Legislation Text

File #: RES 25-1586, **Version:** 1

Requesting a variance from Minnesota Municipal State Aid Rules for the St. Anthony/Rondo Avenue Mill & Overlay Project from Snelling Avenue to Marion Street.
WHEREAS, the City of Saint Paul plans to repave portions of St. Anthony and Rondo Avenues between Snelling Avenue and Marion Street and construct pedestrian curb ramps compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act using Municipal State Aid funds; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota State Aid Rules apply for all streets designated as Municipal State Aid (MSA) Streets (including St. Anthony/Rondo Avenue from Snelling Avenue to Marion Street), for which the City of Saint Paul receives municipal state aid funding; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota State Aid Rules 8820.9946 and 8820.9951 pertaining to reconditioning of Municipal State Aid streets state that one-way streets must have at least two (2) through-traffic lanes; and

WHEREAS, the MnDOT Office of State Aid for Local Transportation advised the city to seek a variance from MSA standards if the city desires to reduce the number of lanes on St. Anthony and Rondo Avenues from two (2) through lanes to one (1) lane; and

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Paul sought and was granted a similar variance for the repaving of Concordia and Rondo Avenues in 2024 for the same extent on the south side of the I-94 corridor, and the road was subsequently repaved and repainted with one travel lane alongside a buffered bike lane in autumn 2024; and

WHEREAS, St. Anthony Avenue and Rondo Avenue are classified as major collector streets between Snelling Avenue (Trunk Highway 51) and Marion Street (Ramsey County Highway 56), with an average daily traffic volume ranging from about 1,850 to 5,950 vehicles per day; and

WHEREAS, traffic speed data collected in May 2025 at three points along St. Anthony Avenue found average speeds ranging between 32.5 and 34.9 mph, with the upper value approximately 10 mph above the posted 25 mph speed limit, with more than 97 percent of vehicles traveling faster than the speed limit; and

WHEREAS, the city has heard neighborhood and resident concerns about speeding and traffic safety on St. Anthony/Rondo Avenue for several years; and

WHEREAS, the city received multiple comments as part of its Transportation Safety Action Plan regarding safety concerns for pedestrians crossing St. Anthony/Rondo Avenue; and

WHEREAS, in the ten years between 2015-2024 reported crashes include two (2) fatalities and six (6) serious injuries, in addition to numerous crashes of lesser severity; and

WHEREAS, the repaving of St. Anthony and Rondo Avenues presents an opportunity for the city to re-think the layout of the street to promote improved multi-modal access, lower speeds, and improved traffic safety; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Highway Administration considers “Road Diets” or roadway reconfiguration in the form of reduction of the number and width of travel lanes as one of its Proven Safety Countermeasures to improve safety, calm traffic, provide better mobility for all users, and enhance overall quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the city adopted the updated Saint Paul Bicycle Plan in 2024, identifying St. Anthony and Rondo Avenues for future implementation of a bikeway; and

WHEREAS, to improve safety and mobility options the city would like to explore the potential of reconfiguring St. Anthony and Rondo Avenues to have one through travel lane alongside a buffered bicycle lane, mirroring the repaving and reconfiguration of Concordia/Rondo Avenue in 2024 on the south side of I-94; and

WHEREAS, the granting of a Municipal State Aid variance does not require the city to move forward with the lane reduction, but provides the city the option to do so should it so choose; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that we do hereby authorize the Director of Public Works to request a variance from the Minnesota Department of Transportation State Aid Rules 8820.9946 MINIMUM DESIGN STANDARDS, URBAN; RECONDITIONING PROJECTS and 8820.9951 MINIMUM DESIGN STANDARDS, ON-ROAD BICYCLE FACILITIES FOR URBAN; RECONDITIONING PROJECTS which require that one-way Municipal State Aid St. Anthony and Rondo Avenues have two through travel lanes, thus allowing the city to pursue the ability to reduce the number of lanes from two to one; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Department of Public Works will not initiate these changes until after it has received variance approval for the lane reduction from the Minnesota Department of Transportation, and until it has conducted additional traffic feasibility investigation and public engagement with neighborhood groups and stakeholders to advise the Department on lane reduction and bicycle lane implementation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul City Council hereby indemnifies, saves and holds harmless the State of Minnesota and its agents and employees of and from claims, demands, actions, or causes of action arising out of or by reason of the granting of the variance to Minnesota Department of Transportation State Aid Rules 8820.9946 and 8820.9951. The city further agrees to defend at its sole cost and expense any action or proceeding commenced for the purpose of asserting any claim arising as a result of the granting of this variance.

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