X	

	Entity	State/Federal Agency Coordination	Technical Advisory Group	Local Officials Group	Community Advisory Group
LOCAL AND ELECTED OFFICIALS	La Crosse County Administrator		X	X	
	La Crosse County Supervisors			X	
	La Crosse County Hwy Dept.		X	X	
	La Crosse County Health Dept.		X	X	
	La Crosse County EMS		X	X	
	La Cross County Clerk's Office			X	
	La Crosse County Sheriff			X	
	La Crosse County Historical Society			X	
	La Crosse County UW Extension			X	
	La Crosse County Land Conservation			X	
	La Crosse County Planning		X	X	
	MPO (LAPC)		X	X	
	MRRPC		X	X	
	State Senator Office			X	
	State Assembly Person's Office			X	
CITY OF LA CROSSE DEPT	City of La Crosse Clerk's Office			X	
	City of La Crosse Parks and Rec.			X	
	City of La Crosse Mayor			X	
	City of La Crosse Planning		X	X	
	City of La Crosse Police Dept.		X	X	
	City of La Crosse Fire Dept.		X	X	
	City of La Crosse Public Works		X	X	
	City of La Crosse Engineering		X	X	
	City of La Crosse Municipal Transit		X	X	
	City of La Crosse (City Council)			X	
CITY, VILLAGE, AND TOWN REPRESENTATIVES	City of La Crescent			X	
	City of Onalaska		X	X	
	Town of Campbell			X	
	Town of Medary			X	
	Town of Onalaska			X	
	Town of Shelby			X	
	Village of Holmen		X	X	
	Village of West Salem		X	X	
COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES	Neighborhood Associations				X
	Businesses				X
	Residents				X
	Community/Non-Profit Organizations				X
	Universities & Tech Schools				X

	Entity	State/Federal Agency Coordination	Technical Advisory Group	Local Officials Group	Community Advisory Group
	Environmental Groups				X
	La Crosse County Historical Society			X	
	La Crosse Municipal Airport			X	
	School Districts		X	X	
	Utility Companies			X	

4.2 Federal and State Agencies

In Stage 2, study sponsors (WisDOT and FHWA) will develop sponsor roles and direction before interagency coordination begins. This will include a discussion of a possible problem statement, goals, and objectives for the corridor as well as example screening criteria that could be used for evaluation of strategies. At this time, WisDOT and FHWA will define each agency's role in studying and implementing alternative mode solutions. Clearly understanding and defining these roles with regard to transit for the CRTS will be important in view of recent challenges to roadway projects.

The federal and state agency coordination will begin at a kickoff meeting in Stage 2. Items and objectives for the kickoff meeting and necessary subsequent agencies meetings include:

- a. Introduction of the PEL process and Federal Regulations surrounding it (23 USC 168)
- b. Review and comment on Draft Problem Statement/Objectives

In these initial coordination meetings, WisDOT and FHWA will pursue a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with federal and state agencies that provides consensus on the use of PEL findings in future environmental documents. This MOU will note that this PEL process is an acceptable method of developing and screening of strategies and determining those that will be evaluated in a subsequent NEPA environmental process. The initial agency coordination meetings will also revise and complete a coordination plan similar to the coordination plans used in the United States Code (USC) 23 USC 139 [formerly referred to as Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU 6002)] process.

Coordination with federal and state agencies will be continuous throughout the process. Consensus and/or agreement will be obtained on the results of each stage: broad strategies, corridor concepts, refined concepts, and draft and final report. Meeting frequency will be determined by the agencies at the kickoff meeting and adjusted as needed. After the draft report has been published, comments and a formal concurrence on the results will be sought from federal and state agencies.

4.3 Local Public Agencies

WisDOT representatives will meet with staff members of the public works and planning departments of affected communities to introduce the CRTS, the PEL Process and explain the type of involvement requested from their staff and elected officials. WisDOT will interact with local officials during Stages 2 through 5 of the PEL Work Plan as follows.

Before the formation of technical and community advisory groups (TAG's and CAG's), WisDOT representatives met with staff members of the public works and planning departments of affected communities to explain the PEL process and the need for involvement from their staff and elected officials. These briefings occurred in February 2015. WisDOT will continue to interact with local officials through Stages 2 through 5 of the work plan as follows.

4.3.1 Stage 2–Broad Strategies

The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) made up of staff members from potentially affected communities will be formed to provide technical guidance on broad regional strategies. Depending on the coordination activities with federal and state officials, the committee may also contain representatives from resource agencies. The TAG will take part in the development, review, and comment on the problem statement, screening criteria, and strategies evaluation.

A Community Advisory Group (CAG) made up of identified individuals from potentially affected communities will be formed to provide community input on broad regional strategies. The CAG will meet to develop, review, and comment on the problem statement and screening criteria and evaluate broad strategies.

The La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC) Policy Board will assist the project team in developing broad strategies that are in concert with the Coulee Vision 2050.

The expectation is that these committees could meet up to three or more times during the Broad Strategies (Stage 2) part of the project.

4.3.2 Stage 3–Strategies

Following screening, strategies that satisfy the problem statement will be advanced to Stage 3. In this stage, the strategies will be refined and evaluated. Those that do not address the problem statement and objectives will be dismissed or identified for consideration in other programs.

The TAG will review problem statements, objectives, and screening criteria. The TAG will then evaluate improvement concepts. It is anticipated that the TAG will meet two times or more to evaluate concepts.

The CAG will review problem statements, objectives, and screening criteria. The CAG will then evaluate improvement concepts. It is anticipated that the CAG will meet two times or more to evaluate concepts.

4.3.3 Stage 4–Refined Strategies

The concepts portion of the study will develop concepts that satisfy the problem statement and objectives. Following screening in Stage 3, concepts that address the problem statement, define objectives, and warrant more detailed study for feasibility and effects are brought forward into Stage 4 where these concepts are refined and further analyzed. Stage 4 is the final stage where strategies are screened. Those recommended to move forward will be identified for future NEPA documents and documented in the Study's draft and final reports.

During Stage 4, the CAG and TAG will continue to review and evaluate the refined concepts.

4.3.4 Stage 5–Draft and Final Reports

After release of the draft report, comments will be sought. These comments will be addressed in the final PEL report. At this time, endorsements will be requested from communities that were involved in the CAG and TAG process.

5.0 OUTLINE OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT METHODS

The study team will use a variety of public involvement methods through Stages 2 through 5. Methods will include but not be limited to: public involvement meetings, focus groups, newsletters, and a website.

It is anticipated the public communication will begin in Stage 2 and coincide with the beginning of public meetings. Consistent and strategic communication efforts will take place throughout the CRTS PEL effort. The following paragraphs summarize conventional and electronic communication media options that will be implemented.

5.1 Media

5.1.1 Electronic Media

Because of the broad area that could be affected by regional alternative strategies, electronic mediums will be leveraged to efficiently obtain input from Coulee Region residents. The following list summarizes the electronic mediums that are planned.

1. The CRTS has obtained a website address that directs viewers to the WisDOT website for the study. This provides a quick method for the public to obtain project information.
www.couleeregionstudy.dot.wi.gov

2. Add any additional from Work Plan if applicable

Other electronic mediums may be implemented as needed to effectively reach different groups, residents, and employers.

5.1.2 Conventional Media

Conventional media will also be used to interact with those who do not have access to, or do not use, electronic media sources. Notice of project events, such as PIM's, will be provided through electronic media but notification will also use the following media.

1. Select distribution of newsletters to those requesting hard copies.
2. Press releases will be distributed to media outlets before major study activities such as PIMs.
3. The project team will pursue interviews with media outlets to inform the public of the study and advertise major study events.
4. Add any additional from Work Plan if applicable

5.2 Meetings

5.2.1 Public Involvement Meetings (PIMs)

PIM's will be held at critical junctures of the project: The PIM's are:

1. Stage 2–A PEL kickoff meeting that introduces the study and allows the public to review and comment on draft problem statement, objectives, and screening criteria.
2. Stage 2–A PIM to review and comment on the findings of the broad strategy evaluation.
3. Stage 3–A PIM to review the draft findings of concept evaluation.

4. Stage 3-A PIM to review the final findings of concept evaluation.
5. Stage 4–A PIM to review the findings for the refined concept evaluation.
6. Stage 5-A PIM to review Draft Report.

PIM's will consist of two meetings at two locations and dates within a one to two week period. Each set of meetings will have identical meeting content and exhibits. The locations will change to provide greater opportunity for residents to attend. It is anticipated that each PIM series will be held at two locations. Convenient access to environmental justice (EJ) populations will be a factor in the selection of meeting locations.

5.2.2 Focus Groups

Meetings with local government officials and staff are discussed under agency coordination. Meetings will be held with special interest, advocacy groups, groups representing EJ populations, and major employers at critical junctures in the PEL process to obtain feedback. Examples could include University of Wisconsin, La Crosse public schools, Gundersen Health System, Trane, and the La Crosse Hmong Cultural and Community Agency. Junctures will include:

1. Stage 2–Review of the problem statement and screening criteria.
2. Stage 2–Review of the evaluation of broad strategies.
3. Stages 3 and 4–Review strategies.

If strategies and concepts are refined to specific locations, the PEL Team may also initiate meetings with neighborhood groups to obtain feedback on improvements that could affect them.

6.0 STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS

In addition to the key stakeholders (discussed in Section 3 of this document), there are a number of individuals, businesses, groups and organizations interested in this study. The CRTS Team will communicate activities to a wide range of audiences and stakeholders, which may include but is not limited to:

- General public
- Local communities
- La Crosse neighborhood associations
- Business and Industry
- Tourism
- Special interest groups
- Area commuters

6.1 General Public

The general public includes Coulee Region residents, area visitors, and commuters. Anticipated issues to be addressed for the general public include, but are not limited to:

- Education on the PEL process
- Existing conditions, challenges and deficiencies
- Importance to regional economy and metro area
- Current transportation demands/needs

- Future transportation demands/need
- Screening criteria
- Transportation strategy options/recommendations
- Potential impacts
- PEL schedule and milestones

Examples of outreach to the general public include study videos; a website with current information about the study and process; neighborhoods and special interest groups; hosting PIMs, preparing and distributing informational brochures, distributing media announcements and news releases at milestones and e-mailing notifications to stakeholders.

6.1.1 Public Involvement Meetings (PIMs)

Large-scale PIMs will be conducted in La Crosse and Onalaska to inform the general public about the study's progress. These meetings will be coordinated with the Project Manager (PM) and will be promoted on the study website, in the newspaper, and through email notifications to the study mailing list.

The Study Team, in conjunction with the RCM, is responsible for coordinating meeting logistics including developing meeting materials, and determining staff needs for the meeting. The PM, and other study team members, attends the meetings to be available for questions and to present information if needed.

These meetings will be conducted in the hybrid open house format and will include display easels or stations staffed by study the CRTS project staff. A study video and/or PowerPoint presentation about the overall study will be created for people to view. Relatively short presentations, as well as Q&A sessions, are typically included in PIMs.

6.1.2 Neighborhood Outreach

Outreach to neighborhoods includes hosting informal meetings with potentially affected residents and distributing study information. Meetings with individual residents or neighborhood and homeowners associations are also anticipated.

6.2 Business & Industry

This group includes individual businesses and industries within the Coulee Region.

Examples of outreach to businesses and industries include study videos, a website with current information about the study and process, social media, hosting small group and/or one-on-one meetings distributing informational brochures, media announcements and news releases at milestones (which can then be redistributed by the business, group or organization to its members).

6.2.1 Business & Industry Meetings

WisDOT will host informal group and one-on-one meetings for businesses/stakeholders along the study corridor. The PM, and select study team members, is responsible for conducting these meetings.

The CRTS PEL Team ensures they are utilizing and updating the distribution list. The project team will assist the PM with preparing meeting materials and setting up meetings. The RCM should be invited to all business outreach meetings.

The RCM, along with the PM will communicate directly with businesses to identify their concerns. In many cases, design exhibits and materials are able to address employers' needs. The PM may provide selected informational materials for distribution by the employer, as handouts. The CRTS Team will continue to communicate with business/industry stakeholders throughout the study.

6.3 Area Communities

Municipalities and official Neighborhood Associations located in the Coulee Region will have a heightened interest in the Coulee Region Transportation Study.

Examples of outreach to the communities includes a website with current information about the study and process, hosting PIMs, distributing informational brochures and posters, distributing media announcements and news releases at milestones, e-mailing notifications to stakeholders, Community Advisory Group (CAG) representation and being available to meet with various communities and their representatives.

6.4 Elected Officials/Government Agencies

Local and state elected officials, and representatives of involved agencies, will require inclusion in public information dissemination and regular involvement meetings as needed or requested. These representatives will be interested in the effects on constituents, infrastructure, and agency resources.

Examples of outreach to elected officials and government agencies includes individualized meetings with the La Crosse Mayor, membership in Technical Advisory Group (TAG), a website with current information about the study and process, hosting public involvement meetings, and meeting one-on-one or in small groups. In addition, update briefings will be held for local governments on an as-requested basis.

6.4.1 Elected Officials/Agencies Point of Contact

The Regional Communications Manager (RCM) and Project Manager (PM) are the primary contacts for state and local officials. Outreach to state and local elected officials is important throughout the study as elected and public officials typically receive calls from residents and businesses about study activities.

If consultants are contacted by any state or local official, they are asked to notify the Project Manager and RCM (by email or phone) with the following information:

- Contact name, affiliation, and either email or phone number
- Description of issue
 - Constituent's name (if there is one)
 - Background
- Proposed response (if you have one)

The outreach to state and local officials is developed and implemented with the goal that the officials are provided answers or information requested of them by constituents.

6.5 Special Interest Groups

There are a number of special interest groups in the Coulee Region that may be interested in the Study. These groups are listed in Section 3.0.

Anticipated issues to be addressed include, but are not limited to:

- Education on the PEL process
- Current status of transportation in the Coulee Region
- Importance to regional economy and metro area
- Transportation demands/needs
- Future transportation demands/need
- Transportation strategy options/recommendations
- PEL schedule and milestones
- Transit service levels
- Bike/pedestrian connectivity
- Transportation equity
- Impacts

Examples of outreach to the special interest groups include study videos, a website with current information about the study and process, social media which will engage the communities and neighborhoods, hosting PIMs, distributing informational brochures and posters, distributing media announcements and news releases at milestones, e-mailing notifications to stakeholders, and being available to meet with the groups one-on-one or through small group meetings.

6.6 Environmental Justice (EJ)

At the start of Stage 2 study staff will:

- Meet with WisDOT EJ resource staff to gather information and input regarding the overall EJ approach.
- Meet with organizations that traditionally are a voice for EJ populations (e.g., La Crosse Hmong Cultural and Community Agency).

Examples of potential outreach to the EJ population includes, but is not limited to, study videos, project website, hosting PIMs, distributing informational brochures and posters, distributing media announcements and news releases at milestones, and being available to meet with on an as-needed basis.

The location of EJ populations will be a factor in the selection of public involvement locations for each public involvement cycle. Any other language translations will be considered if certain ethnic concentrations exist within the areas affected by alternative strategies being evaluated, or if a need for translation is requested.

A more detailed outreach strategy to members of the Environmental Justice (EJ) population will be addressed in a separate EJ plan. It should also be noted that many of the other study public involvement activities and tactics described in this plan will also reach the EJ population.

6.7 Native American Tribes

Native American Tribes are likely to have an interest in the Study.

Examples of outreach to Native American Tribes includes study videos, a website with current information about the study and process, hosting PIMs, distributing informational brochures and posters, distributing media announcements and news releases at milestones, and being available to meet with Tribal representatives on an as-needed basis.

6.8 Target Audience Outreach Methods

Table 2 illustrates public involvement tactics to be used throughout the CRTS, as well as showing which target audience(s) the tactic will reach. Grey shaded areas indicate audiences impacted by specific tactics.

Table 1 - Tactics & Target Audience Impact Matrix

Methods	General Public	Business Industry Tourism	Local Comm.	Elected Officials & Agencies	Special Interest Groups	Enviro. Justice	Native Amer.
Study Website							
Email info							
Brochure							
Newsletter(s)							
Poster(s)							
PIMs							
Small Group or One-on-One Meetings							
CAG and TAG							
General Meetings							
Focus Group Meetings							
News releases & alerts							

7.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The CRTS Team will use a range of resources, activities, advisory groups and media outreach to communicate and seek input at study milestones and on key issues. Specific information resources and outreach activities are described in Section 7.

7.1 Information Resources

Public Involvement Information Resources is a list of information methods and products that will be utilized to inform the public about the CRTS. All tools listed will be reviewed by the team prior to distribution.

Public Involvement Information Resources

Tool	Description	Use
Website	A website will be developed for the WisDOT studies site: www.couleeregionstudy.dot.wi.gov	This will be the main resource for all stakeholders looking for current information on the study
Traditional Media	<p>News releases will be developed and distributed to area media on an as-needed basis regarding study milestones, issues and/or public meetings.</p> <p>Contacts with editorial boards will provide key area media outlets with clear and concise information about the study.</p>	Traditional media, including websites, still plays a valuable role in reaching the general public as well as elected officials.
E-mail Distribution	Information e-mails will be sent to stakeholders on the mailing list and elected officials as major study issues arise and as study milestones occur. A distribution list is developed and continually updated. Limited paper mailings will also be used to disseminate information.	To distribute fact sheets, public involvement meeting dates, study updates and other information.
Newsletters	<p>Newsletters will be developed and distributed to coincide with key study milestones and meetings.</p> <p>The newsletter will be a concise, but comprehensive record of study activities to date which will include information, public input opportunities, and brief reports on meetings that have occurred, etc.</p>	Primary distribution will be via email and posting on the website. A number of newsletters will be printed for distribution via community organizations and libraries.
Technical Presentations	Presentations will be developed to communicate updates on the study milestones, public involvement opportunities, schedule, and information contacts.	For use at PIMs and small-group meetings as well as placed on the website.

Fact Sheets	As a way of communicating with specific audiences, fact sheets will be prepared periodically to provide information on specific issues and/or upcoming public involvement meetings.	Fact sheets will be used for public involvement, local meetings and placed on the website.
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7.2 Contact Information

The following is in accordance with the rules and policies set by the Office of Public Affairs (OPA):

- Any mass mailings related to the CRTS will be written for the WisDOT Project Manager's signature.
- All correspondence will be on the approved CRTS PEL letterhead or WisDOT letterhead.
- Only WisDOT employee signatures can appear on WisDOT letterhead.
- For study mailings that request a return response, a self-addressed envelope sent directly to the consultant's address may be used.
- In written correspondence, the return address may include the name of the consultant at the discretion of the WisDOT study manager, but it will also include a WisDOT name and address. If consultant names are included, their role should be clearly outlined in the letter.
- All brochures, newsletters, websites, etc. will include the name and contact information of a WisDOT project manager and/or the RCM.
- Invitations to public meetings will be on WisDOT letterhead, in WisDOT envelopes, with WisDOT contact information.
- News releases or media alerts prepared for transportation study/studies will always go out on WisDOT letterhead with WisDOT staff listed as the contact.
- Distribution of any media alerts or news releases will be handled by WisDOT communications unless the study representative delegates the duty to a PI consultant.

7.3 Logos

- Logos placed on materials play an important role in the communication process. The use of logos on WisDOT materials is tightly controlled.
- The WisDOT logo and the CRTS PEL logo must be on materials distributed or viewed externally.
- No consultant logos are to appear on WisDOT materials distributed or viewed externally as public involvement documents.
- Consultant logos may appear on technical documents and plans, including those used at public involvement meetings when there is a professional or proprietary need to have the consultant identified.
- Consultants preparing materials on behalf of WisDOT may obtain the WisDOT logo and use it according to WisDOT's graphic identity standards.

7.4 Print Materials

All print materials (newsletters, fact sheets, handouts containing sensitive information, etc.) for public meetings will be reviewed and approved by the CRTS Team. The RCM determines if public involvement materials are subject to department approval under the Transportation Administration Manual (TAM) policies. If so, the RCM sends the material to the OPA for review. This is consistent with TAM 22.

7.5 Newsletters

A newsletter will be prepared when appropriate as new information is ready for distribution, and will be posted on the study website and emailed to those on the email list in advance of the meeting. The newsletter will be a concise, but comprehensive record of study activities to date, and will include information on the study process, scheduled milestones, public input opportunities, brief reports on meetings that have occurred, etc.

WisDOT and the public involvement team will determine content and language for each newsletter. The public involvement team will draft and finalize each edition for the PM's approval.

Newsletters will be used for email and general distribution, PIMs and small-group meetings. Newsletters should be posted/emailed approximately three weeks prior to PIMs or Public Hearings.

7.6 Fact Sheets

Fact sheets will be created when WisDOT sees a need to inform the public of certain issues. The fact sheets will be distributed by staff attending public outreach and local government meetings. The public involvement team will assist in creating the fact sheets, including advising study managers about content and format.

7.7 Translations

Requests for translations should be given to the CRTS PEL Team.

7.8 Electronic Media

7.8.1 Website

Keeping the public informed and involved during this study is one of the most important goals of the effort. The website will be located at www.couleeregionstudy.dot.wi.gov and will contain information about the study.

The CRTS Team will provide updates for the WisDOT-hosted website. Announcements for any public meeting dates and locations should be placed on the site at least two weeks in advance of the meetings. Meeting handouts and exhibits will also be placed on the website close to or on the date of the first meeting for the public to view. The website will include links for direct email connections with study staff.

The project team, in conjunction with WisDOT, is encouraged to review web content on a regular basis and help keep the site as up-to-date as possible.

All information presented on the website will be reviewed and approved by the CRTS PEL Team and posted by the Region. That person is responsible to coordinate posting of material on the website. Emails announcing study information will also be sent to constituents who sign up for email updates through the website.

7.8.2 PowerPoint Presentations

PowerPoint is a powerful tool using graphics to capture the interest of the viewer. The amount of text on each slide should be kept to a minimum for easy reading. PowerPoint presentations will be used for internal and external meetings as well as placed on the study website.

7.8.3 Mailing List/Maintenance

The list will be updated as needed to include stakeholders, local officials, agencies and other interested parties. All public meeting sign-in sheets will be checked against the present database and changes or additions will be made as needed.

7.8.4 Strategies for Future Issues

As with any study, there will be unanticipated issues that arise, which will require outreach to inform, involve or respond to the public. The CRTS Team will identify these issues through ongoing public involvement activities and regularly scheduled meetings with the PM and RCM.

As part of the public involvement process, once the team receives a request for action on an issue or milestone, the project team will develop a strategy for successful outreach.

7.9 Media Outreach

Local media outlets will be used to keep users and stakeholders informed about the study. WisDOT shall provide information to the public involvement team for the development of up-to-date information for media materials relating to the Study.

7.9.1 Media Contacts

It is important that contacts with the news media be handled in a timely manner by the most appropriate WisDOT spokesperson. The RCM serves as an ongoing resource for the media along the corridor.

The RCM works, on a daily basis, to provide media with information, coordinate interviews, provide access to study areas for video/photographs, etc. Since study managers are often in the field, it's most efficient for media to contact the RCM who can coordinate information and interview needs.

The RCM can provide suggestions for proactively contacting media through news releases, alerts, briefings, editorial board visits, etc. WisDOT may schedule a media briefing or editorial board prior to a public involvement meeting, or as an issue arises, as a way to present information to the media without distraction. Other guidelines regarding media contacts include:

- It's the responsibility the project team to keep the RCM and public involvement team informed of study issues that may garner media attention. One of the best ways to do this is to involve the RCM at regular study team meetings and updates.
- Contact information on a media release is generally WisDOT staff. There may be some circumstances when a consultant is listed as the contact on a WisDOT release, but the WisDOT project manager should always approve it.
- The RCM distributes media advisories and releases using the department's media distribution list.
- Only department staff speaks on behalf of the department. At PIMs, the consultants may assist in presentations, but the lead spokesperson on state study/studies should be a WisDOT employee.
- If contacted directly by a reporter, consultants should refer the reporter to the RCM to coordinate the request for information. Consultants may be asked to provide information to media, but this should only be done at the request of the RCM.

- Media contacts must be reported according to department policy in TAM 15.

7.9.2 News Releases

Media participation and coverage of the PIMs will be encouraged via news releases and through coordination with the RCM. The PM, and/or designated Study Team member, will provide content, maps and graphics for news releases.

The RCM will issue news releases to all local media outlets prior to public involvement meetings and other study milestones. A list of media outlets focused on the minority communities will be developed. Other media milestones will be used if available and appropriate.

7.9.3 Media Requests

All media requests should be routed through the PM. The PM will then contact the RCM to develop a response.

The public involvement team will prepare responses to media inquiries and provide to the RCM for review and approval. The RCM will be assigned to work with reporters that attend public meetings to make sure they have accurate information and an opportunity to interview with study managers or supervisors (with their consent).

7.9.4 Media Briefings/Editorial Boards

The project team, working with the RCM, will develop and provide information to the necessary individual for media briefings and/or editorial boards. All print and electronic notices should be reviewed and approved by the project team prior to distribution.

7.10 Public Meeting Notices

The project team will prepare content, maps and graphics for public meeting notices or display ads for publication. All print and electronic notices should be reviewed and approved by the project team prior to distribution.

7.10.1 Multicultural Media Notices

The project team and RCM will prepare content, maps and graphics for inclusion in multicultural media outlets and brochures. All print and electronic notices should be reviewed and approved by the project team prior to distribution.

8.0 STUDY TEAM MEMBERS & ROLES

This chapter describes how the CRTS PEL Team will coordinate outreach efforts.

8.1 Study Staff

WisDOT and the CRTS Team will be jointly responsible for the implementation of the PIP throughout the study.

There is also WisDOT staff that will be key to managing, supervising and supporting public outreach efforts. In addition, WisDOT has retained public involvement and communications consultants to support public involvement activities for the CRTS. Consultant team members include: WisDOT, Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc., g. Moxie and Bay Ridge Consulting.

WisDOT and the CRTS Team will work closely together to ensure appropriate study staff members have opportunities to meet and communicate with the public in both large and small-scale meetings. The following provides the names and titles of those involved in the public outreach.

Coulee Region Transportation Study Team and Titles

Name	Title
Andrew Winga	WisDOT - Project Manager
Stephen Flottmeyer	WisDOT - Project Supervisor
Angela Adams	WisDOT - Project Chief
Steve Vetsch	WisDOT - Regional Environmental Coordinator
Francis Schelfhout	WisDOT – Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator
Rosanne Meer	WisDOT – Environmental C.O.
Bethaney Bacher-Gresock	FHWA – Environmental Specialist
Darren Fortney	Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc. - Project Manager, Public Involvement
Jim Hanson	Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc. - Deputy Project Manager, Traffic
Jeremy Tomesh	Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc. - Traffic, Design
Nate Day	Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc. - Public Involvement, Land Use
	g. Moxie - Public Relations, Public Involvement
	Bay Ridge Consulting - Public Involvement, Transit

Coulee Region Transportation Study PEL WisDOT Public Involvement Team Leaders

Name	Title
Andrew Winga	CRTS PEL Study Team Project Manager (PM)
Michael Bie	CRTS PEL Study Regional Communications Manager (RCM)

9.0 PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS RECORD (PCR)

With the scale of the CRTS, members of WisDOT will be called upon to answer questions from the public, local officials, legislators and news media. Most of these public contacts are routine. Others may fall under the Public Communications Record (PCR) requirement.

Whenever WisDOT or the study team members are contacted by legislators, local officials, private sector officials, or news reporters for information, opinions or comments, summaries of contacts are reported to the PM, RCM, OPA and the Department’s Secretary’s Office.

Such reports are an important part of the Department’s communication system. PCRs may be an “early warning” system alerting the Secretary’s Office to emerging issues, and provide

feedback about public/media/legislative support for transportation programs, proposals or plans.

9.1 When PCRs are required

PCRs should be filed as soon as possible and no later than the end of the day the contact occurred. They should be filed when:

- the communication is likely to result in radio, television or newspaper coverage;
- the subject matter is or potentially will be controversial or sensitive in nature;
- there is reason to believe the caller may be gathering information from others within the Department;
- the contact is about a subject of local importance that may become controversial;
- the subject matter relates to a legislative issue;
- the question suggests a major issue may be emerging;
- The communication is likely to result in a call to the Secretary's office, Governor's office or elected official.

9.1.1 PCRs are not required when the:

- subject is of local or limited interest, or the caller is referred to somebody else; examples might include a question relating to another project or study in the Coulee Region;
- Contact is non-controversial and in response to news releases issued by WisDOT.

9.2 PCR Information

All PCRs must contain the following information:

- Subject – briefly identified
- Routine/Urgent
- Date
- From
- Division/Bureau
- Contact name
- Organization
- Subject matter
- Discussion summary
- Points made
- Follow-up suggested

To ensure consistency of information, a form will be provided to study team members to use for such purposes. *See Form 1 on the next page.*

10.0 SCHEDULE

As the study progresses, a public outreach schedule will be created to mirror the current work plan. The public outreach schedule will coincide with the study's progress and milestones to obtain feedback and provide the public with information in a timely manner. This schedule is considered to be a living document and will be frequently updated.

10.1 INITIAL PI ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

Below is a preliminary timeline/schedule for initial activities, which will be expanded upon as the study proceeds.

February – March 2015

Public Involvement Plan (PIP)

Development of public involvement plan which provides a comprehensive overview of outreach activities and audiences. This will be a living document; updated throughout the study.

Environmental Justice (EJ) Plan

A Development of an environmental justice plan, which provides a comprehensive overview of EJ outreach activities and audiences, will be a living document and updated throughout the study.

Website

Website copy will be developed and approved. The website will be created. Website has gone live as of 2/11/15. www.couleeregionstudy.wi.gov

PIM

The project team will establish locations in La Crosse and Onalaska for PIMs to take place.

Traditional Media Outreach Planning

A strategy and timeline will be developed for traditional media outreach. Traditional media includes daily and weekly newspapers, TV stations, radio stations, local publications and their online versions which reach the study's stakeholders. Strategies to be considered, but are not limited to, news releases, editorial board meetings, reporter meetings, backgrounder pieces.

Stakeholder Involvement Meetings (CAG and TAG)

A series of meetings will be held each month with CAG and TAG members to gather information and input as part of the PEL process. Information gathered will be used to help shape public involvement materials.

March – May 2015

PIM Planning

The project team will secure locations for PIMs. Planning will take place to determine meeting format, speakers, presentation materials and handouts.

Stakeholder Involvement Meetings (CAG and TAG)

CAG and TAG meetings will continue.

Traditional Media Outreach

Work will continue working on media outreach planning. In particular, at this time, the effort will focus on outreach to promote upcoming PIMs as well as encouraging coverage focusing on the study, its goals and opportunities for public input.

Public Involvement Plan

PIP will be reviewed and updated on an as needed basis.

Environmental Justice Plan

EJ plan will be reviewed and updated on an as needed basis.

June – October 2015

Traditional Media Outreach

This will include news release development, editorial board meetings and information dissemination to media outlets in the Coulee Region.

PIM Planning

Planning and material production will continue. PIMs will take place in October in La Crosse and Onalaska.

Website

Website copy will be updated on an as needed basis.

Public Involvement Plan

PIP will be reviewed and updated on an as needed basis.

Environmental Justice Plan

EJ Plan will be reviewed and updated on an as needed basis.

November 2015

Information Recap and Evaluation

Information and feedback gathered through the PIMs will be reviewed by the project team so outreach materials, strategies and messages can be adjusted accordingly

11.0 QUALITY CONTROL & DOCUMENTATION

Quality control and documentation of the public outreach efforts is important. The Consultant project manager oversees or delegates these activities to ensure one person is responsible for making sure information is logged and tracked appropriately. Some measures include:

- Frequent contact with the study manager through the appropriate coordinator.
- A central filing location and a consistent file naming system.
- Creation and maintenance of a master spreadsheet that tracks outreach efforts.
- Provide outreach summaries to the PM and study team at monthly meetings.