



PLANNING AHEAD • STAYING INFORMED • BUILDING COMMUNITY



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Do you own or operate a business? This guide is meant to help you prepare for WisDOT improvement work. The department appreciates that there are many types of businesses statewide, from those competing for foot traffic in bustling neighborhoods to the supper clubs, hotels and attractions that, alone, serve as roadside destinations. No matter what your business is, who it serves or where it's located, we hope the resources in this guide help to provide food for thought and facilitate productive interactions during planning and construction.

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Introduction

Dear business owners,

Thank you for your many contributions to Wisconsin's economy and quality of life. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation works hard to develop and maintain the quality infrastructure you deserve to effectively move goods, deliver services and bring in customers.

WisDOT understands that improvement projects can create logistical challenges for businesses of all shapes and sizes, and that these challenges can vary depending on the location and nature of a business. In some cases, businesses are clustered near project sites while, other times, the businesses themselves stand alone as a roadside destination.

We call this program "In This Together" because department planners and engineers are passionate about working with project stakeholders to reduce or eliminate impacts that could occur during construction. Your business adds value to any highway improvement, and community partnerships matter greatly to the work that we do. We want you, the business owner, to have a firm understanding of what's happening, why it's happening and what the future looks like for any project that has potential to impact your business.

Ideally, this guide will serve as a springboard for productive discussions among WisDOT staff and the business community. So, please take some time to review this information. We hope you find the resources, descriptions and examples to be insightful and helpful.

To your success,



Kristina Boardman
Secretary

Preparation Roadmap

Tips to stay engaged with the project and prepare your business for success—from start to finish



Preparation Roadmap

Tips to stay engaged with the project and prepare your business for success—from start to finish

Before the project

	Notes and Next Steps
<input type="checkbox"/> Attend public involvement meetings, where there's opportunity to connect with project staff and other businesses located within a project's footprint. Begin making lists of key contacts—and let project staff know how to stay in touch with you.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Learn about the project goals, benefits and anticipated impacts. Note that some of this information for the larger and more impactful projects can be found on Wisconsindot.gov .	
<input type="checkbox"/> Share with the project team any unique needs of your business, such as upcoming events, as well as access needs, questions or concerns.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Inform WisDOT staff of any future community events that may require additional coordination.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Request to be included on any public email lists that may be created for the project.	

1 year before construction—Begin business coordination

	Notes and Next Steps
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify and list concerns about access, parking, deliveries and other logistical elements that may impact your business.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Keep an updated list of key project contacts and continue discussion with project staff and other businesses in the project footprint regarding questions, comments and concerns.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Begin to think about temporary signage and other need-to-know information to help customers and employees navigate the work zone.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Brainstorm a promotional campaign. This could be unique to your business or in partnership with neighboring properties to establish a consistent theme, tagline or logo.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Look for opportunities for partnerships, promotions and resources that extend beyond your business by discussing with other businesses, local business groups and local governments.	

6 months before construction—Get your neighbors, partners and employees involved and continue prep work

	Notes and Next Steps
<input type="checkbox"/> Get your employees and other partners involved: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share project details• Discuss concerns• Invite them to participate in construction preparation activities	
<input type="checkbox"/> Obtain information on detour routes and other project updates as plans are finalized.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ask questions about how the project team will communicate with businesses and share your ideas.	
<input type="checkbox"/> If applicable, understand the temporary sign permit process and ask questions as needed.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Learn about detour routes, construction staging plans and other project updates as they become available.	

Preparation Roadmap

Tips to stay engaged with the project and prepare your business for success—from start to finish

2 months before construction — Gather final project details and complete promotional materials and construction preparation plans.

Notes and Next Steps	
<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for detours: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify delivery locations• Notify delivery drivers of changes	
<input type="checkbox"/> Kick-off promotional campaign or other communication efforts to prepare customers for what to expect during construction. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set up social media pages or email lists• Consider creating personalized maps and guides that will help customers navigate the construction zone to find you• Distribute flyers and keep all staff up to date with the project to inform customers.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hold a final pre-construction coordination meeting with the involved businesses and associations.	

During construction — Execute your plan for events and promotions. Connect early and often with the project team.

Notes and Next Steps	
<input type="checkbox"/> Stay positive, be patient and focus on the end result.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Work with staff to maintain a positive mindset; keep staff up to date with the project so there's a consistent message to customers.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Keep project contact list current and stay in touch with the project team to discuss business needs such as access, parking and special events.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Execute promotional strategy and keep an open mind to promotional opportunities that may emerge through the course of the project.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Check in with other businesses in the project footprint to coordinate cross-promotions.	

