



Handout packet

Public involvement meeting for

I-94 East-West Freeway Corridor Study

70th Street to 16th Street

Milwaukee County

Project I.D.: 1060-27-03

Tommy Thompson Youth Center (640 S. 84th St.)

December 8, 2021, 4 to 7 p.m.

Wisconsin DNR (1027 W. St. Paul Ave.)

December 9, 2021, 4 to 7 p.m.



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Purpose of Meeting	3
Project Information	3
Project Location.....	3
How to Share Comments.....	4
Public Meeting Exhibits	4
Local History of I-94 Corridor.....	5
Traffic and Safety Numbers Tell Many Stories.....	6
Traffic Forecast Variability Analysis.....	8
Project Cost.....	9
Historic Properties	9
Environmental Justice.....	10
Indirect and Cumulative effects.....	10
Timelines	11
WisDOT Contacts	12

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

Welcome! And thank you for attending the meeting.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is hosting two open-house style public involvement meetings. You are invited to view project information, talk with project staff, and submit input on alternative designs for the corridor. The purpose of the meeting is to:

- Share information on the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement:
 - Project purpose and need
 - Design alternatives - 6-lane (with full and half Hawley Interchange) and 8-lane
 - Including cost and impacts
 - Traffic information - current and forecast volume, safety, and operations
 - Connectivity opportunities for bike and pedestrian neighborhood connections
- Answer questions and listen to concerns on work completed so far,
- Collect comments.

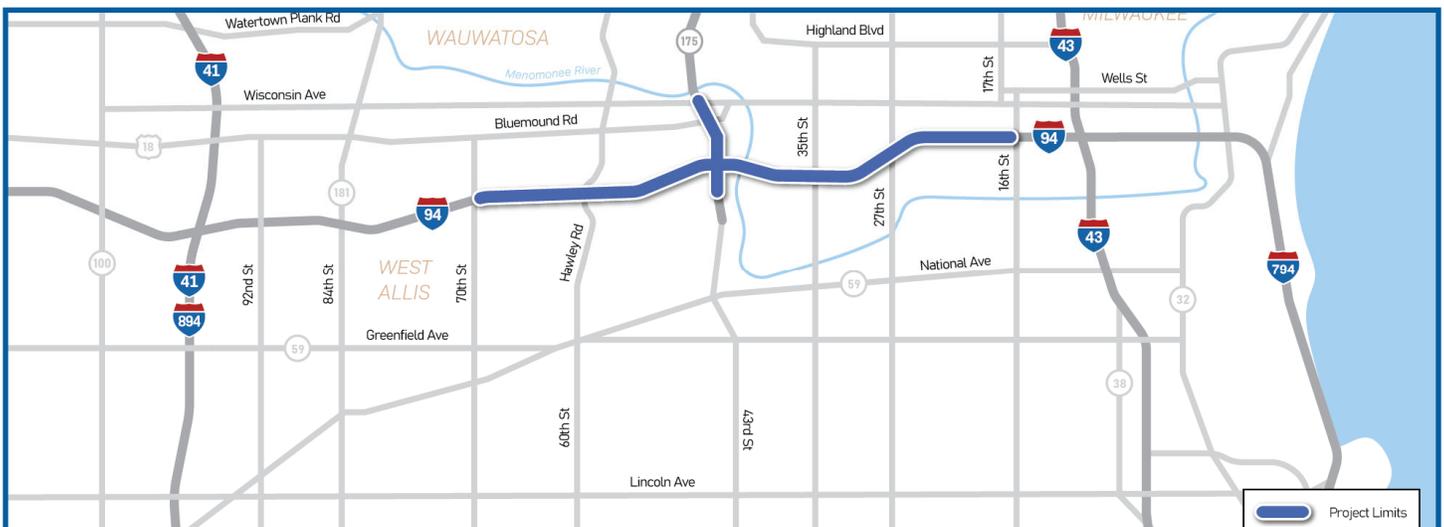
PROJECT INFORMATION

WisDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are continuing an environmental and engineering analysis of the I-94 East-West Corridor. The project covers approximately 3.5 miles of I-94 between 70th Street and 16th Street in Milwaukee County. The project includes one system interchange (WIS 175/Brewers Boulevard) and five service interchanges (70th Street/68th Street, Hawley Road, Mitchell Boulevard, 35th Street, and 25th/26th/28th Street.)

