

TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE COORDINATION

**Executive Summary and Report
Of the WisDOT Land Use Workgroup**

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Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Division of Transportation Districts
Division of Transportation Infrastructure Development
Division of Transportation Investment Management
Office of Policy and Budget

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Executive Summary

Background

How does the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) influence land use? Where we improve transportation facilities, what purpose they're intended to serve, the type of facility we build, how the facilities are designed, the statutory regulatory powers associated with those facilities and how those powers are used, all have a strong influence on land use. WisDOT is placing a high priority on examining this land use and transportation relationship, its linkages, and ways we can improve coordination efforts.

As a result of a number of converging activities (development of a department land use vision, set of land use goals, and guiding principles, and the adoption of the DTD Strategic Business Plan land use goal) and an increasing awareness that land use activities cut across all modal divisions within DOT, an interdivisional group called the "Districts Land Use Workgroup" was created in Fall 2000 to address transportation and land use challenges faced by WisDOT. Members included staff from all modal divisions and OPB. (See Appendix A for membership listing.) The Office of Policy and Budget (OPB) was heavily involved because it has been assigned the responsibility for coordination of land use related activities in WisDOT, including policy development related to those activities.

The workgroup efforts fulfill requirements of the Division of Transportation Districts' (DTD) Strategic Business Plan goal for land use, which states:

"Create a team, including representatives from the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs), that will research current practices, in order to develop a template for district staff involvement in land use planning issues by 01/01/02."

Workgroup Phases One and Two

The workgroup developed a "phased" approach to examine various issues surrounding land use, transportation and WisDOT's activities. During Phase One, the workgroup discussed and categorized land use related activities conducted within the department. Issues such as how local land use choices affect state transportation facilities and how WisDOT influences local land use choices were deliberated. These discussions led to workgroup members drafting issue papers to identify and familiarize each other with crucial WisDOT land use issues and topics.

In Phase Two, the workgroup met with each transportation district to present and discuss with staff the issue papers developed in Phase One. During the meetings, district current practices were reviewed, areas of concern were identified, and alternative means of staff involvement in land use planning issues were discussed. Based on these discussions, the issue papers were revised to include the information gained from the district meetings. This report provides a culmination of Phases One and Two of the workgroup's efforts. Each of the revised issue papers found in this report are being

used as a starting point for a database for the “template” guide and further land use policy development work in these areas. Policy development will be based on what district staff told the workgroup at the series of district meetings held in Fall 2001.

The workgroup also discovered the need to improve cross-divisional information sharing on land use issues. As a result, OPB recommended to the Secretary’s Office the creation of a department-wide discussion group to provide a forum for discussing land use issues throughout the department. This department-wide group, known as the Land Use Roundtable, consists of various staff across modal divisions and meets quarterly.

Key Findings from the Workgroup’s District Visits

Through the district visits, a number of themes emerged.

1. **We consistently heard that land use, the access that serves it, and the traffic it generates have major impacts on state highways.** The workgroup heard this regardless of whether a district was primarily urban, rural or a mix of urban and rural. We also heard that it is not always easy to effectively respond to land use changes because these decisions are a local responsibility under state law.
2. **Many district staff saw a need to integrate consideration of land use issues into state transportation planning, access management and project development.** Ideas offered by district staff to improve integration included: coordinating access management decisions with local, regional and state plans; developing a long-term vision for access along the state highways; increasing the number of corridor plans conducted; and improving communication and coordination between the department’s planning and project development functions.

To accomplish this, a partnership between central office and districts is needed to develop and implement policies and procedures that will provide for both consistent and practical application of department-wide land use policies. While district staff have a good understanding of the impacts that local land use choices can have on the state’s transportation facilities, they do not currently have adequate department support in the form of consistent policy direction, resources, training and tools. This additional support would: substantially improve the coordination and integration of local, regional and state plans; enhance WisDOT’s planning efficiencies and project programming; and improve WisDOT’s abilities to make access management decisions that promote the preservation and operation of its highway corridors and that are consistent with local plans and goals.

3. **More consideration of land use in department activities means districts would need to spend more time coordinating plans with local governments.** There is a growing expectation that land use and transportation should be coordinated at all levels of government in Wisconsin. The state’s

comprehensive planning legislation and comprehensive planning grant program enacted in 1999 increased this expectation.

4. **Resources available to improve and expand planning efforts in districts are limited at this time.** All districts are spending some staff time working with local governments on planning and development related issues. While there is broad agreement that an increased planning role for districts would be beneficial to the state's investment in its transportation system, some districts question how much additional workload activities such as involvement in local comprehensive plans and conducting corridor planning would bring, as some districts are considering cutting back on current efforts.
5. **The workgroup found that district practices and terminology such as "corridor planning" and "bypasses" varied across districts.** The workgroup found that many of the issues studied do not have adequate department definitions, policies or guidance to provide for consistent district practices. While many district staff expressed a desire for more policy guidance in these areas, they also expressed the desire that department policies be flexible enough to respond to the different needs and circumstances around the state. To achieve both consistent and practical policies for districts, the workgroup believes a partnership between central office and the districts is necessary.

Issues for Further Consideration

Below are the twelve issues the workgroup asked district staff during the district visits in Fall 2001. This section briefly outlines the workgroup's findings related to "Issues for Further Consideration" for policy development, guidance, training needs, etc. Some topics are under active consideration by the department, however, the workgroup believes all the issues deserve further consideration. The issue papers written by the workgroup members found in sections three through six of this report provide additional potential process improvements as identified by district staff. These issue papers also provide more detail on current practices and department policies in the various land use and transportation issues related to these twelve issues.

Districts' Participation in Local Comprehensive Plans

Districts generally agree that participation in the development of local comprehensive plans is a worthwhile activity that has substantial benefit in those areas with state highways, interstates, and other regional and state transportation facilities. Department participation in comprehensive plans is an opportunity to educate local officials about state transportation plans and to seek consistency between local and state needs, goals, and plans. It is also an opportunity for WisDOT to learn about local plans that may impact state transportation system and facilities. However, some districts also stated staff time available is very limited and resources or priorities would need to be adjusted to have more staff time available for this purpose.

Training for district staff on local comprehensive planning would be useful. The training should include an opportunity for information sharing and policy guidance

about what districts are doing and should be doing in this area. A checklist and concise advice about how to participate in a comprehensive planning process and how to review plans would ensure greater consistency among districts and would help district staff make more efficient use of limited staff time. See section three, page 26 of the report for the complete issue paper.

Current efforts. The department is engaged in a number of activities to develop policy direction on WisDOT's participation in local planning efforts. OPB is developing guidance for use by staff on how they should become involved with local planning efforts. The Transportation – Land Use Coordination Guidebook will include this guidance and information on how this involvement relates to WisDOT's activities. Training is being planned for 2002 on local comprehensive planning and WisDOT's role in these efforts. The "Transportation Planning Resource Guide," developed by WisDOT – Division of Transportation Investment Management (DTIM), Bureau of Planning primarily for local governments on the development of the transportation element of local comprehensive plans, is also available for use by staff and for distribution to communities, consultants, RPCs and other interested parties.

Corridor Plans

Districts call many different types of plans and studies "corridor plans." There is no consistency across the districts in the definition of a corridor plan, the different types of corridor plans, and the different purposes each type serves. Corridor planning is an emerging issue for the department and for district staff and provides a number of benefits to the department. However, currently, only a few districts are initiating corridor plans that consider land use and transportation issues together and also include a considerable amount of local government input in the planning process.

A number of issues were raised related to corridor planning that warrant further consideration by the department. First, consistent definitions of the different types of corridor plans are needed. The department should develop guidance for the districts on why corridor plans are beneficial, when and how to do corridor plans, how they should be funded, and how they should be used and implemented. The department should also develop criteria for selecting and prioritizing corridors for conducting corridor planning. Finally, the department should develop processes for linking outcomes of corridor planning to project development. See section three, page 28 of the report for the complete issue paper.

Current efforts. OPB is developing a consistent set of policies and a consistent definition for corridor planning. A stakeholder group is currently discussing various potential initiatives. In addition, DTIM, Bureau of Planning is leading the effort to revise the state's long-range, multimodal transportation plan by 2004. This plan, a revision of "Translinks21," will potentially identify key corridors throughout Wisconsin providing more focus for the issues of land use and transportation. Training on corridor planning is being developed for late 2002 or early 2003.

Pre-EIS Studies

The department does not have consistent definitions for the variety of pre-project studies conducted in the districts. It would be helpful for the department to develop definitions of all project related studies (e.g., pre-EIS studies, alpha studies, corridor studies). A description of how and when each study should be done is also needed. This description could include a range from small- to large-scale studies explaining when they may be needed. These policies should also include advice about how to involve the general public and local officials in the study process. See section three, page 30 of the report for the complete issue paper.

Current efforts. Cumulative and secondary land use impacts guidance developed by the Division of Transportation Infrastructure Development (DTID), Bureau of Environment is currently available. Some guidance can also be found in the Facilities Development Manual for use in all project related studies. Additional work is being conducted to identify a transportation impacts analysis model that could potentially be used to identify land use impacts of certain transportation improvement proposals. OPB is developing a set of “Land Use Terms” which will describe the various land use related phrases and department used terminology including project related studies and guidance on when each type of study is appropriate. These terms will be available in the Transportation - Land Use Coordination Guidebook.

Functional Vision for Rural STHs

Nearly all districts agreed that there are benefits to identifying a long-range vision for the rural STH routes to better coordinate a desired long-term functional use and nearby development decisions, such that short-range decisions are made consistent with the long-range vision. Such a vision, while desired, carries some problems, namely: 1) the likelihood of increasing appetites for improvements ahead of their needed time, and 2) problems with identifying facility types ahead of required National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act (WEPA) processes. A multidivisional WisDOT workgroup has been working on identifying a long-range vision for all rural STH routes in Wisconsin, based on recommendations made in a recently completed, consultant (HNTB) contracted study for the department.

Identification of such a vision should be conducted in conjunction with local governments and affected stakeholders through specific corridor studies for corridors tentatively identified as categories 1-3, which consider the desired long-term function of the road and local development plans. District staff suggested that the department should conduct a similar identification process for urban and suburban STH routes also. For the complete issue paper, see section 3, page 24 of the report.

Current efforts. DTIM, Bureau of Planning is leading an effort to develop a statewide approach to a “functional vision” for each segment of the STH system. Since the district meetings held in Fall 2001, the categories for the corridors are being revised to reflect access categories rather than facility types. These changes were based on feedback from district staff. It is anticipated this approach will be included in the state highway plan update as part of the state long-range multimodal plan.

The Program Development and Project Planning Process

Local plans, economic development goals and local transportation issues could receive more systematic consideration when districts develop the six-year program. The department should consider how to more formally include local goals and plans in its program development and project planning process. Currently, program development and project design are based on a number of key issues but are heavily weighted toward safety and pavement conditions. District staff indicated that the current availability of local planning information varies widely and is often unreliable for long-term planning. There is currently no consistent, department-wide policy on criteria for district program development.

District staff identified a series of potential solutions to improve coordination between local plans and department decision-making, which should address the long-term preservation of the state's transportation system. These ideas could be included in the department's program development and project design processes. Suggestions include the greater use of corridor planning by districts; greater district involvement in local comprehensive planning and local development; and district adherence to department access management policies and guidance; and a statewide access management plan. Better use and articulation of current access management tools and a functional vision for the state trunk highway system were also identified as ways to improve WisDOT processes. See section 4, page 36 of the report for the complete issue paper.

Current efforts. A number of districts have begun to examine their approach to project development to better integrate local planning and economic development goals within each district's process. Additional guidance is anticipated within both the Transportation – Land Use Coordination Guidebook and the state long-range multimodal transportation plan.

Access on Bypasses

A policy is needed on when bypasses should be planned, designed and ultimately built as freeways so they do not eventually become congested urban arterials. Bypasses are often built when a state trunk highway, especially in urban areas, becomes a congested urban arterial road with frequent access points. In some cases, bypasses around bypasses are needed to resolve the situation for a second time. Building bypasses as freeways preserves the regional and state transportation function of the highway. A bypass policy should include clearer definitions of types of bypasses. The need for exceptions should be considered in policy development. For the complete issue paper, see section four, page 40.

