



FDM 6-5-1 Introduction

December 20, 2013

Public involvement is very important in the development of a project. Public involvement must be implemented in accordance with this chapter on all projects administered by WisDOT, including those federally funded projects that are developed by local units of government or their consultants.

The policies and processes identified in this chapter shall be used to develop and administer the public involvement process regardless of whether or not an environmental document is being prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act or the Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act.

FDM 6-5-5 Staff Resources

December 20, 2013

Each WisDOT region has key staff with specialized expertise in the public involvement process. Just as the goal should be to communicate early and often with the public, contacts with the regional public involvement process experts should occur in the same manner.

5.1 Region Communications Manager

Each WisDOT region has a Region Communications Manager (RCM) who assists region staff in developing a comprehensive communication plan and choosing appropriate public involvement techniques. It is critical to involve the RCM early in the project and to keep him or her apprised of progress at all times. The RCM signs off on all Public Involvement Plans (PIP). Another important role of the RCM is to serve as the region's liaison to the WisDOT Office of Public Affairs.

5.2 Region Tribal Liaison

Each WisDOT region has a Region Tribal Liaison, who assists project development staff in developing and choosing appropriate public involvement techniques to ensure Wisconsin tribes have an opportunity to provide input in the WisDOT planning and project development process.

5.3 Region Environmental Coordinator

Each WisDOT region has one or more Region Environmental Coordinators (REC) who assists project development staff in ensuring the appropriate public involvement procedures are followed throughout the environmental review and decision-making process.

FDM 6-5-10 Public Involvement Plan

November 17, 2020

10.1 Introduction

All projects have public involvement and require a formal written public involvement plan. The level of detail in the plan will depend on the scope of the project and possibly on the type of environmental document being prepared.

The Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is essential in assuring the effectiveness of public involvement. Use the PIP template found at the environmental program form, templates, and checklists website.

<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/eng-consultants/cnslt-rsrcs/environment/formsandtools.aspx>

Details for completing the template are found in [FDM 6-5-10.2](#).

The PIP is a project-specific sequenced list of anticipated contacts with the public. Preparation of the PIP is a crucial task completed early in the environmental review process. A properly developed PIP will ensure effective involvement of the affected public in a planned, orderly manner throughout the entire project.

For projects being evaluated using a draft environmental impact statement or an environmental assessment (for which the 23 USC 139 process applies), a Coordination Plan for Agency and Public Involvement (Coordination Plan) must also be prepared. Elements of the PIP should be incorporated into the Coordination Plan. Refer to the environmental website for the Coordination Plan Template.

<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/eng-consultants/cnslt-rsrcs/environment/formsandtools.aspx>

Refer to [FDM 20-10](#), Environmental Documentation, to coordinate plans and activities that align and

complement the activities in this section.

Why prepare a Public Involvement Plan

- Early and continuous communication, education, and outreach to stakeholders.
- Effective communication for diverse stakeholders.
- Collaborative problem solving and consensus building.
- Results in more comprehensive outcomes based on the input of stakeholders.
- Conduct outreach efforts based on the specific project.
- Meet funding and timeline deadlines.
- Plan and execute public involvement for decision-making.

Benefits of preparing a Public Involvement Plan

- Issues are addressed earlier rather than later in the process.
- Builds public trust and support.
- Less negative or critical coverage from the media.
- Agreements are more likely to be maintained.
- Reduces delay from conflict, misunderstandings and/or opposition.
- Reduces costs due to delays.
- Process establishes a framework for collaboration.
- Helps to prioritize needs and determine the best alternative.
- Evaluates the effectiveness of public input.

10.2 Developing the Public Involvement Plan**Key concepts:**

- Public involvement process is well defined and communicated.
- Public involvement efforts and results, both positive and negative, are well documented.
- Meets the particular needs of the stakeholders and project.