This segment of I-94 opened to traffic in 1961-1962. I-94 is a major east-west freeway link across the northern U.S. and is a critical link in Milwaukee County's freeway system, connecting the Marquette and Zoo interchanges. In addition to serving long-distance travelers and regional and national freight movement, the study area freeway system is an important commuter route for many employees who commute to work in the Milwaukee region.

The purpose of the I-94 East-West Corridor study is to address the deteriorated condition of I-94, obsolete roadway and bridge design, existing and future traffic demand, and high crash rates.

PROJECT LOCATION



HOW TO SHARE COMMENTS

- Talk with project staff at the meeting.
- Complete a meeting comment form.
- Visit the project website at **wisconsin.gov/94eastwest**.
- Other comments can be submitted to Project Manager Joshua LeVeque.
 - E-mail: Joshua.LeVeque@dot.wi.gov
 - Phone: (414) 750-1468
 - Mail: WisDOT SE Region, 141 NW Barstow Street, PO Box 798, Waukesha, WI 53187-0798.
- Comments are always welcome. To be part of the meeting record, comments should be submitted by December 31, 2021.

PUBLIC MEETING EXHIBITS

Exhibits at the meeting show the reasons the project is needed, the alternatives under consideration, and the costs and impacts of the alternatives.

Project location map	Alternatives under consideration (6-lane, 8-lane)
Project schedule	Cost and right-of-way impacts
Regional significance of corridor	Comparison of 6-lane and 8-lane
Public input	Stadium Interchange Rendering, driving directions
SEWRPC Vision 2050	Off-freeway modifications
Bridge and pavement terminology	Utility considerations
Level of Service background	Nearby transportation projects
Existing design deficiencies	Connectivity opportunity - trails
Design speed of curves	Connectivity opportunity - neighborhoods/business
Design stopping sight distance	Previous alternatives considered
Existing and forecast traffic operations	Area of potential effect
Existing and forecast safety	Section 106 historic and cultural resources
Existing and forecast traffic volume	Boundaries of Section 4(f) properties
SEWRPC Traffic Forecast Variability Analysis	Noise barrier - how they work; effectiveness
Trip patterns (east/west)	Trip origins and destinations

LOCAL HISTORY OF I-94 CORRIDOR

This corridor hasn't always been automobile-based: the river corridor paved the way for early settlement and development, heavy rail brought jobs, and electric rail moved people to jobs before there was a highway. The post-World War II economic boom ushered in the automobile age.

What problems were roads built to solve? According to local historians, problems included local road safety concerns, congestion, exorbitant travel times, and financial losses to businesses struggling to move goods. Trains were on fixed routes, and people increasingly wanted to drive their own vehicles.

The 1950s solution: Build a freeway system. In 1952, the City of Milwaukee begins building a 20-mile expressway.

Local and regional planning evolution: The City of Milwaukee had assumed responsibility for locating and constructing the freeway system. As the plans evolved, the City realized it would have a difficult time planning and constructing freeways beyond its borders. In 1953-1954, the City of Milwaukee turned over planning and construction of the local freeways to the newly created Milwaukee County Expressway Commission.

National planning: In 1956, the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act was enacted under President Eisenhower to create a quality network of highways throughout the nation.

Throughout the early 1960s, parts of current I-94 gradually opened throughout the southeastern Wisconsin region. I-94 from 70th to 16th Street was built primarily on the route of an electric train corridor.

