



8/18/06 - Referred back to Committee by City Council.
 8/22/06 - T&PW postponed.

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

Date: August 8, 2006
To: Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee

Subject: Closure of Talmage Avenue SE (Between 20th & 21st Avenues SE)

Recommendation:

- A. Authorizing the City's Department of Public Works to work with Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Co. (BNSF) in developing a plan for closing Talmage Avenue SE (Between 20th & 21st Avenues SE) to improve public safety by removing the at-grade railroad crossing.

Previous Directives:

Prepared by: Rhonda Rae, P.E., Director Engineering Services Division, 612.673.3627
 Jack Yuzna, P.E., Principal Professional Engineer
 Engineering Services Division, 612.673.2415

Approved by:

 Steve Kotke, P.E., Interim City Engineer, Director of Public Works

Presenters: Jack Yuzna, P.E., Principal Professional Engineer, Engineering Services

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)

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

Background/Supporting Information:

In 2000, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) implemented a program that challenged all Class 1 railroads, such as BNSF, to close 25% of their at-grade crossings. Since the program

started, BNSF, working with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT), has sought suitable closure locations.

During a site visit to an adjacent project, the BNSF representative noted that the Talmage Avenue SE at-grade rail crossing appeared to be a good candidate for closure. The City's Department of Public Works had previously identified crossings for closure as part of its Railroad Quiet Zone initiative. After an initial evaluation, Public Works concurs that the Talmage crossing may be a viable candidate for closure.

BNSF is seeking Council action supporting the closure initiative so that further evaluation can be made and funding resources can be pursued. Public Works intends to seek input from the affected neighborhoods in developing a design plan and proposes to explore opportunities to incorporate storm water management best practices and landscaping into the closure.

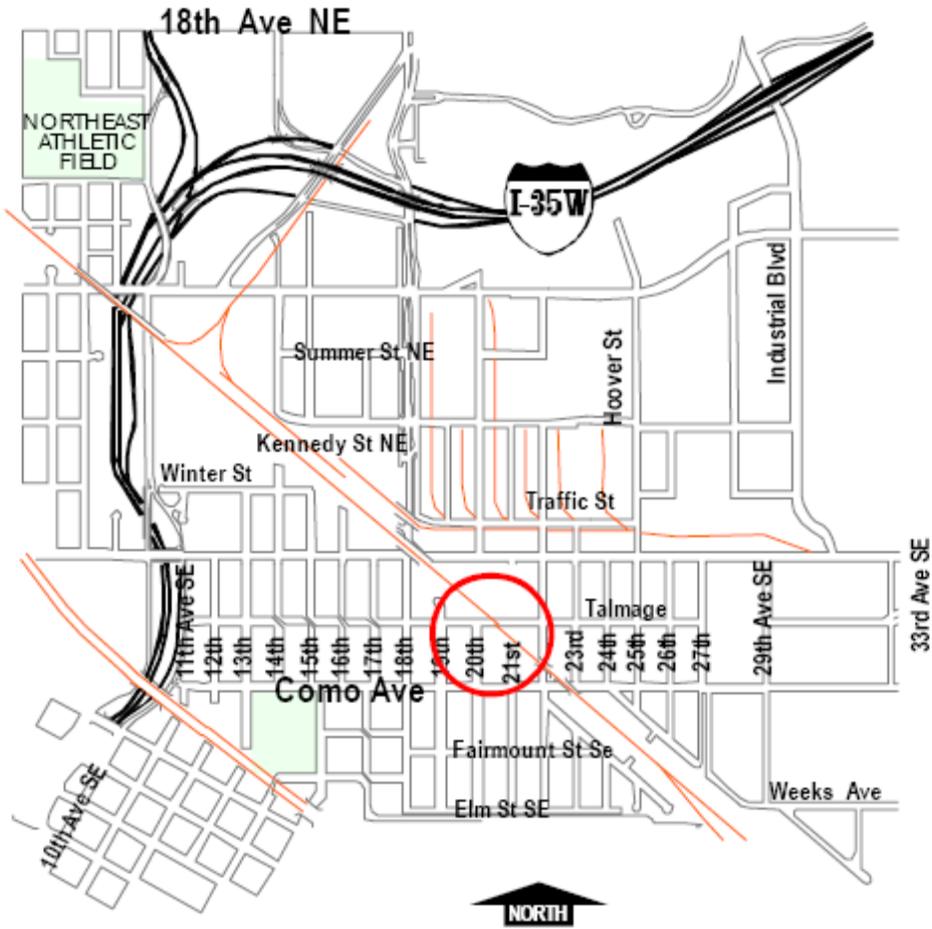
When the design and estimate are developed and funding determined, Public Works will return to your committee to advise you of our findings and seek committee approval. We anticipate that to occur in December of this year and, if approved, construction would occur in the 2007 construction season.

Attachment 1 - General Project Area Map
Attachment 2 - BNSF Letter Requesting Closure of Talmage Ave SE
Attachment 3 - Street Closure Schematic

CC: Council Member Ostrow, Ward 1
Council Member Gordon, Ward 2

ATTACHMENT #1

General Project Area Map



ATTACHMENT #2



Lynn Leibfried, P.E.
Manager Public Projects

BNSF Railway Company

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July 3, 2006

Jack Yuzna
City of Minneapolis
350 S. 5th St. Room 203
Mpls, MN 55401

Re: Closure of Talmadge Avenue in Minneapolis, MN
DOT# 082978K, LS 25, St. Paul Subdivision

Mr. Yuzna,

I would like to take this opportunity to advance our recent discussion on the possibility of permanently closing the at-grade railroad crossing mentioned above.

The Federal Railroad Administration, (FRA) has challenged all Class 1 railroads to close 25% of their at-grade crossings. The BNSF crossing closure initiative is supported by the FRA, and also the Minnesota Department of Transportation, (MNDOT). These organizations continuously work together to provide safety improvements to the traveling public.

In response to the FRA's challenge, the BNSF developed an aggressive Crossing Closure Initiative. BNSF actively pursues crossing closures system wide, throughout the United States. In early 2006, we achieved our 3,000th closure since the induction of the program in the year 2000. BNSF is the leader in the industry on crossing closures, and the number of vehicle/train incidents has significantly dropped as a result of this program, along with other BNSF crossing safety programs.

The intent of the Crossing Closure Initiative is not to inconvenience communities but rather to close those crossings which are redundant, have poor physical characteristics and for which alternate access exists. In many cases traffic can be taken off of an undesirable route over the railroad and diverted to a nearby crossing which has active warning devices and better sight distance and geometry, or is grade separated.

BNSF is very interested in closing the grade crossing at Talmadge Avenue. BNSF will work together with MNDOT and the City to develop a closure plan, to ensure the City's needs are met for the adjacent roadways.

As discussed, I request the City to develop a layout of the adjacent streets upon closure of the Talmadge railroad crossing. Please submit a preliminary cost estimate for review. I will arrange a meeting between BNSF, MNDOT and the City to review the project once a preliminary plan is received. I will be happy to introduce this idea at an upcoming Commissioners meeting if the City desires.

I look forward to working with you on the safety improvement project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynn Leibfried". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Lynn Leibfried

cc: Julie Carr, MNDOT

ATTACHMENT # 3
PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE

