



SCOPE OF WORK
A REGIONAL
FREEWAY SYSTEM
RECONSTRUCTION STUDY
FOR SOUTHEASTERN
WISCONSIN

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SEWRPC STAFF MEMORANDUM

SCOPE OF WORK

A REGIONAL FREEWAY SYSTEM RECONSTRUCTION STUDY FOR SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN

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SEWRPC Staff Memorandum

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INTRODUCTION

At the request of the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission will lead an effort to prepare a plan and program for rebuilding the regional freeway system in the 21st Century. A key objective of the effort is to develop a broad understanding of the emerging freeway system needs and, based upon that understanding, and the development and evaluation of alternative freeway reconstruction plans, build a regional consensus on the desirable scope of a freeway reconstruction plan and program. Widespread agreement on the plan and program will be sought. Particularly important will be endorsement of the plan and program by the seven county boards of supervisors in the Region in the form of potential amendments to the currently adopted regional transportation system plan for the year 2020.¹

The Commission directed that the staff respond to the Secretary's request by preparing a scope of work of the proposed study. That scope of work includes statements of the need for, and purpose of, the freeway study; a description of the technical work to be undertaken to support the findings and recommendations that are intended to come out of the study; an organizational framework for conducting the study, including an advisory committee structure and efforts to appropriately involve State, county, and local officials and the general public as the study is being conducted; a timetable for the conduct of the study; and a determination of the steps to be followed to secure the desired endorsement of the plan and program developed under the study.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is funding the study, including Commission staff work and funding to enable the Commission to retain consultants to assist, in particular, the Commission and the Department in developing cost and impact estimates associated with proposals to rebuild and redesign the regional freeway system.

¹ See *SEWRPC Planning Report No. 46*, A Regional Transportation System Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin: 2020.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

The present regional freeway system, which totals 273 miles, is shown on Map 1. This system was built in stages over the period 1953 through 1995. Map 2 shows the year that each segment of the regional freeway system was opened to traffic. The following summarizes the primary reasons why it is important to focus attention on this system as the 21st Century begins:

1. Age of Important Segments of the Freeway System

Many portions of the regional freeway system, including some of the most heavily traveled segments and interchanges, are approaching the end of their economic and functional lives. While the Wisconsin Department of Transportation is engaged in a multi-year program of resurfacing these key segments, the Department has indicated that such resurfacing efforts are “stop-gap” in nature, providing for the continued functioning of the segments only through the first five-to-10 years of the 21st Century. At that time, efforts need to begin to rebuild these key freeway segments from the “bottom up.” Such rebuilding efforts will provide an opportunity to reconsider important aspects of the design of the system. It is critical that careful attention be given to design and related capacity issues, since the large capital investment that will be made in the early part of the 21st Century to rebuild the freeway system may be expected to functionally serve the residents and businesses of southeastern Wisconsin for the next 50 years.

