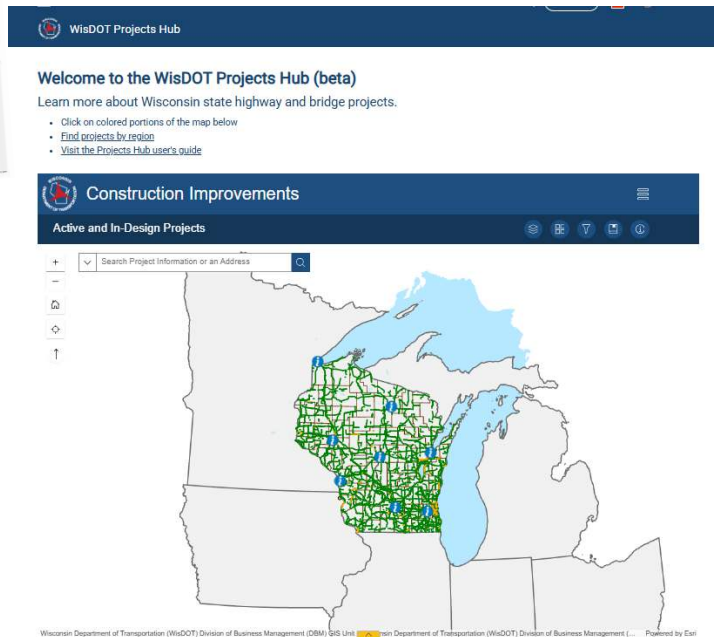




State of Wisconsin, Department of Transportation

Category: Information & Communications Technology

The Blueprint for Tomorrow: The WisDOT Projects Hub Transformation

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Executive Summary

In March 2026, The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) launched an ArcGIS-powered portal – the WisDOT Projects Hub – to deliver a new generation of websites connecting the public with information about Wisconsin state highway and bridge projects.

Projects Hub replaced a dated practice of managing project websites in separate platforms based on where the project was within the overall lifecycle. Study, design, and planning websites were managed in SharePoint for the Wisconsin.gov website. Construction-phase pages were recreated in WordPress to branch from the 511wi.gov traveler information service. While this past practice helped to differentiate what was under construction from what was simply in a development pipeline, it effectively fragmented continuity of information and doubled operational effort to deliver websites publicly.

The Projects Hub delivers a unified, mobile-responsive, and accessibility-conscious experience that meets modern expectations for simple, on-the-go access. By presenting project details through interactive maps and standardized project pages, the Projects Hub makes project status, timelines, and geospatial context easier to find and understand. Color-coding and automated data pulls, keep project lifecycle distinctions clear without prompting the public to navigate separate sites, reducing potential for confusion, and lowering barriers to participation.

The Hub's Feature Manipulation Engine (FME) integration pulls internal datasets into geo-spatial form, enabling richer transparency for the program. Reusable templates ensure consistent presentation across projects, so residents and stakeholders receive predictable, reliable information regardless of project phase. This consistency supports public involvement requirements by making outreach materials clear and more easily discoverable.

Developed in collaboration with WisDOT's GIS Unit and informed by peer best practices, the initiative includes plans for internal training, governance, and ongoing support to sustain the platform. Early outcomes include streamlined migrations from legacy systems and reduced operational overhead.

By centering accessibility, clarity, and data transparency, the WisDOT Projects Hub modernizes public engagement—making it easier for Wisconsin residents to find, understand, and participate in transportation decisions that impact their communities.

The WisDOT Projects Hub brings every improvement project website under one roof with reusable templates and automated data feeds, delivering a true one-size-fits-all framework that adapts seamlessly to phones, tablets, and desktops with little to no extra work for web authors.

Idea

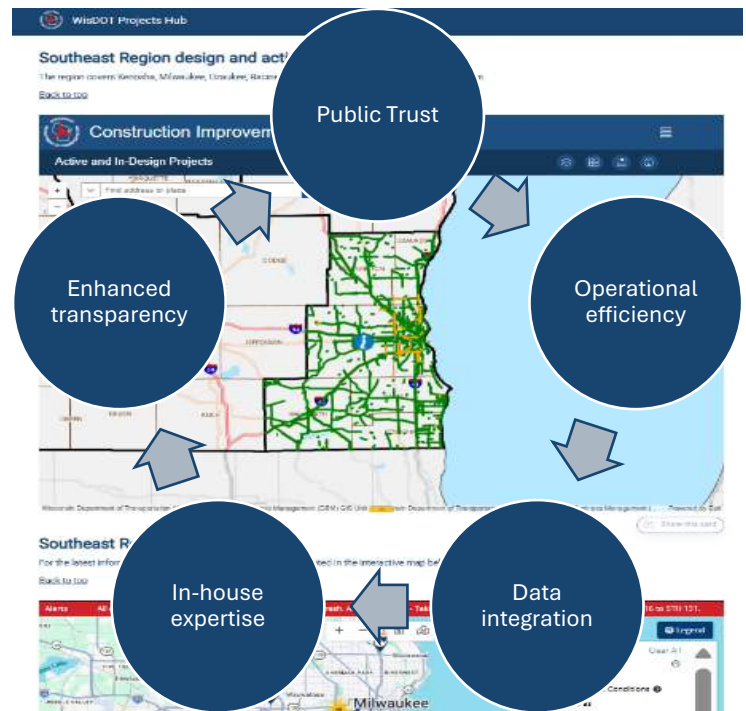
What problem or opportunity does the project address?

