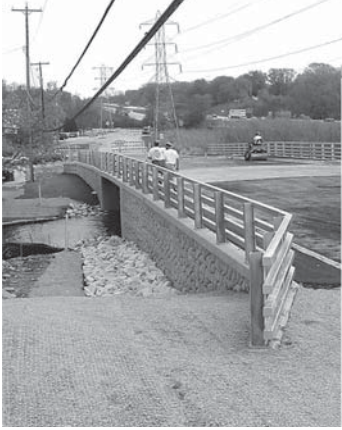


Early alert key to working with utility relocations



A road crew at a new bridge project works around nearby overhead power lines. This can be less costly than relocation.

RELOCATING POLES or buried facilities to make way for a road project can be a major operation for a utility company. Local officials in charge of the project generally have the authority to require relocation if an existing facility inside the right-of-way conflicts with construction activity, or affects public health and safety.

They also have the chance, says State Utility Access Engineer Ernie Peterson of WisDOT, to make the whole project run smoother by communicating early and often with the utility.

Peterson and others in WisDOT recently met with utility companies to compare notes on utility coordination. One result was creation of a straightforward coordination

process the state plans to use in the next round of federally funded road projects.

Planners start the process by alerting the utility early about a proposed project. Project designers then meet with the utility before finalizing the plans to evaluate relocation needs and avoid any unnecessary or costly moves.

"The companies told us they weren't getting adequate notice from the designers when a project called for relocation," Peterson says. "We can see it serves everyone's interests to do a better job communicating from the planning stages through implementation."

Julie DeBauche, Utility Projects Specialist with WisDOT, notes local road projects face the same challenges and, on larger projects,

could benefit from following a similar collaborative process. "Depending on the size of the project, guidelines call for alerting utilities at least one construction season ahead. A week or two is not enough." Follow-up is equally critical, she adds. Staying in touch with the utility between design and construction helps ensure they complete all relocation work in a timely way.

Peterson suggests that better give-and-take between project planners and utilities pays off in both time and money. State or local projects stay on schedule and on budget when all parties work together. A redesign that saves relocation costs also benefits rate payers and tax payers who fund these projects. ■

Action on weight limits— Town of Hull

continued from page 1

without permit of 48,000 lbs. The ordinance distinguishes between new roads recently reconstructed to accommodate a limited amount of heavy vehicle use and old roads that cannot handle big loads without risking damage.

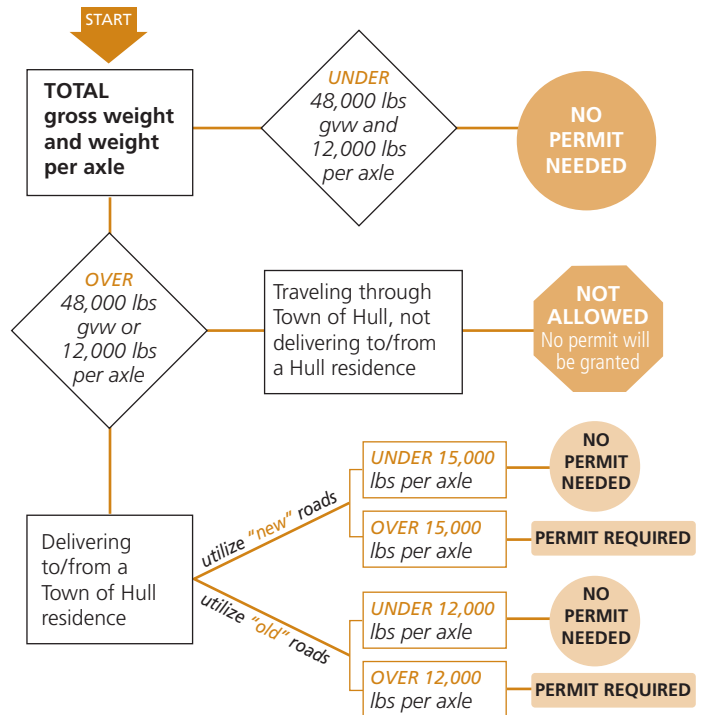
Local roads, local runs

Language in the new weight limits ordinance talks about protecting citizen safety and the Town's investment in 80 miles worth of local roads. Holdridge admits reference to pedestrian and bicycle safety is unusual in such an ordinance. But, he notes, it is increasingly necessary for urban towns that border larger municipalities—Hull is contiguous to Stevens Point—to accommodate all types of travel, not just motor vehicles.

The ordinance also lists the goal of providing truck access for delivery of goods and services to Hull residents and businesses.

When the load requires a permit, Town officials will work with the trucker to identify a suitable route, time of day and other details. Town businesses routinely operating trucks

Permitting Process Flowchart



This Permitting Flow Chart provides at-a-glance view of factors governing new Town of Hull weight limits.