

July 25, 2017

Attn: Mr. Jim Wild
Executive Director, East-West Gateway Council of Governments
via email: TIP@ewgateway.org, and jim.wild@ewgateway.org

Re: 2017 Draft TIP Public Comment: Funding for projects critical to North St. Louis County

Dear Mr. Wild:

I am writing to express my support for the prioritization and funding of the Missouri Department of Transportation's (MoDOT) improvements on Interstate 270 (I-270) in North St. Louis County.

Interstate 270 is a vital link for fourteen communities in North St. Louis County and it is one of the most heavily congested corridors in the St. Louis metropolitan region. Much of the I-270 North has reached the point where significant rehabilitation or reconstruction is mandatory. Originally built in the early 1960s, the 50+ year old interstate shows signs of deterioration due to its age and heavy freight traffic.

Poor access for pedestrians, in particular, has become a barrier to opportunities for many residents throughout the corridor. Improvements will address significant immediate and long-term improvement needs (including congestion, safety, mobility, access, and aging infrastructure) and help improve the economic viability in the future for North St. Louis County and the St. Louis region as a whole. We encourage you to give it favorable consideration.

Since 2010, the community has been working with MoDOT to study the I-270 North Corridor in St. Louis County. The I-270 North Environmental Assessment, which began in 2013 and was completed in April of 2017. The assessment revealed that there is currently \$703 million in needs, and \$106 million is being funded for the 2018-2019 fiscal year. The Connect 2045 plan includes six projects phased over 20 years that will cost a total of \$706 million. \$348 million of the costs will be utilized during 2016-2025, and the other \$358 million during 2026-2035. This initiative has huge public support from our community organizations and our elected officials, businesses and other stakeholders in our community. Ideally, funding should be advanced sooner so these projects should be phased over a shorter period of time so that communities along I-270 have fewer years of congestion due to construction and can reap the benefits of the entire project's completion, similar to how I-64 was handled.

Phase 1 of the I-270 North Corridor project, the first step to implement transportation improvements in the Corridor, allows for innovative contracting methods, such as design-build, the industry identification of the best solutions to accelerate the project's delivery, and reduced cost and improve quality. Lastly, upgrading traffic operations, safety and access will allow the North County community to leverage these transportation improvements to encourage economic revitalization.

Other new major projects in the TIP, of interest in the North St. Louis Community consist of interchange improvements at I-70 and Lucas-Hunt and resurfacing and ADA improvements along MO 180 (St. Charles Rock Road) from I-270 to St. Louis City Limits. All, critically necessary projects. We respectfully request that you give priority to these projects, as well.

North County Inc. (NCI) is an economic and community development advocacy association serving the North St. Louis County community for more than 40 years. Through collaborative initiatives with the area's business, civic and community leaders the organization works on quality of life issues in order to build a more sustainable business and residential community that can prosper and thrive long into the future.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Zoll, President/CEO