

# HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA

REPORT TO THE COMMISSIONERS

DATE: OCTOBER 23, 2024

**REGARDING: RESOLUTION APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING VARIOUS EASEMENTS INCLUDING A TEMPORARY RIGHT TO CONSTRUCT FOR RAMSEY COUNTY RICE STREET RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT AT 895 RICE STREET (DISTRICT 6, WARD 1), A PERMANENT EASEMENT FOR NORTHERN STATES POWER, D/B/A XCEL ENERGY, AT THE SMITH AVENUE RAMP FOR THE GOLD LINE BRT STATION ELECTRICAL FACILITIES (DISTRICT 17, WARD 2), AND A PERMANENT EASEMENT FOR METROPOLITAN COUNCIL AT SMITH AVENUE RAMP FOR UTILITY LINES (DISTRICT 17, WARD 2).**

## **Requested Board Action**

Approve and authorize entering into and executing 1) a temporary right to construct to Ramsey County for its Rice Street Reconstruction Project of a 488 sq. ft. temporary easement over HRA-owned property at 895 Rice Street; and 2) a permanent electric easement to Northern States Power, d/b/a Xcel Energy, for an electrical distribution center at HRA-owned Smith Avenue Ramp in correlation with the proposed Gold Line BRT project; and 3) a permanent utility easement to Metropolitan Council (“Met Council”) for utility lines, namely electrical and fiber, at HRA-owned Smith Avenue Ramp in correlation with the Smith Ramp Station.

## **Background**

### 895 Rice Street Easement

Ramsey County, in partnership with the City of Saint Paul, has initiated a road and sidewalk reconstruction project along the Rice Street corridor between Pennsylvania Avenue to Wheelock Parkway. The HRA is the fee owner of one property along the construction route at 895 Rice Street which requires an action by the HRA to grant a temporary right to construct over 488 sq. ft. of the property along Rice Street.

The Rice Street Improvement Project will include utility relocation, resurfacing roadway, updating sidewalk curb ramps, and improving safety features, among other improvements. Longer term road closures and the start of road reconstruction is anticipated to begin in spring 2025 and conclude in fall 2027. Ramsey County is requesting a temporary right to construction for the HRA-owned parcel that would expire on December 1, 2027. Because the City of St. Paul is anticipated to enter into a cooperative and maintenance agreement for this project, there will be no compensation for the temporary easement. The temporary right to construct is now in its final form and requires approval and authorization from the Board to enter into and execute.

#### Smith Avenue Ramp Easement – Xcel Energy

Northern States Power, d/b/a Xcel Energy, reached out to staff in late March 2024 requesting an easement for installation of an electrical distribution center adjacent to the Smith Avenue Ramp at 145 Smith Ave to serve a new bus shelter for Metro Transit's Smith station and the proposed Bus Rapid Transit Gold Line. A joint effort between the HRA Parking Manager, Smith Ramp operator, and the City Attorney's Office occurred to confirm the location and minimal to no disruptions to Xcel's proposed location for the facility. With approval from the City Attorney's Office, the Executive Director executed a letter to Xcel in April 2024 confirming that easement rights would be granted by the HRA for the location of the electric distribution facility and that construction could begin prior to executing an easement document so as not to delay the work. The easement document is now in its final form and requires approval and authorization from the Board to enter into and execute.

#### Smith Avenue Ramp Easement – Met Council

In May 2024, Met Council reached out to confirm certain terms of its lease at the Smith Avenue Ramp for the Smith Ramp Station. At that time, it was noted that Met Council had existing conduit lines and would be installing more that were not within the leased premises pursuant to that lease but some of which may be within a public right of way. Because the Met Council lines have been in existence for some time staff offered a letter similar to the Xcel letter confirming that easement rights would be granted by the HRA for the location of the Met Council lines at the Smith Avenue Ramp property. Having confirmed the location and minimal to no disruptions, the Executive Director executed a letter to Met Council in June 2024. The easement document is now in its final form and requires approval and authorization from the Board to enter into and execute.

**Budget Action**

No budget action is anticipated.

**Future Action**

There will be no further Board action. Upon approval, staff will proceed to arrange for execution of necessary documents for the HRA properties identified herein.

**Financing Structure**

There is no financing structure involved.

**PED Credit Committee Review**

Credit Committee review is not required.

**Compliance**

There are no compliance requirements associated with this matter.

**Green/Sustainable Development**

The Sustainable Building Policy does not apply to this matter.

**Environmental Impact Disclosure**

An environmental assessment is not a requirement of this matter.

**Historic Preservation:**

N/A

**Public Purpose/Comprehensive Plan Conformance**

The disposition of the interests listed herein comply with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan regarding transportation. Specifically, to name a few, the 2040 Comprehensive Plan chapter on transportation states the City's priorities under Goal 1, Policy T-3 includes the design of rights-of-way that enhance pedestrian and bicyclists' safety. Goal 2 is also achieved under Policy T-7 which includes implementing intersection safety improvements such as traffic signals, Policy T-9 that involves design of rights-of-way for all users, including older people, children and those with mobility constraints as guided by the Street Design Manual and Safe Routes to School Plans by thoughtfully addressing curb cut design, level

sidewalks, lighting, and accessibility, and Policy T-10 regarding design of sidewalks, trails, and transit stops for personal safety by providing lighting.

**Statement of Chairman (for Public Hearing)**

No public hearing is required for this matter.

**Recommendation:**

The HRA Executive Director recommends approval of the attached resolution which approves and authorizes the execution of the easement documents referenced herein.

**Sponsored by:** Rebecca Noecker

**Staff:** Nicolle Goodman

**Attachments**

- **Temporary Right to Construct for 895 Rice Street**
- **Electric Easement for Xcel Energy**
- **Utility Easement for Met Council**
- **Map of 895 Rice Street**
- **Map of 145 Smith Avenue**
- **D6 Neighborhood Profile**
- **D17 Neighborhood Profile**