



Lake Park Friends

ATTN: Jan Uebelherr, President
2975 N. Lake Park Road
Milwaukee, WI 53211

Milwaukee County Parks

9480 Watertown Plank Rd.
Wauwatosa, WI 53226
(414) 257-PARK

September 14, 2020

RE: Milwaukee County Responses to Colleen Reilly's Questions and Comments Regarding Section 106 Historical Documentation for the Lake Park Arch Bridge Rehabilitation, Project 19-1344 MI / WisDOT 2967-01-03

Dear President Uebelherr,

I am reaching out regarding the ongoing project to rehabilitate the Ravine Road Bridge in Lake Park. As you know, Milwaukee County staff and a team of design consultants have been coordinating with the Lake Park Friends throughout the project effort. The purpose of this letter is to address questions and comments that Colleen Reilly has sent to the WisDOT Cultural Resources Team on behalf of the Lake Park Friends.

The currently specified coating system for the bridge rehabilitation is an acrylic film-forming coating. One product that fulfills the project specifications is TexCote XL 70 Bridge Cote with Silane, referred to as "TexCote" in previous documents. The Milwaukee County design team is aware of the Lake Park Friends (LPF) concerns regarding the currently specified coating system to be applied to the portion of the original bridge structure to be retained. LPF has been part of the team that prepared the project Request for Proposals (RFP) and reviewed consultant proposals for the project design. Proposals were evaluated and the highest scoring, most experienced and most qualified consultant team Olson Nesvold Engineers, PSC (ONE) was selected. LPF also reviewed the various reports, plans, specifications and estimates at the 30% and 60% design completion stage levels. Your review comments on those documents have been noted and discussed during virtual project review meetings, along with your verbal comments made during the virtual public information meeting held on June 17, 2020 and City of Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission virtual meeting held on September 1, 2020. LPF has clearly and consistently stated the proposed coating is an aesthetic issue, and that there are other sealant systems that will provide the same level of protection. Milwaukee County and the design team do not agree.

The design team is also concerned with aesthetics, but it is not the primary concern. The primary concern is preserving the structural integrity and historic fabric of the bridge for another 50 years (and hopefully more). That includes preserving as much of the original (non-air entrained) concrete and protecting the reinforcing steel that holds the concrete together. Coating and sealant systems are not the same. The coating system and the associated elastomeric crack treatment provides superior protection to the concrete and reinforcing steel than does the sealant with associated rigid cementitious crack



treatment. Of the fascia of the original concrete surfaces to remain, the majority have either been eroded away beyond recognition and/or coated in some form by concrete patches, shotcrete, paint and/or cementitious parge material in the past. Therefore, application of a pigmented coating does not constitute wholesale masking of original historic concrete. When approaching the project with a primary goal of extending the life of the bridge another 50 years, the frequency and cost of maintenance efforts is a very serious consideration. Milwaukee County Parks is under well-documented financial stress and our future financial capacity for maintenance must be entertained in tandem with the bridge aesthetics. The existing bridge is not in good shape. A coating system provides the best opportunity to extend the life and preserve the historic composition of the structure while minimizing future maintenance/rehab efforts over the next 50-plus years. A maintenance schedule has been prepared by WJE, a sub on ONE's design team, with expertise in historic concrete. The maintenance schedule is based on the structure having a coating system applied. The cost of the maintenance schedule over 50 years is estimated at about \$1.5M in 2020 dollars. Going with a less protective sealant system will cause the maintenance cost to go up and lead to loss of historic fabric.

It can be debated that some items on the schedule go beyond maintenance. However, even without those items the estimated cost of the maintenance schedule would be over \$1M. Discussions are ongoing between the County and LPF regarding LPF providing funding for future maintenance efforts to ensure the longevity of the rehabilitated bridge. The \$300K understood to be the current amount LPF will make available is far short of the estimated maintenance funds needed. Maintenance costs will increase over time and an even greater shortfall for maintenance funding, and associated loss of historic material, will result if a sealant system is used.

As mentioned, aesthetics is a concern for the County and our design team. There are currently five different mockups specified in the 60% plans and specifications that will provide a process for addressing color, finishes, construction processes, etc. for concrete patching, crack repairs, new concrete and coating system. LPF is aware of these specified mockups as such information as included in the various documents submitted by the design team for review.

Milwaukee County Parks appreciates your ongoing partnership and communication.

Sincerely,



Guy Smith, Executive Director
Milwaukee County Parks