The project effectively modernizes the approach to project websites and leverage data in new ways to promote the value of transportation projects to the traveling public. Traditionally, WisDOT highway and bridge project websites have been split between two entirely different platforms. The effort was meant to differentiate points in project lifecycle, but came with downsides - potential for confusion, inconsistency and operational inefficiency.

WisDOT's longstanding use of and expertise with ESRI ArcGIS products opened doors to a new solution that could coordinate all project sites, regardless of lifecycle, using an interface as simple for end-users as it is for web-authors to create hundreds of new project websites annually.

Why does it matter?

A visually consistent, accessible platform has multiple benefits. First, it builds public trust and increases the reach and quality of engagement by presenting information in predictable ways. Second, consolidation improves operational efficiency by eliminating duplicated maintenance and training burdens and by lowering staff effort required to publish and maintain project pages. Third, integrating mapping and project data centralizes authoritative information to support planners, communicators, and the public in making data-driven decisions. Finally, by leveraging in-house ArcGIS expertise and existing enterprise investments, the WisDOT Projects Hub provides a mobile-responsive, accessibility-conscious experience with limited new cost to the department.



Websites serve as baseline communication for hundreds of WisDOT projects annually.

What makes it different?

- **Simplicity and staff usability:** Focused on accessible, reusable templates over complex custom web builds.

- **Technical integration:** A Feature Manipulation Engine (FME) converts internal project and financial tracking into geospatial datasets for automatic map updates and transparency.
- **Consistency:** Standardized project pages, with corresponding headers and informational experience, ensure predictable presentation across the portfolio.

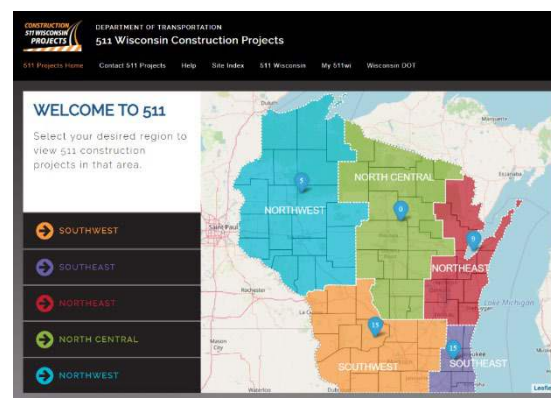
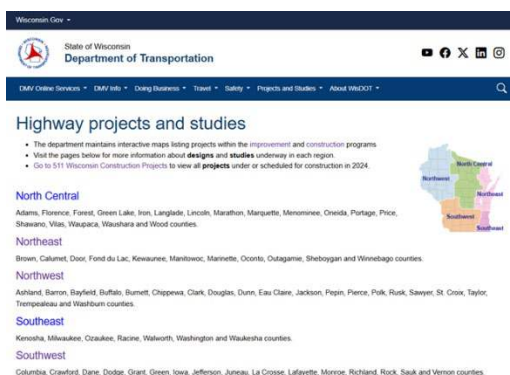
What makes it universal?

Because many transportation agencies already use ESRI ArcGIS products, what WisDOT is doing through the WisDOT Projects Hub is transferable and can be adopted by other departments of transportation seeking to centralize virtual public involvement and project communications. At the enterprise level, the Hub leverages GIS Unit governance and existing GIS investments so the platform can scale across state programs and align with broader technology strategies. Additionally, the ease of use via standardized templates creates virtually no barriers to entry for new web authors in the system. With little training, new staff – ranging from seasoned veterans to interns – have quickly adapted.

Implementation

What was the roadmap?

The project set several goals: to consolidate SharePoint (below, left) and WordPress (below, right) project content into ArcGIS Hub (right), to deliver a unified, mobile-responsive public interface by the March 2026 soft launch, and to migrate legacy content while creating scalable support for virtual public involvement. Key milestones included initiating a formal IT resource project to align communications and technical teams, collaborating with the GIS Unit to design the Hub and FME data flows, conducting a soft launch in March 2026 to collect feedback and refine processes, and scheduling retirements of legacy platforms with SharePoint targeted for fall 2026 and WordPress expected later in 2026.



