Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Freeway System Reconstruction Study and Recommended Plan

Myths and Facts

May 2003

Myths to be Addressed

- The Regional Planning Commission is only concerned with planning for freeways. (page 4)
- Multimodal alternatives to widened freeways, like expanded public transit and rail transit systems, have not been considered, and if considered, could solve the Region's freeway congestion problems. (page 5)
- While SEWRPC plans recommend improvements to elements of the regional transportation system other than the regional freeway system, those recommended improvements are never implemented. (page 7)
- The freeway study recommended plan is not a part of an overall transportation plan, or package of transportation improvements. (page 7)
- Other metropolitan areas are not planning freeway system capacity expansion - it has only been proposed for the freeways of Southeastern Wisconsin. (page 9)
**Myths to be Addressed - continued**

- Further study is needed at this time regarding reconstruction of the regional freeway system. The freeway study plan will provide final decisions as to what will ultimately be built, and therefore, there is a need now to further consider freeway reconstruction alternatives with respect to rebuilding to modern design standards and additional lanes. (page 9)

- There were no opportunities for public input until the end of the freeway reconstruction study. (page 11)

- The Cities of Milwaukee and Glendale have rejected, and oppose, the recommended plan - including rebuilding the freeway system to modern design standards and the widening of 127 miles of freeways in Southeastern Wisconsin. (page 14)

- The reconstruction of the regional freeway system under the recommended plan would benefit only outlying suburban counties, and not Milwaukee County. (page 15)

- The costs associated with the proposed freeway system design and design-related safety improvements to meet modern design standards are not justified. (page 15)

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**Myths to be Addressed - continued**

- The cost to reconstruct the regional freeway system is too expensive due to the proposed additional lanes. (page 16)

- IH 94 in Milwaukee County is proposed to be reconstructed as a “double-decker” freeway through Wood National Cemetery, and Wood National Cemetery will be significantly impacted. (page 17)

- The right-of-way and property tax base impacts of the proposed additional freeway lanes are significant, particularly for Milwaukee County. Moreover, the estimates of right-of-way acquisition prepared under the study are not complete, and additional right-of-way will be required for the relocation of electric power transmission lines and for stormwater runoff mitigation. Also, the right-of-way and property tax base impacts of the recommended plan must be under-estimated as they are less than that of Alternative 6 from the IH 94 East-West corridor study completed in the late 1990’s which proposed modernizing the freeway and building special high occupancy vehicle lanes on the freeway. (page 20)
**Myths to be Addressed - continued**

- The proposed additional lanes will have little impact on freeway traffic congestion and delay. (page 23)
- The forecast increase in freeway traffic congestion is acceptable because much of the increase in congestion is expected to be moderate (not severe or extreme) congestion. (page 25)
- Rebuilding the freeway system with additional lanes will result in negative impacts on local surface arterial streets with local businesses by reducing traffic on those streets. (page 26)
- The study has not considered whether the proposed additional freeway lanes will improve freeway traffic safety. (page 27)
- Adding freeway capacity would just induce additional travel and offset any expected congestion reduction benefits. (page 27)

**Myths to be Addressed - continued**

- The proposed additional lanes will result in increased air pollutant emissions and decreased air quality in Southeastern Wisconsin. (page 28)
- Rebuilding the freeway system under the recommended plan will have a significant impact on wetlands and primary environmental corridors. (page 29)
- The recommended plan will result in more impervious area, and the runoff of a greater quantity and poorer quality of stormwater. (page 30)
- The proposed widening of 127 miles of the Region’s freeways will result in more urban sprawl. (page 30)
**Myth - The Regional Planning Commission is only concerned with planning for freeways.**

**Fact -** The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has been conducting comprehensive regional land use and transportation planning efforts for over 40 years, and the Regional Freeway System Reconstruction Study is one element of those comprehensive planning efforts.

- The study of the freeway system is being conducted within the context of the entire regional transportation system and regional land use and transportation system plans.

