

Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030



Public Participation Plan

June 2010

Background

The Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 requires states to prepare state rail plans to receive federal grants. In 2010, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) will begin development of the *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030*, the state's long-range plan focused on freight, intercity passenger and commuter rail transportation. The *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* will include:

- A statewide vision for freight, intercity passenger and commuter rail
- An overview of the state's existing rail system
- An assessment of the existing rail system
- A statement of public financing issues for rail projects and service
- A rail investment program
- A system-plan environmental evaluation
- An environmental justice analysis

The plan horizon will extend to the year 2030. The *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* will build off the policies and issues identified in *Connections 2030*, Wisconsin's statewide multimodal long-range transportation plan adopted in October 2009 (as well as the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative passenger rail efforts, 2004 *Rail Issues and Opportunities* report and the 1992 *Freight Rail Policy Plan*).

Since the federal government has not yet issued guidance specific to the development of state rail plans, WisDOT will follow the public participation requirements identified under the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (RSIA), which details the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA), and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). The SAFETEA-LU requirements are codified in Title 23, Chapter 450 of the Code of Federal Regulations. In addition, the plan will be developed pursuant to the requirements of section 135 of title 23, United States Code; and will consider the goals within other pertinent rail plans, including the national rail plan, if it is available before the plan is complete.

Goals of the *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* Public Participation Plan

Comprehensive public participation is crucial to the success of the *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030*. To ensure broad-based public participation and awareness, WisDOT will:

- Ensure an open and inclusive process
- Educate the public about Wisconsin's rail transportation system
- Provide opportunities for the public to participate in the planning process
- Enable dialogue between WisDOT, the general public and stakeholders to identify the critical issues facing the state's rail system and develop policies to address these issues
- Schedule public hearings at times and locations that are both convenient and accessible

Target Audience

All Wisconsin residents are encouraged to participate in the *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* planning process. Specific outreach efforts will be undertaken to ensure participation from minority, low-income and senior populations. These target efforts may include group meetings, focus groups, and one-on-one meetings.

Outreach Process

The outreach process is made up of three phases:

Phase 1:	Needs identification
Phase 2:	Draft plan review
Phase 3:	Final plan adoption

Phase 1:

The outreach efforts during phase one will focus on needs and issues identification. To ensure that the department receives the information necessary to complete the draft plan, the department will:

- Develop a Web-based survey
- Hold up to six regional forums to consult with freight rail operators, intercity passenger rail interests, commuter rail owners and operators, and community leaders

All Wisconsin residents and rail stakeholders will be encouraged to complete a Web-based survey that will identify needs and issues pertinent to rail planning in Wisconsin.

In addition, WisDOT will hold up to six focused outreach events around the state to consult with freight rail operators, intercity passenger rail interests, commuter rail owners and operators, and community leaders. Structured as regional forums, these outreach events will occur prior to the draft plan being released for public review. Invitations to the regional forums will be sent to key stakeholders to ensure focused discussions. During the outreach events, the initial issues and needs gathered through the development of *Connections 2030* and previous efforts to develop the *Rail Issues and Opportunities* report (2004) will be presented. WisDOT planning staff will use the results of both past and current efforts to help prepare the draft *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* for public review.

Phase 2:

After the release of the draft *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030*, the department will initiate a 45-day public comment period. During that time WisDOT will hold up to ten public hearings and up to ten focused meetings with minority, low income and senior populations statewide. In addition, WisDOT will meet with rail stakeholder interests upon request. WisDOT will produce summary documents to communicate development of the draft plan and summarize its content. When the comment period closes, the comments will be analyzed and the plan updated, as appropriate.

Phase 3:

Upon completion of phase two, the department will finalize the *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* and seek adoption by the department Secretary. A final summary document will also be produced communicating the process and results of the outreach efforts, as well as key components addressed in the plan.

Consultation with Tribes, State and Federal Agencies, and Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Regional Planning Commissions

To develop the *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030*, WisDOT will adhere to the coordination and consultation requirements defined under:

- Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008
- The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), and
- 23 CFR 450.104

Pursuant to the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008, WisDOT will provide adequate and reasonable notice and opportunity for comment and other input to Wisconsin's public rail carriers, commuter operators, and transit authorities, units of local government, and other parties interested in the preparation of the *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030*.

