

March 29, 2012

Mr. Kevin Roggenbuck
Transportation Coordinator
Transportation Advisory Board
390 Robert Street North
St. Paul, MN 55101

RE: Proposed TIP Amendment: SP#138-010-018 (Maplewood)
TH 36 / English Street Interchange [City Project 09-08]

Dear Kevin:

The City of Maplewood is proposing a 2012 – 2015 TIP Amendment. This item was presented as a last minute addition to the March 15th TAC Funding and Programming Committee. The last minute change was due to a request by MnDOT to complete the project during the 2013 construction season to avoid conflicts with an improvement project on the adjacent Interstate 35E. This requires the project to be authorized prior to September 2012. I believe that this last minute preparation caused some confusion due to a lack of information. I am providing this letter as a supplement to the original TIP Amendment request.

As you are aware, this project was granted a Scope Change in April 2011. I understand the concern that the major cost increase needs to be analyzed. I believe that the following is relevant information, and I contend, that a majority of these costs are not related to the original project, but are being done as an efficiency of the local improvement. I have noted the various points as follows:

1. The total project cost from the Scope Change Estimate [April 2011] of \$10.1 million and the current estimate of \$16.75 million is \$6.625 million. That can be broken down as follows:
 - a. \$4.475 million is due to the lowering of TH 36, which is entirely at MnDOT expense. We were not aware that MnDOT was considering this change when the project discussion on the Scope Change to make English a full access interchange was underway in 2011. This lowering of the roadway is due to MnDOT considering making the roadway more functional and was not necessary to achieve the project benefits of the interchange construction and access revisions that are accomplished with the original project. The project as proposed at the Scope Change could be implemented if MnDOT had not decided to lower the roadway, and thus an evaluation of the project benefits based on the addition of these costs is not relevant. It is being done because we decided to close the roadway to accomplish the interchange project in a short amount of time in 2013 to meet area roadway construction timeframes.
 - b. \$650K for noise wall construction that was not anticipated as part of the original project and is due to the lowering of the mainline by MnDOT and not due to the construction of the interchange. We could not have anticipated this cost at the time of the scope change because of the neighborhood involvement process and is a decision by the Maplewood City Council to address neighborhood concerns.
 - c. \$275K for the construction of a trail in the area along County Road B. This is a local cost that we have added as part of a project contingency. We are doing this because we are in the area and has nothing to do with the original or Scope Change project.

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- d. \$275K for additional improvements to the local connection to Viking Drive.
These are improvements in the area to meet neighborhood requests and does not reflect on the overall project design or needs. Local improvements should not be part of project benefit calculations.
- e. \$300K for Gervais Avenue/Frontage Road reconstruction. These costs are part of the project only because Maplewood wants to rebuild the local roadways as part of the area improvement and again should not be part of the project benefit considerations. It is being done to be efficient as part of the project.
- f. Increase from a \$250,000 improvement to a \$900,000 improvement on County Road B at TH 61. This is an local roadway project with our partners at Ramsey County and is roadway revision that aligns the intersection to a private driveway for a Ramsey County golf course; again, that cost is part of the area improvements, it has nothing to do with the cost-effectiveness calculation from the original project and is only being done to be efficient by doing area improvements in one package.

The total additions since the 2011 Scope Change request are \$6.625 million and I contend none of these have relevance to the original intent of the project, which was the consolidation of access points along TH 36 at English Street. As a local project sponsor, it is imperative that we look for all cost-effective solutions to address our concerns during a single construction project. An alternative for Maplewood would have been to remove our local improvements to a different project and different year. Similarly, MnDOT could have waited to implement the mainline TH 36 Improvements until this interchange project was completed. Both delay decisions would have allowed the original project to remain intact and proceed as proposed in the 2011 Scope Change request, but would not have served either the traveling public on TH 36, nor the Maplewood residents and business owners of the area. I contend that is not what we need to provide as government servants. I fully understand that our lack of information contributed to the discussion at the TAC Funding and Program Committee. Thank you for your attention to this request and your support for the local area improvements.

We will have representatives present at the TAC Meeting on April 4th to present this information.

CITY OF MAPLEWOOD

R. Charles Ahl, P.E.
Assistant City Manager

Attachment: Preliminary Layout

C: Karl Keel, TAC Funding and Program Chair
Mayor Will Rossbach