

# I-94 East-West Freeway Corridor Study

## Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Spring 2014

### UPDATE ON ALTERNATIVES

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is studying the I-94 corridor, which connects the Marquette and Zoo Interchanges. The study limits extend from 70th Street on the west to 16th Street on the east.

#### REASONS EAST LIMIT MOVED TO 16TH STREET

You may recall previously seeing 25<sup>th</sup> Street identified as the eastern limit for this project. As alternatives were developed to improve the 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup>/St. Paul Interchange, this moved the “match point” with the existing freeway east to about 16th Street. The new eastern 16th Street project limit was formally approved by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in February of 2014. All alternatives since late 2012 have shown an end point just west of 16th Street.

#### REASONS WHY THIS CORRIDOR IS BEING STUDIED

- Deteriorated pavement originally built in the 1960s
- Obsolete design of the roadway and bridges
- Current and future congestion
- High crash rate

#### ALTERNATIVES *(SEE DISCUSSION INSIDE)*

WisDOT is evaluating two alternatives for the west half of the study area (70th Street to the Stadium Interchange) and two alternatives for the east half (Stadium Interchange to 16th Street). All the alternatives would add one lane in each direction.

- The 68th/70th Street Interchange will remain similar to how it is today; the area between the cemeteries will be built either at the same elevation or as a double deck segment.
- The Stadium Interchange design is mostly set with a new configuration; but the segment east of the stadium will be built either nearly on the existing alignment or shifted a few hundred feet to the south as the corridor approaches the 27th Street area. There are different 27th Street Interchange options for each alternative. Both east half alternatives maintain freeway access to 35th Street.

Join us at a public involvement meeting, June 16 or 17 *(details on back page.)*

### JUNE 16 AND 17 PUBLIC MEETINGS

Residents will have the opportunity to talk one-on-one with project staff regarding potential improvements.

Please plan to attend either of these meetings; both will cover the same information. *(see back page for details)*

Watch for project updates:  
[www.seffreeways.org](http://www.seffreeways.org)

Visit us at the Wisconsin State Fair in the Expo Center in August



# FEEDBACK FROM THE COMMUNITY

WisDOT appreciates the community's involvement in the planning process. People engaging in the study are bringing equally important, yet widely differing perspectives and priorities to the discussion; and as a result, offering everyone a broader view and dialogue regarding the corridor. There are several examples where design alternatives have been substantially altered to address concerns and suggestions provided over the first two years of the study, throughout the entire corridor.



Maintaining as many freeway on- and off-ramps as feasible has been the number one request from stakeholders along the corridor including I-94 drivers, local neighborhoods, businesses and community leaders. This has also been the greatest challenge for WisDOT: seeking ways to address safety and congestion, and maintaining interchange access, while reducing as many impacts as possible.

**CEMETERY AREA - VARYING INPUT:** Opinions on freeway design vary between all stakeholders ranging from do nothing to building a double deck freeway.



## BALANCING ACCESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

I-94 is closely tied to some of the region's most valuable economic and cultural resources. I-94 provides the best access to the premier destination of the state, downtown Milwaukee. Reliable freeway access maintains Milwaukee's ability to attract economic development. I-94 provides access to many thriving neighborhoods, business districts, and recreational destinations in Wisconsin.



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## SCHEDULE

### 2014

- Public meeting in June
- State Fair in August
- Draft EIS complete and available for public review
- Public hearing likely before the end of 2014

### 2015 and beyond

- Final EIS prepared and made available for review
- Record of Decision issued mid-2015
- **(and, if a build alternative is chosen)**
- Engineering, real estate and utility issues addressed
- Construction is not likely until 2019 and is dependent on many factors

# ALTERNATIVES

Below is a brief overview of alternatives WisDOT is considering for the project. WisDOT has eliminated some alternatives based on public feedback, engineering and traffic considerations, impacts, and costs.

## WEST LEG, FROM 70TH STREET TO THE STADIUM INTERCHANGE

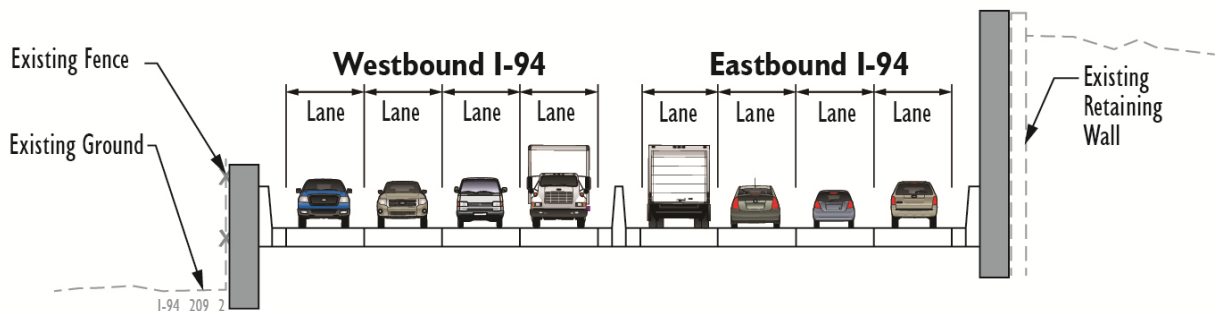
The 68th Street and 70th Street exit and entrance ramps will remain generally the same.