Key preparation:

- Consider current transportation and urban development plans including WisDOT, regional, and local plans.
- Align the public involvement process with needs of the project.
- Provide for flexibility in process to adapt to changes.
- Design a plan for the specific project and tailor it to the demographics of the project's area of impact.
- Define key measurable outcomes of the community's values.
- Train all staff, both internal and external, to properly execute the plan in an effective and timely manner.
- Utilize best practices from projects that have similar community characteristics and challenges to anticipate and avoid previous mistakes.

Key considerations:

- What is the functional classification of the roadway?
- What is the level of potential impact to the human, natural, and physical environment?
- Are there Environmental Justice or other unique populations in the study area?
- How much involvement from state/federal agencies and interest groups (local or county government, businesses, or others) is required or anticipated?
- What is the level of potential project controversy?
- In the past, how have the public and stakeholders reacted to similar transportation projects in the area?
- How many residential or business properties or tribal lands are in the immediate area of the project?
- What is the impact to users in the project area including motorists, pedestrians, bikers and others?
- What is the proposed construction staging or detour plan? (see [FDM 11-3-5.3.1.5 Construction Traffic Control](#))
- What is the amount and complexity of right of way impacts?
- What is the anticipated level of political concern?

Key components:

The Public Involvement Plan Template consists of the following key components.

1. Define the project's purpose and need

The first step in developing a public involvement plan is to clearly define the need for the project and the issues it is meant to solve. In this section, provide a clear, non-technical description of why the project is needed and the proposed solutions. Please keep in mind that the solutions are proposed until the project has gone through the public involvement process (i.e., communication with regulatory agencies, local community officials, property owners, etc.).

2. Create a plan timeline

The plan should include a detailed timeline of the planning, program development, or decision-making processes as well as the public involvement activities within that process. Public involvement needs to be timed early enough to provide the public many opportunities to influence the decision.

Describe key phases of the project delivery and include public involvement/outreach activities. Include a targeted month and year to clarify expectations and have a clear vision of what will be done and when.

The first phase of public involvement should be conducted very early in project development to ensure that appropriate public involvement is being conducted before any decisions are made.

Example milestones to include in timeline: 30, 60, 90 percent plans; local community officials/emergency management meeting and public involvement meetings; list of attendees for public involvement meetings; notice and news release for public involvement meetings; complete environmental document; handouts and exhibits for public meetings; final PS&E.; project Let; beginning of construction; complete construction.

3. Identify public involvement goals and objectives

After determining the appropriate level of public involvement for the project, the next step is to define the goals for inviting the public to participate. The following are questions to consider as you develop the goals:

Could this be an opportunity to:

- Create a better project.
- Incorporate other community goals into the project.
- Benefit from public input, involvement, and support regarding the project.
- Collaborate with citizens or organizations in overlapping areas.
- Promote good news, WisDOT programs and/or projects.
- Strengthen partnerships between WisDOT and local community officials.

List what the Public Involvement Plan will accomplish. Start each sentence with a verb and use measurable results using a month, year, or some other way to determine if the goal was met or not.

For example: "Identify and actively involve affected stakeholders by November 2014."

4. Identify stakeholders and target audiences

With goals and objectives outlined, it is easier to identify stakeholders and what level of public outreach is needed. When creating the list of stakeholders, make sure to think about audiences that may not typically be engaged to try to cover a broad range of citizens. Focus on all audiences that are important. They should be included early and regularly during project development. *Please include a contact name and contact information for each stakeholder.* Target audiences include but are not limited to:

- Property and business owners
- Local and county officials
- Neighborhood associations/special interest groups
- Regulatory agencies
- Tribes
- Media

5. Define the process, tactics, and techniques (see [FDM 6-5-15](#))

Describe in detail the different methods to convey information and to which intended audiences. List key public involvement activities and their tentative dates.

