

Secretary Craig Thompson
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Secretary Thompson

This letter is to provide input from the Milwaukee City-County Task Force on Climate and Economic Equity (CCTFCEE) to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) on the proposed reconstruction of I-94 between 16th street and 70th street. While understanding that repair of this section of the Interstate is needed, we ask that WisDOT reconsider expansion to accommodate additional lanes, and for an updated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to specifically consider the climate impacts of increased traffic due to expansion, as well adverse effects on low-income communities and communities of color.

The CCTFCEE was created in 2019 (Common Council File [190445](#)) and established goals for community-wide greenhouse gas emission (GHG) reduction of 45% by 2030 and to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 or sooner. The [City's 2018 GHG inventory](#) revealed that over 20% of our city-wide emissions are currently generated from the transportation sector. To achieve our reduction goals, it is critical to both reduce the vehicle miles traveled, as well as accelerate the transition to clean fuels. Research shows that expansion of freeways generally leads to more traffic and could increase vehicle miles traveled in Milwaukee, causing higher emissions.

The CCTFCEE also aims to reduce racial and income inequality by assuring that greenhouse gas reduction investments and policies will create the maximum number of permanent living wage green jobs for people who live in the most impoverished Milwaukee neighborhoods with limited economic opportunity. The negative impacts of the freeway system on communities of color are well-documented, expansion of I-94 is likely to exacerbate issues such as air and noise pollution, loss of property value, and disconnectedness for Milwaukee neighborhoods.

We understand the importance of this reconstruction project to upgrade aged infrastructure and the potential benefit to the local workforce. We support reconstruction of I-94 but the project must move forward in a way that will most benefit Milwaukee communities, address equity concerns, and help combat climate change. To this end, the CCTFCEE supports the list of recommended improvements, projects, and priorities that accompanied Mayor Tom Barrett's letter on March 26th. This list of improvements, projects, and priorities closely mirrors strategies the CCTFCEE will use to help reduce GHG emissions from the transportation sector and will help mitigate the inherent adverse effects on equity and climate from the interstate project.

This list also helps to redirect the potential economic benefits to the Milwaukee communities that would be most impacted by the reconstruction project. Use of the Residential Preference Program and through partnering with local workforce development agencies would help ensure that the jobs created from this project will support Milwaukee families.

The Milwaukee City-County Task Force on Climate and Economic Equity urges you to consider these changes to the I-94 reconstruction project to best maximize the benefits for Milwaukee residents and helping to reach our GHG reduction goals.