Official Mapping of Bypasses

Guidance is needed regarding how districts can offer appropriate advice to local governments on officially mapping bypass routes. Future transportation options may benefit from advanced mapping when environmental constraints severely limit alternatives or when corridor plans are developed. NEPA regulations require WisDOT to conduct environmental studies before the department makes decisions on transportation solutions (such as a bypass route). To help them navigate this complex

situation, districts need guidance on what NEPA regulations would allow them to do. See section four, page 42 for the full issue paper.

Land Use Relationship to Frontage Roads

District staff need guidance on how much flexibility they have when working with frontage roads or other parallel local road options including where and when the department should build them. WisDOT sometimes uses frontage roads as a mechanism to reduce the number of access points along state trunk highways. District staff agreed that frontage roads can provide benefits. However, staff indicated that there is a need for more guidance on frontage roads. For example, the department should develop a clear definition of what a frontage road is, what it is intended to accomplish and what the purposes are for building a frontage road.

WisDOT should also develop a cost-sharing policy on frontage roads. For example, should the department build a frontage road and then turn it over to the local government, or should the construction cost be shared with the local government? See section four, page 38 for the full issue paper.

Development Reviews: Implementation of Revised Trans 233

WisDOT should develop a consistent, department-wide access management philosophy, and coordinated policies and procedures for all development review activities (e.g., driveway permit requirements same as Trans 233 permit requirements). District staff need more information and guidance on the department's access management philosophy, and how much latitude staff have for creative problem solving when making development review decisions.

A theme throughout the districts is the need to improve internal coordination within districts, regarding development review activities. Staff expressed that construction engineers should not make driveway decisions that are inconsistent with the department's access management philosophy. Another related key issue is that development review decisions (Trans 233 reviews, driveway permits, and transportation impact analysis) should be linked to local plans and the department's long-term "functional vision" for a highway.

There is a need for outreach and education for local officials, developers, and the general public on the need for and benefits of access management. There is also a need to develop an access management database with applicability at least for the Systems Planning and Operations section, and potentially a district-wide application. See section five, page 45 for the full issue paper.

Current efforts. The Highway Access Steering Committee (HASC) is engaged in the development of an access management philosophy and guidance. A guide is also planned devoted to access management issues. DTID, Bureau of Highway Operations has prepared a series of power point presentations available for district staff to use as an educational tool for the public, local officials and practitioners. These presentations show the value and importance of access management tools and implementation.

Transportation Impact Analysis

Departmental guidance on district activities relating to Transportation Impact Analyses (TIA) is needed. For example, guidance and direction are needed on: when to require a TIA, the minimum requirements for a TIA and who should pay for the TIA, especially when it relates to more than one development. Although criteria exist in the Facilities Development Manual, there are regional differences in each district that are not addressed. For the complete issue paper, see section five, page 48.

Current efforts. The department's TIA User's Group is currently preparing guidance on TIAs. The first product anticipated is a guide for consultants who specifically conduct these studies, which will include guidance on the necessary information to include in a TIA and to what degree issues are examined. The Transportation – Land Use Coordination Guidebook is also anticipated to include information on how TIAs fit together with other department land use related policies and activities.

Land Use Related Skills, Knowledge and Training

The training needs most commonly mentioned by districts include training on land use planning, municipal planning, and the development approval process and techniques, especially the different powers of the state of Wisconsin and local governments in planning. Twenty-five other topics were also identified. In-house user's groups and guides can accomplish a lot of the training needs but a wide variety of educational facilities offer worthwhile workshops, conferences, and classes useful for WisDOT staff. WisDOT should offer re-occurring symposia for local governments and developers on land use and transportation related subjects.

Districts noted that the department should hire a mix of generalists, planners, and engineers to work on land use and transportation coordination issues. Traffic engineers should work on specific criteria of transportation impact analyses but generalists and planners can provide other specific skills to enhance the process. It would be helpful for WisDOT to hire planners, people with municipal government experience and persons with some education in mapping or geography for work in areas such as corridor studies and working cooperatively with local governments on comprehensive planning efforts. For the complete issue paper, see section six, page 55.

Current efforts. The Transportation – Land Use Coordination Guidebook is scheduled for completion in late Summer 2002 in hard copy and on the dotnet intranet website. OPB is developing a series of workshops for district staff directly relating to land use and transportation issues. The first workshop on comprehensive planning activities is scheduled for Summer 2002.

Metropolitan Planning Organization Plan Updates

The department should explore ways to improve coordination with Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) on MPO long-range land use and transportation plans, program and project planning, local development issues, and local comprehensive planning. Many Regional Planning Commissions are also working with local governments on comprehensive plans and land use issues. Coordination between individual districts and individual MPOs and RPCs varies considerably, from very close

cooperation and coordination to doing the minimum work necessary to meet federal requirements. The variance in coordination among districts, MPOs and RPCs is due to a number of factors, ranging from insufficient staff resources to a lack of understanding of each other's responsibilities or activities. One issue raised by MPOs in the sessions is that WisDOT is reducing its modeling efforts, which is a component of the MPO plan update process which will negatively affect MPO efforts. See section three, page 32 and section six, page 52 for two issue papers on this topic.

Current efforts. The department is working with each MPO to further enhance the federally required, long-range transportation plan update processes to improve the coordination between metropolitan land use decision-making and the planning and investment in multimodal transportation.

Next Steps

In addition to the body of knowledge found in this report developed by the workgroup through Phases One and Two, the Transportation – Land Use Coordination Guidebook is another primary workgroup product anticipated for completion in Summer 2002. This departmental Guidebook is intended as a dynamic reference tool, to help educate and inform staff on land use and transportation coordination issues. It will include terms, “best practices,” departmental policies and guidance where available and appropriate, resource information, frequently asked questions, and where to go for additional information on land use related activities. The Guidebook will be made available on WisDOT's internal “dotnet” intranet website and in hard copy format.

Many of the land use and transportation related policy development issues noted in this report continue to evolve throughout WisDOT. The land use and transportation relationship will continue to be a key topic for the department in the future. Through the workgroup efforts, extensive work went into learning about the land use and transportation connections inherent in the department's work with the hope that the workgroup can relay to a larger audience a clear set of impacts that land use has on transportation and WisDOT activities and vice versa. The creation of a new forum, the Land Use Roundtable, is a direct result of the workgroup's efforts. The Roundtable meets quarterly to provide cross-divisional communication circle on current land use and transportation activities and issues.

The workgroup process has also garnered several key findings and topic specific issues from which to continue department work efforts and policy development related to improving the coordination of transportation and land use activities. The workgroup efforts have helped to clarify that in order to improve the coordination between land use and transportation activities, policies and procedures, an approach is needed that combines both specific and broad topical issues with the development of policy direction and guidance on a department-wide basis.

Section One: Introduction to WisDOT's Land Use and Transportation Issues

Background

How does the Wisconsin Department of Transportation influence land use? Where we improve transportation facilities, what purpose they're intended to serve, the type of facility we build, how the facilities are designed, the statutory regulatory powers associated with those facilities and how those powers are used, all have a strong influence on land use. Local land use choices also significantly impact WisDOT activities and planning efforts.

Why Focus on the Land Use and Transportation Relationship?

WisDOT is placing a high priority on examining the land use – transportation relationship, and looking at how WisDOT can help improve the coordination of land use and transportation planning and decision-making. Some of the motivations for placing a high priority on the transportation – land use relationship include:

1. **Cyclical Relationship.** Land use and transportation decision-making are inextricably linked and cyclical in nature. Land use development generates trips that can lead to transportation improvements that, in turn, can and often do make nearby areas more attractive for development.
2. **Multimodal Planning.** The department's Strategic Plan encourages a long-range multimodal transportation planning perspective. Understanding and addressing the land use – transportation relationship is a key component of this perspective.
3. **Awareness of Current and Future Role.** The department is increasingly aware that our activities play a role in land use planning and development, and could play a larger role as we work with local governments as they conduct planning in the future.
4. **Cooperative Efforts.** The department's Strategic Plan encourages us to think in terms of partnerships and communication. Most land use development is initiated and conducted by the private sector while planning and zoning is controlled through local governments and WisDOT plans state transportation projects. All three sectors need to work cooperatively together to achieve the best land use-transportation outcome for the citizens of Wisconsin. We need to consider how to increase WisDOT's cooperative efforts and coordination in the land use decision-making process to ensure these decisions do not harm the transportation system, or make the system prematurely obsolete.
5. **Development and the STH System.** Development near or along a State Trunk Highway (STH) can generate a high number of trips, which has the

potential to degrade the function and operation of the highway. The department will not be able to keep up with replacing these mobility-oriented facilities as they slowly transition into commercial strips and local arterials. The department should work with local governments to plan development along state highways to preserve state transportation investments, while at the same time accommodating local development goals.

6. **Local Roads.** An improved state trunk highway is not the best or only viable solution to every land use – transportation relationship issue. Other functional or jurisdictional street and highway systems may need to be improved, as well as other modes of transportation.
7. **Quality of Life.** Through our transportation programs and projects, WisDOT affects the quality of life of the communities we serve. Department actions can have secondary and unintended consequences such as affecting local land use decision-making and the economies of those communities. The department is interested in promoting and supporting planned and efficient development patterns.
8. **Comprehensive Planning.** Wisconsin’s Comprehensive Planning Law (passed in 1999) requires all local governments to develop and adopt comprehensive plans by the year 2010. These plans are required to include a transportation element. WisDOT staff will be asked to become more involved in local comprehensive planning, and we have the choice to take a reactive or a proactive approach to this involvement.
9. **Public’s Involvement.** Public interest and involvement in the department’s planning and decision-making processes are increasing. We need to consider community values, and one way to do this is to consider the area’s comprehensive plans when we develop our project plans. Corridor planning is also another way to connect these issues.
10. **Development Impacts.** More dispersed population and development often leads to more traffic congestion and safety concerns along transportation facilities, not only in metropolitan areas but also around the entire state. This is forcing us to think more about how development and congestion impact our facilities, and what we can and should do about it.
11. **Staff Education.** As WisDOT staff continue to increase their awareness of the issues relating to land use and transportation relationship, there is a need to provide more guidance, and staff education about these issues. While staff time may be a concern, the issues continue to elevate in their importance throughout the department. We need to consider what is appropriate, what is going to provide us efficiencies in our efforts, and what is most effective in our approach.

The impacts of the land use and transportation relationship are a result of the culmination of many different issues, processes, policies and programs. Therefore, WisDOT has started by looking at where the department is today and is focusing on improving our current programs and processes instead of searching for a single grand solution.

Department Land Use Vision and Goals

Land use and transportation related activities cross all WisDOT modal divisions and influence many different facets of the department's efforts. Twelve guiding principles on land use were developed as the primary outcome of the May 2000 senior managers' meeting. The Secretary's Office and the modal administrators formally endorsed these principles in July 2000. The Secretary's Office and WisDOT's Board of Directors endorsed a department land use vision and land use goals in January 2001. (See Appendix B.)

WisDOT's Land Use Vision:

Coordinating transportation and land use decisions to effectively manage our transportation systems.

Land Use Goals for WisDOT:

1. Increase WisDOT staff's understanding of the transportation - land use relationship, and how our activities affect land use.
2. Develop a WisDOT philosophy and message on land use.
3. Provide direction and support to districts and divisions on their land use activities.
4. Increase coordination, communication and involvement with local planning efforts.

Because of the involvement of multiple divisions and the interrelationship of these activities, the Office of Policy and Budget (OPB) has been assigned the responsibility for the coordination and policy development of land use related activities in WisDOT. OPB has at the center of its land use coordination effort WisDOT's land use vision, guiding principles, and land use goals.

All modal divisions are involved in various land use related efforts. The Division of Transportation Investment Management (DTIM) is responsible for developing statewide plans for all transportation modes and is also leading the development of a new long-range multimodal transportation plan. WisDOT's transit programs, programs to promote economic development through transportation investments as well as state highway programs all have impacts on or are impacted by land use, and are part of DTIM's responsibilities. DTIM also led the effort to develop the "Transportation Planning Resource Guide," a resource for communities as they prepare local comprehensive plans.

The Division of Transportation Infrastructure Development (DTID) is responsible for the state's railroads, airports, harbors and the development and improvement of state highway facilities. Part of the process requires environmental reporting that must consider land use impacts. Access management is also a key policy topic in which DTID staff is significantly involved. Each of these activities is affected by or can affect land use. The Division of Transportation Districts (DTD) works closely with property owners, developers, stakeholders, and local governments on various land use related issues such as neighborhood plans, local comprehensive plans, project development, development plans, access and driveway permits, and many other issues that relate to land use.