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**Fact (continued)**

**SEWRPC regional plans recommend**

- "Smart" land use growth at regional and neighborhood levels
- Substantial expansion of public transit
  - A 70 percent expansion of bus-miles of transit service
  - Development of rapid and express transit services
  - Consideration of rail alternatives to bus in key corridors
  - Establishment of dedicated funding
- Efforts to improve transportation system efficiency
  - Actions to use fully the capacity of the existing transportation system—freeway traffic management, curb parking restriction, and traffic engineering
  - Actions to promote and enhance alternatives to drive alone automobile travel—promotional programs and marketing, transit vehicle priority and innovative fare systems, and detailed neighborhood and site planning
- Surface arterial street and highway improvements
  - 405 miles of widened arterials
  - 124 miles of new arterials
Fact (continued)

- The freeway reconstruction study recommendations will be added to these recommendations of the regional plan.
- SEWRPC will, as always, work for, monitor, and report on implementation of all elements of the regional transportation and land use plans.
  - Land Use
  - Public Transit
  - System Efficiency Actions
  - Surface Arterial Streets
  - Freeways

Myth - Multimodal alternatives to widen freeways, like expanded public transit and rail transit systems, have not been considered and, if considered, could solve the Region's freeway congestion problems.

Fact - The study was explicitly structured to consider the widening of the freeway system as a measure of last resort. Before considering adding lanes to the freeway system as it is reconstructed, the study first considered the effects of:

- “Smart” land use growth at regional and neighborhood levels
- Substantial expansion of public transit
  - 70 percent expansion of bus miles
  - Development of rapid and express transit systems including light rail and commuter rail systems
- Actions to improve surface transportation efficiency
- Surface arterial street improvements
- The analysis of these combined actions indicated that a near doubling in freeway system traffic congestion by the year 2020 may be expected even with implementation of these actions.
The study was explicitly structured to consider freeway widening as a measure of last resort, by identifying the freeway traffic volumes and congestion that may be expected even if “smart” land use growth occurs, public transit is significantly expanded, and even if complete light rail and commuter rail systems are implemented. This was done to make clear the choice which this Region and each County faces in rebuilding the freeway system, that is, whether to reconstruct the freeway system to its same capacity and accept substantially increased future freeway traffic congestion, or to rebuild the freeway system with additional lanes to avoid this substantial increase in traffic congestion and provide additional capacity for economic growth.

The findings of the study here in Southeastern Wisconsin are similar to those of other metropolitan areas, specifically, that substantial expansion of public transit may not be expected to have a significant impact on traffic congestion.

FINDINGS OF PORTLAND AND SAN DIEGO TRANSPORTATION PLANS

PORTLAND, OREGON

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>AUTO TRIPS</th>
<th>TRANSIT TRIPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>96.7%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>93.7%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
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TRIP GROWTH (1994-2020)

- NEW TRIPS
- EXISTING TRIPS

PORTLAND, OREGON

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>AUTO TRIPS</th>
<th>TRANSIT TRIPS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>98.9%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>98.2%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>AUTO TRIPS</th>
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<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TRIP GROWTH (1998-2020)

- AUTO TRIPS
- TRANSIT TRIPS
**Myth -** While SEWRPC plans recommend improvements to elements of the regional transportation system other than the regional freeway system, those recommended improvements are never implemented.

**Fact—** Improvements and expansions of other elements of the regional transportation system recommended in SEWRPC plans have been implemented, and continue to be implemented.

- Between 1995 and 2001, transit service expanded by over 20 percent with new service between Milwaukee County and Ozaukee and Washington Counties, new evening service in the Cities of Racine and Waukesha, and expanded service in and between Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties. However, transit service is estimated to have declined by about 4 percent in 2002, and is projected to decline again in 2003. The amount of transit service expected to be provided in 2003 will still be 12 percent greater than that provided in 1995.

- Also, SEWRPC has worked with each transit operator in the preparation of short-range plans, and in the consideration of State-wide high speed rail service and commuter rail service in the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee corridor.

- About 80 miles, or 15 percent, of the 529 miles of planned surface arterial improvements have been implemented since 1995.

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**Myth -** The freeway study recommended plan is not a part of an overall transportation plan, or package of transportation improvements.

**Fact -** The freeway reconstruction study is being conducted within the context of the adopted regional land use and transportation plans. The final recommendations of the freeway reconstruction study will become part of the recommendations of those plans, and will not replace or diminish any other regional land use or transportation plan recommendation.
Regional land use and transportation plans currently recommend:
- "Smart" growth at regional and neighborhood levels
- Substantial expansion of public transit
  - A 70 percent expansion of bus-miles of transit service
  - Development of rapid and express transit services
  - Consideration of rail alternatives to bus
  - Establishment of dedicated funding
- Continued and expanded efforts to make more efficient use of the transportation system
  - Actions to use fully the capacity of the existing transportation system—freeway traffic management, curb parking restriction, and traffic engineering
  - Actions to promote and enhance alternatives to drive alone automobile travel—promotional programs and marketing, transit vehicle priority and innovative fare systems, and detailed neighborhood and site planning
- Improved and expanded surface arterial street system
  - 405 miles of widened arterials
  - 124 miles of new arterials

SEWRPC will, as always, work for, monitor, and report on implementation of all elements of the regional transportation plan
- Land use
- Public transit
- Transportation systems and demand management
- Surface arterials
- Freeways
**Myth - Other metropolitan areas are not planning freeway system capacity expansion — it has only been proposed for the freeways of Southeastern Wisconsin.**

**Fact - Southeastern Wisconsin is not unique in considering freeway capacity expansion. In fact, the regional transportation plans of other metropolitan areas include freeway capacity expansion.**

- Portland, Oregon Metropolitan Area - Their regional plan calls for a 17 percent increase in the number of freeway system lane-miles between 1994 and 2020.
- Seattle, Washington Metropolitan Area - Their regional plan calls for a 33 percent increase in the number of freeway system lane-miles between 1998 and 2030.
- The proposed additional lanes in the recommended plan on 127 miles of the regional freeway system represent about a 20 percent increase in the number of freeway system lane-miles over the next 30 to 40 years as the freeway system is reconstructed.

**Myth - Further study is needed at this time regarding reconstruction of the regional freeway system. The freeway study plan will provide final decisions as to what will ultimately be built, and therefore, there is a need now to further consider freeway reconstruction alternatives with respect to rebuilding to modern design standards and additional lanes.**

**Fact - The costs, benefits, and impacts of freeway system reconstruction have been comprehensively addressed under the freeway reconstruction study, including:**

- Construction cost
- Right-of-way
- Freeway traffic congestion
- Air pollutant emissions and air quality
- Land use
- Induced travel
- Surface street traffic
- Traffic safety
- Primary environmental corridors and wetlands
- Travel time delay and reliability
- The expected impacts of the recommended plan on minority and low income populations have also been evaluated.
The freeway study plan will not represent the final approval, or conclusion of study, of freeway reconstruction within Milwaukee County and Region.

- Each 10- to 15-mile segment of freeway will need to undergo multi-year preliminary engineering and environmental impact studies by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

Fact (continued)

- These preliminary engineering and environmental impact studies will consider again reconstruction alternatives, and impacts at a greater level of detail, including County, municipal, and community review and input.
- County and municipal review and input will be solicited, and final decisions as to reconstruction are only made at the conclusion of preliminary engineering.
Myth - There were no opportunities for public input until the end of the freeway reconstruction study.

Fact - Extensive public involvement efforts were conducted throughout the study. The public involvement efforts included:

- Public meetings and hearings (19 total)
- A study Web Site
- Study newsletter (five issues)
- Guidance of a Study Advisory Committee
- Briefings to interested municipalities and groups

Public Involvement – Public Meetings and Hearings

- A total of 19 public meetings and hearings were held in 2001 and 2002, with meetings held in each county of the Region. The meetings were announced in the study newsletter, on the study Web Site, in news releases, and in paid newspaper ads.
  - An initial series of eight public meetings was held in July and August of 2001. At these meetings, information was provided, and input sought, on the following topics:
    - Function of the freeway system
    - Condition of the freeway system and need for reconstruction
    - Freeway system design, safety, and congestion problems and deficiencies
    - Alternatives which may be considered for freeway reconstruction
  - A second series of 11 public meetings was held in May and June of 2002. At these meetings, information was provided, and input sought, regarding the preliminary plan and all alternatives developed for consideration.
Public Involvement – Study Web Site

- A study Web Site (located at www.sewrpc.org/freewaystudy) was established at the beginning of the study. The Web Site includes the following:
  - An opportunity to provide comments electronically and to request future issues of the study newsletter
  - General information regarding the study such as the purpose and scope of the study and the study Advisory Committee membership
  - All materials from the study
    - Summary information
    - Draft report chapters
    - Each issue of the study newsletter
    - Agendas and minutes of study Advisory Committee meetings
    - Presentations provided at study Advisory Committee meetings
    - Announcements of public meetings and hearings
  - Regional Planning Commission staff contact information

Public Involvement – Study Newsletter

- Five issues of a study newsletter were developed and distributed. The newsletters provided information regarding the study as it has progressed, including the following topics:
  1. Scope of the study
  2. Need for freeway reconstruction
  3. Freeway design, safety, and congestion problems
  4. Announcement of initial series of public meetings and alternatives to be considered for freeway reconstruction
  5. Announcement of second series of public meetings and hearings, descriptions and comparisons of freeway reconstruction alternatives considered, and a preliminary plan for freeway system reconstruction
Public Involvement – Study Newsletter (continued)

- The newsletters were distributed widely beginning in March 2001 through April 2002 using a variety of methods
  - Mailed to about 2,000 interested persons
  - Mailed to State senators and representatives of Southeastern Wisconsin
  - Mailed to all county supervisors, city aldermen, village trustees, and town supervisors in the Region
  - Mailed to comprehensive list of media contacts throughout Southeastern Wisconsin
  - Published on study Web Site
  - Distributed at public meetings and hearings

Public Involvement – Guidance of a Study Advisory Committee

The Regional Planning Commission established an Advisory Committee to guide the freeway reconstruction study with the following membership:

- Seven Counties—Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha Counties
- County Executives, County Board Chairs, and Milwaukee County Board Transportation, Public Works, and Transit Committee Chair
- Municipalities—Mayor and Common Council President of Milwaukee; Mayors of Oak Creek, Wauwatosa, and Brookfield
- Business—MMAC and West Bend Chamber of Commerce
- Labor—Teamsters Union
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation
- Federal Highway Administration
- Transportation Development Association
Public Involvement – Briefings to Interested Municipalities and Groups

- In addition to providing briefings to each of the county boards of supervisors in the Region, the Regional Planning Commission offered briefings to each municipality in the Region and provided briefings at the request of any interested group.
- The offer of briefings was accepted by numerous groups and municipalities, and Commission staff provided such briefings to each group and municipality that expressed interest

Myth - The Cities of Milwaukee and Glendale have rejected, and oppose, the recommended plan - including rebuilding the freeway system to modern design standards and the widening of 127 miles of freeways in Southeastern Wisconsin.

Fact - The City of Milwaukee Common Council expressed support for rebuilding the freeway system to modern design standards and for the widening of 108 of the total proposed 127 miles of freeway widening. The Common Council did not support the 19 miles of widening in the preliminary plan attendant to IH 94 between the Zoo and Marquette Interchanges and IH 43 between the Mitchell Interchange and Brown Deer Road. (Resolution Number 011729 April 23, 2002)

- The City of Glendale Common Council expressed opposition to the widening to 8 lanes of IH 43 in the City of Glendale as proposed under the preliminary plan. The Common Council noted the alternative considering the widening of IH 43 to six lanes north of Bender Road in the City of Glendale, but indicated neither support nor opposition. (Resolution June 24, 2002) The final recommended plan includes the widening of IH 43 from four to six lanes north of Silver Spring Drive in the City of Glendale.
Myth - The reconstruction of the regional freeway system under the recommended plan would benefit only outlying suburban Counties, and not Milwaukee County.

Fact - The residents and businesses of Milwaukee County may be expected to benefit substantially from the reconstruction of the regional freeway system under the recommended plan.

- More than 50 percent of the daily traffic on the freeway system in Milwaukee County is made by the residents of Milwaukee County, and another 40 percent of Milwaukee County freeway system daily traffic is traffic to and from Milwaukee County's businesses and industries. The residents and businesses of Milwaukee County will benefit from:
  - Reduced travel times
  - Reduced congestion-related safety problems
  - Increased travel time reliability

Myth - The costs associated with the proposed freeway system design and design-related safety improvements to meet modern design standards are not justified.

Fact - There is a significant cost associated with rebuilding the freeway system to meet modern design standards, but the improvements were recommended because the benefits were viewed as outweighing the cost.

- The existing freeway system was built in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Since that time, there have been decades of experience with, and research on, freeway operations and safety.
More detailed preliminary engineering studies have already been completed for both the Marquette Interchange and IH 94 in Racine and Kenosha Counties. In both cases, design and design-related safety improvements to meet modern design standards were incorporated in the engineering plans for the reconstructed freeways after substantial public input. The design improvements for these two freeway segments represent about one-half of the total estimated cost of design improvements for the entire freeway system. Similar preliminary engineering studies will be conducted for each freeway segment prior to reconstruction.

Reconstruction of a freeway not in compliance with national standards requires that approval be granted by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for each possible exception to the design standards.

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**Myth -** The cost to reconstruct the regional freeway system is too expensive due to the proposed additional lanes.

**Fact -** About $710 million, or about 11 percent, of the total estimated cost of $6.23 billion to rebuild the regional freeway system under the recommended plan is associated with the proposed additional lanes.

- Most of the $6.23 billion cost is associated with rebuilding the existing system capacity to today’s design standards.
- For a modest increase in the construction cost, freeway traffic carrying capacity will be expanded by about 33 percent on freeways widened from 6 to 8 lanes, and by about 50 percent on freeways widened from 4 to 6 lanes.
Construction Cost

$3.37 billion – Base Cost of Reconstruction
$2.15 billion – Cost of Improvements to Meet Modern Design Standards
$0.71 billion – Cost of Additional Lanes on 127 Miles of Freeway
$6.23 billion– Total Construction Cost Over Next 30 Years ($208 million annually)

Note: Costs are reported in year 2000 dollars. Costs include all construction costs, intelligent transportation system (ITS) infrastructure, utilities, right-of-way, traffic mitigation, contingencies, construction management, and design engineering.

Myth - IH 94 in Milwaukee County is proposed to be reconstructed as a “double-decker” freeway through Wood National Cemetery, and Wood National Cemetery will be significantly impacted.

Fact - The construction of the lanes in one direction directly and completely above the lanes in the opposite direction - a “double-decker” freeway- is not proposed. It is proposed that the westbound lanes of IH 94 between Mitchell Boulevard and Hawley Road be elevated - with the westbound lanes to overlap the eastbound lanes and cemeteries to the north by up to 15 to 25 feet.

- This design configuration will be required whether or not additional lanes are provided if grave disturbance is to be avoided and if safety shoulders are to be provided.
Fact (continued)

- As part of the freeway reconstruction, Zablocki Drive (Cemetery Access Road) would be routed under the freeway with Mitchell Boulevard, and its bridge over IH 94 removed. The elevated westbound lanes would be about as high as the current Zablocki Drive (Cemetery Access Road) Bridge.
- By elevating the westbound IH 94 lanes, no removal or relocation of graves and no increase in land dedicated to freeways and streets is likely in Wood National Cemetery.
- Following the completion of the Regional Freeway System Reconstruction Study, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation will consider all reasonable alternatives for the reconstruction of this freeway segment during subsequent, more detailed preliminary engineering and environmental impact studies prior to reconstruction.

Freeway Redesign Configuration of IH 94 between Mitchell Boulevard and Hawley Road

- No land required, or graves disturbed in any cemetery
Freeway Redesign Configuration of IH 94 between Mitchell Boulevard and Hawley Road—Perspective: Looking North from Miller Park-East

**EXISTING DESIGN - EAST**

**PROPOSED DESIGN - EAST**

IH 94 Freeway would be rebuilt to same elevation adjacent to the Story Hill neighborhood.

Freeway Redesign Configuration of IH 94 between Mitchell Boulevard and Hawley Road—Perspective: Looking North from Miller Park-West

**EXISTING DESIGN - WEST**

**PROPOSED DESIGN - WEST**

Westbound IH 94 lanes would only begin to increase in elevation west of Mitchell Boulevard.
Myth - The right-of-way and property tax base impacts of the proposed additional freeway lanes are significant, particularly for Milwaukee County. Moreover, the estimates of right-of-way acquisition prepared under the study are not complete, and additional right-of-way will be required for the relocation of electric power transmission lines and for stormwater runoff mitigation. Also, the right-of-way and property tax base impacts of the recommended plan must be under-estimated as they are less than that of Alternative 6 from the IH 94 East-West corridor study completed in the late 1990s which proposed modernizing the freeway and building special high occupancy vehicle lanes on the freeway.

Fact - The estimated right-of-way and attendant property tax base loss impact is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>To Meet Modern Design Standards</th>
<th>To Add Lanes</th>
<th>Total*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residences</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>201*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Buildings</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governmental Buildings</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Tax Base Impact</td>
<td>$143 million</td>
<td>$51 Million</td>
<td>$194 Million*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*162 residences, or 81 percent, in Milwaukee County.
*17 commercial buildings, or 61 percent, in Milwaukee County.
*All three structures are owned by Milwaukee County.
*$134 million, or 69 percent, in Milwaukee County. Of this $134 million property tax base impact in Milwaukee County, $87 million is due to freeway modernization (including $55 million in Marquette Interchange alone) and $47 million is due to additional freeway lanes. The $134 million in property tax base loss represents 0.33 percent of the $40.8 billion property tax base of Milwaukee County. The estimated property tax base impact is the total cost of right-of-way acquisition less the cost of the 3 government buildings to be acquired. It is conservatively high, as it includes acquisition administration and relocation costs.
*Includes all right-of-way needed for freeway reconstruction, including for electric power transmission line reconstruction and relocation and stormwater mitigation.
Fact (continued)