For example: “For the project, WisDOT will conduct a coordination meeting, one public involvement meeting, and one local officials meeting. The purpose of the local officials meeting and public involvement meeting is to (*state purpose*). These meetings are to inform the public of the project purpose and the reasoning behind some of the decisions made including (*state specific decisions relating to project*). The goal is to conduct all meetings by (*month, year*) so there is time to incorporate any necessary comments into the plans before they are finalized.”

6. Define the key messages

The project (or key) messages are the project facts and beliefs that people should understand and, ultimately, accept. These messages also include description of the project benefits. They should be simple, easy to understand and non-technical. The messages will evolve and will be incorporated into all aspects of the public involvement plan and activities.

7. Approvals

Ensure that the WisDOT project manager and RCM review and approve the public involvement plan prior to implementation; preferably during the scoping phase of the project development process.

Both the WisDOT project manager and the RCM must sign off on the plan. Review the plan periodically and update as the project progresses. Contact the RCM regarding any questions.

10.3 Considerations for an Effective Public Involvement Plan

Communication should be conducted in the right place at the right time with a lot of thought and research given to the targeted audiences. The level of communication will vary depending on the project and the related impacts.

Methods used to communicate the proposed improvements should reach the target audiences using several techniques. It is important to leverage relationships and take time to listen to those audiences to learn about what they value, their interests and beliefs, and to obtain their input on the project. Asking the right questions can result in answers that may not be obvious initially. In addition, the PIP should align with other land use and transportation plans at all levels so that conflict is limited. Creativity, innovation, and thinking “outside the box” are encouraged in order to produce the best results. PIPs should be dynamic and may require periodic updates and modifications as the project evolves. Include alterations as soon as they are identified and provide an opportunity for the public to comment in order to maintain the integrity of the document.

10.4 Staff Roles

It is imperative to have a well thought out PIP that involves many or all of the following WisDOT stakeholders. There should be agreement early in the process identifying who has what role, who is responsible for which decisions, activities to be conducted, follow-up, and communication. A timeline will help to clarify these details. See Office of Public Affairs (OPA) guidance for more information on roles for:

- WisDOT Project Manager
- WisDOT Consultants
- WisDOT Region Communications Manager, Design Team, Corridor Manager, PI Staff
- WisDOT Region Tribal Liaison (as applicable)
- WisDOT Region Environmental Coordinator (as applicable)

FDM 6-5-15 Techniques

September 19, 2014

The public involvement process will vary based on the complexity of issues presented, the amount of controversy, project impacts, political interest, and other variables. It is important to understand the complexities of the project and put into place an appropriate PIP based on the particular project. Projects both large and small could involve a fair amount of public involvement.

There are numerous techniques available to conduct the public involvement process. Strive for flexibility and informality when using any public involvement techniques. Project managers are encouraged to be creative with selecting or devising techniques to use on a project. Some techniques can be used to achieve more than one objective (see [FDM 6-1-1](#)), although not all techniques are appropriate for every project.

Using various methods is very important because many methods can be combined into integral parts of a community or region’s regularly scheduled events. It is important to understand the context of a project: talk to community members, research historical documents, and/or attend community events to find out who understands current issues and history. These will provide insights that may not be found in other ways. Collaborate with them to conduct business in a non-threatening way that is convenient and helpful for WisDOT, its partners, and the community.

It is important to “right-size” the techniques to fit the project. Many of the techniques are relatively simple, low-cost methods of involving the public. Others are complex, high-cost techniques that should be implemented only after carefully considering the potential return on the investment. Some techniques may be required by law under certain scenarios (i.e., public hearings) and must be included as part of the public involvement process.

The Office of Public Affairs (OPA) has developed a Public Involvement Best Practices guide found in Chapter 13 of the Mega Projects Guideline site at:

<https://wisconsin.gov/rdwy/mega/mg-pub-invol.pdf>

This guide provides a detailed explanation of possible techniques and guidelines as well as a brief synopsis. The Public Involvement Best Practices matrix provides a two-page synopsis of the guide and is also found on the same website.

