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September 12, 2016

Adam Duinick, Chairman
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert Street North
St. Paul MN 55101-1805

Subject: Blue Line Extension - Pedestrian Bridge for Bass Lake Road station

Dear Chairman Duinick:

The City of Crystal is deeply troubled by the exclusion from the Blue Line Extension project scope and budget of a pedestrian bridge across Bottineau Boulevard to serve the proposed LRT station at Bass Lake Road.

Bottineau Boulevard is a high volume, high speed, six lane arterial, and with turn lanes, pedestrians must cross nine lanes of traffic. The Bass Lake Road LRT station will be tucked into a narrow space along Bottineau Boulevard. The project office's forecasts show that the presence of the station will increase pedestrian crossings by a factor of four. To facilitate access to the station, pedestrians must have an alternative to crossing Bottineau Boulevard at grade.

During Hennepin County's Bass Lake Road station area planning process in fall 2015, a groundswell of public support emerged for a pedestrian bridge to connect the neighborhoods east of Bottineau Boulevard to the proposed Blue Line LRT station. This grassroots need was reflected in numerous illustrations presented to the public by the county's consultant throughout the station area planning process.

On November 12, 2015, the Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee included language in its scope resolution directing the project office to explore pedestrian bridges at the 63rd Avenue and Bass Lake Road stations. On February 11, 2016 the CMC more specifically directed the project office to work with the City of Crystal on a pedestrian bridge "for eventual inclusion in the scope of the project".

Over the next several months, staff from the city and the Blue Line Project Office spent countless hours discussing and refining design concept for a pedestrian bridge. During that time, the Corridor Management Committee met three times and no CMC member expressed opposition to the pedestrian bridge.

On July 19, 2016 the city and project staff reached an understanding regarding the ownership and maintenance responsibilities for the bridge.

On July 21, 2016 the Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee voted to remove the bridge from the project scope presented by project staff. The city and its residents struggle to understand how the CMC suddenly became so opposed to the bridge at the last minute, after so many months of work with no expression of opposition from the CMC prior to July 21.

It is important to note that the Corridor Management Committee's action was inconsistent with the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Blue Line Extension project. The FEIS includes the pedestrian bridge for the Bass Lake Road station and specifically recognizes the need for pedestrian and bicycle accessibility and safety.

The City of Crystal is gravely concerned about the project being built without the pedestrian bridge. We fear that that having four times more pedestrians crossing nine lanes of traffic will one day lead to a tragic outcome. We ask that Metropolitan Council consider including the bridge in the project as an essential element for public safety and the success of the Bass Lake Road LRT station on the Blue Line Extension.

Sincerely,



Jim Adams, Mayor

Cc: Katie Rodriguez, Metropolitan Council District 1
Lona Schreiber, Metropolitan Council District 2
Jennifer Munt, Metropolitan Council District 3
Deb Barber, Metropolitan Council District 4
Steve Elkins, Metropolitan Council District 5
Gail Dorfman, Metropolitan Council District 6
Gary L. Cunningham, Metropolitan Council District 7
Cara Letofsky, Metropolitan Council District 8
Edward Reynoso, Metropolitan Council District 9
Marie McCarthy, Metropolitan Council District 10
Sandy Rummel, Metropolitan Council District 11
Harry Melander, Metropolitan Council District 12
Richard Kramer, Metropolitan Council District 13
John Commers, Metropolitan Council District 14

Steven T. Chavez, Metropolitan Council District 15
Wendy Wulff, Metropolitan Council District 16
Dan Soler, Blue Line Extension Project Director
Representative Lyndon Carlson
Representative Mike Freiberg
Senator Ann Rest
Governor Mark Dayton
Representative Keith Ellison
Senator Amy Klobuchar
Senator Al Franken