All divisions cross over various responsibilities and often work together on these issues. However, this work is sometimes conducted with a variety of purposes, goals, and levels of understanding regarding land use and is conducted without appropriate policy and guidance for how these activities interrelate to land use and transportation.

Districts Land Use Workgroup

An interdivisional group called the "Districts Land Use Workgroup" was formed in Fall 2000 to address transportation-land use challenges under the aegis of the department and DTD's Strategic Business Plan. Four DTD staff as well as DTIM, DTID and OPB comprise the membership of the workgroup. (See appendix A for membership listing.) OPB is actively participating in the workgroup to help examine various policies, activities, and practices to better understand land use issues and to begin to identify where consistency is needed to improve the land use and transportation relationship. The workgroup developed a three-step or "phased" approach to examine various issues surrounding land use, transportation and WisDOT's activities. See section two for detailed information on the workgroup process.

Section Two: Workgroup Process and Key Findings

The four categories as discussed above: transportation systems planning, project planning; operations and preservation and institutional capacity; and the various activities within each of the four categories are the focus of the workgroup's efforts.

Phase One

During Phase One, the workgroup discussed and categorized land use related activities conducted in the department. Issues such as how local land use choices affect state transportation facilities and how WisDOT influences local land use choices were deliberated. These discussions led to workgroup members drafting topical issue papers to identify and familiarize each other with crucial WisDOT land use issues.

The workgroup also discovered the need to improve cross-divisional information sharing on land use issues. As a result, OPB recommended to the Secretary's Office the creation of a department-wide discussion group to provide a necessary forum for discussing land use issues throughout the department. This department-wide group, known as the Land Use Roundtable, consists of various staff across modal divisions and meets quarterly.

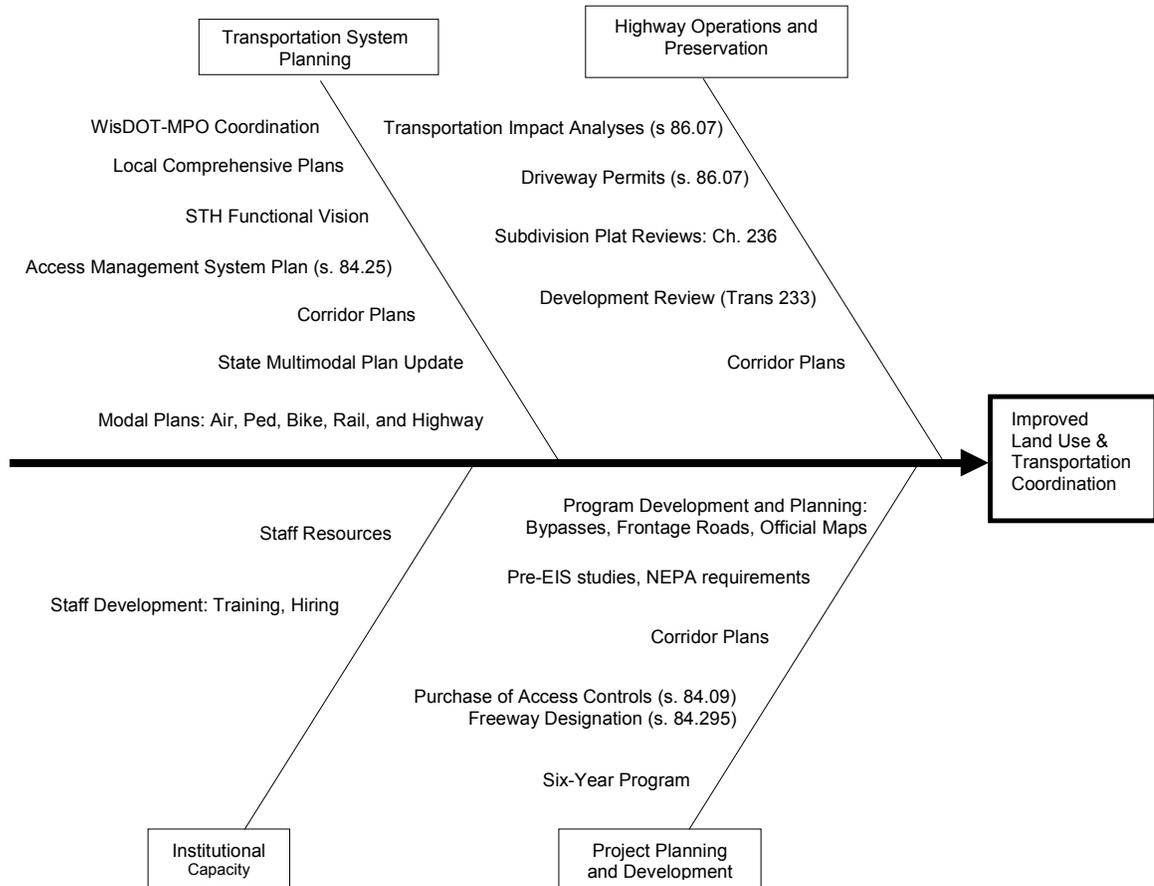
Identifying WisDOT's Land Use and Transportation Issues

In order to discuss land use and transportation issues systematically, four categories were identified by the workgroup where WisDOT plays a role in the land use and transportation relationship. These categories served the basis for the workgroup discussion and issue papers. The four categories include: transportation system planning; project planning and development; operating and preserving highways; and developing institutional capacity for dealing with land use and transportation relationships. The four categories and several identified activities within each of the categories are included in the diagram below. The diagram is intended to help organize the issues for further discussion; however, additional activities could also be included.

Transportation System Planning

System-wide transportation planning is conducted at the state and regional levels. This level of planning looks at transportation as an overall system instead of an agglomeration of projects. Improvement project concepts often grow out of system planning efforts. Land use planning which also impacts transportation is primarily conducted at the local government levels. The different scales of the plans often cause conflicts. Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law requires local governments to prepare comprehensive plans by 2010 and must include a transportation element. All the various types, levels and scales of plans afford the opportunity to address the land use and transportation relationship in ways that will improve WisDOT's project planning, development, operations, and system preservation activities. Activities

included in this category are: WisDOT-MPO coordination, local comprehensive plans, corridor plans, functional vision study for STHs, access management system plan, the state’s long-range multimodal plan, and the various statewide modal plans for air, bicycle, rail, pedestrian and highways.



Project Planning and Development

The most common way to think of the department’s influence is through its highway improvement projects. Where project funds are prioritized, how projects are designed, which regulatory tools are used, and how WisDOT relates to external customers and the state and local political structures influence land use. Our connection with our customers is essential in any project. Activities in this category include: six-year program development, corridor plans, pre-EIS studies, program development and planning for bypasses, frontage roads, official mapping, purchase of access controls and freeway designation.

Existing Highway Operations and Preservation

After a highway is constructed, improved, or expanded, the department makes an effort to manage how other public and private roads and driveways access state highways. This access management, in turn, may influence how development occurs in and around these areas. The highway operation and preservation efforts the department makes are

often in response to land use decisions of local governments which places new development along and very near to STHs. Maintaining and improving the STH system's functionality, its safety and mobility requirements, are critical activities for the department. Activities in this category include: development reviews under Trans 233, transportation impact analyses, driveway permits, subdivision plat reviews, and corridor plans.

Institutional Capacity

In order to participate in these areas noted above relating to the land use and transportation connections, skilled professionals must be active on the state, regional, and local levels. At some level, WisDOT will need to maintain and raise the professional level of effort relating to improving the land use and transportation relationship. Also, it is important to provide a meaningful set of tools staff will be able to turn to for guidance. Activities in this category include staff resources and staff development issues such as training and hiring practices.

Phase Two

In Phase Two, the workgroup met with all eight transportation districts, including representatives from every MPO and RPC unit in the state, to present and discuss with staff the issue papers developed in Phase One. During the meetings, district current practices were discussed, areas of concern were identified, and alternative means of staff involvement in land use planning issues were discussed. Based on these discussions, the issue papers were revised to include information gained from the districts' meetings. Each of the revised papers found in this report are being used as a starting point for a database for the "template" guide and further land use policy development work in these areas. Policy development will be based on what district staff told the workgroup at the series of district meetings held in Fall 2001. This report provides a culmination of Phases One and Two of the workgroup's efforts.

Key Findings from the Workgroup's District Visits

Through the district visits, a number of themes emerged.

1. **We consistently heard that land use, the access that serves it, and the traffic it generates have major impacts on state highways.** The workgroup heard this regardless of whether a district was primarily urban, rural or a mix of urban and rural. We also heard that it is not always easy to effectively respond to land use changes because these decisions are a local responsibility under state law.
2. **Many district staff saw a need to integrate consideration of land use issues into state transportation planning, access management and project development.** Ideas offered by district staff to improve integration included: coordinating access management decisions with local, regional and state plans; developing a long term vision for access along the state highways; increasing the number of corridor plans conducted; and improving communication and

coordination between the department's planning and project development functions.

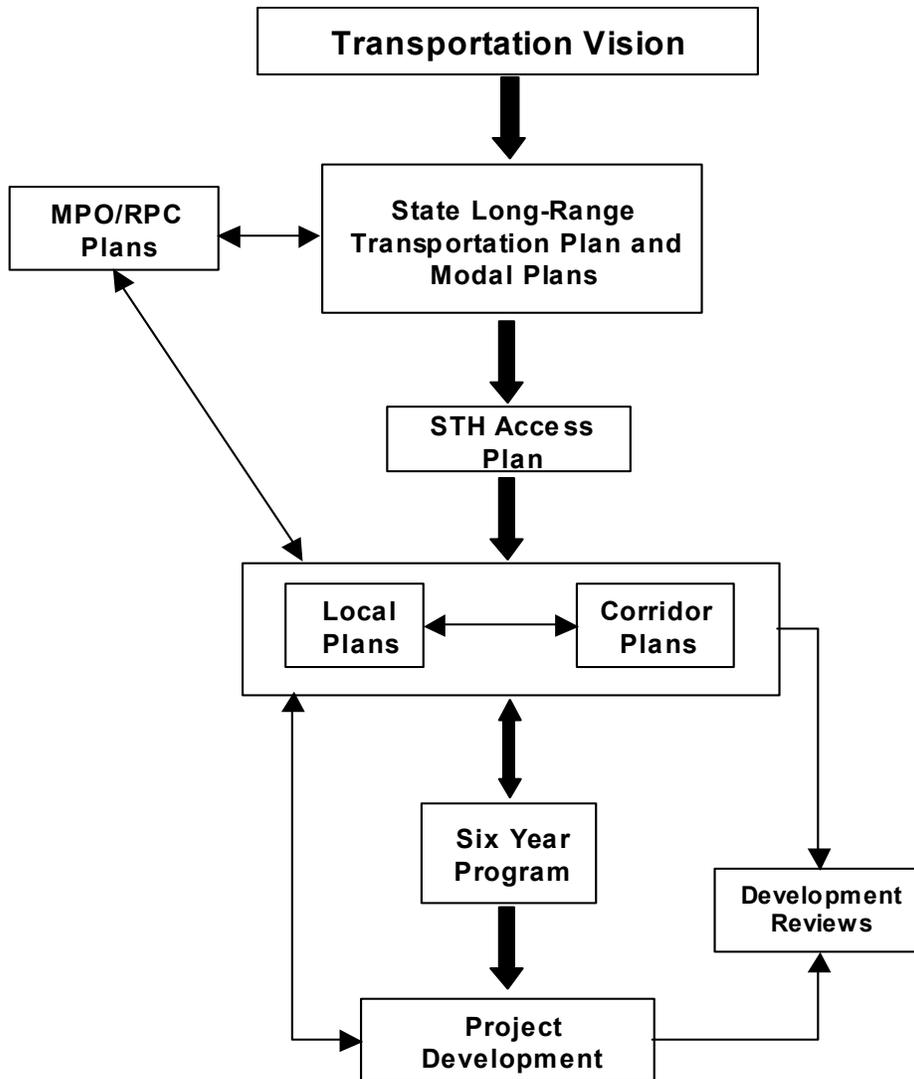
To accomplish this, a partnership between central office and districts is needed to develop and implement policies and procedures that will provide for both consistent and practical application of department-wide land use policies. While district staff have a good understanding of the impacts that local land use choices can have on the state's transportation facilities, they do not currently have adequate department support in the form of consistent policy direction, resources, training and tools. This additional support would substantially improve the coordination and integration of local, regional and state plans, enhance WisDOT's planning efficiencies and project programming and improve WisDOT's abilities to make access management decisions that promote the preservation and operation of its highway corridors and that are consistent with local plans and goals.