The following are some examples and descriptions of techniques that could be included in the PIP:

1. **Develop targeted mailing lists and set up databases including online or electronic versions to streamline processes and reduce duplication of efforts.** Compile up-to-date mailing lists of property owners, businesses, special interest groups, tribes, and others who are affected by or who have an interest in the project. Use tax listings, telephone books, online searches, and utility customer lists as possible sources. Expand lists by adding interested parties from sign-in sheets at public involvement meetings, emails, or phone calls from the public to make it as comprehensive as possible.
2. **Contact property owners.** Contact property owners by letter, phone, or other personal means. In any case, inform property owners adjacent to a project of all major developments to ensure they are aware of scheduled meetings and basic project concepts.
3. **Hold public involvement meetings.** These meetings are held during the project development process to share ideas or details with the public and receive public feedback. Whether informal or formal, they provide direct communication between department staff and the public. Always provide an opportunity for input and feedback from all interested stakeholders regardless of their position. See [FDM 6-10](#) for details about the public involvement meeting process.
4. **Open house.** This allows informally exchanging information and collecting data by providing a highly visible, two-way communication process between the department and community. Staff should be familiar with the project and overall development process. This technique can be used for large and/or sensitive projects where the cost of having project staff on duty at remote locations is warranted.
5. **Conduct a survey.** Surveys provide detailed information from the public while allowing them to voice their concerns. Surveys can be mailed, emailed, etc. to affected parties, distributed throughout communities at various locations, handed out at public involvement meetings and hearings. Additional public involvement questions could be included during an origin-destination study. It is important to understand that responses should be received from a representative portion of the population affected. Contact the RCM regarding the department’s process and coordination.
6. **Conduct meetings with local officials and interested groups.** Similar to a public involvement meeting, targeted meetings allow for personal interaction in an informal setting. These meetings are organized for a specific neighborhood or interest group rather than the general public. They help define and address concerns from a particular group and provide focused assistance.
7. **Establish a citizen advisory committee.** The advisory committee is responsible for gathering data from the constituents and making recommendations to decision makers. Ensure that their voices are heard, input is considered in a timely manner, and that they understand their feedback is important.
8. **Construct a display model or computer-enhanced photos of the project for public use.** Display models and computer-enhanced photos can help the public visualize project concepts and potential impacts. They may also help minimize misconceptions about the proposed improvements. Consider using “before and after” photos of similar projects or visual aids such as the photo log of the project, or photographic/computer modeling.
9. **Hold a public hearing.** When public hearings are held for environmental documents, the hybrid-style public hearing shall be used. Hybrid-style public hearings provide more options in presentation styles and how testimony is taken. Testimony from the audience can be either provided orally in traditional, town-hall style format, one-on-one with a court reporter, or in written form. See [FDM 6-15](#) for details about the public hearing process.
10. **Make public appearances.** Proactively seek out and accept invitations to appear on radio or television programs, public schools, chamber of commerce meetings, special community events, or other local

venues. News media and other public appearances inform large numbers of people about specific projects as well as the decision-making process, which encourages the public to be more involved.

11. **Compile a fact sheet for project news releases/events.** Submit a fact sheet to the RCM when the PS&E is submitted to the central office. The fact sheet will be used as the basis for project news releases and developing publicity for groundbreakings and ribbon cuttings. Collaborate with the RCM to develop news releases throughout the project and at key points such as when the contract is awarded, when construction starts or ends, or when there are changes in traffic flow. Information concerning the project and scheduled meetings can be distributed to the public through news releases, feature articles, notices placed in local newspapers, television and radio, and/or electronically. Large groups of people can be reached for minimal cost.
12. **Monitor the news media through newspaper clippings, media reports and the internet.** Use these to learn the local perspective on issues, problems, and values important to a particular community and to discover issues that may be controversial.
13. **Create project brochures and newsletters.** Work with the RCM to create brochures and newsletters that are concise, clearly written, and appealing. Follow WisDOT style guidelines and, when possible, use the WisDOT project information template.

