



Cavalier Johnson
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

October 7, 2022

Faith Hall
Grant Lead, Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Ms. Hall:

I am writing in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) application for funding through the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program. The RCP funding would facilitate the Reconnecting Milwaukee – Reimagining WIS 175 Feasibility Study to evaluate options for reconnection of communities in the City of Milwaukee that are currently divided by the 1.5-mile stretch of WIS 175 from Wisconsin Avenue to Lisbon Avenue. The highway has a substantial impact on the 19 surrounding neighborhoods and the nearly 51,000 city residents located within one mile of the project corridor.

The project aligns to the Biden-Harris Administration's policies and priorities as well as to USDOT's strategic goals for the RCP program by reconnecting communities divided by transportation infrastructure. The study will focus on safety, economic strength, equity, climate and sustainability, transformation, and organizational excellence and is seeking funds to conduct community-supported planning activities. The project will support and engage economically disadvantaged and traditionally underserved communities to increase affordable, accessible, and multimodal access to daily destinations.

WIS 175 is a remnant of a larger freeway plan that never fully materialized. WIS 175, in its current configuration as a stub end, divides neighborhoods and residents, separating them from opportunity, services, and amenities. It poses safety and operational issues through high crash rates; mobility issues for local traffic, bicycles, pedestrians; and creates a barrier to commercial connectivity and other everyday destinations. The City of Milwaukee will be a key partner in this study to lead comprehensive engagement input and to create and evaluate innovative alternatives. Reimagining WIS 175 will connect Washington Park to the surrounding neighborhoods. It will unlock economic value and it will reconnect neighborhoods, providing opportunities for multimodal transportation, not just for cars.

We commend USDOT for recognizing the need to reconnect communities by reimagining transportation facilities. WisDOT, Milwaukee County, City of Milwaukee and multiple stakeholders are aware and supportive of one another's applications. Funding these proposals would make an even greater impact towards removing physical and socioeconomic barriers. The City of Milwaukee fully supports WisDOT's application for the funding of Reconnecting Milwaukee – Reimagining WIS 175 Feasibility Study. Please give this 2022 RCP funding proposal your full consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cavalier Johnson', with a stylized, flowing script.

Cavalier Johnson
Mayor