



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** RES 16-1979, **Version:** 1

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Supporting the Rondo Land Bridge.

WHEREAS, the community envision using active community engagement to reimagine and reconnect communities over, on, and around I-94; and

WHEREAS, the partnership of Rondo Avenue Inc. and the Friendly Streets Initiative and the City of Saint Paul aim to secure investments to create equitable outcomes, multimodal systems, and vibrant and livable places that support prosperity and cultural inclusion; and

WHEREAS, The Rondo neighborhood, a historically African-American neighborhood in Saint Paul, was decimated by the construction of Interstate 94 in the 1950s - 1960s; and

WHEREAS, It is well documented that communities of color, particularly African-American communities, were destroyed or disrupted in cities across the U.S. as a result of the interstate highway system. This resulted in displacing or “re-sorting” (as urban psychiatrist Dr. Mindy Fullilove puts it) of the people who resided in urban communities; and

WHEREAS, The Rondo Neighborhood, named for its vibrant commercial corridor, Rondo Avenue, was one such victim of interstate highway development; and

WHEREAS, On July 17, 2015, Mayor Chris Coleman of Saint Paul, and Commissioner Charles Zelle of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT), issued formal apologies for the role of public agencies in contributing to the destruction of Rondo; and

WHEREAS, Part of what is motivating community involvement in a Rondo Land Bridge project is the need to transform the apologies of public officials into actions and real, concrete changes; and

WHEREAS, Towards that end, the partnership of Rondo Avenue Inc. and Friendly Streets Initiative are aiming for the realization and future operation of a Land Bridge (or “highway lid”) over I-94 in what used to be the Rondo neighborhood to be built within a timeframe that is reasonable for community expectations and needs; and

WHEREAS, community engagement efforts led by Rondo, Summit-University and Thomas-Dale residents, and facilitated by Friendly Streets Initiative as part of the Better Bridges for Stronger Communities project, occurring throughout 2015 and 2016, has resulted in robust conversations about solutions to I-94 crossings, a land bridge being among the most popular concepts; and

WHEREAS, The Rondo Land Bridge would serve the needs of those who live, work, shop and play nearby, by providing amenities and connectivity currently absent from the Rondo neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, The Rondo Land Bridge will serve as a driver of economic development, offers opportunities for improved public health through pollution mitigation, multi-modal transportation infrastructure, sustainable building and maintenance practices, and the opportunity for healthy food endeavors (production and/or distribution); and

WHEREAS, The Rondo Land Bridge would provide educators with curricular and pedagogic opportunities, and artists chances for aesthetic and cultural expression; and

WHEREAS, The Rondo Land Bridge would serve as a counter-narrative to historical rifts between public agencies and local communities, offering a nationally- and historically-significant corrective - a reconciliation and healing, as community members are expressing -- to the racialized urban planning practices of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; and

WHEREAS, A draw both locally and nationally, the Rondo Land Bridge has the potential to be a destination of tourist significance while increasing the quality of daily life of the residents of Saint Paul; and therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Saint Paul City Council supports the Rondo Land Bridge and directs the City's Intergovernmental Agency to list this as a City priority at the next Minnesota State Legislative session.