

I-94 East-West Corridor Study

70TH STREET TO 16TH STREET, MILWAUKEE COUNTY



WISDOT AND FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recently identified a preferred alternative for reconstructing the I-94 East-West freeway from 70th Street to 16th Street in the City of Milwaukee.

The preferred alternative will modernize the corridor with four lanes in each direction and will include building the Stadium Interchange as a diverging diamond design.

- > Freeway modernization has greatly reduced crash rates for other freeway projects in southeast Wisconsin.
- > A major investment in infrastructure in Milwaukee County, the preferred alternative requires less property acquisition than the previously selected preferred alternative in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (approved 1/28/2016). Today's preferred alternative will have less of an impact on the local tax base and less disruption to local neighborhoods. The number of residential displacements has dropped from eight to one and commercial displacements have dropped from eleven to six as compared to the 2016 recommendation.
- > WisDOT has redesigned the Stadium Interchange to a service interchange which reduces the estimated construction cost by approximately \$80 million. The identified preferred alternative includes a diverging diamond interchange (DDI) at the Stadium Interchange with I-94 traveling over WIS 175/Brewers Boulevard and the highest point of the DDI matching the existing interchange elevation. The Diverging Diamond Interchange is described on Page 3.
- > Providing efficient movement for existing and future traffic at the local interchanges in the corridor, the plan maintains local access where feasible. The Hawley Road Interchange will be modified to a half-diamond interchange. Traffic to and from the east will no longer have access at Hawley Road.
- > Reducing future traffic volumes on local roadways, the preferred alternative improves local road function for all modes of transportation (cars, bicycles, pedestrians, transit). Fewer cars on local roads compliments local efforts to improve safety.
- > An investment of \$25 million in transit upgrades will be made to help mitigate traffic impacts during construction.

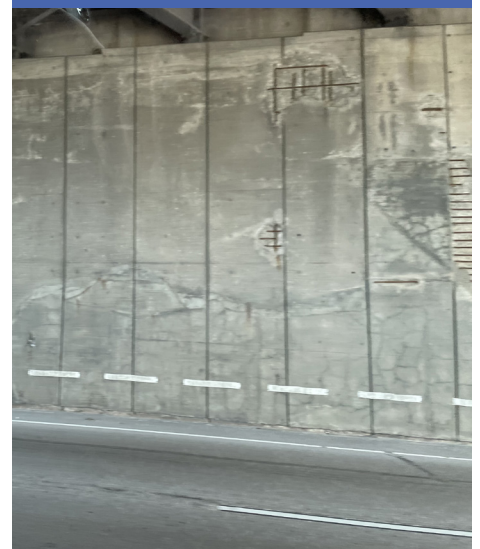
The plan is responsive to input received since the beginning of the corridor study in 2012-2016 and 2020-2022. Public input has been essential to the development and refinement of alternatives. While the public does not speak with one voice, the Department listened to and considered all public input in the selection of the preferred alternative.

The alternative is more fully described in the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement, available on the project website: [WISCONSINDOT.GOV/94EAST WEST](http://WISCONSINDOT.GOV/94EASTWEST)

WHY REBUILD?

This I-94 corridor needs to be rebuilt to improve safety, replace aging infrastructure (originally constructed in the 1960s) and reduce congestion. In this corridor, congestion and outdated design (example: weaving across lanes for a left hand exit) is linked to a greater number of crashes, a number greater than the statewide average for urban freeways.

I-94 is part of the nationwide network of interstate highways. It also serves as a vital route for commerce and vehicle traffic commuting to, from, and around the greater Milwaukee area.



Aging infrastructure in the corridor.

8-LANE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The 8-lane alternative is WisDOT's and the FHWA's identified preferred alternative for the corridor. The 6-lane alternative was studied extensively and met some aspects of the purpose and need of the project. However, the 8-lane alternative improves safety and operations for all users of the interstate and better meets the purpose and need for the project.

Since the 2016 Final Environmental Impact Statement, modifications were made to the 8-lane alternative to reduce impacts and better incorporate public input.

MODIFICATIONS

- > At the 35th Street interchange, the layout is narrowed to avoid displacements on the west side of 35th Street.
- > At the 68th Street eastbound entrance ramp, the design is narrowed to avoid two of three possible displacements.
- > With these reduced impacts, only one residential displacement is required for the corridor.

