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# 1 Introduction

The *Wisconsin Guide to Pedestrian Best Practices* (Guide) represents the second of a two-part Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) approach to address pedestrian needs in the state. The first part, the *Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020* (Policy Plan), outlines statewide and local measures to increase walking and promote pedestrian safety. It establishes goals, objectives, and actions for better integrating pedestrian facilities into the overall transportation system through 2020.

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## 1.1. Purpose and scope

This Guide helps implement the goals, objectives, and actions described in the Policy Plan. The Guide is a resource for WisDOT, local government officials, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), regional planning commissions (RPCs), school districts and developers to use when planning and designing walking facilities along and across roadway projects.

Specifically, this Guide's purpose and scope is to:

- ▶ Serve as a reference or guidebook for WisDOT staff and local officials for planning and designing pedestrian projects.
- ▶ Provide regulatory information and standards from such sources as the Americans with Disabilities Act, the federal *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices*, Wisconsin State Statutes, and WisDOT's *Facilities Development Manual*.
- ▶ Discuss how land use decisions impact walking and identify issues local officials should consider when making land use decisions. It is expected local officials will use this Guide as they draft local comprehensive land use

### Key highlights of the *Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020*

- » **Pedestrian needs on state trunk highway projects:** WisDOT will review all state trunk highway projects for pedestrian needs using scoping criteria and guidelines.
- » **State Trunk Highway Enhancement Projects:** WisDOT supports stand-alone sidewalk projects through such programs as the Transportation Enhancement Program for sidewalk retrofit projects to fill in gaps.
- » **Minimizing the "Barrier Effect":** WisDOT commits to minimizing the "barrier effect" to walking. This is sometimes posed by state trunk highways or by joining local sidewalks to state trunk highway sidewalks. Particular attention will be paid to needs near high traffic generators such as schools and commercial areas.
- » **Local Encouragement:** The Policy Plan encourages local governments, MPOs and RPCs to provide increased attention to meeting pedestrian needs on roadways in their areas. This Guide is WisDOT's primary method to help these and other interested groups.

plans, develop pedestrian projects, and review public and private development projects.

- ▶ Provide information to help local officials devise new local initiatives related to pedestrian education and pedestrian and motor vehicle enforcement.

Together the Policy Plan and the Guide are intended to bring attention to pedestrian needs and improve overall walking conditions.

While the Guide is not a regulatory document, it does reference several regulatory and advisory sources including:

- ▶ WisDOT's *Facilities Design Manual*
- ▶ Federal Highway Administration's *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices* and *Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access*, Parts 1 and 2
- ▶ Americans with Disabilities Act implementing regulations
- ▶ American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) *Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities*
- ▶ U.S. Access Board's *Accessible Rights of Way Design Guide* (draft)

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## 1.2. Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020 recommendations addressed in the Guide

This Guide fulfills eight specific actions specified in the *Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020*. These actions are summarized below.

### Action 1.3:

**WisDOT will minimize the barrier effect in state trunk highway designs.**

*How the Guide addresses this policy:*

Discussion and examples are included in Chapter 5.

### Action 1.4:

**WisDOT will promote state-of-the-art design practices**

*How the Guide addresses this policy:*

Extensive discussion and presentation of drawings and photographs related to project design and implementation is included. Topics include:



- » Design details of pedestrian treatments on roadways
- » Examples of standard and innovative pedestrian facilities
- » A discussion of pedestrian travel concepts and the benefits of livable communities
- » Examples of traffic calming devices on the local system
- » A discussion of local policies and practices regarding sidewalks
- » A best practices review of education and enforcement efforts

### Action 1.5:

**WisDOT will report level of effort of pedestrian investment**

*How the Guide addresses this policy:*

This assessment will be done both retrospectively and prospectively. The Guide presents a review of needs and progress towards addressing those needs.

### Action 2.1:

**Local governments should consider pedestrian transportation in their land use plans**

*How the Guide addresses this policy:*

Local officials are encouraged to develop a community-wide pedestrian-friendly transportation system. The Guide provides information related to this topic, and guidance for this purpose including:

- » Models from Wisconsin communities and other states (e.g., sidewalk inventories, model ordinances and pedestrian plans)
- » Identification of pedestrian generators (e.g., schools, elderly, housing and shopping areas)
- » Promoting stronger ties between transit and pedestrians, pedestrian facility financing techniques, financial assistance for planning efforts, and recent developments in pedestrian planning

WisDOT staff will continue to work in partnership with local communities and planning agencies in identifying deficiencies or weak links in existing pedestrian facilities on or across state highways. These assessments will include the identification of financial resources, if available, that local communities can use to develop and maintain pedestrian facilities. Examples of communities that have completed creative and successful pedestrian plans are included.