After construction

Notes and Next Steps	
<input type="checkbox"/> Let customers know the project is complete—and encourage them to come visit you.	
<input type="checkbox"/> In communications, consider stressing advancements in safety, navigation or walkability.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Some businesses may consider promotions, which might range from discounts through a ribbon-cutting or special event in partnership with other businesses.	

Working With Work Zones

We're in this together

Project managers can have quite a bit going on at any given time. They juggle items like staff resourcing to supply deliveries and emergency vehicle access — all while staying on schedule and within budget. **It's important to start the conversation about your needs early and keep in touch.**



What to Expect from WisDOT

Commitment to safety:

Providing alternate routes, detours and temporary pedestrian accommodations.

Partnership:

Maintaining business access and keeping heavy equipment away from busy areas.

Open communication:

Proactively managing concerns through public meetings, project websites, social media, emails and one-on-one discussions.

How Businesses can Play an Active Role

Get to know the project:

Attend meetings, review project materials, and connect with staff to learn about timelines and project goals.

Provide input early:

Communicate your thoughts on key project details, alternative routes, and parking information as soon as possible.

Share project materials:

Use maps, handouts, and regular project updates to keep customers, employees, and suppliers informed and engaged.

Getting Organized

Road work can mean different things to different businesses. A Main Street restaurant may want to consider changing up food delivery schedules. A Northwoods resort may want to consider publishing a construction map and suggested detours on its website. Nearby offices may want to talk to employees about the ongoing road work and how it may coincide with the daily commute.

No matter what your business is or where it's located, you do not have to go it alone. Here are some ideas to help any business team up for success.

Organization tips:

- ▶ Connect with the nearest chamber of commerce or visitors' bureau for help brainstorming ways to continue engaging customers.
- ▶ If there are neighboring businesses, consider organizing as a group for planning, promotion and communication.
- ▶ If your business stands alone, think about signage, routing and communication needs to help customers. **See the temporary signage information later in this guide.**
- ▶ Use the worksheets throughout this guide to help with brainstorming and planning as construction approaches.



Road to Success Checklist

Communication tips for businesses impacted by work zones



Communication

It is important to share information quickly, efficiently and accurately. There's no magic wand for success, but the points below should assist businesses of all types and sizes through the construction process.

- ☐ **Identify stakeholders.** Think about who you need to reach and why. Think suppliers, customers other businesses – anyone is fair game. 
- ☐ **What do they need to know?** Think about detours, routing and parking. Project fact sheets, explaining future benefits, can be useful as well. 
- ☐ **What questions are your customers bound to have?** WisDOT staff, project web pages and 511wi.gov are good sources of information to help get the answers you need. 
- ☐ **Striking the right tone.** Positivity is always best policy. Consider focusing on “construction specials” or any other factor that makes your business a destination regardless of adjacent construction. 
- ☐ **Building connections.** Options may include social media, email, websites, flyers, traditional mail, paid advertising and local media outreach. Don't forget good old-fashioned word of mouth as well. Consider developing talking points for all staff to use regarding the project. 
- ☐ **Frequency of communication.** How often should you make updates and how do you plan to make them? 
- ☐ **Partnership opportunities?** Neighboring businesses might consider working as a group. Businesses that stand alone as roadside destinations might consider working with chambers of commerce or other businesses in the area to coordinate opportunities for customers. 
- ☐ **Consider temporary signage** to enhance business visibility.

Road to Success Checklist

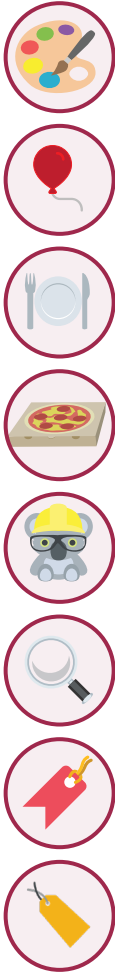
Promotional tips for businesses impacted by work zones



Promotions

Creating special “under construction” promotions can encourage your existing customers to visit and attract a new customer base during construction. Some businesses may find additional benefit by partnering with nearby businesses to design unique promotions or amplify customer outreach.

- ☐ **Design a template** and/or create a slogan to use in your “open for business” materials and promotions.
- ☐ **Hold events** prior to construction to draw attention to the area.
- ☐ **Consider “hard-hat lunches”** or other specials to draw new customers.
- ☐ **Start a delivery service** during construction— maybe pooling resources with other businesses.
- ☐ **Create or use an existing mascot** to bring more energy to special events.
- ☐ **Develop a scavenger hunt** or other fun activities to encourage patrons to explore the area and visit multiple businesses.
- ☐ **Plan groundbreaking** (before construction) and/or ribbon-cutting (after construction) activities and promotions.
- ☐ **Hold promotions** coinciding with achievements and completion of work throughout the project.



Road to Success Checklist

Tips to align business operations with project activities



Business Activities

Adjusting your business plan to prepare for estimated changes during this time can save you time, money and stress.

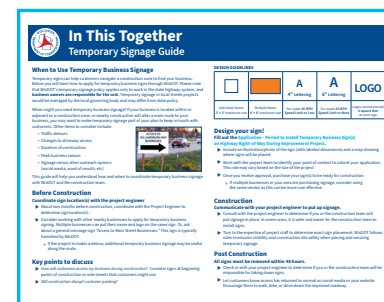
- ☐ **Work with your suppliers** to arrange alternative delivery times or locations if possible.
- ☐ **Seek out partnerships** to provide support and discuss if/how resources will be pooled among businesses.
- ☐ **Partner with a local small business development center** or other small business assistance organizations to seek out business consulting sessions or other support services.
- ☐ **Determine if there are alternative entrances or access points** to your business that could be used that would be more convenient during construction. Enhance and highlight these entrances prior to construction to show customers how easy it is to get to your business.
- ☐ **Consider adjusting hours of operation** to provide customers options during the evening or weekends when construction is not as busy. Coordinate these hours with neighboring businesses.
- ☐ **Think about planning any type of work** that doesn't directly face customers, such as inventory or remodeling.



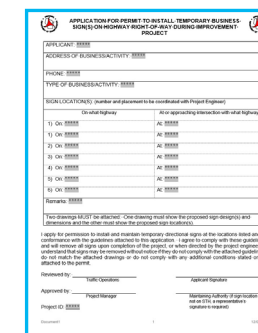
Temporary Signage Guide



Businesses can create temporary signage to enhance visibility throughout a project. This can be particularly important if your business caters to tourists or out-of-towners who might be unfamiliar with the area. WisDOT offers the following guide on the rules and process for establishing temporary signs. **Please note that WisDOT's temporary signage policy applies only to work in the state highway system, and business owners are responsible for cost and installation.**



