



Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Policy and Safety First Research Programs

Request for Proposals

FFY 2026

Pilot Expansion of WisDOT's

Pedestrian Counting Program

Request for Proposals Timeline and Information

February 18, 2026

Issue Date of this Request for Proposal (RFP). This RFP has been posted at: <http://wisdotresearch.wi.gov/rfps-and-proposals>.

Please read the [Proposal Preparation Instructions](#) as this document has been updated recently and contains important information, including tables and templates, necessary for writing a proposal for submission.

March 4, 2026
4:30 PM (CST)

Questions regarding this RFP are due by this date and time. Questions need to be submitted electronically with the project name to: research@dot.wi.gov. Questions received after this date and time will not be considered.

March 16, 2026
4:30 PM (CST)

Responses to Questions will be posted on the WisDOT Research and Library website at: <http://wisdotresearch.wi.gov/rfps-and-proposals>.

March 30, 2026
12:00 PM (CST)

Proposals are due by this date and time. Proposals must be submitted electronically in a PDF version to: research@dot.wi.gov. Proposals received after this date and time will not be considered.

May 29, 2026

Award and Deny letters will be sent by email to all proposal submitters (only lead investigator will be notified).

Project Budget and Schedule

\$175,000

Project Budget shall not exceed this amount. Matching funds will not be considered in the proposal evaluation process. Proposals which exceed this amount will be disqualified.

18 Months

Period of Performance / Duration of Project

August 1, 2026

Anticipated Start Date of Project

December 1, 2027

Researcher's Final Report due

February 1, 2028

Anticipated End Date of Project

Safety First

WisDOT Research Program

For more information regarding this RFP contact the WisDOT Research Program at: research@dot.wi.gov.

NOTICE: Submission of a proposal does not guarantee an award. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received; however, in the event WisDOT does award a project, such award will be based on uniform evaluation criteria.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation Policy and Safety First Research Programs Request for Proposals

Pilot Expansion of WisDOT's Pedestrian Counting Program

Acronyms and Definitions

ATP – Active Transportation Plan

BiPASS – Bicycle & Pedestrian Analysis Support System

COP – Close-Out Presentation

DMP – Data Management Plan

MnDOT – Minnesota Department of Transportation

OAPM – Office of Asset and Performance Management

PI – Principal Investigator, lead researcher

PIRSI – Performance Improvement, Research, and Strategic Initiatives Division of WisDOT

POC – Project Oversight Committee comprised of subject matter experts who are the main point of contact with the PI.

RFP – Request for Proposal

R&L – WisDOT Research and Library Unit providing administrative support

WisDOT – Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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Background and Problem Statement

The nationwide increase in pedestrian fatalities in 2022 brought attention to the issue of pedestrian safety. That year, 72 pedestrians in Wisconsin were killed, a twenty-year high. Yet even before 2022, pedestrian fatalities in Wisconsin have been fairly consistent for the past twenty years. In fact, the five-year average from 2015-2019 (55.8) was higher than the previous five-year average from 2010-2014 (47.2). This is in contrast to fatality statistics for non-pedestrians, which have been decreasing over time. While driving on Wisconsin roadways has become safer, there has not been long-term improvement in pedestrian safety over the past twenty years.

Ultimately, this means that pedestrians make up an increasing share of Wisconsin's roadway fatalities. From 2000-2005, pedestrians made up around 6 percent of fatalities, while in 2022 they made up 12 percent. Furthermore, in 2022, walking only accounted for 6.9 percent of total trips according to the National Household Travel Survey, meaning pedestrians are disproportionately at risk on our roadways.

A challenge that WisDOT faces in planning for pedestrians is a lack of data. The draft Active Transportation Plan (ATP) notes that the Technical Advisory Committee and the Steering Committee would have benefited from additional exposure data by mode, non-motor vehicle crashes, and user counts, if such data were available. Additionally, a 2019 research project sponsored by WisDOT analyzing factors contributing to crashes identified a lack of exposure data as a limitation of their study. One of the study's long-term recommendations was to "institutionalize consistent pedestrian and bicycle counting procedures as part of traffic monitoring programs," and to expand partnerships with local governments to create a database for consistently formatted counts of activity statewide. While WisDOT's Office of Asset and Performance Management (OAPM) is working on developing a tool to estimate bicycle and pedestrian volumes on and along Wisconsin's road network, it would be beneficial to have more accurate count data.

