

I-94 East-West Corridor Modernization Project

70th Street to 16th Street, Milwaukee County



APPROVED ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) completed a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the I-94 East-West corridor from 70th Street to 16th Street. The Federal Highway Administration and WisDOT released the approved Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) on March 8, 2024. This is the final environmental approval needed before proceeding to final design and construction.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

8-lane modernization

- Lowest predicted crash rate of alternatives analyzed in the SEIS.
- Reduces the crash rate while serving 150 million more vehicle miles over 10 year as compared to 6-lane alternative (and reduces traffic on adjacent local streets).
- Results in substantial improvements to traffic operations resulting in less congestion and improved safety (congestion is a contributor to crashes).

Reduced impact alternative - compared to 2016 FEIS

- Reduced displacements from 20 (2016) to 8 (2022).
- Reduced new right of way needed from 73 acres to 49 acres.
- Breakdown of the preferred alternative right of way:
 - Existing highway right of way: 75%.
 - Public utilities and stadium district: 20%.
 - Private land needed: 5%.

LOCAL AND INTERSTATE TRAFFIC

Traffic direction is split almost equally with 49% eastbound and 51% westbound in the morning with similar percentages in the afternoon.

During the midday, most travel is between businesses, which includes the highest amount of trucks as a percentage of total volume. Congestion is not just a future problem based on traffic growth: it is a problem today, based on today's traffic volumes, which is causing user delays and crashes.

EQUITY

It is not equitable for WisDOT to accept a more congested and less safe freeway on I-94 in Milwaukee while providing a more modern and safer I-94 freeway in surrounding communities.

LOOK AHEAD

Pending funding availability, utility and Interstate highway construction is currently scheduled to start in 2025 and continue for about seven years. You can help keep the project on track by providing a letter of support for inclusion in the MPDG application for the project.

REQUEST FOR SUPPORT

Your support is requested for WisDOT's application to USDOT's Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) program. Reviewers take letters of support into consideration when determining which projects to provide grant funding. If you would be willing to provide a letter of support, please use the template provided and add your own perspective on how/why this project is important to you.

Please use your organization's letterhead and return your letter of support to WisDOT by **Wednesday, May 1st, 2024**.

MPDG PROGRAM

The MPDG program consists of three subprograms, of which the I-94 Project is eligible for two - Mega and INFRA:

Mega

Awards competitive grants to multimodal freight and highway projects of national or regional significance to improve the safety, accessibility, efficiency, and reliability of the movement of freight and people in and across rural and urban areas.

INFRA

Invests in large, complex projects that are difficult to fund by other means and are likely to generate national or regional economic, mobility, or safety benefits.

USDOT has made available \$5.1 billion for the current round of funding (fiscal years 2025 and 2026). With the funding authorized under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) set to expire in 2026, this may be the last chance to secure MPDG funding.



BENEFITS

Minimal footprint

- The reconstructed I-94 East-West corridor will be built largely within the existing right of way or on publicly owned land.

Safety

- The average crash rate on the corridor varies between two to three times higher than the statewide urban freeway average and, at some points, more than four times higher.
- Crashes on other recently reconstructed/modernized southeast Wisconsin Interstate segments have been reduced by up to 45%. Similar results are expected in this corridor.

Community

- The 2016 FEIS and 2024 Supplemental FEIS concluded the project would not result in any impacts that would be considered disproportionately high and adverse to minority or low income communities under Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice.
- The project will result in 6,000-10,000 jobs and create better connections to major employment centers including the Menomonee River Valley, downtown Milwaukee, and the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center.

Water runoff

- WisDOT will work with communities and the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) during the Project's final design phase to formulate stormwater management strategies, both from a water quality and water quantity standpoint.
- Reconstruction provides an opportunity for WisDOT, local stakeholders, and MMSD to partner in green infrastructure solutions to manage stormwater onsite.

Travel impacts

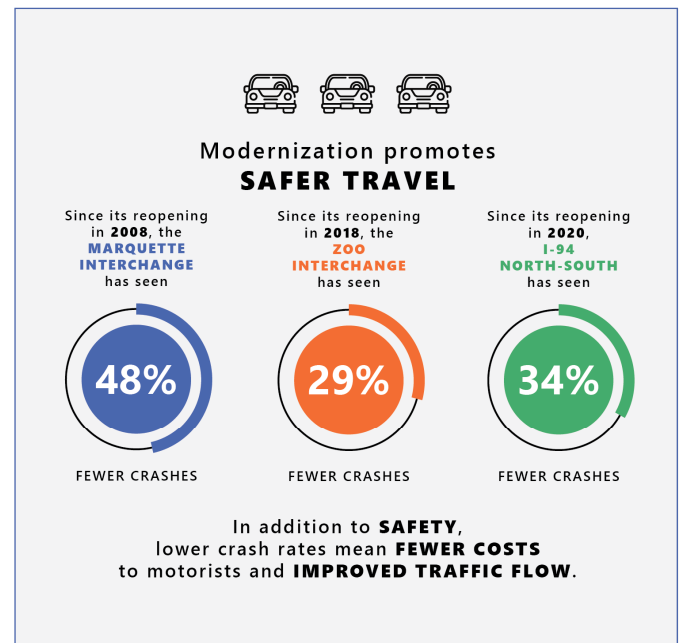
- The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) forecasts include an estimation of new and diverted trips. New trips are generally fewer in a mature urban corridor compared to a roadway in a less developed location.
- The preferred alternative is complimentary to the city of Milwaukee's Complete Streets program, making bike and pedestrian improvements on local roads more successful by removing through traffic from local roads.

Cost avoidance

- Avoids the need for temporary solutions – such as another resurfacing in the near future (estimated at \$40+ million) requiring two more years of lane closures, user delays, and more crashes – that will add to the overall cost while doing nothing to solve the underlying safety and traffic problems.



Stadium Interchange—Diverging Diamond



HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE

The I-94 East-West corridor has historically been a power and transportation corridor with the Menomonee River, railroad, and power transmission lines separating the area. The Interstate was largely built in the abandoned right of way. In the 1960s, it was a natural route chosen by city of Milwaukee planners and built by the Milwaukee County Expressway Commission with minimal impacts to property and adjacent arterials.