Temporary Signage Guide



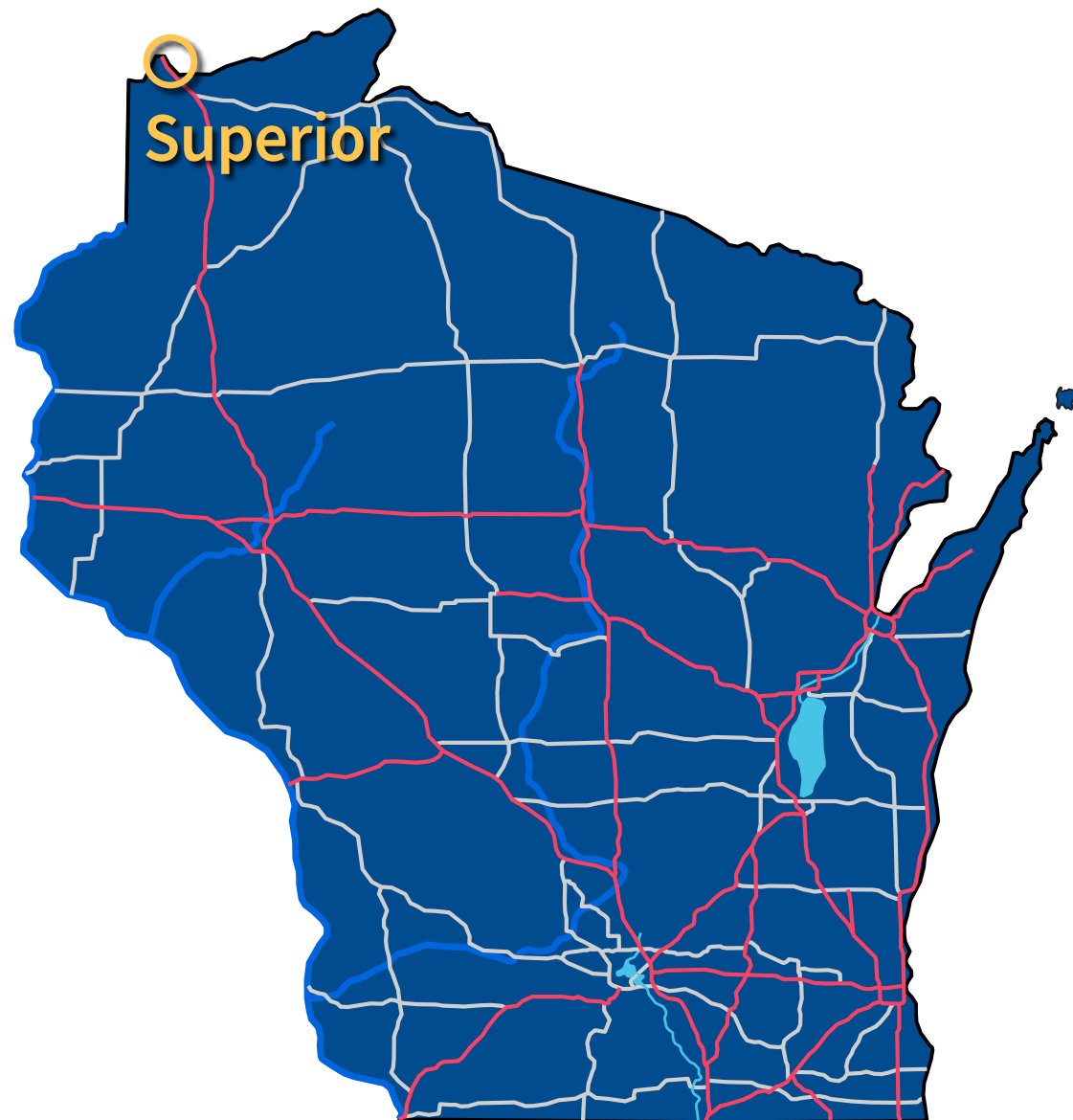
Application – Permit to Install Temporary Business Sign(s) on Highway Right-of-Way During Improvement Project

Moving traffic through WisDOT projects

Accommodating traffic is a major consideration for any WisDOT project. WisDOT's [handling traffic web page](#) provides information on staging and detours. In all projects, communication is key. WisDOT staff work hard to minimize impacts and can benefit from knowing more about your customers' and employees' needs getting through the work zone.



