

# SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL FREEWAY SYSTEM RECONSTRUCTION STUDY



## In This Issue

The Regional Freeway System Reconstruction Study for Southeastern Wisconsin is well under way. This newsletter is being published to keep you informed of the study’s progress and findings.

The **first issue of this newsletter** was published in March and provided background information regarding the need for, and scope of, the study, as well as the role, makeup, and responsibilities of the Study Advisory Committee.

In this issue of the newsletter you will find:

- Highlights of the study’s findings with respect to the role, function, and need for reconstruction of the regional freeway system of Southeastern Wisconsin.
- An updated study schedule.
- An introduction to our new Web site.

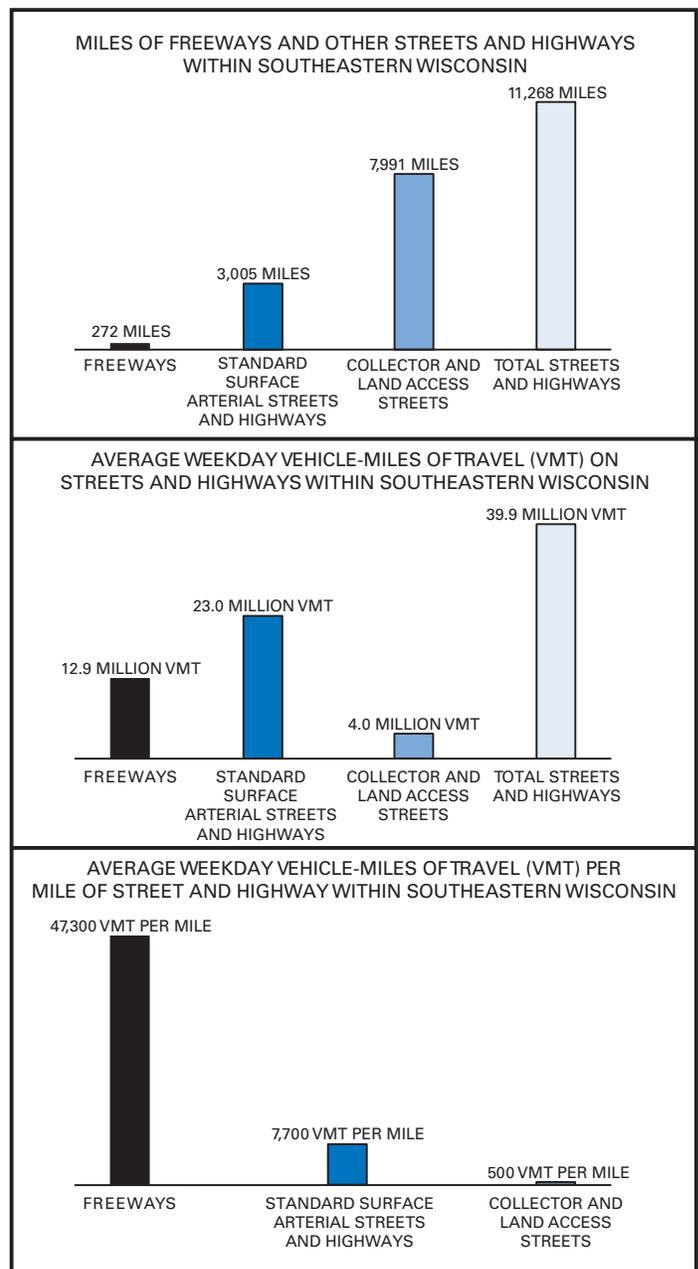
## Overview of the Regional Freeway and Transportation System

The dominant form (almost 95 percent) of all travel within Southeastern Wisconsin on an average weekday is made over streets and highways.

The amount of wear and tear received by the 272 miles of freeway in Southeastern Wisconsin—and the resulting need for reconstruction—is directly related to the number of vehicle-miles traveled over it. Per mile, freeways in the seven-county Southeastern Wisconsin Region carry substantially more traffic than surface arterials and local streets (collector and land access streets).