WisDOT staff in the Southeast (SE) region conduct regular pedestrian counts using infrared boxes from spring to fall. These counters are usually placed for about two weeks on a rotation of locations, generally in places where pedestrian paths cross state highways. Some of these locations are tracked over time. The SE region has three counters, two of which are the newer Eco Counter PYRO Box EVO, and the other is an older PYRO Box. They automate the counting; however, they do not distinguish between cyclists and pedestrians because they use infrared sensors, although the SE region sometimes uses tube counters to count cyclists, which may let them know what the ratio of cyclists to pedestrians is. The PYRO Boxes must be installed carefully so as to not count electrical boxes or other items that generate heat. Other limitations to the counters include difficulty with people walking side by side; issues with reflective materials; and limitations to where it can be placed (for example, not placing it near a bus stop because people may pace back and forth and be counted repeatedly).

Bicycle and pedestrian coordinators in other regions have a desire to get counts but do not have the capacity to do so due to staff time. While the SE region has two bicycle/pedestrian coordinators, most other regions only have one, and they sometimes fulfill other roles. Additionally, the SE region is the most urban and smallest by area, meaning travel times to install counters are shorter.

This research seeks to explore methods of pedestrian counting and assess the feasibility of WisDOT expanding its count program into rural areas. The research will provide insight into the costs and benefits of expansion, including examining how exposure data can be used to assess safety, improve risk estimations, and prioritize corridors for improvement based on both exposure and crash data. These insights should then be used to provide recommendations for WisDOT, should the agency pursue expansion.

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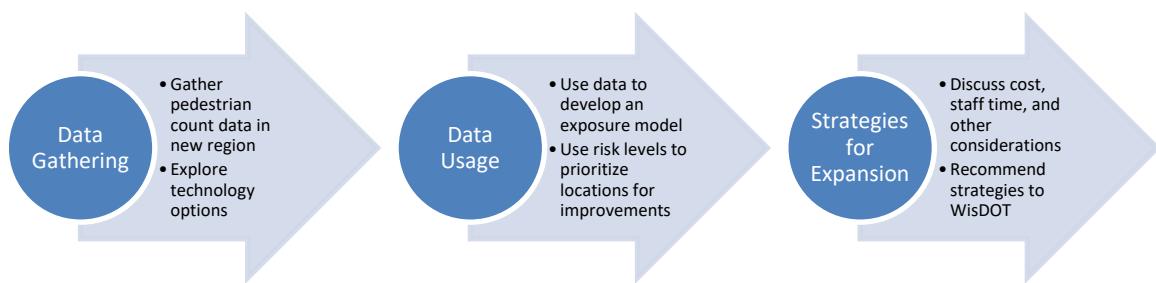
Research Objectives

The goal of this research is for WisDOT to explore how the state might expand its pedestrian count program. The research should provide WisDOT with new exposure data, assess how exposure data can be used to better assess risk and prioritize locations for improvement, and finally, provide insights on the feasibility and strategies of WisDOT expanding its count program.

The objectives of this project are:

- Test different methods of counting pedestrians, such as video footage with AI categorization, infrared boxes, tube counters, and/or other methods.
- Compare the respective benefits and costs of the above methods.
- Establish how this data can be used to enhance safety.
- Generate estimates for staff time and cost of creating a statewide pedestrian count program.
- Make recommendations to WisDOT for how it might expand its count program.

Figure 1. Three Main Goals of the Research Project



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Research Approach - Scope of Work/Work Plan/Experimental Design

3.1 Task 1: Literature Review

Researchers will conduct a literature review on pedestrian counting methodology and uses for the data. Special attention should be paid to any state DOTs who have established statewide pedestrian count programs, such as MnDOT.

Deliverable: The researchers will provide the POC with a written literature review along with a presentation summarizing the results.

3.2 Task 2: Determine Technology and Count Locations

In consultation with the POC and regional WisDOT staff, the researchers should identify locations to place counters, as well as the different technologies they will test (e.g., infrared counters, cameras, etc.). Consideration should be given to places with crash histories, locations of interest from regional staff, and any locations noted by the public or city, MPO, or RPC staff. The locations chosen should all be within one region of WisDOT rather than spread across regions.

Please note that while the focus of this study is pedestrians, some counters cannot distinguish between bicycles and pedestrians; having cyclist data is not required but would be beneficial to this project.

Deliverable: The researchers will develop a list of count locations and technology to be tested which will be provided to the POC for review.

3.3 **Task 3: Conduct Pedestrian Counts**

Over a several month period, the researchers will conduct pedestrian counts at the determined locations.

Deliverable: Results from testing locations will be included in a detailed spreadsheet of the count data. The researchers will produce a 1–3-page summary document outlining the count results and general trends, along with the more detailed spreadsheet of the count data. Summary tables, charts, and graphics are encouraged. These will be provided to the POC for review.

3.4 **Task 4: Assess Pedestrian Safety Risks and Prioritize Locations for Improvements**

The researchers will use the exposure data gleaned from the counts and crash data, along with other variables if so chosen, to assess safety across the locations. Using this information, the researchers should develop a method for categorizing the count locations based on safety risk (i.e., given the exposure and crash data, which locations pose the greatest risk to pedestrians?) and offer recommendations as to how WisDOT could conduct similar analyses.

Deliverable: The researchers will produce a safety analysis document that includes a discussion of the methods for evaluating safety and discussion of how they would prioritize safety improvements which will be provided to the POC for review.

3.5 **Task 5: Assess Costs and Considerations**

Throughout the project, the researchers should note staff time and resources required to conduct the counts (e.g., driving time, gas, etc.). This information will be used to create an estimate for the potential cost of expanding the count program statewide. This analysis might include estimates like how many full-time or part-time staff would be required, costs of fuel, etc.

Additionally, based on the results of the literature review, discussions with staff, and the researchers' own experiences, the researchers should provide recommendations for WisDOT if the agency seeks to expand its pedestrian counting program.

Deliverable: Document summarizing cost estimates and outlining major recommendations will be provided to the POC for review; more detailed estimates and recommendations should be part of the final report.

3.6 **Task 6: Project Final Report**

The research team will prepare and submit a Final Report following the timeline and requirements detailed in the [Final Report and Close-Out Presentation \(COP\) Information](#). This document contains important information for the Final Report and COP process.

The Final Report will include a summary of the project background and problem statement, research objectives and approach, best practices, recommendations, and interpretations developed during the project as well as a discussion of implementation options.

The POC members will review this report. Questions and comments will be submitted to the researcher and will require edits and revisions, or a response and explanation in a Summary Report. The Final Report will be considered complete and approved when the POC chair accepts all revisions and responses. Any data files collected from the lab and/or field testing/survey should be included for future use, analysis, and interpretation.

Deliverable: The researchers will provide the POC with a final report, which the POC will review and provide feedback on. The researchers will provide the POC with an approved final report incorporating the questions and feedback from the previous deliverables. This report, along with a brief summarizing the main findings, will be posted on the WisDOT webpage.

3.7 Task 7: Close-Out Presentation (COP)

The research team will have a 1-hour meeting to present a 30-45 minute PowerPoint presentation followed by discussion. The presentation includes a summary of the background and problem statement, research objectives and approach, best practices, recommendations, and interpretations developed during the project.

Deliverable: The researchers will provide and present a PowerPoint presentation to the POC and interested WisDOT leadership.

4 Required Testing/Equipment/Materials

4.1 Required Testing

Researchers will install and use pedestrian counters (type TBD) in locations chosen in consultation with the POC (Tasks 2-3).

Researchers will share their findings and experiences of using the counters, as well as the data.

4.2 Equipment

Pedestrian Counters (types TBD) – some research funds may be used to purchase pedestrian counters, which will belong to WisDOT and should be returned to WisDOT at the close of the project.

4.3 Non-WisDOT Equipment and Materials

If the researchers desire, they may also use pedestrian counting equipment they own or rent equipment to compare different methods.

5 Required Travel and Meetings

WisDOT will only fund travel expenses if they are included in the research project proposal budget.

5.1 Travel for Tasks and/or Field Work

Travel to do field testing is required.

5.2 Meetings

A kick-off meeting, periodic progress meetings, and a close-out presentation are required. Meetings are anticipated to be virtual. Please see the [Policy and Safety First Meeting Information](#) for additional information.

5.3 POC Meetings

At the start of the project the POC Chair, lead PI and R&L will determine points in the project where discussions and decisions are needed. One hour to 1½ hour-long meetings will be set for the full POC, the researchers, and R&L staff at those times, based on meeting needs. The researcher will typically have a short presentation with relevant information and progress updates.

5.4 Check-In Meetings

If there are gaps of more than eight weeks between meetings, check-in meetings of 20-30 minutes may be scheduled for the POC Chair, lead PI and R&L staff. A presentation is not expected at check-in meetings.

5.5 Close-Out Presentation (COP)

WisDOT welcomes a virtual Close-Out presentation; however, the researcher may present the results in person, paid by contract funds, if included in the project budget.

5.6 Conferences

Conference attendance by the researcher is not required for this project

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WisDOT/POC Contribution

WisDOT will provide the following support through the Project Oversight Committee (POC) to support the successful completion of the project:

- Work will be conducted with project oversight by WisDOT staff and the Project Oversight Committee (POC). The POC members support the successful completion of the project.
- The research team may assume that WisDOT staff/POC members can contribute a maximum of 40 hours over the project's duration.
- The research team will not assume the availability of WisDOT staff or equipment in the proposal. If WisDOT or another entity donates equipment or staff time, a commitment letter must be included in the proposal.
- The POC will coordinate access to WisDOT materials used in laboratory test programs, if needed.
- The POC and POC will also coordinate access to WisDOT databases, if needed.

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Traffic Control (if needed)

Traffic control is not anticipated to be necessary for this project; however, depending on the research design, it could potentially be needed.

Installation of counters such as infrared counters or cameras does not generally require traffic control, as they are not being installed on the road itself. If the researchers anticipate that their

methods would necessitate traffic control, this should be included in the research proposal and discussed with the POC should the proposal be accepted.

Please see the [Proposal Preparation Instructions](#) for additional information.

WisDOT will NOT fund traffic control expenses apart from what is included in the research project proposal budget.

8 Deliverables – Required Project Documentation

8.1 Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs)

A 1-2 page summary of project activities, next steps and expenditures for the quarter. WisDOT will provide the QPR template. See [WisDOT Research Quarterly Progress Report Information](#).

8.2 Quarterly Invoices

Invoices are submitted quarterly. See [WisDOT Research Program Invoice Information](#).

9 Deliverables – Reports and Presentations

9.1 Meeting Updates & Interim Reports

Meeting updates are typically short PowerPoint presentations.

Interim reports may include the Literature Review and others as designated. Interim reports are flexible in format and length. These may be papers, graphs, tables, surveys, or other formats. The POC and researcher will determine what format and length is most appropriate for each report.

9.2 Project Final Report Requirements, Process and Timeline

The Final Report for the research project will go through three stages as it is reviewed by the POC and edited by the researcher(s): Project Report, Revised Report and Approved Final Report. For full details please see [Policy and Safety First - Final Report and Close-Out Presentation \(COP\) Preparation and Submission Information](#).

9.3 Research Data

All research data will be identified and made available per the Data Management Plan (section 16).

Reports, Presentations and Deliverables

Researcher, please keep this table in the Proposal.

Task	Report / Presentation	Description of Deliverable
All	POC Meeting Updates	Throughout the project, PowerPoints, interim reports and meeting updates are requested to be emailed to R&L 1 week before POC meetings for POC review and preparation for meeting discussion.
1	Literature Review and Summary	The researchers will provide the POC with a written literature review along with a presentation summarizing the results.
2	List of Proposed Technology and Count Locations	The researchers will develop a list of count locations and technology to be tested which will be provided to the POC for review.
3	Spreadsheet of Count Data and Count Summary Document	Results from testing locations will be included in a detailed spreadsheet of the count data. The researchers will produce a 1–3-page summary document outlining the count results and general trends, along with the more detailed spreadsheet of the count data. Summary tables, charts, and graphics are encouraged. These will be provided to the POC for review.
4	Safety Analysis Document	The researchers will produce a safety analysis document that includes a discussion of the methods for evaluating safety and discussion of how they would prioritize safety improvements which will be provided to the POC for review.
5	Costs and Considerations	Document summarizing cost estimates and outlining major recommendations will be provided to the POC for review; more detailed estimates and recommendations should be part of the final report.
6	Researcher's Final Report	The researchers will provide the POC with a final report, which the POC will review and provide feedback on. The researchers will provide the POC with an approved final report incorporating the questions and feedback from the previous deliverables. This report, along with a brief summarizing the main findings, will be posted on the WisDOT webpage. Email Word and PDF versions to R&L See Policy and Safety First - Final Report and Close-Out Presentation (COP) Preparation and Submission Information
	Revised Final Report and Summary document	Email Word and PDF versions to R&L
7	COP Presentation	The researchers will provide and present a PowerPoint presentation to the POC and interested WisDOT leadership. See Policy and Safety First - Final Report and Close-Out Presentation (COP) Preparation and Submission Information

WisDOT seeks to fund research with high implementation potential. Implementation potential will be tracked throughout the lifecycle of this research project and may include changes to expected implementation. The research plan must include specific statements describing anticipated research results and an assessment of implementation potential.