3. **More consideration of land use in department activities means districts would need to spend more time coordinating plans with local governments.** There is a growing expectation that land use and transportation should be coordinated at all levels of government in Wisconsin. The state's comprehensive planning legislation and comprehensive planning grant program enacted in 1999 increased this expectation.
4. **Resources available to improve and expand planning efforts in districts are limited at this time.** All districts are spending some staff time working with local governments on planning and development related issues. While there is broad agreement that an increased planning role for districts would be beneficial to the state's investment in its transportation system, some districts question how much additional workload activities such as involvement in local comprehensive plans and conducting corridor planning would bring, as some districts are considering cutting back on current efforts.
5. **The workgroup found that district practices and terminology such as "corridor planning" and "bypasses" varied across districts.** The workgroup found that many of the issues studied do not have adequate department definitions, policies or guidance to provide for consistent district practices. While many district staff expressed a desire for more policy guidance in these areas, they also expressed the desire that department policies be flexible enough to respond to the different needs and circumstances around the state. To achieve both consistent and practical policies for districts, the workgroup believes a partnership between central office and the districts is necessary.

Linking Land Use and Transportation Through WisDOT Processes

Through the workgroup's process and the series of district meetings, the workgroup is increasingly aware that to improve the linkages between land use and transportation, the best approach combines an issue-by-issue discussion, an examination of broad issues and the policy development process. By taking this approach the department will bring together a set of coordinated activities, policies and procedures.

Many of the district staff indicated through their comments a need for re-examining how the department views the land use and transportation linkages; specifically, how the department integrates local plans and transportation issues into WisDOT planning, development review, access management and project development processes and decisions.



The flow chart was developed based on the discussion within the workgroup and from what the workgroup heard from district staff in the district meetings. It is intended to reflect how WisDOT staff through their activities, programs, and policies should coordinate and integrate land use and transportation linkages. The flow chart shows that department involvement in local planning and corridor plans should be coordinated with many levels of state, regional and local efforts and should integrate with and filter through project development and development reviews.

The flow chart is primarily conveying a coordinated approach that more effectively integrates land use issues into all aspects of our transportation and land use activities through cooperation with local governments, stakeholders, MPOs and RPCs. It also shows that the department should work with local governments through local comprehensive plans and corridor plans to improve the department efficiency and effectiveness in project development reducing the potential for disputes and improving scoping of these projects.

Next Steps

In addition to the body of knowledge found in this report developed by the workgroup through Phases One and Two, the development of a department Transportation – Land Use Coordination Guidebook is another primary workgroup product anticipated for completion in Summer 2002. This Guidebook is intended as a dynamic reference tool, to help educate and inform on land use and transportation coordination issues. It will include terms, “best practices,” departmental policies and guidance where available and appropriate, resource information, frequently asked questions, and where to go for additional information on land use related activities. The Guidebook will be made available on WisDOT’s internal “dotnet” intranet website and in hard copy format.

Section Three: System Planning Issue Papers

Section 3A. Functional Vision for STHs

Section 3B. Districts' Participation in Local Comprehensive Plans

Section 3C. Corridor Plans

Section 3D. Pre-EIS Studies

Section 3E. MPO Plan Updates

Section 3A: Functional Vision for STHs

System Planning Issue Papers

Issue Introduction

The state trunk highway (STH) system serves two primary, occasionally conflicting, functions: it provides access to property, and it provides mobility between travel destinations. Generally, as the highest order highway system in the state, the STH should emphasize mobility over access. All public highways in the state are functionally classified for federal aid eligibility purposes. However, that functional system is not sufficiently refined to know what kind of access control is needed to preserve the functionality of the STH routes. With the exception of constructing a four-lane expressway design for all existing two-lane Corridors 2020 Backbone routes, there is no long-term vision established for any part of the STH system. A good example is the construction of STH 29. The goal for STH 29 was a four-lane divided roadway constructed by 2000, but there is no real definition of what kind of service to preserve on the newly constructed route, and therefore, no long-term plan to maintain that service. A study has been proposed that would establish a long-range vision (40+ years) for individual components of the STH system. This study would attempt to put each rural STH route into a function/access category.

What the Workgroup Heard at District Meetings

Current Process

Such a long-range vision for STH routes is not currently done.

Concerns/Improvement Goals and Challenges

District 1 thinks the concept is good, but they are unsure of the details. They believe WisDOT should categorize on a map all district highways and show the vision, but separate the transportation corridor and its preservation from the facility that will go into the corridor. The staff noted that the ultimate facility is not important, but how much right-of-way is available. Then WisDOT controls access and can influence adjacent land use. There are issues with identifying the ultimate design and the environmental analysis process.

District 2 believes a STH vision is important, but it must not simply focus on rural STHs. It would be of limited use for them if the functional vision looked at rural routes only. WisDOT should work to identify what the state role should be – especially in urban and suburban areas. Staff noted that hopefully, the Connecting Highways Study would help determine this role. There is also some concern in the district about raising expectations of local governments and the general public.

Everyone at the District 3 meeting agreed that this concept was something we should pursue. Staff noted that something like Corridors 2020 could be used as WisDOT's vision. One of the benefits is setting statewide priorities. The process would have to be continually coordinated with local planning, including comprehensive plans. Local plans

should reflect the agreed upon vision. Working with UW-Extension educators would be a good tool.

District 4 supported the need for the long-range vision. It should be reflected in the state's long-range multimodal plan.

District 5 questioned the need for this concept, as it is not an important issue in District 5. There are funding related issues because the district staff indicated they could not afford to do this long-term assignment. Major projects and interstate projects would need to relate to this vision.

District 6 has already started a similar process. Staff agreed that there is a need to define a vision and then make decisions to fulfill that vision. STH 29 was noted as a good example. There is currently no vision of what STH 29 should ultimately become. After analysis, it may be classified R1 or R2, depending on a number of factors. STH 64, Houlton to New Richmond, is another example. Staff noted that decisions on the functional class need to be done on a statewide basis and local comprehensive plans should reflect the long-range STH vision. WisDOT should take the lead in determining the vision – develop a proposal and present it to them for their reaction. Local governments do not look far enough into the future. WisDOT may have to acquire land and conduct an EIS prior to final footprint or alignment determination. WisDOT may need to use state funds to purchase right-of-ways rather than federal funds.

District 7 felt this was an important effort, but some staff felt that a shorter planning horizon might be more useful. Forty years is just too long to effectively anticipate needs. The department needs to build incentives for local governments and a process for implementation. Staff also noted that WisDOT also needs a way to put highways under the proper jurisdiction. They also felt the department needs to plan for extraterritorial boundary changes, because there isn't always a tie with functional classifications. WisDOT needs to have appropriate functional classifications for growth transition areas near city boundaries in order to effectively enforce access decisions. Improving access decisions without political reprisal and increasing education is important also.

With regard to ties with the comprehensive planning process, District 7 felt that local goals are not mobility related but are development-oriented. It is also hard for WisDOT staff to review plans without a mandate and with a lack of resources. The district noted it could use some RPC assistance in local issues, land information, and data. There is some unwillingness at the district to get involved in local plans. We need to educate others on functionality of state highways.

District 8 supported the need for WisDOT to be looking ahead on the state's major corridors. However, they were quite concerned that identifying the long-term design goal for a route would raise local expectations to do the work now. USH 53 is a good example. If the expressway portion were identified as an ultimate freeway, there would be strong pressure to build interchanges now, even if the vision for that route identified the need for a freeway 30-40 years in the future. They also were concerned about WisDOT's ability to fund such visions. Staff noted that it is useless to identify that vision if the state has no way of financing it.

Section 3B. District Participation in Local Comprehensive Plans

System Planning Issue Papers

Issue Introduction

State law requires all local governments including counties to prepare comprehensive plans including a “transportation element” that must incorporate state and regional transportation plans. Local governments around the state are beginning to prepare comprehensive plans although they have until the end of the decade to adopt and implement them. State law requires that local comprehensive plans incorporate state and regional transportation plans; however, there is currently no way to ensure that local plans will be consistent with state and regional plans.

Last year, WisDOT produced a transportation planning resource guide for planners and local governments to use as they develop the transportation element of their comprehensive plans. This guide recommends that communities consult with WisDOT’s transportation districts on state transportation plans, projects and data for their area.

Participation in the development of local comprehensive plans is a major opportunity for WisDOT to inform local governments about important state transportation issues that affect them and to encourage consistency between local plans and state transportation plans. A comprehensive planning process will be the time when local governments are most likely to be open to new planning information and ideas. Comprehensive plans in communities that have state highways should consider the following state transportation issues: existing state transportation plans such as Corridors 2020; future projects; access control on state highways; connectivity between state highways with local road systems; and local development issues. Other important transportation issues having potential state and regional implications that should be considered in local plans include railways, airports, harbors, transit, and pedestrian and bicycling issues.

What the Workgroup Heard at District Meetings

Current Process

Most districts are receiving some requests for involvement in development of local plans. However, many communities and even regional planning commissions (RPCs) are not requesting district participation in the development of plans or review of plans. Consultants developing plans for local governments are often seeking to minimize their work so as to not go over budget. Some consultants are asking districts for data such as traffic counts, upcoming projects and a response to potential projects favored by the community for inclusion in the plan.

County and larger community planning processes are more likely to be substantial planning efforts requiring more district staff time. Some counties are asking district staff

to participate in a committee or staff team for the plan. Most towns and many smaller villages are not near a state highway or interstate so state transportation issues may be less important in their plans. In locations where RPCs are actively involved in planning, they may be fulfilling the role of representing state transportation needs in the planning process. Sometimes this may be acceptable and sometimes it may not.

Some districts are making it known that they want to participate in the planning process. Participation ranges from reviewing local plans to serving on local committees. Many communities may wait until the end of the compliance period (year 2010) to prepare a plan so the department should expect a peak of activity in future years.

Most districts are spending a small amount of staff time reviewing plans and being involved in their development. Direct participation in plan development seems to be no more than .1 or .2 of a full-time equivalent (FTE) staff person's time in any district. One district suggested districts should be able to send draft plans to the central office for review. Districts increasingly have a staff person with a lead role on land use related transportation planning. Staff assigned this role will have or develop skills needed to participate in the development of plans and review of plans. They would be appropriate team leaders for other staff whose input is needed for review of comprehensive plans. This review includes information about access, projects, the program, and right-of-way standards. Districts reported that this staff time is fully committed now to other activities.

Concerns

Most districts did not know where they would find the staff time to review comprehensive plans or participate in plan development with their current level of work activities even though most staff think this participation is a worthwhile activity. Districts indicated that they currently only have enough resources to be in a reactive role in local planning processes.

Improvement Goals and Challenges

Concise advice and guidance, such as a checklist, about how district staff should participate in local planning processes and how to review comprehensive plans would ensure greater consistency among districts and be time efficient for staff.

Although most districts agreed that participating in local comprehensive planning processes is a worthwhile activity, existing staff levels and work demands indicate that there will not be additional time for it in the future, unless this issue is given a higher district and department priority.

Section 3C. Corridor Plans

System Planning Issue Papers

Issue Introduction

A corridor plan considers both transportation and land use issues within a planning process that includes public input and integrates strategies to better manage development while designing and/or preserving a highway corridor. A formal process does not currently exist for corridor planning. These types of plans should not be confused with other transportation studies such as: alpha studies, S1 and S2 studies, pre-EIS studies or environmental impact statements (EIS). In fact, a formal, consistent definition for corridor plans or corridor planning studies does not exist.

WisDOT is placing a greater emphasis on coordinating transportation and land use issues. The 2020 Wisconsin State Highway Plan emphasizes the need for strong partnerships between local and state governments. The plan states, “this will allow local agencies to plan developments better...which will reduce pressures on the system and ensure the least environmental impact.” Translinks21 states that corridor preservation is one means of coordinating transportation planning with land use planning and development. This coordination minimizes negative land use and social impacts as well as the costs of transportation improvements.

What the Workgroup Heard at District Meetings

Current Process

Some districts are conducting corridor plans, however the definition of a corridor plan varies. Terms used include: feasibility study, safety/mobility study, and long-term vision of the state highway.