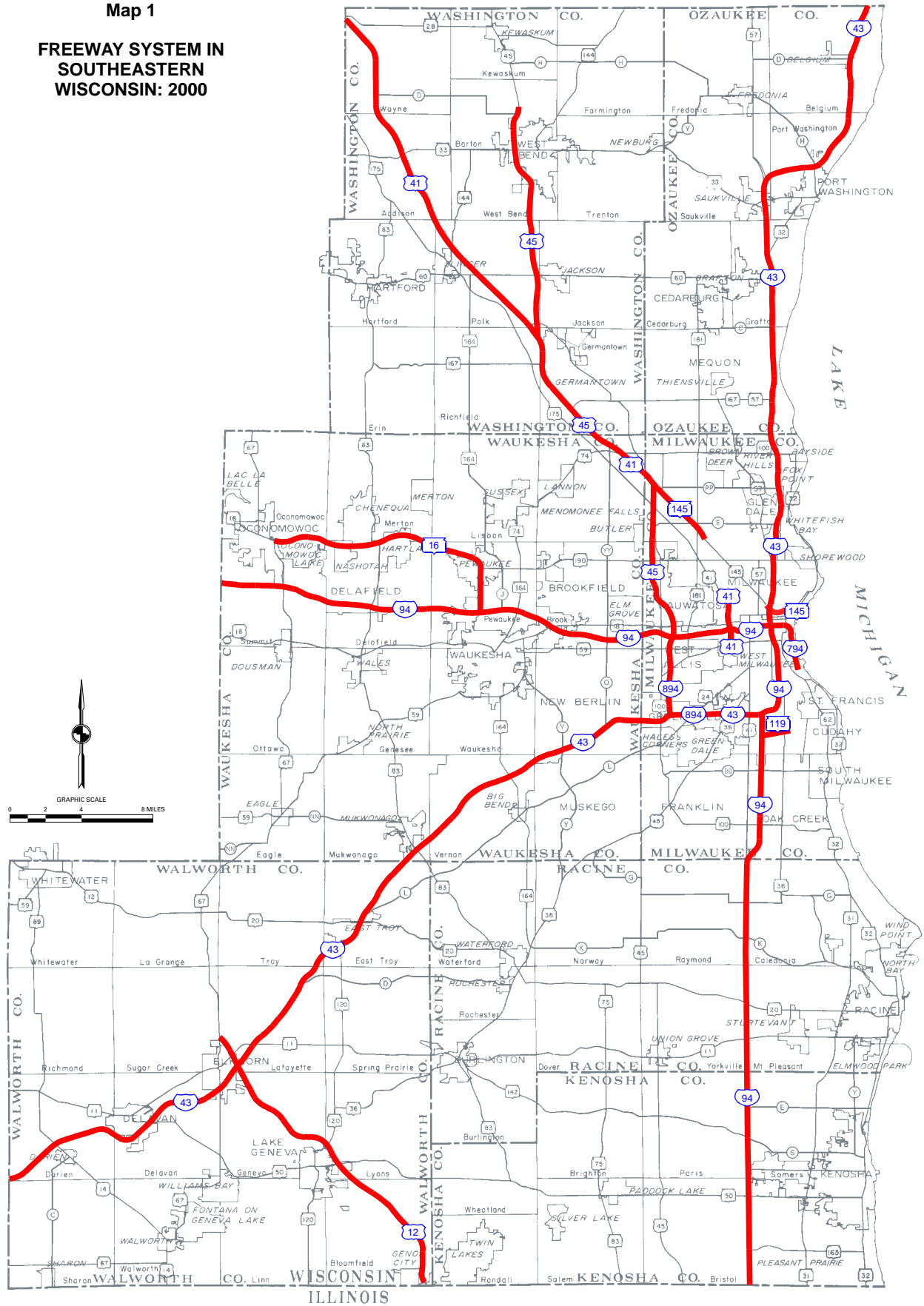
2. Relative Importance of the Freeway System

The network of arterial streets and highways presently serving the southeastern Wisconsin Region approximates 3,277 miles. That network is used to accommodate about 92 percent of daily tripmaking in the Region, with remaining 8 percent representing trips made by transit (3 percent), school bus (4 percent) and bicycle and walking (1 percent). Of the total network, freeways represent 273 miles, or 8 percent. On an average weekday in southeastern Wisconsin, there are nearly 36 million vehicle miles of travel. Of that total, 13 million miles, or 36 percent, are made on the freeway system. Clearly, freeways are the most critical element of the regional travel facility system and deserve focused attention.

3. Obsolescence of Freeway System Design

The oldest and most heavily traveled segments of the regional freeway system do not meet modern freeway design standards. Obsolete design features include left-hand entrance and exit

