

9/19/23 Wisconsin Jurisdictions—Consultation #1

Description: AECOM staff held the first of two planned consultations with representatives from the jurisdictions on the Minnesota side of the MIC planning area, to gain input into observed and emerging transportation issues. The project process overview and engagement opportunities were discussed and highlighted by AECOM.

Key takeaways from the 2045 Plan were discussed and some key topics were identified:

- Aging baby boomers migrating to the region may drive demand for walkability, ADA compliance, and compact community living.
- Job-based growth may not significantly impact the transportation system.
- The housing crisis affects growth prospects.
- Addressing barriers to walking, biking, and transit for shorter trips is crucial.
- Transportation project costs have increased by 20% in the last two years.

Discussions also clarified:

1. Focus on Walking and Sidewalks:

- Prioritize walking infrastructure.
- Gaps in sidewalk systems need attention.
- Multi-use paths and active transportation plans can enhance connectivity.
- Rail lines create isolated neighborhoods, impacting pedestrian access.

2. New Developments:

- Recent development includes hotels and larger apartment buildings.
- Limited developable parcels in Superior.
- Housing construction outside the city primarily focuses on single-family homes.

3. EV Charging and Electrifying Corridors:

- Wisconsin and Superior need to embrace EV charging infrastructure and electrify corridors.
- Private investment in charging infrastructure is preferred.
- The city aims to phase out gas vehicles for the municipal fleet.
- The state is developing an EV corridor plan, but implementation challenges remain.
- Sustainability efforts include stormwater management and reducing impervious pavement.

4. Roadway Redundancy and Detours:

- Lack of redundancy in the roadway system is problematic.
- Shuttling traffic through neighborhoods during closures can be disruptive.
- Detours can be lengthy, especially in rural areas.

5. Impact of Heavy Commercial Trucking:

- Heavy trucks cause significant damage to roadways.
- Long detours for trucks disrupt transportation throughout the region.

6. Traffic Signals and Bridge Project:

- Most traffic signals on state highways in Superior have been updated.

- Completion of the Blatnik bridge project will significantly alter traffic patterns and behavior.

Local Transportation Issues discussed included:

1. Superior Active Transportation Plan:

- Approximately half of the city's sidewalk program is funded through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)- importance of safety and risk assessment for multi-modal projects.

2. Safety Hotspots and Uncharacterized Locations:

- Safety concerns exist east of the roundabout on US 2.
- The intersection of County C and WIS 35 also needs attention, although the specific problem hasn't been characterized yet.

3. Pavement Maintenance and Practical-Based Approach:

- Pavement condition is a major maintenance issue.
- WisDOT's practical-based maintenance model focuses on resurfacing and maintaining existing infrastructure.
- The City of Superior owns its own paver for overlaying local roads, ensuring operational efficiency.

4. Enhancing Corridors for Bikes and Pedestrians:

- E 2nd Street and Tower Avenue, both state highways, run through neighborhoods.
- The goal is to create safer, people-focused corridors that better accommodate bikes and pedestrians.

5. Freight Bypass:

- There's interest in developing a bypass south of Superior specifically for freight transportation.