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October 10, 2015

St. Paul City Council  
City Council Chambers  
Ramsey County Courthouse  
15 Kellogg Avenue West  
St. Paul, MN 55116

Re: Assessment # 155401  
File #19100

Dear Council Members,

I object to the proposed assessment for the following reasons. I have resided in St. Paul for 25 years and this is my first letter to the Council and/or Mayor's Office.

1. Ford Parkway was built around 1926. Other than pothole repair, I am not aware of any major fixes to this road for some time. Trucks supplied and took cars away from the Ford Plant for many years, considerably adding to the damage. Though the road needed repairs, any significant repair for Ford Parkway has been delayed until the Ford Plant shut down. The city of St. Paul and Ramsey should use property tax and other funds from the sale of the Ford property for the repairs to the street. Ford Parkway is County Road 42, and its improvement is for the benefit of the general public, and not for the homeowners along it.
2. I am concerned about double taxation. I assume that as a result of the improvements, the value of the homes along Ford Parkway will now be assessed at higher values, and thus residents will be assessed higher property taxes by Ramsey County.
3. We have already agreed to pay for a new sewer connection (about \$1,300.00 for our portion, side by side houses). While this was "optional", we were legitimately concerned that all of the heavy work might damage the eighty year old connection. While this is a private connection, it also serves the public good by ensuring that sewer service for the entire neighborhood would not be disrupted by a break in front of our residence. With this proposed assessment, the city intends to charge us a total sum of \$3,462.70 for 45

feet of property, which works out to about \$70.00 per foot. We live in a modest home, and it makes no sense that we are asked to pay for these repairs, and not richer households to the north and south who will benefit just as much from the improvements to this street.

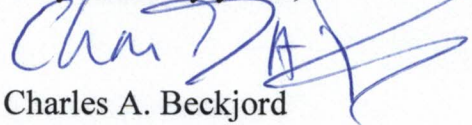
4. Needless to say, the construction was a pain in the backside. Ford Parkway was closed from Snelling to Fairview from May 29, 2015 to October 9, 2015. That is roughly 4.3 months for only three city blocks! During much of this time, we put up with loud noise and shaking ground. The schedule was confusing, as many days the workers kept it up until nine in the evening, while there were often weeks with little or no work done. Our windows, and perhaps lungs, are coated with dirt from months of work.
5. Adding to the aggravation was the decision to work on so many different streets at once. At various times during the construction on Ford Parkway, the Snelling bridge over 94 was being replaced; Snelling, Randolph, Hamline, Lexington, Cleveland and St. Clair were all being worked on. Work was also being done on the Highway 5 bridge, and on 46th Street and Minnehaha in Minneapolis. Getting anywhere began to resemble a chess match. While the City and County were obviously not responsible for all of these projects, it really boggles the mind that all these major projects had to occur at the same time. While I am not a civil engineer, it must be possible to focus on fewer projects at once, and get them done quicker, resulting in fewer traffic nightmares.
6. While the street looks wonderful, the sidewalk is now a patchwork of perhaps four different generations of sidewalk. Some sidewalk poured just last year was torn up again, while other major portions of sidewalk are left over from medieval times. Putting in all new sidewalk could have been done for a small fraction of the total cost of the project. In front of my house, the newly installed curb is several inches higher than the old sidewalk, so the short walk between the curb and the sidewalk has a pronounced slope, perhaps 5 degrees or more. Ramsey County told me that the street was their responsibility, and the sidewalk is the responsibility of the City of St. Paul. Ramsey County further told me that St. Paul thought it could do the sidewalks cheaper, and plans to redo the entire sidewalk next year! To really do a good job will require ripping up all or much of what was just recently poured, which seems neither cheaper nor efficient. If St. Paul does redo the sidewalks next year, I wager it will also attempt another assessment. Once again, the mind is boggled. With proper planning, there was sufficient downtime that everything could easily have been torn up once and paid for once.
7. The preceding comments were in regard to the proposed assessment. This last comment is in regard to safety issues at the intersection of Ford Parkway and Davern.



People tend to speed along Ford Parkway, as there is no traffic light or stop sign from Fairview to Snelling. I have seen speeds exceeding fifty miles an hour by the time cars have reached Davern from either direction. There have been numerous bad accidents at this intersection, which must be on record somewhere. The former crosswalk at Ford and Davern--being without the modern accompanying yellow signs--was often disregarded by most motorists, and I literally have had to run across Ford to avoid being hit. This is a busy intersection for both bicyclists and pedestrians, and has a bus stop. While a median was installed on Ford Parkway, the median ends quite some distance from this intersection, and thus affords no protection to either pedestrians or bicyclists. I doubt the median will slow cars down significantly, as driving behavior in the Twin Cities has generally declined as the streets have become more congested. Ford is a major thoroughfare, and many people drive as fast as they can get away with. I believe this intersection is dangerous, and that the exclusion of a crosswalk here is a big mistake. I ask the Council to use its influence to have a crosswalk added to Ford Parkway at Davern. Consideration should also be made to adding a four way stop sign at Ford and Davern, as was appropriately added to Montreal at Davern a few years back.

Thank you for considering these comments. The contents of this letter should not be construed in any way to denigrate the workers who have worked very hard and diligently in performing this reconstruction.

Very sincerely yours,



Charles A. Beckjord

cc: Mayor Chris Coleman