In addition to requirements of the Rail Safety Improvement Act 2008, SAFETEA-LU requires consultation with two groups: 1) non-metropolitan local officials and 2) federal, state and tribal environmental, regulatory and resource agencies. While both consultation processes apply to public participation, the actual processes are different.

Consultation with local officials in non-metropolitan areas is defined under 23 CFR 450.104, which states,

“One or more parties confer with other identified parties in accordance with an established process and, prior to taking action(s), considers the views of the other parties and periodically informs them about action(s) taken. This definition does not apply to ‘consultation’ performed by the States and the MPOs in comparing the long-range statewide transportation plan and the metropolitan transportation plan, respectively, to State and Tribal conservation plans or maps or inventories of natural and historic resources.”

In February 2005, WisDOT reaffirmed this consultation process (Appendix A). WisDOT will follow these guidelines as they relate to *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* outreach.

SAFETEA-LU also requires consultation with federal, state and tribal environmental, regulatory and resource agencies in the development of statewide transportation plans. Specifically, consultation includes a comparison of transportation plans with conservation plans or maps, if available, and a comparison with inventories of natural and historic resources, if available (23 CFR 450.214(i)). SAFETEA-LU also requires that the discussion of mitigation activities be developed in consultation with the above agencies. WisDOT will hold consultation meetings with federal, state and tribal environmental, regulatory and resource agencies. At least one meeting will occur before the draft *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* is released for public review. WisDOT will hold at least one consultation meeting with tribal governments. This meeting may be coordinated with WisDOT's Tribal Task Force.

WisDOT will also meet with Wisconsin's 14 metropolitan planning organizations and nine regional planning commissions to ensure the *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* correctly reflects the recommendations identified in the MPO and RPC long-range transportation plans. WisDOT will either conduct a separate meeting with the MPOs and RPCs or include consultation activities as part of regularly scheduled quarterly MPO and RPC director meetings. This consultation meeting will occur prior to the draft plan being released for public review.

Meeting Accessibility

SAFETEA-LU requires that to the maximum extent practicable, public meetings should be held at convenient and accessible locations and times. This has been and will continue to be one of the goals of this public participation plan.

Visualization Techniques

To the maximum extent possible, states are encouraged to use visualization techniques to describe the proposed long-range transportation plan. WisDOT will continue to use maps and graphics, whenever possible, in its planning process. Other techniques may be used, if feasible.

Information Availability

WisDOT has created an exclusive Web-site for the *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* (www.wisconsinrailplan.gov). WisDOT will update the Web-site as new information becomes available.

Public Participation Process

Proposed activities

Below is a list of proposed public participation activities:

- **Notice of Intent**
WisDOT will publish a Notice of Intent to prepare a long-range transportation plan in the official state newspaper.
- **Public Participation Plan**
WisDOT will prepare and publish for public comment the public participation plan. A notice will be published in the official state newspaper. A notice will also be published on the plan's Web site.
- **Mailing List (both U.S. mail and electronic)**
By combining mailing lists from previous planning efforts and identifying public officials, WisDOT will create a mailing list. WisDOT staff will update the list to include individuals who want to be added and to remove individuals when addresses are no longer valid. Changes to the mailing list are identified on a continual basis.

WisDOT will establish an electronic mailing list. Individuals will have the opportunity to receive information about the *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* via email.
- **www.wisconsinrailplan.gov**
WisDOT obtained a unique domain name for the planning process. The Web site is updated when new information is available.
- **Questionnaire**
WisDOT will publish a questionnaire to identify rail needs. The survey will be primarily Web-based, but paper copies will be made available, upon request.
- **Postcard**
WisDOT will send a postcard to the mailing list notifying recipients that the planning process has started and that they can complete the survey and provide their feedback during the first phase of the process.
- **Consultation**
WisDOT will hold consultation meetings with four separate groups: 1) federal and state environmental resource agencies, 2) tribal governments, 3) MPOs and RPCs, and 4) rail interests.

- **Draft Plan Phase**

With the completion of the needs identification, WisDOT will release the draft plan for public review. WisDOT will:

- Publish the draft plan and summary document on the Web site
- Establish a 45-day public comment period
- Conduct statewide public hearings on the draft plan and its system-plan environmental evaluation
- Use visualization techniques, such as maps and charts, to illustrate the main goals of the plan
- Inform Wisconsin legislators of the draft plan recommendations
- Provide presentations, upon request
- Translate summary materials into Spanish
- Provide verbal and/or written translations, upon request
- Inform the media
- Document the comments received and how WisDOT responds to those comments

Individuals will have the opportunity to view the draft plan at public hearings, and comments may be submitted by e-mail to railplan2030@dot.wi.gov or by writing to: Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030, WisDOT Bureau of Planning and Economic Development, P.O. Box 7913, Rm 901, Madison, WI 53707-7913.

