

From: [John Traxler](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_Contact-Council](#); [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Robert Street Reconstruction Municipal Consent
Date: Monday, August 11, 2025 7:52:54 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[2023-08-15_Captain Kens Site Circulation.pdf](#)
[MNDOT Urban Freight Perspectives 110818.pdf](#)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jtraxler@captainkens.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Re: **Robert Street Reconstruction Municipal Consent** (August 13 2025)

From: John Traxler
Sent: Sunday, August 10, 2025 11:53 AM
To: Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us; CouncilHearing@ci.stpaul.mn.us
Subject: FW: Robert Street Reconstruction Project

To: Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us and CouncilHearing@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Re: Robert Street Reconstruction Project

Date: August 10, 2025

IMPORTANT: Captain Ken's Foods (344 Robert Street South, St. Paul, MN 55107) requires uninterrupted truck access to and from its shipping dock (from and to Robert Street South) throughout the Robert Street Reconstruction Project Monday thru Friday. MNDOT already fully understands this. See attached file [2023-08-15_Captain Kens Site Circulation.pdf](#) prepared by MNDOT.

Also, see other email msgs below received from MNDOT's Chris Bower.

Please also note in addition: Continued **Water, Natural Gas, Sewer** and **Electricity** services are critical needs to Captain Ken's Foods' **SAFE QUALITY FOODS** (aka "SQF") certified food processing.

All of the above has been previously communicated to MNDOT for previous MNDOT projects, and again communicated early and often to MNDOT for the upcoming **Robert Street Reconstruction Project**.

John

PS The Robert Street Reconstruction Project has Captain Ken's Foods' business owners very concerned that Captain Ken's Foods will be put out of business by this project similar to how businesses along University Avenue were put out of business during the installation of the Light Rail Transit line.

PPS Captain Ken's Foods and MNDOT have developed a mutual and shared understanding of Captain Ken's Foods' critical 24/7/365 needs necessary to continue its daily operations because of earlier MNDOT projects before and since 2018 as well as continuous email and ongoing face-to-face communications over the past 10+ years. Also, see attached MNDOT

Urban Freight Perspectives 110818.pdf prepared for MNDOT by John Traxler of Captain Ken's Foods per MNDOT's request. Also, see below email msgs.

Cyber Security Vigilance and Caution: RESIST THE CLICK!: Report It, Delete It. Defend the Team, Captain Ken's Foods and All Business Partners.

John G. Traxler
President/CEO and Co-Owner
Captain Ken's Foods

344 Robert Street South
Saint Paul, MN 55107-2200
Ph: 651-298-0071
Cell: 612-414-7653
Fax: 651-298-0849
jtraxler@captainkens.com
www.captainkens.com

From: John Traxler <jtraxler@captainkens.com>

Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 12:18 PM

To: 'Bower, Christopher (He/Him/His) (DOT)' <Christopher.Bower@state.mn.us>

Cc: 'Kevin Nelson' <Kevin.Nelson@kljeng.com>; 'Paul Glaser' <paul.glaser@kljeng.com>; 'Walker, Kevin (DOT)' <kevin.walker@state.mn.us>

Subject: RE: Robert Street Reconstruction project 2026 - 2027

Hi Chris,

Thank you for your prompt reply today!

Captain Ken's Foods ("CKF") and I will continue to communicate promptly with you. Feel free to call me at any time.

FYI:

1. Natural Gas and City Sewer utility services, as well as dock access/service for over-the-road semi-trucks and box trucks, are critical daily needs for CKF' ongoing inspected food processing, heating/cooking/baking, and Shipping and Receiving. Without these utilities and available dock services CKF is out of business.
2. Spring/Summer is a very busy production time for CKF partially because of CKF' popular retail *Firehouse Oven-Baked Beans With Bacon*. Consequently, an extended "3-day weekend" during the Summer/Spring season is not preferred. But, if necessary, a "3-day weekend" may be planned in advance. A "3-day weekend" (when CKF is closed anyhow) can be accommodated but only with adequate advance planning/communication/scheduling/agreement performed 3 weeks in advance directly with John Traxler. Consequently, if necessary, please contact me three weeks in advance of a planned "3-day weekend". (John Traxler's contact info is presented below.)
3. CKF' production/processing facility is under USDA/FDA/MNDA inspection. CKF operates Monday thru Friday (except holidays) every week of the year shipping its frozen products and receiving (refrigerated (fresh) and frozen) ingredients and packaging materials at its St. Paul dock adjacent to Robert Street South.

