



June 4, 2019

Dear Joint Finance Committee members:

As the Joint Committee on Finance prepares to take up transportation funding for the 2019-21 biennium, we write on the behalf of the Cities of Glendale and Mequon, and the Villages of Bayside and Fox Point in support of enumerating the I-43 project in the current budget. The freeway runs directly through our communities. Expansion will benefit our residents significantly.

Built in the mid-1950s and mid-1960s, the I-43 corridor between Silver Spring Drive and Grafton connects people, jobs and products in Milwaukee and Ozaukee counties to destinations beyond and is a main artery for Wisconsin commerce and tourism. Nearly 171,000 jobs are located within five miles of the project.

But its age, increasing deterioration and growing congestion are putting motorists at risk and limiting economic development. On average, more than 75,000 vehicles travel this section of I-43 daily, making it the highest volume four-lane freeway corridor in Wisconsin. By 2040, traffic on sections of the corridor is expected to increase 32 percent. This means travel times will become increasingly unreliable, impacting commuters and businesses alike.

Outdated features like narrow shoulders and short weaving distances are failing to provide safe operating conditions for today's vehicles. As a result, crash rates are higher than the statewide average for similar urban freeway segments. With the reconstruction, we ask that the state fulfill its commitment to the reconstruction of the Mequon Highland Road interchange. Appropriate exits help reduce traffic in our communities, assist with economic development and help ensure the well-being of our communities and those that surround us.

The corridor doesn't need another short-term treatment. Continuing to simply resurface this roadway will result in throwaway costs, perpetual orange barrels in the corridor, motorist inconvenience, while doing nothing to solve the underlying safety, congestion and structural issues.

Now is the time to move forward with the I-43 reconstruction project. Every year the project is delayed, an estimated \$9 million is added to the project's cost due to inflation, while motorists and employers continue to bear a congestion tax of about \$8 million a year in lost productivity.

Please support safety, jobs and economic development by enumerating the I-43 reconstruction project and the Highland Road interchange reconstruction in the 2019-21 budget.

Sincerely,

Mayor Bryan Kennedy, Glendale
Mayor John Wirth, Mequon
President Sam Dickman, Bayside
President Douglas Frazer, Fox Point