Who was involved?

The initiative was a joint effort among communications staff responsible for public outreach and IT staff who manage the department's ArcGIS platform. A central office communications unit manages the project and offers broad division-wide support, while GIS Unit staff provided technical collaboration and governance guidance.

- **Development:** Visioning with real user input, creating proof of concept, gaining managerial consensus, shopping to stakeholders and eventual user groups.
- **Accessibility:** Working with statewide advocacy groups to ensure strong end-user experience for screen readers and other accessibility tools.
- **Education:** Developing expertise in the system, drafting main pages and project page templates, testing system tools and studying best practices.
- **Outreach and awareness:** Demoing for design and construction staff statewide to ensure awareness of the new sites and incorporate feedback.
- **Training and education:** Working with Region Communications Managers to ensure system operability and smooth transition from old platforms.

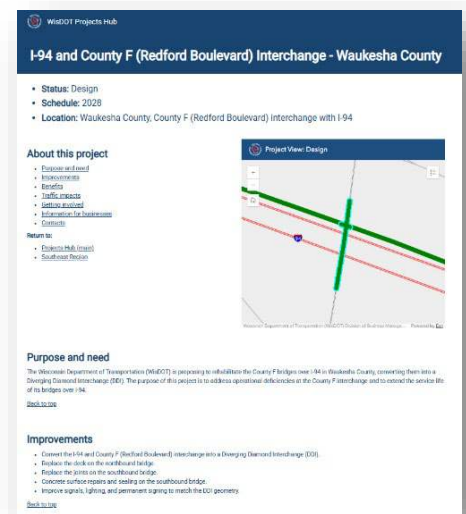
How did you do it?

Approach

- Began with an IT resource project to align vision and technical capacity.
- Leveraged in-house ArcGIS expertise to minimize additional costs.
- Built reusable templates and FME integrations to automate data feeds.
- Prioritized mobile responsiveness, accessibility, and consistent presentation.
- Obtained consensus across management layers and required approvals primarily within standard operational processes.
- Inventoried more than 600 websites on SharePoint and WordPress platforms for migration.
- Developed and executed training of 12 web-authors.

Technical architecture:

- The WisDOT Projects Hub, powered by ArcGIS Hub, is the public-facing platform.
- FME integrations to convert internal project/financial datasets into geospatial layers.
- Standardized project page templates for outreach (example, right).
- Governance, training, and support provided via WisDOT's GIS Unit and central division communications team.



Impact

What did the project make better?

The Projects Hub enhanced transparency by exposing up-to-date project data and geospatial context through FME-powered maps. Consistent templates and responsive design improved discoverability and accessibility compliance, which helps the public more easily engage with project information. Operationally, consolidation reduced duplicated platform maintenance and decreased staff time needed to create and update project pages. By centralizing these functions in a single enterprise Hub, WisDOT established a scalable foundation for broader virtual public involvement and for institutionalizing data-centric storytelling across the department.

- **Transparency:** FME-powered maps present continually refreshed project data and geospatial context to the public.
- **Consistency and accessibility:** Standard templates and responsive design improve discoverability, accessibility compliance, and the public's ability to engage.
- **Operational efficiency:** Consolidation reduces duplicated platform maintenance and decreases staff time required to create and update project pages.
- **Scalability:** A single enterprise Hub supports broader virtual public involvement and institutionalizes data-centric storytelling.

How do you know?

Early indicators from the soft launch demonstrate upticks in web traffic, with marketing limited to standard outreach on individual projects. Staff report that migrations from legacy platforms have been streamlined, with overhead on project pages trending down through the ease of use of the new system. These qualitative and quantitative signals support the conclusion that the WisDOT Projects Hub has delivered early benefits in transparency, consistency, and efficiency.



What now?

Having completed a soft launch and gathered initial feedback, the next steps include exiting soft launch status and continuing to refine based on user and staff input, completing migration from SharePoint (target: fall 2026) and from WordPress (later in 2026), expanding FME pipelines to incorporate additional internal datasets, and extending integrations to other tools such as ArcGIS Story Maps to enable richer storytelling. The department will also focus on improving event management features, strengthening governance, and expanding staff training to sustain the platform and scale virtual public involvement across WisDOT.

Continuous improvement

As the WisDOT Projects Hub transitions from a soft launch into mainstay use, the project team continues to explore what's possible. A large benefit of leveraging the ArcGIS system is the potential to connect with other components for event management, survey and customizable information mapping tools. Driving continuous improvement are the fundamental goals from the outset of the project – better transparency and operational efficiency.

Tracking

- **Engagement:** Page views, session duration, comments/submissions, and survey response rates compared to legacy platforms.
- **Staff efficiency:** Average time-to-publish or update a project page before vs. after Hub adoption.
- **Compliance:** Continuing to lead the way in accessibility and mobile responsiveness.

