



BUILDING SMARTER: WISCONSIN'S DIGITAL LEAP IN CAPITAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT

**State of Wisconsin
Department of Administration**

Award Category: Digital Experience:
Enterprise Solutions
Project Dates: November 2021 - March 2024
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Idea

The State of Wisconsin's capital project portfolio had outgrown its aging, homegrown project management system (WisBuild), which lacked modern functionality, transparency, and integration with enterprise financial systems. Managing a \$5.5 billion portfolio with more than 2,200 active projects, the Division of Facilities Development (DFD) needed a modern platform that could support complex workflows, ensure compliance, and streamline collaboration with thousands of external partners—architects, engineers, contractors, and state agencies.

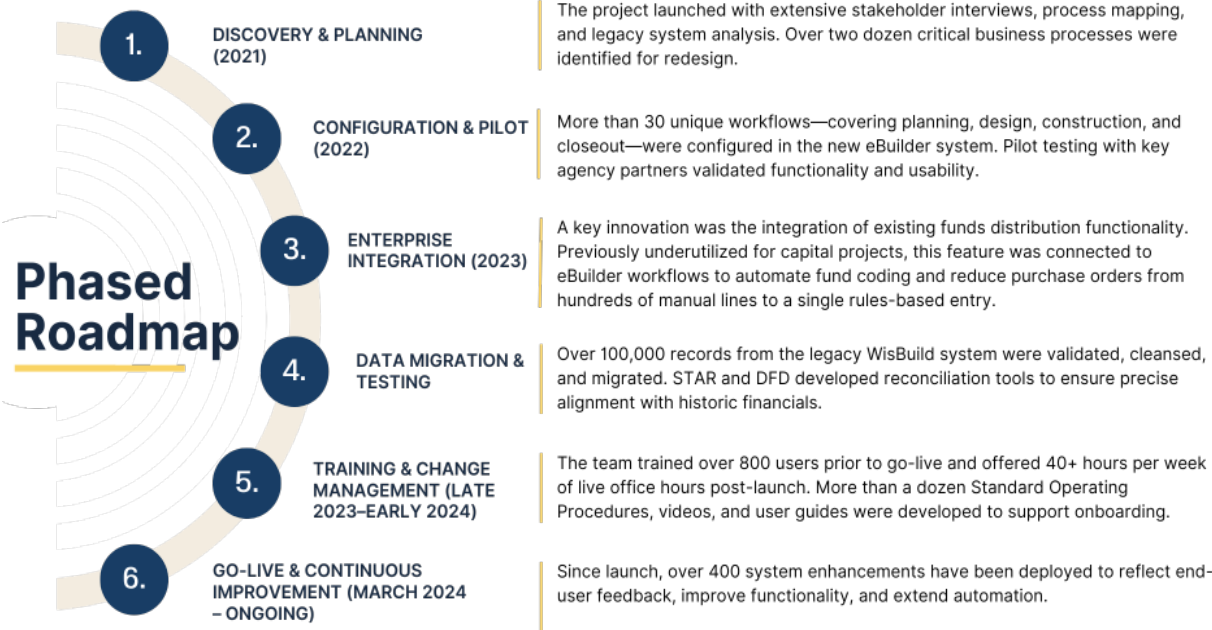
Without change, the State risked costly inefficiencies, fragmented data, and limited financial insight across one of the most expensive and risk-intensive areas of government operations—construction. More than 5,000 users relied on siloed workflows, and thousands of transactions were processed manually, introducing errors and delays. A modern solution was essential to support rising capital budgets, increase transparency, and align with enterprise systems like PeopleSoft. This project delivered that transformation. Had we not acted, DFD would have lacked the tools to support the largest capital budget in state history or respond to legislative expectations for improved fiscal oversight.

Unlike many PMIS implementations, Wisconsin's approach was not just technical—it was operational. We didn't just drop in a tool; we redesigned how government builds. We replaced 25 years of legacy processes, migrated hundreds of thousands of transactions and documents, and restructured our entire funds distribution process to allow for one-line capital purchase orders—eliminating manual entries, streamlining reconciliation, and enabling true data-driven financial oversight. The implementation also included role-based user experiences tailored to the full spectrum of state construction stakeholders, making it one of the most ambitious and inclusive PMIS deployments in the country.

This initiative addressed multiple State CIO Top Ten Priorities—Legacy Modernization, Data Management & Analytics, and Digital Government. It also supported transparency, accountability, and improved capital planning at the state level. Every state faces similar infrastructure backlogs, growing capital portfolios, and stakeholder demands for digital solutions. Wisconsin's implementation offers a replicable blueprint for others to follow.

