



Department of Transportation

Thomas Lynch, PE, PTOE, PTP, AICP, Director of Transportation

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Director's Report – January 22, 2025

It's been a couple of months since I have prepared a report. Many of Transportation's major capital projects are winding down, to be replaced with a new set of projects. WisDOT has been particularly active with four studies in the Madison area. Interacting with this WisDOT projects will be a focus in the coming years.

Sincerely,

Thomas W. Lynch, PE, PTOE, PTP, AICP
Director of Transportation
City of Madison

Staff Changes

- Renee Callaway will be retiring near the end of March. Renee has had a transformative effect on our street policy and providing accommodations for all travel modes. Madison is better because of her efforts. She will be missed.
- Kevin Luedke has joined the team as the Pedestrian Bicycle Administrator. Previously Kevin was the Madison Office Manager for a national pedestrian/bicycle planning and design firm. His multi-state experience in treatments and practices will be an asset to the Department.
- The 2025 Budget approved a reorganization of the Parking Division. Stefanie is actively filling new or re-allocated positions within the Division.
- Metro recently filled the new Chief Operations Officer position with Bryan Mulrooney. He comes from Washington's Spokane Transit and we look forward to his contribution.
- Traffic Engineering recently filled the Safe Street for All grant coordinator position. Jessica Hersch-Ballerger will start in March of this year.
- Last week I (Tom) announced my retirement this spring. It has been a privilege to serve as the Transportation Director these past 7 years and am impressed by what we collectively have accomplished. The city is actively recruiting for my replacement. I will be working through April, and available to assist a new Director into the summer as needed.

E-W BRT

- Most items are completed, including the Whitney Way/Mineral Pt Rd intersection.
- Preliminary findings from Automatic Passenger Counters (APCs), (calibration yet to be approved by FTA), suggest that ridership increases on the BRT lines could be in the double digits. By spring we hope to have the APCs certified, and we will be able to provide direct results.

- Service has mostly stabilized this winter. Through the fall there were missed runs due to driver and/or bus shortages.

N-S BRT

- As a new administration takes leadership of federal agencies, the N-S BRT project is in the project development process and has been recommended for funding. The funding has been appropriated but not yet apportioned. We will continue to work with the FTA towards the grant agreement and construction of this BRT Line.
- We continue to work with WisDOT and Dane County to enter into Memorandum of Agreements for roads under their jurisdiction. We are also seeking WisDOT financial participation in the reconstruction of Park St.
- The consultant team is working on finalizing the 30 percent design, which will be shown in public engagement activities this spring. The consultant is also preparing a draft environmental document. Small modifications to the Locally Preferred Alternative are being explored.
- The overall budget for the project continues to be challenging. Project cost saving measures will likely be needed. For example, Park St could receive a retrofit instead of a reconstruction.

WisDOT Projects

- I-39/90/94 Project
 - WisDOT released their [Final EIS](#) and Record of Decision in December.
 - The project was recommended for funding at the Transportation Projects Commission in December and now must be included in the Wisconsin State budget.
 - We are in active negotiations for cost sharing of the Hoepker Road interchange, scheduled for construction around 2030. This may result in an agreement in the first or second quarter of 2025. Note that the supporting roads of Hoepker and Portage need upgrading, and these costs have not yet been programmed.
 - The Milwaukee St interchange, and replacement of the Milwaukee St bridge over I-39/90/94 are part of the Badger interchange phase which is scheduled for the early 2040s.
- North Stoughton Road Project
 - WisDOT completed their Environmental Assessment of the project, but it has not been posted online yet. Key features include:
 - An at-grade intersection of East Washington Ave and Stoughton Rd.
 - A ped/bike crossing bridge over Stoughton Rd south of the Hwy 30 interchange.
 - A ped/bike crossing bridge over East Washington Ave east of the Stoughton Road intersection.
 - A shared use path on the east side of the corridor, gapped when US 51 travels adjacent to the airport.
 - In December this project was also approved for funding by the Transportation Projects Commission. Because of the funding category, this project does not need to be incorporated into the State budget.
 - There is a public hearing for the environmental document tentatively scheduled for March 18, 2025. Items that Madison will request include:
 - Allowing a westbound left from East Washington to Schmedeman, which would improve redevelopment potential for the SW quadrant of the Stoughton Rd/East Washington intersection.
 - The ability to use WisDOT right of way on the south side of Hwy 30 in order to connect the Stoughton Rd crossing with the Autumn Ridge path.

- There will probably be cost sharing negotiations regarding this project in the third quarter of 2025.
- South Stoughton Road Project
 - This project is still in the alternative development stage. They hope to screen alternatives down to three by March and have a preferred alternative late 2025/early 2026.
 - Madison sent the attached letter providing preferences for alternative screening.
 - There is not uniform agreement on the best alternative. The corridor right of way is very wide and has fostered a dispersed suburban land use pattern over the last five decades. Changing road geometry is unable to fully change the character of the corridor.

