



Department of Public Works
Infrastructure Services Division

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April 24, 2008

Mr. Dewayne Johnson
Southeast Region Director
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
PO Box 798
Waukesha, WI 53187-0798

Dear Mr. Johnson:

As you are aware, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WISDOT) is beginning the environmental analysis/preliminary engineering phase for the construction of the Zoo Interchange in the City of Milwaukee. The purpose of this letter is to follow up the meeting of February 26, 2008 with Mayor Barrett and to provide initial Department of Public Works (DPW) input into the design at this early stage of project development.

First, DPW would like to express its continued disappointment that the DEIS and FEIS for the I-94 North-South corridor did not incorporate rapid transit alternatives when considering major transportation improvements in the north-south corridor. While we appreciate the explanations provided to our concerns within Appendix D of the FEIS, we continue to disagree with the general approach WISDOT takes by only implementing the highway components of the regional transportation plan while leaving rapid and express transit components to local jurisdictions.

WISDOT's role in maintaining an effective statewide transportation network should include funding all necessary inter-city transportation facilities that cross multiple jurisdictions – including rapid and express transit facilities. It is DPW's hope that WISDOT takes a more multimodal approach when considering improvements to the Zoo Interchange and future southeastern Wisconsin freeway improvements.

With respect to the Zoo Interchange, the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin calls for capacity expansion of southeastern Wisconsin freeways. However, the regional transportation plan recognizes that additional analysis will be necessary before freeway expansion is advanced. According to the regional transportation plan, "the 127 miles of freeway widening proposed in the plan, and in particular the 19 miles of widening in the City of Milwaukee (IH 94 between the Zoo and Marquette Interchanges and IH 43 between the Mitchell and Silver Spring Interchanges), will undergo preliminary engineering and environmental impact statement by the WISDOT.

Mr. Dewayne Johnson
April 24, 2008
Page 2

During preliminary engineering, alternatives will be considered, including: rebuild-as-is, various options of rebuilding to modern design standards, compromises to rebuilding to modern design standards, rebuilding with additional lanes, and rebuilding with the existing number of lanes. Only at the conclusion of the preliminary engineering would a determination be made as to how the freeway would be reconstructed."

City of Milwaukee Common Council Resolution No. 011729 explicitly opposes capacity expansion of I-94 between the Marquette Interchange and the Zoo Interchange while generally supporting design improvements to improve safety if such improvements can be made without excessive community impacts. In light of Resolution No. 011729, DPW supports design improvements of the Zoo Interchange to improve motorist safety while minimizing right-of-way impacts.

If, however, WISDOT proposes capacity expansion of the Zoo Interchange, it is essential that the planning process as described in the regional transportation plan be adhered to. Specifically, it is DPW's expectation that a legitimate alternative analysis be performed that includes both freeway improvements and rapid transit improvements in the context of a regional plan for maintaining mobility of the traveling public. Such alternatives analysis would be expected to be subjected to a full public involvement process and would allow an informed evaluation of alternative infrastructure improvements in achieving broad community goals.

In the event that WISDOT does not propose capacity expansion of the Zoo Interchange, it would be DPW's expectation that the interchange be designed so as not to preclude future implementation of mass transit improvements. Specifically, the regional transportation plan has identified a number of east-west corridors within your project's limits for potential future commuter rail, rapid and express transit routes including a portion of the abandoned CP Rail West Allis Line. It is DPW's goal that this West Allis Line corridor, which runs under the south leg of the Zoo Interchange, be preserved for potential future express or rapid transit routes as well as an important link in the regional bike trail network. Furthermore, Wisconsin Avenue located just north of the Zoo Interchange, has been identified as potential future express transit route in the City of Milwaukee Comprehensive Transit Strategy. It is requested that this potential transit improvement be considered in the design of the Zoo Interchange as well.

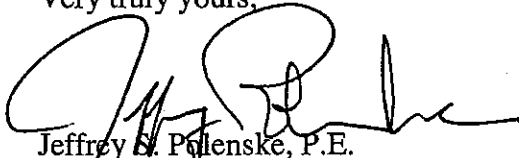
Finally, as you know, the West Suburban TIA is essentially completed and it is imperative that the TIA conclusions be considered as a part of the Zoo Interchange design. The existing transportation system will not be able to accommodate the planned development within the County Research Park and Hospital Complex. The Zoo Interchange design team should consider options that would maximize access and mobility to and between the developing areas while minimizing the traffic impacts to the adjacent neighborhoods.

Mr. Dewayne Johnson
April 24, 2008
Page 2


As the preliminary engineering/environmental analysis phase for reconstruction of the Zoo Interchange progresses and design concepts are developed, DPW will provide further input as necessary. Furthermore, upon finalization of the design for the interchange, DPW will provide input into traffic mitigation strategies to maintain mobility during construction.

We look forward to continued discussions with WISDOT as the design phase progresses on this highly important project.

Very truly yours,



Jeffrey S. Polenske, P.E.
City Engineer



Jeffrey J. Mantes
Commissioner of Public Works

MDL:ns

C: Mayor Tom Barrett
President Willie L. Hines, Jr.
Alderman Michael J. Murphy
Alderman Robert Bauman