Implementation

The eBuilder implementation was a cornerstone of Wisconsin’s digital modernization strategy for capital project delivery. It followed a structured, multi-year roadmap that transformed decades-old business processes, aligned statewide financial systems, and redefined collaboration between public and private stakeholders in state construction.



This project exemplified true enterprise collaboration, engaging three core divisions of state government. The Division of Facilities Development (DFD) led process redesign, training, communication, and system configuration, ensuring the solution met real-world project delivery needs. STAR (State Transforming Agency Resources) developed financial logic, purchase order integration, and custom reconciliation tools, aligning eBuilder with statewide accounting systems. The Division of Enterprise Technology (DET) oversaw cybersecurity, infrastructure compliance, and authentication protocols.

Additional stakeholders included partner agencies such as the Universities of Wisconsin, and Departments of Corrections, Health Services, and Transportation, all of whom participated in user testing, pilot validation, and post-launch feedback. Private sector partners—architects, engineers, and general contractors—were given tailored access roles and training, enabling more efficient engagement with public projects.

Stakeholder engagement was achieved through co-design sessions, governance boards reviewing workflow changes, and embedded liaisons accelerating adoption during training

and rollout. Dozens of state staff contributed to configuration, governance, quality assurance, and training, with DFD staff conducting over 300 workshops, mock migrations, and sprint reviews over two years.

The technical architecture was built on a cloud-based SaaS platform, providing anytime, anywhere access and disaster recovery capabilities. Role-based access control ensures users see only relevant projects and documents, while STAR integration delivers real-time financial visibility and purchase order validation at the project level. The system is fully compliant with state security protocols, including multifactor authentication and ADA-accessible interfaces.

Change management was robust, with intensive pre-launch training tailored to user roles, 40+ hours per week of open office hours in the first six weeks post-launch, and ongoing weekly training for new users. Communication was continuous, with newsletters, user guides, knowledgebase content, and embedded help features supporting users throughout the transition.

A standout achievement was the strategic integration of STAR's funds distribution functionality into eBuilder's workflows. This smart reuse of an existing enterprise feature enabled automated, rules-based assignment of fund codes, reduced purchase orders to a single auto-coded line, cut reconciliation time by more than 60%, and delivered clean, auditable financial records—maximizing value, minimizing risk, and accelerating benefits.

Wisconsin's eBuilder implementation stands out for its inclusivity, serving not only internal staff but also state contractors, architects, and agencies, each with tailored access and functionality. Few states have deployed a project management information system at this scale with such comprehensive, role-based capabilities.

To ensure sustainability, a dedicated eBuilder team within DFD is overseeing enhancements, user support, and agency coordination. Enhancement requests are triaged by a cross-divisional governance board, and system metrics are regularly monitored to ensure performance and usability. Future phases will include GIS integration, deferred maintenance data workflows, and advanced analytics for capital forecasting, ensuring the system continues to evolve with Wisconsin's needs.

Impact

The eBuilder implementation fundamentally changed how Wisconsin plans, builds, and manages public infrastructure. Before this transformation, capital project delivery was burdened by outdated technology, siloed communication, and manually intensive processes that left projects vulnerable to delays, financial errors, and missed opportunities. WisBuild, the legacy system, lacked integration with the state's ERP system (STAR), offered no role-based access, and could not support the scale or complexity of Wisconsin's \$5.5 billion capital portfolio.

After the transition to eBuilder, every aspect of the project lifecycle—from planning and procurement to construction, closeout, and payment—is now managed in a centralized, cloud-based platform. Key results include:

- **Over 2,300 active projects** managed in real time
- **More than 5,000 users onboarded**, including contractors, architects, engineers, and agency partners
- **100,000+ legacy records and transactions migrated**, ensuring data continuity
- **Pay requests processed in days**, rather than weeks
- **Purchase order reconciliation time reduced by more than 60%**
- **Dashboards and executive reporting tools** implemented across all user types

This project replaced fragmented, paper-based processes with a transparent digital backbone for the state's most complex construction projects.

The numbers tell a powerful story. But even more impactful are the voices of those who now rely on the system daily:

"This is the most accessible, transparent project data we've ever had."

— *Capital Budget Officer, Universities of Wisconsin*

"We used to wait weeks for updates or documents. Now we can log in and get everything we need instantly. This system has saved us time and money."

