Beyond the Highway

Accommodating Bike, Pedestrians, ATV, and Snowmobiles within the STH System

Tom Beekman, P.E.
Northwest Regional Planning Chief
Department of Transportation
TOPICS FOR TODAY

- WisDOT accommodation policy for non-motorized and motorized trails within state highway right-of-way

- WisDOT accommodation policy for non-motorized and motorized routes on a state highway roadway

- WisDOT funding for trails
DEFINITIONS OF THE DAY

**Highway** = The right-of-way within and upon which a public roadway and its appurtenances are located.

**Roadway** = The portion of highway used for vehicular travel, i.e. ‘shoulder to shoulder.’

**Trail** = Permitted and marked within the highway right-of-way, but built off the roadway.

**Route** = Permitted and marked to operate within the highway right-of-way on the roadway.
Big “T” Trails

- Most common public perception of ‘trail’
- Statutorily recognized
  - May have ‘4f or 6f’ status
  - Many are Rails-to-Trails
- WisDOT interaction is typically only when a transportation project may touch them.
- As a rule, managed by WisDNR or local units of government.
WisDOT allocates approximately $2 million annually to WisDNR for its Recreational Trails Program.

Motorized ATV, UTV, Snowmobile

Non-Motorized Bike, Pedestrian
WisDOT has right of first refusal on a rail line when rail service is officially discontinued on that line. Three options:

- Maintain state-sponsored rail
- Convert to Rails-to-Trails
- Abandon the rail interests on the land and convert corridor to non-rail purpose under private or public ownership.

Wisconsin has been converting rails into trails since 1964 and currently has more than 300 miles of trail on rail corridors...more than any other state.
Bike and Ped Accommodations

On-Roadway STH Accommodations

- Bike or pedestrian lanes designed into a STH roadway are an ‘accommodation’. Their presence in and of itself, does NOT constitute a trail or route.
- Locations are typically limited to short stretches of STH in urban areas.
- Similarly, some rural STHs may have wider paved shoulders to ‘accommodate’ existing bike or pedestrian use on that highway.
- WisDOT does **not** sign on-roadway ‘accommodations’ on STHs as trails or routes.
Bike and Ped Accommodations

Off-Roadway, In STH Right-of-Way

- Separate facility within STH R/W, referred to as ‘trail accommodation’.
- Requires a WisDOT permit to occupy STH right-of-way.
- Requires local unit to be responsible for all maintenance.
- Potential for WisDOT cost share if done when a state highway project occurs on that highway.
- Can be funded with 100% local funds.
- Can be funded with certain WisDOT Local Program funds.
- Can be signed as a trail with appropriate WisDOT permits.
Results...Before

Red Cliff Reservation
Bayfield County
Results...After

Red Cliff Reservation
Bayfield County

STAND ALONE TRAIL

SIDEWALKS

SHARED USE TRAIL AND CROSSINGS
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
- Non-motorized and local maintaining authority
  - Safe Routes to School Program,
  - Transportation Enhancements,
  - Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities Program

2016-2020 Program Cycle
- Approximately $7 Million in Federal Funds
- Awards announced - Summer 2016.
- Next opportunity - 2017

Leveraging Tribal Funds

- Opportunities to cost participate with state funding
- Opportunities to expedite the Section 106 process
- Opportunities to work cooperatively on future bike and pedestrian plans.
- The Red Cliff Experience included all of this.
ATV **Routes** vs ATV **Trails**

**ATV route** = *On-roadway* portion of a highway designated for use by ATV operators by the governmental agency having jurisdiction of that highway.

**ATV trail** = *Off-roadway* portion of highway designated for use by ATV operators by the governmental agency having jurisdiction of that highway.

*WisDNR has jurisdiction for establishing standards, encouraging use, and supervising the rules on the WI system of ATV routes and trails.*
ATV Interaction with Public Roadways

- IN GENERAL, ATV/UTVs are not allowed to ride on public roads nor in the right-of-way next to public roads as do snowmobilers.
- Operation on and around public roads is restricted and in most cases illegal.
- There is no residential access allowance that permits riding on a roadway from a dwelling to the nearest trail or route.
Motorized ATV Routes or Trails

ATV Crossing a Local Highway

- Legal...if done in the most direct manner practicable, and at a place where no obstruction prevents a safe and quick crossing.
WisDOT requires a permit for any ATV to operate on a state highway or within the right of way for that state highway. However, permits are not required to operate an ATV on state highway or within state highway right of way in the following situations:

- Crossing the STH at a county, town or local road intersection with that STH.
- Crossing from a driveway on one side of STH directly to a local road or driveway on the other side.
Operating ATV On-Roadway On Local Highways

It is legal when:

- The public roadway is not being maintained for public traffic. Regardless of condition, if receiving WI General Transportation Aids, the road is being ‘maintained’.
- The roadway is designated as an ATV route.
- ATV is being used as an implement of husbandry.
- Operator holds a Class A or B permit under Wis. Stat. 29.193(2) and is traveling for hunting.
- If an ATV trail is officially routed on the roadway for a short distance.
Operating ATV **On-Roadway** On State Highways

- If ATV is used as implement of husbandry.
- If operator holds a Class A or B permit under Wis. Stat. 29.193(2) and is traveling for hunting.
- If a **ATV trail** is officially routed on the STH for a short distance with appropriate WisDOT permits or local agreements.
Recent Statutory Changes
Motorized Routes and Trails

Requirements for ATV Routes on State Highways

- Requestor must be local government
- Location details
- Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between WisDOT and local government
- County and C-V-T ordinances designating route
- Must support DNR ATV route/trail network
- No short segments to only serve businesses.
- Signing and pavement markings paid by locals
Local Ordinances

Local governments may enact ordinances to operate an ATV on the roadway or shoulder of any highway to cross a bridge 1,000 feet in length or less.

Even though the statute gives local units of government this right, WisDOT may determine that due to safety and operational factors for both ATV and roadway users, an ATV trail must be built to and from the bridge instead of allowing ATVs to travel on the roadway or shoulder.
WisDOT allocates approximately $2 million annually to WisDNR for its Recreational Trails Program.

Motorized ATV, UTV, Snowmobile

Non-Motorized Bike, Pedestrian
Assistance programs
Content_Area2
Road and bridge assistance programs
These programs assist local governments with needed improvements to local roads, highways and bridges.
Transit assistance programs
Transit programs can assist local governments and transit systems with operating and/or capital expenses to support public transportation services such as buses, vans and shared-ride taxi systems.
Other aid
These programs provide financial assistance to local governments, along with other public and private entities, to make a variety of improvements to highways, airports, harbors, bike, rail and pedestrian facilities.
Questions?

Tom Beekman, P.E.
Northwest Regional Planning Chief
(715) 836-4628
Thomas.beekman@dot.wi.gov
http://dot.wisconsin.gov

Brian Gaber, P.E.
North Central Regional Planning Chief
(715) 365-5751
brian.gaber@dot.wi.gov
http://dot.wisconsin.gov