<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/library/publications/pi-guidelines.htm>

The message should be relevant, simply stated, and reinforced with graphics, pictures, or other visuals to enhance understanding. Publications can be handed out during public meetings, mailed to selected stakeholders, distributed throughout communities, made available at WisDOT field or region offices, and posted on the Internet.

Consultants should contact the RCM for a project template and style guidelines.

14. **Contact legislators.** WisDOT takes an active role in building good relationships with legislators by providing them information about specific transportation projects and responding to their requests in a timely manner. WisDOT encourages legislators to contact Region Directors and RCM's as key sources for project information. Collaborate with the RCM to brief legislators on larger or sensitive projects through email, personal visits, or phone calls. Make sure legislators are on all mailing lists; they should be invited to all public involvement meetings and public hearings. Keep legislators informed about construction starts and emerging project issues that may result in constituent contacts.
15. **Involve affected area businesses.** Work with the RCM to meet with area businesses early during the design phase of the project and stay involved during construction. The "In This Together" campaign offers a comprehensive plan including a workbook, case studies, promotional samples and WisDOT staff contacts. The campaign includes suggestions and advice for Wisconsin businesses that face construction impacts. The manual can be obtained through the RCM or at:

<https://wisconsinindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/eng-consultants/cnslt-rsrcs/default.aspx>

The worksheet includes a timeline and associated tasks for up to 18 months in advance of the project beginning and continues through post construction.
16. **Help organize and participate in groundbreakings/ribbon cuttings.** For most events, the decision to hold a groundbreaking/ribbon-cutting event is made by the local community/communities. The RCM then works in cooperation with the communities and the Office of Public Affairs to select a date and location and to help organize the event. Refer to the Fact Sheet Ribbon-Cutting/Groundbreaking Ceremony.

<https://wisconsinindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/eng-consultants/cnslt-rsrcs/environment/formsandtools.aspx>

The Federal Highway Administration does not consider ribbon cutting events as a necessary cost of a project. Costs associated with ribbon-cutting events are not eligible for federal participation and should be charged to non-participating projects.

17. **Web pages on the Internet.** Work with the RCM to gather appropriate project information for development on project web pages and submit information to the RCM following Department Style Guidelines and the approval process. Keep the RCM informed about project developments and changes for updates to the project web page. Project web pages cannot be placed on a consultant web-site; pages must be posted on the WisDOT web-site. Web-sites developed by consultants must follow WisDOT Style Guidelines and approval process.

18. **Social media.** Social media is quickly becoming a primary means of communication through the Internet and mobile devices such as cell phones. Blogs, Facebook, Twitter, email blasts, QR codes and other forms of social media, as they emerge, should be considered for use in the public involvement process. The use of social media must be implemented according to the WisDOT Transportation Administrative Manual (TAM) Directive COM 105. COM 105 includes social media purpose, general operations and administration, setting up an account, responsibilities and roles and references or related WisDOT policies. Consult with specialists if COM 105 does not include information that is adequate to address your needs.
19. **Ethnic, cultural or religious venues.** Communities include various ethnicities, cultures, and religions. They may share common beliefs, values, rituals, history or other characteristics that are deeply integrated into everyday living. These may be openly expressed by preferences in housing, clothing, meeting in a common location, rituals, etc. Research the ethnic, cultural, and religious groups that currently exist in the community and those that have existed in the past. Understand how, why and where these groups find commonalities amongst each other and what is most important to include, avoid and/or understand about the project.

No matter which techniques are used, the best practices listed in Table 15.1 should be applied.

