



City of Oak Park Heights

St. Croix River Crossing Project Update and Position

As many are now aware, President Obama recently signed into law, legislation providing an exemption to the proposed St. Croix River Crossing Project from the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. What this generally means is that the Project can proceed without further review from laws under such Act which limited the further development of the Project in the past.

While there are supporters and detractors of this Project, the City of Oak Park heights has not engaged into the merits of these positions, rather focusing its attention on ensuring that costs associated with any Project do not fall disproportionately on the shoulders of local Oak Park Heights City Taxpayers. The City does not believe that a project of such regional magnitude should be the responsibility of a community of 4,300+ and has firmly stated this position.

Financially, the City is not in a position to take over frontage roads, maintain miles of newly created trails, maintain new signalizations, or manage substantial new storm water ponding. In addition, utility relocations alone are estimated to cost into the millions of dollars for which the City will require State, Federal, or other outside financial assistance.

To date, the City Council has worked with our Federal and State Transportation authorities as well as State and Federal Legislators to ensure these costs are provided for. As the City looks positively to continue to work to secure needed funds for these basic infrastructure needs, the City will also explore additional opportunities relative to the Project ,allowed under Minnesota law or otherwise, and continue to advocate an equitable resolution for local governments when faced with significant State and regional projects.

The proposed timeline of the Project commences construction in late 2013 or early 2014, with earlier load testing, land acquisition and survey work throughout the area. Accordingly, there is some reasonable time afforded to all parties to identify and provide real resources to the City to address the costs mentioned above. The City has and will continue to seek aid and partnerships throughout this period so that the City can affirmatively and positively address the needs and interests of its citizens and businesses.

The City anticipates holding public open houses in the coming months to provide more information on the St. Croix River Crossing Project as it becomes available. Please visit the City's website at www.cityofoakparkheights.com for updates.