Districts’ corridor plans generally include: analysis of the current function of the highway corridor and the existing land use; state and local transportation related recommendations for the corridor and land uses along the corridor, and discussion on future access points and future highway projects along the corridor. Corridor plans are used in a variety of ways. One district uses the corridor plan in the following sequence of events – system plan (Corridors 2020, State Highway Plan), corridor plan, environmental study, and construction project. Some districts are doing these as a follow-up to the EIS process. One district did a pilot corridor study in conjunction with an access controlled state highway under section 84.25, Wisconsin Statutes.

Several different means are used to develop corridor plans: One district required a local cost share for study. Other districts pay fully for the studies. One district funds plans using consultant budget. Districts prepare plans in-house, use RPCs or use consultants to prepare plans.

Public involvement varies in each districts corridor plans. One district holds open town meetings. Others do not involve the public. Some districts use advisory committees.

Concerns

Districts' concerns about corridor plans ranged from lack of a corridor plan philosophy to having enough resources to work on corridor plans. Districts noted that the lack of guidelines and/or consistent policies is an issue. Some districts expressed concern about raising public expectations on the potential for future transportation projects too early in the process. Staff planning experience, competing for planning staff with other agencies, and the lack of planning consultants to conduct corridor planning work was noted as a concern.

Funding a corridor plan was also raised as an issue. There is a lack of planning resources to do a corridor plan where there is no approved construction project and difficulty in funding corridor plans where no project is foreseen.

Improvement Goals and Challenges

Districts noted that corridor planning is a challenging but worthwhile effort. Further direction for corridor planning efforts will be helpful. Direction should include the definition of a corridor plan; corridor plan selection criteria; planning process; best practices; and explanation of when corridor plans and other types of studies are appropriate. Districts noted that a guide would be useful for providing this information and department policies.

Other goals and challenges noted were hiring employees with a planning background and knowledge of relevant state laws, providing training for corridor planning, and finding adequate consultant dollars for preparing corridor plans.

Section 3D. Pre-EIS Studies

System Planning Issue Papers

Issue Introduction

A number of districts are using a study process that has various names associated with it. The workgroup is calling it a Pre-EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) Study, but districts also call the process a needs assessment or transportation study. These studies are done to seek local official and citizen input in determining the purpose and need, and support for a transportation project. They have been used as a process to work with local citizens and officials to study the transportation needs of several communities. The communities then recommended that the department move forward into the environmental process to assess the impacts of various alternatives. The districts seek local support before moving forward into the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) analysis.

The current process looks broadly at environmental issues related to a number of alternatives' concepts. The purpose is not to recommend an alternative, since this is done within the NEPA analysis process. Instead, the intention is to identify the purpose and need for a transportation project and possible broad alternative concepts.

What the Workgroup Heard at District Meetings

Current Process

District 1 views these studies as a way to generate understanding between the department and the public about transportation needs now and in the future. Relationship building is key. District staff emphasize listening, rather than talking to local citizens. The short-term solutions that are generated by the community can lead to local support for those that happen later in time, and that have greater impacts.

District 2 does not conduct pre-EIS studies. District 3 conducts corridor plans in lieu of pre-EIS studies. District 4 recently completed its first needs assessment study, the I-39/US 51 study in the Wausau metropolitan area. The purpose was to look broadly at Wausau's transportation issues. A number of local- and state-sponsored projects are now being investigated as a result of the needs assessment, none of which is likely to require an EIS.

District 5 calls their process a "transportation study" with external customers, but uses the term "alpha study" internally. The purpose is not to select an alternative or make a specific recommendation, but to gather community ideas, and gauge support for possible projects. District 5 recommends it include purpose and need (s); an environmental scan; and some type of a recommendation. Local officials and agency representatives need to be involved early in the process; local citizens later.

District 6 uses a two-stage process, called "S1 and S2" study. Stage 1 (S1) looks at conceptual alternatives. Local officials are involved at this point, but not citizens,

because their experience indicates that citizens prefer to react to preliminary lines on a map. A broad overview of the environmental impacts is done, using what is already documented and available. Consultants conduct traffic modeling. A Stage 2 study begins the NEPA process. Public involvement is part of Stage 2. Benefits include working with local citizens early, and identifying known barriers up front.

District 7 calls their process a “transportation study,” although they hardly ever use this study process. They measure the Level of Service (LOS) volume vs. capacity over a 20-year horizon. They do not move forward until the local government asks for a project. District 7 recommends not talking to local citizens until just prior to enumeration of a pre-design project. District 8 does not conduct pre-EIS studies.

The department is placing more emphasis on coordination with local units of government regarding land use planning and transportation planning. Local citizens, local officials, environmental groups and resource agencies frequently raise direct and indirect land use impacts of projects. This early study stage is a good time to discuss these concepts with local citizens and officials, and to work with them to determine how best to consider land use impacts of the area under study. However, several of the districts specifically mentioned that they prefer not to involve citizens until later in the process. Some districts’ experience is that local citizens prefer reacting to preliminary lines on a map.

Improvement Goals and Challenges

Several issues need to be addressed regarding this topic. The most important one is whether the general public should be included in the same early coordination as local officials and the agencies. Although several districts expressed opinions to the contrary, this is counter to other department initiatives such as community sensitive design and community impact assessment. While staff can agree that it may be difficult to get involvement early in the process, the department needs to focus on how to do a better job of this. A related concern that was expressed is that when the public is involved early, they may expect to see something built in the near future.

Another interesting point noted in the district meetings is that several districts do not perform pre-EIS studies. While it is understandable that District 8 does not conduct them because there are seldom EIS projects in District 8, the fact that District 2 does not conduct them is more of a surprise. They have been required to Major Investment Studies in the past, and perhaps that is what they do, rather than calling them pre-EIS studies. That lack of consistency between districts needs to be further investigated. Corridor plans in District 3 are related, but not quite the same as a pre-EIS. They seem to be content with their process. District 8’s U.S. Hwy. 8 study, east of US 53, is more similar to District 3 corridor planning process. Alpha studies that are used to inform the majors’ projects process will continue to be performed. An abbreviated version of an alpha study is conducted in District 7 followed by some type of future broad environmental scan. The difference between alpha studies and pre-EIS studies will need to be determined at some time in the future.

Section 3E. MPO Plan Updates

System Planning Issue Papers

Issue Introduction

Federal law requires each of Wisconsin's metropolitan areas to develop and update a multimodal transportation plan with a 20-year horizon, in order to qualify for federal transportation funds. Each Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) currently has a plan with a year 2020 horizon. Many of the MPOs are represented by Regional Planning Commissions; however, some MPOs are represented through other organizations. Each MPO must update their plan every three years for federally designated air quality non-attainment areas and every five years for air quality attainment areas. WisDOT works with twelve MPOs covering fifteen metropolitan planning areas in Wisconsin. See Appendix C for a table of MPOs and RPCs in each district.

All MPOs (except those in non-attainment areas) reaffirmed their then-existing plans in 2000 to restart the plan update clock, giving them until 2005 to complete an update with a 2030 planning horizon. This will provide more time to complete a broader update and use the 2000 Census data. All of these long-range transportation plans are based on locally adopted comprehensive or land use plans or agreed-upon land use growth assumptions. As part of this next round of MPO plan updates, WisDOT is emphasizing (but not requiring) a stronger link between land use and transportation plans through the development and evaluation of land use scenarios and their potential impact on long-range transportation needs. There are several issues related to the MPO plan updates: How do we improve the relationship and coordination between each MPO and WisDOT? How do we assure an appropriate coordination between the MPO planning processes and the various comprehensive planning processes?

What the Workgroup Heard at District Meetings

Current Process, Concerns and Challenges

District 1 works with four MPO areas: Madison, Janesville, Beloit and Dubuque. The district, along with DTIM-Bureau of Planning, Urban Planning Section help to coordinate plan update issues and activities. Generally, district/MPO coordination "could be worse, but could be better." Suggestions for improving district/MPO coordination include increased staff availability; more routine contact; more coordination/cooperation with TIAs; increased focus on what WisDOT needs from MPOs/RPCs; and focus on the MPO/RPC quality of work rather than quantity.

District 2 works closely with Southeastern Wisconsin RPC (SEWRPC), which is the MPO for the seven-county southeastern region. The district wants to continue what they feel is a good relationship with SEWRPC. SEWRPC works with an advisory committee and WisDOT (both district and central office staff) is a member of that committee. SEWRPC approaches the transportation/land use relationship correctly, in that they develop a long-range land use plan and then develop a transportation plan that will help serve that land use vision. Staff often work out differences outside of the

committee structure. Some issues that need improvement include better coordination with the district PDS staff, earlier discussions of alternatives to ensure a better end-product, and strengthening of the coordination of segment-level travel forecasts between SEWRPC and the district. Staff also noted that WisDOT's Bureau of Aeronautics should respect the regional plan more when it makes investment decisions.

District 3 works with four MPO areas: Green Bay, Sheboygan, Appleton and Oshkosh and two RPCs: East Central Wisconsin RPC and Bay-Lake RPC. The district reports there is a lot of informal, daily communication with the RPCs and MPOs. The district is a member of technical and policy committees for the Sheboygan MPO. The district controls projects on the state system in areas with populations below 200,000. They usually do not disagree on the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). They involve MPOs on areawide multi-jurisdictional transportation studies, using the MPO wherever they can (versus a consultant) due to its grounding with the community. However, district coordination and involvement in RPC activities could be improved.

District 4 was inadvertently misplaced and therefore a summary is not included here. However, there is one MPO in District 4, Wausau MPO that is represented by Marathon County. The two RPCs include North Central Wisconsin RPC and East Central Wisconsin RPC. Both these RPCs attended outreach meetings held at other districts.

District 5 works with one MPO area, LaCrosse. Currently the MPO is the city of La Crosse and it will transition to the county. District staff indicated the move of the MPO functions to the County would help to improve coordination. WisDOT has primarily been the lead on transportation planning issues here rather than the MPO, which is good and bad. The battles between the city and surrounding towns created a historically very weak relationship, however, the district is looking at the reassignment of staffing for the MPO as an opportunity for better coordination. The transportation plan update (completion date 2005) is good timing with reassignment of the MPO. There are two RPCs in District 5, Mississippi River RPC and Southwest Wisconsin RPC. With both, there are concerns about a lack of presence in the region and whether the RPCs are properly fulfilling the contracts that they currently hold and continue to seek out. There needs to be more accountability for the planning contracts.

District 6 works with one MPO area, Eau Claire, which is represented by West Central RPC and is made up of two counties, three cities and ten townships. There are three RPCs total in the district including West Central Wisconsin RPC, Northwest Wisconsin RPC and Mississippi River RPC. Coordination between the MPO/RPC and the district is inadequate and the presence of the MPO/RPCs is weak in the region. The district noted that MPO appears to conduct what is minimally needed to receive federal dollars. However, the relationship between the district and the MPO/RPCs is not a hostile relationship. Municipalities often have their own agendas, which may conflict with MPO/RPCs integration/coordination goals. Improvement should focus on giving the MPOs binding authority, but then we must be ready to handle the outcomes of this increase authority.

District 7 does not have a MPO area within the district. North Central Wisconsin RPC and Bay-Lake RPC located in District 7 attended other district sessions.

District 8 has one MPO area, Duluth-Superior. Northwest Wisconsin RPC and West Central Wisconsin RPC are the two RPCs in the district. Staff reported that the coordination with the MPO is very good. The district serves on various committees set up for special studies as well as the regular MPO committees. The MPO is responsive to district issues. Minnesota DOT is the lead for state coordination for the long-range plan update. Coordination with comprehensive plan development is through the Northwest Wisconsin RPC, which involves the district on a limited basis. Further involvement is constrained by staff resource availability.

Section Four: Project Planning and Development Issue Papers

Section 4A. The Program Development and Project Planning Process

Section 4B. Land Use Relationship to Frontage Roads

Section 4C. Access on Bypasses

Section 4D. Official Mapping of Bypasses

Section 4A. The Program Development And Project Planning Process

Project Planning and Development Issue Papers

Issue Introduction

Project planning and development are critical steps that lay the groundwork for project selection, type and location. This process leads directly to the project included in WisDOT's six-year program. It is generally agreed that transportation decisions have some impact on land use decisions and vice versa. The decisions made in the project development process are likely to impact future land use decisions or are a reaction to past or current land use decisions.

What the Workgroup Heard at District Meetings

Current Process

The current program development process is primarily driven by three major factors – safety, preservation and capacity. Management and staff from each district were asked a series of questions regarding the land use and program and planning relationship. Their comments are summarized below.