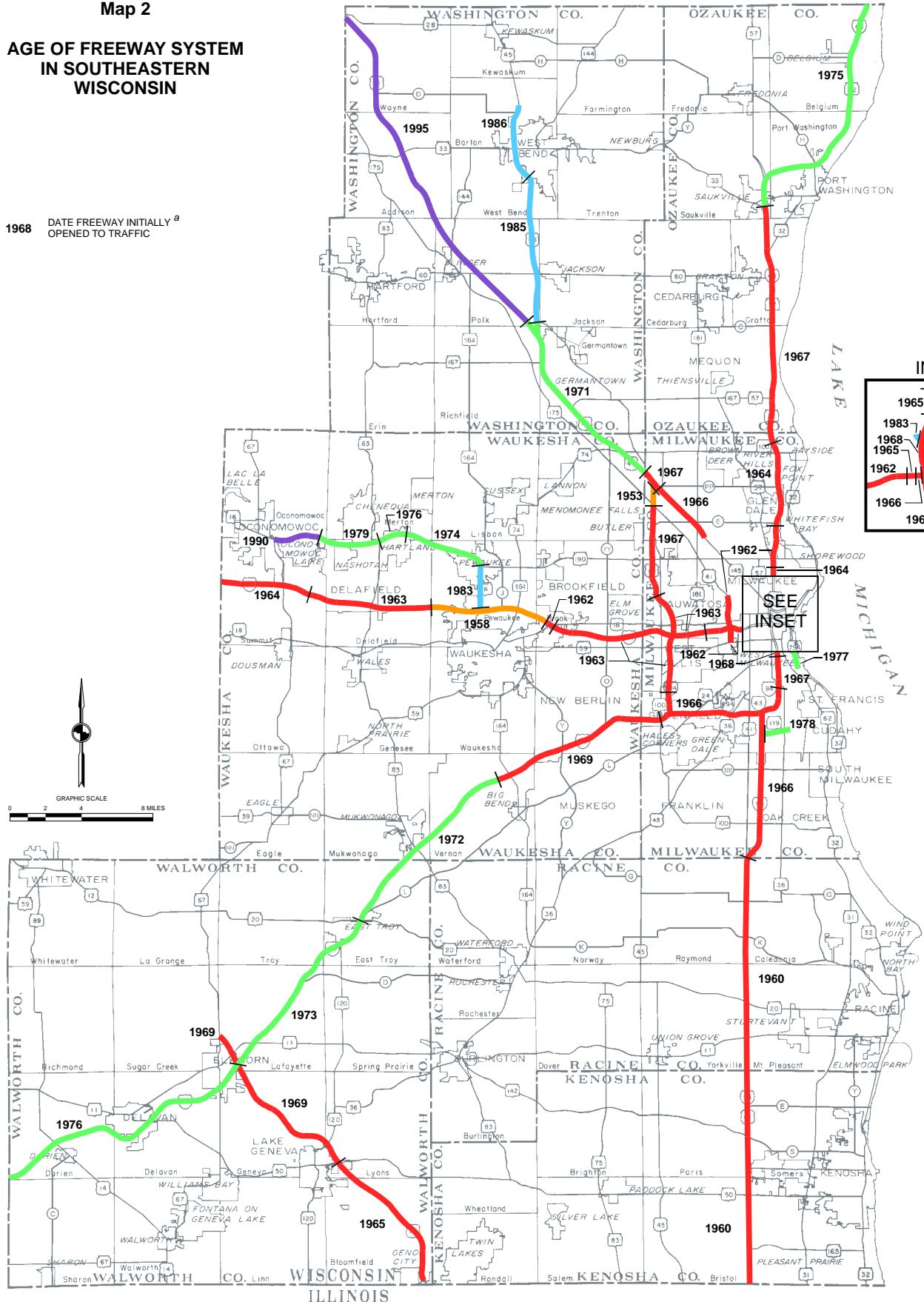
Map 1
FREEWAY SYSTEM IN
SOUTHEASTERN
WISCONSIN: 2000



Source: SEWRPC.

Map 2 AGE OF FREEWAY SYSTEM IN SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN

1968 DATE FREEWAY INITIALLY^a
OPENED TO TRAFFIC



^a The Stadium Freeway South between IH 94 and National Avenue was reconstructed in 1999. Other short segments of the freeway have been reconstructed, including IH 43 between Henry Clay Street and Bender Road.

Source: SEWRPC.

ramps, lane drops at interchanges, inadequate merging and diverging lane lengths, inadequate shoulders and lateral clearance, substandard horizontal and vertical curvature, and sections where traffic “weaving” movements create traffic congestion and hazardous driving conditions. The need to totally rebuild these oldest freeway segments provides a rare opportunity—once every 30 to 50 years—to carefully examine each substandard design feature and seek appropriate corrective measures. Such a course of action has become particularly important because the regional freeway system that is in place today is not expected to be significantly expanded. Rather, the present system will be called upon to serve the Region for many years to come, carrying traffic volumes substantially—up to two times—in excess of the volumes that were anticipated when these freeway segments were originally designed.

4. Traffic Congestion on the Freeway System

Relatively congestion-free travel is an important measure of the quality of life in any metropolitan region. While daily traffic congestion on the freeway system serving southeastern Wisconsin does not yet approach that of other, more notorious metropolitan freeway systems in the Nation, congestion problems in southeastern Wisconsin are beginning to mount and travel times are beginning to increase. The congestion increases travel costs and safety hazards. Moreover, the congestion makes the system increasingly unreliable as a basic element of the regional transportation system. The need to rebuild major portions of the regional freeway system in the coming years presents a rare opportunity to carefully examine traffic congestion problems and, wherever practical, seek appropriate solutions to those problems.