- **Adopting the Plan**

At the end of the 45-day public comment period, WisDOT staff will analyze the comments received. WisDOT will amend the plan when feasible. The WisDOT Secretary will then adopt the *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030*. WisDOT will:

- Publish the adopted plan on the Web site
- Distribute copies of the adopted plan in CD format and related summary materials, upon request
- Translate the final plan summary materials into Spanish
- Provide written translations, upon request
- Inform the media
- Provide presentations, upon request

Appendix A

Documentation of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Process for Consultation with Local Officials in Non-Metropolitan Areas

Introduction

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) consults continually with local officials in areas of the state not served by metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). The central office in Madison and each of the five transportation regions have worked hard to develop strong relationships with local and tribal governments throughout Wisconsin.

In response to the FHWA final rule defining local consultation in areas not served by MPOs, WisDOT is submitting this document as a description and documentation of the agency's local consultation process. It also presents highlights from the central office and the transportation regions of some of their successful practices, and reviews the steps in the local consultation process for a few select WisDOT plans and programs. Lastly, it provides a description of the review process for this local consultation documentation and outlines the steps WisDOT will take to ensure the process is reevaluated in the future.

WisDOT's Non-Metropolitan Local Consultation Process

WisDOT's local consultation process is built upon a strong tradition of cooperation. For years, WisDOT has incorporated local governments and officials into the transportation planning and programming decision-making process. The agency has always been committed to working closely with local officials to understand and meet their transportation needs. WisDOT advises, but does not set, local priorities.

WisDOT's existing planning process provides opportunities for statewide public input and review. The public outreach efforts for Wisconsin's multimodal plan *Translinks 21* and subsequent modal plans were praised for their comprehensiveness and ability to invoke input from the entire state. This extensive outreach effort continues as WisDOT develops its current multimodal transportation plan, *Connections 2030*. Information regarding *Connections 2030* is available online or by contacting the WisDOT Bureau of Planning and Economic Development (BPED). Information regarding previous planning efforts and/or the STIP is also available by contacting WisDOT's Bureau of Planning and Economic Development.

Consultation with Tribal Governments

In February 2004, Governor Doyle issued Executive Order 39, "Relating to an Affirmation of the Government-to-Government Relationship between the State of Wisconsin and Indian Tribal Governments within the State of Wisconsin." As a result of that executive order, WisDOT, the Wisconsin Division of FHWA and Wisconsin's eleven federally-recognized tribes entered into a partnership agreement in May 2005. The purpose of the agreement is to "create and define processes by which WisDOT and FHWA will work in collaboration with Wisconsin's eleven sovereign Indian Nations. This agreement is designed to acknowledge and support the government-to-government relationship between tribes and state and federal agencies and to

support American Indian sovereignty.” As part of the partnership agreement, WisDOT has established a WisDOT Tribal Task Force that includes representatives from WisDOT, FHWA and each individual tribe. Part of the task force’s goal is to create a document that defines tribal consultation for both projects and planning.

WisDOT will consult with tribes who have ancestral homelands within the state boundaries on all decisions that may affect tribal rights and interests in regard to long and short range transportation planning. WisDOT is committed to government-to-government consultation with tribes on actions that affect identified tribal rights and issues.

Consultation means respectful, effective communication in a cooperative process that works towards a consensus, before a decision is made or an action is taken. Consultation means more than simply informing affected tribes about what the department is planning to do. WisDOT acknowledges that consultation is a process, not a guarantee of agreement on outcomes. While dedicated to implementing constructive consultation practices, the department hopes to go beyond issue-specific consultation. The goal is to achieve mutually beneficial priorities, programs and interests.