- The amount of right-of-way acquisition estimated to be necessary for additional lanes is significantly less than that needed to correct freeway design standards.
- Two portions of the freeway system have already proceeded through preliminary engineering and their attendant right-of-way acquisition has been approved: Marquette Interchange and I-94 in Kenosha and Racine Counties. This already approved right-of-way acquisition includes 34 of the 201 residences, 14 of the 28 commercial buildings, and $90 million of the $194 million property tax base impact.
- Property tax base impact in Milwaukee County
  - $87 million to meet modern design standards
    ($55 million in Marquette Interchange already approved)
  - $47 million to provide additional lanes
  - $134 million Total

Fact (continued)

- The total $134 million property tax base impact represents a 0.33 percent reduction in Milwaukee County property tax base over 30 years as the freeway system is rebuilt, or about a 0.01 percent annual reduction. Milwaukee County property tax base has been growing at about 1.5 percent annually from new construction and at about 4.0 percent annually including inflation.
- In addition, the property tax base impact may not represent a loss in tax base. Aldrich Chemical, which will be acquired as part of the Marquette Interchange, will be building a new plant in the City of Milwaukee.
Fact (continued)

- No additional land or property acquisition beyond that already identified under the study - residential, commercial, or other - will be required for the relocation of utility transmission towers or to address stormwater management issues.
- The estimates of right-of-way requirements prepared under the study already did account for any right-of-way needed to address stormwater management such as stormwater detention ponds and any necessary relocation of utility facilities.

Fact (continued)

- Also, the estimated right-of-way acquisition and property tax base reduction is significantly greater under Alternative 6 in the East-West Corridor Study because Alternative 6 in the East-West Corridor Study proposed the construction of special barrier-separated high occupancy vehicle lanes. The special lanes included their own safety shoulders and separating barriers and their own exclusive interchanges with on- and off-ramps and as a result require a freeway right-of-way which is a minimum of 30 feet wider than the freeway right-of-way as is currently proposed under the recommended plan.
**Myth -** The proposed additional lanes will have little impact on freeway traffic congestion and delay.

**Fact -** The proposed additional lanes will permit the Region to avoid a near doubling in freeway traffic congestion which will occur by the year 2020 if the freeway system is reconstructed without the proposed additional lanes.

### Freeway Traffic Congestion—Benefit of Proposed Additional Lanes

(Forecasts of freeway traffic volume and congestion consider freeway widening as a measure of last resort, as they identify the freeway traffic volume and congestion expected even with smart land use growth, substantially expanded public transit, and improved surface arterial streets)
Avoid a doubling of travel delay on the freeway system by the year 2020

Avoid a 15 to 40 percent increase in freeway system peak hour travel times by the year 2020

Address safety problems due to traffic congestion — rear-end crash rates are 5 to 15 times higher on congested freeway segments

Increase freeway system travel time reliability

Avoid significant increases in traffic volumes and congestion on surface arterial streets and attendant adverse neighborhood impacts

Provide additional capacity for economic growth

Statements have also been made that the freeway system should not be built with additional lanes as the additional lanes may reduce congestion and travel delay by only a few to 5 minutes. While this may be true for short trips on the freeway system, including, for example, trips on I-94 between the Zoo and Marquette Interchanges, the increase in travel delay, which will be avoided for many trips on the freeway system will be much more than 5 minutes if additional lanes are not provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trip Description</th>
<th>Current Free-Flow Travel Time</th>
<th>Current Peak-Hour Travel Time</th>
<th>Additional Peak-Hour Travel Time by Year 2020 if Additional Lanes Not Provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Side of Milwaukee to Downtown Milwaukee</td>
<td>17 minutes (total travel time of 30 minutes)</td>
<td>13 minutes</td>
<td>9 minutes (total travel time of 39 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest Milwaukee County to Northeast Milwaukee County</td>
<td>24 minutes (total travel time of 34 minutes)</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>8 minutes (total travel time of 42 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Mitchell Airport to Northwest Side of Milwaukee</td>
<td>22 minutes (total travel time of 33 minutes)</td>
<td>11 minutes</td>
<td>11 minutes (total travel time of 44 minutes)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the above example trips are entirely within Milwaukee County.
**Myth** - The forecast increase in freeway traffic congestion is acceptable because much of the increase in congestion is expected to be moderate (not severe or extreme) congestion.