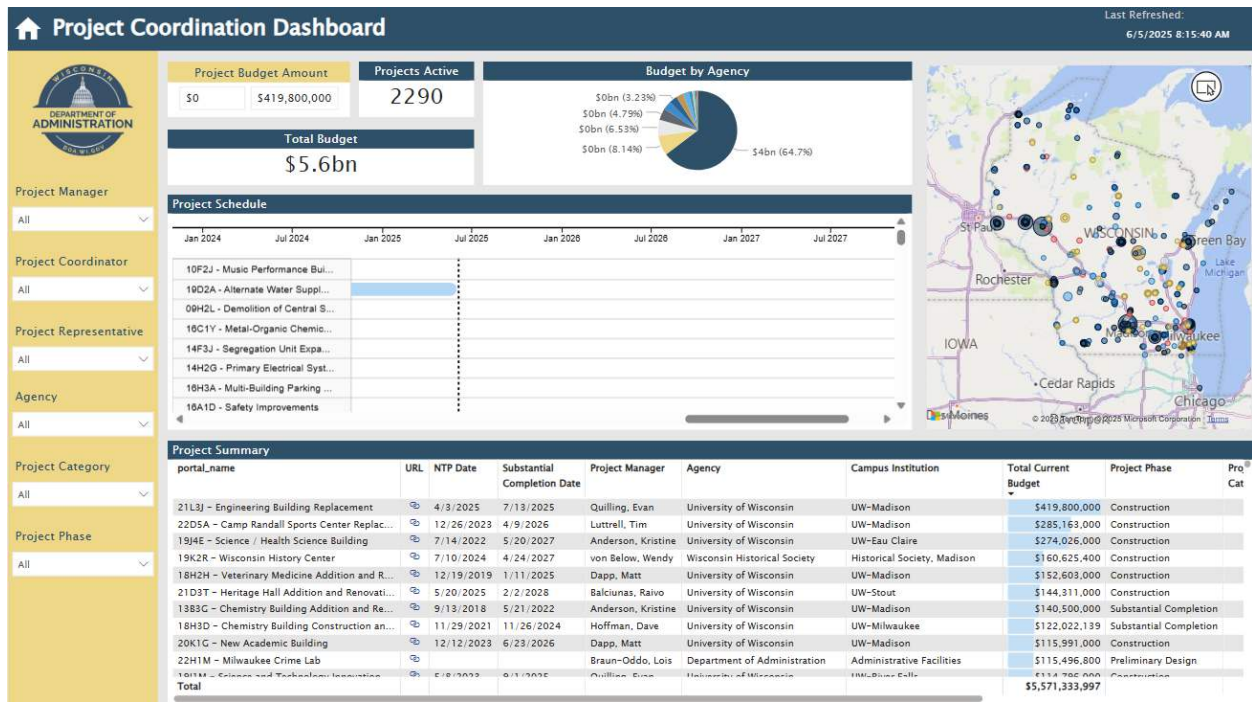
— *Private-Sector Construction Partner*

"Having a single platform for all capital projects—RFIs, drawings, change orders, payment tracking—is a game changer. It's streamlined everything."

— *Agency Project Lead, Department of Corrections*

"Before eBuilder, I was chasing down documents and manually cross-checking numbers. Now I have real-time dashboards that show me exactly where things stand."
 — Project Manager, Division of Facilities Development

The improvement isn't just operational—it's cultural. Agency users now trust the system as a reliable source of truth. Contractors receive timely payments. Stakeholders collaborate in real time instead of sending emails back and forth. Leadership can track project status and financial performance with a click.



A view of the Project Coordination Dashboard

eBuilder has become the operational hub for capital project delivery in Wisconsin. It is actively maintained, continuously enhanced, and already evolving to support future needs:

- **Planned integrations with GIS and facility data systems** will provide spatial insight and lifecycle cost analysis.
- **Custom PowerBI dashboards** are under development to enhance capital budget forecasting and legislative reporting.
- **Workflow refinements** continue through governance and change control boards.

The return on investment extends far beyond reduced errors or faster processing. This system provides the visibility, scalability, and digital infrastructure needed to responsibly manage the largest capital budgets in Wisconsin's history—and prepares the state for what comes next.

Much more than a one-off software deployment, this project represents a complete transformation, replacing a 25-year-old system with a secure, enterprise-grade platform that empowers thousands of users, strengthens fiscal accountability, and enhances the public trust.

It is a model for other states grappling with legacy systems, surging infrastructure investments, and calls for greater transparency. Wisconsin's implementation shows what's possible when government embraces technology—not just to build and improve efficiency, but to lead.