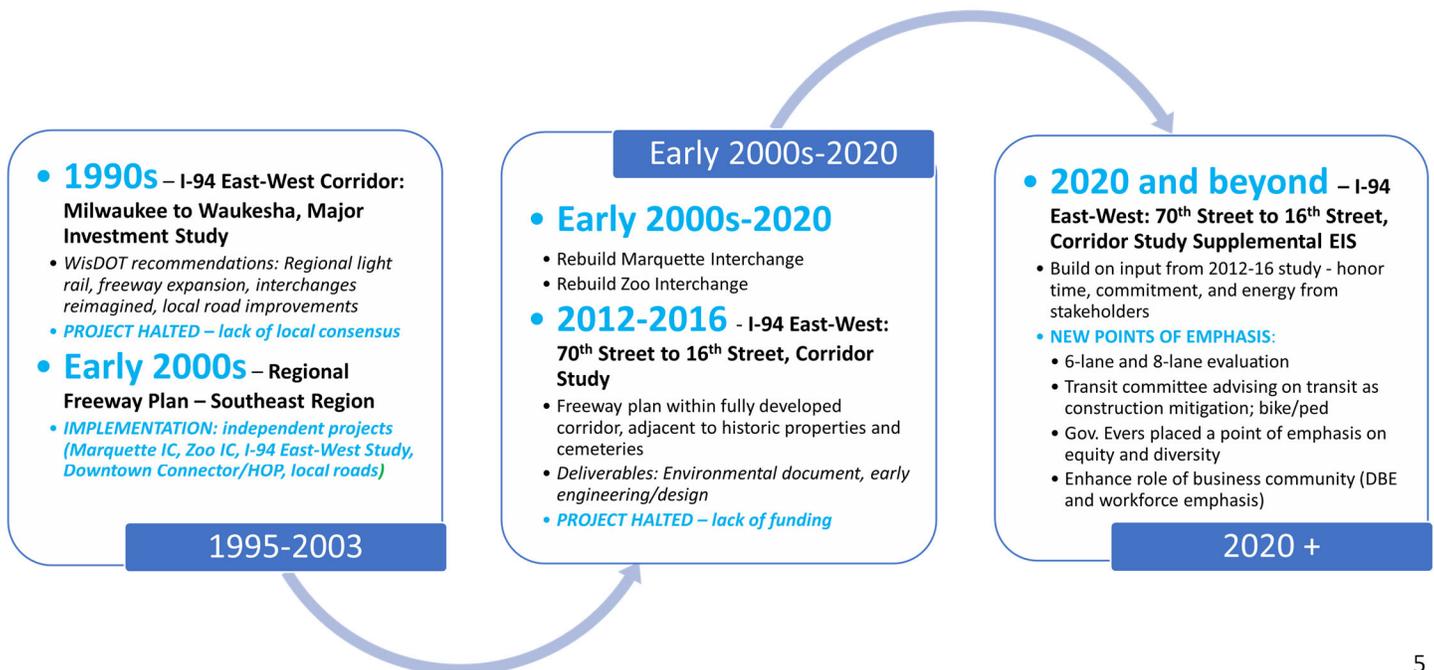
Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) was formed in 1960, and a freeway plan was completed in 1965 outlining 112 miles of freeway throughout the county. The plan was approved in 1966.

In the I-94 East-West Corridor, the eastern half of the corridor was built on the edge of a neighborhood overlooking Menomonee Valley. The western half of the project was built primarily in the utility and rail corridor.

About three decades after the I-94 freeway opened, WisDOT, in collaboration with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), completed a **Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS)/Major Investment Study (MIS) for the original I-94 East West Corridor** study in October 1996. The Draft EIS/MIS project termini were Interstate 794 (I-794) and the I-94/Highway 16 (WIS 16) Interchange in Waukesha County. WisDOT developed a draft locally preferred alternative (LPA) that included all the transportation components of the Draft EIS/MIS, as follows:

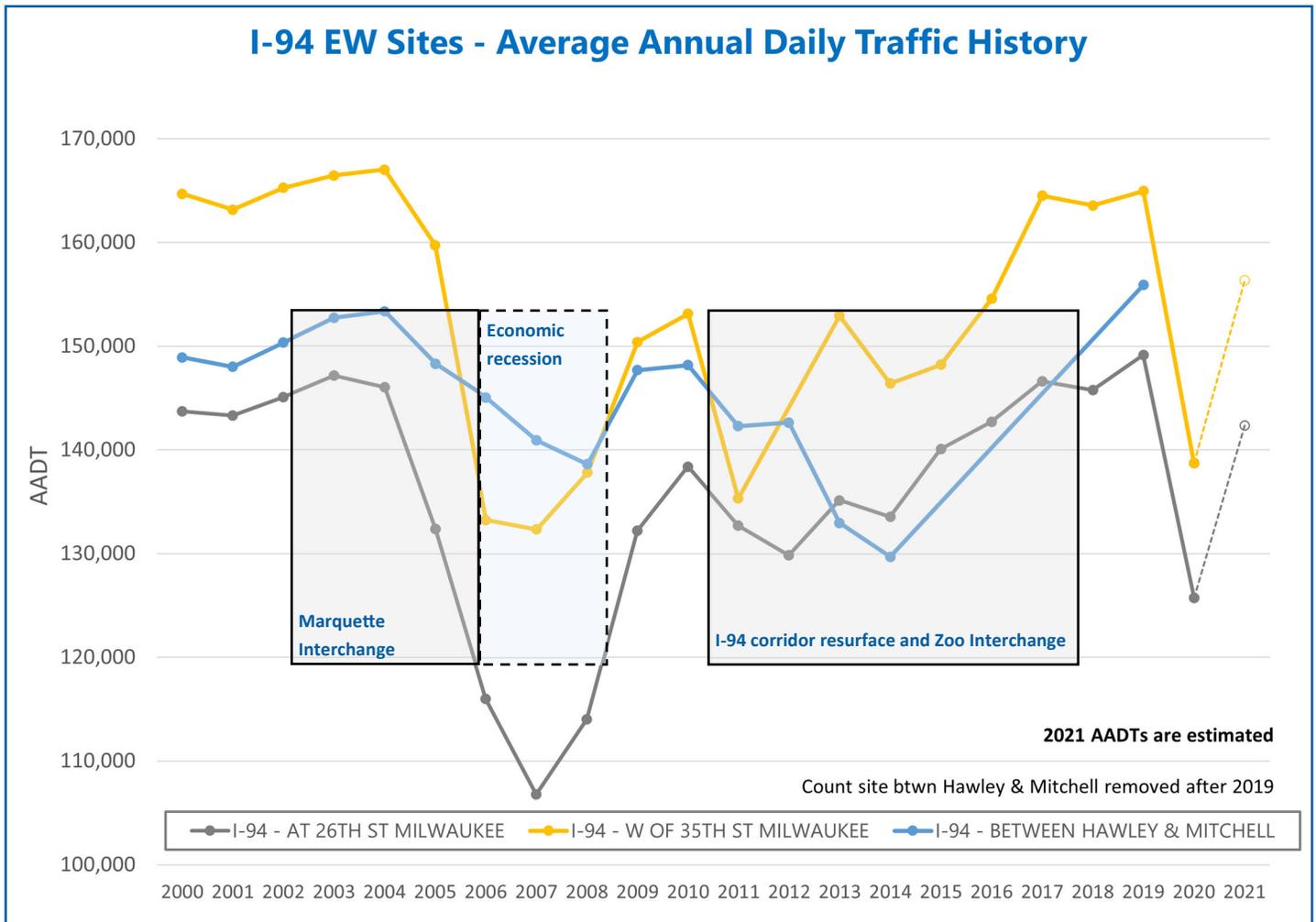
- Reconstructing the Marquette Interchange with design and safety improvements
- Reconstructing I-94 to modern design standards between downtown Milwaukee and Waukesha
- Adding special purpose lanes for carpools and buses on I-94
- Expanding bus transit service in the metro Milwaukee area
- Establishing light rail transit in Milwaukee County

The comprehensive draft EIS/MIS lacked local consensus. As a result, the reconstruction of the system is being completed incrementally.



