

EESW

RESOLUTION NO. _____ - 2023

EXPRESSING the desire of the Mayor and Council that the City of Cincinnati continue advocating for improvements throughout the progressive design-build process that encourage the shared priorities of minimizing the urban footprint of the Brent Spence Bridge Corridor Project through further design enhancements.

WHEREAS, the historic, bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”) has supported initiatives that have reconnected communities that were severed by highways in the 1950s and 1960s; and

WHEREAS, the Brent Spence Bridge Corridor (“BSBC”) Project will address issues of both the past and present around road safety, environmental impact, and climate justice while emphasizing core themes of equity, sustainability, and job creation; and

WHEREAS, the Central Business District, the West End, and what is now Queensgate were significantly affected by the initial construction of the Brent Spence Bridge and the Mill Creek Expressway, which is a part of I-75; and

WHEREAS, the construction of the Mill Creek Expressway was, at the time of its inception, the second largest so-called “slum clearance” project in the nation and included the total demolition of the Kenyon-Barr neighborhood and the displacement of over 27,000 people in 9,800 families, 97 percent of whom were Black Cincinnatians; and

WHEREAS, since its construction in 1963, the BSBC has been a pivotal part of the national network for the transportation of goods such that nearly three percent of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) passes across the Brent Spence Bridge each year; and

WHEREAS, the BSBC Project is a once-in-a-century project that will have a substantial, long-term impact on the region, and thus should be constructed in an intentional way as to minimize displacement, correct issues and failures of the past, and ensure the maximum benefit to the City and the region; and

WHEREAS, intraregional transportation is changing rapidly, leading to an increase in people commuting to work, school, amenities, and other locations by bike, foot, or bus, which demonstrates the environmental imperative to build on the need to expand facilities to support multimodality; and

WHEREAS, improvements made to the BSBC design in 2022 will increase the connectivity between communities of Cincinnati; and

WHEREAS, encouraging and accommodating increased connectivity between communities is in line with both the climate action goals set by the 2023 Green Cincinnati Plan and the federal government’s environmental justice goals set as part of the IIJA and Inflation Reduction Act; and

WHEREAS, the BSBC Project has been awarded \$1.635 billion in funding from the IIJA, with additional contributions from the Ohio Department of Transportation (“ODOT”) and Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (“KYTC”); and

WHEREAS, the progressive design-build process adopted by ODOT is an approach that allows participants and stakeholders, including the Federal Highway Administration (“FHWA”), ODOT, KYTC, the design-build team, impacted municipalities, and the local community, to consider and address major project topics in an open format and create the basis of design, overall project requirements, and final design intent before substantial work begins; and

WHEREAS, continuing to explore the feasibility of incorporating additional innovative design concepts into the BSBC Project will place our region on a path towards success and further economic growth in the coming decades; and

WHEREAS, the City, ODOT, and FHWA have stated their shared commitment to ensuring that the BSBC Project is a world-class, innovative infrastructure improvement project; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Cincinnati, State of Ohio:

Section 1. That the Mayor and Council express their support for the Administration’s continued advocacy that the Brent Spence Bridge Corridor Project design explore all options to reclaim additional land throughout the corridor; and that the Mayor and Council further encourage the Administration to advocate for the Ohio Department of Transportation (“ODOT”) to consider additional improvements throughout the existing progressive design-build process that could further reduce the width of the total right-of-way, streamline and reduce the footprint of downtown entry/exit points, improve existing pedestrian and bicycle access and safety, and potentially return additional developable land or greenspaces to public use, including reviewing and considering various innovative concepts submitted to ODOT, while either maintaining or reducing the current timelines, budget, and construction schedules.

Section 2. That the Administration continue its cooperative relationship with ODOT, while supporting and encouraging efforts to explore the feasibility of additional proposals with the understanding that this once-in-a-century infrastructure project will impact the future of Cincinnati's growth and development for decades to come.

Section 3. That the Mayor and Council request that the Administration and ODOT report back to Council on the outcome of ODOT's evaluation of external proposals, including that shown on Attachment A and any other public comments submitted for the Brent Spence Bridge Corridor Project that provide recommendations for achieving the City's goals.

Section 4. That copies of this resolution be spread upon the minutes of Council and provided to the Ohio Department of Transportation, Tammy Campbell – ODOT District 8, 505 S. State Route 741, Lebanon, OH 45036, tammy.campbell@dot.ohio.gov; the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, Stacey Hans – KYTC District 6, 421 Buttermilk Pike, Fort Mitchell, KY 41017, stacey.hans@ky.gov; and the Federal Highway Administration, Laurie Leffler – FHWA Ohio Division, 200 North High Street – Room 328, Columbus, OH 43215, laurie.leffler@dot.gov.

Passed: _____, 2023

Aftab Pureval, Mayor

Attest: _____
Clerk

Submitted by Mayor Aftab Pureval, Councilmember Meeka D. Owens, Vice Mayor Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney, and Councilmembers Jeff Cramerding, Reggie Harris, and Seth Walsh.