



**Request for City Council Committee Action
From the Department of Public Works**

Date: May 15, 2007
To: Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee
Subject: **Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement for Chicago Avenue Bridge**

Recommendation:

Receive and File: Midtown Corridor Historic Bridge Study which will be submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office and Minnesota Department of Transportation Cultural Resources Unit.

Previous Directives:

- November 19, 2006 – Authorization to execute Amendment 1 to the Memorandum of Agreement.
- February 13, 2004 – Authorization to execute a Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement between the State Historic Preservation Office, Federal Highway Administration, Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis for mitigation of the historical loss due to the Replacement of the Chicago Avenue S and Park Avenue S Bridges over the Midtown Greenway (29th Street Corridor).

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Approved by: _____
Steven A. Kotke, P.E., City Engineer, Director of Public Works

Presenter: Stephanie Malmberg, P. E., Project Manager, Public Works

Permanent Review Committee (PRC)	Approval _____	Not applicable	<u> X </u>
Policy review Group (PRG)	Approval _____	Not applicable	<u> X </u>

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

- X No financial impact - or - Action is within current department budget (If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)
- ___ Action requires an appropriation increase/decrease to the Capital Budget
- ___ Action requires an appropriation increase/decrease to the Operating Budget
- ___ Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase
- ___ Action requires use of contingency or reserves
- ___ Business Plan: X Action is within the plan. ___ Action requires a change to plan.
- ___ Other financial impact (Explain):
Request provided to department's Finance Dept. contact when provided to the

Committee Coordinator

Community Impact

Neighborhood Notification: Not applicable at this point

City Goals: A safe place to call home, enriched environment

Comprehensive Plan: Engineering Services has been working with CPED regarding development & future land use along the corridor

Zoning Code: Not Applicable

Background/Supporting Information

Historic District

In the late nineteenth century the neighborhoods of south Minneapolis experienced a population boom whereby development leapfrogged the at-grade railway line. With the many street at-grade crossings, conflicts between residents and trains mounted until the City demanded that the Chicago Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad lower its tracks and provide bridge structures for each street crossing. The resulting structures constitute a bridge at approximately every block, creating a transportation grid over the rail trench known as the Chicago Milwaukee and St. Paul Grade Separation Historic District.

Within the Chicago Milwaukee and St. Paul Grade Separation Historic District, located between and including Hennepin Avenue and Cedar Avenue, there are thirty-eight bridges. Of these thirty-eight bridges, twenty-six are historic and were constructed between 1912 and 1916 to carry streetcars, buses, automobiles, and pedestrians. In addition, there is one historic bridge, West 29th St., located adjacent to the corridor between Colfax and Dupont Avenues.

Of the twenty-six historic bridges crossing the corridor, twenty are designated local roadways and are owned by the Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority (HCRRA). A review of these structures reveals seven basic bridge types, with the majority of the bridges of cast-in-place concrete T beam construction.

Requirements

Section 106 "National Historic Preservation Act", of the Code of Federal Regulations, requires projects receiving federal funding to determine if, within the project area, there exist archeological or historical elements and if the project will effect them. Both the City's Chicago Avenue S Bridge (Project No. 92349) and the County's Park Avenue Bridge (Project No. 90491) Replacement Projects received Federal funding. Since the two projects are adjacent to each other, the City of Minneapolis Public Works (City), Hennepin County Public Works (County), Minnesota Department of Transportation's Cultural Resource Unit (MnDOT CRU) and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) agreed that the production of a Midtown Greenway Corridor Study would serve to mitigate losses to the historic district caused by the reconstruction of the Chicago and Park Avenue Bridges.

The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) stipulates that the City and County complete a planning study for the bridges within the Chicago Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad Grade Separation Historic District. The study is to include analysis of each bridge's condition, potential for rehabilitation and any proposed schedule for replacement. It was also to include an analysis of the district and the effects of any further bridge removals within the district.

The City, recognizing that transportation needs are integral to the programming of bridges in the corridor, decided it would be beneficial to include an analysis of traffic and circulation to the Study.

The Study has been formatted to include two phases. Phase I addresses Traffic & Circulation and Phase II addresses the Historical and Bridge Structures Evaluation.

