http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/highway-const-zoo-s5.jpg



Project expected to create between 6,000 and 10,000 jobs in Wisconsin.

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today announced the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) will seek federal approval to resume a project to rebuild an East-West corridor of I-94 from 70th St. to 16th St. in Milwaukee County, giving one of the most congested and dangerous roads in the state a makeover to mitigate safety and congestion problems.



“Investing in our infrastructure is critically important for our economy,” Gov. Evers said. “Moving forward on the I-94 East-West corridor project will mean between 6,000 and 10,000 good jobs and will ultimately save lives, reduce travel times, and help businesses across our state. We know that deferring road maintenance could cost us more down the road and put safety at risk, so getting to work on this project is good common sense.”

The I-94 East-West corridor is a major lifeline for businesses and local economies across the state. The current East-West corridor was designed and built more 60 years ago, intended for significantly less traffic than its current use. The corridor also has a crash rate two and a half

times that of similar state highways, making it a continued safety and congestion concern. WisDOT Secretary-designee Craig Thompson said simply repaving the current segment is not a viable option.

“It would cost about half a billion dollars to rebuild the corridor in its current form and the end product would be nearly as congested and dangerous as before,” Secretary-designee Thompson said. “With the Marquette Interchange complete and the Zoo Interchange nearly completed, the East-West corridor would just become a bottleneck between them. Maintaining a state of good repair and adequately addressing safety and congestion problems along the corridor is essential, and it will also help the state maximize the return on its investments in other sections of I-94.”

Secretary-designee Thompson stressed that the economic benefit of improving the East-West corridor would be felt statewide by impacting daily commuters, recreational travel and tourism, agricultural products, and other freight.

“Almost half of Wisconsin’s exports exit the state through the southeast,” said Secretary-designee Thompson. “Manufacturers and agribusinesses throughout the state rely on that section of highway to get parts and materials in and products out to customers. Making it easier and faster for freight trucks and delivery vehicles to get through the East-West corridor will make businesses all over Wisconsin more competitive.”

WisDOT will reassess alternatives to confirm the preferred option for the segment that would increase safety and improve travel times while preserving local historic grave sites and maintaining the current number of interchanges. In addition to sparing the historic grave sites in the Story Hill neighborhood and maintaining the current number and location of interchanges, the preferred option will not incorporate the “double-decker” design that drew community opposition when the project was last studied in 2015.