PURPOSE AND OVERALL SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The basic purpose of the regional freeway study would be to develop a regional consensus on how best to rebuild the freeway system to serve the needs of southeastern Wisconsin well into the 21st Century. It is not expected that unanimity in sentiment and belief regarding difficult freeway issues will be achieved, although such a result would be highly desirable. Rather, it is expected that a course of action supported by most of the concerned parties can be identified. Freeways have areawide significance, serving multiple municipalities, counties, and states, and carrying traffic through the Southeastern Wisconsin Region, as well as through the State of Wisconsin. Consensus achievement is most appropriately determined by the positions taken on the issues by the legislative bodies of the seven counties comprising

the planning region, as areawide units of government, and by State government. In turn, those positions would best be taken with knowledge of the positions on specific freeway issues taken by the legislative bodies of local municipalities, particularly those municipalities within which the freeway facilities lie.

To achieve the basic purpose of consensus determination in this matter will require at least the following work efforts:

1. Information and Education

Achieving a consensus requires that all parties concerned who are expected to contribute to that consensus are fully informed about the subject matter. In the case of the regional freeway study, those individuals expected to participate in the consensus seeking process include elected officials at the State, county, and local levels of government; appointed officials serving county and local government, including administrators and managers, public works directors, engineers, and planners; leaders from the business and industrial community; leaders from community-based organizations; and members of the general public. A significant effort must be made to develop an information base attendant to the regional freeway system that will make it possible for such individuals to become fully informed about freeway system problems and potential actions to address such problems. In this respect, information needs to be developed and disseminated concerning the relative importance of the regional freeway system in accommodating daily travel and transportation needs in the metropolitan area; the extent to which the transit mode of travel—whether by rail or bus—can be expected to contribute to meeting regional travel and transportation needs; the extent to which technology in the form of “intelligent transportation systems” (ITS) can be expected to help accommodate travel demand; and the extent to which the present freeway system has significant design deficiencies which contribute to safety and congestion problems.

2. Development of a Freeway System Reconstruction Plan

Achieving a consensus also requires that a definitive plan for functionally rebuilding the regional freeway system be prepared and disseminated. The process of preparing that plan must include consideration of alternatives, including an alternative that would simply replace existing freeway segments and interchanges in kind. The freeway system reconstruction plan and, in particular, the reconstruction alternatives considered, will need to be coordinated with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation’s preliminary engineering study of the Marquette interchange.

While system level in nature, the plan must be created upon an information base that permits a ready understanding of the practical differences between the alternatives considered. Moreover, while it is intended that the plan be prepared with the design year 2020 in mind, recognition must be given to the fact that the facilities proposed to be rebuilt are expected to have a functional life for at least the first half of the 21st Century.

3. Development of a Freeway System Reconstruction Program

Achieving a consensus also requires that the plan for rebuilding the regional freeway system be accompanied by a program designed to outline the approximate time schedule for the freeway reconstruction effort and the financial resources that will be required to support that effort. Given the areawide nature of freeway facilities, it is expected that most, if not all, of the funds required to carry out the plan will be secured from Federal and State transportation resources. Consequently, the program must clearly outline for Federal and State elected officials the requirements for funding.

4. Consensus Seeking Process

The process to be followed in seeking a consensus on a plan and program to rebuild the regional freeway system must be structured and clearly understood. As the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for southeastern Wisconsin under Federal transportation law, the Regional Planning Commission has the responsibility to sponsor the required planning effort. The Commission is empowered under State law to appoint advisory committees to help guide its planning efforts. In this case, the planning effort involves seeking possible amendments to the presently adopted regional transportation system plan for 2020. For the envisioned freeway study effort, a broad policy-based committee structure is appropriate. Accordingly, a new advisory committee will be created to guide the consensus seeking effort. As described in more detail later in this document, a number of techniques to broaden government official and citizen participation in the work effort will supplement the work of the advisory committee.

It is intended that the advisory committee's recommendations for rebuilding the freeway system and for possible regional plan amendment be considered by the seven county boards of supervisors and--in four cases--by the county executives concerned. The Commission will work with each county to structure an appropriate process for seeking the views of the chief elected

officials and legislative bodies of cities, villages, and towns prior to taking county action on the advisory committee's recommendations. The actions of the seven county boards will then be taken into account by the Regional Planning Commission in any needed effort to amend the adopted regional transportation system plan. Following any necessary Regional Planning Commission action, the resultant plan and program will be forwarded to the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, and ultimately to the State Legislature and Governor, for consideration at the State level of government.

MAJOR WORK ELEMENTS

Since the regional freeway system rebuilding planning and programming effort is to be set within the context of the adopted regional transportation system plan for 2020, much of the technical work required to be undertaken involves data extraction from, refinement of, and extension of, work that was completed by the Commission in 1997. The envisioned work effort does not involve setting a new plan design year with attendant new forecasts of population and economic activity and of travel. Consequently, it is anticipated that the technical work can be readily accomplished by the Commission staff, working with the staff of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and such consulting assistance as may be necessary to conduct certain inventories and to help develop reasonable cost estimates associated with alternative freeway rebuilding scenarios.