**Fact** - Freeway traffic congestion may be categorized in three levels:
- Extreme - stop-and-go bumper-to-bumper traffic averaging 20 to 30 mph or less.
- Severe - speeds reduced by up to 15 mph and extremely difficult to change lanes.
- Moderate - speeds reduced by up to 5 mph and difficult to change lanes.

Much of the forecast increase in freeway traffic congestion is expected to be moderate congestion, but even freeways forecast to be moderately congested should be a concern.
- The level of congestion on a freeway experiencing moderate congestion can quickly become severe or extreme with even a small disruption in traffic flow—a motorist making a poor merge or lane change or a vehicle stopped on the shoulder.
- The forecasts of freeway traffic volume and freeway congestion levels are for the year 2020, but the reconstructed freeway system may be expected to last about 50 years prior to requiring reconstruction again.

### Existing 1999 and Forecast Year 2020 Freeway Traffic Congestion

(Forecasts of freeway traffic volume and congestion consider freeway widening as a measure of last resort, as they identify the freeway traffic volume and congestion expected even with smart land use growth, substantially expanded public transit, and improved surface arterial streets.)
As a result, any growth in traffic must be carried on surface arterials, which will in time result in increasing congestion on surface arterials. As surface arterials become congested, motorists will use travel routes on local residential streets and travel through neighborhoods.

Fact - The freeway system is carrying traffic volumes equal to its capacity during morning and afternoon rush hours, and without additional lanes, will in the future increasingly do so as well during hours surrounding the rush hour, the mid-day, and the evening.

- As a result, any growth in traffic must be carried on surface arterials, which will in time result in increasing congestion on surface arterials.
- As surface arterials become congested, motorists will use travel routes on local residential streets and travel through neighborhoods.

Fact (continued)

- Providing additional capacity on the freeway system (33 percent capacity expansion for 6 to 8 lanes and 50 percent capacity expansion for freeways widened from 4 to 6 lanes for about a 13 percent increase in freeway reconstruction cost) will avoid increasing traffic congestion on surface arterial streets and through traffic in neighborhoods.
- Peak period travelers tend to know well the freeway and arterial system and businesses along arterial streets. If they want to go to those businesses, they will choose the arterial street to make the trip regardless of freeway conditions.
**Myth -** The study has not considered whether the proposed additional freeway lanes will improve freeway traffic safety.

**Fact -** The proposed additional lanes included in the recommended plan may be expected to result in substantial congestion-related safety benefits.

- The existing rear-end crash rate on congested freeway segments is five to 15 times higher than that experienced on uncongested freeway segments.
- The highest rear-end crash rates are experienced on the most extremely congested freeway segments.
  - The rear-end crash rate is so high on extremely congested freeway segments that rear-end crashes on these freeway segments account for more than 70 percent of all freeway accidents.

**Myth -** Adding freeway capacity would just induce additional travel and offset any expected congestion reduction benefits.

**Fact -** The proposed additional freeway capacity is not expected to induce more travel over the existing situation.

- Adding freeway lanes may be expected to result in levels of congestion in the year 2020 which are only modestly less than current levels of congestion. Therefore, adding freeway lanes cannot be expected to induce more travel over the existing situation.
- Review of historic traffic growth in Southeastern Wisconsin including the period during which the freeway system was first constructed and significantly reduced both peak and off-peak period travel times indicates that nearly 90 percent of historic traffic growth was a result of factors such as economic and household growth and changing population lifestyles, and not travel which was “induced.” This finding is based on both SEWRPC and U.S. Department of Transportation research.
**Myth -**  The proposed additional lanes will result in increased air pollutant emissions and decreased air quality in Southeastern Wisconsin.

**Fact -**  Whether the freeway system is rebuilt with or without additional lanes will have a negligible impact on the level of transportation system ozone-related and other air pollutant emissions and air quality.

- Similar levels of regional vehicle traffic are expected with or without additional lanes—only more or less under congested conditions and on freeways as opposed to surface arterials. Slightly less air pollutant emissions are expected if the freeway system is rebuilt with additional lanes due to lower levels of congestion, and less inefficient vehicle operation.

### Comparison of Estimated Air Pollutant Emissions under Freeway Reconstruction Alternatives—Forecast Year 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freeway Reconstruction Alternative</th>
<th>Southeastern Wisconsin (7 County) Year 2020 Forecast Air Pollutant Emissions (Tons per Hot Summer Weekday)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volatile Organic Compounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebuild to Modern Design Standards</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommended Plan (includes proposed additional lanes)</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Includes all vehicle transportation emissions and fuel consumption from the seven county Region street and highway system traffic: freeways, surface arterial streets, and collector and land access streets.*
Transportation system ozone-related air pollutant emissions have been significantly declining and are projected to continue to decline even with increasing traffic. This is principally a result of new motor vehicle standards for air pollutant emissions – “tailpipe technology”.

Southeastern Wisconsin—6 County Severe Ozone Nonattainment Area

Transportation Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tons per Hot Summer Weekday</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transportation Nitrogen Oxides (NOx)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tons per Hot Summer Weekday</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: These projections have been reviewed and approved by both the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Myth - Rebuilding the freeway system under the recommended plan will have a significant impact on wetlands and primary environmental corridors.

Fact - Impact on Wetlands and Primary Environmental Corridor Under Recommended Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>To Meet Modern Design Standards</th>
<th>To Add Lanes</th>
<th>Total*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wetlands</td>
<td>38.2 acres</td>
<td>5.4 acres</td>
<td>43.6 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Environmental Corridors</td>
<td>67.5 acres</td>
<td>6.8 acres</td>
<td>74.3 acres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The estimated total area of wetlands in southeastern Wisconsin is 273,100 acres and of primary environmental corridors is 297,000 acres. The wetlands and primary environmental corridors affected by the recommended plan represent 0.015 percent of total wetlands and 0.025 percent of total primary environmental corridors. Any wetland loss would need to be mitigated, or replaced, as is standard State process. Moreover, nearly 60 percent of the affected wetlands and primary environmental corridor lands under the recommended plan are located along IH 94 in Kenosha and Racine County and are attendant to unbraiding IH 94 freeway on- and off-ramps from frontage roads - a design improvement which has already undergone preliminary engineering and received design and environmental approval.
**Myth -** The recommended plan will result in more impervious area, and the runoff of a greater quantity and poorer quality of stormwater.

**Fact -** The reconstruction of the regional freeway system even with design improvements and additional lanes may be expected to result in improved conditions with respect to freeway stormwater runoff compared to the existing situation.

- Substantial advances in stormwater management have been made since the freeway system was originally designed and constructed.
- The Wisconsin Department of Transportation now requires that stormwater management issues be properly addressed.
- Recent reconstruction efforts including the North Interchange and Miller Park Way in Milwaukee County have included the implementation of measures to improve freeway stormwater runoff conditions.

**Myth -** The proposed widening of 127 miles of the Region’s freeways will result in more urban sprawl.

**Fact -** Little or no effect on land use is anticipated due to the proposed widening of 127 miles of the Region’s freeways.

- There are numerous other factors that much more significantly contribute to decentralization.
- Potential effect of transportation on decentralization is complex.
- Little change from existing freeway traffic congestion levels expected under recommended plan.
There are numerous other factors that contribute to decentralization

Studies of urban decentralization and opinion surveys have found other factors unrelated to transportation have more significantly contributed to decentralization:

- Rising affluence
- Preferences for single family homes and larger lots
- Cost of living
- Schools
- Environmental amenities
- Pace of life
- Perceived and/or actual crime and safety
- Societal changes
- Industrial restructuring
- Information technology

Transportation probably receives attention primarily because it is one of the few factors subject to some control by government.

Potential effect of transportation on decentralization is complex

It has been argued that reduced congestion will contribute to decentralization, but it should also be considered that increased congestion may contribute to decentralization.

- Those concerned about decentralization often argue that policies which significantly reduce or eliminate congestion likely contribute to decisions by residents to locate further out on the periphery. They also perceive that increased traffic congestion will result in a reduction in decentralization, and a strengthening of the central city.

- It should also be considered that policies which promote tolerance of significant increases in congestion may contribute to an acceleration of the decentralization of businesses and residents, as well as declines in regional and local economic growth - threatening the resurgence currently being experienced in some central city areas.
Little change from existing freeway traffic congestion levels expected

The proposed additional lanes may be expected to prevent a near doubling of freeway traffic congestion, but may be expected to provide little change - a minor reduction - from existing levels of congestion.

In summary:
- Transportation is not considered a principal, or even significant cause of decentralization.
- The effect of even a significant congestion reduction on decentralization is not clear-cut.
- The proposed additional lanes are not expected to result in a significant reduction in congestion compared to existing levels.
- It should be considered as well that policies which promote tolerance of a significant increase in congestion in central Milwaukee County may encourage decentralization.