How It's Done



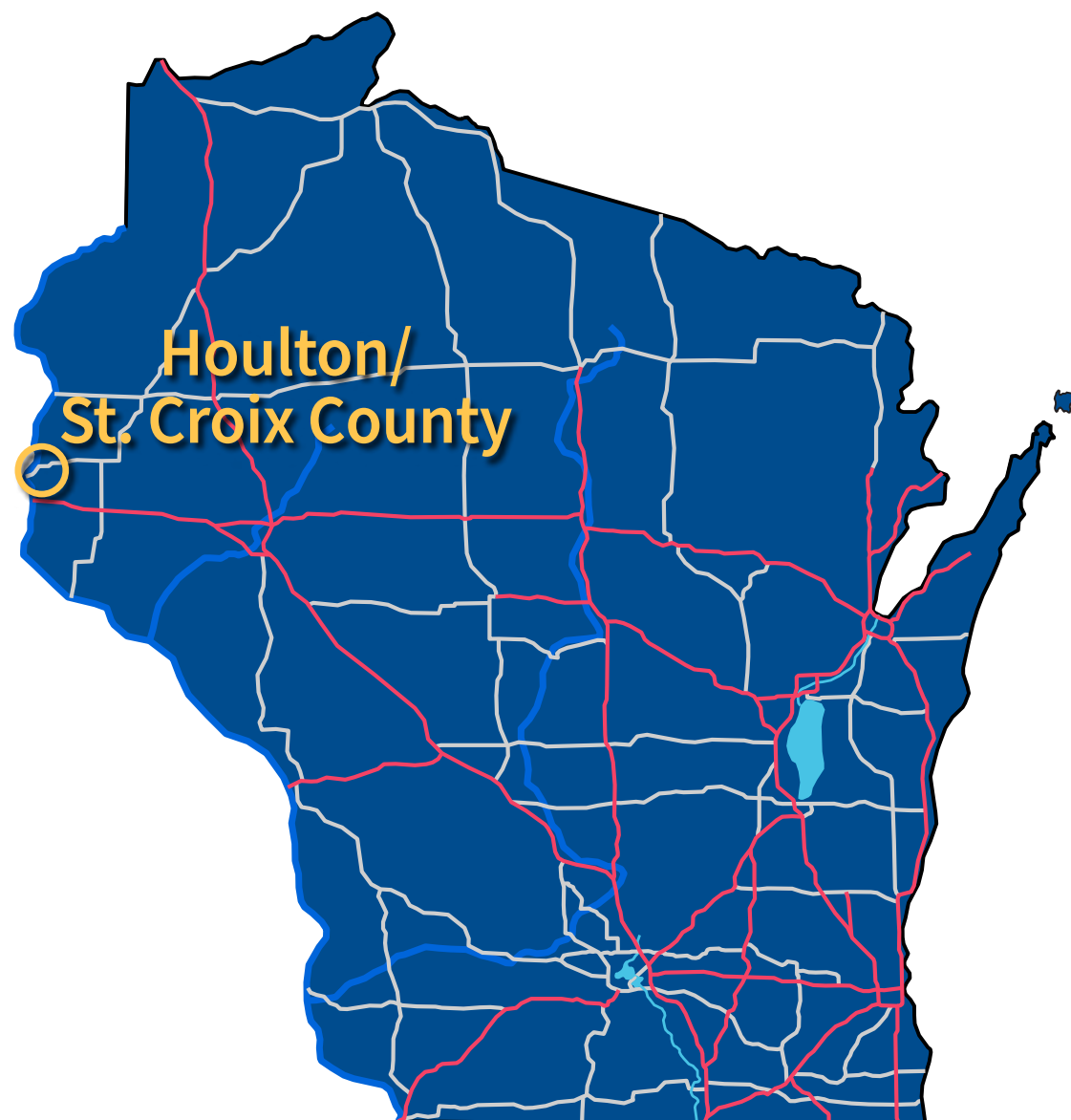
Superior US 2

- Business coordination organized through Superior Business Improvement District (BID).
- The BID created a Belknap Street Reconstruction Facebook page to share construction updates and promotions. Facebook Live was a useful tool.
- The BID posted photos of a construction mascot, “Coney,” visiting different businesses during construction to show that others could do the same.
- Businesses cross-promoted – a receipt from a clothing store would get you a free beverage from a neighboring restaurant.



Key takeaways: Stay positive, be flexible, know that some, but not all businesses will participate and take advantage of social media.

How It's Done



Houlton/St. Croix County St. Croix Crossing Bridge

- This project incorporated multi-state promotion with MnDOT and WisDOT. The St. Croix County Economic Development Corp. was also actively engaged in shared media campaigns with construction updates.
- Local business boat tours were held to promote the project and maximize business. WisDOT staff members were on each tour to provide project information.
- Project staff worked with a supper club owner to install signs on a WIS 35 detour route directing customers to his business during a portion of the project.
- To close out construction, multiple stakeholders coordinated a ribbon-cutting event.

