



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Wheeling/Bel-O-Mar Proposes Construction of New Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge at Aetnaville Bridge Site

WHEELING, W.VA. – The City of Wheeling, in conjunction with Bel-O-Mar Regional Council, has proposed to the West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Highways, the construction of a new pedestrian/bicycle bridge at the site of the Aetnaville Bridge once the demolition of the current superstructure is completed.

In a letter to West Virginia Secretary of Transportation Byrd E. White, III, City Manager Robert Herron said that Wheeling officials are interested in working with WVDOH, the Ohio Department of Transportation and Bel-O-Mar to re-establish a new pedestrian/bicycle bridge at the Aetnaville site, utilizing the existing piers. A response from White indicates that representatives from the Engineering Division are currently investigating the request, which will take about 60 days to complete.

“Once this investigation is completed, we will notify you of the results and of any recommendations,” White stated in the letter.

The WVDOH plans to demolish the closed Aetnaville Bridge, which spans the back channel of the Ohio River between Wheeling Island and Ohio.

“For years prior to its final closure, this bridge served as a vital and popular pedestrian and bicycle link between Wheeling Island, Bridgeport and Martins Ferry Ohio,” Herron wrote.

The proposal that was submitted for consideration estimates the cost of the project at about \$3 million and includes repairs to the current piers, a 10-foot pedestrian bridge deck and superstructure. Commitments based on project cost of \$3 million include:

- Cost will be split for Ohio and West Virginia; ODOT share \$1 million.
- Bel-O-Mar will commit ODOT sub-allocated CMAQ funds not to exceed \$1 million for the project; WVDOT share \$2 million.

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- City will commit 10 percent in local match with state match of another 10 percent; the balance will be solicited in CMAQ funds.
- Upon completion, the City will take ownership of the bridge and WVDOT will continue to inspect the bridge as per their current schedule.

This request from the City of Wheeling comes on the heels of a public meeting on this topic conducted by WVDOH at West Virginia Independence Hall last June where there was overwhelming support from the public to maintain a pedestrian/bicycle bridge at this location.

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