HDC Resolution to Consider Purchase of the CP Spur

WHEREAS freight service on the Canadian Pacific Rail Spur (Ford Spur) that once served the Ford Assembly Plant has terminated permanently; and

WHEREAS in 2017 the City of Saint Paul completed a study of the disused spur; and

WHEREAS this study was conducted because this is a major opportunity to re-purpose the Ford Spur as a community asset, providing opportunities for trail-based transportation and recreation, as well as economic development, and has the potential to be a landmark project in the city having positive, transformational impacts on the neighborhoods along the corridor; and

WHEREAS the study also emphasized how the use of the Ford Spur would improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and connectivity between the West 7th and Highland neighborhoods and Downtown; Provide transportation options to support Ford Site redevelopment; Provide additional affordable transportation options for residents; Support economic development; Provide opportunities for people to be active and healthy; Provide new trail-based recreation opportunities and connect to existing parks and trails and create new and distinctive public spaces that celebrate the West 7th and Highland neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS the engagement portion of the study identified strong support for the conversion of an unused corridor into a public amenity with the inclusion of a pedestrian/bike path; and

WHEREAS the Highland Bridge development anticipates several thousand new residents, workers, and customers within the decade; and

WHEREAS Ramsey County is the category of jurisdiction traditionally empowered to acquire abandoned rail right-of-way and at this time is not pursuing the purchase of this property; and

WHEREAS Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority and its consultants have identified major parts of the CP Spur as back-up alignment in case parallel parts of the West 7th Riverview Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) alignment prove unfeasible, and

WHEREAS the HDC believes all those currently living, working, or visiting the area and future Highland Bridge residents, customers and workers could benefit greatly from mobility options possible with acquisition and conversion of the CP Rail spur to a multimodal mobility corridor; and

WHEREAS there is concern that the Ford Spur may instead be sold off piecemeal thereby

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limiting the development opportunities identified in the 2017 study; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the HDC requests the Regional Rail Authority of Ramsey County follow the recommendations of the Re-Imagine the Ford Spur study conducted by the City of St Paul and purchase the Ford spur as one complete property as soon as possible, to benefit the people of Ramsey County, the City of St. Paul, the residents of Highland Park, and the broader West 7th community.

Approved January 18, 2022
By the Transportation Committee of the Highland District Council

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