



WHRP

Wisconsin Highway Research Program

Researcher Information Packet

Acronyms

COP – Close-Out Presentation
CS - Contract Specialist
FHWA - Federal Highway Administration
PI - Principal Investigator
POC - Project Oversight Committee
QPR - Quarterly Progress Report
R&L – WisDOT Research and Library
TOC - Technical Oversight Committee
UWTS - University of Wisconsin- Madison Technical Support
WHRP - Wisconsin Highway Research Program

Research Programs Overview

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has a variety of research programs as part of our efforts to uphold our mission to provide leadership in the development and operation of a safe and efficient transportation system. WisDOT research is dedicated to developing usable solutions to specific problems.

WisDOT's Bureau of Performance Improvement, Research, and Strategic Initiatives (PIRSI) Research and Library Services Unit in the Division of Budget and Strategic Initiatives (DBSI) coordinates the department's research activities and provides access to information that leads to data-driven decision making. PIRSI continues its efforts to align research with WisDOT's strategic priorities; to facilitate and track implementation of research results; to promote the use of emerging technologies; to bolster the department's efforts to improve transportation safety; and to support the adoption of associated policies and procedures to demonstrate accountability to our transportation stakeholders and the public.

WisDOT research is carried out under two research programs, the Wisconsin Highway Research Program (WHRP) and the WisDOT Policy and Safety First Research Programs.

WHRP

The Wisconsin Highway Research Program (WHRP), established in 1998 by WisDOT in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin–Madison, aims to better design, build, and reconstruct the state's transportation system. The four areas of focus include Geotechnics, Structures, Flexible and Rigid Pavements.

Policy and Safety First

The WisDOT Policy Research Program promotes and funds research that addresses planning, operations, safety, finance, economic impacts, environmental issues, emerging technology and other policy aspects of all transportation modes and all agency operations. The Safety First Research Program is built on the Safety-First Initiative, which began in 2023 to enhance the agency's knowledge of safety-related best practices. The initiative explores research to leverage new technologies for data gathering and engineering countermeasures.

Wisconsin Highway Research Program WHRP

WHRP leadership is provided by the WHRP Steering Committee, Technical Oversight Committees and Project Oversight Committees with Technical Support from the University of Wisconsin and administrative support from WisDOT Research and Library staff.

WHRP Steering Committee WisDOT Administrators & Wisconsin Stakeholders Subject Matter Experts from WisDOT, Industry and Academia Provide leadership and strategic direction.	
WHRP Steering Committee Chair Ethan Severson, WisDOT	FHWA Wisconsin Division Liaison Joe Balice

WHRP Technical Oversight Committees (TOC) Members from WisDOT, Industry and Academia. The Committee Chair is from WisDOT. Develop projects, provide leadership and strategic direction.			
Structures	Geotechnics	Rigid Pavements	Flexible Pavements

WHRP Project Oversight Committees (POC) Members from WisDOT, Industry and Academia. The Committee Chair is the main point of contact at WisDOT. Coordinate access to field projects, obtain materials, manage issues.	
Principal Investigator (PI) Co-PI and Research Team	University of Wisconsin-Madison Technical Support and Research and Library Unit staff at WisDOT.

