



Hennepin County News

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LOWRY AVENUE BRIDGE UPDATE

Open house on bridge-replacement project planned for Aug. 21

Area residents are invited to provide input about the replacement for the present Lowry Avenue Bridge at an open house Tuesday, Aug. 21. The open house will be from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. with a presentation at 6:30 p.m. It will be held at the North Regional Public Library, 1315 Lowry Ave. N., Minneapolis.

“The Lowry Avenue Bridge can be the signature bridge for the upper river. This first open house will start the conversation with the community,” said Hennepin County Commissioner Mark Stenglein. “It’s an opportunity to share opinions and expectations on a new bridge.”

In addition, Hennepin County Transportation Department officials said an area field survey showing the existing structures, roads, ground features and utilities is needed for planning at this stage of the process. The field survey will be conducted on properties on or close to Lowry Avenue, Marshall Street Northeast and Second Street North. Property owners will be contacted.

“We want to let property owners know that the field crew may be on their land and assure them that no damage will be done to their property,” Commissioner Stenglein said.

The Lowry Avenue Bridge carries Hennepin County State Aid Highway 153 (CSAH

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Lowry Bridge open house/2

153) over the Mississippi River between North and Northeast Minneapolis. The bridge was built in 1905 and remodeled in 1958.

According to the present schedule, construction of a replacement for the current Lowry Avenue Bridge is anticipated to begin in September 2009, with completion in November 2011.

The County Board approved the Lowry Avenue Bridge replacement project as its No. 1 state bonding request at its June 26 board meeting. The 2008 state bonding request is for \$24.2 million. A federal funding request will also be submitted to the federal government. The project was awarded \$2.5 million from the state in 2006 for design planning.

This is the largest bridge replacement project that remains under Hennepin County jurisdiction, with a replacement cost exceeding twice the county's annual transportation construction budget. The total projected cost will be approximately \$34.4 million.

Hennepin County will be partnering with many entities to complete the Lowry Avenue Bridge project including the State of Minnesota, the City of Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Park Board, the Metropolitan Council, the federal government and the community.

As a precaution after the collapse of the I-35W Bridge over the Mississippi River Wednesday evening, Aug. 1, county Transportation Department bridge engineers inspected the Lowry Avenue Bridge on Thursday, Aug. 2.

The engineers surveyed for foundation stability and visually inspected the superstructure for structural integrity. They determined the Lowry Avenue Bridge continues to be safe for traffic use.

The county has monitored the bridge on a regular basis since engineers discovered foundation problems at the large pier on the east side of the Mississippi River navigational channel in the fall of 2004. At that time the bridge was closed for repainting. The bridge remained closed while Transportation Department engineers and a bridge consultant determined the extent of the problems and completed repairs.

The consultant recommended quarterly inspections of the bridge. Because of its concern about the safety of the traveling public, the county, instead, decided to inspect the bridge every four to six weeks.