

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S
LAND USE COORDINATION & POLICY DEVELOPMENT
SUMMARY

MOTIVATIONS

WisDOT is placing a high priority on examining the transportation – land use relationship, and exploring ways WisDOT can improve coordination in the land use and transportation planning and decision-making process. Here are a few reasons why improved coordination is important to WisDOT:

- ✓ Land use and transportation decision-making are inextricably linked and cyclical in nature.
- ✓ The Department's Strategic Plan encourages a long-range intermodal transportation planning perspective, partnerships and communication.
- ✓ WisDOT leaders and Department staff persons are increasingly aware that WisDOT currently plays a role in land use planning and development, and will necessarily play a larger role in working with local governments as they conduct planning the future.
- ✓ WisDOT has a need to preserve state transportation investments and prioritize its future expenditure of resources.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ WisDOT programs affect 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.
- ✓ WisDOT supports and wants to promote planned and efficient development patterns. More dispersed population and development often leads to more traffic congestion and safety concerns along transportation facilities, not only in metropolitan areas but around the entire state.
- ✓ Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law (passed in 1999) requires local governments to develop and adopt comprehensive plans by the year 2010. WisDOT staff will be asked by local governments to be more involved in their comprehensive planning efforts.
- ✓ 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.

The best way for the Department to improve our transportation-land use planning and decision-making processes is to start with where we are today and improve those processes instead of searching for a single grand solution. In order to do this we will need to coordinate and potentially improve WisDOT's existing land use related programs and policies.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

A number of activities have already occurred related to transportation and land use coordination and policy development at WisDOT. These include the development of a land use related program inventory, a land use vision, guiding principles, and land use goals for WisDOT.

WisDOT Land Use-Related Program Inventory. WisDOT's transportation districts and modal divisions currently perform a variety of activities that provide assistance to local and regional governments. In 1998, the Office of Policy and Budget prepared a report entitled "Evaluations of WisDOT Programs with Relationships to Land Use, Land Use Planning and Land Regulation Authority", which found that over 40 WisDOT programs have a direct, indirect, or planning-related impact on land use.

WisDOT's Land Use Vision. Two senior manager meetings focusing on land use were held in 2000. Discussions at these meetings and other discussions among WisDOT staff formed the basis for a WisDOT land use vision statement, guiding principles and set of land use goals. Based on the discussions at these meetings, the following land use vision was developed and endorsed by the WisDOT Board of Directors in January, 2001:

WisDOT's Land Use Vision:

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

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. These principles and introductory paragraph were formally endorsed by the Secretary's Office and the modal administrators 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;
12. 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 Goals. At its January 23, 2001, meeting, the WisDOT Board of Directors endorsed the following land use goals for WisDOT:

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.

Identified Objectives and Strategies for Implementing WisDOT Land Use Goals:

- ❖ Create a coordinating and information-sharing framework for WisDOT management and key staff.

Strategy One: Hold Monthly Secretary's Office Coordination Meetings
Strategy Two: Create a WisDOT Land Use Coordination Roundtable

- ❖ Expand WisDOT staff knowledge regarding land use issues through training and available resources.

Strategy One: Develop and implement an internal land use training program.
Strategy Two: Develop an Executive Office's Land Use Web Page.
Strategy Three: Circulate information to staff on transportation - land use issues, conferences, workshops, etc.
Strategy Four: Develop information and materials for staff and the public on why land use issues are important to WisDOT.

- ❖ Develop a culture within the department for coordinated, consistent land use-related policy-making and information-sharing, through which consistent and reasonable policies will be made, and relevant WisDOT staff will be kept informed of and understand the department's policies related to land use.

Strategy One: Develop a Department Land Use Vision, Goals, and Guiding Principles. (Completed)

Strategy Two: Develop consistent policies across the Department on land use-related activities and programs.

Strategy Three: Develop and distribute information and materials for staff that describe WisDOT's land use vision, guiding principles, and land use goals; why land use issues are important to WisDOT; and indicating any changes to land use policies and programs.

Strategy Four: Develop and implement a WisDOT land use training program.

- ❖ Examine the resources required to increase WisDOT's involvement with local land use planning efforts.

WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED OUTCOME?

The Department has recognized that the transportation – land use relationship is an important issue for WisDOT. The Department has prioritized this issue, as it is critical for accomplishing a balance between the state's transportation needs and community goals. However, this effort will take work to accomplish. With tightening department resources, creative solutions will be key. By striving for improved internal coordination and communication, providing training opportunities, and developing consistent policies relating to land use WisDOT will improve interjurisdictional coordination relating to transportation in Wisconsin.

For more information, please visit the DOT land use intranet website for updates, summaries, contact information, resources and other items relating to land use and transportation issues.

NOTE: This document represents a summary of two documents: "Land Use Coordination & Policy Development: Motivations And Recent Activities" and "Land Use Coordination & Policy Development: Implementation Activities." For these documents, please refer to the above website.