WisDOT is considering two alternatives in the cemetery area both of which avoid relocating any graves.

- **AT-GRADE ALTERNATIVE - ADDING A LANE IN EACH DIRECTION BY CONVERTING THE OUTSIDE SHOULDER TO A 4TH LANE.**

- Each lane will be 11 feet wide, rather than the desirable or preferred 12 feet.
- New shoulders, both inside and outside of the travel lanes, will be only 1.5 foot wide rather than the desirable or preferred 12 foot wide.
- Both the current Hawley Road and Mitchell Boulevard Interchanges will have to be removed.
- This alternative is considerably less expensive than the double deck alternative, potentially less disruptive to the Soldier's Home National Historic Landmark, and less complicated to construct.
- Interstate Safety Analysis has shown a 30 percent higher crash occurrence rate for an alternative featuring 11 foot lanes and 1.5 foot shoulders when compared to an alternative featuring 12 foot lanes and standard width shoulders.

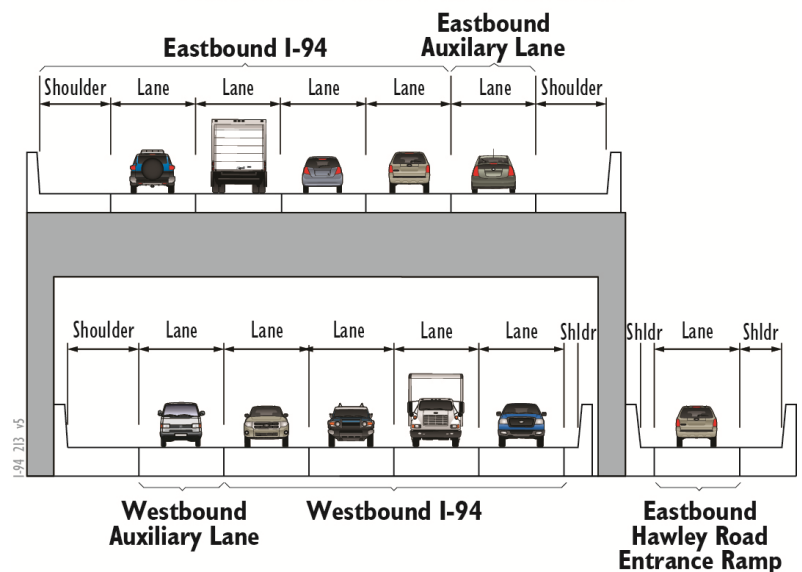
### Cross Section of At-grade Alternative Between Cemeteries



- **DOUBLE DECK ALTERNATIVE - BUILDING A DOUBLE DECK FREEWAY (ROUGHLY BETWEEN 64TH STREET AND MITCHELL BOULEVARD).**

- One set of freeway lanes would be located over the other set of lanes.
- WisDOT's traffic analysis indicates that if each direction had four freeway lanes plus one or two more for traffic entering or exiting the freeway at adjacent interchanges, this design alternative meets all project purpose and need objectives.
- This alternative is safer and would have less congestion than the at-grade alternative.
- The Hawley Road Interchange will remain open; Mitchell Boulevard Interchange will be relocated to the east.
- This is a more costly alternative, and would take longer to build.
- The double deck would be more visible to the adjacent cemeteries, businesses, and neighborhoods than would the at-grade alternative.

### Cross Section of Double Deck Alternative Between Cemeteries



# ALTERNATIVES (CONTINUED)

## EAST LEG, STADIUM INTERCHANGE TO 16TH STREET

- Under this alternative, drivers travelling north-south through the Stadium Interchange, as well as those turning left onto I-94 from either the north or south, would pass through a new traffic signal.
- Traffic exiting I-94 would flow freely (no traffic signal) to Miller Park Way.
- Northbound US 41 traffic will not be able to exit at Wisconsin Avenue.
  
- WisDOT plans to replace the Mitchell Boulevard Interchange with a new interchange embedded within the Stadium Interchange connecting to a local street west of Miller Park Way.
  - This interchange will provide similar access to what is provided by the existing Mitchell Boulevard Interchange, but about one-half mile to the east.
  - It will provide access to adjacent neighborhoods, businesses, the VA complex, and Miller Park parking lots.
  
