



Hennepin County News

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****NOTE TO EDITORS: There will be more details in a subsequent media advisory.****

Lowry Avenue Bridge removal implosion on June 21

The Lowry Avenue Bridge, a Minneapolis landmark since 1905, will be removed by implosion at 9 a.m. Sunday, June 21. The current structure, which has been closed since April 2008, must be removed before construction can begin on the replacement bridge this fall.

Due to lack of structural integrity, imploding the current structure is the safest option available to workers, and results in minimal disruption to the environment and river navigation. The implosion will sever what remains of the steel trusses, dropping them into the river; residents should expect to hear a loud, deep, boom-like sound.

Preliminary dismantling already has taken place. The county plans to salvage, recycle or reuse more than 90 tons of steel and other related items. Implosion contractor Advanced Explosives Demolition Inc. has designated a 1,000 ft. horizontal (land) and 1,000 ft. vertical (air) safety zone because of expected air pressure vibrations. This area will need to be vacated the morning of the implosion.

The Lowry Avenue N. road closure will expand to include from N. 2nd Street to Grand Street NE, and Marshall Street NE will close from 23rd Avenue NE to 26th Avenue NE with a signed detour, the morning of June 21. The industrial zoning of the neighborhood and heavy tree line along the Mississippi River shore means there is

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limited-to-zero visibility for the public of the implosion site.

Bridge removal contractor Carl Bolander & Sons Co. of St. Paul will clear the main navigation channel within 24 hours following the implosion. All of the steel is scheduled for removal from the river bed within one week. If mechanical removal of the piers fails, a second implosion may be needed in mid-July.

A 32-inch diameter, 175-foot-long test piling will be installed at the end of June, after the river bed is cleared. The piling will jut approximately 10 feet out of the water, and be marked according to United States Coast Guard standards. This pile will be tested the end of July in order to confirm foundational requirements for new bridge designer T.Y. Lin International.

The county is coordinating with the following agencies throughout the demolition process: the Department of Natural Resources, the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, the Minneapolis Fire Department, the Minneapolis Police Department, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Hennepin County engineers, in consultation with Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, determined it was necessary to close the bridge last April due to continued structural issues with one of the bridge piers. In 2004, bridge engineers discovered Pier 3 had rotated 11 inches out of vertical alignment. Further rotation of the pier introduced an unacceptable risk to the traveling public.

The Lowry Avenue Bridge carries Hennepin County State Aid Highway 153 over the Mississippi River between north and northeast Minneapolis. The bridge, built in 1905, was substantially renovated in 1958.

The County Board approved the Lowry Avenue Bridge replacement project as its No. 1 state bonding request in summer 2006. Funding sources for the project include Hennepin County bonds; state bridge bonds; a \$475,000 federal appropriation granted in March; and \$10 million in federal stimulus funding.