Thank you for accommodations which will be necessary to continue Captain Ken's Foods' daily food

processing and Shipping and Receiving.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at any time.

John

Cc: Kevin Nelson
Paul Glaser
Kevin Walker

From: Bower, Christopher (He/Him/His) (DOT) <Christopher.Bower@state.mn.us>

Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 9:41 AM

To: John Traxler <jtraxler@captainkens.com>

Cc: Kevin Nelson <Kevin.Nelson@kljeng.com>; Paul Glaser <paul.glaser@kljeng.com>; Walker, Kevin (DOT) <kevin.walker@state.mn.us>

Subject: RE: Robert Street Reconstruction project 2026 - 2027

Hi John,

Thanks for reaching out – we're aware of the urban freight perspectives study (<https://www.dot.state.mn.us/mps/docs/metroreport.pdf>) and the prior feedback.

When we met previously, I took notes on your truck access and shared that with our designers – we're tracking all of your access and site circulation needs, and are intentionally designing the project around that. A few examples:

- We have an internal goal of maintaining 24/7/365 truck access as a starting point, with clockwise internal truck circulation only (per the map). This entails up to, and potentially including, building a temporary construction access off of Robert Street while we rebuild the existing driveway. In the event this happens, MnDOT will rebuild any fencing/gate as needed at State cost.
 - If we can coordinate a way to replace the driveway over a 3-day weekend when you're closed anyhow, that can be an option too, but we're prepared build an additional temporary driveway if needed
- We've developed a break in construction staging so that Captain Kens will always have access to one side of Robert Street (like we did with the RR bridge construction in 2022). When we're rebuilding Robert St. north of Captain Ken's we'll keep Robert Street open to the south, and vice versa. We're intentionally designing our entire construction staging plan around this constraint.
- We've designed both the entrance at Wood St and exit at Colorado Street to work with a tractor trailer with 53' trailer. We're planning to reconstruct the entire driveway entrance off of Robert Street (some distance into your parking lot) to prevent truck's landing gear from scraping on the pavement as it does today.
- We don't (yet) have utility coordination and construction details figured out, but we're tracking that too, especially the need for gas service. We'll have more coordination around that in the future.

We're still early in the design phase of the project, I expect we'll have more to share around construction access and staging later this year. I'm copying Kevin Nelson and Paul Glaser – they are the designers on this project, and Kevin Walker. Please let us know if you have any other questions!

Thanks,
- Chris

Christopher J. Bower, P.E. (MN)

North Area Engineer | Metro District
christopher.bower@state.mn.us

Want to discuss something further? Click the following link to find a time that works for a virtual meeting.

 [Book time to meet with me](#)

From: John Traxler <jtraxler@captainkens.com>

Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 9:20 AM

To: Bower, Christopher (He/Him/His) (DOT) <Christopher.Bower@state.mn.us>

Cc: Walker, Kevin (DOT) <kevin.walker@state.mn.us>; 'emily.holman@bolton-menk.com';

McCartney, Molly (DOT) <molly.mccartney@state.mn.us>; Kevin Nelson

<Kevin.Nelson@kljeng.com>

Subject: FW: Robert Street Reconstruction project 2026 - 2027

This message may be from an external email source.

Do not select links or open attachments unless verified. Report all suspicious emails to Minnesota IT Services Security Operations Center.

Hi Chris,

For **Robert Street Reconstruction Project 2026 – 2027** (hereafter “Project”):

Does MNDOT, or any of its contractors, need any additional information from Captain Ken’s Foods pertaining to the Project? If so, please advise immediately.]