To summarize, by mileage, freeways comprise only 3 percent of all streets and highways in Southeastern Wisconsin; however, these same freeways carry almost 33 percent of all vehicle-miles of travel, and nearly 30 percent of all travel on an average weekday within Southeastern Wisconsin.

More in-depth discussion about the regional transportation system, regional transportation system funding, and the Commission’s long-range regional plans for land use and transportation, can be found on the study’s Web site, [www.sewrpc.org/freewaystudy](http://www.sewrpc.org/freewaystudy).



## Function of the Freeway System

The freeway system of Southeastern Wisconsin functions to serve travel within the Region by the residents and businesses of Southeastern Wisconsin, and to serve longer-distance statewide and interstate travel. Nearly 214 miles, or 80 percent, of the 272 miles of the freeway system are considered by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation as “Corridors 2020 Backbone” routes, essential to connecting the State’s population and economic centers to one another and to national and international markets. Also, nearly 173 miles, or 65 percent, of the freeway system are federally designated interstate highways, intended to connect the nation’s principal metropolitan areas, cities, and industrial centers.

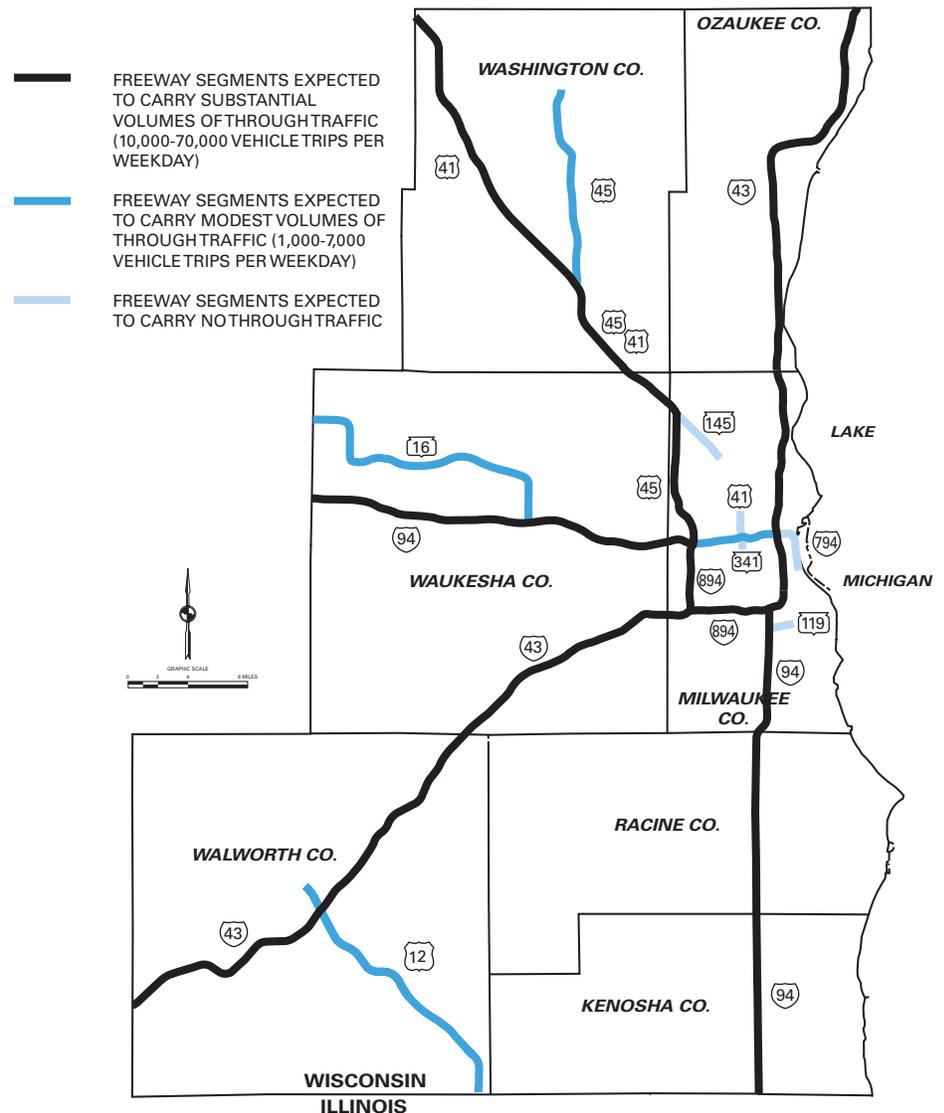
The freeway system also functions to provide high-speed and high-capacity access to intermodal passenger and freight facilities within Southeastern Wisconsin. These facilities include Milwaukee County’s General Mitchell International Airport, the Port of Milwaukee, Amtrak passenger stations, a Metra passenger train station in the City of Kenosha, and intercity bus stations in the City of Milwaukee.

