

Wisconsin Highway Research Program

Highway Research Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes: August 30, 2001

Present: Ruben Anthony Jr., Gerry Waelti, Kevin McMullen, Nina McLawhorn, Pat Casey, Peter Bosscher, Bob Arndorfer, Dave Larson, Tom Brokaw, Donald Gutkowski, Mike Cass, Dwight McComb, Ernie Wittwer, Stan Woods, Habib Tabitabai, and Tom Walker

The Steering Committee welcomed Donald Gutkowski as a new member to the Committee. Don Gutkowski is District Director for WisDOT's District 6 Office in Eau Claire.

Pat Casey presented the Department's recently published *Wisconsin Transportation Research 2000, Report to Stakeholders* document. The Research Coordination Section anticipates publishing annual updates to the report. Steering Committee members provided positive feedback and were supportive of the Department's efforts to centralize all research information into one document.

Pat Casey also provided a presentation relative to recent efforts by the Department to address information service needs within the state and the region. Currently, research is being conducted, but in many cases the results are not indexed for easy access by potential interests. Many times if information is available it is costly and cumbersome to access the data. This is an issue that the DOT is very interested in addressing. Pat outlined two opportunities to discuss this issue further. These include: focusing the upcoming Peer Exchange (required by FHWA every three years) on Information Services, and coordinating with the MRUTC to host a conference in the Midwest to broaden the discussion to the region.

Nina McLawhorn presented an overview of the SP&R budgeting process, and current funding available for research within WisDOT. Currently, the SPR funding available to research is 25% within DTID and is divided between WHRP and COR. Nina indicated that State Improvement dollars are used to match WHRP funds, and State Planning and Administration funds are used to match COR dollars.

Committee members discussed the equity of distribution of SPR funding to research and non-research activities within the Department. To answer this question, Dwight McComb conducted a review of funding distribution within WisDOT over the life of TEA-21 and determined that research is receiving a fair share of the obligation authority.

Committee members discussed the issue of incorporating funding within the research budget to address project associated costs including implementation of the results and addressing any faults or problems that might arise as a result. It was indicated that the Department's goal is to incorporate research results into project specifications before the project is let; in an effort to minimize the costs associated with modifying a project later on.

Peter Bosscher presented information relative to the WHRP budget including both research and administrative portions. Currently, Minnesota DOT is reviewing the Durability Proposal to determine whether or not they are interested in participating in this study through an advisory

capacity and funding. All agreed that there is interest in participating in pooled fund efforts through the Program.

With all Flexible Pavement TOC projects proposed and with the proposed increase to the Administrative budget, the Program budget was over by approximately \$50,000. Mike Cass indicated that there was carryover that could be used to fund the both proposed Flex projects and the Administrative costs, less the proposed costs associated with the Highway Materials Conference (identified in the Administrative Budget). Additionally, however, it was agreed that WHRP Staff would work to try to garner MnDOT support on the Durability Study to develop a Pooled Fund. A motion was made and seconded, to fund the budget (less the conference costs).

Committee members discussed the concern raised that efforts had been made in the past to keep the costs of RFPs low in order to stay within the budget parameters of the Program. Meeting participants agreed that the TOCs should be defining and encouraging submission of research proposals that may exceed individual TOC budgets. TOCs should submit ranked project proposals to the Steering Committee no matter what the proposed budget may include, and ask the Steering Committee to make the final determination.

Peter Bosscher then presented the draft *5-Year Strategic Plan* for the WHRP. Committee members discussed the draft Plan (a summary of comments follows), but then agreed that a smaller subcommittee should be formed to draft the Strategic Plan for the Program.

Subcommittee members include:

Dave Larson,
Habib Tabitabai,
Kevin McMullen,
Len Makowski,

Mike Cass,
Dwight McComb, and
Peter Bosscher.

Subcommittee members will meet prior to the October meeting to discuss the draft Plan.

Comments provided by Committee members during the meeting including the following:

We need to develop a key set of goals that can be applied toward research;

If this Program represented a larger budget than its current \$1million, then the proposed list of goals would be appropriate. However, given the smaller budget, these goals are too broad.

Best Practices:

Is the determination and definition of best practices a WisDOT or WHRP role? An example cited was the FDM. All agreed that this goal should be broadened to serve as an informational piece that the DOT could then use to make the final determination on appropriate best practices. It was agreed that a goal of research is to provide tools, and recommended procedures for application by practitioners. Each research project should review the best practices related to the project.

This Program's goals need to include safety, reliability and durability of highways. Safety must be incorporated into the goals.

In the current draft, wherever the word pavements occurs, change that to highways and/or highway infrastructure.

Life Cycle Costs:

Need to address whether our goal is to reduce costs at the loss of performance or are we looking for longer lasting roads and structures?

Possible rewording: "Increase performance while reducing life cycle costs."

Reduce User Delays:

The original intent of this goal when developed was to ask the DOT to determine what was a higher priority minimizing delays, or reducing costs.

Develop Cost Competitive Options

Rehabilitation, construction, maintenance all can be adjusted by functional class.

Next meetings for the Steering Committee:

October 25 (Thursday), 2001 1 pm to 4 pm.

December 11 (Tuesday), 2001, 1 pm to 4 pm.

Meeting location will be announced at a later date. We are working to provide videoconferencing for our out-of-town participants.