WHY THE 8-LANE

- > **Safety:** The identified preferred alternative is predicted to reduce I-94 mainline crashes by about 20% compared to the no-build alternative; the 8-lane alternative has the lowest predicted I-94 mainline crash rate of all alternatives analyzed. Further, the 8-lane serves .15 billion more vehicle miles traveled over 10 years (compared to 6-lane) due in part to traffic returning to the freeway from the local streets. The 8-lane improves safety over existing conditions due to geometric changes and reduced congestion. The crash analysis of existing conditions indicated a strong correlation between congestion in the corridor and high crash rate.
- > **Travel time:** The 8-lane alternative reduces travel time and congestion within the modeled study limits for the AM and PM peak periods analyzed.
- > **Reliability:** The 8-lane alternative will reduce congestion on I-94 and adjacent east-west arterials improving performance and reliability for all vehicles.
- > **Impacts:** While the environmental impacts are very similar between 6-lane and 8-lane alternatives, the operational benefits of 8-lane alternative far outweigh the 6-lane alternative.
- > **Purpose and need:** The 8-lane alternative better meets the purpose and need for the project compared to the 6-lane modernization alternative with few additional impacts and a comparatively small additional investment.



Outdated design contributes to crashes.



Congestion in the corridor.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

2023

FINAL SUPPLEMENTAL EIS &
RECORD OF DECISION
ON-GOING DESIGN

2024-2029

FINAL DESIGN
UTILITY RELOCATIONS
CONSTRUCTION

- > Final design, real estate acquisition, utility relocations, and the reconstruction of I-94 and the interchanges will begin after the FHWA Record of Decision if a build alternative is included in the final decision.
- > Mainline freeway and interchanges – Detailed planning and design for the changes to local roads, interchanges, and other access points will include community officials, neighborhoods, businesses, and impacted property owners.
- > Noise barriers – Following the statewide WisDOT processes, communities, neighborhoods, and property owners impacted by the placement of noise barriers will be involved. Decision making on noise barriers will be made after specific noise barrier focused public meetings are completed, likely in late 2023 or early 2024.

Notes:

- > *The Record of Decision is the final step in the Federal Highway Administration approval of the environmental document*
- > *Design schedules are dependent on future approvals*
- > *Construction schedules are dependent on budget allocations*

STADIUM INTERCHANGE DESIGN – DIVERGING DIAMOND INTERCHANGE



HOW WILL THE NEW STADIUM INTERCHANGE OPERATE?

Check out the Diverging Diamond Interchange video on the project website.



Built by the Milwaukee County Expressway Commission in the 1960s, the Stadium Interchange was envisioned as a connection between the planned north-south and east-west freeway segments. When two freeways intersect, a free-flow (system) interchange is typically built to allow for safe and efficient movement. The existing Stadium Interchange design was included in the early 1950s freeway plan developed by Milwaukee County as part of the planned freeway system in and around the region.

While the north-south freeway was never completed, the current Stadium Interchange handles two to three times the amount of traffic found on other local road interchanges in the corridor. A safe and efficient interchange is vital to the residents, businesses moving people and commerce, entertainment traffic generators, hospitals, and education institutions in the corridor.

A Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) is planned for the Stadium Interchange. WisDOT has constructed Diverging Diamond Interchanges at key highway interchanges across the state. A DDI is currently planned for the I-43 and Brown Deer Road Interchange. This innovative interchange is designed to intuitively guide motorists through the pathways.

Advantages of this type of interchange:

- > **Safety** – Reduces the number of conflict points where vehicles can collide as compared to other service interchange types.
- > **Greater capacity and efficiency** – Accommodates more traffic than conventional designs. Drivers make free-flow right and left turns on to the major freeway.
- > **Easy navigation** – Guides drivers with overhead signs, pavement marking, and traffic signals.



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VISIT THE
 PROJECT
 WEBSITE

HOW TO STAY INFORMED

- > **Attend WisDOT public meetings** — watch the website for details.
- > **Invite us** to attend your neighborhood group meeting, business meeting, church or civic group meetings. We regularly attend community events to share information and get your feedback.
- > **Input matters!** Major design elements were included or dropped based on public input. During the remainder of design and construction, public input will be critical to the success of the project.



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PROJECT WEBSITE

wisconsin.gov/94eastwest