



City of Staples
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February 8, 2010

Rep. Collin Peterson
2211 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Rep. Peterson:

I am writing on behalf of the City of Staples to request funds for the Staples North-South Corridor with Railroad Overpass Project. As you know, we previously received an appropriation of \$1.2 million as part of the 2005 Federal Transportation Bill (HPP 2638), \$700,000 from the 2006 State Bonding Bill and an additional \$300,000 in the 2009 State Bonding Bill. **At this time, we are requesting an additional \$6.68 million of Federal funds to complete the project.** This funding will be used to provide a roadway and bridge that will create a true North/South corridor through the City of Staples with an overpass that will span the railroad tracks and HWY 10. This roadway will connect CSAH 21 on the south to CSAH 30 to the north, creating a new regional corridor with no obstacles.

The City of Staples has been divided by the railroad tracks since the tracks were laid. The number of trains and the length of those trains are increasing. Burlington Northern/Sante Fe Railroad indicates that there is an average of 47 trains per day (anticipated to increase to 60 by 2030) that average 7,000 feet in length. Due to configuration of the tracks and switches (rated at a maximum of 21 mph) the trains move very slowly through Staples, blocking the crossing for, on average, 3.6 hours per day. This creates a severe public safety issue that we have been dealing with for over 100 years.

The City of Staples Police Department has cited BNSF 21 times over the past 10 years for blocking the crossings illegally. They simply pay the fines. The Police responded to over 304 calls on the south side but don't track the number of times they waited for trains. The Staples Ambulance had to wait for 48 trains in 2008. The wait time was anywhere from 1-10 minutes. The Staples Fire Department responded to 16 calls on the south side of the tracks in 2008 and 21 in 2007. As you can see, it is only a matter of time before the delays at the crossings result in serious consequences.

The public process, preliminary engineering and environmental documents are complete and the Staples City Council and Todd County Board, as our State Aid Agency, have approved the layout. There is overwhelming support for this project and we have moved into the right-of-way acquisition phase. For your information, I have also submitted an appropriation request form to Sen. Klobuchar.

Thank you for your help. Representatives from the City of Staples would be happy to meet with you or other Legislators to discuss this project. Please let me know what the next step is.

Sincerely,

Jerel Nelsen
Community Development Director