The importance of the freeway system to business and industry is apparent from a comparison of the location of the freeway system and the location of jobs within Southeastern Wisconsin.

Vehicle travel on the freeway system across Southeastern Wisconsin can be characterized in one of three ways according to whether travel is:

- **“Local”**—both ends of the trip over the freeway are located within the county within which the freeway is located.
- **“Intercounty”**—one end of the trip is located within the county within which the freeway is located and the other end is located outside the county.

## CLASSIFICATION OF FREEWAY SYSTEM WITH RESPECT TO FORECAST AMOUNT OF YEAR 2020 THROUGH TRAFFIC CARRIED



- **“Through”**—both ends of the trip are located outside the county within which the freeway is located.

In the year 2020, all segments of the freeway system may be expected to carry significant volumes of local traffic and intercounty traffic. Most segments of the freeway system also may be expected to carry substantial volumes of through traffic; however, most stub or spur freeways may be expected to carry no through traffic and predominantly serve local traffic.

## The Need for Reconstruction

Construction of the regional freeway system began in 1952. Most of the system was built in the 1960s and the early 1970s. The freeway pavement was designed with a service life of 40 to 50 years. The original freeway concrete pavement was designed to last 20 to 25 years. Two asphalt resurfacings with patching of the original pavement were expected to extend the life of the pavement for another 20 to 25 years, with the first resurfacing having a service life of 12 to 15 years, and the second having a service life of eight to 10 years.

The freeway system pavement has performed well, with the actual service life of the original pavement and the first resurfacing largely meeting the anticipated design life. However, beginning this decade, the service life of the pavement of some of the first-constructed segments of the freeway system will require reconstruction. By 2003, approximately 135 miles, or 50 percent, of the regional freeway system will have been patched and resurfaced twice, and upon deterioration, will require reconstruction.