AS WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED AND OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO CAPTAIN KEN’S FOODS’ CONTINUED OPERATIONS: See attached ([MNDOT Urban Freight Perspectives 110818.pdf](#)) for your reference: “*This detailed information was initially prepared on November 8, 2018 during planning for MNDOT’s Union Railroad Bridge project in 2022. The attached continues to accurately present the necessary truck traffic flow “into” and “away” from Captain Ken’s Foods’ only dock facilities during the **Robert Street Reconstruction Project 2026 - 2027**. See especially the map of truck traffic on the attached (final page) which presents the only route semi-trucks can navigate through Captain Ken’s Foods’ property “to the dock” and “away from the dock” and back to Robert Street South.*”

PPS You are welcome to stop in at Captain Ken’s Foods and visit with us at any time.

PPPS Feel free to share the above and attached information with other members of the Project’s team. Thank you.

Cc: Kevin Walker

Emily Holman
Molly McCartney
Kevin Nelson

From: John Traxler <jtraxler@captainkens.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 20, 2024 12:47 PM
To: 'Bower, Christopher (He/Him/His) (DOT)' <Christopher.Bower@state.mn.us>
Cc: 'Walker, Kevin (DOT)' <kevin.walker@state.mn.us>; 'emily.holman@bolton-menk.com' <emily.holman@bolton-menk.com>; 'McCartney, Molly (DOT)' <molly.mccartney@state.mn.us>
Subject: FW: Robert Street Reconstruction project 2026 - 2027

Chris,

Kevin Walker has asked me to make sure to include you on my future communications because you are the MNDOT PM on the **2026 – 2027 Robert Street Reconstruction project** and are working closely with Kevin Nelson. You will be cc'd on my future email correspondence.

IMPORTANT: See [attached document](#) for your reference and recent details presented in email msgs further below including:

*"This detailed information was initially prepared on November 8, 2018 during planning for MNDOT's **Union Railroad Bridge** project in 2022. The attached continues to accurately present the truck traffic flow "into" and "away" from Captain Ken's Foods' only dock facilities. See especially the map of truck traffic on the attached (final page) which presents the only route semi-trucks can navigate through Captain Ken's Foods' property "to the dock" and "away from the dock" and back to Robert Street South."*

If you have any questions please contact me.

John

Cc: Emily Holman
Chris Bower
Molly McCartney
Kevin Nelson

From: John Traxler <jtraxler@captainkens.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 20, 2024 9:46 AM
To: 'kevin.nelson@kljeng.com' <kevin.nelson@kljeng.com>
Cc: 'emily.holman@bolton-menk.com'; 'kevin.walker@state.mn.us' <kevin.walker@state.mn.us>
Subject: Robert Street Reconstruction project 2026 - 2027

Good morning Kevin Nelson,

Do you need any follow-up information from me about Captain Ken's Foods after your review of my email (see below and attached) sent to you on Thursday, August 15, 2024 8:29 AM? Please advise.

I would like to meet with you here at Captain Ken's Foods when you have a chance to meet.

Thank you.

John

Cc: Emily Holman
Kevin Walker

From: John Traxler <jtraxler@captainkens.com>

Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2024 8:29 AM

To: 'kevin.nelson@kljeng.com' <kevin.nelson@kljeng.com>

Cc: 'kevin.walker@state.mn.us' <kevin.walker@state.mn.us>; 'emily.holman@bolton-menk.com' <emily.holman@bolton-menk.com>

Subject: FW: Robert Street Reconstruction project 2026 - 2027

Good morning Kevin Nelson,

IMPORTANT:

Attached is the **detailed document** that we discussed via phone this past Monday and Captain Ken's Foods must share with you for the impending **Robert Street Reconstruction 2026 - 2027** project. This detailed information was initially prepared on November 8, 2018 during planning for MNDOT's **Union Railroad Bridge** project in 2022. The attached continues to accurately present the truck traffic flow "into" and "away" from Captain Ken's Foods' only dock facilities.