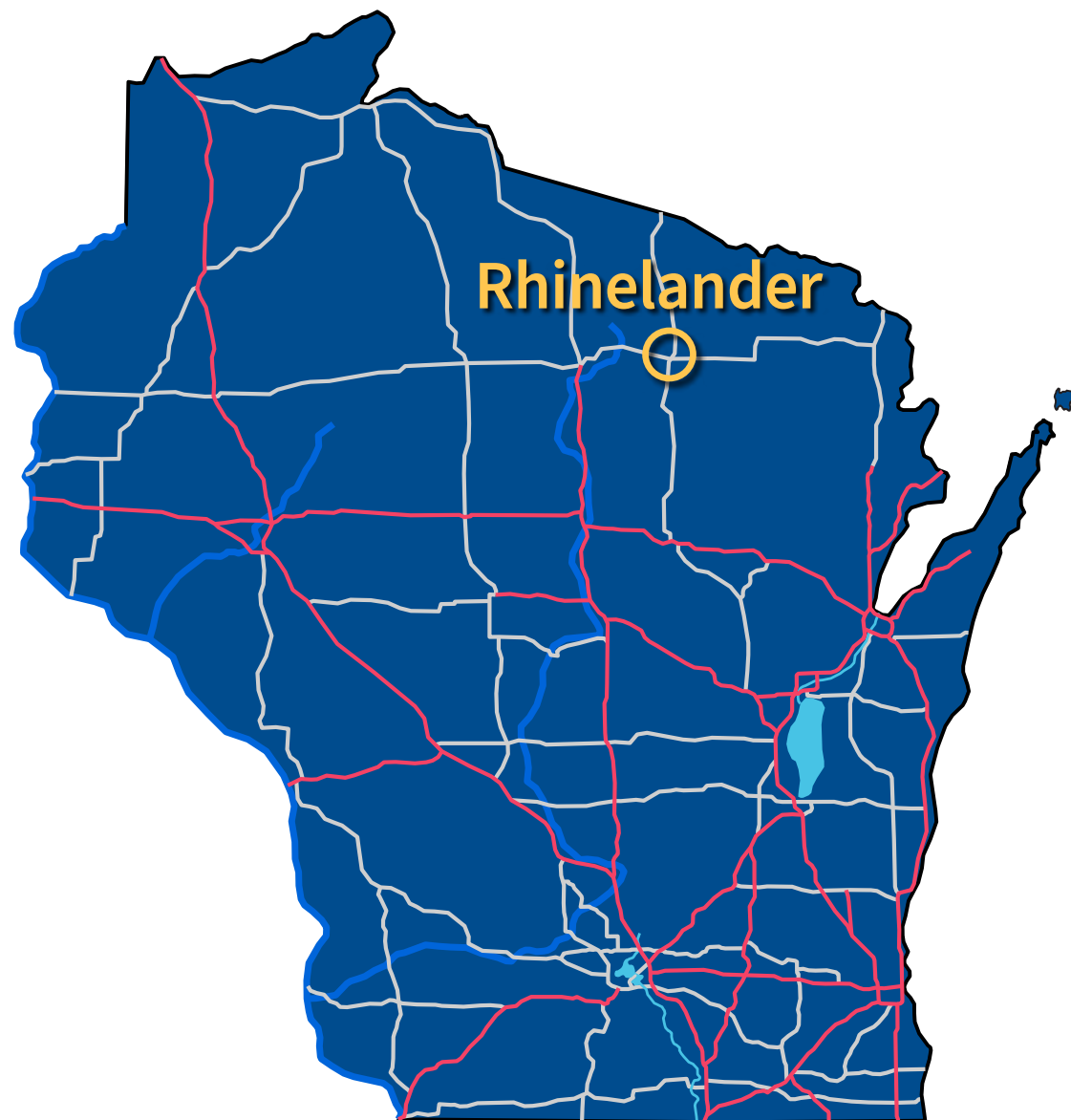


WisDOT officials also:

- Implemented a Wisconsin project website for the Loop Trail project.
- Held multiple public and local official meetings regarding construction, the schedule and traffic impacts — prior to and during construction — and made project presentations to a variety of groups.
- Held presentations at local schools about the project and general bridge and road construction.
- Placed updated project maps at the St. Joseph Town Hall and staffed a project information booth at the town's fall festival.

Key takeaways: This project had many impacts before and during construction. Due to collaboration and proactive communication, businesses and communities on both sides of the St. Croix River were engaged.

How It's Done



Rhinelander US 8/WIS 47

- Construction of a roundabout at the intersection of US 8 and WIS 47 in Rhinelander replaced a signalized intersection that had a history of crashes.
- A significant amount of public outreach was conducted during design and construction.
- Coordinated with the city for local detours and to schedule alongside adjacent city streets work.
- Coordinated with Oneida County to communicate detours to thousands of visitors to the annual Hodag Country Fest.
- Outreach included public presentation on how to drive safely in a roundabout.
- Also published roundabout safety materials on the project web page.



Key takeaways: Engaging in pre-construction outreach processes helps to keep everyone in the know.

How It's Done



US 18 / 151 (Verona Road) Fitchburg, Verona and Madison

- The business community formed the Verona Road Business Coalition (VRBC) resourced with a full-time staff person and a board of directors to administer business coordination, promotions and minimize disruption to businesses.
- Along with VRBC's comprehensive website, it also created a mobile app—the Verona Road Passport—which incentivized customers to visit Verona Road businesses and get their passport “stamped” virtually by visiting participating businesses.
- VRBC hosted seasonal events to build a sense of community during construction.
- A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held every time a portion of the road was reopened using a semi-truck instead of scissors.



