



## CITY OF SAINT PAUL

Mayor Christopher B. Coleman

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Council President Russ Stark and  
Members of the City Council  
310CD City Hall  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Colleagues,

With this letter I am returning Res PH 16-415 with my line-item veto as provided for in Sec 6.09 of the Charter and specified in Version 3 of the resolution in Legistar.

I have two concerns about a last minute amendment to a resolution that was originally offered in an effort to be transparent about how capital funds are allocated within the Department of Public Works:

- The Council and the Administration have worked diligently over several years to ensure that the Public Works budget is tied to a carefully planned program of projects that is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and financial projections. The recent development of a five year plan was intended to bring both efficiency and transparency to a process that the Council often criticized for favoring the "squeaky wheel." A fundamental tenet of the plan is that, when funds become available, they are devoted to the next project in the queue so that we continue to make progress toward completing all of the priority projects across the city. Adding one or more projects to the budget at the last minute threatens to undermine that principle and the process itself.
- The initial cost estimates for the projects proposed to be added to the budget exceed the amount the amendment places in contingency. As a result, one of two things will happen: (1) the funds will remain in contingency for an indeterminate amount of time, providing no value to anyone, or (2) additional funds will be drawn from priority projects, further delaying implementation of the five year plan.

Having said that, I have asked Public Works Director Kathy Lantry and her staff to take the sense of the Council under advisement and, if appropriate, bring them forward when we begin the 2018 budget discussions in a few months.

The two projects identified in this resolution may, indeed, be worthwhile additions to the city's infrastructure. My concern is with the way they were advanced. I encourage us to remain committed to the principles of long-range planning and transparency that we have worked so hard to integrate into the budget process.

Sincerely,

Christopher B. Coleman  
Mayor

cc: Shari Moore