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4 **A RESOLUTION**

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6 Declaring a higher and better use for acres of parking lots, calling upon the Southeast
7 Wisconsin Professional Baseball Park District to collaborate with the City of Milwaukee
8 and Village of West Milwaukee to redevelop some of its parcels, and requesting the
9 Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) study dismantlement of the Stadium
10 Freeway (STH 175) south of Interstate 94 (I-94)

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13 WHEREAS, having a professional baseball team in Milwaukee is something dear
14 to the city, County, region, and State; and

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16 WHEREAS, Milwaukee County was the driving force behind what became
17 Milwaukee County Stadium; the County assembled land from the United States
18 Veterans Administration, the City of Milwaukee, and the former Story Stone Quarry; and
19 financed the design and construction of the stadium, breaking ground in 1950 and
20 opening in 1953; and it was the first publicly funded sports stadium in the United States
21 (1946 File Nos. 8820 & 8830; 1947-1948 File No. 9315, *inter alia*; 1949 File Nos. 11224
22 & 11274; 1950 File No. 10347 *inter alia*; 1951 File Nos. 10347, 12262 *inter alia*); and

23
24 WHEREAS, Milwaukee County owned and leased Milwaukee County Stadium to
25 its two professional Major League Baseball team tenants and had a stadium committee;
26 and

27
28 WHEREAS, in 1995 Wisconsin Act 56, the State of Wisconsin created the
29 Southeast Wisconsin Professional Baseball Park District to govern the new professional
30 baseball stadium, and allowed the new District to impose a special additional sales and
31 use tax (0.1 percent) on the Counties of Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Washington, and
32 Waukesha to fund the construction and debt service of a replacement to Milwaukee
33 County Stadium; and

34
35 WHEREAS, the City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County each contributed \$30
36 million toward the final \$392 million cost of the stadium, and Milwaukee County
37 voluntarily conveyed control of the former Milwaukee County Stadium property to the
38 State of Wisconsin, which in turn conveyed the land to the Southeast Wisconsin
39 Professional Baseball Park District (File No. 95-846); and

40 WHEREAS, Milwaukee County residents and those residents of Kenosha,
41 Ozaukee, Racine, Washington, and Waukesha Counties paid the Stadium Sales Tax in
42 addition to State and county sales taxes to the sum of around \$605 million, from 1996 to
43 2020, for approximately 24 years; and
44

45 WHEREAS, the Southeast Wisconsin Professional Baseball Park District leases
46 use of the property to the current tenant, a Major League Baseball team, at a rate of
47 approximately \$1.1 to \$1.2 million per year over a period of 30 years, which has hardly
48 increased despite the valuable real estate, and the tenant collects all stadium
49 concessions, retail, naming rights, and parking revenue at the site; and
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51 WHEREAS, the vast majority of tax revenues generated at the professional
52 baseball stadium go to the State of Wisconsin: all income taxes and approximately 90
53 percent of the sales tax revenue, with the remaining approximate 10 percent going to
54 Milwaukee County; and
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56 WHEREAS, the February 1, 2022, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* article, “The
57 stadium tax is gone. But Milwaukee-area taxpayers might get a new bill to pay for
58 ballpark’s future improvements,” reported that the owner of the professional baseball
59 team is worried that the remaining balance of the stadium district’s reserve fund for
60 capital maintenance may not be sufficient to cover future renovations, and the team
61 owner would want additional taxpayer subsidy; and
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63 WHEREAS, according to the Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau 2021
64 Informational Report 14, “The state’s levy limit program prohibits any county, city,
65 village, or town from increasing its ‘base’ levy in any year by more than the percentage
66 change in the local government’s . . . equalized value due to new construction, less
67 improvements removed. . .”; that requirement has resulted in little revenue growth for
68 communities whose tax bases are not rising at the rate of inflation; and
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70 WHEREAS, in the October 2021, Wisconsin Policy Forum (WPF) paper, “Sinking
71 Treasure,” the WPF noted for Milwaukee County a “flat or declining nature of key state
72 revenue streams, state limits on local property taxes, and the need to devote increasing
73 shares of property tax levy to pension liabilities and retiree health care.”; and
74

75 WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin has imposed a structural deficit on local
76 governments in Wisconsin, whereby the costs to continue the services citizens expect
77 and deserve rise higher based on inflation than do the percentage of State shared
78 revenue increases which are typically less than one percent per year (File Nos. 18-944,
79 19-161, & 22-457); and

80 WHEREAS, the following parcels east of the Stadium Freeway, (State Trunk
81 Highway 175) are owned by the Southeast Wisconsin Professional Baseball Park
82 District in the City of Milwaukee whose 82 approximate acres do not contribute any
83 property taxes for municipal, County, or educational services and force remaining
84 property taxpayers to shoulder the burden of local services:
85

Address	Area (Acres)	Tax Key
101 S. 44 th St.	28.40209	4220008000
500 S. 44 th St.	50.6949	4220012000
618 S. 44 th St.	2.74077	4220011000

86
87 ; and
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89 WHEREAS, the highest and best use of land in the middle of Milwaukee County
90 is not parking lots which sit empty for 203 days, or approximately 56 percent per year,
91 and rarely fill, especially when they pay no taxes; and the stadium's approximately
92 13,000 spaces are greater than the combined parking of Disney World's Magic Kingdom
93 and EPCOT, at 11,000 spaces; and
94

