



Oppose WISDOT's Billion-Dollar Highway Boondoggle in Milwaukee

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WISDOT) is proposing to unnecessarily add lanes to I-94 between the Zoo and Marquette Interchanges in Milwaukee. The project is expected to cost \$850 million tax dollars and will divert resources away from much-needed local infrastructure improvements - like pothole repairs and public transportation - all while traffic along this stretch of road is declining.

- **This expansion project is a billion-dollar boondoggle:** It's an expansion we don't want, don't need and can't afford. The \$850 million I-94 expansion is unjustified and unnecessary.
 - **We don't want it:** Hundreds of people spoke out against any expansion of I-94 at WISDOT's public hearings in December. The City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County have passed multiple resolutions opposing any expansion. While WISDOT may have "listened" to community feedback, the agency clearly failed to take local objections into account in making its decision.
 - **We don't need it:** A 1000 Friends of Wisconsin report from 2014 found that traffic counts on this stretch of highway decreased by 8 percent from 2000-2012, according to WISDOT's own data. This is in line with state and national trends indicating the 60-year U.S. driving boom has ended. Demographic changes - a growing generation of Millennials who prefer car-light or car-free lifestyles, and aging Baby-boomers who increasingly outlive their ability to drive - will likely carry these trends into the future.
 - **We can't afford it:** WISDOT is proposing to spend \$400-\$450 million, on top of the cost of repairing the highway, to expand it; at the same time, the agency is asking Wisconsin taxpayers to pay more taxes and fees and accept greater state borrowing to make up for a supposed \$600 million transportation funding shortfall that exists because the DOT continues to propose boondoggles like this.
- **We need to get our transportation spending priorities straight:** Unneeded highway expansions divert billions of dollars away from the repair of existing local roads and other critical local transportation infrastructure all over Wisconsin. While spending on big-ticket highway projects and expansions like this one doubled between 1998 and 2013, local road and bridge assistance funding has declined by about 30% during the same period. With limited resources dedicated to repair, Wisconsin's local roads and bridges are crumbling, and transit systems are struggling to maintain service. For example, our state has 1,212 bridges deemed "structurally deficient" by the FHWA's 2014 National Bridge Inventory - an increase over 2013; 38% of Wisconsin's local roads are in urgent need of repair.
- **Instead of adding a lane, we should simply repair I-94:** WISDOT concedes, in its I-94 Draft Environmental Impact Statement, that many of the safety concerns identified along the Interstate could be addressed through spot improvements, without adding a lane. This alternative - which was preemptively dismissed by WISDOT - would cost less than half as much as the expansion, preserve critical business access in all directions at Hawley Road, and respect the integrity of nearby cemeteries, property and landmarks.
- **We must invest in 21st century mobility for all in the Milwaukee region:** In addition to returning the highway to good repair without unnecessarily adding a lane, we should invest in much-needed transit improvements that will connect Milwaukeeans to jobs, services and commerce, as well as draw bright young minds and employers to the region. The Coalition for More Responsible Transportation has outlined such a plan in its "Rehab/Transit Option."

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