

## New funding cycle for Local Roads to start

Over \$48 million in state funds supported about 1,200 Local Road Improvement (LRIP) projects in the 2002-03 biennium, according to a new WisDOT report: *Summary of the 2002-3 Local Roads Improvement Program*.

The report describes the program's performance for the biennium, and lists in detail each local government that received funding, how much they got, and for what specific improvement, says Mary Forlenza, WisDOT's Chief of Local Transportation Programs and Finance, whose section manages the LRIP program. Project types approved under the program varied; mostly reconstructions with a few resurfacing, bridge and design projects.

"The flexibility and minimal red tape in LRIP help locals get their improvements completed successfully with little hassle," says Forlenza. "The program helps local economies statewide, from providing welcome funds to large counties and cities to add flexibility to highway budgets, to providing dollars for smaller towns and villages that may not be eligible for federal improvement funding."

The next LRIP program cycle, for 2004-5, will begin in late summer. Statewide meetings will be held with county commissioners this fall. "Although the state budget was not final as of this newsletter



Some towns jointly choose larger LRIP projects.

deadline, the Governor's budget includes 2.5% annual increases for LRIP," Forlenza says. "County highway commissioners are critical in helping administer the program," she notes.

"Take the opportunity to review safety hazards when planning LRIP projects," recommends Don Walker, T.I.C. Director. Improved road surfaces may lead to higher traffic speeds and the potential for more crashes, he notes. "For a little additional cost and effort you can remove or improve hazardous guardrail, culvert drop offs, and other roadside hazards," Walker says. The T.I.C.'s *SAFER Manual* has ideas for identifying and treating local road safety issues.

Coordinate with nearby local road agencies. "We see, and encourage, a trend among communities to get together and choose significant projects within their counties rather than dividing the available money evenly among all the towns within the county," says Forlenza. The towns in each county elect five town chairs to review potential applications and select several larger LRIP projects.

"LRIP is an established, successful program that has seen strong support from the Legislature. If a county has eight or ten townships and they approve two to three projects a biennium, over five to six years, each of those townships could see a significant improvement project," Forlenza says.

*The 2002-03 LRIP Summary Report will be available by June 30th, only on the Web. The SAFER Manual is available from the T.I.C. (See Resources page 6.) For specific program questions, contact your county highway commissioner or an LRIP manager: Maria Cole, WisDOT Districts 3,4,7,8, 608/264-7336, [maria.cole@dot.state.wi.us](mailto:maria.cole@dot.state.wi.us); or Janice Watzke, WisDOT Districts 1,2,5,6, 608-266-9497, [janice.watzke@dot.state.wi.us](mailto:janice.watzke@dot.state.wi.us)*



### Signs

What is your "sign IQ?" Test yourself by trying

to answer some questions from the February T.I.C. Signing Workshops. Instructor Tom Heydel, Traffic Operations Engineer, WisDOT District 2, supplied the answers. For more information on signing basics, see T.I.C. Bulletin #7, *Signing for Local Roads*, newly revised to include changes to the MUTCD and the Wisconsin Supplement.

**Do I have to install a RR advance sign where a roadway parallels a RR track and it is less than 100' between the parallel road and the track?** Yes. This is a new requirement. The proper sign would be W10-2, 3, or 4 depending on the location of the track. It is placed on the road that parallels the track and is required on all recognized streets or side roads at a location based on the stopping sight distance.

**Is it still required on a low volume road?** Yes. Part 5 Section 5F.03 of the *Manual*

discusses this. It's not always clear how to sign or mark a specific situation.

**Can I place a stop sign at a RR crossing if there are active warning devices (flashing light signals)?** No. People sometimes think using a Stop sign will help slow traffic down as it approaches a track, but this use is not permitted. The MUTCD, Section 8B.07, does not allow stop or yield signs at RR crossings with active warning devices.

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## Crossroads

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Wisconsin Transportation Information Center (T.I.C.), UW-Madison Department of Engineering Professional Development, 432 N. Lake St., Madison, WI 53706. Phone: 800/442-4615 Fax: 608/263-3160.