Given the number of tribes, the extent of tribally reserved rights, and the size and complexity of WisDOT, the Department may not be able to identify in advance all issues that may be appropriate subjects for tribal consultation. However, WisDOT will begin the planning consultation process, as follows:

- 1) The Bureau of Planning and Economic Development and the WisDOT tribal liaison shall review tribal long-range transportation plan documents whenever WisDOT and/or a tribe updates their respective long-range transportation plan.
- 2) When WisDOT is developing a long-range transportation plan, the WisDOT Bureau of Planning and Economic Development will hold:
 - a. A meeting with representatives from the tribal planning departments of all 11 tribal Nations in Wisconsin, planning representatives from each WisDOT region, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the FHWA, to discuss the transportation issues and needs
 - b. A statewide follow up meeting to discuss the draft plan
 - c. A meeting at any other time as requested by individual tribes or WisDOT
- 3) WisDOT shall hold one regional planning meeting per year per WisDOT transportation region with WisDOT Regional Office planning staff and tribes located within that region. The meeting shall focus on short-range planning goals and specific planning goals within WisDOT's Six-Year Highway Improvement Program.

Highlights from the Local Consultation Processes in WisDOT Regions

For years, WisDOT's central office and five transportation regions have been very successful in consulting with local officials in areas not served by MPOs. The following section highlights some examples of these local consultation efforts. Not all of the listed functions are performed in every region as the level of consultation can vary depending on region size, number of local officials, and proximity to an MPO.

Also presented is a brief overview of WisDOT's Local Roads and Streets Council, a very successful partnership between state, regional and local transportation stakeholders.

Planning Studies and Land Use Issues:

- Creating advisory committees, work groups, expert panels, Web sites, newsletters, and brochures (committees include professional staff, municipal representatives, local leaders, and other interested parties)
- Assisting local officials in developing long-range comprehensive plans, including discussion of local and regional land use, transportation, and access management
- Assisting local officials with the transportation element of their comprehensive plans
- Working with consultants on public involvement issues, including organizing meetings and focus groups
- Developing a Local Program Guidebook that outlines the various state and federal programs, acting as a reference for evaluating projects for funding eligibility

Six-Year Highway Improvement Program:

- Organizing meetings with county highway committees to review program additions, and any changes in the schedule of the projects
- Discussing potential candidate projects with cities, counties and tribes
- Staffing local meetings to answer any questions regarding process or projects
- Distributing the Six-Year Highway Improvement Program to county clerks throughout the state
- Maintaining a Six-Year Highway Improvement Program Web site and providing a contact for questions regarding the program

Local Program Notification:

- Providing Surface Transportation Program-Urban notification and statewide eligibility criteria for all eligible municipalities with populations between 5,000 and 50,000 vying for statewide projects
- Providing Bridge and Surface Transportation Program-Rural notification and statewide eligibility criteria to county highway commissioners, who set priorities within their regions and vie for projects statewide

- Notifying local jurisdictions of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program funding availability in eligible non-attainment areas of the state (SE Wisconsin)
- Notifying local jurisdictions of Local Transportation Enhancements (TE) program funding availability (notifications include a mailing with program information and guidelines, and subsequent follow-up at regional and statewide local association meetings and conferences)
- Conducting local programs forums throughout the state to provide information on various state and federal programs at the local level
- Participating in statewide local association conferences and conventions to provide information on various state and federal programs available to local communities
- After project approval, regional project development staff and management consultants coordinate with local officials to ensure completion of the project from design to construction

Other Local Consultation Practices:

- Working with the state's local associations (Wisconsin Counties Association, Wisconsin Towns Association, Wisconsin Alliance of Cities and League of Wisconsin Municipalities) on major policy issues, funding formulas and related topics for federal and state funded local improvement and assistance programs
- Involving local officials in the project development process
- Working with the regional planning commissions, cities and counties to stay informed on local issues
- Responding to requests by local governments to attend various meetings
- Participating in quarterly Safety Commission meetings
- Holding meetings with county highway commissioners to discuss topics such as programming and schedules for state trunk highway improvement and maintenance projects
- Holding meetings on corridor planning projects, access management issues, or major highway development issues that ultimately could impact program delivery
- Consulting with local officials during the enumeration and scheduling of projects ahead of letting
- Partnering, educating and training county highway commissioners and other local officials with regard to state funded Local Roads Improvement Program guidelines, policies, applications and other key information
- Consulting with local officials with regard to state funded Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA) projects during initial application and construction
- Coordinating access management and local road connection issues with various municipalities. This coordination includes direct contact or attendance at public meetings

Local Roads and Streets Council:

Celebrating its tenth anniversary in 2005, WisDOT's Local Roads and Streets Council (LRSC) is comprised of representatives from all levels of government, including WisDOT, the Wisconsin Towns Association, Wisconsin Counties Association, Wisconsin Alliance of Cities, League of Wisconsin Municipalities, RPCs, and MPOs. As direct advisors to the Secretary of Transportation, this cross-section of transportation stakeholders allows for input from a wide range of viewpoints and perspectives, which is an asset in developing policy and direction for the LRSC. The LRSC provides education and outreach to local government and transportation officials with regard to local policy and implementation issues.