Key takeaways: Strong, organized leadership combined with momentum and creativity can help business owners remain positive and keep customers coming through the doors throughout construction.

BUILDING OUR FUTURE
VERONA ROAD BUSINESS COALITION

End of Construction



Before and after of WIS 20/83
in the village of Waterford.



Once the dust settles, the equipment moves out and the road reopens, local businesses — and customers — can fully enjoy the enhanced connectivity and safety benefits of a WisDOT improvement project. The end of a big project can mark a great time for promotions or celebratory events such as a block party or ribbon-cutting. It's a chance to be creative, have some fun and let customers know how much you appreciate their loyalty.

Remember, we are in this together! Please continue to use the resources and information in this guide to learn about projects in your area and reach out to WisDOT staff with any questions at any point in the process.

▶ Let customers know construction is complete

Share the advancements in safety, navigation or walkability as a result of the project. Encourage them to walk, bike or drive along the improved roadway to visit you.

▶ Collect any temporary signage

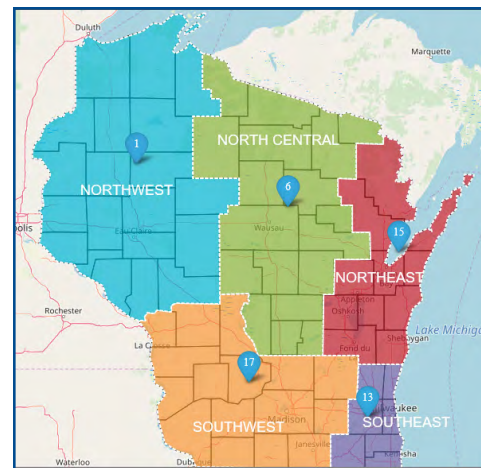
Work with project staff to gather your temporary signage from along the project or detour route.

▶ Celebrate!

Consider creative events or promotions to mark the success of the project.

WisDOT Project Information Resources

So, where are all these construction projects? When do they start? How long will they last? WisDOT publishes information regarding ongoing and upcoming projects that can help businesses plan for impacts. Please note that the information below applies only to WisDOT project work, the vast majority of which will occur in the state highway system. WisDOT recommends also periodically reviewing local government resources for information about upcoming local streets projects. In many communities, local projects are searchable online through the local government's website.



Active construction: Look to **511 Wisconsin** to learn more about traffic impacts and detours related to state highway and bridge construction.



Future projects:

- **Highway Projects and Studies page** Information on study and design phases for emerging needs that may be many years away.
- **Six-Year Highway Program** Projects about to go into production.
- Interactive GIS maps include:
 - » **Upcoming construction projects** (next two years)
 - » **Transportation Improvement Program** (next six years)



Please note: Individual project plans and timelines are subject to change.

Lifecycle of a Transportation Project

PROJECT INITIATION

What factors initiate a project?

- Emergencies and safety concerns
- Public and stakeholder input
- Pavement and bridge condition
- System maintenance and operations needs

PLANNING

- Develop options
- Collect feedback from the public and stakeholders
- Complete planning studies and gather and analyze data

MAINTENANCE

- Crack filling and sealing
- Minor alterations
- Snow removal and seasonal maintenance
- Monitoring roadway operations and safety

PROJECT COMPLETION

- Contract closeout
- Community celebration or ribbon-cutting
- Roadway open to regular traffic

CONSTRUCTION

- Hire contractors (project letting)
- Pre-construction public meeting and on-going communication
- Construct improvement projects

