



City of Oak Park Heights

14168 Oak Park Blvd. N • Box 2007 • Oak Park Heights, MN 55082 • Phone (651) 439-4439 • Fax (651) 439-0574

August 23rd, 2012

City of Oak Park Heights – St. Croix River Crossing Project

PRESS RELEASE

City of Oak Park Heights, MN

At the City Council meeting on August 23rd, 2012 the Oak Park Heights City Council passed a resolution approving the MNDOT St. Croix River Crossing construction plans effectively allowing the St. Croix River Bridge Crossing Project's planning and construction to continue on its established timeline.

The decision to be considered by the City Council was to determine if the layout submitted to the City by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) in July 2012 was in accordance with the 1995 layout for which the City granted Municipal Consent. Upon review and comparison of the 1995 layout and the 2012 submission the City Council determined that while there are differences in the two plans at large, the layout changes were insignificant or were otherwise beneficial to the City.

The City worked diligently with MNDOT Staff to find solutions to cover City expenses that were anticipated to be incurred as a direct result of the Project, being mainly utility costs. While many partial solutions were found, there remained a gap of approximately \$1.5 million dollars for which the funding had not been previously identified. With the positive intervention and assistance of Governor Mark Dayton, this gap has been closed resulting in the City having minimal financial requirements only for its "betterments" which are desired for utility improvements within the Project. MNDOT also agreed to cap or limit the City's financial exposure also providing budgetary assurances for the City.

The City will now move into a final discussion phase with MNDOT to develop standard final Cooperative Construction Agreements and a Master Utility Agreement which will allow work to proceed commencing possibly in late 2013 or early 2014. The entirety of the St. Croix River Bridge Crossing Project and the Minnesota and Wisconsin approaches is estimated to take three years.

The City does wish to thank Governor Mark Dayton for his leadership on this matter and understanding the City's financial concerns. The City also thanks U. S. Senator Amy Klobuchar, Congresswoman Michele Bachmann and former Congressman Mark Kennedy for their federal bi-partisan leadership to shepherd this Project forward after decades of debate and delay. The City also wishes to thank State Representative Kathy Lohmer for working to secure additional state resources needed to cover utility costs. The City looks forward to working with MNDOT to complete this project in a timely and efficient matter so as to cause the least amount of inconvenience for area residents, businesses and the traveling public.