

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE  
INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION**

DATE: October 1, 2021

TO: Supervisor Marcelia Nicholson, Chair, County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation

SUBJECT: From the Director of the Department of Transportation, an Update on the I-43 North-South Brown Street to Capitol Drive by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)

FILE TYPE: INFORMATIONAL REPORT

**POLICY**

This report is for informational purposes only.

**BACKGROUND**

Wisconsin has 115,543 miles of public roads, from Interstate freeways to city and village streets. This highway improvement program covers only the 11,745-mile state highway system which is administered and maintained by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT). The other 103,798 miles are improved and maintained by the cities, towns, counties, and villages in which they are located.

The state highway system consists of 876 miles of Interstate freeways and 10,869 miles of state and US-marked highways. While the 11,745 miles of state highways represent only 10.2% of all public road mileage in Wisconsin, they carry over 38 billion vehicle miles of travel a year, or about 58.6 % of the total annual statewide highway travel.

Each invested dollar returns benefits in terms of time savings, fewer accidents, and decreased vehicle operating costs. Poor roads mean more accidents and deaths, higher insurance costs, wear and tear on vehicles, more time on the road and less efficient and competitive commerce.

In providing access to neighborhoods, manufacturers, commuters, and tourists within the Milwaukee metropolitan area, and connecting Milwaukee to other areas including northern Illinois and Green Bay, I-43 is a critical interstate link not only for Southeast Wisconsin, but the entire state. The corridor connects the city, serves as a gateway to popular tourist locations in northern Wisconsin, and links major industrial centers throughout the region. Today, I-43 carries nearly 160,000 vehicles each day through the project area. Traffic is projected to grow another 15 percent over the next thirty years.

The purpose of the project is to address deteriorating pavement and bridges, as well as substandard traffic operations, from Brown Street to Capitol Drive. The project improvements aim to maintain safe and efficient vehicular movement along the I-43 corridor. All planned and recommended modifications will stay within the existing freeway right of way.

The original pavement in the I-43 project corridor is over 50 years old. WisDOT resurfaced the pavement in 1982, and most recently, in 2002. The proposed rehabilitation project will resurface and repair the driving surface and is anticipated to last 10 to 15 years. Each additional resurfacing after this project will last less time due to further deterioration of the original underlying base materials.

The I-43 corridor between Brown Street and Capitol Drive also has bridge structures that were originally constructed between 1963 and 1967. Five of the structures have reached a point where they need routine, but significant repairs to preserve their current function:

- Brown Street – Concrete Deck Overlay and Paint
- Wright Street – Concrete Deck Overlay and Paint
- Center Street – Paint
- Locust Street – Deck Replacement and Paint
- Burleigh Street – Deck Replacement and Paint

### Schedule

|                          | 2021   | 2022  | 2023  | 2024  |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| ACTIVITY                 |     |     |     |  |
| ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS   |  |   |   |   |
| ENGINEERING/DESIGN       |  |   |   |   |
| BID PHASE & CONSTRUCTION |  |   |   |   |

### ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

This is a Wisconsin Department of Transportation project.

### RECOMMENDATION

This report is for informational purposes unless otherwise directed.

### VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

should receive a Microsoft Teams invite to co-present this file.

### PREPARED BY:

Jesse Jefferson, P.E., Project Manager, Wisconsin Department of Transportation Southeast Region

APPROVED BY:

*Julie Esch, Deputy Director*

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Donna Brown-Martin  
Director, Department of Transportation

ATTACHMENTS

I-43 North-South Brown Street to Capitol Drive Update Power Point

cc: Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board of Supervisors  
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County Clerk