

Dept. of Transportation: Gov. Evers announces nearly \$15 million in grants and loans to improve freight rail

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Governor Tony Evers, together with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), today announced nearly \$15 million in grants and loans for five freight rail projects worth an estimated \$24.4 million. The projects will enhance safety by replacing timber bridges, improving crossings, and allowing emergency vehicle access.

“These freight rail projects are an investment in a critical part of Wisconsin’s supply chain,” Gov. Evers said. “Modern and efficient freight rail makes our communities safer and our whole transportation infrastructure stronger. This work will mean shorter routes for some emergency vehicles, higher weight limits for some trains, and a more modern rail for Wisconsin.”

“Strengthening bridges, creating new routes for emergency vehicles and updating crossings improves safety and the efficient movement of goods and services,” WisDOT Secretary Craig Thompson said. “Wisconsin’s freight rail network is a critical part of our transportation infrastructure and these grants make strategic investments for our future.”

Last year, Gov. Evers signed the 2021-23 biennial budget which provided \$20 million for the Wisconsin Freight Railroad Preservation program (FRPP). Through this investment, the FRPP provided \$12.7 million in grants, and the Freight Railroad Infrastructure Improvement Program (FRIIP) provided \$2.1 million in loans. The remaining funding is from matching funds from participants.

For fiscal year 2022, Wisconsin & Southern Railroad (WSOR) has been awarded funding for the following four projects:

Janesville Bridges and Track Restoration – WSOR has been awarded a grant of up to \$2,256,140 and a FRIIP loan of \$1,128,070 to rehabilitate five bridges and one mile of track in Janesville. The project, which will increase capacity of the bridges to 286,000-pound carloads, is estimated to cost \$11,280,700. The Wisconsin River Rail Transit Commission, Pecatonica Rail Transit Commission, and East Wisconsin Counties Railroad Consortium have all pledged financial support to the project.

Reedsburg Subdivision Track Rehabilitation Phase 2 – WSOR has been awarded a grant of up to \$3,782,400 and a FRIIP loan of \$472,800 to rehabilitate 22 miles of track from Waunakee in Dane County to Devil's Lake in Sauk County. The project will consist of replacing 27,550 ties and reconstructing nine public road crossings.

Prairie Subdivision Bridge Replacement – WSOR has been awarded a grant of up to \$2,995,404 and a FRIIP loan of \$374,426 to replace four timber bridges on the Prairie Subdivision in Crawford, Grant, Iowa and Sauk Counties. The project bridges will be replaced with new steel trestles at a total cost of \$3,744,255.

Reedsburg Subdivision Bridge Rehabilitation – WSOR has been awarded a grant of up to \$621,376 comprising 80% of the \$773,565 total project cost to rehabilitate two bridges located near Lodi in Columbia County.

The City of Madison has been awarded funding for the following project:

Bridge 259 Replacement – The City of Madison has been awarded a grant of up to \$3,068,800 comprising 80% of the \$3,836,000 cost to replace bridge 259 over Troy Drive in Madison with a longer structure that will accommodate a wider roadway and sidewalks and enable greater vertical clearance to allow passage of emergency vehicles. These improvements will enhance public safety and access to the Troy Drive neighborhood.