Amtrak

- We are revisiting some sites at WisDOT's request. A draft report will likely be posted in the coming months.
- The pace of the statewide Corridor ID project led by WisDOT is taking some time. After the release of our report, we will be in a holding pattern until that study progresses further.

Parking

- Stevens Construction was able to essentially complete the City's portion of the Lake Street ramp by the scheduled release date. A formidable task considering subgrade problems that were experienced. The City is negotiating with Mortensen on access to the site and coordinating the two contractor's activities. The ramp contains the intercity bus terminal. The ramp and bus terminal scheduled to be opened in the summer of 2026. There may be a test run fit of the intercity bus terminal in June of 2025.



Reconnecting Communities

- We have executed our \$1 million Reconnecting Communities grant agreement with US DOT and have selected a consultant (AECOM).
- Currently we are in contract negotiations, with a start date hopefully in early summer.

Curb Management Plan

- We have had several scoping meetings for the Curb Management plan. This will be a focus in 2025 and will likely be an 18-to-24-month effort that will result in a lengthy policy document.

Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Grant

- As mentioned, a SS4A coordinator has been hired.
- Consultant solicitation have or are going out for:
 - The Pedestrian plan and finalization of the All Ages and Abilities Bike Network
 - The Regent St design
 - Equitable Engagement consultant.



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December 23, 2024

Jeff Berens

WisDOT SW Region
101 Wright Street
Madison WI 53704

COPY

Subject: South Stoughton Road Screening

Jeff,

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in the design development for the South Stoughton Road project. We understand that WisDOT seeks to screen the number of alternatives from 6 to 3 in the coming months and this letter is meant to provide Madison's feedback in this effort.

We preface our feedback with an understanding that Stoughton Road was initially constructed as the "East Beltline." The ensuing six decades of low-density retail and industrial development reflect its design and purpose at that time. As the function and future of the corridor are being reimagined, the City's comments at the beginning of the study remain pertinent. Staff believe a lower-speed urban corridor will better foster redevelopment over the coming decades compared to a higher speed expressway. Corridor volumes of 50,000 vehicles per day can be accommodated with a facility that has fewer than 10 lanes (mainline plus frontage roads).

We appreciate WisDOT developing Alternative 5, and Madison continues to believe that Alternative 5—or a hybrid that incorporates aspects of Alternatives 4 and 5—have the greatest potential to address key objectives for the corridor. Specifically, we support the following strengths of these alternatives:

- A 35-mph speed limit
- All ages and abilities bike/pedestrian facilities
- Improved neighborhood and business connections
- Smaller intersections that allow for shorter pedestrian crossings with optimized signal designs
- Reducing the freeway-like feel of Stoughton Road and fostering a safer, more welcoming environment for pedestrians and cyclists
- Better frontage and access for business—supporting economic vitality in the corridor
- Opportunities for new development in some locations and innovative green space in others

We share concerns expressed in a recent meeting about the corridor, particularly that reducing the speed

Jeff Berens – WisDOT Project Manager
December 23, 2024

limit and increasing access points without additional design features may not achieve the intended outcomes. Given these considerations, we request that Alternative 5 (or hybrid of Alt 4/5) advance into more detailed refinement and evaluation. We look forward to constructively engaging with the study team to identify creative solutions to address these challenges. Nationally, there are examples of successful lower-speed arterials that serve dispersed industrial and retail development, while also addressing Vision Zero, sustainability, and equity goals.

The SuperStreet concept was not presented at the public information meeting yet was discussed at a recent progress meeting. Madison has reservations regarding this concept. The SuperStreet efficiently handles motor vehicle traffic but will be difficult to navigate for pedestrians and bicyclists. The SuperStreet would negatively impact east-west connectivity—particularly for drivers making through movements on Buckeye and Pflaum Roads. Thru motor vehicle traffic on Buckeye and Pflaum Road is impeded by having to make a right, a U-turn, and then a right. This poses problems for drivers such as students at LaFollette Highschool. Instead of strengthening these neighborhood connections, the SuperStreet increases the barrier Stoughton Road poses. We request that WisDOT dismiss this alternative.

As Madison's Southeast Area Plan moves forward, we hope to provide more feedback in the coming months. Thank you for WisDOT's receptiveness to our comments and the ability to participate in the alternative development effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in brown ink, appearing to read 'Tom Lynch', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Thomas W. Lynch PE PTOE PTP AICP
Director of Transportation, City of Madison

C: Mayor Satya Rhodes Conway
Reuben Sanon
Jim Wolfe
Yang Tao