**Action 2.2:**

**WisDOT will include local road pedestrian facility designs in the FDM**

*How the Guide addresses this policy:*

Chapter 5 outlines and proposes language to address local road pedestrian facility design measures.

**Action 2.3:**

**WisDOT will develop the Best Practices Resource Guide to help locals meet pedestrians needs**

*How the Guide addresses this policy:*

The Guide meets this commitment

**Action 4.3:**

**WisDOT will review pedestrian-related laws**

*How the Guide addresses this policy:*

The Guide includes a review of state-of-the-art enforcement and education programs that have improved walking as a transportation choice. WisDOT's Bureau of Transportation Safety will continue to seek out innovative techniques and programs as well as promote their use to local law enforcement agencies. The Guide provides information on coordinating engineering, education and safety awareness efforts with enforcement.

**Action 5.2:**

**WisDOT will promote walking as part of a multimodal transportation system**

*How the Guide addresses this policy:*

The Guide includes examples of developing pedestrian facilities in an intermodal context. WisDOT will continue to provide training opportunities and consult with local officials to improve their understanding of these critical connections and safety considerations.

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## 1.3. Audience

The Guide is written primarily for professionals working with pedestrian issues. This includes local officials, such as planners, public works directors, engineers and technicians, interested in the planning, design and implementation of pedestrian projects, as well as developers and school district managers. The Guide is also written for WisDOT Regional staff involved in the production of plans and designs for state trunk highway facilities.

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## 1.4. Guide organization

The Guide is organized into 10 chapters:

### Chapter 1: Introduction

- » Guide purpose
- » Organization
- » How the Guide relates to the Policy Plan.

### Chapter 2: Who is a Pedestrian? Pedestrian Travel in Wisconsin

- » Characteristics of pedestrians and pedestrian travel
- » The importance of walking and “spill-over-benefits” for all forms of transportation
- » Pedestrian planning design needs, especially for people with disabilities, children, and seniors
- » Characteristics of pedestrian crashes
- » Connections with other modes  
ex. Streets, highways, transit, rail facilities

### Chapter 3: The Impact of Land Use Plans, Zoning Approvals and Other Municipal Decisions

- » Comprehensive land-use planning and walking
- » The effects of development density
- » Zoning decisions and their impact on pedestrian crashes
- » Access and accommodation
- » Role of site design in promoting walking
- » Retrofitting existing development
- » Planning new commercial and residential developments
- » MPO and RPC planning efforts
- » Successful models and prototypes of efforts

**Chapter 4: Transportation Planning for Pedestrians**

- » Collecting necessary information before designing facilities
- » Conducting a needs assessment of the pedestrian transportation system
- » Techniques to determine existing and future needs
- » Rural area issues
- » Retrofitting sidewalks
- » Pedestrian facility design concepts including Americans with Disabilities Act considerations, universal design and context sensitive design

**Chapter 5: Facility Design**

- » Sidewalk design characteristics
- » Shoulders in rural cross sections, street crossings and other features
- » Crossings at rail intersections, bridges and underpasses
- » Roadway design considerations
- » Roadway width, design speed, intersection treatments, and traffic calming
- » Lighting needs and streetscapes
- » Parking
- » Meeting the pedestrian needs of transit users and rail users
- » Considerations in designing urban trails
- » Pedestrian-related additions to the FDM

**Chapter 6: Maintenance of Pedestrian Facilities**

- » Ongoing facility maintenance program
- » Construction site issues
- » Winter maintenance including current law and practices

**Chapter 7: Work Zone Safety for Pedestrians**

- » Traffic Control Plans
- » How to avoid, minimize, and mitigate disruption to pedestrian travel
- » Different approaches based on land use and anticipated pedestrian traffic

**Chapter 8: Safety Education and Enforcement**

- » Current programs
- » Current statutes
- » Enforcement of laws on driver and pedestrian behavior
- » Local ordinances
- » Examples of enforcement programs

**Chapter 9: Funding for Pedestrian Facilities and Programs**

- » Stand alone pedestrian projects
- » Facilities benefitting pedestrians incorporated into roadway and bridge projects.
- » Local funding options such as Tax Incremental Financing Districts

**Chapter 10: Resources**

- » Annotated bibliography of resources organized by chapter

**Chapter 11: Glossary**