- **OFF-ALIGNMENT ALTERNATIVE**
  - Maintain freeway access to 35th Street.
  - Use braided ramps to allow I-94 traffic to safely use the closely-spaced Stadium Interchange, the 35th Street Interchange and the reconfigured 27th Street Interchange.
  - I-94 will move a few hundred feet south of its current location from approximately 30th Street to 18th Street. This would improve safety and operations on I-94, and will displace two more businesses south of I-94 than would the on-alignment alternative.
  
- **NEARLY ON-ALIGNMENT ALTERNATIVE**
  - Maintain freeway access to 35th Street.
  - Use braided ramps as outlined above.
  - Keep the reconstructed freeway as close to the existing freeway lanes as possible.
  - Retains the current ramp pattern near 27th Street (25th/26th/28th/St. Paul.)

## HOW THE AREA BETWEEN THE CEMETERIES MAY BE BUILT

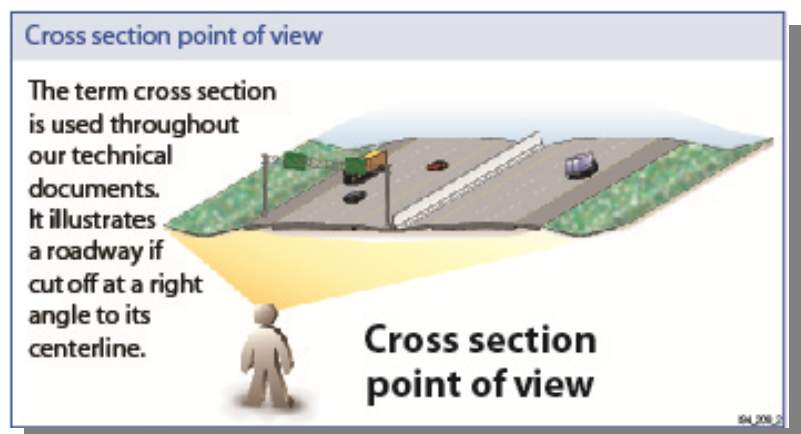
WisDOT will not move any graves from the three adjacent cemeteries as a result of this project.

In evaluating the at-grade and double deck alternatives, a number of factors help WisDOT determine which alternative will be selected. Those include, but aren't limited to: how do they improve safety and congestion, construction cost, long-term operations and maintenance costs, construction duration, "constructability" (will freeway closures be needed? if so, for how long? will traffic need to be diverted elsewhere during reconstruction?), fire protection and life/safety issues, visual impacts to adjacent neighborhoods, and impacts to the Soldiers Home National Historic Landmark. WisDOT continues to work with stakeholders to assess concerns and suggestions regarding this area.

There are three alternatives being considered. There are significant geometric design and cost differences between them.

- **"ALL UP" DOUBLE DECK:** the lower roadway would be at the existing grade of I-94, with the upper deck elevated - \$275-\$325 million\*
- **"PARTIALLY DOWN" DOUBLE DECK:** the lower roadway can only be placed about eight feet below the existing grade - \$300-\$350 million\*
- **AT GRADE:** the roadway will be reconstructed at approximately the same elevation - \$110 million\*

*\*Costs are represented in 2013 dollars, for the entire west leg, including the cemetery section.*



# FREQUENT TOPICS OF CONVERSATION

## TRANSIT

*How is transit currently funded in Milwaukee County?*

From the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) website:

MCTS receives funding for its operations from four sources – passengers (also advertising and other related income) account for 35 percent. The State of Wisconsin provides 43 percent, the federal government provides 11 percent, and Milwaukee County property taxes contribute about 11 percent.

## LOCAL ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

Money used to fund freeway improvements cannot be used to maintain local roads. If WisDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) choose a lower cost alternative for the I-94 corridor, the additional money or cost savings cannot be used for local roads under current WisDOT and FHWA policy and by Wisconsin statute.

# FOR MORE INFORMATION

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WisDOT SE Region  
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Waukesha, WI 53187-0798

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**EMAIL:** Jason.Lynch@dot.wi.gov

# RELOCATION

If your home or business has been contacted about displacement by this project, and you have any questions, please feel free to call the WisDOT real estate representative. Please note that it is still in the study phase and properties shown as potential relocations may or may not be impacted when the final design is developed.

Dan Vaclav  
WisDOT SE Region Real Estate  
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**Proposed redesign of the Stadium Interchange, looking southwest**

Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
Southeast Region  
P.O. Box 798  
Waukesha, WI 53187-0798



Printed on partially  
recycled paper

# YOU ARE INVITED

## OPEN HOUSE MEETINGS

Same information both nights - come when it is most convenient for you!

Monday, June 16, 2014 - 3:00pm - 7:00pm  
Pettit National Ice Center - Hall of Fame Room (2nd floor)

500 S. 84th Street, Milwaukee

*Enter off of 84th Street*

MCTS Route 67

Tuesday, June 17, 2014 - 5:00pm - 8:00pm

Marquette University High School - cafeteria

3401 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee

*\* use Henke Center entrance in parking lot on Michigan Street*

MCTS Routes 10, 35, 30