The following work elements are envisioned to be undertaken:

1. Overview of the Regional Transportation System

This work element is intended to develop an information base that will provide all parties concerned with a comprehensive overview and good understanding of the regional transportation system. Drawing from the 2020 regional land use-transportation study, the existing regional transportation system will be definitively described, including the regional arterial street and highway system, as well as the regional freeway subsystem, and the regional public transit system. The amount of travel by automobile and truck on the freeway and surface arterial street systems, and on the public transit and bicycle and pedestrian systems will be presented. The present relative importance of each of these systems in providing for personal mobility, the movement of goods, and the delivery of services will be quantitatively addressed. The role each of these systems performs as part of the regional transportation system will be described.

Finally, this work element will include a descriptive analysis of the financial resources that are presently used to support the development and operation of the regional transportation system. This analysis will include an examination of the allocation of such resources to the highway and transit modes of travel.

From the material developed under this work element, transportation system findings and conclusions concerning the importance and performance of the freeway system will be presented for consideration by the Advisory Committee. These findings and conclusions will relate to the essentiality of focusing attention and resources on the rebuilding of the regional freeway system without in any way diminishing parallel efforts to deal with the needs of the remainder of the arterial street and highway system and with other modes of travel.

2. Description of the Extent and Condition of the Freeway System

This work element will consist of a definitive description of the extent and condition of each major segment of the regional freeway system. Specific information is to be developed on the age and condition of the pavements and bridges comprising each segment of the system. From this information, the expected life of each freeway segment will be ascertained, thereby contributing to an understanding as to when each segment is likely to reach the end of its physical and functional life and to thereby require reconstruction.

3. Description of the Function of the Freeway System

This work element will consist of a definitive description of the relative function of each major segment of the regional freeway system. Information will also be presented on the current jurisdictional and Federal aid classification of each freeway segment. More specifically, information relating to function to be developed would include, by freeway system segment, existing and anticipated traffic volumes, average length of trips, and the origins and destinations of the trips. Based upon this information, findings and conclusions will be presented as to the fundamental function served by each major freeway segment, placing each segment within the context of the larger regional, state, and interstate freeway system. These findings and conclusions will provide information for consideration with respect to which level of government—state or county—should have the principal responsibility for contract operations and maintenance of each freeway segment.

4. Assessment of Freeway System Need for Design and Capacity Improvements

This work element will develop an information base, on a segment-by-segment basis, to permit an assessment to be made relative to needs for design and capacity improvements on the freeway system. Data will be collated from available sources with respect to design deficiencies, traffic accidents, traffic volumes, traffic capacities, traffic levels of service, and traffic congestion.

With respect to geometric design deficiencies and attendant problems, a set of geometric design standards will first need to be agreed upon. Those segments of the freeway system which do not meet the design standards will then be identified. The potential design deficiencies and problems include inappropriate lane drops at interchanges and other locations, substandard merging and diverging lane lengths, inadequate shoulders and lateral clearance, substandard horizontal and vertical curvature, the existence of left-hand exit and entrance ramps, the existence of rural design sections where urban design sections would now be appropriate, and other design inadequacies. Design deficiencies will be described and mapped as appropriate, summarizing such deficiencies by freeway segment.

A descriptive analysis of traffic safety problems on the freeway system will be prepared. Data will be collated on the number and type of accidents on each major segment of the freeway system. Accident rates will be computed. The historic trend in number of accidents and accident rates on freeways by segment and location will be identified.

Traffic capacity and congestion problems will be ascertained on a segment-by-segment basis, under historic and current conditions. The traffic capacity and congestion problems will be described by freeway segment with respect to the number of weekday hours during which congestion is occurring or has occurred, as well as the severity of the congestion problems. Traffic congestion will be defined by comparing total average weekday traffic volumes to total average weekday design capacities, by comparing morning and afternoon peak traffic hour volumes to hourly capacity, and by comparing hourly traffic volumes during other periods of the day to hourly capacity. The degree of severity of traffic congestion will be expressed in terms of levels of service, including a description of traffic conditions and estimated average speed of traffic. The effects of systemwide freeway traffic congestion will be illustrated by developing freeway system travel time contours between various points within the Region under historic and

current conditions. Also, the growth and change in surface arterial peak-hour traffic as compared to freeway peak-hour traffic will be presented.

