



Recovery Act dollars move into local road and bridge projects

The WisDOT website is a central source for current information on the Recovery Act program.



Resources

<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/recovery/index.htm>

Link to information, resources and help related to the federal economic recovery projects program on the WisDOT site, including Functional Classification Maps.

<http://www.recovery.wisconsin.gov/index.asp?locid=164>

New Wisconsin Office of Recovery and Reinvestment site serves as a portal to information about funding timelines, eligibility and resources at the state and federal levels. Go to Program Search tab and choose Transportation category.

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/economicrecovery/>

Federal Highway Administration website contains array of information about transportation funds allocated for state and local governments through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

<http://www.recovery.gov/>

Federal website contains information on how the ARRA works, updates on progress in the states and links to agency resources.

WISCONSIN'S SHARE of transportation funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) will start to flow into improvement projects as soon as this spring. The state received a total allocation of \$529 million for state and local road, bridge and transportation enhancement projects. The State Legislature and Governor Jim Doyle committed an initial \$300 million for "shovel ready" highway and bridge projects around the state.

Another \$158 million is available for local projects. Of that amount, \$48 million is earmarked for three urbanized Transportation Management Areas (Milwaukee, Madison, Kenosha area) and approximately \$109 million is available for use on local projects statewide.

Website an up-to-date resource

The WisDOT website is a central source for current information on the Recovery Act program. Local officials can find pertinent content under *Programs for Local Government* where department officials plan to post frequent updates with program details and contact information. Regional Planning Commissions are another resource for local officials with questions.

Another source with facts and background on the state's allocation of federal stimulus dollars is the new Wisconsin Office of Recovery and Reinvestment site.

Along with the links listed here for state resources, *Crossroads* includes web directions to the Federal Highway Administration's online resources related to the topic and a new federal site dedicated to the overall recovery initiative. ■



Enforcement influences travel speeds.

Considering local speed limits, speed and safety

SPEED LIMITS are set by state statute in Wisconsin, but state and local governments do have administrative power to modify speed limits on specific roadways under their jurisdiction. Knowledge of changing road conditions and traffic patterns help influence decisions about what limits are both safe and appropriate. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has authority to modify speed limits on state trunk highways and it holds authority over some speed limit modifications proposed for local roads.

Speed is a significant factor in the severity of crashes. In 2007, Wisconsin counted 251 deaths and 10,984 injuries as a result of speed-related crashes. Speed accounted for 35 percent of all fatal crashes. It also is the major factor in the injury and death of pedestrians and bicyclists.

Studies show that drivers tend to drive at a speed they feel is comfortable and safe, regardless of the posted speed. That means posted limits rarely determine actual travel speeds unless enforcement is present. Several research studies modified existing speeds to a lower limit and found the change did little to reduce actual travel speeds. In some cases, the lower speed made a road less safe.



Radar signs educate drivers.

Another finding from these and other studies is that the difference in speeds between vehicles on a roadway has a major negative impact on safety. Called the speed differential, it shows that the greater the difference in speeds between vehicles, the greater the chance of a severe crash that results in injuries and significant property damage.

Researchers know driver behavior in response to road conditions determines actual travel speed. So traffic

engineers developed a study method that considers prevailing speeds along with other details like site distance, traffic volume, conflicts, road geometry and enforcement to define a "rational" speed limit.