Table 15.1 Public Involvement Best Practices

- Deliver timely and accurate information.
- Inform all stakeholders using various methods and tools to reach the widest audiences.
- Apply WisDOT policies and guidelines in a consistent manner.
- Notify legislators, local officials, and other stakeholders as early as possible about project meetings or hearings.
- Build relationships with elected officials by providing frequent briefings or project updates.
- Ensure that all contracts and agreements are clear, complete, and well defined.
- Involve the RCM early in the process regarding all education and information efforts.
- Implement techniques to gain informed consent when dealing with the public on all projects.
- Ensure all key staff attends meetings and is prepared to answer questions.

FDM 6-5-20 Special Public Involvement Considerations

December 20, 2013

It is particularly important that any special public involvement requirements are incorporated in the PIP. This includes announcements in English and other languages for news, media, and minority publications. Consider using multi-lingual experts to interpret comments during the meetings with non-English speaking attendees. ADA requirements including public accommodations for those who are deaf or hard of hearing, or blind or have low vision must be met as well.

Thoroughly research any federal or state requirements, Executive Orders, agreements, or other policies, guides or resources so staff not only know who is impacted, but how they are impacted.

When conducting public involvement, be sure to research and collect information about all populations that may be affected by the project. Communities such as, but not limited to, Wisconsin tribes, Hmong, Latino, or other cultures should be considered. Include the elderly, disabled, and low-income populations that may be impacted.

Identify key community leaders and open the lines of communication in a way that is most meaningful to them. It is important to understand their cultural practices and methods for interacting effectively. This will vary depending on the situation. Involve the populations early and often to ensure their needs, goals and vision for the project are considered. Different techniques and strategies may be needed depending on their comfort level of participating in the technique or using the technology; the availability to technology (such as computers or smart phones), and frequency of participation required to have meaningful involvement.

20.1 Executive Order 12898 - Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations

To be effective, a technique must provide appropriate public input for the project phase, be affordable, and reach the appropriate customers using effective practices. In addition, Environmental Justice requires the department to consider disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations. To accomplish this, the department should:

- Actively and aggressively identify populations within the project's area of influence.
- Involve affected populations in the determination of whether the effect is adverse or beneficial, and if

adverse, whether it falls disproportionately on that population.

Any public involvement should incorporate techniques that seek out and interact with minority and low-income populations to adequately inform them about the project and to obtain their input. Possible techniques and practices include:

- Contact community leaders to determine the best method of involving the populations.
- Ask the community leaders to participate in public presentations.
- Offer to give a project presentation at regularly scheduled meetings that the population conducts.
- Place meeting notices near mailboxes, at grocery stores, places of worship, community centers and other public gathering areas.
- Put meeting notices in local newspapers that serve the populations. Print the publications in languages other than English.
- Run radio announcements on stations that serve the populations. This is especially important in areas of large Hmong populations.
- Consider providing special public transportation methods so people without vehicles or those living in areas without access to public transportation can get to the meeting.
- Consider providing childcare services at the public meeting.

20.2 Tribal Public Involvement

The "tribal public" is comprised of the entire community with all of its diverse interests and points of view. It also includes a range of groups within or adjacent to the community who are likely to be impacted by the transportation decisions that are made. The project team is encouraged to consider a wide range of groups and individuals such as:

- Tribe leaders
- Tribal elders
- Tribe members
- Tribal government officials
- Non-tribal residents living within the area
- Neighboring jurisdictions, including local and county governments
- Economic development or tourism groups
- Employers
- School and health officials
- Individuals or groups who do not drive (pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders)
- Transportation service providers

Written materials and presentations used to engage and inform tribal communities should respect and be compatible with the tribe's values, reflect their technical understanding of the topic, and highlight their interests in the subject matter. Visual tools (pictures, maps, drawings, charts, graphs) are good ways to help tribal members understand the problems, proposed solutions, and how these will affect their community.

Special techniques and methods for engaging tribal communities, such as clearly defining project-related terms commonly used by transportation project team members, can play a critical part in conveying information and receiving meaningful feedback. The project team is encouraged to work with the Region Tribal Liaison for assistance in understanding tribal values and cultures when conducting tribal public involvement.