95 WHEREAS, east of the Stadium Freeway and north of West National Avenue,
96 Komatsu owns a small parcel in the City of Milwaukee and approximately 42 acres in
97 the Village of West Milwaukee, which it may soon sell as it transitions its corporate and
98 manufacturing operations to its new facilities in the Harbor District in the City of
99 Milwaukee and the Village of West Milwaukee and Milwaukee County have a vested
100 interest in ensuring continuity of a stable and growing property tax base, and under
101 Wisconsin Statutes municipalities may create tax incremental districts as a way to
102 finance improvements and facilitate development; and
103

104 WHEREAS, the use of tax incremental financing on property presently owned by
105 the Southeast Wisconsin Professional Baseball Park District may facilitate
106 entertainment district development which the tenant could use to finance any additional
107 capital maintenance costs to the baseball stadium; and
108

109 WHEREAS, according to the City of Milwaukee Department of City Development,
110 the demolition of the 0.8 mile Park East Spur in 2003 allowed for reintegration and
111 redevelopment of around 24 acres back into the fabric of the Westtown and Lower East
112 Side neighborhoods in the City of Milwaukee, improving urban living with new
113 commercial and residential developments, allowing better contiguity of the street grid,

114 experiencing more than \$1 billion in private investment, raising property values, and
115 returning significant land to the property tax rolls; and

116

117 WHEREAS, there is a “Deer District” adjacent to the Basketball Arena,
118 convention, and Old World Third Street entertainment districts which generate
119 significant commercial activity, as do entertainment districts in:

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- 121 • Green Bay’s Titledown District adjacent to Lambeau Field
- 122 • Atlanta’s The Battery adjacent to Truist Park (Atlanta Braves)
- 123 • St. Louis’ Ballpark Village adjacent to Busch Stadium (St. Louis Cardinals)
- 124 • Tampa Bay’s proposed “Gas Worx” (Tampa Bay Rays)

125

126 ; and

127

128 WHEREAS, any restoration of the street grid south of Interstate 94 due to efforts
129 to create an entertainment district could reconnect with streets north of Interstate 94,
130 while the Wisconsin Department of Transportation studies dismantlement of part of the
131 Stadium Freeway (State Trunk Highway 175) north of the Stadium Interchange (File No.
132 22-659); and

133

134 WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation could further study
135 dismantlement of the Stadium Freeway (State Trunk Highway 175) south of Interstate
136 94 to West National Avenue in tandem with studying dismantlement to the north, and
137 potentially allowing for the street variously known as South 43rd, Miller Park Way, and
138 Brewers Boulevard, to extend northward; and

139

140 WHEREAS, redevelopment of land east of the Stadium Freeway and the soon-
141 to-be former Komatsu property, has the potential to be even more transformational for
142 the City of Milwaukee and Village of West Milwaukee than the removal of the Park East
143 Freeway, could help restore the street grid, revitalize neighborhoods and improve racial
144 equity, create a fun and vibrant mixed-use destination which could attract visitors on
145 non-event days, and contribute to the property tax base of the City of Milwaukee, the
146 Village of West Milwaukee, and Milwaukee County; and

147

148 WHEREAS, the Committee on Intergovernmental Relations, at its meeting of
149 July 11, 2022, recommended adoption of File No. 22-727 (vote 3-0); now, therefore,

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151 BE IT RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors declares the
152 highest and best use for land in the center of Milwaukee County is not acres upon acres
153 of parking lot which sit vacant for most of the year and any further public subsidy toward
154 the stadium leased by the Southeast Wisconsin Professional Baseball Park District

155 ought to come with a return of underutilized land to productive use for the benefit of the
156 community; and

157

158 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
159 hereby calls upon the Southeast Wisconsin Professional Baseball Park District to work
160 with the City of Milwaukee and Village of West Milwaukee to study:

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- 162 • Relinquishing of control of several District-owned parcels to coincide with any
163 redevelopment of the Stadium Freeway and extension of the street grid
- 164 • Creation of a mixed-use entertainment district in the City of Milwaukee and
165 Village of West Milwaukee
- 166 • How tax incremental financing may facilitate parking lot redevelopment and/or aid
167 in the establishment of a revenue stream which may facilitate future capital
168 rehabilitation costs of the baseball stadium, thereby reducing or eliminating the
169 need for a future stadium sales tax or other public subsidy

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171 ; and

172

173 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
174 hereby encourages Komatsu to collaborate with the redevelopment of its Village of
175 West Milwaukee properties concurrent with any future redevelopment of parcels
176 currently used as parking lots under the control of the Southeast Wisconsin Professional
177 Baseball Park District; and

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179 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
180 hereby requests the Wisconsin Department of Transportation study dismantlement of
181 the Stadium Freeway (State Trunk Highway 175) from Interstate 94 south to West
182 National Avenue, in collaboration with any efforts outlined in this resolution; and

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184 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Office of Government Affairs staff is
185 authorized and requested to communicate the contents of this resolution to the
186 Wisconsin Governor, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, State policymakers,
187 collaborate with the City of Milwaukee and Village of West Milwaukee, and support
188 legislation that achieves the criteria outlined in this resolution; and

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190 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
191 hereby requests the County Clerk transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the City
192 of Milwaukee, Village of West Milwaukee, Southeast Wisconsin Professional Baseball
193 Park District, Komatsu Mining Corporation, and Komatsu America Corporation.

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196 07/11/22
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