

Hennepin Avenue Bridges bonding request

Purpose

Hennepin County is seeking \$23.4 million in state funding to recondition the iconic Hennepin Avenue Suspension Bridge and two approach bridges located immediately to the east.

This investment is needed to extend the life of these bridges and preserve this critical infrastructure that serves the movement of people, goods and information. It addresses disparities among our residents, responds to climate change and helps build a healthier community.

These bridges provide a vital connection for people – linking downtown and Northeast Minneapolis. Every day, there are more than:



+22,400
vehicles



+2,500
people walking
and rolling



+1,300
people biking



11 daily
Mississippi River
crossing transit routes

In addition, the proposed E Line Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (ABRT) service is anticipated to operate along Hennepin Avenue, providing an efficient commuter service between the University of Minnesota and the Southdale Transit Center in Edina.

Deferring this investment would hurt this regional corridor including quality of opportunities, access to critical services and economic development.

Ignoring this critical link would diminish the value of improvements being made on both sides of the suspension and approach bridges and at locations nearby. The city, county and state are all making investments that will enhance the experience for people using all modes of transportation, improve accessibility and address community needs.



Hennepin Avenue connects downtown and Northeast Minneapolis. The E Line corridor's preferred alignment (in purple) is carried over the Mississippi River on Hennepin Avenue by these bridges.



50 years ago...

Approach bridges installed

1971–1973

Existing bridge completed

1988

Ongoing maintenance

Bridge study completed



Present Day

Anticipated construction start

2024

Need

The Hennepin Avenue Bridge is a historic crossing and a nationally recognized cultural landmark. By the 1980s, the previous bridge had reached the end of its service life. The decision was made to replace that bridge with one that would continue to recognize the important linkage and the historic bridges that preceded it. The existing bridge was completed in 1988 and continues to be a landmark — often shown in aerial views for nationally televised sports and entertainment events.

The nearby approach bridges, while less iconic, are key linkages. The westbound bridge was installed in 1971 and the eastbound bridge was installed in 1973.

Over the years, all three bridges have experienced deterioration of their decks, substructures, and superstructures. In 2021, the county completed a feasibility study. The result showed that replacement was not needed and that strategic bridge preservation treatments would extend the service life of the bridges. Without timely preservation, these bridges will continue to deteriorate and future rehabilitation costs will increase exponentially.



Concrete spalling on barrier



Structural member coating and section loss



Concrete ramp deterioration

Potential improvements

While not essential to the preservation of the bridges, a maintenance project offers the ideal time to make other improvements that benefit the community.



Improved experience for people walking and rolling



Improved experience for people biking



Improved transit experience

Contact

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