



Winona Bridge Work Package #5 Bridge No. 5900 (Existing Bridge) Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Letter to Winona Community

February 22, 2016

I've been honored to serve the Winona community for nearly three (3) years as the Winona Bridge Project Manager. Bridges, in general, and bridge projects, in particular, tend to bring out passion in a community. The entire Winona community hasn't disappointed in this area as a lot of great feedback has been shared by you with our project team.

The core values my team and I have are trust and transparency. To date, I believe we've returned all phone calls and emails and answered all questions from you to the best of our ability. We've presented at numerous civic functions and public meetings. I feel actions speak louder than words so I would like to provide an overview at the end of this letter of the things we have done in the area of trust and transparency.

Recently, I had to announce that we were projected to be \$30 million over budget for the project and that we are hitting the "pause button." This is an unfortunate occurrence and a lot of money, no question about it. This has caused some to cast blame, others to bring out old wounds from long ago, and even others speculating that MnDOT is planning to remove the existing bridge and not being trustworthy with the reasons for the projected cost overrun.

If you need to place blame or point fingers, blame me, the project manager. If you have publicly suggested MnDOT is not being trustworthy, please take the time to try and understand the complex issues before us prior to jumping to conclusions and be mindful that facts do matter. I believe the Winona community deserves the best information possible to make their own educated decisions and conclusions. I am confident once you understand what we are trying to accomplish and all the background behind it, you will appreciate things in much greater detail and reach a more educated and perhaps different conclusion.

In this regard, the Winona Bridge Project Team (WBPT) is pleased to announce a project website devoted entirely to the work on the existing bridge and how the cost overrun came to be <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/winonabridge/work-package5-costs.html>. This site will include articles on the following, among others:

- Winona Bridge Project budget history and budget performance to date.
- The Project Planning, Scoping, Preliminary Design, and Final Design phases of project delivery, in relation to budgeting and cost.
- The Preliminary and Final Design scopes of work and budget for the existing bridge rehabilitation and reconstruction, including the \$30 million overall project cost growth, including how and why this occurred.

- Why Construction Manager General Contractor procurement was chosen for the Winona Bridge Project and how the cost estimating works within CMGC.
- Interactions with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and our historical partners on the project.
- Possible options moving forward.

I encourage you to submit topic areas or questions you would like our team to answer and post to this website. If you've signed up for emails from the Winona Bridge Project site, we'll alert as we add information, so you can read at your convenience.

And now for the trust and transparency issue:

When my project team started working on the Winona Bridge project in May 2013, I met with city leaders to establish overall project goals. Two primary goals for the community expressed were:

1. Build the new bridge as quickly as possible, and
2. Keep the costs for the city as low as possible.

In this regard, we selected the CMGC procurement methodology, the first project for MnDOT, and began working tirelessly toward completion of the new bridge by the end of 2016. Some people viewed this as an impossible challenge, including some within my own agency. Essentially, we moved up the opening of the new bridge by at least one full year, if not more. Fast forward to today, we are on track to open the new bridge between Labor Day and Thanksgiving this year. With the accelerating deterioration of the existing bridge in recent years, the value of meeting this goal may never be fully understood.

In June of 2013, I presented the Winona City Council with their anticipated cost portion for the overall project of \$713,000. This was for city costs associated with:

- A new traffic signal system at the 4th - Winona intersection (50% local cost).
- A right turn lane from 4th to Huff (50% local cost).
- Trail / Park / Landscape Amenities (\$200,000).
- Construction Engineering (8% local cost).

Since that time, working collaboratively with city leaders, we've added the following items to the project:

- A new traffic signal system at 4th -Huff (25% local cost).
- Reconstruction of the south side of 4th Street in front of the YMCA.
- Storm water pond accommodations for potential re-development of excess right of way.
- A bike trail connection from the bridge area to the existing levee trail.

Even with all this additional work, the estimated costs for the city are currently projected to be \$12,000 **under** the original estimate from June of 2013. Also, a significant portion of the local cost is being covered with State Aid funding. My team and I have worked tirelessly to

minimize the financial burden on the Winona community related to this project, while still providing very nice aesthetic amenities for all to appreciate for years to come.

Lastly, the overall project cost overrun came into sharp focus based on the results of our 90% cost estimating phase for Work Package #5. This estimate was the first time we had obtained actual price quotes from subcontractors and suppliers. This effort was concluded on January 20, 2016, and I personally presented information to council at the first possible council working session on February 16, 2016. You might also recall that I updated the local media last year that costs were trending higher. We moved quickly to meet with the council as soon as we were able to fully understand the details and complexities. We're still working through all of the information, but felt we needed to keep our partners with the city informed on what we had encountered.

My hope is you hit the "pause button" before reaching any conclusions on what may happen with the existing bridge and read the materials we will be adding to the work package #5 website. I am extremely optimistic that a solution will emerge that Winona will support along with MnDOT. There are no "hidden agendas" from my team. In the meantime, feel free to submit any questions you may have directly to me.

Once again, it has been a pleasure to serve you. I appreciate all of the citizens and officials I've come to know well during this project and you will continue to get the same determined effort we've had to put the best option forward and ensure that there is clear transparency in what we are doing.

Terry Ward, PE, MSISE, PMP
Winona Bridge Project Manager
(507) 286-7688
terry.ward@state.mn.us