

# Dept. of Transportation: Transportation Projects Commission meets for first time since 2014

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*TPC approves removing three current highway project studies*

Wisconsin's Transportation Projects Commission (TPC) met today, for the first time in five years. The commission received updates on major transportation projects across the state.

"The TPC meeting can play an important role in fostering stronger communication between the Legislature, transportation stakeholders, my administration, and the public about major highway projects," said Governor Tony Evers, who chairs the commission.

The TPC, consisting of a bipartisan group of legislators and three citizen members, approved removing three Major Highway Project studies at this time.

"In order to make the best use of the citizens tax dollars, it is imperative that we are deliberative and look at what the emerging needs are, prioritize how we state the projects to achieve the greatest value, and plan for how they can be funded," Secretary-designee Craig Thompson said. "This type of planning and staging can be the most important efficiency that we can provide to the taxpaying public."

## 1. **US 8 (WIS 35 to US 53), Polk and Barron counties**

- US 8 Tier I corridor environmental study has been completed and the Tier II documents were suspended. The corridor does not warrant an enumeration recommendation from the department at this time.

- Identified needs on this project can be satisfactorily addressed with rehabilitation projects that will not qualify for Majors funding.

#### **1. WIS 11/US 14 (Janesville to I-43), Rock and Walworth counties**

- There are higher priority corridors that should be funded before this corridor. This is expected to be the case for the foreseeable future.

#### **1. US 12 (Fort Atkinson Bypass), Jefferson county**

- The department was directed to stop work on this corridor in 2012.
- The department is recommending that this study be removed from the list of approved Major Highway Studies because needs for this bypass are not expected to be warranted until after 2035.

Major Highway Project candidates undergo an extensive, statutorily-set evaluation that considers a project's potential to enhance economic development, relieve traffic congestion, improve safety and achieve community objectives while minimizing environmental impacts. To move forward, candidate projects must undergo an environmental review process. State law prohibits the TPC from recommending major highway projects unless funding is sufficient to begin construction within six years.

The TPC is a public/private commission that includes the Governor, five state senators, five assembly representatives and three citizen members who review, approve, and make recommendations regarding Major Highway Projects in Wisconsin.

The 2011-13 state budget revised the definition of a Major Highway Project as a project that has a total cost of more than \$30 million and involves at least one of the following:

- Constructs a new highway route of 2.5 miles or more in length
- Reconstructs or reconditions an existing highway of either relocating 2.5 miles or more of the existing highway or adding one or more lanes five miles or more in length to an existing highway

- Improves to freeway standards 10 miles or more of an existing divided highway having two or more lanes in either direction.

State law (84.013(1)(a)2m) also specifies that any project with a total cost of over \$75 million can also qualify as a major highway project. More information about major highway projects in Wisconsin can be found on the WisDOT website at <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/projects/6yr-hwy-impr/maj-hwy/default.aspx>.