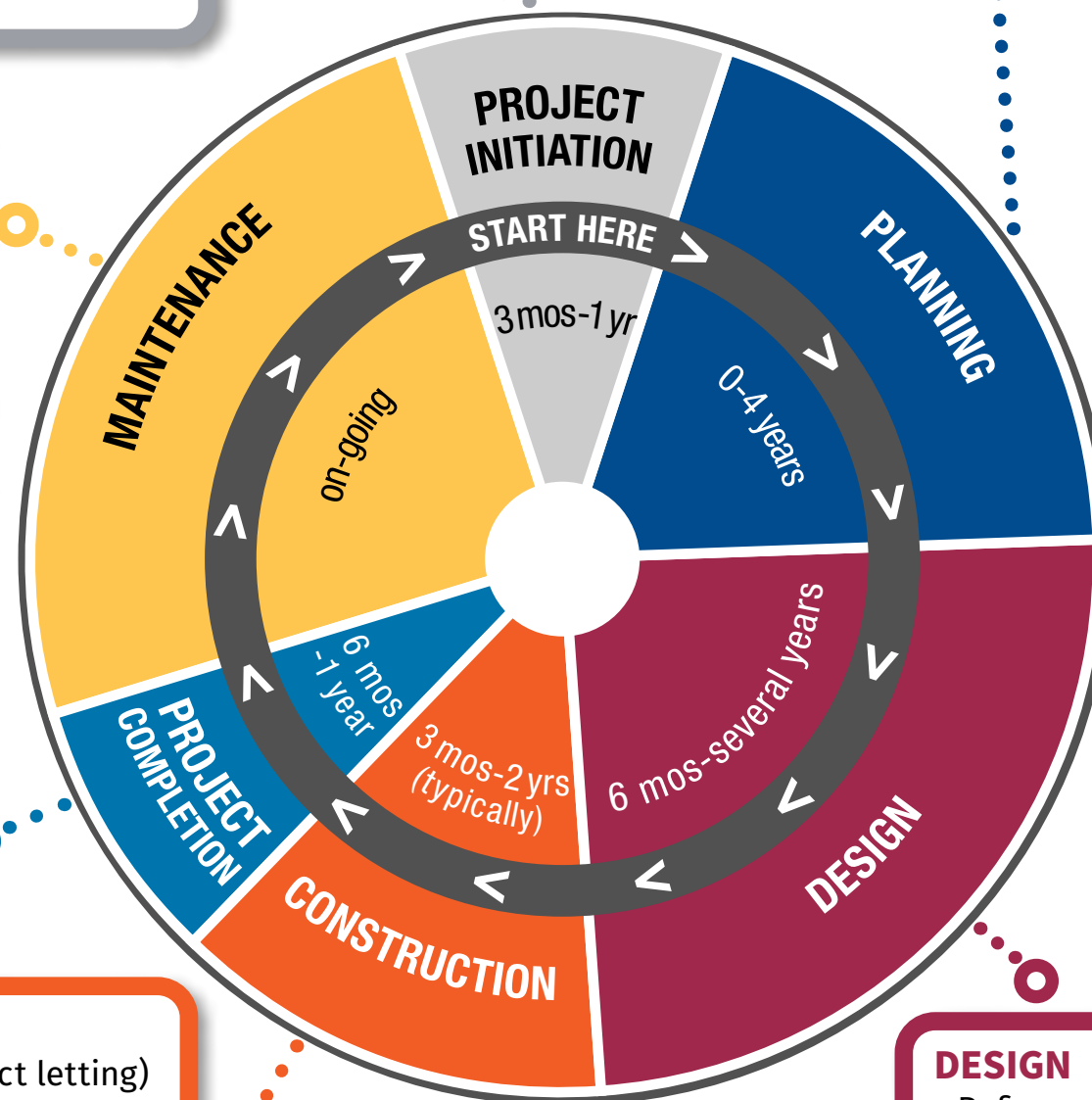
DESIGN

- Refine options and develop design
- Collect and incorporate input from public meetings
- Finalize detailed project plans including staging and detours

PROJECTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE:

WisDOT is constantly working to maximize the use of taxpayer dollars to deliver the most safe and efficient transportation system possible. Sometimes, that means changing project timelines and scopes. Factors that can change a project's life cycle trajectory include funding constraints, unforeseen environmental circumstances and changes to other projects.

Understanding the different phases of a transportation project can help you know what to expect. It is important to stay involved as the project develops to prepare accordingly.



Additional Business Resources

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

wisconsin.gov

Wisconsin construction projects

projects.511wi.gov



Division of Transportation System Development (DTSD) region offices



- Eau Claire (715) 836-2891
- Green Bay (920) 492-5623
- La Crosse (608) 785-9022
- Madison (608) 246-3800
- Rhinelander (715) 365-3490
- Superior (715) 392-7925
- Waukesha (262) 548-5902
- Wisconsin Rapids (715) 421-8302

Also, consider connecting with state and local business advocacy groups such as:

- African-American Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin
- American Indian Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin
- Downtown merchants' districts
- Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin
- Hmong Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce
- Local chambers of commerce
- Municipal (city, village, town) offices
- Neighborhood associations
- Universities or technical colleges
- Wisconsin Asian Chamber of Commerce
- Wisconsin Chinese Chamber of Commerce
- Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation
- Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce
- Wisconsin Small Business Development Center
- Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation