

WHITE PAPER/PUBLIC INPUT INSTRUCTIONS

Wisconsin State Budget

Recovery and Reinvestment Act

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There are currently two very important sources of funding for transportation projects being shaped: the **Wisconsin State Budget** and disposition of new federal funding from the American **Recovery and Reinvestment Act (i.e. economic stimulus money)**. Your input on both issues still can go a long way towards shaping how this funding is spent, and whether bicycle projects see a fair share.

What You Can Do

Contact your elected officials and tell them that funding for bicycle projects is important to you. In addition, you can contact WisDOT, DNR, and local agencies. Generally agencies associated with road-building, such as WisDOT or the city engineering office, would have potential funding for transportation-related projects, while DNR and parks agencies might be able to fund recreational projects.

There are several important junctures in the state budget process where public input is vital (see “What is the State Budget Process?” below). Because the Governor has already approved his version of the budget, the next step in public input is contacting your individual state legislators, as well as members of the Joint Finance Committee.

With regards to stimulus funding, at this time you should contact your state legislators, the governor, and your local officials. Of the approximately \$529 million in stimulus money for surface transportation coming to Wisconsin, local governments and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) will receive 30 percent. How the stimulus funding will be spent and what the process will be is still under development, but it is important to weigh in early, as there are tight deadlines on when stimulus money must be spent. The remaining 70 percent will be administered by WisDOT. This amount includes a special 3 percent pot for “enhancements,” which often include bike projects; WisDOT has wide discretion on the other 67 percent, but it is likely to use almost all of that for road repair and expansion.

In summary, send letters (or emails or phone calls) to:

1. To your state assembly person (about both state budget and stimulus)
2. To your state senator (about both state budget and stimulus)
3. To the Joint Finance Committee (about the state budget and the stimulus). Attend public meetings.
4. To the Governor (about stimulus)
5. To your MPO and local road department (about stimulus)
6. To your mayor and alder (about stimulus)

What You Can Say

- Introduce yourself. Include your home address so they know that you are a constituent.
- Indicate that you are calling regarding the state budget and/or the economic recovery bill.
- Bicycling is important to you and you would like to see local, state, and federal funding spent to improve conditions for bicycling in Wisconsin/your community.
- Bicycling projects lay an important foundation to address some of our country’s major crises, including physical inactivity and obesity, energy and oil dependence, and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Bicycling is both a major tourist draw and a major industry in Wisconsin and what is good for bicycling is good for Wisconsin’s economy. Bicycle projects also make communities into destinations which can help local businesses.
- Bicycling projects tend to be smaller than road projects and to be more labor intensive. Stimulus money spent on bicycling projects could be used quickly, net more jobs, and particularly help local engineering and construction firms.
- If you have a specific bicycle project in your community that you feel strongly about, mention it.
- Important programs to fund in the state budget: Transportation Enhancements (TE), Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ), Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program (BFPF, formerly STP-D), and Safe Routes to

School. Note that the Department of Transportation recommended holding funding on all of these programs steady (though we'd actually like to see funding levels increased). It is important to stress to your target that general surface transportation funding can and be used for bike projects; many assume only the special programs listed above can do so and that the larger pot of STP money is just for roads. Both state and local/MPO STP dollars can go to bikes, as well as pedestrian and transit facilities, programs to reduce traffic volume, and many other projects.

What is the State Budget Process?

- Fall (even numbered years): State agencies submit budget request to Governor. The public should contact the Department of Transportation (time has passed for this budget).
- Winter: Governor presents his budget. The public should contact the Governor (time has passed for this budget).
- Spring: Budget introduced to state legislature and sent to Joint Finance Committee. JFC holds public meetings in early spring. JFC holds executive sessions to amend and pass budget in late spring. JFC submits their version to legislature. The public should contact their legislators and the Joint Finance Committee as well as attend public meetings (this is where we are at in the current budget process).
- Late Spring/early Summer: Both houses (assembly and senate) review and amend budget. Conference committee held to resolve differences in assembly and senate versions. Final version sent back for approval to both houses. After approved, sent to Governor to sign or veto. In the past, the Governor could do a partial of "Frankenstein" veto, but this practice has been somewhat curtailed recently. The legislature can override a veto with 2/3 majority. The final budget is law for two years. Last ditch public input at this point can be directed to your legislators and the Governor, but it may be too late.

Where You Can Learn More

For more on the state budget:

- Full text of Governor's Budget: <http://www.doa.state.wi.us/debf/execbudget.asp?locid=3>
- Summary of Governor's Budget: http://www.doa.state.wi.us/debf/pdf_files/bib.pdf
- Legislative Fiscal Bureau <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lfb/>

For more information on the federal Recovery and Reinvestment Act:

- FAQs: http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/media/file/FAQ_recovery_bill_2-18-09.pdf
- Federal Stimulus Tracking: <http://www.recovery.gov/>
- Wisconsin Stimulus Tracking: <http://www.recovery.wisconsin.gov/>
- Sample letter and talking points:
http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/media/file/take_action_recovery_bill_2-18-09.pdf
- In depth talking points: http://www.vtpi.org/econ_stim.pdf
- "Shovel-ready" bike projects:
http://www.americabikes.org/docs/America_Bikes_Ready_to_Go_Projects_Ir.pdf

How You Can Contact Decision-Makers

- Who are my state legislators? <http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/w3asp/waml/waml.aspx>
- Wisconsin Joint Finance Committee <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lfb/jfc.html>
- Governor's Offices: <http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/section.asp?linkid=59&locid=19>
- Governor's online contact form: <http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/contact.asp?locid=19>
- MPO contacts: <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/planorg/docs/contacts.pdf>
- Map of MPO regions: <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/planorg/docs/map.pdf>
- Mayors/Alders/Local Transportation Departments: Google your city/village or look in the phone book