

Connections 2030
Tribal Consultation Updated
September 26, 2008
Mole Lake Conference Center, Mole Lake, Wisconsin

Note: This update occurred as part of a regularly scheduled WisDOT Tribal Task Force meeting.

Meeting Summary

Purpose of Meeting Summary – The meeting summary notes are intended to document key comments/questions, decision points and mitigation examples discussed during the tribal consultation meeting. In some cases and in response to certain comments, WisDOT provided clarification and additional information during the discussion. This information is noted as “Meeting response” throughout these summary notes. WisDOT also reviewed the comments after the meeting. Any additional information about the comment is noted as “follow-up response.”

General Meeting Notes

1. Introduction

Aileen Switzer, WisDOT Bureau of Planning and Economic Development, noted that at the May 8, 2008, tribal consultation meeting, meeting attendees had expressed an interest in updates to be provided at Tribal Task Force meetings.

2. Purpose of Update

Aileen provided an overview of the purpose and intent of tribal consultation as part of the *Connections 2030* planning process. Aileen noted WisDOT had finished the remaining draft plan chapters.

3. Overview of the remaining plan chapters

Aileen provided an overview of the remaining draft plan chapters. Key points are summarized as:

A. Funding chapter:

Aileen presented a review of the *Funding Wisconsin’s Transportation System* chapter. There are two parts to the funding chapter:

- Funding / trends
- Recommendations and strategies WisDOT would follow through 2030 to address transportation finance needs

Funding for Wisconsin’s transportation system comes from state revenue, federal funding, bonding and other funds. Funding trends include an eroding revenue base and increasing costs for litigation, construction, and real estate acquisition. Addressing funding needs at a corridor level by integrating the funding for transit, highway, and other modes, is one of the key issues WisDOT is investigating. WisDOT is also working to address the anticipated increase in freight movements.

In general, transportation revenue is expected to be flat through 2015, with no significant increases or decreases in revenue. Transportation funding is a challenge at a national level and WisDOT will continue to monitor funding issues to identify future challenges and funding options.

B. Public Involvement Chapter

Unlike the balance of the chapters, the public involvement chapter will not be reviewed by the agencies. This chapter highlights the phases, processes, and meetings conducted during the *Connections 2030* Plan development.

C. Implementation Chapter

Aileen reviewed the *Implementing Connections 2030* chapter. This chapter does not address implementation for individual policies, but looks at the overarching plan implementation. Implementation will be based on a range of priorities, organized into the short-term, mid- to long-term, and over the entire planning period. During plan development, WisDOT sought to make the draft plan both realistic and tangible for readers. WisDOT's Central Office, regions, and stakeholders will have varying roles in implementing *Connections 2030*. Aileen also discussed the methods and tools anticipated to assist during implementation:

Corridor management

- Multimodal perspective
- Offers an investment-focused approach
- Incorporation of WisDOT's vision for specific corridors (preservation vs. expansion)
- Linkage of statewide transportation plans to local plans

Value Engineering

- Occurs at design stage and involves stakeholders and FHWA
- Maximizes investment and increases value
- Reduces maintenance costs

Schedule and funding

- Incorporates corridor management approach
- Addresses funding at a broader level to address multiple modes

D. System-Plan Environmental Evaluation

Aileen reviewed the *System-plan Environmental Evaluation* (SEE) chapter. The SEE is unique to Wisconsin and is intended to estimate impacts at a broad level. The SEE's purpose is to identify significant effects, primarily through qualitative analysis, though some quantitative analysis may be used in specific cases. The SEE identifies and compares the potential impacts of the *Connections 2030* draft plan and the base case. The SEE is an initial assessment of the potential impact of implementing the recommended plan policies and does not replace more detailed project-level environmental analysis.

E. Environmental Justice

The *Environmental Justice* chapter identifies the locations of minority, low-income, people aged 65 years and older, and zero vehicle household populations and public outreach activities. To ensure participation by minority and low-income persons, the

Environmental Justice chapter was developed to supplement the SEE chapter. Aileen reviewed the guiding principles of Executive Order 12898, and the methodology used to develop the chapter.

WisDOT expanded the definition of environmental justice populations to include citizens 65 years and older and those without vehicles. Similar to the SEE analysis, this system-level analysis is not intended to replace project-level environmental justice analyses.

The *Connections 2030* environmental justice analysis is unique and more rigorous than previous system-level analyses. The environmental justice analysis focused on five themes:

- Intercity travel
- Access to jobs
- Highways
- Intermodal connections
- Transit

The environmental justice analysis concluded that while the implementation of specific components of the plan could potentially cause impacts to the identified populations, overall, the whole plan's policies do not include any inherent disproportionate impacts to environmental justice populations. As individual policies and projects are initiated, disproportionate impacts may result, but pursuant to the Executive Order, the environmental justice principles and the department's policy efforts would work to avoid, minimize or mitigate the impact.

4. Public release of draft plan

Aileen noted WisDOT anticipates releasing the draft plan for public review in October. WisDOT will hold public information meetings across the state beginning in November. Aileen also noted that WisDOT will meet with tribes to provide more information on the draft plan or present the information to tribal leadership if requested.

5. Discussion

Comment: Highways 47/55 are still not shown on the statewide system-level corridor map. As noted at the May 8 meeting, this is an important corridor for the Menominee Tribe.

Meeting response: The corridors shown on the map are system-level priorities. This does not mean that Highways 47/55 are not important. However, in comparison to the other corridors shown on the map that reflect a state level perspective, Highways 47/55 are not identified. It is anticipated that with the adoption of *Connections 2030*, each region will review the corridors identified under the long-range plan, and identify additional region-level priority corridors for further study.

Follow-up response: Chapter 13, *Implementation*, was amended to reflect that the WisDOT region offices will identify region-level priority corridors.

Comment: Tribal officials question what WisDOT is doing. Will the plan and corridors identify WisDOT activities?

Meeting response: Neither the plan nor the corridor maps include all WisDOT projects. Instead, the plan and maps identify projects that help meet the plan's vision or support one of the individual policy's action steps.