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Office of the Mayor

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RE: Grant Received for Pedestrian and Bike Underpass

They say good things come to those that wait. We believe good things come to those that work to get them! For the STH 67/Oconomowoc Parkway pedestrian underpass project, the wait started in 2014. There is now light at the end of the tunnel; pun intended. Waukesha County and the City were notified that a grant for \$2.281 million has been awarded to complete the connections to the pedestrian underpass on the Lake Country Trail.

When did we start? In 2014, Mayor James Daley signed the documents required to include the underpass structure as part of the STH 67 reconstruction project. In coordination with Waukesha County, City Staff took the lead to obtain the land needed for the tunnel. All required items were in place for the reconstruction of STH 67. This project provided eight lanes of travel plus turn lanes. Reconstruction of STH 67 was a two-year project. The west half completed in 2015 and the east in 2016.

When did work begin to open the ends of the tunnel? In September 2016, the County received a \$798,000 Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grant based on our construction estimate of \$997,000 to connect the Lake Country Trail to the underpass structure. Our first construction bid was \$2.33 million leaving a large gap between funding and construction costs. We made some changes and rebid the project a second time in the fall of 2019. The low bid received was slightly lower at \$1.7 million. Waukesha County and the City decided to apply for a larger grant in 2020, which we did not receive. Thus, at that time there was no light at the end of the tunnel.

In 2021, Mayor Magnus coordinated meetings with State Representative Barbara Dittrich, Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow, Waukesha County Supervisor Tyler Foti, Waukesha County Staff, DOT, and City Staff. Letters were sent, phone calls made, and after multiple meetings several funding options were explored. Our police chief, fire chief, multiple city department heads, and council members joined the efforts to share our safety concerns at this intersection. Waukesha County applied for the Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) grant in July of 2021 with a revised construction cost of \$2.691 million. In addition to the grant application in July, Alderman Kevin Ellis took shovel in hand to spotlight the underpass issue with a symbolic digging effort with residents at the underpass.

Yes, it took some time and hard work. Diligence and a coordinated effort from all levels of government got us to where we are today. "It is a great example of a positive outcome as local; county and state officials worked together for the benefit of safety and the community. The efforts of Alderman John Zapfel behind the scenes and Alderman Ellis engaging the community helped push these efforts forward." stated Mayor Robert Magnus.

The grant received this year will cover \$2.281 million of the construction cost and allow for safe passage on the Lake Country Trail under the highway. It is our hope to have the tunnel open later in 2022 or early in 2023.