There are often tribal events planned for other purposes that provide opportunities to engage attendees in a discussion about transportation planning. This strategy might draw in Tribe members who are unlikely to participate in meetings held specifically to engage the public in transportation planning. These events might include:

- Tribal pow wows
- Dances
- Rodeos
- Church events
- Elder community events
- School events
- County fairs
- Casino events

- Health fairs
- Job fairs

20.3 Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) stipulates involving the community, especially those with disabilities in the development and improvement of services. An individual with a disability is defined as a person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; a person who has a history or record of such impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such impairment. Sites of public involvement activities and the information presented must be accessible to persons with disabilities. Special efforts are needed to comply with statutory requirements.

Include those with sight, hearing, or mobility limitations and provide adequate access and services such as sign language, listening assistance, and telecommunication for the deaf and hard of hearing (TDD).

ADA requires specific participation activities including:

- Outreach - developing contacts, and notification to participate
- Consultation for those with disabilities
- A chance for public comments
- Accessible formats
- Public hearings
- Summaries of main issues during the public comment period
- Ongoing efforts to involve the community in planning

For public involvement meetings and public hearings, ADA requirements must be met under federal requirements. Elements to consider when making meetings and hearings ADA compliant include verifying that:

- Has an accessible site for the public involvement meeting or hearing been selected?
- Are primary entrances easily accessible?
- If the meeting is held on an upper or lower level of the building, is there an elevator or other method for making the meeting location accessible?
- Is there space for wheelchairs throughout the room and at the front of the room?
- Are microphones accessible to persons in wheelchairs?
- Is the meeting site accessible by public transportation or have other arrangements been made to provide persons with disabilities the opportunity to attend?
- Is there disabled parking available?
- Have requests been made by persons with disabilities for alternative methods of providing input to or receiving information from the department? For example, have listening aids, interpreters or sign language translators been requested?
- Is a separate meeting needed for ADA persons at an alternative meeting location?

For additional ADA information, refer to 42 USC 1201.

20.4 ADA Title II, State, Local, and Tribal Government Activities

This covers all activities of State and local governments regardless of the size of the project or use of federal funds. It requires these governments to give those with disabilities an equal opportunity to benefit from all of their programs, services, and activities, including but not limited to transportation and town meetings.

For additional ADA Title II information, refer to 28 CFR Part 35.

20.5 Wisconsin Telecommunication Relay System

Those who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, have low vision or speech disabled can use the Wisconsin Telecommunication Relay System (WTRS). The service provides a link between text telephone users and conventional telephone users. Callers can access the relay 24 hours through a toll free number or by dialing 711. Operators will be able to assist you. There are different ways to contact the WTRS:

- Dial 711
- TTY 1-800-947-3529
- Voice 1-800-947-6644
- ASCII 1-800-272-1773
- Fast ASCII 1-800-267-8867

- Speech to Speech 1-800-833-7637
- Spanish to Spanish 1-800-833-7813
- For further assistance go to www.hamiltonrelay.com

FDM 6-5-25 Other Public Involvement Requirements

August 17, 2020

In addition to the general National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) public involvement requirements described in 23 CFR 771.111, other Federal laws and regulations have distinct requirements for public involvement activities. In many cases, these requirements may be integrated into the project's planned public involvement efforts, avoiding the need to hold duplicate meetings. During the preparation of the public involvement plan, project staff should give careful attention to public involvement requirements outside of the standard NEPA requirements. Project staff should communicate early in project development with staff from other State and Federal agencies to ensure that all applicable public involvement requirements are incorporated into the PIP and implemented during project development.

Examples of other Federal laws and their implementing regulations requiring public involvement follow, although this list is not exhaustive.

- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended; 36 CFR 800.2(d)
- Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966; 23 CFR 774.5
- Section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1972, as amended; 33 CFR 325 & 327

25.1 Stormwater

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) General Permit to discharge stormwater under the Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) General Permit No. WI-6066800-1. WisDOT is permitted to discharge stormwater from its Transportation Separate Storm Sewer System (TS4) to waters of the state in accordance with the conditions set forth in this permit.

