



Milwaukee County Transit System

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September 30, 2022

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

RE: Letter of Support for the 2022 RCP Program: Reconnecting Milwaukee – Reimagining WIS 175 Feasibility Study, (Milwaukee, WI)

Dear Faith 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.

WIS 175 is a remnant of a larger freeway plan that never fully materialized and poses safety and operational issues through high crash rates and peak hour delays; mobility issues for local traffic, bicycles, pedestrians; and creates a barrier to business connectivity and other everyday destinations. The study is a partnership between various agencies and advocacy groups to further evaluate, incorporate comprehensive engagement input, and create innovative alternatives that blend the needs of all parties and modes of transportation, and to develop a land use strategy that spurs economic development of the region. Funding this proposal would have a great impact towards removing physical and socioeconomic barriers within the City of Milwaukee, which is one of the most racially segregated cities in the country.

Specifically, this study will examine replacing most of the freeway spur with a boulevard from State St. to North Ave. According to Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley, this conversion would reconnect the communities that were cut off from each other when the freeway was built. It would also offer new opportunities for the Milwaukee County Transit System to design bus routes to serve residents and businesses in these neighborhoods. Finally, this study is well aligned with Milwaukee County's vision to advance racial equity and thus become the healthiest county in Wisconsin.

I support WisDOT's application for the funding of Reconnecting Milwaukee – Reimagining WIS 175 Feasibility Study and look forward to the infrastructure investment in our region through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Please give this 2022 RCP funding proposal your full consideration and if I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Denise Wandke".

Denise Wandke
Interim Managing Director
Milwaukee County Transit System