

By Supervisors Weishan Jr., Czarnecki, Cullen, Martin, Haas, and Clancy

A RESOLUTION

Reaffirming Milwaukee County’s opposition to further expansion of Interstate 94 (I-94)

WHEREAS, at its meeting on March 10, 2021, the Committee on Transportation, Public Works and Transit (TPWT) discussed highway speeds and safety issues on the interstate system within Milwaukee County and discussed the perceived necessity of freeway expansion; and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has identified the segment of Interstate 94 between 70th Street and 16th Street (I-94 East-West Corridor) in Milwaukee County for reconstruction as that freeway segment was constructed in 1961 and has exceeded its intended lifespan; and

WHEREAS, in 2014 WisDOT intended to further widen I-94 to increase lane mile road capacity for drivers and reconfigure an obsolete design which may pose safety issues, at an approximate cost of \$850 million (File No. 14-941), while in 2015 Milwaukee County and the City of Milwaukee opposed widening, instead favoring in-kind replacement and funding for transit (File No. 15-426), leading to the Wisconsin Governor rescinding the project in 2017; and

WHEREAS, on July 8, 2020 the Wisconsin Governor revived the I-94 East-West Corridor project and in his proposed budget for the 2021-2023 Biennium grants WisDOT a debt authority of \$40 million for the Corridor; and

WHEREAS, like the basic economics concept of supply and demand, creating greater supply of highway lanes induces more demand which will in turn generate more traffic, noise, and pollution culminating in the same traffic jam with a wider highway; in other words, widening roads to solve traffic congestion is like loosening a belt to solve obesity; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 Pandemic may have changed the way people do business and go about their lives as more people work from home and fewer people commute to work, the older traffic projections WisDOT rely upon may be obsolete; and

41 WHEREAS, as Milwaukee County seeks new funding for local government
42 financing while the State of Wisconsin imposes unfunded mandates and prevents
43 Milwaukee County from properly funding itself (File Nos. 18-944 and 19-831), while
44 simultaneously further destroying Milwaukee County's property tax base just for more
45 pavement; and

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47 WHEREAS, Milwaukee County has vowed to become the healthiest county in
48 Wisconsin (File No. 19-397) and collaborates with the City of Milwaukee to address
49 economic inequity and climate change via the City-County Joint Taskforce on Climate
50 and Economic Equity (File No. 19-582); and

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52 WHEREAS, incentivizing more people to sit in more emissions-spewing
53 automobiles exacerbates climate change and economic inequity as only improved
54 transit can reduce emissions and help those who cannot afford personal vehicles get to
55 their jobs and works against the recommendations of the Preliminary Report of the City-
56 County Joint Taskforce on Climate and Economic Equity (File No. 20-496); and

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58 WHEREAS, a single fully-seated bus can take 40 cars off the road and therefore
59 mitigate congestion by reducing the number of automobiles driving at any given time;
60 and therefore the State of Wisconsin could save taxpayer dollars by not widening the
61 highway, enhance funding for driving alternatives to reduce congestion and greenhouse
62 emissions, and improve the people's health and property values in Milwaukee County;
63 and

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65 WHEREAS, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors (County Board), at its
66 meeting of March 25, 2021, adopted File No. 21-378 offered under suspension of the
67 rules (vote 15-1); and

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69 WHEREAS, the Milwaukee County Executive, on April 13, 2021, vetoed File No.
70 21-378; and

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72 WHEREAS, the County Board, at its meeting of April 22, 2021, referred File No.
73 21-378 to the Committee on Transportation, Public Works, and Transit (TPWT)
74 (vote 15-3); and

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76 WHEREAS, the Committee on TPWT, at its meeting of May 5, 2021,
77 recommended adoption of File No. 21-378 by recommending that the County
78 Executive's veto be overridden (vote 3-1); now, therefore,

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BE IT RESOLVED, Milwaukee County hereby reaffirms its opposition to the expansion and lane mile capacity increase of the Interstate 94 East-West Corridor between 70th Street and 16th Street and reaffirms its support for an in-kind rehabilitation of the existing interstate footprint, adjusted for safety considerations, coinciding with increased transit funding; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Office of Government Affairs staff is authorized and requested to communicate the contents of this resolution to the Wisconsin Governor, state policymakers, and Wisconsin Counties Association, and support legislation that achieves the criteria outlined in this resolution.

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