Concerns

From a land use perspective, district staff identified a series of concerns. There is no clear agency direction that indicates which priorities should take precedence during highway project development. WisDOT needs to better define the intended function of a state highway. Land use decisions are generally local decisions and often long-term development information is not available for the project development process. There is no clear agency direction that indicates which priorities should take precedence during highway project development.

Currently, staff noted that land use issues seem to play a diminished role in the project programming and planning areas. Land use issues are generally generated through local decisions and are often the focus after project completion and often relate to highway access management issues. This can be attributed to several factors. Districts noted that the factors that drive a project are often pavement related and not tied to development issues. This was a common response in the northern districts of the state. The availability of planning related information from local governments and regional agencies varies widely and is often unreliable for long-term planning. Many communities do not have local plans and those that do often do not follow or are quick to amend plans to respond to immediate development pressure. Regional plans can be helpful, but adherence by local communities is sporadic at best.

District staff is hopeful the comprehensive planning laws will help to improve the amount and quality of information available. That may lead to an increased use of local planning related information in this process.

Improvement Goals and Challenges

There are many instances where WisDOT's mobility goals conflict with the development goals of communities, which typically includes more access points. The results of that conflict are mixed, but district staff found that the better they are able to articulate the mobility goals of the system, the better the likelihood of success. This mobility vs. access conflict is clearly an issue with state highways that have become the commercial districts on the urban fringe of communities (too many access points on the system). In these communities, the decision needs to balance access needs of the community and mobility goals of WisDOT. Creative solutions need to be developed to address this conflict. Many of the district suggestions focused on the possibility of identifying these urban fringe areas as connecting highways, which would require a stronger local effort.

District staff identified a series of potential long-range solutions to address the long-term preservation of the system. Use of these concepts could be rolled into the program and planning process and would heighten the profile of land use issues. Some of the district suggestions included greater department use of corridor planning and involvement in the development of local comprehensive plans.

Staff also noted that the development of a stateside access management plan, better articulation of the functional vision of the state system, and better use of our current access management tools would be beneficial. Continued efforts to educate and inform local governments on these issues, particularly why we make various access decisions was also noted by district staff as a continuing challenge to WisDOT.

Section 4B. Land Use Relationship of Frontage Roads

Project Planning and Development Issue Papers

Issue Introduction

Freeway conversion projects require WisDOT to remove existing at-grade access to the state highway. Many times, a property's only reasonable access is via the state highway. Limited options are available when dealing with this situation. Commonly, WisDOT constructs frontage roads so that the property retains access to a public street. In most cases, upon completion of the construction project, the local governments own and maintain the frontage roads. The frontage road is then a part of the local transportation network.

What the Workgroup Heard at District Meetings

Current Process

Most districts will build frontage roads depending on the situation. They refer to FDM 11-25-45 for guidance. Access is permitted on frontage roads and local governments maintain frontage roads. Frontage road construction is not encouraged in some districts but they will build them to remove access and to reduce local trips on the state highway system. Some districts will restrict access on frontage roads so that the frontage road maintains some level of service in case they need the road as an alternate route. Some districts prefer other options rather than constructing a frontage road such as "backage roads" or parallel local streets.

Concerns

Funding and cost sharing of frontage roads is an issue. There seems to be no consistent policy on when a district can build frontage roads. A frontage road is not clearly defined. There seems to be many different definitions of frontage roads. There are no uniform setbacks for frontage roads from the state highway. Districts also expressed Trans 233 concerns on frontage roads.

Also there seems to be questions on the type of funding available to build frontage roads. Many districts noted that they favor parallel local streets. Other concerns expressed by district staff include:

- DNR does not generally prefer frontage roads.
- Snow removal is a problem on frontage roads.
- Frontage roads can create cumulative impact concerns.
- There is a statute that prohibits WisDOT from acquiring right-of-way more than one quarter of a mile from the highway except for mitigation purposes.

Improvement Goals and Challenges

Staff noted that more "backage" roads are needed where properties can be developed along both sides of the road. Uniform setback standards for frontage roads from state highways are needed. The FDM should be updated to reflect current practices and new

standards. One challenge noted is that frontage roads need to remain useful to WisDOT in case we need them for alternative routes due to construction, accidents, etc. District staff indicated that the staff dealing with frontage roads should have a background in access management and knowledge of relevant state laws. Staff should also have planning skills as well as knowledge on real estate and development practices.

Section 4C. Access on Bypasses

Project Planning and Development Issue Papers

Issue Introduction

WisDOT does not currently have a policy regarding appropriate access for new bypasses. New bypasses are typically built on newly acquired right-of-way without private property access rights and with few public road intersections. Because private or public access to a bypass in an urban area can significantly increase the value of adjacent land, WisDOT can expect pressure to allow direct access to bypasses. Since WisDOT does not have a policy regarding appropriate access for new bypasses, districts vary in how they respond to these requests for access.

Over time, too much highway access in or near an urban area can undermine the regional transportation function that originally justified construction of the bypass and related environmental impacts including the personal hardship experienced by property owners and others. If the bypass becomes a congested urban arterial, the community and/or WisDOT may seek to build a new bypass to relieve urban traffic congestion and to restore a reasonable state highway function. Thus, appropriate access management on new bypasses can protect them and diminish the long-term environmental and financial impacts of building further bypasses of the same community.

What the Workgroup Heard at District Meetings

Current Process

Most often local governments initiate a request for a bypass or a bypass study. Some communities want a bypass when they are not justified by state transportation needs. When smaller communities are located on a section of a backbone or connector route that is being expanded to four lanes, districts may raise the potential need for a bypass for the community to consider or districts may let the community know that an environmental study for the highway may be required to consider the alternative of a bypass.

Districts have different policies for future access on newly constructed bypasses. At least one district has a practice that all new bypasses are constructed freeways or are planned as freeways in which future access expectations are set over time. As increasing development occurs, all at-grade intersections will be removed. At least one district cited local preferences influencing whether a bypass is built as a freeway or not. In some cases, the communities the bypass goes through prefer a freeway to limit urban sprawl. One district said that it is more likely a bypass will be a freeway if a planning approach is initially taken in a major project.

Bypasses often raise concerns about related development impacts. Some districts limit access not only on the bypass but also by purchasing access rights for an adjacent section on intersecting roads. This is done to limit access and development as well as to maintain safety and preserve the regional highway function of the state highway.

Districts generally agree that there is a need for consistent definitions of a bypass or types of bypasses. One district identified three types of bypasses: (1) with private access, (2) with at-grade access at street intersections, and (3) with interchange access only at major intersecting roads. Several districts pointed out there are at least two types of bypasses. In the first case, a rural bypass on relocation is proposed where a primary purpose is to more effectively carry regional traffic and this can only be achieved by removing the state highway traffic from urban arterial traffic. The other type of bypass is primarily justified by the need to remove state highway traffic from a congested downtown and/or congested arterial and this can be accomplished with an urban connector and/or relief route.

Districts had different views on whether or not a departmental policy is needed. Some districts supported a policy and others preferring to have it determined by a decision between the district and local communities. Views ranged from districts taking the position that all bypasses of communities should be freeways to districts saying that all or most bypasses will be urban arterials. Some districts identified backbone and Corridor 2020 routes or R1 highways as priorities for freeway bypasses.

Concerns

Some of the congested arterials that need to be bypassed were built as urban arterial bypasses decades ago. For example, a rural freeway bypass is being built around Platteville to replace the existing USH 151 bypass that has become a congested urban arterial bypass. Some districts thought that to prevent this issue, bypasses should now only be built as freeways rather than as urban arterial roads to preserve the regional function of the highway and to prevent creating a future need to build bypasses to replace bypasses.

Some districts expressed the concern that if a policy on access for bypasses is developed, it should be flexible.

Improvement Goals and Challenges

Districts agree that clearer definitions of different types of bypasses are needed. Most districts agree there should be a general departmental policy for bypasses to be planned as ultimate freeways as they are designed and as right-of-way acquisition occurs. This does not mean they have to be built as freeways. Some at-grade intersections may remain at the time of construction but these intersections would be phased out as traffic and safety problems increase. Some districts thought this policy should not have exceptions or at least very few exceptions. Other districts were concerned that local needs and the type of highway would sometimes make a freeway inappropriate. These districts emphasized the need for flexibility.

Section 4D. Official Mapping of Bypasses

Project Planning and Development Issue Papers

Issue Introduction

Cities, villages and towns that adopted village powers have the ability to officially map future road locations including bypasses. WisDOT is not permitted to initiate a NEPA study involving a bypass until six years before expenditures for a project will begin. By the time WisDOT can begin considering bypass alternatives, the planning process for a project is underway.

As local communities undertake a comprehensive plan process, it is reasonable that they consider the potential need for bypasses during their 20-year planning horizon (or more) and where a bypass would be best located if needed. Some areas of the state have few environmentally acceptable locations for bypasses that may be needed in the future. In these situations, local governments may be well advised to officially map a route to preserve it.

What the Workgroup Heard at District Meetings

Current Process

Districts do not generally help communities consider how to advance map bypasses. Districts reported they are reluctant to have any involvement because: NEPA process limits WisDOT's ability to take any position on bypass routes without first conducting an EIS; district involvement may create expectations for a project that cannot be delivered; and affected property owners may want WisDOT to purchase their property before a project exists.

The inability of one district to agree, in concept, some years ago, that a bypass route might be needed for a community resulted in the community removing the best available bypass route from its official map. Several years later the district started a bypass study for the community, development had occurred in the area once mapped for a bypass, and only less desirable routes were available.

At least one district has been able to help communities understand what types of information should be considered in choosing a bypass route to officially map.

Concerns

The state does not have the ability to select a bypass route or take positions on routes without going through the NEPA process. As a result, districts have to be very careful about commenting on the need for a bypass or the quality of any bypass locations communities may consider officially mapping. This is a sensitive transportation planning issue where districts may need to consult with Division of Transportation Infrastructure Development, Bureau of Environment and Federal Highway Administration on the NEPA process and help the local community assess its options. Communities need to

be aware that WisDOT and other agencies may not agree with the alternative officially mapped by a local government.

Improvement Goals and Challenges

Future state transportation options may benefit from advanced mapping of bypass routes by communities, especially when good bypass alternatives are limited by environmental constraints. Local governments along highways where corridor plans are prepared in advance of a project may also want to officially map a bypass route. In these cases, district staff need to be able to offer appropriate advice to the local governments without violating the intent of NEPA.

Section Five: Operating and Preserving Highways Issue Papers

Section 5A. Development Reviews: Implementation of
Revised Trans 233

Section 5B. Transportation Impact Analysis

Section 5A. Development Review: Implementation of Revised Trans 233

Operating and Preserving Highways Issue Papers

Issue Introduction

Wisconsin Administrative Code, Transportation Chapter 233 (Trans 233) prescribes certain requirements on all developments abutting state highways being proposed under subdivision platting under Chapter 236 of the Wisconsin State Statutes and through all other land divisions. The purpose of Trans 233 is to minimize or eliminate the impacts of land divisions on abutting state highways. WisDOT reviews all proposed land divisions to ensure they either comply with the requirements of Trans 233 or whether “special exceptions” are needed. Trans 233 reviews include certified survey maps (CSMs), subdivision and condominium plats, and any other type of land division adjacent to a state highway. Trans 233 reviews may also be conducted before issuing driveway permits.

Trans 233 includes a two-tiered system of setbacks. The normal setback of 50 feet exists on the higher class State Trunk Highways, but a reduced setback of 15 feet is in place on the remaining highways. Either setback may be modified as a result of a special analysis by district staff. These modifications are called special exceptions. The creation of a category of actions called “special exceptions” raises the issue of how the department can make Trans 233 decisions that are consistent, yet flexible.

What the Workgroup Heard at District Meetings

Current Process

The Trans 233 review process varies between districts. Most districts agree that Trans 233 reviews are going more smoothly now than they were after initial implementation of the rule. Most districts start from a “no access” perspective (i.e., do not allow additional direct access to the STH system, remove access when possible), but are willing to provide additional access when necessary. The common district philosophy is that the STH system functions primarily to provide mobility, while the local road system functions primarily to provide access. Staff realizes the need for compromise, and some districts are more successful than others in coordinating local, legislative and management buy-in to the access decisions they make.