The Phase I Traffic and Circulation Study was completed in October of 2005. The results from Phase I has assisted the City in making determinations on which bridges are the best candidates for retaining full vehicular access, removal (full closure) or reclassification (from vehicular to bike/pedestrian). The Phase I analysis took into account current land use, future development & traffic circulation. The final report includes a list of potential recommendations, from a transportation perspective, for each bridge with "local" roadway classification, located between Hennepin Avenue and Cedar Avenue S.

Based on Phase I, the Traffic and Circulation Study, the following bridges would be eligible for complete closure to vehicular traffic and either converted to a pedestrian and bicycle facility or removed completely:

- Colfax Avenue -Reclassify to bicycle & pedestrian facility
- 12th Avenue - Full closure and removal or reclassify to bicycle & pedestrian facility
- 14th Avenue - Full closure and removal or reclassify to bicycle & pedestrian facility
- 15th Avenue - Full closure
- 16th Avenue - Full closure
- 17th Avenue - Full closure
- 18th Avenue -Reclassify to bicycle & pedestrian facility

These recommendations only suggest that if we had to close a bridge these are the best candidates from a traffic circulation perspective. Faced with these recommendations it is your Department's and the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) recommendations that the existing street grid for pedestrian use and that no two consecutive bridges be removed.

Phase II of the study was completed in the spring of 2007 and involves looking at the bridges from a structural and historic perspective. Since it is not cost effective to analyze each of the bridges, a screening process that was largely defined by the results of the Traffic and Circulation Study (Phase I) was used. Due to the repetitive design of these bridges, 5 bridges have been selected for a more in-depth structural analysis. The bridges selected for the Phase II structural analysis include: Fremont, Pleasant, Columbus, 10th and 18th Avenues South. Analytical results from these five bridges, along with bridge inspection and maintenance records on the other structures, will yield enough information to rank and provide a programmatic classification to each bridge between Hennepin and Cedar Avenues. For planning purposes we have identified the six Rs: Routine maintenance, Repair, Rehabilitate, Replace, Remove and Reclassify.

Stakeholder Input

Comments received from preliminary stakeholders have been taken into account and will be included in the report's Appendix.

HCRRA, the current owner of the corridor, is cautious that any work planned for the bridges will not impede future uses or alignments of the rail transportation corridor or will not interfere with transit within the corridor (street car or LRT) once this investment is in place.

CPED has concerns about any bridge closures to vehicular traffic between Hennepin and Lyndale, that no two consecutive bridges be closed to vehicular traffic, and maintaining the current street grid system.

The Study's Historian felt that the western segment (east of 12th Avenue) was compromised and its significance diminished to a point delisting from the National Register may be appropriate. SHPO and Mn/DOT CRU do not agree with some of Historian's findings regarding the contributing /non-contributing status of some of the bridges in the Historic District. They further concur that the district should not be segmented and should stand as a whole; any smaller segment could not adequately reflect the original historic resource.

The Midtown Community Works Partnership comments that disrupting the transportation grid would significantly curtail future redevelopment opportunities and that demolition or reclassification should not be considered until the City's Ten Year Action Plan is completed and a decision is made about the best transit mode for the Midtown Corridor.

The Midtown Greenway Coalition comments focus on the potential use of streetcars and their benefits, as well as aligning rail transit through the south portal of the three-portal bridges leaving space for trails in the central portal and avoiding trail reconstruction.

Prior to any infrastructure work, the Public Works will follow our public engagement process for project development which includes working with stakeholders in a context sensitive design process. The City will gather input from area business and residential communities as part of the design process. As such, the recommendations for the bridges presented within this report may change depending on the community involvement process and future development of the corridor. Finally, any project will be brought before City Council for input and approval.

Next Steps

To fulfill our obligation to the Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement, Public Works will submit the findings and recommendations of the study to MnDOT CRU and SHPO. Following submittal of the study, the City intends to seek Federal funds to assist in the preservation of these structures.

Attachments:

1. Study Area
2. Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement Between FHWA and SHPO Related to Bridge Replacement Project S.P. 141-165-15
3. Link to Final Report: <http://cmean407/pw/0065/dms14599/FinalReviewReport5-9-07.pdf>

Cc: Council Member Robert Lilligren, Ward 6
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