

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-office Communication

DATE: 1/22/2025

TO: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

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

SUBJECT: From the Director, Department of Transportation providing an Informational Report on road conditions on County Trunk Highway ZZ with a resolution from the Department of Transportation to require the Union Pacific Railroad Company to repair the at-grade rail crossing.

FILE TYPE: Informational Report

REQUEST

This report is for informational purposes only.

BACKGROUND

Milwaukee County holds jurisdiction over County Trunk Highway ZZ (College Avenue). A Union Pacific-owned freight railroad track intersects with this highway directly west of South Pennsylvania Avenue. The track abuts the east side of the General Mitchell International Airport (GMIA), a County operated entity. Since this at-grade intersection consistently experiences higher vehicle traffic, road conditions deteriorate at a faster pace than other roads within the County.

Constituents residing and utilizing this corridor have frequently contacted their Milwaukee County Supervisor about its poor road conditions. Numerous residents driving through the at-grade crossing have experienced both long and short-term damages to their vehicles. Constituents submitted complaints showing cracks and severe lips within four feet of the rail crossing traveling both east and westbound. The Milwaukee County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) desires for all County roads to be in safe and adequate operational conditions for any ongoing vehicle traffic including multi-modal options.

According to Wisconsin State Statute § 86.12, a County Board in which a railroad crossing is located may "by resolution require any railroad company to pave, plank, repair, change, or otherwise improve the crossings, as the needs require." Private railroad companies own large amounts of land surrounding railroad tracks throughout Milwaukee County. These companies can include Union Pacific, Canadian Pacific, Wisconsin Southern, and Norfolk Southern. Leaders at MCDOT have contacted Union Pacific about road conditions at this crossing, but the County has yet to receive sufficient communication from Union Pacific.

The Milwaukee County Department of Transportation Director is providing this informational report as necessary background for the attached resolution. MCDOT aims for the resolution to formally require Union Pacific to repair County Highway ZZ's poor road conditions. Previous efforts to contact Union Pacific have been unsuccessful. With approval by the Transportation and Transit Committee and ultimately the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors, Union Pacific, required by State of Wisconsin statutes, will repair the road which will allow drivers to cross the intersection safely and securely.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Describe how the item aligns to the strategic plan:

- 2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity.
- 2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions.
- 3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities.

RECOMMENDATION

This report is for informational purposes only. Should the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors approve the separate resolution attached with this informational report, the County Clerk's office will deliver both documents to the Union Pacific Railroad Company and require the road conditions to be repaired.

FISCAL EFFECT

There is no fiscal effect.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Milwaukee County Department of Transportation

PREPARED BY:

Donna Brown-Martin, Director of Milwaukee County Department of Transportation

APPROVED BY:



Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation

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