TRAFFIC AND SAFETY NUMBERS TELL MANY STORIES

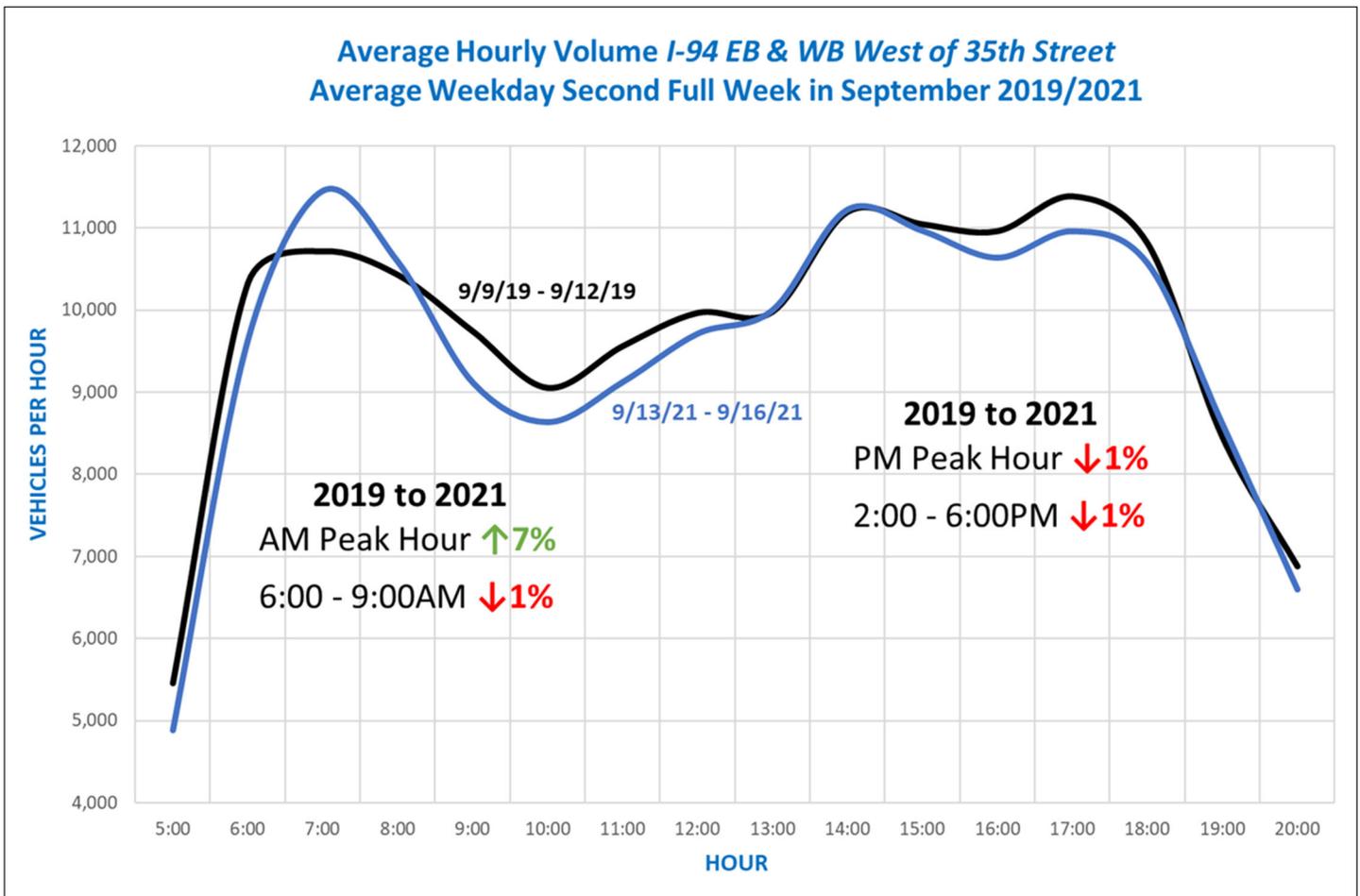
- [Safety is a foundational component of WisDOT's mission.](#) When recent mega projects in southeast Wisconsin were complete (the Marquette Interchange, Zoo Interchange, I-94 North-South), safety improved. Crash rates went down as the freeways were modernized to current design standards. When compared to pre-construction conditions, crash rates in the Zoo Interchange and Marquette interchange decreased by 34% and 45%, respectively since reconstruction.
- [Over the past 20 years, use of the freeway has been variable year over year.](#) What situations impact the use of I-94? There are many contributing factors to the variability. Since 2000, both ends of the corridor, the Marquette and Zoo Interchanges, were reconstructed. In 2011-2012 this corridor was resurfaced. Additionally, the economic impacts of the 2008 recession and COVID-19 pandemic briefly reduced volumes. Overall, there has been a general increasing trend in traffic volumes over the long term.