See especially the map of truck traffic in the attached (final page) which presents the only route semi-trucks can navigate through Captain Ken's Foods' property "to the dock" and "away from the dock" and back to Robert Street South.

If you have any questions please contact me.

Thank you for your attention.

John

Cc: Kevin Walker, MNDOT

Emily Holman, Bolton-Menk

From: Bower, Christopher (He/Him/His) (DOT) <Christopher.Bower@state.mn.us>

Sent: Tuesday, August 15, 2023 3:17 PM

To: John Traxler <jtraxler@captainkens.com>

Cc: Debbie Belmares <dbelmares@captainkens.com>; Walker, Kevin (DOT) <kevin.walker@state.mn.us>; Kevin Kosel <kkosel@captainkens.com>

Subject: RE: Captain Ken's (business meeting)

John,

It was great meeting you today – thank you for sharing details of your operations.

I marked up the attached map with some notes on your operations and truck circulation from our meeting today. Please let me know if I've captured anything incorrectly. I'll share the attached with our designers, and ask them to design any future work around these constraints.

In our meeting I mentioned some other upcoming work in the area, here are some links to those efforts:

- Lead-Free Saint Paul Water website - <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/saint-paul-regional-water-services/customer-resources/lead-free-sprws>
- Map of lead (or unknown) water services - <https://sprwsonline.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=34713bfefee742d8a89eeacad439dabc>
- Metro Transit G Line BRT - <https://www.metrotransit.org/g-line-project>

As I mentioned, our goal is to try and get all the Saint Paul water work and all the Metro Transit work done at the same time as the MnDOT project. We're continuing to work out those details, but you can learn more about those other projects at the links above.

My information is below, we'll be in touch in the future as we develop more details about the project.

Thanks,
- Chris

Christopher J. Bower, P.E. (MN)

North Area Engineer | Metro District
612-322-4660
christopher.bower@state.mn.us

Minnesota Department of Transportation

1500 W. County Rd. B2
Roseville, MN 55113

mndot.gov/



-----Original Appointment-----

From: Walker, Kevin (DOT) <kevin.walker@state.mn.us>

Sent: Tuesday, July 18, 2023 11:33 AM

To: Walker, Kevin (DOT); Walker, Kevin (DOT); Bower, Christopher (He/Him/His) (DOT); John Traxler; kkosel@captainkens.com

Cc: Debbie Belmares

Subject: Captain Ken's (business meeting)

When: Tuesday, August 15, 2023 12:30 PM-1:30 PM (UTC-06:00) Central Time (US & Canada).

Where: 344 Robert St S (344 Robert St S, St Paul, Minnesota 55107)

Hi John and team,

Here is the meeting invite.

Kevin

From: John Traxler <jtraxler@captainkens.com>

Sent: Friday, August 14, 2020 9:59 AM

To: 'cornell.richardson@state.mn.us' <cornell.richardson@state.mn.us>

Cc: 'marcell.walker@state.mn.us' <marcell.walker@state.mn.us>; 'Walker, Kevin (DOT)' <kevin.walker@state.mn.us>

Subject: Robert Street South project (East Fillmore Avenue to East Annapolis Street) 2000 - 2006

Hello Cornell,

I understand that you are the *Supervisor of Robert Street Project 2020 – 2026*. I have previously met with Marcell Walker a couple times and Kevin Walker once.

-
The Robert Street South project (East Fillmore Avenue to East Annapolis Street) 2000 – 2006 has me very concerned that Captain Ken's Foods will be put out of business by this project similar to how businesses along University Avenue were put out of business during the installation of the Light Rail Transit line.

Per MnDOT's inquiry and request in 2018 regarding MnDOT Urban Freight Perspectives: In reply I previously prepared and presented to MnDOT some of my detailed concerns regarding this project in the attached document. See attached November 8, 2018 document.¹

Captain Ken's Foods is a frozen food processing facility and was started in 1967 by a retired Saint Paul Fire Dept. Captain, Kenneth J. Freiberg. Our Operations Manager, Kevin Kosel, and Plant Manager, Richard Gavin, have been with the company for 38 year and 47 years respectively. My brother Mike and I have been co-owners of Captain Ken's Foods since 1999. My wife Linda and our brother Tom are also employees of the company and are being recognized this month for their 20 years here at Captain Ken's Foods. We are family owned and team driven.

Who do you suggest I establish a direct working relationship with at MnDOT to maintain contact with to guide Captain Ken's Foods through this MnDOT project?

Please advise.

Thank you.

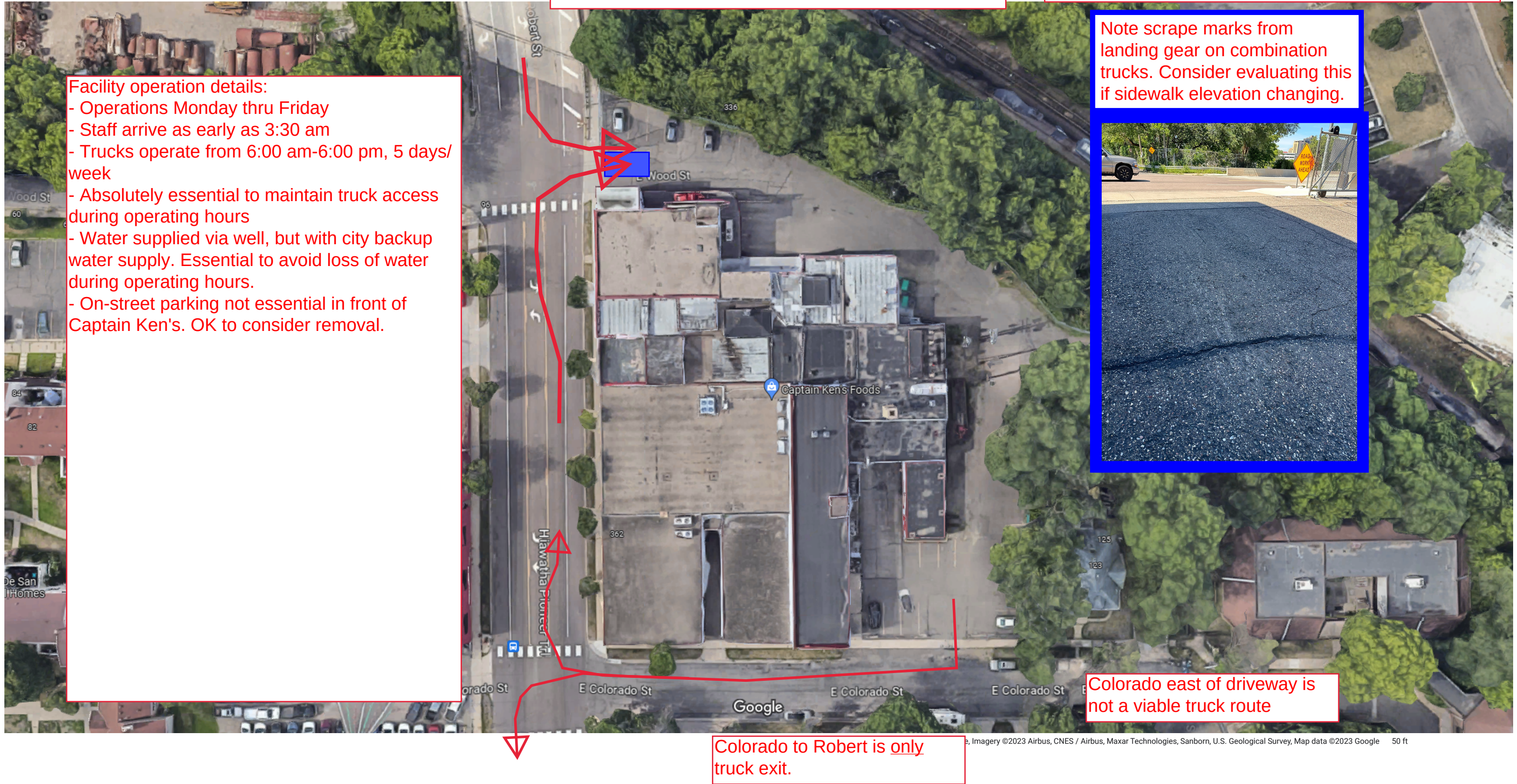
John

PS You are welcome to stop in at Captain Ken's Foods and visit with us at any time.

Cc: Marcell Walker, MnDOT
 Kevin Walker, MnDOT

¹ - [Note: At the time of drafting the attached document it was my understanding that the Robert

Street South project (East Fillmore Avenue to East Annapolis Street) would last until 2022-2023, but we now understand that it will continue through 2025-2026. Furthermore, at the time of drafting the attached document, Robert Street South had two (2) lanes in each direction and a turn lane in certain areas. Since then, and as you know, Robert Street South was re-lined to one (1) lane in each direction and a turn lane in certain areas; all of which is working very well from my perspective. When I am sitting at the desk in my office, I overlook the intersection of Robert Street South & Wood Street.]





344 SOUTH ROBERT STREET, SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA 55107

PHONE: (651) 298-0071

FAX: (651) 298-0849

(Revised November 8, 2018)

Interview Questions for Businesses – MnDOT Urban Freight Perspectives

For the Urban Freight Perspectives Project Captain Ken's Foods (hereafter "CKF") understands that MNDOT staff plan to address the following questions to better understand transportation needs and challenges and to collect feedback on MNDOT efforts. CKF also understands that interviewers will ask follow-up and additional questions as needed.

The following CKF answers to each question is made in anticipation of, and related to, Hwy 3/Robert Street MNDOT projects tentatively scheduled in the year 2020 and 2022-2023. See italicized answers below. [Note: **Hwy 3/Robert Street** is also interchangeably referred to as "Robert Street South", i.e., CKF's mailing address location is: Captain Ken's Foods, Inc., 344 Robert Street South, St. Paul, MN 55107. At CKF's physical location "Hwy 3/Robert Street" is also referred to as "South Robert Street" by Google Maps.]

- What modes of transportation does your business use? **Answer:** *Commercial vehicles of all sorts. Primarily semi tractor trailers of all sizes including 53' semi-trailers, cars, vans, etc.*
- What are your business's biggest transportation challenges or concerns? **Answer:** *Inaccessibility of vehicles (mostly commercial semi tractor trailers) to daily "enter to" CKF's property (St. Paul, MN 55107) from Highway 3/Robert Street and "exit from" CKF's property onto Colorado Street and then back onto Hwy 3/Robert Street. This Entrance and Exit access is required for both daily delivery of fresh refrigerated/frozen/other food ingredients and supplies and daily shipments of CKF palletized frozen products.*
- Commercial semi tractor trailers can not turn around on CKF's property.
- See attached map of CKF's property illustrating the "only" options for Entrance and Exit of property for commercial semi tractor trailers.

VERY IMPORTANT

ENTRANCE TO PROPERTY FROM HWY 3/ROBERT STREET

1. SOUTHBOUND commercial semi tractor trailers on Hwy 3/Robert Street currently easily access CKF's property from:
 - A. SOUTHBOUND TURN LANE, and/or
 - B. Either of the two southbound lanes.
2. NORTHBOUND commercial semi tractor trailers on Hwy 3/Robert Street can only access CKF's property from one of two northbound lanes. That particular lane is the lane farthest from the curb.
3. NORTHBOUND commercial semi tractor trailers on Hwy 3/Robert Street can not access CKF's property strictly from northbound lane that is closest to the curb due to "too sharp of a turn" alongside building that is immediately adjacent to property's driveway entrance.

- A. ***NORTHBOUND commercial semi tractor trailers (48' and 53' in length) might be able to make the turn but the driver must swing wide into the next lane over, i.e., similar to 2. above.***

EXIT FROM PROPERTY BACK TO HWY 3/ROBERT STREET

Note: All commercial semi tractor trailer traffic exits the rear of CKF's property via Colorado Street (Westbound) for one-half block distance back to Hwy 3/Robert Street. Most such traffic heads Northbound on Hwy 3/Robert Street back to Plato Blvd. and then on to Hwy 52, although some traffic will head southbound on Hwy 3/Robert Street to other destinations.

1. Exiting commercial semi tractor trailers that head NORTHBOUND onto Hwy 3/Robert Street (from Colorado Street) requires a wide berth for making this sharp turn, i.e., approximately the width of two lanes.
2. Exiting commercial semi tractor trailers that head SOUTHBOUND onto Hwy 3/Robert Street (from Colorado Street) requires at least the width of two lanes for making this sharp turn.
3. After exiting property onto Colorado Street it is critical for all commercial semi tractor trailers to access onto either Northbound or Southbound on Hwy 3/Robert Street.

Entrance to and Exit from property must be available simultaneously.

- How is your business affected by congestion, both in terms of daily operations and plans for the future?
Answer: CKF's daily food processing business operations will cease in the event of inaccessibility of commercial vehicles to daily "enter to" and "exit from" CKF's property necessary for daily delivery of fresh refrigerated/frozen/other ingredients and daily shipments of palletized frozen products. In other words, CKF will be "out of business" in the absence of commercial semi tractor trailer daily access to and from CKF's property.
- Based on your company's experience or what you are hearing from drivers, what feedback do you have about the following MnDOT congestion management tools: overhead dynamic message signs, ramp metering, and MnPASS lanes? ***Answer: No applicable feedback at this time.***
- What safety concerns do you have regarding transportation in the metro area and Minnesota?
Answer: Same transportation concerns as other businesses.
- What feedback do you have about the following infrastructure and features: pavement conditions, interchanges/intersections, signage, bridge clearances, and truck climbing lanes? (Specific locations?)
Answer: IMPORTANT: The existing southbound LEFT TURN LANE on Highway 3/Robert Street into CKF's property (LEFT TURN LANE begins on the bridge over railroad tracks) must be a continuing priority feature to facilitate and aid southbound traffic movement on Highway 3/Robert Street.
- What impact does construction in the metro area have on your company's shipping and receiving and on commuting for your employees? (We will share information with you about several current projects.)
Answer: Inaccessibility/detours of commercial semi tractor trailers and vehicles to and from CKF's property during construction would cause CKF's daily operations to cease. Furthermore, commuting employees would be unable to access CKF's parking property.