Most districts categorize highways for access purposes but there are no common categories across districts. In addition, some districts simply consider the highway’s current function, not how the facility may need to function in the future. For example, requests for access to a high-number, low traffic count, non-Corridors 2020 highway are more likely to be granted than are access requests to a low-number, high traffic count, Corridors 2020 highway. This is expedient, but the review process considers only current function and not future function as areas along the STH system are further developed. There are many cases of fairly recent access approvals resulting in safety or mobility problems, which might have been avoided by more fully considering long-term

impacts to justify denial or modifications to the access provided. See Appendix D for specific questions asked on this issue.

Concerns

Every district cited resource constraints as a major concern. While staff resources are most often cited, most districts consider a GIS-linked access management database as a necessary, but currently absent, resource. Staff indicated they are willing to wait until District 2 has its model database working properly. District 3 has also developed a database to track requests. Some staff expressed a need for a database that would have even broader application than the one District 2 is developing. A district-wide database that could be used not only by the SPO section but also throughout the district was noted as important.

Most districts see the link between transportation impact analyses, corridor plans, highway functionality classifications, local land use and comprehensive plans, and Trans 233/access management issues. They do not have the resources or training to best work these disparate issues into a "comprehensive view of transportation." Every district indicated that the development review related workload has increased tremendously, but most districts have been able to meet deadlines, at least up to now.

Most districts are concerned that the desire to provide flexibility in Trans 233 reviews provides legislators a way to directly influence staff-level decisions, to the detriment of long-term system functionality. One concern expressed is that while each Trans 233 decision is unique, ultimately most of the difficult ones come down to a judgment call. If the decision goes against the landowner, the next call is frequently to a legislator. Many districts agree that improving working relationships with local governments could improve the review process and deflect legislative pressures, but the resources needed to build these relationships are not available at this time.

Most districts would like more specific guidance on when and what type of access to grant through Trans 233. Some staff thought existing guidance was sufficient but want additional staff resources to perform the work.

Districts reported that sometimes WisDOT is not involved early enough, or not involved at all, in the local government's planning and development process or long term planning, so it is behind at least one step in the process. Sometimes WisDOT districts do not have knowledge in advance about pending local development proposals and then is stuck with either forcing extensive rework of a development proposal or forced to accept or make access decisions that are poorly thought out. Past access decisions, over time, can sometimes turn out to be the wrong choice. Then it becomes a question of how WisDOT can correct past mistakes.

Improvement Goals and Challenges

Most districts also agreed that there are still a lot of policies and processes that need to be documented. Districts also noted that the workload for reviews has increased tremendously. Most districts also said that they really need an access management,

Trans 233 GIS-linked database. One of the main points noted is to provide adequate staff and other resources to do all the work that needs to get done.

Districts identified that it is important to have staff that have education, experience or training in: understanding the land use and transportation connection; conflict resolution skills; systematic development of informed consent; GIS use; and how to use the tools WisDOT have more effectively. Other staff education and training needs include: creating and maintaining effective professional relationships (i.e., with local officials, developers, etc.); real estate and subdivision plat review skills; how to read a CSM; and understanding how statutes, rules, policy guidance and procedures work together.

Other issues noted by districts as improvement goals include an access management policy manual that includes consistent access management philosophy, rules, policies, procedures, etc. (i.e., driveway permit requirements same as Trans 233 permit requirements). Staff also expressed that reducing political influence on staff-level access management decisions and improving internal and external coordination on development reviews were important. Staff noted that part of this coordination should include on-going education for local officials, developers, and others including what the department is trying to do with Trans 233 and the land use and transportation linkages.

Section 5B. Transportation Impact Analysis

Operating and Preserving Highways Issue Papers

Issue Introduction

A Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA) is a study conducted when traffic impacts are anticipated as a result of proposed land development. A TIA, also called a transportation impact analysis, can be required as part of a district's development review processes for developments adjacent to state trunk highways (STHs) or connecting highways. It is intended to analyze the transportation impacts of the proposed development, such that those impacts can be considered before the development is approved by the local government – with the intent that if the development has significant impacts some type of mitigation measures would be imposed on the developer by a local government as a condition for development approval, the proposal significantly modified, or in extreme cases the development might not be approved. Local governments can require TIAs for proposed developments in any part of a community. WisDOT uses TIAs to review impacts of proposed developments only when the development is adjacent to state trunk highways within the driveway permitting process in Trans 231 or within Trans 233 review process.

What the Workgroup Heard at District Meetings

Current Process and Concerns

District 1 works with local units of government to seek TIAs, trying to work off of the TIA User's Group proposed criteria. The cities of Janesville, Madison, Sun Prairie, and Middleton all require TIAs. Problems with current TIA requirements include: addressing the impact of development occurring off the STH routes that also impact STH system; TIAs are too site specific and not necessarily looking at corridor or areawide impacts. District 1 feels that specific criteria are needed and there needs to be a way for WisDOT to get involved on the front end of development proposals, not the back end as is the case too many times now.

District 2 is by far the leader in the number of TIAs conducted and procedural policies, with specific documentation on criteria, responsibility, procedures, and content. Guidance criteria are important, not only for WisDOT, but for developers. Sometimes District 2 will ask community or developers to combine TIA for multiple developments. Large developers see TIAs as a cost of doing business. Staff resources are a problem, given the amount of TIAs done in the southeast region. Improvements suggested by District 2 include consideration of drainage issues in the TIAs.

District 3 uses three triggers for TIAs: 1) a Trans 233 review, 2) a driveway permit request, and 3) a local request for street connection to a STH. District 3 uses a modification of District 2 warrants (any development that generates more than 100 vehicles per hour or 700 trip ends daily). A TIA is not done in every situation. The decision is made more on a case-by-case basis.

District 4 uses a screening process through Trans 233. There are no real criteria followed. In the case of new schools and large commercial developments, District 4 staff use their own judgment. The district also looks at the type of traffic—number of trucks vs. number of automobiles and the current operating situation. A problem also exists in that there is no current process to close out a TIA.

District 5 requires a TIA as part of the Trans 231/233 process. TIAs are only requested if the development requires a permit of some sort. Developments on local roads are not required to do a TIA, even if the development will have obvious impacts on the STH system. Generally, District 5 refers to District 2 procedures when a TIA is required. District 5 has not required many TIAs.

District 5 feels there is a need for consistent criteria, but feels that some flexibility must be retained due to the differing nature of development in various parts of the state. The district also felt that a TIA should be a multimodal transportation impact analysis and not simply a traffic analysis.

District 6 requires a TIA when a Trans 231/233 permit is required. In addition, District 6 generally requires a TIA when peak hour volume is 100 vehicles or greater per hour or when Average Daily Trips (ADT) is greater than 750. Staff notes that problems usually arise with small, local developers, not with WalMart or Home Depot. District 6 feels that a development that is not a land division on STHs is problematic, given that 95% of "local approving authorities" don't know what a TIA is. Guidelines are needed to determine who pays for a necessary improvement. District 6 notes that a TIA review comes from the maintenance/traffic budget, not the consultant budget. It should come from SPR funds. The resource demands are severe.

District 7 requires TIAs when it appears that a proposed development will incur a negative impact to a WisDOT facility and/or intersection, injecting risk to the traveling public, or the goods that travel along the facility. A Trans 233 reviewed development of a large scale will require a TIA as well. The district looks at Level of Service, ADT, Vehicles Per Hour (VPH), etc. Three TIAs have been completed in 2.5 years, as well as one traffic study. A traffic study is required when VPH are greater than 100 in District 7. Staff notes that inconsistency at any level of the land use or access management process is bad for business and public relations. Therefore, the department should develop consistent TIA criteria.

Staff believes WisDOT should encourage local governments to require TIAs for developments off the STH. The incentive for local governments is primarily safety. Local governments are often concerned about losing development with TIAs being required. District 7 believes the important desired improvements for TIAs include: 1) an access management database system to save time researching information, 2) a TIA users guide generated by WisDOT that would include criteria, associated laws and policies and where to go for information. WisDOT's TIA User's Group is currently developing some of this information.

District 8 requires Transportation Impact Analyses frequently. Expected traffic generation is the primary criterion. A guide to TIAs, like that being developed by the

TIA User's Group, would be quite useful for both the district staff, as well as the local communities and developers.

Improvement Goals and Challenges

In summary, the process for TIAs varies considerably by district. Generally, WisDOT districts use Trans 233 or driveway permit authority in Trans 231 as a rationale to require a TIA. District 2 has the most sophisticated and well-documented process. They have written guidance which outlines when a TIA must be done, what issues it should address, and who should be involved. Other districts have policies on TIAs, but most are not documented in writing. Some districts have only recently been involved in their first TIA. If a TIA is required, most districts require the developer to produce it.

WisDOT does not have authority to require a TIA for 75% of developments that are taking place because they are not directly adjacent to the STH. However, most districts state that impacts to the STH still exist even when the proposed development is not directly adjacent. Current policy, when a TIA is conducted, is to have it reviewed by the DTIM Traffic Forecasting Section.

Section Six: Other Issue Papers

Section 6A. Summary of Sessions with MPO and RPC Staff

Section 6B. Land Use Related Skills, Knowledge, and Training

Section 6A. Summary of Sessions with MPO and RPC Staff

Other Issue Papers

Issue Introduction

Federal law requires each of Wisconsin's fifteen metropolitan planning areas that are represented by twelve Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to have a multimodal transportation plan with a 20-year horizon in order to qualify for federal transportation funds. WisDOT assists each MPO to update these plans. Many of the MPOs are represented by Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs). Districts also work with both MPOs and RPCs on transportation planning, project and programming issues. See appendix for tables outlining the RPCs and MPOs in each of the districts.

Each of Wisconsin's MPOs and RPCs were invited to attend a district session to discuss a broad range of land use related topics and respond to a series of questions. This paper includes information gathered from these MPO/RPC sessions. Attendance at each session varied. For several reasons, some of the summary questions do not have documented responses limiting the amount of information on the topic. The meeting held in District 7 did not include a session with MPO and RPC staff due to the lack of a metropolitan planning area in the district. The RPC covering District 7 counties attended the meeting in District 4. The MPO/RPC session from the meeting in District 8 is not represented in this summary paper due to lack of specific documentation.

Topics that were discussed include:

- MPO plan updates
- Transportation element of comprehensive plans and the districts' role
- Continuing education in land use and planning issues for WisDOT staff
- Land use guide for WisDOT staff

What the Workgroup Heard at MPO/RPC Session

MPO/RPC Current Process

The discussion focused around general coordination between WisDOT and the MPOs/RPCs. Formal and informal techniques were discussed including staff meetings, mailings, meeting notifications and newsletters sent by MPOs/RPCs and WisDOT staff involvement on MPO/RPC committees. Some RPCs contract with MPOs to conduct certain planning related work. The level of overall coordination between MPOs/RPCs and WisDOT ranges widely from frequent, informal discussions to formal committee participation to annual meetings only.

MPO and RPC staff reported that a lack of consistency in the coordination efforts appears to cause some problems between WisDOT and MPO/RPC staff. MPOs/RPCs noted that often they do not know WisDOT's long-term plans or shorter-term decisions causing inconsistencies in the MPO/RPC plans, policies and message to local governments. Some MPOs also do not coordinate well with RPCs creating a lack of

regional vision. MPOs and RPCs that border Minnesota also expressed concerns with coordination. MPO/RPC staffing resources were noted as a concern for improving coordination. MPO/RPC representatives also frequently noted that not enough WisDOT staff was assigned to the plan update functions as well as to overall coordination efforts. Central office was also specifically noted as needing to provide information such as forecasting and transit related information. Traffic forecasting was identified by MPOs as required in their plan updates but WisDOT has decided not to provide to MPOs due to agency budget cuts. Modeling was raised as a concern for some MPOs/RPCs as resources continue to tighten while MPO planning requirements still exist.

Improving overall coordination between all parties was noted as an important goal. Most participants indicated communication is the key to successful coordination. A number of MPO/RPC staff suggested that WisDOT should be more pro-active in sharing transportation plans, alternatives, etc. early on rather than waiting for the issues to emerge. Improving coordination with local comprehensive planning and local development efforts was discussed in several meetings as an issue that MPOs, RPCs and WisDOT need to focus attention on. Increasing the level of corridor planning was suggested as a successful technique to improve long-term coordination. Traffic forecasts were also noted as something WisDOT should continue or provide funds to the MPOs and RPCs to conduct the forecasts.

Comprehensive Planning Issues

As with the long-range plan, MPOs/RPCs indicate that district staff (and sometimes central office staff) participation varies in the level of coordination and involvement in local plans. Many RPCs are assisting local governments in developing comprehensive plans. A few MPOs/RPCs noted that WisDOT staff participated in both formal and informal ways through committees and draft reviews but noted that some plans have had little participation, review or involvement from WisDOT staff. A few participants noted that MPOs/RPCs participate to add a regional transportation perspective in local plans. One MPO noted that a district financially invested in the development of a county plan as well as participated in its development. East Central Wisconsin RPC, Bay-Lake RPC, and North Central Wisconsin RPC are all currently developing regional comprehensive plans. Some RPCs noted that they intend to develop a regional plan under the comprehensive planning statutes sometime in the future; however, a couple of RPCs indicated they did not intend to develop a regional plan at this point.

The vast majority of the RPCs noted that it is very important for WisDOT to be involved in local plans at some level. MPO/RPC participants noted that WisDOT is not currently active enough in local planning efforts. RPCs noted that WisDOT's advice is critical in local plans but since it has not been overly present in local planning, successful coordination efforts will require diligent work by WisDOT. A couple of RPCs noted that the lack of requirements for coordination with local governments, regions or state entities is a concern. Although RPCs also noted that more activity with local governments is important, many noted that WisDOT resources assigned to these efforts appears to be a factor in the lack of activity. Many noted that most local governments would generally welcome WisDOT presence or review of local plans.

When asked why WisDOT is not asked to participate more often in local planning efforts, one RPC noted that sometimes the only reason a local government asks for WisDOT's assistance is because they want something from WisDOT. Another RPC noted that WisDOT did not have a process set up that would help foster the coordination.

Most MPO/RPC participants noted that WisDOT needs additional process or policies for reviewing, participating in, or integrating local plans for consistency with state plans, policies, etc. Many of the participants said that WisDOT should develop a better process for coordination with local plans just at a "basic" level. Become a "partner," stated one RPC representative. One RPC representative noted that districts should be more proactive on promoting multimodal approaches to local governments in local planning efforts. An overwhelming majority of participants noted that any direction, advice or review WisDOT can provide to local governments is welcomed and needed. Suggestions include: provide information to local governments on various land use scenarios; discuss impacts of various land use decisions to the transportation system; provide discussion of development types and designs; develop a checklist for plans (transportation element but maybe land use scenarios, implementation, cooperation, also) for a variety of users; and hold regional seminars. The majority noted that more resources should be assigned to these types of efforts.

Developing Staff with Land Use Skills, Continuing Education

Many participants noted that WisDOT has more to add to land use related issues than other state agencies. Participants from many sessions noted that the existing WisDOT staff does not currently have the basic skills or resources to achieve improved planning related coordination with local governments. One participant summed up a majority opinion that WisDOT should work to balance qualitative (planning) and quantitative (engineering) processes in the department.

A couple of participants noted that although we need to train staff, WisDOT should also guide district staff on the department's expectations and provide some direction for coordination and policy on land use and transportation planning related issues.

An understanding of the "basics" at the district level by existing staff such as land use and transportation planning issues, laws, "planning and land use 101" were noted as important improvement goals for WisDOT. Succinct but pertinent seminars/programs/documents as part of staff development were suggested. A participant noted that a "panned down" guide would be good for local governments. One participant also noted that WisDOT should utilize RPCs and MPOs for staff development in an educational program.

Section 6B. Land Use Related Skills, Knowledge, and Training

Other Issue Papers

Issue Introduction

District personnel in various roles within multiple organizational units and civil service series need land use related skills. The term “land use” skills, knowledge and training is used in this issue paper as a larger appreciation and understanding of community development values and goals, connections between land use and transportation as well as specific technical skills in planning, site development and review practices.

What the Workgroup Heard in District Meetings

Current Process

Staff discussed some of the district roles that could benefit from land use skills and knowledge. These include:

- NEPA studies/location studies/conceptual design/project planning studies/alpha studies.
- Corridor planning.
- Multi-modal programs such as rideshare, telecommuting, grant program management, park and ride planning and management, bike and transit facility planning assistance.
- Development reviews (Trans 233, TIAs, etc.).
- Management support/special studies/public information.
- Local and regional planning coordination efforts.

Department staff within these roles generally have diverse educational backgrounds. Bachelor or advanced degrees in engineering, urban/regional planning, and public administration are common. Other staff have college degrees in areas such as geography, real estate and journalism. There are also combinations of all these degrees. Some staff have coursework toward a bachelor’s or advanced degree.

District staff that might utilize land use skills and knowledge can be organizationally located within Systems Planning and Operations, Real Estate in Technical Services, Project Development, Business Services. Staff could be in a number of civil service series including: Civil Engineer, Engineering Specialist, Program and Planning Analyst, Community Services Specialist, and Real Estate Agent.

Concerns Identified by Districts

The roles mentioned above require an understanding of both state transportation needs and local goals as well as an appreciation for policy combined with specific implementation techniques. Individuals can acquire these skills through a combination of academic education, training, and experience, but districts expressed concern that it may take years to develop these abilities. Another approach districts noted is to

assemble teams in which each team member has strengths in some of the knowledge and experience areas. Without agency recognition and fostering of these skills, it is reasonable to believe that the people who have them may potentially be drawn away from WisDOT to other organizational or professional opportunities.

Improvement Goals and Challenges

A general set of questions was asked the districts. These questions include the staff training needs relating to land use and skills needed to achieve department goals.

The vast majority of districts said that “planning 101” is needed including: land use planning principles, development approval process, and procedures and techniques. Half of the districts noted that training on state planning and zoning laws and rules that apply to transportation planning, site developments, access, the department role vs. local control, and developing partnerships with local governments. Additional training on the FHWA regulations, process and NEPA procedures was also noted by half of the districts.

A wide variety of training issues were raised in three or less districts including: development scenarios, systemation development of informed consent (SDIC), the land use/transportation relationship, conflict resolution, real estate process, community sensitive design, new employee training, highway access management, facilitation skills, corridor preservation, use of GIS and access management database, department perspectives and processes such as majors, and funding, and MPO/RPC planning processes.

District staff also provided comments regarding the skills and knowledge the department and district staff need to help WisDOT to achieve its land use goals. Over half the districts indicated that the department should hire generalists but should train specialists. A few districts noted that traffic engineers are needed for TIAs and that planning knowledge and skills are needed for conducting corridor plans. A couple of districts mentioned that WisDOT needed staff that have local government experience, good communication and people skills, and experience with working with modeling for MPOs. It was mentioned that it is important to balance the planning and engineering staff, that both were needed in land use related activities. Other skills mentioned by a single district included salesmanship, legislative understanding, and information management.

Districts provided several suggestions on who in particular offers this training. Many districts commented that users groups and guides are very important in staff training. Several districts mentioned the Northwestern University Traffic Engineering Institute, which provides specific training on traffic management of land development case studies. Other staff noted that UW, FHWA, NHI, RPCs, WAPA, and WisDOT expert staff all could be a resource for training. In addition, a couple of districts mentioned the need for reoccurring symposiums for local governments on land use and transportation related subjects. Generally, district staff assumed that district staff would be offered the training. Other suggestions included manager training, local government and MPO staff,

developers and consultants preparing comprehensive plans, corridor plans, transportation studies, EISs, and TIAs.

Appendices

Appendix A: Workgroup Members

Appendix B: WisDOT's Land Use Principles, Vision and Goals

Appendix C: RPCs and MPOs

Appendix D: Development Review Questions

Appendix A: Workgroup Members

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* Anne Monks and Tanace Matthiesen are co-chairs of the workgroup. Mike Maierle was also a co-chair before accepting another position outside of WisDOT, and played an integral part in the workgroup's efforts.

Appendix B: WisDOT's Land Use Guiding Principles, Vision and Goals

WisDOT's Guiding Principles on Land Use

Twelve guiding principles on land use were developed as the primary outcome of the May 2000 senior manager meeting. The Secretary's Office and the modal administrators formally endorsed these principles and introductory paragraph in July 2000.

“WisDOT considers the impact transportation facilities have on local land use and land use decisions. WisDOT has taken the initiative in educating local officials about the impacts of their land use decisions on the transportation system, and the impacts of transportation decisions on land use. This work, however, is often constrained by funding and other resource limitations.

1. WisDOT will not usurp local land use decisions;
2. WisDOT will be educators for local government leaders who struggle with balancing the need for growth with the desire to preserve their community character;
3. WisDOT's decisions will reflect our desire to be a good neighbor;
4. WisDOT's decisions will be consistent with our mission and values;
5. A comprehensive transportation system includes multiple modes of transportation;
6. Some transportation modes are more dependent on land development design and population density than other factors and this dependence needs to be understood;
7. WisDOT will emphasize planning as a tool with many uses: it provides an opportunity to coordinate & integrate transportation and land use decisions, it can strengthen relationships between WisDOT and local governments, it identifies costs before they are incurred and can identify ways to minimize them; and it provides for extensive public participation;
8. WisDOT will especially promote integrated transportation and land use planning;
9. WisDOT will respect, consider and balance environmental resources, property rights, community goals, transportation needs and quality of life issues in our decision-making;
10. WisDOT will be accountable for our decisions: accountable to the environment, to the transportation system, to our taxpayers;
11. WisDOT will support the development and implementation of local comprehensive plans;

WisDOT recognizes the impacts that its actions have on land use changes and will attempt to make those impacts harmonize with local community values.”

WisDOT's Land Use Vision:

Coordinating transportation and land use decisions to effectively manage our transportation systems.

Land Use Goals for WisDOT:

1. Increase WisDOT staff's understanding of the transportation – land use relationship, and how our activities affect land use.
2. Develop a WisDOT philosophy and message on land use.
3. Provide direction and support to districts and divisions on their land use activities.
4. Increase coordination, communication and involvement with local planning efforts.

Appendix C: RPCs and MPOs in WisDOT Transportation Districts

RPCs in WisDOT Transportation Districts

Regional Planning Commission	Counties	WisDOT Transportation Districts
Bay-Lake RPC	Brown, Door, Florence, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marinette, Oconto, Sheboygan	3
Dane Co. RPC	Dane	1
East Central Wisconsin RPC	Calumet, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Marquette, Menominee, Outagamie, Shawano, Waupaca, Waushara, Winnebago	2, 3, 4
Mississippi River RPC	Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, Trempealeau, Vernon	5, 6
North Central Wisconsin RPC	Adams, Forest, Juneau, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Vilas, Wood	4, 7
Northwest Wisconsin RPC	Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Washburn, Taylor	6, 8
Southeast Wisconsin RPC	Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, Waukesha	2
Southwest Wisconsin RPC	Grant, Green, Iowa, Lafayette, Richland	1, 5
West Central Wisconsin RPC	Barron, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Polk, St. Croix	6, 8

Note: There is no RPC coverage in Columbia, Dodge, Jefferson, Rock, and Sauk Counties, covered in part of Dist. 1.

MPOs In WisDOT Transportation Districts

Metropolitan Planning Area	Metropolitan Planning Organization	WisDOT Transportation Districts
Appleton	East Central Wisconsin RPC	3
Beloit	City of Beloit	1
Chippewa - Eau Claire	West Central Wisconsin RPC	6
Dubuque	East Central Intergovernmental Association	1
Duluth - Superior	Arrowhead Regional Development Commission	8
Green Bay	Brown County	3
Janesville	City of Janesville	1
LaCrosse	LaCrosse County	5
Madison	City of Madison	1
Oshkosh	East Central Wisconsin RPC	3
SE Wisconsin	Southeastern Wisconsin RPC	2
Sheboygan	Bay-Lake RPC	3
Wausau	Marathon County	4

Appendix D: Development Review Questions

Development Review –Trans 233

These are the questions that were asked in 7 out of 8 districts; the questions asked of District 5 were slightly different, and were revised after that meeting.

Finalized Questions:

1. What are your experiences with Trans 233 regulations and implementation in this district? What is your process?
2. To what extent do you consider -- and to what extent do you think you should consider -- local plans and positions when making access decisions?
3. Would you like more specific guidance about when to grant access and what type of access to grant through Trans 233?
4. What are the tools WisDOT needs to clearly explain the purposes of Trans 233 to property owners?
5. What skills or experiences should the department focus on for doing this job?
6. What continuing training would be useful for those working on this issue?
7. What would be helpful in a template or guide, related to this issue?
 - List of WisDOT policies on this issue?
 - Relevant state laws?
 - Guidance on WisDOT priorities for allocating resources to this issue?
 - Where to go for assistance, training?
 - Description of current WisDOT processes related to this issue?