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4 **A RESOLUTION**

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6 Calling upon the State of Wisconsin to ensure a racially equitable balance in
7 transportation funding between expressways and mass transit
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10 WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has
11 identified the segment of Interstate 94 between 70th Street and 16th Street (I-94 East-
12 West Corridor) in Milwaukee County for reconstruction as that freeway segment was
13 constructed in 1961 and has exceeded its intended lifespan; and
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15 WHEREAS, in 2014 WisDOT intended to further widen I-94 to increase lane mile
16 road capacity for drivers and reconfigure an obsolete design which may pose safety
17 issues, at an approximate cost of \$850 million (File No. 14-941), while in 2015
18 Milwaukee County and the City of Milwaukee opposed widening, instead favoring in-
19 kind replacement and funding for transit (File No. 15-426), leading to the Wisconsin
20 Governor rescinding the project in 2017; and
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22 WHEREAS, on July 8, 2020 the Wisconsin Governor revived the I-94 East-West
23 Corridor project and in his proposed budget for the 2021-2023 Biennium grants WisDOT
24 a debt authority of \$40 million for the Corridor; and
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26 WHEREAS, on April 15, 2021 WisDOT announced the agency would further
27 study the Corridor by investigation and drafting of a supplemental environmental impact
28 statement to “allow [WisDOT] time to better assess the changes in traffic patterns
29 resulting from the pandemic, and to receive more public input. It will also help us make
30 certain that our efforts to ensure racial equity with this project are comprehensive and
31 aligned with federal priorities”; and
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33 WHEREAS, racial inequity has taken center stage in Milwaukee County
34 orientation and policy since declaring racism a public health crisis in File No. 19-397,
35 with transportation being no exception; and
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37 WHEREAS, previously when WisDOT was expanding Interstates 94, 894 and 41
38 in and around the Zoo Interchange, in 2012 a lawsuit was filed where the plaintiffs
39 argued WisDOT was creating a disparate impact in Milwaukee County by prioritizing
40 highways for predominantly White drivers at the expense of people of color; and

41 WHEREAS, in 2014 WisDOT subsequently settled to provide supplemental
42 operations and advertising funding from 2014 to 2018 to the Milwaukee County Transit
43 System; and

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45 WHEREAS, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
46 (SEWRPC), which is the federally-designated metropolitan planning organization and
47 regional planning commission for southeastern Wisconsin, including Milwaukee County,
48 and among other things, provides long-range plans for land use development and
49 transportation planning, most recently with “VISION 2050,” which debuted in 2016; and

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51 WHEREAS, in File No. 21-397, relating to transportation Title VI requirements for
52 federal transportation funding in Milwaukee County respectively, SEWRPC found:

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- 54 • “[S]hould the reasonably available and expected funding for implementing the
55 public transit element of VISION 2050 continue as estimated. . . , a disparate
56 impact on the Region’s people of color, low-income populations, and people with
57 disabilities is likely to occur.”
 - 58 • “[B]uilding an equitable transportation system in Southeastern Wisconsin is not
59 solely within Milwaukee County’s control. In particular, the State Legislature and
60 the Governor would need to act to substantially increase State funding for transit
61 and allow local governments or transit operators to raise additional revenue
62 locally to avoid transportation-related disparate impact[s]. . . .”

63
64 ; and

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66 WHEREAS, for far too long there has been an imbalance in State transportation
67 priorities which has created a disparate impact for people of color; and

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69 WHEREAS, the Committee on Transportation, Public Works, and Transit, at its
70 meeting of May 5, 2021, recommended adoption of File No. 21-460 (vote 4-0); now,
71 therefore,

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73 BE IT RESOLVED, Milwaukee County hereby supports balanced transportation
74 funding between expressways and public transit which will benefit all residents of
75 Milwaukee County and opposes disparate impacts on any of its residents; and

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77 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Milwaukee County hereby calls upon the
78 Wisconsin Governor and Legislature to appropriate substantially more transit operating
79 assistance, and supports WisDOT’s undertaking of a supplemental environmental
80 impact statement prior to any remediation or expansion of Interstate 94; and

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

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