The analysis will also address traffic congestion and travel time conditions anticipated on the regional freeway system by the year 2020. The projected future traffic volumes and congestion on the freeway system will be analyzed under several different scenarios in order to define the probable range in future regional freeway traffic volumes and conditions. More specifically, the analysis will be structured so as to identify the potential effects of various nonfreeway improvements—including transit--on future freeway traffic volumes and traffic congestion problems. At least the following potential nonfreeway improvements will be included in the analysis:

- No improvement in the arterial street and highway or transit systems serving southeastern Wisconsin.
- Implementation of the surface arterial street and highway and transit system improvements and expansions proposed in the adopted 2020 regional plan
- Implementation of the surface arterial street and highway and transit system improvements recommended in the year 2020 plan, modified to include also implementation of the light rail facility evaluated by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in the recently completed Major Investment Study for the East-West travel corridor, other extensions of light rail transit in corridors identified as candidates for such improvements in the regional plan, and development of the complete commuter rail transit system in those corridors identified in the regional plan as candidates for such improvements.

The foregoing scenarios would be evaluated under an assumption that the future land use development pattern in the Region would approximate that set forth in the adopted year 2020 regional land use plan. The potential future trends in growth and change in weekday freeway traffic volumes under the range of scenarios will be identified and compared to the historic trend in freeway traffic volumes on a total daily and hourly basis.

From the material developed under this work element, findings and conclusions would be developed and presented with respect to: a) the potential future range of traffic volumes and congestion levels which likely will occur on the regional freeway system by the year 2020; b) the relative importance of each element of the regional transportation system in accommodating future year 2020 travel demand; c) the extent to which transit and surface arterial street and highway improvements may be expected to affect future traffic volumes and congestion levels on the regional freeway system; and d) the extent to which technology may be expected to help meet future traffic demands without adding system capacity.

5. Design and Evaluation of Alternative Freeway System Reconstruction Plans

Under this work element, alternatives for rebuilding the freeway system will be developed and evaluated. Those alternatives will address the identified design, safety, and congestion problems. With respect to appropriate segments of the freeway system, the alternatives are expected to include the following:

- Reconstruction in-kind with no improvements.
- Reconstruction with limited redesign to address safety problems and geometric design deficiencies.
- Reconstruction with substantial redesign to address safety problems and geometric design deficiencies.
- Reconstruction with substantial redesign to address safety problems and geometric design deficiencies and with additional traffic lanes to address congestion problems.

In addition to the foregoing system level analyses, special analyses may be undertaken with respect to alternatives identified by the staff and Advisory Committee as a result of the consideration of freeway design, safety, and congestion problems. These alternatives may include the addition or removal of freeway-to-surface arterial street interchanges, the limitation of movements at freeway-to-surface arterial street interchanges adjacent to freeway-to-freeway

interchanges, and the removal of existing freeway segments and addition of new freeway segments.

The evaluation will include identifying benefits and costs, including construction costs; the effect of the specified level of improvements on traffic volumes and congestion levels and traffic safety on both the freeway system and the surface arterial street and highway and transit systems; needed right-of-way acquisition and attendant disruption of land uses; the effect of improvements on the provision of transit services; and environmental impacts, including air pollutant emissions and land use, developed at the system level of analysis. A special study to identify the impacts of freeway design and congestion on freeway traffic safety may be expected to be conducted.

The costs of each alternative will be estimated on a segment basis and summed to provide a system level understanding of the total costs that would be incurred. The costs of each alternative will be compared to anticipated funding levels, resulting in a determination of potential funding shortfalls. The anticipated available funding will be drawn from fiscal analyses presented by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in the recently completed State highway plan.

The analyses will be coordinated with any freeway preliminary engineering studies which may be underway at the same time, including the Marquette Interchange and Park East Freeway terminus.

6. Selection of a Recommended Freeway System Reconstruction Plan

Based upon the findings of the inventories and analyses, and the evaluation of alternatives, a recommended freeway system plan will be formulated, described, and evaluated. The recommended plan may be expected to be derived from the careful consideration of the evaluation of alternative freeway system improvements. The Advisory Committee will be asked to endorse a preliminary recommended plan and authorize the staff to take that preliminary plan through a public review process culminating in public hearings. While the overall public participation process attendant to this work effort is described in more detail later in this memorandum, it is expected that the preliminary recommended plan will, at a minimum, be presented at a series of public informational meetings; that the preliminary plan will be presented through outreach activities to community and neighborhood groups, business groups, and environmental interest groups; that the preliminary recommended plan will be presented to appropriate groups of State Legislators and to chief elected officials, including county executives

and county board chairs, as well as the public works, transit, and transportation committees representing each of the seven counties in the Region; and to other appropriate local government boards and committees upon request. Following that process, the preliminary plan will be the subject of a series of public hearings where all parties concerned will be able to make their views known.

Based upon the record established through the foregoing process, the Advisory Committee will be asked to configure a final recommended freeway system reconstruction plan. It is expected that such a plan would propose actions to be implemented along each freeway segment. All improvements to the freeway system recommended in the plan will need to proceed to preliminary and final engineering, including environmental review and clearance procedures, prior to implementation.

7. Preparation of a Recommended Freeway System Reconstruction Program

Under this work element, a program will be developed that will aid all parties concerned in understanding both the time schedule over which it may be expected that specific freeway segments would be rebuilt, and of the anticipated source of financial resources that will be required to accomplish the reconstruction effort. This will involve setting priorities for the reconstruction work needed to accomplish the entire freeway system reconstruction plan, assessing the ability to accomplish the reconstruction in accordance with anticipated revenue availability, and identifying any critical gaps in financial resources that need to be filled in order to assure a smooth, functional transition from the current freeway system in the year 2000 to the planned freeway system by about the year 2020. It is envisioned that the program will generally identify the freeway segments to be reconstructed, including identifying within that schedule the time required to undertake engineering and environmental studies by five year periods. A preliminary draft of the reconstruction program will be prepared and presented for public review as a companion document to the recommended preliminary freeway reconstruction plan. As necessary following the public review process, the program will be adjusted to reflect the final freeway system reconstruction plan recommendations.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

It is proposed that the freeway study be organized as follows:

1. Study Sponsor

The study would be sponsored by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission as the designated metropolitan transportation planning organization (MPO) for the Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha metropolitan areas. The Commission would work closely with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in carrying out that study.

2. Study Staffing

The Regional Planning Commission staff would provide the primary technical resource for conducting the study. The Commission's Assistant Director will be designated as the principal staff member responsible for the conduct of the study. The District staff of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation will also be expected to contribute significantly to the study, particularly with respect to identifying freeway design and operational deficiencies, providing traffic accident data, and developing freeway reconstruction cost estimates. The Commission will also retain engineering consulting services to assist in data collection and analyses efforts, in developing estimates of selected impacts associated with alternative freeway reconstruction proposals, and in developing cost estimates associated with those proposals.

3. Advisory Committee

The Regional Planning Commission will create a Regional Freeway System Advisory Committee to provide policy guidance in the conduct of the study, including the identification and evaluation of alternatives and the selection of a recommended plan. The Advisory Committee will include appropriate representatives of state, county, and local government, the metropolitan Milwaukee business and labor communities, and the environmental and university communities. The Advisory Committee will be chaired by a member of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND OUTREACH EFFORTS

The regional freeway system reconstruction study will be carried out in such a way as to facilitate the active participation of public officials, business and civic leaders, environmental and community groups, and other concerned and interested citizens and parties. Public involvement throughout the study is viewed as being critical to its successful completion. A proactive approach to public involvement will be undertaken. This will include the complete and open sharing of information in the form of clear documentation of study findings and recommendations, timely public notice of meetings and hearings, opportunities for early and continuing involvement of interested parties in the planning process, broad public outreach, and responsive consideration of public input.

The Regional Planning Commission maintains a continuing relationship with the University of Wisconsin-Extension for the purpose of facilitating public involvement in its programs. Toward this end, an experienced Extension agent is assigned to work full time with the Commission staff. That agent will be charged with the responsibility of structuring in detail and managing this public involvement program. The Extension agent will work with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, District 2, and central office public information staff. These efforts will be in addition to the involvement of agencies and groups through participation on the study Advisory Committee.

The public involvement program is expected to include at least the following:

1. Initial Public Involvement

Efforts will be made to inform public officials and the general public at the onset of the study as to the purpose and scope of the study. Informational materials will be developed and distributed.

2. Interaction With Community Representatives

It is expected that mechanisms will be developed to provide group and individual briefings throughout the study to elected officials, key public agency staff members, business and industrial leaders, and community and organization leaders.

3. Community Outreach Activities

Efforts will be made to interact with community groups. This will include neighborhood and community organizations, chambers of commerce, environmental groups, service clubs, and similar organizations. Presentations and slide shows will be developed and offered to such groups with appropriate speakers.

4. Briefing of State Legislators

At key points in the study, briefings will be held for the Region's State legislators on the study findings and recommendations.

