

I-94 East-West **ECON**Connect



hispanic collaborative



MOLSON COORS beverage company



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Vital I-94 East-West Project Clears FHWA Review

Coalition Thanks WisDOT and FHWA for Extensive Analysis of Corridor

Milwaukee – Today, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) announced the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) signed off on the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the I-94 East-West project. The document includes the department’s preferred alternative of a modernized eight-lane corridor with a diverging diamond interchange to replace the current Stadium Interchange.

Data shows traffic on the corridor has returned to just shy of 2019 levels. This means the corridor carries approximately 160,000 to 180,000 vehicles daily, markedly more than intended for this Interstate section. According to the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC), the corridor will remain significantly congested even with an extreme decrease-in-vehicle-reliance model (increased transit capacity, no fares, more work-from-home, higher vehicle occupancy) without expansion.

“We thank WisDOT and FHWA for all the work they have done on this project,” Corey Zetts, executive director of the Menomonee Valley Partners, said. “WisDOT analyzed the options using the latest data, continuously sought input from stakeholders, and has incorporated stakeholder feedback for improved bike and pedestrian facilities planned along the various local roadways as part of the project. This diligence will pay dividends for decades with a reduction in congestion-related traffic accidents and a corridor ready to keep up with the region’s bright future.”

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A 2021 poll found that area residents across broad demographic, geographic, and political subsets overwhelmingly support the modernization of the 60-year-old I-94 East-West Corridor with an added lane in each direction to reduce congestion and improve traffic flow and safety. This result was before new WisDOT estimates showed the cost of eight lanes modernized to current safety and design standards only varies from a six-lane option by three to six percent.

“If you drive this corridor, you know it is past time to get this project done, and done right,” said Nancy Hernandez, president of the Hispanic Collaborative. “This is the next step in the process. We are committed to helping WisDOT and FHWA get this much-needed project over the finish line.”

The 3.5-mile I-94 East-West Corridor, which links the updated Marquette and Zoo interchanges, was originally built in the early 1960s. The corridor’s outdated design, age, and ongoing deterioration result in congestion, safety, and economic development challenges. Several segments within the corridor have an average crash rate two to three times higher than the statewide average.

“This is a once-in-generation opportunity to rebuild Milwaukee’s aging infrastructure while building its workforce,” said Terry McGowan, president and business manager of the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 139. “This project provides a path for new apprentices to learn a craft that can lead to a rewarding career working in the building and construction trades. It also presents the unique opportunity for workers to complete their paid apprenticeships on one project site without leaving Milwaukee.”

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About I-94 East-West Econ Connect

I-94 East-West Econ Connect is a coalition of community development organizations, businesses, institutions, and other entities unified around the need to improve the safety and capacity of the I-94 East-West Corridor to maximize its economic and societal benefits for the region and the state.