

Mayor and Council Communication

DATE: 12/13/22

M&C FILE NUMBER: M&C 22-1026

LOG NAME: 06VA-21-012 STELLA STREET CLOSURE

SUBJECT

(CD 8) Adopt Resolution Physically Closing a Portion of Stella Street at the Fort Worth and Western Railroad (FWWR) Bridge Between East Vickery Boulevard and Luxton Street to Prevent Large Trucks from Colliding with the Bridge

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

Adopt the attached resolution physically closing a portion of Stella Street at the Fort Worth and Western Railroad (FWWR) bridge between East Vickery Boulevard and Luxton Street to prevent large trucks from colliding with the bridge.

DISCUSSION:

The Transportation and Public Works (TPW) Department has requested a physical closure of motor vehicle traffic of a portion of Stella Street that transects a railroad bridge to improve neighborhood public safety for those residents who live in the area. The closure of a portion of Stella Street will aid in preventing a catastrophic failure of the railroad bridge due to a truck or other vehicle crashing into it. The potential of vehicles hitting the narrow wooden trestle bridge causing a potential train derailment will be greatly decreased with the physical closure of the street. The City Plan Commission reviewed the request at their meeting on October 13, 2021 and recommended approval of the requested closure.

The wooden trestle bridge, serves the Fort Worth and Western Railroad (FWWR) as a connector to their customers between IH30 and south of IH20. FWWR customers include the Carter Industrial Park, the Fort Worth Water Treatment Plant, Ben E. Keith, Mother Parker, Miller Brewery, Bunge Oil, RTD, SemCo, Green Bay Packing, and the FWWR switching yard. There are between two to four trains per day moving approximately 10 miles per hour across the railroad bridge, some of which are hauling hazardous materials.

The travel lanes under the railroad bridge are narrow at 9 feet 6 inches from face-of-curb to face-of-curb with approximately 12 feet between columns in each direction. Due to the design of the railroad bridge there is also a column in-between the eastbound and westbound travel lanes. The height of the railroad bridge at 12 feet 11 inches high is lower than optimal for vehicular traffic, particularly truck traffic.

A metal recycling facility, EMR-Fort Worth, is located on the east side of the railroad bridge. Large trucks hauling materials for recycling enter and exit the facility using Stella Street under the railroad bridge to access E Vickery Boulevard increasing the likelihood that a vehicle will rub or hit the railroad bridge.

The exact number of times the bridge has been rubbed against is difficult to count however, there is a good count of the number of times the bridge has been hit by trucks or other vehicles. In 2020, there were five incidents in which trucks hit the bridge. Those incidents occurred on:

- January 16, 2020
- July 30, 2020
- July 31, 2020
- August 2, 2020
- August 6, 2020

TPW staff has performed an investigation on the causes of accidents at the bridge crossing which included reaching out to the FWWR and nearby business owners. Evidence from the field investigation showed trucks hitting the bridge structure both vertically and horizontally.

TPW staff working with FWWR developed two options to consider with regard to addressing bridge safety. The first option the considered by TPW was to add additional signage and possibly prohibiting long truck traffic traveling under the bridge. It was determined that the placement of additional signage would not adequately address the safety issues and concerns of a catastrophic failure as a result of the an accident since trucks have been using the underpass for many years and would likely ignore any such signage.

The second option considered by TPW is a physical closer of a portion of Stella Street. Due to the roadway's geometric challenges under the bridge a street closure was determined to be the best option. Traffic for the metal recycle business located on Stella Street will continue to have a safe route to E. Vickery Boulevard on the east side of the bridge using Luxton Street. A street closure eliminates vehicular traffic passing under the bridge thereby removing the possibility of vehicles colliding into the bridge structure. Accommodations will be made to continue to maintain pedestrian and bicycle access under the bridge along Stella Street.

In conjunction with the City of Fort Worth Fire Department, TPW staff is proposing the installation of bollards in the road to create the physical barrier while allowing access to the fire hydrant located on the east side of the bridge.

This project is located in COUNCIL DISTRICT 8.

A Form 1295 is not required because: This M&C does not request approval of a contract with a business entity.

FISCAL INFORMATION / CERTIFICATION:

The Director of Finance certifies that approval of these recommendations will have no material effect on City funds.

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Expedited