Don Walker, <i>director</i>	<a href="mailto:donald@engr.wisc.edu">donald@engr.wisc.edu</a>
Ben Jordan, <i>staff</i>	<a href="mailto:jordan@engr.wisc.edu">jordan@engr.wisc.edu</a>
Steve Pudloski, <i>staff</i>	<a href="mailto:pudloski@engr.wisc.edu">pudloski@engr.wisc.edu</a>
Susanna Fuerstenberg, <i>program assistant</i>	<a href="mailto:tic@epd.engr.wisc.edu">tic@epd.engr.wisc.edu</a>
Lynn Entine, <i>writer and editor</i>	Entine & Associates
Susan Kummer, <i>graphic artist</i>	Artifax



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**Can I mount a KEEP RIGHT sign at 4' or less?** No. The minimum mounting height is 5', or 7' where there is pedestrian movement or parking allowed (Sec. 2A-18, MUTCD). The standard KEEP RIGHT or KEEP LEFT sign in Wisconsin, according to the Wisconsin Supplement to the MUTCD, is the R4-7 or R4-8 symbol sign.

**Can I use a 2" round steel pipe (similar to those used for parking signs) for a sign post?** No. It can be tempting to use available stock, but the 2" round steel pipe does not meet FHWA standards. The FHWA has a list of acceptable posts that meet breakaway standards, such as the 2" perforated square steel tube. Using posts that do not meet the breakaway standards can be a liability issue.

**Is a Stop Ahead sign always required in advance of a Stop sign?** No, not always. It is required when the Stop sign is not sufficiently visible to approaching traffic at distances in the following table from the Wisconsin Supplement. It is also required on county highways approaching a state highway, and town roads approaching state or county highways, regardless of sight distance and visibility.

**Minimum Visibility Distance Guidelines**  
2002 Wisc. Supplement to the MUTCD

Speed	Minimum visibility
25 MPH	155 feet
30 MPH	200 feet
35 MPH	250 feet
40 MPH	305 feet
45 MPH	360 feet
50 MPH	425 feet
55 MPH	495 feet
60 MPH	570 feet
65 MPH	645 feet

**Can I install a school crossing sign (S1-1) with arrow plaque (W16-7P) on a street, road or highway that is not near the school?** Yes. You might consider this on a street where numerous children cross to reach a school several blocks away. According to Section 7B.09 of the MUTCD you can place this sign and arrow at marked crosswalks that are on established school pedestrian routes.

Don't forget the advance sign, S1-1, is required in advance of a school crossing sign. It is also required on a road, street or highway that borders a school (Wisconsin Supplement). Place the advance sign 150'-700' ahead of the school grounds, depending on the speed limit.

**Can the S1-1 school crossing sign and W16-7P school crossings arrow plaque be located before the actual crossing due to space problems?** Yes. Sec. 7B.09 of the MUTCD says to place it as close as possible, preferably within about 50'.

**Can I use the Stop Ahead symbol sign?** Yes, the W3-1 (STOP AHEAD) or W3-1a (symbol sign) is acceptable. By policy, the state uses the W3-1 on state highways.

**Do requirements for bridge clearance signs apply to local roads?** Yes. All roads, highways and streets are required to have a low clearance sign where the clearance over the usually traveled portion of the highway is less than 14' 6". If the clearance is less than 13' 6", you must place a sign in advance at the nearest intersection to allow a vehicle to detour. The XXX miles ahead plaque (W57-52) on the advance sign is also required.

**Can I put 16"x 16" flags on a sign?** Yes, as a temporary measure for a new condition such as a new stop control at an intersection. Flags draw attention to the new sign for drivers who frequent the roadway and are not used to stopping. Part VI of the MUTCD has more detail on flags. Once flags start to fade, it is probably time to take them down, although the Manual has no requirement to do so.

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TRANSPORTATION Information Center — LTAP

University of Wisconsin—Madison  
College of Engineering  
432 North Lake Street  
Madison, WI 53706



Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP)

phone 800/442-4615 • fax 608/263-3160 • email tic@epd.engr.wisc.edu