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City of Milwaukee to Seek Six-Lane Zoo Interchange that Spares More than 20 Properties, Sends \$150 Million in Savings for Local Roads and Bridges

The Milwaukee Common Council today overwhelmingly approved a resolution stating that any rebuild of the Zoo Interchange should include six lanes – not the proposed eight – sparing more than 20 properties and saving at least \$150 Million which could be redirected to local governments for reconstruction and maintenance of existing roads and bridges.

The measure outlining the city's official position on the project, sponsored by **Alderman Michael J. Murphy**, **Alderman Robert J. Bauman**, and **Alderman Nik Kovac** was approved on a 13-2 vote.

Alderman Bauman said the critical Zoo Interchange project – tagged as the most expensive freeway project in Wisconsin history – requires strong, ongoing direction and input from Milwaukee. “Retaining the existing six lanes in the interchange saves 20 homes and one commercial property, and it channels the considerable savings to where it's really needed – in fixing our crumbling local streets and bridges,” he said.

The resolution also urges the state Department of Transportation to provide access to I-94 from Blue Mound Road, as long as further property acquisitions can be avoided, and to pursue a new roadway crossing US 45 between Wisconsin Avenue and Watertown Plank Road, thereby creating a more direct link between the Milwaukee County Research Park and the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center and providing some traffic relief to the existing street system.

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Interchange Savings/ADD ONE

Alderman Murphy said the resolution also protects local transit options by making provisions for bicycles, public transit, and recreation a part of the interchange project. “The city is making it clear that a transit and bicycle-trail right-of-way that extends from the former West Allis Air Line railroad right-of-way on the southern edge of the interchange should extend northward toward the Milwaukee County Grounds and Swan Boulevard to preserve the option of installing public transit service and bicycle facilities from downtown Milwaukee to the County Grounds at a future time,” he said.

“The Hank Aaron State Trail would also be extended westerly through the interchange via the former West Allis Air Line railroad right-of-way,” Alderman Murphy said. “More commuters are choosing other transit options because they’ve grown tired of freeways, traffic and high gas prices, and this reality is reflected strongly in our position on this critical public infrastructure project.”

In other matters, the Council today:

- Voted 11-3 (with one excused) to move the staff of the Historic Preservation Commission from the Department of City Development to the Common Council – City Clerk’s Office.
- Voted 14-1 to increase some taxicab rates and charges including changing the “flag drop” charge from the first 1/8th of a mile to 1/10th of a mile and eliminating the \$.10 per bag charge.
- Voted to uphold the Zoning, Neighborhoods and Development Committee decision to overturn the historic designation on portions of Hide House, 2625 S. Greeley St.
- Voted 15-0 to apply for our second round of grant funding through the Solar American Cities Program, allowing for installation of solar hot water heaters and continued installer training and new green jobs.