MEETING SUMMARY

WisDOT Traffic Safety Engineering Workgroup (TSEWG) Meeting
Thursday June 14, 2007
10:30 AM – 3:30 PM
DOT Room HF501 (Eau Claire Room)
Madison, Wisconsin

ATTENDANCE ROSTER

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MEETING DISCUSSION

1. The Roles and Responsibilities of the TSEWG in WisDOT

Rebecca Yao met with the regional traffic safety engineers to examine the existing purpose, mission, roles and responsibilities, and goals of the current Traffic Safety Engineering Work Group. The group discussed the possibility of restructuring/reorganizing the workgroup to better meet the needs of WisDOT.

The group also discussed some technical issues that included:
- At-grade expressway/bypass intersections
- Type A, B, and C intersections vs. left-turn lanes and right/through lanes
- Access Management – before and after crash statistics/performance measures

2. Road Safety Audits (RSAs)

Rebecca summarized where we are to date with the RSA Master Contracts. We currently have three contracts underway with Opus International Consultants and one pending with SRF Consulting.
Rebecca attended a RSA peer exchange in South Carolina in May 2007. She presented on current RSA practices in Wisconsin, including past projects, RSA initiatives, and next steps. She also heard from other states that are currently practicing conducting RSAs.

- About 30 state represented plus FHWA representatives
- Most states with RSA experience use RSAs more as a reactive versus a proactive approach (Arizona includes RSAs as part of traffic impact analyses to be more proactive)
- Some states that have good RSA programs include South Carolina, Iowa, Arizona, Pennsylvania, Florida, and Tennessee.

For more information on the RSA peer exchange, go to [http://tig.transportation.org/?siteid=57&pageid=2263](http://tig.transportation.org/?siteid=57&pageid=2263)

There was some discussion on Wisconsin’s approach to developing RSAs in the state:

- We should be working toward a proactive approach and conduct RSA in planning stage of a project.
- Rebecca discussed integrating RSAs and Value Engineering (VE) and recommended that this is occurring now as part of the I-94 North/South Corridor study. Rebecca, Chris Quesnell, and Marie Treazise participated in the I-94 North/South Racine and Kenosha Counties VE Study in early June and incorporated a safety component. One of their recommendations to the study team is to conduct a RSA on this portion of the study. Rebecca and Marie talked with the two people conducting the VE study to get their thoughts/opinions on how to incorporate RSAs and VE. One of the ideas that Marie and Rebecca talked about was that we are going to do a VE and RSA in a parallel fashion for the I-94 North/South Milwaukee County portion.

Some ideas the VE instructors proposed included:

- Conducting a RSA after a VE study, using the VE report as input to the RSA, and including a VE team member on the RSA team.
- Conducting a VE study after a RSA, using the RSA report as input to the VE, and including a RSA team member on the VE team.
- Using a Roadside Safety Analysis Program (RSAP) to quantitatively develop safety measures. This program allows the user to input certain roadway characteristics and certain roadside improvements and the program’s output is a quantitative number on how much safety is increased or decreased. However, this program does not analyze intersections.

There are pros and cons to each and as we develop our Wisconsin RSA guidelines, we need to work closely with the VE team as they revise the Wisconsin VE guidelines.

Rebecca mentioned that there is going to RSA training on July 23-24, 2007. The RSA training is schedule prior to the FHWA training on intersection safety on July 25-26. John Shaw is working on getting registration set-up for those two courses.

Other training coming up include the Traffic Engineering Fundamentals Workshop, June 26-28 at UW-Fond du Lac and the Access Management Workshop, August 28-30 at UW-Madison.

Scott Nelson reviewed the US 151 Fond du Lac bypass issue and proposed future improvements. Scott mentioned that it would be a good idea to start looking at intersections on bypasses, perhaps looking at before and after crash statistics. He also mentioned the FHWA Bypass Report and suggested that we start to follow-up on some of recommendations from the report. Rebecca mentioned that the Bureau of Project Development (BPD) is leading an initiative to look at intersection geometrics on bypasses. John Corbin suggested that it might be worthwhile establish access management considerations based on the type of corridor. The Southeast Region is developing an Urban Corridor Model (UCM) based on proposed access management improvements along Bluemound Road in Milwaukee. John also emphasized that access management should focus also on safety rather than just mobility.

Pat Fleming noted that there was a bypass study report completed in 2001(?) on locations on where bypasses should be built and includes the necessary freeway/expressway standard needs. The report included criteria on where bypasses should be located; however, the report was put on the back burner. Pat will send an electronic copy of the bypass study report to Rebecca.

4. Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

Chuck Thiede sent out the new HSIP guidelines on April 25, 2007 soliciting for projects in the 2008-2011 programming period. FHWA approved these guidelines on April 23, 2007. Chuck noted that the guidelines have changed due to new requirements of SAFETEA-LU. These guidelines are interim and will be subject to further revisions as we move forward with this new process. The deadline for submitting projects for HSIP funding is August 1, 2007 to Central Office. As stated in the guidelines, December 1, 2007 is set as the target date for project approvals. Similar to the old process, three copies of each submittal are required. Chuck stressed the regions should reach out to local agencies and have them apply for HSIP funding. Top priority projects include locations from the five percent report and cross-median crash hot spots. Chuck indicated that we will likely receive more projects than we can fund, so we need to figure out a way to prioritize the projects. The regional safety engineers suggested that they should be part of the prioritization process. After further discussions, the group agreed that the regional safety engineers would be a part of the review/prioritization process. They would provide their list of prioritized projects to the HSIP review committee for consideration. The HSIP review committee is made of three people: Rebecca Yao, Chuck Thiede, and a regional design liaison depending on the region. Rebecca will set up a project prioritization meeting in late August/early September with the regional traffic safety engineers and Chuck Thiede. As part of the HSIP Program, Chuck asked that each of the regions prioritize their own projects. Chuck will send out a spreadsheet for each of the regions to use. One of the other items that Chuck mentioned is how much money should be allocated to the locals vs. the state roadways. This is something that has not been determined yet, but will need to be considered. Chuck
also reviewed the current state of the HSIP Program funding. As of June 1, 2007, the Program is at 50% for Fiscal Year 2007, 114% for F2008, 48% for FY2009, 10% for FY2010, and 0% for FY 2011. One of the items discussed is how these safety projects fit in with other projects (3R, Backbone, Majors). One of the questions asked is whether the HSIP Program should be stand-alone projects only, or whether they could and should be a part of the other projects?

Brad Javenkowski is working on putting the five-percent report together for FHWA by the August 31 deadline. He would like each of the regions to list out proposed improvements for each of the five percent locations. He will send out a template for each of the regions to fill out.

One of the other topics of discussion included the Safety Analyst Program and how that would fit into the process. Brad mentioned that he is working on converting the data for Safety Analyst into the correct format. He should be done with that in the next couple months and then he will send everything to the TOPS Lab for them to start evaluating the software. The TOPS Lab will evaluate the software over the next year and present their findings. If we determine that Safety Analyst is software worth implementing, then we would use it as one tool to help us determine our top five percent locations. In the meantime, we are using meta as a basis for the five percent and we are also working with the TOPS Lab and Earth Tech to establish a process for determining potential countermeasures for specific intersection configurations. Bill Bremer mentioned that he is working on putting together needs for the state and that he will include Safety Analyst training as a part of requests.

5. WisDOT Regular (annual) Fatal Crash Review Process

By statute, regional traffic engineers are required to attend County Highway Safety Commissioner’s meeting where the causes for fatal crashes are frequently questioned and the countermeasures are often discussed. To better respond to the public requests in a consistent manner, WisDOT is considering to develop a regular fatal crash review process.

Rebecca mentioned that it would be a good idea to develop a statewide annual fatal crash review process, which could include reviewing each of the fatal crashes in detail, examining fatal crash patterns, developing a fatal crash summary report, etc. John Corbin wanted to know what each of the regions does after a fatal crash occurs and it is apparent that each of the regions has a different process. One issue that was brought up is that there could be resource implications to analyzing every fatal crash. John Corbin will discuss this at the next Operations Managers meeting, which will include policy and justification for reviewing fatal crashes. Rebecca will work with Emily Johnson to get this on the agenda.

6. Statewide safety communication plan

It is another proactive approach to responding media requests regarding highway safety on state routes. Talking points, consistent responses need to be discussed from central office to regions.
John Corbin mentioned he would like to develop a consistent method of communicating to the public. Some of the questions that he brought up include:

- If a safety issue occurs in a region, who should be the one to answer questions?
- Should the regional safety engineer answer the requests/questions or should it be a public information officer? Should the question/request be routed through Central Office?

We should have a statewide initiative/plan to address safety situations that will arise as a result of a specific project, public requests, etc.

John Corbin will bring this up as an item one of the upcoming Operations Managers meetings to discuss and talk about options, implications, etc. Rebecca will work with Emily Johnson to put on the agenda.

7. Members Report

None.

ACTIONS

- Pat will send an electronic copy of the bypass study report to Rebecca.
- Rebecca will set up a project prioritization meeting in late August/early September with the regional traffic safety engineers and Chuck Thiede.
- Chuck will send out a spreadsheet for each of the regions to prioritize their HSIP projects. Each region should fill out and send back to Chuck.
- Rebecca will work with Emily Johnson to put a couple items on the next Operations Managers meeting: (1) Fatal Crash Review Process and (2) Statewide safety communication plan.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the WisDOT Traffic Safety Engineering Workgroup (TSEWG) Meeting is:

TUESDAY, August 21, 2007
9:30 AM – 3:30 PM
Governor’s Conference on Highway Safety
Stevens Point Holiday Inn Hotel & Convention Center
1001 Amber Avenue
Stevens Point, WI 54481