The Local Consultation Process for Select WisDOT Programs and Plans

The following section briefly lays out the steps in the local consultation process for some of WisDOT's major programs and statewide transportation plans.

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP):

WisDOT's public involvement activities for the STIP are very extensive. Opportunities for the public to comment on local projects and programs before they become part of the final STIP are promoted and maximized. In brief, the public outreach for the STIP contains the following major components:

1. Statewide 30-day public comment period
2. State highway system program hearings¹
3. Local informational meetings and public hearings for the Six-Year Highway Improvement Program including:
 - Meetings with local officials and the public in their communities, to obtain project requests, understand local needs, and address local concerns
 - Meetings to inform the public of the proposed Six-Year Highway Improvement Program and the range of modal alternatives that were explored in its formation, and to receive comments on its projects
 - Public hearings every two years in each WisDOT transportation region to elicit public comment on the program and the range of modal alternatives
4. Small urban centers and rural transit program and project hearings
5. Local project hearings

Beginning with the 2007-2010 STIP cycle, WisDOT will notify stakeholders, the general public, MPOs and RPCs that the draft STIP is available on our Web site. They will be offered a 30-day opportunity to provide WisDOT with any comments for final STIP incorporation. This outreach will be conducted on an annual basis.

¹ In some regions, hearing may be informal.

Ultimately, all transportation projects and programs included in the STIP benefit from significant local input from conception to completion.

Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP):

In addition to federal improvement programs, LRIP is a state-funded entitlement and discretionary program provided by WisDOT and targeted specifically to aid local units of government with improvements to their local roads. The program includes the following six components:

- County Highway Improvement Program (CHIP)
- Town Road Improvement Program (TRIP)
- Municipal Street Improvement Program (MSIP)
- County Highway Improvement Discretionary Program (CHIP-D) for high-cost county projects
- Town Road Improvement Discretionary Program (TRIP-D) for high-cost town projects
- Municipal Street Improvement Discretionary Program (MSIP-D) for high-cost municipal projects

In general, the steps in the local consultation process include:

1. Working with local association leadership on program policies and elements
2. Notification to local jurisdictions of program eligibility and funding availability, as solicited by each WisDOT region office, is coordinated statewide with county highway commissioners who play an integral role in program implementation and implementation
3. Local review, prioritization and selection of projects
4. Project selection by groups made up of:
 - Town road committees and municipal street committees for municipalities with populations less than 20,000. Counties and municipalities with populations over 20,000 select their own projects (LRIP entitlement projects – CHIP, MSIP, TRIP).
 - Statewide committee consisting of six Wisconsin Towns Association district directors and six members at large (TRIP-D).
 - Statewide advisory committee consisting of members of the League of Wisconsin Municipalities and the Wisconsin Alliance of Cities (MSIP-D).
 - Committees established in each of the five Transportation Regions made up of all county highway commissioners within the region. (CHIP-D).

The discretionary components each have distinct regional and statewide processes for project review, selection and recommendation for approval. Eligibility is based on community type. Detailed information is available on WisDOT's Web site at: www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/highways/lrip.htm.

The Local Transportation Programs and Finance Section of WisDOT's Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Railroads and Harbors manages all local highway, bridge and multi-modal programs other than Scenic Byways and TEA. These various programs provide funding for specific projects.

