



Alder Derek Field

Third District

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June 19, 2023

Brett Wallace
Director, Southwest Region
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
2101 Wright Street
Madison, WI 53704

Subject: Milwaukee Street Bridges Replacement

Dear Mr. Wallace:

I represent the more than 14,300 residents of Madison's Alder District 3 on the Far Eastside of Madison, Wisconsin on the Madison Common Council. My district is divided by the I-30/90/94 corridor running north/south. One underpass and two bridges cross this stretch of interstate highway to connect neighborhoods in our district to their neighbors, jobs, and amenities around the Eastside. Thousands of residents cross these routes every day by car, on Metro Transit bus routes D and C, by bicycle, and on foot. The Milwaukee Street bridges over the highway are of particular concern: these bridges' thirty-foot width is insufficient to safely allow the volume and modes of transportation my neighbors use to cross the highway. I had dozens of conversations about this issue with concerned neighbors this spring when knocking doors.

I appreciate the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's recent cooperation with staff in the City of Madison's Department of Transportation to approve a recent lane-change project funded under Safe Streets Madison, which [a contractor began on Tuesday, June 13](#). Prior to this project, the Milwaukee Street bridges only had space for two twelve-foot lanes of traffic and two three-foot shoulders, dangerously shared by growing numbers of pedestrians and bicyclers right next to 35 mph traffic. The Safe Streets Madison project this week moved the three feet of westbound shoulder space to be combined with the eastbound shoulder space, shifting both lanes of traffic three feet north and leaving six feet for a pedestrian through-way on the southern edge of the bridges. However, this arrangement does not leave space for a bike lane or other safe path for bicyclers to travel over the Milwaukee Street bridges. Bicyclers must instead veer into traffic for the length of both bridges and for the stretch of road between them. These bridges are insufficiently wide to separate bike traffic from vehicle traffic and the community is very concerned about the danger this poses to all who travel over the bridges. In the eight weeks since the beginning of my term, the safety of the Milwaukee Street bridges is one of the most frequent concerns I receive from justifiably frustrated constituents.

The Milwaukee Street bridges need to be replaced with wider, safer bridges, and soon. The east side of Madison is growing rapidly, and the neighborhoods in and near District 3 are no exception. The

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Grandview Commons neighborhood continues to fill in along Milwaukee Street, and at least two new mixed-use developments that include housing are approved to begin construction near Milwaukee Street to the east of these bridges. The City's adopted [Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan](#) allows for additional dense developments around Town Center Drive and Metro Terrace, as well as near the Milwaukee Street and Sprecher Road intersection. Further, the City's adopted [Northeast Neighborhoods Development Plan](#) allows for significantly more employment and housing development north of the I-94 corridor east of the Badger Interchange. This growth brings more residents using different modes of transportation to cross the Milwaukee Street bridges.

As part of [WisDOT's I-39/90/94 Corridor Study](#), the Badger Interchange alternatives show a replacement for the Milwaukee Street bridges to make them wider and improve their safety. However, I'm very concerned about the timeline for that work, because I understand that there's a multi-year, multi-biennial budget path ahead before construction of the chosen interchange alternatives will occur. I urge our representatives in the State Legislature to please consider working with WisDOT to move up the timeline for this much-needed project. We all want those bridges to support a safe network that meets my constituents' and our growing community's needs.

Please let me know if you or your staff have any questions for me, and thank you for your consideration.

Derek Field
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Cc: Senator Melissa Agard, Wisconsin Senate District 16
Representative Samba Baldeh, Wisconsin Assembly District 48
Representative Melissa Ratcliff, Wisconsin Assembly District 46
Satya Rhodes-Conway, Mayor, City of Madison
Jael Currie, District 16 Alder, City of Madison
Thomas Lynch, Director, Madison Department of Transportation
Yang Tao, City Traffic Engineer, Madison Department of Transportation
Justin Shell, Administrator, WisDOT Division of Transportation Investment Management
Rebecca Burkel, Administrator, Division of Transportation System Development
North Star Neighborhood Association Board