5. Mailing List

An effort will be made to develop and maintain a mailing list of individuals interested in the progress of the study. This will help ensure that those individuals receive appropriate informational materials as well as notices of public informational meetings and public hearings.

6. Promotion of Media Understanding and Reporting

An effort will be made to involve the press and electronic media at appropriate points in the study process. This will include development of meeting announcements, news releases as information becomes available, background information, media kits, and briefings to ensure that media representatives are kept abreast of the study progress.

7. Publication and Description of Reports and Materials

Copies of the reports and related materials developed in the study, as well as executive summaries of key reports, will be made available to individuals on the mailing list and will be placed in local libraries for public examination and review. A site on the Worldwide Web may also be established to facilitate information dissemination.

8. Public Informational Meetings and Public Hearings

As the Advisory Committee develops its preliminary recommended plan and program for rebuilding the regional freeway system, it is expected that a series of public informational meetings and hearings will be scheduled throughout the Region. This will allow for public review and comment on the work of the Committee and provide the major vehicle by which the

comments and opinions of residents and groups in the Region can be obtained and considered by members of the Advisory Committee.

9. Public Participation Record

The Extension agent will be responsible for compiling and maintaining a full record of public participation activities and all of the comments received through the established channels for public review and comment. This will include letters, E-mail, and comments made at public meetings and hearings. This record will be made available for review by Advisory Committee members and others so that such comments can be taken into account in the decision-making process.

STEPS TO BE TAKEN TO SECURE PLAN AND PROGRAM ENDORSEMENT

The following are the major steps that are envisioned to be taken to properly conduct the freeway reconstruction study and to achieve a basic consensus on the scope and content of the freeway reconstruction plan and program:

1. Formation of Advisory Committee

The Commission will take steps to formally create a broad-based Advisory Committee.

2. Conduct of Technical Phase of the Study

Working with the Advisory Committee, the Commission and Department staffs will carry out the technical work required to properly complete the study. A series of Advisory Committee meetings will be held for the purpose of obtaining Advisory Committee review, consideration, comment, and approval of the study materials and findings developed by the study staff.

3. Public Involvement Companion Effort

Concurrently with the technical work, the Extension agent will structure and manage the public involvement program previously outlined. That program will be appropriately coordinated with progress on the technical aspects of the study.

4. Release of Preliminary Recommendations

At the completion of the technical phase of the work, the Advisory Committee's preliminary recommendations with respect to the freeway reconstruction plan and program will be released for public review and comment. In addition to a series of public informational meetings, special efforts will be made at that time to provide detailed briefings to key public and private officials and groups, particularly including the public works, highway, and transportation committees of the seven county boards of supervisors.

5. Conduct of Public Hearings

A set of public hearings on the preliminary recommended plan will be held and a record of those hearings prepared and disseminated.

6. Determination of Final Advisory Committee Recommendations

After reviewing the record of public involvement, including the comments and positions made known through the public hearings, the Advisory Committee will formulate a final recommended freeway system reconstruction plan and program. Those final recommendations will be set forth in an appropriate document and distributed to all parties concerned.

7. Review and Action by County and Local Governments
on the Advisory Committee's Recommendations

Each of the seven counties in the Region will be asked to formally take a position on the Advisory Committee's recommendations. This means working through the normal county review and approval process, including submittal of a formal request for consideration of this matter to the county board chairman, referral to an appropriate county committee, recommendation by that committee, consideration of that committee's recommendation by the full county board of supervisors, and—in those cases where counties have county executives—action by the county executive on the county board's determination. As a part of this county review process, the Commission will, upon request, work with each county to structure an appropriate methodology for ascertaining the positions of individual local units of government in the county on the Advisory Committee's recommendations. It is expected that within each county, the county boards and county executives will want to encourage local governmental units to consider the matter and make their positions known in a timely manner.

8. Consideration of the Actions of the Counties by the Regional Planning Commission

Once each county board has completed its action on the Advisory Committee's recommendations, the Regional Planning Commission will give formal consideration to the actions of the counties and make a final set of recommendations to the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. The Commission may choose, before making its recommendations, to refer the matter back to the Advisory Committee for further review and comment in light of county determinations. The Commission's recommendations, including any needed amendment to the adopted regional transportation system plan, will be documented in a final report. With the transmittal of that final report to the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the study process will have been formally concluded.

TIME SCHEDULE

It is intended that the work effort for the freeway reconstruction study be completed within 15 months of the time of initiation of the study. A tentative schedule for the work is set forth on Figure 1. It is recognized that this is an ambitious schedule and that, in particular, the process of obtaining county determinations on this matter may extend the period for several months.

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