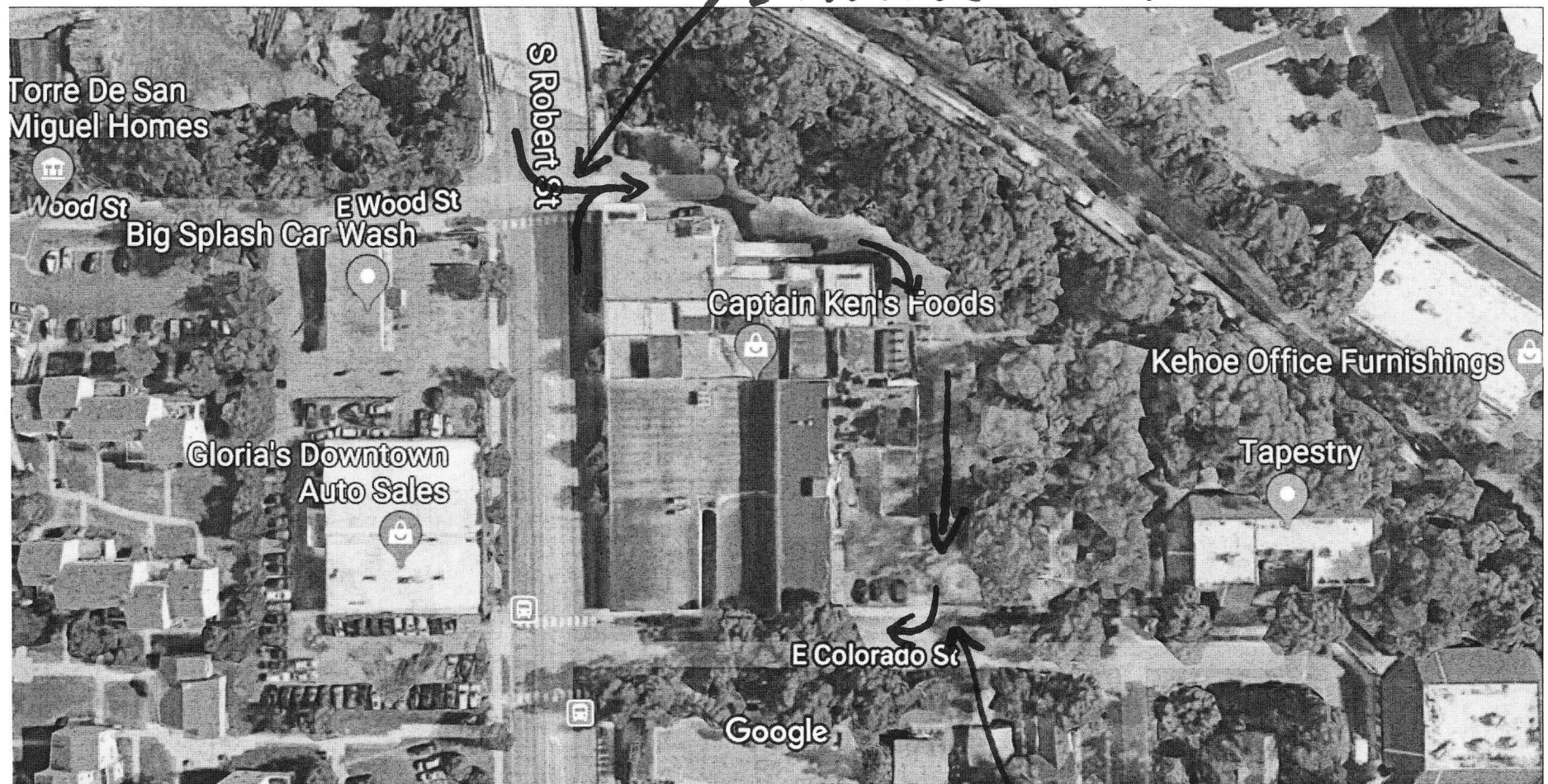
- How well or poorly is MnDOT clearing roads of snow and ice, and are there particular routes that need to be cleared more quickly and completely? **Answer:** *Because Robert Street is a main trunk highway (Hwy 3) into downtown St. Paul, and used by all sorts of commercial and personal vehicles, it is cleared regularly.*
- How well is MnDOT keeping you informed about construction, adverse weather events, and congestion? **Answer:** *So far MNDOT has been receptive to my inquiries and pleas for help in planning for the upcoming project tentatively scheduled for 2020 and 2022-2023.*
- What information from MnDOT would help your business plan for increases in freight volumes and congestion over the next 10 to 20 years? **Answer:** *Continued open communication between MNDOT and CKF will hopefully resolve any and all issues on a go forward basis.*
- How do size or weight restrictions affect your business? What feedback do you have on the restrictions and the permitting process? **Answer:** *Size or weight restrictions of access to and from CKF's property would jeopardize daily operations.*
- Based on your company's experience or what you are hearing from drivers, what feedback do you have about truck parking – availability, locations, rules and regulations across jurisdictions? **Answer:** *CKF site is otherwise easy to reach and accessible from and to Highway 3/Robert Street via Plato Blvd. and Highway 52.*
- What information would you like MnDOT to have about your business and its shipping needs when we plan projects? **Answer:** *Lots and lots of timely & advance knowledge and communication of dates/schedule/measures for maintaining open daily access to and from CKF Hwy 3/Robert Street property.*

If you have any questions or comments, please share them with the project manager for this MnDOT initiative, Laurie Ryan at 651-366-3658 or Laurie.Ryan@state.mn.us.



Google Maps

Captain Ken's Foods commercial traffic flow around building



Imagery ©2018 Google, Map data ©2018 Google 100 ft

EXIT ONLY