

Please add to your organization letterhead

[Date]

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) application to the FY 25-26 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) program for the I-94 East-West Corridor Modernization Project (Project) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. A grant award would be used toward reconstruction of Interstate 94 (I-94) between 70th Street and 16th Street to address its deteriorated condition, obsolete design, and high crash rates. Project area infrastructure has already outlived its design life and is quickly approaching the need for replacement. The preferred alternative will see the modernization of the project corridor with the rebuilding of the I-94 mainline, bridges, interchanges, and impacted local roads.

The I-94 mainline through the project area is located entirely within Census tracts identified as Areas of Persistent Poverty. Six of the eight tracts are also recognized as Historically Disadvantaged Communities. Modernization of the corridor will better connect these communities to their daily needs, jobs, and other destinations. The I-94 corridor through the project area is also Wisconsin's busiest roadway, seeing average annual daily traffic (AADT) of 169,000 vehicles daily (2022). The project corridor is at the heart of the southeast Wisconsin region, with 27% of jobs, 26% of the population, and 35% of businesses in the seven-county area located within a five-mile radius of the Project.

The Project will address substandard and hazardous design elements dating back to the freeway's original construction in the 1960s. These include left lane on- and off-ramps and substandard horizontal and vertical curves, sight distances, and merging lane lengths. When combined, all the functional deficiencies create substandard conditions throughout the I-94 East-West Corridor, resulting in a substantially higher than average crash rate in many locations. From 2015 to 2019, there were 2,300 crashes on I-94 and ramps in the study area, or roughly 1.3 crashes per day. Over 20 percent of the crashes resulted in injuries and four crashes were fatal.

WisDOT identified a design alternative for the corridor that avoids and minimizes impacts while addressing pressing transportation challenges. The Project will improve mobility and traffic operations through the corridor by reconstructing the mainline with eight 12-foot travel lanes to match the recently modernized Marquette and Zoo interchanges completed in 2008 and 2023, respectively. The Project's modern design and elimination of pinch points where eight and six lane segments meet will address the excessive crash rate on the mainline and service ramps. Beyond the primary needs for the project stormwater runoff will be managed through the addition of new detention ponds, noise barrier walls will be implemented where previously absent, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements will be applied to intersecting roadways and local trails. WisDOT has also committed to a robust transit mitigation plan with permanent transit facility measures that could serve as long-term transit system upgrades. As the Project progresses, commitments for disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) involvement in construction will be established to ensure this regionally significant project has tangible benefit to women- and minority-owned businesses.

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In closing, on behalf of [Organization], I ask that you give every consideration to WisDOT's application for the I-94 East-West Corridor Modernization Project. The Project will [statement of organization-specific benefits/perspective/anecdotes].

Thank you for your consideration,

[Name]

[Title]