10.1 Research Results

Proposals should detail the research results in terms of a specific deliverable(s).

10.2 Implementation Plan and Deliverables

This section also includes an implementation plan and itemization of deliverables to address the planned implementation type(s) indicated in the RFP. While the plan may change as the research progresses, at a minimum the proposal should indicate:

- The implementation deliverables expected from the research.
- A cost analysis of implementation options
- Potential impediments to implementation.
- Activities necessary for successful implementation.
- Data collection requirements and standards for measurement of success

Please see the [Proposal Preparation Instructions](#) for specific directions related to Research Results and Implementation including completing the table below.

Researchers are invited to suggest deliverables as well as provide information regarding the deliverables included in the Implementation Plan and Deliverables table.

<h2>Implementation Plan and Deliverables</h2> <p>Researcher, please add and describe implementation plans and keep this table in the Proposal.</p>		
Successful implementation of this research will be achieved through the development of the following items:		
Implementation Type	Description	Researcher's Anticipated Deliverables/ Products/ Activities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop a Model:	Use exposure data and crash rates to calculate risk at various locations.	
<input type="checkbox"/> New Design Method or Guidance:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Product Implementation:	Evaluate the performance of various types of pedestrian counting technology.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recommend Future Studies:	Consider new ways of using exposure data and additional research that might enhance understanding of pedestrian counts, behavior, and safety.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Revise a Specification:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Inform Policy:	Use risk model to prioritize locations for safety improvements and describe how WisDOT could incorporate this into its practice.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other:	Create cost estimates and considerations for expanding WisDOT's pedestrian count program.	

11 Project Schedule

The duration of the research project is provided on page 2 of this RFP. The researcher will provide a work schedule which should be based on the assumed contract start date.

11.1 **Summary of Hours**– The proposal must include template [Summary of Hours](#).

11.2 **Gantt Chart** - The project schedule must include a Gantt chart.

12 Budget

12.1 **Budget Worksheet**

The researcher will completely fill-in the Excel [Budget Worksheet](#) template.

12.2 **Budget Justification**

The researcher will provide a detailed description of costs related to travel, materials and supplies and other direct costs. See Proposal Preparation Instructions for details.

13 **Qualifications of the Research Team**

The proposer will provide information on the qualifications and background of the research team.

14 **Other Commitments of the Research Team**

The proposer will complete the **Summary of Commitments** in [Commitments of Research Staff](#).

15 **Facilities and Information Services**

The proposer will provide their laboratory and technical certifications for project related activities.

16 **Data Management Plan**

The research team will include a Data Management Plan (DMP) documenting all field/laboratory data and analyses to ensure accessibility and transparency of research data as required by the USDOT per the Public Access Plan (<https://ntl.bts.gov/ntl/public-access/creating-data-management-plans-extramural-research>). All research data will be identified and made available per the Data Management Plan. See Proposal Preparation Instructions for details.

17 **References**

The proposer will provide references of the research team.

18 **Proprietary Information in Proposal**

[DOA-3027 Designation of Confidential and Proprietary Information Form](#)

Any restrictions on the use of data contained within a proposal must be clearly stated in the proposal itself. Proprietary information submitted in response to a request will be handled under applicable Wisconsin procurement regulations and the Wisconsin public records law. Proprietary restrictions usually are not accepted. However, when accepted, it is the proposer's responsibility to defend the determination in case of an appeal or litigation.

Any material submitted in response to this request that the proposer considers confidential and proprietary information, and which qualifies as a trade secret, as provided in s. 19.36(5), Wis. Stats., or material which can be kept confidential under the Wisconsin public records law, must be identified on a Designation of Confidential and Proprietary Information form (DOA-3027).

Proposal prices cannot be held confidential.

Public Records

WisDOT intends to maintain an open and public process in the solicitation, submission, review, and approval of procurement activities. Notwithstanding the foregoing, records may not be available for public inspection before issuance of the award of the proposal.

The proposer shall retain all records produced or collected under an awarded contract for five (5) years following final payment under the contract and allow access to such records in accordance with requirements established under 49 Code of Federal Regulations 18.42, subch. II of Chapter 19, Wis. Stats. and Chapter 16, Wis. Stats.

Evaluation Criteria

The Evaluation Criteria and Scoring Matrix are in the Proposal Preparation Instructions.

End of Request for Proposal