

October 30, 2020

To: Judiciary & Administration Committee Members
Mayor Tim Kabat

From: Chuck Lee, President
Friends of the La Crosse River Marsh

Re: Resolution #20-1489. “Resolution opposing U.S. Highway 53 corridor alternative 5B-1 . . . [and] . . . to remove the project from the list of major highway projects.”

The *Friends of the La Crosse River Marsh* board of directors extends its endorsement of the above resolution and encourages the J & A Committee to do the same, passing this long overdue action on to the full Common Council.

As you know, the *Friends of the La Crosse River Marsh* is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit membership organization dedicated to 1) preserving the La Crosse River marsh, 2) enhancing its native habitat features, and 3) maintaining its network of public trails. In pursuit of these goals our members have partnered with other community organizations and with city departments, most notably Parks, Recreation and Forestry.

This resolution calls for the removal of the N-S corridor project from the state list of major highway projects, an action that will also eliminate the budget enumeration for that project. Several factors call for such a move: 1) from the beginning, this project brought with it significant environmental damage to the marsh, and thus to the city, 2) the project also severely impacted high risk neighborhoods, and thus does not meet the standards of environmental justice, 3) as noted in the resolution it does not meet the goals of the City of La Crosse Transportation Vision Report of 2015, and lastly 4) since the N-S corridor transportation study has been dormant since 2015 and since there are no funds assigned to it in the next five years (LAPC) it appears the state has abandoned the project.

After over thirty years of having this project pushed by WisDOT planners, or with it merely lurking in the transportation bureaucracy charts, it is time to move on. The city is making spot improvements where needed in our street system, investing in transit and bicycle/pedestrian options, and giving needed attention to neighborhoods and our environment. Progress is being made. Let’s close the book on the N-S corridor idea. Please join the *Friends of the La Crosse River Marsh* in endorsing this resolution.