- With so many variables, [how do we forecast future traffic numbers?](#)
 - Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) develops forecasts primarily based on future land use and population forecasts.
 - WisDOT and the Federal Highway Administration verify the results
 - Current traffic data is analyzed
 - Traffic models are run to determine future conditions as follows:
 - Safety and volumes on the freeway
 - Level of service (LOS), which is the operating conditions of a roadway, including speed, travel time, and congestion
 - Impacts to local roads (safety and congestion)
 - Analysis of freeway users/demographics

TRAFFIC AND SAFETY STORIES (continued)

- The traffic on I-94 is indicative of a [strong regional economy](#) with job centers and residential areas distributed across the region. Comparing eastbound (EB) and westbound (WB) traffic in the morning and afternoon, there is an even split of traffic with people living and working throughout the metropolitan Milwaukee area. In October 2021, morning traffic was 51% WB and 49% EB. In the afternoon, the split was 50.2% WB & 49.8% EB.
- There is concern that as soon as a freeway is widened, the additional lanes will immediately fill up and congestion will be no better than before. WisDOT understands the concern, so here is WisDOT's explanation about two contributing factors: [latent demand and induced demand](#).
 - First of all, yes, if an 8-lane freeway is built, forecasts indicate there will be more traffic using I-94. However, we do not expect significant congestion.
 - [Latent demand](#) is one contributing factor. Latent demand for I-94 is traffic demand that exists within the region regardless of the capacity of I-94. These are trips that would typically use the freeway; however, the freeway is not reliable, so the drivers choose adjacent roadways. If the travel time on I-94 improves, the traffic will shift from the adjacent roadways to I-94. Parallel routes, such as Wisconsin Avenue, Bluemound Road, Greenfield Avenue, and National Avenue are expected to have less through traffic if the 8-lane alternative is selected. Moving the through traffic off local roads and onto the interstate does improve safety on the local roadways.
 - [Induced demand](#) is another contributing factor. Induced demand is a trip that wants to exist, but travel time prevents it from making its desired trip. For example, a resident in the Bay View neighborhood may be reluctant to accept a new job in Wauwatosa if the traffic is too congested without the additional capacity. If the freeway is more reliable and safer to drive on, that same resident may make that trip to Wauwatosa and be classified as "induced" or "new" traffic.
- Another concern is [pandemic-related impacts](#) to traffic. More people are working from home and shopping online. While the pandemic has impacted so much of our daily life, data indicate that traffic has returned to pre-pandemic levels. The chart below illustrates 2019 and 2021 traffic volume numbers.



TRAFFIC AND SAFETY STORIES *(continued)*

TRAFFIC FORECAST VARIABILITY ANALYSIS

- In response to requests from the public to consider possible impacts of the pandemic and increased transit funding, WisDOT engaged the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) to complete modeling and analysis with these factors in mind.
- SEWRPC is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the seven-county southeast Wisconsin region. SEWRPC maintains a regional travel demand model that contains information from the most recent comprehensive plan, including land use, population, and employment data. More information on the 2050 Comprehensive Plan can be found on SEWRPC's website: www.vision2050sewis.org. Specific information regarding the travel demand model can be found in Technical Report No. 51.
- A technical analysis was completed to identify if there is a possibility that traffic volumes could be reduced to a level that keeps the corridor operating safely and efficiently. The SEWRPC analysis considered various possible future variables, including the following:
 - Transit capacity
 - Transit fares
 - Vehicle occupancy changes
 - Travel costs
 - Trip length
 - Increased work from home
 - Online shopping
 - Operational capacity of roadways due to autonomous vehicles
- The following variables were applied to a traffic forecast of the project corridor at different levels and in different combinations: free public transit, increased vehicle occupancy, increased travel cost, increased work from home, and increased online shopping. Combining the variables above, four scenarios were created:
 1. *Increase* in passenger vehicles reliance - most likely scenarios
 2. *Increase* in passenger vehicles reliance - extreme possibility scenarios
 3. *Decrease* in passenger vehicles reliance - most likely scenarios
 4. *Decrease* in passenger vehicles reliance - extreme possibility scenarios
- However, even the most ideal scenario for reducing single-occupant vehicles (increase transit capacity, no fares for transit riders, increase work from home, increase vehicle occupancy with more ride sharing) resulted in severe or extreme congestion under the no-build condition for I-94.

Conclusion, from SEWRPC report: "Despite developing alternatives that would optimistically reduce demand on the freeway, all model runs resulted in severe or extreme congestion under the no-build condition for I-94."

OTHER TRAFFIC QUESTIONS

- [Are both the 6-lane and 8-lane alternatives too big?](#) Does the design match the traffic demand? The WisDOT policy for a multilane urban facility like I-94 is to design to the 200th highest hourly volume within a calendar year. Additionally, the policy states that this design volume is to consider the economic impacts of providing capacity to accommodate that level of volume. Considering the placement of the corridor within the urban area and multiple major event traffic generators like American Family Field and Potawatomi Hotel and Casino, Casino, in context of the above policy, the I-94 Corridor team is using the volumes representing the most common peak periods as the design volumes.
- Can WisDOT use the money to [fund transit instead](#)? Or fix local roads? Although WisDOT provides a large share of local transit operating funding, it does not own or manage any transit systems, nor (by statute) can it fund transit system capital improvements unless directed by the legislature and governor. During the years of I-94 East-West construction, WisDOT may be able to fund transit or local road improvements to mitigate the impacts of construction on the traveling public.



PROJECT COSTS

[The comparison cost to build the project are estimates.](#) The figures will be refined as the project moves through design. Cost estimates are calculated by quantifying the main project components with unit costs from other recent freeway projects. A contingency is built in for items unknown until design is refined. Costs are then calculated in current year (2021) dollars.

COMPARISON COST ESTIMATE (NOVEMBER 2021)

- 6-Lane Half Hawley Program Cost = \$1.238 billion
- 6-Lane Full Hawley Program Cost = \$1.207 billion (assumes no Washington Street extension)
- 8-Lane Program Cost = \$1.281 billion

Per federal requirements, FHWA and WisDOT will conduct a Cost and Schedule Risk Assessment to assess the confidence in the current estimate, develop a year of expenditure cost estimate, and inform the project team on risk management strategies.

HISTORIC PROPERTIES

The I-94 East-West project will not relocate graves.

I-94 is next to several significant historic buildings and properties. Most notable is the Soldiers' Home National Historic Landmark. The site's formal name is the Northwest Branch, National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, and it covers most of the Department of Veterans Affairs campus just west of American Family Field, including Wood National Cemetery, which is bisected by I-94. (Note: National Historic Landmarks are nationally significant historic places designated as such by the Secretary of the Interior because they possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the U.S.)

The site was established by Congress in 1865 as part of a system of National Soldiers' Homes to provide care for soldiers who had been disabled through loss of limb, wounds, disease, or injury during service. The Milwaukee Soldiers' Home campus was one of the first three nationally designated campuses. It is the only one of the three original sites with its Soldiers' Home intact, and it is also the only one with the majority of its surrounding recuperative village remaining.

The Soldiers' Home National Historic Landmark houses 25 post-Civil War and turn-of-the-20th-century buildings. The historically significant and architecturally dominant building is the Soldiers' Home (Building 2 or "Old Main"). Designed by Milwaukee architect Edward Townsend Mix, it was a domiciliary with long rooms, common foyers, and sitting rooms. The building was used for veteran housing until the 1970s, but the basic interior design remains as it was in 1869.



Wood National Cemetery

HISTORIC PROPERTY PROTECTION

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) are two separate laws that require federal agencies to "stop, look, and listen" before making decisions that impact historic properties and the human environment.

NHPA was signed into law in 1966, and Section 106 of the NHPA requires federal agencies to take into account the effect of undertakings they carry out, license, approve, or fund on historic properties and provide the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) a reasonable opportunity to comment before making decisions. Using the Section 106 process, agencies identify historic properties, assess effects to historic properties, consider alternatives to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any adverse effects, and document their resolution.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

WisDOT and FHWA recognize the importance of taking into account environmental justice and equity in project development. The key legislation and policy directives behind environmental justice assessment requirements are Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Executive Order 12898 (issued in 1994), Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based upon race, color, or national origin. Specifically, 42 USC 2000d states that “No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

The Executive Order on Environmental Justice 12898 directs federal agencies to take appropriate and necessary steps to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse effects of federal projects on the health or environment of minority and/or low-income populations to the greatest extent practicable by law. The Executive Order states, to the extent practicable and permitted by law, that neither minority nor low-income populations may receive disproportionately high or adverse effects as a result of a proposed project. The order requires that representatives of low-income or minority populations that could be affected by the project be given the opportunity to be included in the impact assessment and public involvement process.