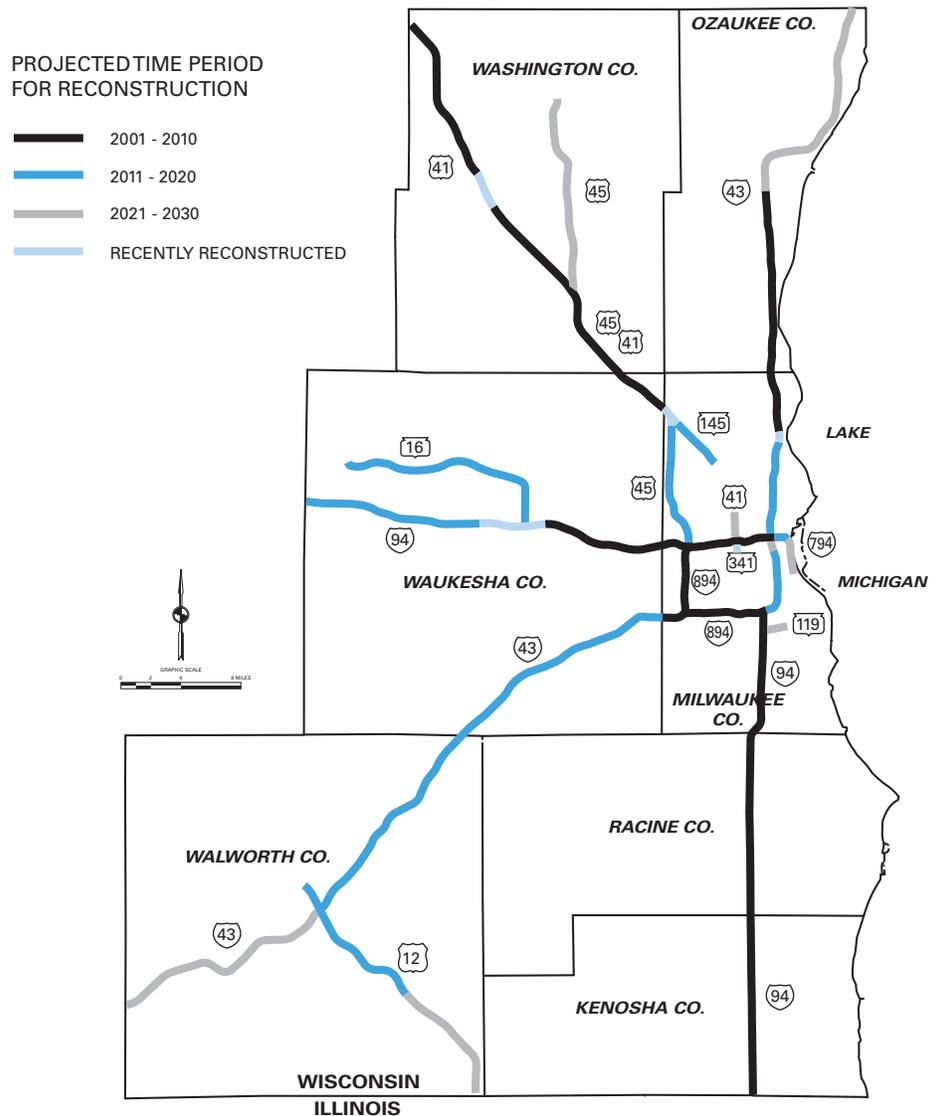
Of the approximately 272 miles comprising the freeway system:

- 113 miles of pavement may be expected to require reconstruction between the years 2001 and 2010
- 96 miles between 2011 and 2020
- 56 miles between 2021 to 2030.

(Seven miles already have been reconstructed as part of interchange and other improvement projects.)

Along with the freeway pavement, the remaining service life and attendant need for reconstruction of the bridges on the freeway system have been examined.

## PROJECTED TIME PERIOD WHEN RECONSTRUCTION WILL BE REQUIRED ON THE SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN FREEWAY SYSTEM



Bridge age, condition ratings of bridge substructure—the columns that hold up the bridge, and superstructure—the beams that support the bridge riding surface, and allowable bridge loads, have been examined. These evaluations have determined that the anticipated service life of most of the freeway system bridges extends only 10 years beyond that of the freeway pavement. As a result, most of the freeway bridges should be replaced at the time of pavement reconstruction.

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## Web Site for Freeway Study is Now Up and Running

The Web site that is dedicated to reporting in detail the findings of the Freeway System Reconstruction Study for Southeastern Wisconsin can be found at [www.sewrpc.org/freewaystudy](http://www.sewrpc.org/freewaystudy).

Visitors to the Web site will be able to locate:

- The purpose and scope of the study.
- Opportunities to participate in the study.
- Newsletters, chapters and reports—all of which can be downloaded—and meeting schedules.
- Links to related sites.
- Answers to frequently asked questions.

The Web site is updated as new study information becomes available.

An electronic version of this newsletter and other related materials are posted on the Internet. It would be helpful to supply your e-mail address to obtain further information, especially for mailing list additions. Please feel free to contact us via our Web site at [www.sewrpc.org/freewaystudy](http://www.sewrpc.org/freewaystudy) or call (262) 547-6721 for these purposes. Thank you.

## What's Ahead...

The Regional Freeway System Reconstruction Study for Southeastern Wisconsin is guided by an Advisory Committee, which includes elected and appointed local officials, representatives of Federal and State Departments of Transportation, the business and labor communities, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The schedule of the Freeway Reconstruction Study is as follows:

- **May:** Design, safety and congestion problems and reconstruction alternatives
- **June-September:** Evaluation of alternatives.
- **September-October:** Preliminary plan.
- **November-December:** Final plan.

For more information:

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