



June 30, 2014

Mr. Jason Lynch
WisDOT SE Transportation Region
P.O. Box 798
Waukesha, WI 53187-0798

Dear Mr. Lynch:

The Story Hill Neighborhood Association (SHNA) appreciated the opportunity to offer input on the latest series of options and alternatives presented by the State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) I-94 East-West Freeway Corridor Study from 70th Street to 16th Street. We know that many Story Hill neighbors took the time to attend the meetings on June 16 and 17 to again offer their ideas and suggestions - both what they'd like to see in a new freeway, and possibly more importantly, what they do not want to see.

The SHNA also has studied the next set of design options for this corridor, and we wish to go on record with our position on these alternatives.

Story Hill neighborhood specific:

- **Once again, we repeat in the strongest terms possible** – The I-94 freeway corridor must be designed and rebuilt within the existing footprint to maintain and preserve the quality of life and housing stock in our neighborhood. We continue to oppose freeway lane expansion in either direction. This means no cutting into Bluff Park north of the freeway, and no removal of homes.
- **Double-deck option “all up” vs. Eight lanes across at grade level** – Again, we are adamantly opposed to any double decking of lanes where the top level/deck is built “all up” – 25-40 feet in the air. The video and still photo simulations provided at the meetings show 4-6 lanes of traffic 25-40 feet up in the air running parallel to and at the same height as Story Parkway, bringing added air, noise and light pollution into our neighborhood, and threatens the views from Bluff Park.

The eight lanes across at grade level option also is not an attractive alternative, given our opposition to freeway corridor expansion. Plus, losing half of the Hawley Road entrance/exit ramps after giving up the General Mitchell Boulevard interchange causes concern, not only for Story Hill neighbors but for the continued viability of the Hunger Task Force, and for businesses on Blue Mound Rd. and in the City of West Allis.

SHNA again asks WisDOT to revisit the tunnel option for this stretch of freeway to ensure that all possible options and ideas have been thoroughly vetted. We have not seen any video or photo simulations of what a tunnel might look like, but the idea that westbound lanes would travel underground with eastbound lanes on top at grade level has merit.

However, if the “all-up” double deck and the eight lanes at grade are our only options, the SHNA reluctantly prefers the eight lanes at grade option. The double deck “all up” scenario is totally unacceptable as it would have horrible consequences for neighbors’ property values and quality of life. Possible sound barriers along Bluff Park also are unacceptable to neighbors.

- **New 46th Street in the Stadium Interchange** – In our August 2013 letter, SHNA supported eliminating the General Mitchell Boulevard on/off ramp if an alternative access ramp would be created near our neighborhood. However, the 46th St. plan WisDOT is presenting leaves much to be desired. The roadway runs north alongside a Milwaukee Brewers parking lot, with the westbound leg running across the top of the parking lot emptying onto Story Parkway. While we still support a new 46th St. access point in theory, this design needs more work and review before SHNA can support such a street creation.
- **Stadium Interchange** – We appreciate the design improvement that moves the interchange about 150-200 yards to the south of its present footprint, which hopefully will help to address the additional noise, air, and light pollution that threaten our neighborhood, plus the threat to Bluff Park and the neighbors who live atop it.

Concerning the Wisconsin Avenue on/off ramp, neighbors strongly support keeping this interchange in future plans, especially if we lose General Mitchell Boulevard access and the 46th Street option does not work out.

- **Public Transit** - We repeat our continued support for a greater emphasis by WisDOT on public transit to serve our neighborhood, and the region in general, to minimize the need to do a complete freeway rebuild. This includes, but is not limited to, funding a better bus system, building and maintaining bike paths, on-street lanes, and roadways year round, designating high-occupancy-vehicle lanes, ride-share programs/locations, and building a future link to the downtown streetcar system. The recent court ruling awarding more transit funding as part of the Zoo Interchange project supports our stand that public transit needs must be adequately and aggressively addressed as part of a comprehensive transportation plan for our region.

Concerning the I-94 corridor and its stakeholders in general:

- SHNA is happy to see that most current entrance/exit ramps will remain open, including keeping 68th and 70th streets to the west, 35th and 27th streets to the east, and Wisconsin Avenue to the north. As stated earlier, we support keeping *all* Hawley Road entrance/exit ramps open as well, even if the eight lanes at grade option is implemented. These access points are life lines to our business and residential neighbors and limiting access in this manner would be a hardship for them. Closing off any of these ramps along this stretch would force a larger amount of vehicles to use the next open ramp, causing congestion and safety headaches. It could also move too much traffic onto city streets that are not designed nor built to accommodate this extra traffic on an ongoing basis.
- We support preserving and maintaining our sister neighborhoods, their housing stock, and the city’s tax base. As stated above, we are opposed to increasing the I-94 footprint if it means taking homes and otherwise disrupting the quality of life in Milwaukee’s neighborhoods.

The SHNA overall position is to support making safety improvements to the I-94 corridor between 70th and 16th streets as necessary, but to otherwise rebuild the highway in the existing footprint, keeping all entrance/exit opportunities, except General Mitchell Boulevard, as is. The quality of life that the Story Hill neighborhood and our surrounding business districts and neighborhoods enjoy must not be reduced or worse, eliminated.

With the total rebuild of the Zoo Interchange and delays in completing the I-94 North/South freeway through Racine and Kenosha counties, as well as other road projects proposed or already underway throughout the state, the SHNA believes that a total rebuild of the I-94 east/west freeway corridor with lane expansions is something taxpayers cannot afford.

Finally, as a result of the continued push to expand the freeway, the neighbors who live on Pinecrest Avenue just three doors off Story Parkway have sold their home now because they are afraid that their property value will decrease later, forcing them to sell at a loss. SHNA has repeatedly stated that this freeway project will have negative effects on our strong, thriving neighborhood – this seems to be coming to pass. By forcing an unneeded, unwanted, unaffordable, double deck, eight-lane freeway on Story Hill residents, how long can any neighborhood remain “thriving” and charming” as we were described in the April 2013 edition of *Milwaukee Magazine*? Therefore, SHNA will continue to fight to keep Story Hill one of the best neighborhoods in Milwaukee.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share our positions and to go on record as part of the public comment session. As stakeholders on this project, SHNA remains committed to working closely with WisDOT to help minimize any and all negative impacts to our community while improving public safety along the I-94 freeway corridor.

Sincerely,

Story Hill Neighborhood Association
c/o 317 N. 50th St.
Milwaukee, WI 53208

cc: Stakeholders – I-94 freeway corridor

Mayor Tom Barrett

Common Council President Michael Murphy

Ald. Robert Bauman

Ald. Nik Kovac

State Sen. Tim Carpenter

State Rep. Daniel Riemer

State Sen. Nikiya Harris

State Rep. Evan Goyke

Sen. Tammy Baldwin

Sen. Ron Johnson

Cong. Gwen Moore

County Super. David Cullen