In the I-94 East-West Final EIS, under the previous preferred alternative, the project was found to have no disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority or low income populations.

INDIRECT AND CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

As part of the Supplemental EIS, an Indirect and Cumulative Effects analysis is being updated.

Transportation projects can have a wide array of effects on people and the environment. The direct impacts, indirect effects, and cumulative effects of a project will be analyzed as part of the Supplemental EIS.

The indirect effects are defined as project impacts “caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable.”

Cumulative effects are defined in both timeframe - such as past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions - and spatial/geographic terms (i.e., how are the effects distributed or allocated on the physical landscape).

WisDOT is interviewing project stakeholders to get their input on indirect effects.

Effects can be beneficial, detrimental, or both. For example, development along a corridor may be economically beneficial by providing new goods and services and helping to contribute to the tax base of a local community. This same development may also create negative impacts on natural resources and other populations. It is important to document both the perceived and established positive and negative effects, as well as to provide suggestions on where mitigation may be appropriate through avoidance and/or minimization efforts.

STAY INFORMED!

As the project proceeds, and more analysis is complete, more information will become available. To stay up to date, please attend future public meetings and hearings, invite WisDOT representatives to speak to your neighborhood or business, and watch the project website at wisconsindot.gov/94eastwest.

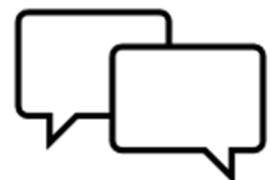
INTERSTATE CONSTRUCTION LESSONS LEARNED NATIONWIDE

FHWA Historian, Richard Weingroff

“The urban Interstates proved to be the most difficult to build. They would have been difficult in any event because of the physical challenge of building freeways on new locations in an urban setting. However, they also proved controversial during the construction stage because of their impacts on people--their homes, businesses, and communities. Today, the urban Interstates are integral parts of our urban landscape, carrying millions of motorists every day, and yet their impacts on our cities remain controversial.”

WisDOT Secretary Thompson:

“The I-94 East-West Corridor, from 70th to 16 Street is located entirely in the city of Milwaukee. While some neighborhoods are thriving, others are struggling with the weight of poverty and lack of opportunity. While one project alone cannot fix all the ills of society, the Wisconsin DOT knows it can and will do better for the communities we serve.”



TIMELINES

SINCE JULY 2020 RESTART

- **2020**
 - Project restart
 - Initiate data collection and environmental evaluation
 - Public Participation
- **2021**
 - Data collected and analyzed
 - Designs developed
 - Community input - March 2021 Public Involvement Meeting, grassroots, neighborhoods, committees
 - Decision to complete a Supplemental EIS
 - Public meeting – December 8 and 9



ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE

- **2022**
 - Continued study, analysis and review (WisDOT and FHWA)
 - Preferred alternative identified
 - Community input
 - Public hearing - summer
- **2023-2025**
 - Federal Highway Administration continues review of document and plans
 - Preliminary and final design
- **2024-2028** (dependent on funding, federal/state approvals, *much to be determined*)
 - Moving related utilities and prep work – year one
 - Freeway construction – likely four years

WISDOT CONTACT INFORMATION

Josh LeVeque, P.E.
Southeast Freeways Project Manager
Phone: (414) 750-1468
E-mail: Joshua.LeVeque@dot.wi.gov

--

Media requests:

Michael Pyritz
SE Region Communications Manager
Phone: (262) 521-5373
E-mail: Michael.Pyritz@dot.wi.gov

--

Real Estate questions:

For questions on acquisition:

Joe Casper
Phone: (262) 521-5123
E-mail: joseph.casper@dot.wi.gov

For questions on relocation:

Tracey Johnsrud
Phone: (262) 521-5124
E-mail: tracey.johnsrud@dot.wi.gov

--

Mailing address for above:

Wisconsin Department of Transportation
SE Transportation Region
141 NW Barstow, Suite 218
P.O. Box 798
Waukesha, WI 53187-0798