

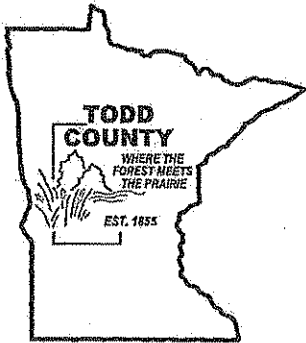
April 21, 2009

Rep. Collin Peterson
2211 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

City of Staples
611 Iowa Avenue
Staples, Minnesota 56479
Phone: (218) 894-2550

Dear Rep. Peterson:

We are writing in support of the North-South Corridor with Railroad Overpass Project in Staples, Minnesota. The City of Staples is requesting an additional \$6.68 Million to complete this \$9.85 Million project. This funding will be used to provide a roadway that will create a North/South corridor through the City of Staples and overpass spanning the railroad tracks and Trunk Highway 10. This roadway will connect Todd County CSAH 21 on the south to Wadena County CSAH 30 to the north, creating a new regional corridor with no obstacles.



Todd County HWY Dept.
44 Riverside Drive
Long Prairie, MN 56347
Phone: (320) 732-2722

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, 3.9 hours per day. This creates a severe public safety issue that we have been dealing with for over 100 years.

The City of Staples received an appropriation of \$1.2 million as part of the 2005 Federal Transportation Bill (HPP 2638) and \$700,000 from the 2006 State Bonding Bill for the project. Also, the 2009 MN Senate Capital Investment Bill includes a \$300,000 request. With the additional \$6.68 Million from Congress, over 87% of the project costs will have been appropriated. Additional local match will come from the City of Staples and/or Todd County.



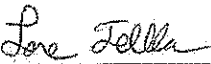
Wadena County HWY Dept.
221 Harry & Rich Drive
Wadena, MN 56482
Phone: (218) 631-7636

Several Public Hearings and Project Management Team meetings have already occurred. A final Public Hearing on the EA will occur on April 30, 2009 in Staples with the comment period ending May 11, 2009.

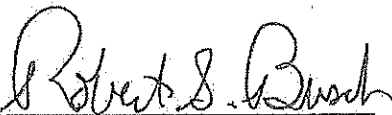
We support this request and urge your support of it.

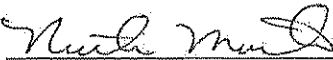


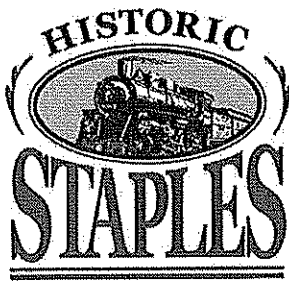
MN Dept. of Transportation
District 3
7694 Industrial Park Road
Baxter, MN 56425-8096
Phone: (218) 828-5700


Loren Fellbaum, P.E.
Todd County Highway Engineer


Joel Ullring, P.E.
Wadena County Highway Engineer


Robert Busch, P.E.
MNDOT District Engineer


Nate Mathews
Staples City Administrator



City of Staples
611 Iowa Avenue
Staples, Minnesota 56479
Phone: (218) 894-2550
Fax: (218) 894-2552

April 21, 2009

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 received an appropriation of \$1.2 million as part of the 2005 Federal Transportation Bill (HPP 2638) and \$700,000 from the 2006 State Bonding Bill for the project. Additionally, the Minnesota Senate Capital Investment Bill includes \$300,000 of additional State funding which along with City and/or County funds will be used as local match. At this time, we are requesting an additional \$6.68 million of Federal funds to complete this \$9,850,000 project. This funding will be used to provide a roadway and bridge that will create a North/South corridor through the City of Staples with an overpass that will span the railroad tracks and HWY 10. This roadway will connect Todd County CSAH 21 on the south to Wadena County 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, 3.9 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.

Additionally, on March 3, 2009 Lakewood Health System was notified that they have been designated as a Level III Trauma Hospital. With this designation, Lakewood Health System will be the destination for many more trauma patients, as EMS personnel will be required to transport patients to the highest designated Trauma Hospital in the area. As more critically injured people are being transported to Lakewood for treatment, the urgency to resolve the railroad crossing becomes even more urgent.

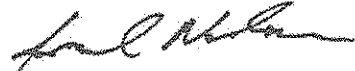
Public Process: Since 2003 the City has hosted numerous Open Houses and Public Meetings to review alternatives and gather input and feedback on the proposed project. Since receiving the initial appropriation in 2005, the City has hosted two open houses (October and December, 2007) and held eight Project Management Team meetings. Project Management team members include representatives from the City of Staples, Todd County, Wadena County, MNDOT, Region Five Development Commission, Staples Planning & Zoning Commission, Todd County SWCD, Staples Motley Schools, Minnesota DNR and BNSF Railroad. Support for this project is overwhelming as everyone in the community is impacted by delays related to the BNSF railroad tracks.

Environmental Process: The Environmental Assessment is complete and has been approved by Todd County, MNDOT and FHWA. A Public Hearing has been scheduled for April 30, 2009 in Staples. The public comment period began on April 6, 2009 and will continue until May 11, 2009.

The preliminary engineering, alternative selection 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 are ready to move forward with the right-of-way acquisition and construction.

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