

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
Paul T. Kurtz, Interim Director



CITY OF SAINT PAUL

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June 24, 2020

Mr. Paul Oehme
Chair, TAC Funding and Programming Committee
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert Street North
St. Paul, MN 55101-1805

RE: PROGRAM YEAR EXTENSION REQUEST FOR SP 164-158-025, RECONSTRUCT BRIDGE #90378, WALLS, APPROACH PANELS AND SIGNAL REPLACEMENTS – MSAS 158 (KELLOGG BLVD), FROM W. 7TH STREET TO MARKET STREET IN SAINT PAUL

Dear Mr. Oehme,

I am writing on behalf of the City of Saint Paul to respectfully request that the Funding and Programming Committee consider the program year extension for the reconstruction of Bridge No. 90378 as referenced above.

“Eastbound Kellogg” Bridge No. 90378 is a unique structure with regional significance, situated in the heart of downtown Saint Paul. The bridge functions as a gateway to major attractions in the Capitol City. In fact, the structure forms direct physical connections to many of these facilities including the Xcel Energy Center, the Saint Paul RiverCentre, the Science Museum of Minnesota, the RiverCentre Parking Ramp, and District Energy. Beneath the surface, two road facilities are integrated with the bridge and weave between its columns:

- 1) Exchange Street Viaduct, a primary access point between Shepard Road (river elevation) and the downtown core (top of river bluff); and
- 2) Loading Dock Road, the centralized freight access point for the Xcel/Rivercentre/Roy Wilkins event and convention center complex.

The project aims to reconstruct the bridge system that includes two eastbound lanes of Kellogg Boulevard, the Exchange Street Viaduct and the Loading Dock Road. Reconstruction is the only viable option for this 84-year old, structurally deficient bridge. Full replacement also offers opportunity for valuable improvements; for example, the new bridge will establish a dedicated pedestrian and bicycle facility through the viaduct connecting the Sam Morgan Regional Trail to the Capital City Bikeway and Kellogg Boulevard.

The bridge’s structural complexity, paired with a total length exceeding 1,000 feet, result in significant reconstruction costs that no municipality can fulfill with its local sources alone. For this reason, the City has sought State and Federal funding opportunities dating back to 2016, and committed local



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capital bond funds to the project. The City received Federal STP funds (program year 2021) through the Regional Solicitation process. Though these Federal funds are essential to the project, they and all available City funds remain insufficient to finance a project of this magnitude. Therefore the City has (and continues to) pursue dedicated State funding. The outcome of State Legislature, including special sessions, may not be known until after the deadline for extension has passed.

The City has committed its local funds to carry out complete design and engineering tasks, aimed at delivering final plans by June 2021 as scheduled for the original program year. Geotechnical and environmental investigations are currently underway. Preliminary bridge plans will be submitted by July 2020, and we are on track to deliver 30% completion plans by October 2020.

If an extension is granted, and the new program year is extended to 2022, the City may be able to secure requested State funding and complete the project without losing access to the Federal grant it has already secured. If the program year extension is not granted, the City will face an insurmountable funding shortfall, and in all probability the City may be forced to withdraw the project altogether. The structure will continue to deteriorate with age and the City will eventually find itself in the difficult position to restrict or close critical components of its downtown transportation network, in order to protect public safety and welfare.

Please entrust that we are continuously looking at various financing instruments aimed at narrowing the funding gap, and we respectfully ask that your office with the help of your chairmanship will embrace this project and provide your support for extension of the program year to 2022.

Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 651-266-6503 or at Paul.Kurtz@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

Sincerely,



Paul Kurtz
Interim Director
Department of Public Works

CC: Colleen Brown, MnDOT Federal Aid
Anne Weber, TAC F&P Committee Member (Saint Paul)