WHRP Administrative Roles & Responsibilities

- **Steering Committee** – WisDOT administrators and Wisconsin experts from industry organizations, FHWA, and academia. They provide leadership and strategic direction for the Wisconsin Highway Research Program.
- **Steering Committee Chair** - Reviews and approves contracts and amendments and is consulted for key project decisions.
- **Technical Oversight Committees (TOC)** - WHRP has four TOCs: Flexible Pavements, Rigid Pavements, Geotechnics and Structures. The TOC is made up of technical experts from WisDOT staff, industry, and academia. TOCs are responsible for developing Request for Proposals (RFP) and reviewing and scoring the collected proposals. TOCs recommend the best proposal of each project to the WHRP Steering Committee for approval.
- **TOC Chair** - Responsible for providing leadership and strategic direction. The TOC chair serves as the contact person to the Steering Committee and may also serve as the (POC) chair or as a member.
- **Project Oversight Committee (POC)** - Each WHRP project has a POC. The POC provides technical support and advice to the Principal Investigator (PI) and provides input at project meetings. The POC members review Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs) and deliverables.
- **POC Chair** - The main contact for the project. Offers support and direction to the PI and works with WisDOT and the PI to resolve issues or concerns. The POC Chair is responsible for submitting implementation updates and reports. The POC chair should be copied on project-related correspondence.
- **Technical Support (TS)** - University of Wisconsin Technical Support Staff work with WisDOT Research and Library staff, the TOC and POC to support the program. TS staff review RFPs, proposals, project reports and deliverables. TS staff participate in meetings and prepares meeting minutes. TS staff should be copied on project-related correspondence.
- **WisDOT Contracts Specialist** - Prepares contracts and amendments and arranges meetings. The Contract Specialist sends out and receives Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs), invoices, project correspondence and reports. The Contract Specialist, along with TS staff, monitors the status and timelines of projects and the deliverables. Program and invoice inquiries should be directed to the Contract Specialist and the Contract Specialist should be copied on project-related correspondence.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and SPR-b funding

WisDOT research programs are funded with 80% federal State Planning & Research Part b (SPR-b) funding from the U.S. DOT Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and a 20% state match. All FHWA funded projects follow the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) of October 1 to September 30. TOC and RLAC Chairs may attend POC meetings, in addition to processing the QPRs, in order to stay current on any developments that may affect the progress of the project. The WisDOT Research and Library Unit meets quarterly with the FHWA Wisconsin Liaison and reports on the progress of all FHWA funded projects.

Workplan Development

The RFP and accepted proposal are the foundation of the Workplan. The PI works with the POC Chair, POC members and R&L to create a finalized Workplan which will become an attachment to the contract. The Workplan is required to include a Data Management Plan and an Implementation Plan. The Workplan will be submitted to the POC Chair and R&L for final review 2 months prior to the anticipated start date of the project. If revisions have been made, the date of revision will be on the Cover Sheet in bold red font below the original date of submission.

Invoice Start and End Dates - Letter of Authorization to Begin Work

WisDOT R&L will notify the PI and POC Chairs when work may begin by sending the executed contract and a letter of "Authorization to Begin Work" with a Start Date and an End Date. *Under no circumstances can invoices be submitted for any work, including meetings, which occurs prior to the Start Date or after the End Date.* The Final Invoice may be submitted up to 60 days after the End Date. Invoices can be submitted quarterly, with or after the QPR. Invoices will be held until the QPR is reviewed and approved by the POC Chair. Please see Invoice Information for full details.

Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs)

Researchers are required to complete Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs). QPRs will be sent by the Contract Specialist to the lead PI prior to the end of each quarter. The PI completes the QPR with project updates and returns it to the Contract Specialist. The QPR will be reviewed by the POC. Please see Quarterly Progress Report Instructions for full details.

Meeting and Reports Schedule

The meeting and reports schedule will vary based on needs as determined by the POC Chair, PI, UWTS and R&L staff. UWTS will take notes for the meetings. If UWTS is not available, a POC member will be selected to take meeting notes and send to R&L staff to incorporate into the Meeting Minutes. Meetings may not be recorded, transcribed with AI, or attended by AI Assistants. Please see Meeting Schedule handout for full details.

508 Compliance

The researcher is requested to ensure all documents, spreadsheets, presentations, websites, software, and training videos conform to Section 508 standards of the Rehabilitation Act.

Implementation Tracking

WisDOT seeks to fund research with high implementation potential. Implementation potential will be tracked throughout the lifecycle of this research project and may include changes to expected implementation. The research plan must include specific statements describing anticipated research results and an assessment of implementation potential. R&L staff will collect information and monitor progress regarding Implementation activities and results.

Thank you for your participation in the Wisconsin Department of Transportation Research Program.