WisDOT's Transportation Separate Storm Sewer System (TS4) Permit requires WisDOT distribute an educational pamphlet at public involvement meetings to aid the public's understanding of WisDOT's Stormwater Management Program.

<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/eng-consultants/cnslt-rsrcs/environment/stormwtr-mgmt.aspx>

The pamphlet is required to be available at public involvement meetings for all WisDOT Mega Projects and at least 50 percent of all Major Projects.

The pamphlet is suggested to be available at public involvement meetings where changes to the existing stormwater management system are being proposed.

Project staff familiar with the project's stormwater design should also attend the public involvement meeting.

FDM 6-5-30 Public Involvement and the Administrative Record

December 20, 2013

The administrative record for a project consists of the project files, emails, and other electronic documents related to the project. Maintaining a complete record of public involvement actions is a critical part of the project development process. At a minimum, the Public Involvement Plan and all documentation and correspondence regarding the public involvement process shall be transmitted to the project file.

FDM 6-5-35 Public Communications Record (PCR)

December 20, 2013

35.1 General

With program responsibility that affects virtually every citizen in the state, WisDOT employees are called upon to answer questions from the public, local officials, the legislature, and news media. Most of these public contacts are routine. Others may fall under the Public Communications Record (PCR) requirement. PCRs are an important part of the department's communication system. PCRs provide an "early warning" system alerting the Secretary's Office to emerging issues, as well as feedback regarding public/media/legislative interest in transportation programs, proposals, or plans.

Per Transportation Administrative Manual (TAM) COM 103, WisDOT employees are required to submit PCRs when contacted by legislators, local officials, private sector officials, or news reporters for information or

comments.

35.2 When is a PCR Required?

PCR's should be filed as soon as possible and no later than the end of the day the contact occurred. They should be filed when there is reason to believe that:

- Communication is likely to result in radio, television, or newspaper coverage
- Subject matter is, or potentially will be, controversial or sensitive in nature
- The caller may be gathering information from others within the department
- Contact is about a subject of local importance that may become controversial
- Subject matter relates to a legislative issue
- Question suggests a major issue may be emerging
- Communication is likely to result in a call to the Secretary's Office, Governor's Office or an elected official

PCRs are not required when the:

- Subject is of local or limited interest
- Caller is referred to somebody else
- The contact is non-controversial (examples might include the status of a drivers license record, schedule of a highway project, or a request for procedural information).

35.3 How to File a PCR

Region staff should contact their RCM to determine the process for filing a PCR. The RCM is responsible for completing and filing daily PCRs on behalf of the region. Other staff should consult TAM COM 103 for instructions.

FDM 6-5-40 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Wisconsin Open Records Law *December 20, 2013*

There are legal requirements associated with both the Freedom of Information Act and Wisconsin Open Records Law requests. The request must be handled in a timely manner prescribed by law. It is important that you involve the right people as soon as a request is received.

40.1 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

FOIA requests are typically filed with FHWA. If you receive a FOIA request, information about the FOIA process can be found by contacting the WisDOT Office of General Counsel.

40.2 Wisconsin Open Records Law at DOJ

The WisDOT Office of General Counsel Wisconsin Open Records and Privacy Guide 2012 is available at:

<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/about-wisdot/who-we-are/exec-offc/default.aspx>

It provides guidance on how WisDOT complies with The Wisconsin Open Records Law which is set forth in Wis. Stat. §§ 19.31 to 19.39 and has been in effect since January 1, 1983.

Central Office staff should coordinate the open records request with the Central Office Records manager.

Region staff should coordinate the open records request with the Region Records manager. The RCM should also be informed about the situation.

A PCR (see [FDM 6-5-35](#)) is often required when an open records request is made.