

WisDOT: Transportation Projects Commission charts bipartisan course for third year

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La Crosse highway study gets unanimous approval

In its third consecutive annual meeting, the bipartisan Wisconsin Transportation Projects Commission today approved by unanimous vote the first step toward improving north-south highway routes in La Crosse County to address pavement, bridge and safety needs, and to reduce intersection delay.

“Today the TPC moved forward with a study that will address deteriorating infrastructure and higher than normal crash rates on US 53, WIS 35 and WIS 16 in the La Crosse area,” WisDOT Secretary Craig Thompson said. “In addition to addressing pavement, bridge and safety needs, project work on these key highways will improve bike and pedestrian accommodations and will reduce delay at some intersections. Thank you to the TPC for a good decision that sets a wise course.”

Crashes along the La Crosse highway corridors have averaged more than 50% higher than the state average in many sections, with intersections being a particular concern. WisDOT has identified 57 corridor intersections with safety concerns.

“After years of elected officials kicking the can down the road and neglecting to fix Wisconsin’s roads, I’m proud to say that my administration has improved more than 1,700 miles of highways and more 1,250 bridges. Additionally, we reconvened the TPC and it’s paying off for communities across our state,” Governor Tony Evers said. “We’ve listened and worked with community and industry leaders to find solutions that address the needs of local and regional transportation systems across our state, and it’s that sort of collaboration and problem solving that will protect the environment, address pedestrian and bicycle needs, and improve safety and pavement issues in a way that works for the La Crosse community.”

Based on its August 2021 TPC report, WisDOT reviewed cost savings of \$19.5 million in Major and Southeast Mega programs in its review of projects to the TPC. At its last meeting, the

group advanced the I-39/90/94 crossing at the Wisconsin River in Columbia County and an 18-mile section of US 51 in Dane County.

Major Highway Project candidates undergo an extensive 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.

The TPC is a commission chaired by the Governor that includes five state senators, five assembly representatives and three citizen members who review, approve, and make recommendations regarding Major Highway Projects in Wisconsin. Governor Evers revitalized the TPC in 2019 after it had been dormant since 2014.