Modal and Multimodal Plan Development:

Since 1994, WisDOT has developed a multimodal transportation plan (*Translinks 21*) and a number of other modal plans including the *State Highway Plan 2020*, *State Airport System Plan 2020*, the *Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020* and the *State Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020*. Throughout the development of these plans, WisDOT worked with local jurisdictions to ensure their input was included in the plan development process. A similar process is being followed in the development of the department's new long-range multimodal plan, *Connections 2030*. In brief, the steps in the planning process included:

- Extensive public outreach including informational meetings and presentations to groups such as:
 - Chambers of commerce
 - Towns associations
 - MPOs and RPCs
 - Environmental advocacy groups
 - Local governments
 - Tribal governments

- Development of plan alternatives
- Additional public outreach to garner comments on alternatives
- Development of draft plan
- Draft plan outreach meetings and teleconferences throughout state
- Development of final plan
- Public hearing on final plan
- Adoption by WisDOT Secretary

Review of WisDOT Local Consultation Process Documentation

This document has been distributed to, and reviewed by, numerous associations, agencies, commissions and organizations throughout the state. Revisions were made based on comments received. The list of reviewers included:

- Internal WisDOT management and staff
- WisDOT regions
- Wisconsin Towns Association
- Wisconsin Counties Association
- League of Wisconsin Municipalities
- Local Roads Streets Council

- Wisconsin Alliance of Cities
- MPOs and RPCs serving affected areas of the State

In general, comments received were positive and backed WisDOT's position that its consultation process with local officials in areas of the state that are not served by MPOs is comprehensive and appropriate.

Future Evaluation Process

WisDOT will continue to review and improve the local consultation process. This effort is not intended to be a one-time occurrence. The agency is committed to continue to work to improve and update its process to achieve its goal of ensuring that all local entities in areas not served by MPOs have sufficient input in the transportation planning process. To make sure the local consultation process remains current and effective, WisDOT will:

- Periodically request comments on the process from towns and counties associations, municipal leagues, MPOs, RPCs, local and tribal governments, and the LSRC.
- Internally assess the success of various tools and techniques used to acquire input. Assessments may address the level of input, the type of input received and/or the role the input had in the process.
- Continue to monitor best practice activities developed in Wisconsin and around the country. WisDOT will implement best practices that are applicable and relevant for our activities.
- Review and solicit comments for at least 60 days at least once every 5 years.
- Apply the process to both statewide planning and the STIP, and integrate questions about the consultation process into our current outreach efforts with transportation stakeholders, community groups, tribal governments and the general public in order to periodically reevaluate the process.

Summary

WisDOT believes its demonstrated process of consulting with local officials meet the requirements of the FHWA rule. WisDOT's practices have been very successful over the years, and therefore, will remain in place. As mentioned, WisDOT will continually monitor its local consultation activities to ensure to process remains current and successful.

Appendix B Environmental Justice Plan

Background

WisDOT's policy is to incorporate environmental justice in all planning, programming and projects decisions. As part of the planning effort, WisDOT will conduct an environmental justice analysis on the *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* and seek public input from a variety of stakeholders.

Environmental justice is focused around three principles:

- Avoid, minimize or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority and low-income populations.
- Ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- Prevent the denial of, reduction of or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

This environmental justice (EJ) plan is designed to reflect WisDOT's interest in furthering EJ activities and outreach during the *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* planning process, as well as show WisDOT's commitment to environmental justice.

Goals of the EJ Plan

The specific goals of the *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* EJ plan include:

- Identifying minority and low-income populations across the state
- Conducting an EJ analysis to determine whether any of the plan's policies or actions result in significantly disproportionate impacts
- Conducting outreach to engage minority and low-income populations in discussions regarding the *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030*
- Building relationships with minority and low-income populations

Since the environmental justice analysis includes an outreach component, the analysis is closely tied to public involvement activities.

A combination of WisDOT and consultant staff will accomplish these tasks.

Target Audiences

Executive Order 12898 covers persons belonging to any of the following groups:

- Black – a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa

- Hispanic – a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
- Asian American – a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands.
- American Indian/Alaskan Native – a person having origins in any of the original people of North America and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.
- Low-Income – a person whose household income is at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines.

Methodology

The *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* is a statewide plan. As a result, analysis and public outreach efforts are focused at the state level. Public outreach efforts will include holding focused discussions around the state with minority and low-income populations on the plan's proposed policies and actions. When possible, WisDOT will use existing organizations that serve target populations. Examples of these organizations include the YMCA/YWCA, the League of United Latin American Citizens, Wisconsin Hmong Mutual Assistance Associations, and the Urban Leagues of Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha, Madison and Beloit.

To enhance low-income and minority population participation, efforts will be made to:

- Hold meetings at transit accessible locations (when available)
- Provide translators, upon request
- Translate the *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* fact sheets and executive summary into Spanish (other languages available, upon request)