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Darrell Wilson
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Grant Street Bridge Task Force
200 Rogers Street
Bluefield, WV 24701

To the Members of the Grant Street Bridge Task Force:

Norfolk Southern shares the desire of the community to restore access between the downtown commercial district and North Side and East End neighborhoods, and we stand ready to contribute the funds to fulfill our maintenance obligations to help repair the Grant Street Bridge.

Our commitment is rooted in the 80-year-old agreement between Norfolk Southern and the City of Bluefield that outlines each party's maintenance obligations and is based on a detailed engineering estimate performed earlier this year that identified the costs associated with bridge repair.

That estimate was derived from a detailed report produced by the West Virginia Department of Highways and was developed by third-party engineering professionals who allocated the City of Bluefield's and Norfolk Southern's respective maintenance responsibilities as specified in the 1940 agreement frequently referenced by the task force.

Norfolk Southern also analyzed two other alternatives for restoring access between the downtown commercial district and North Side and East End neighborhoods. These alternatives included demolishing the existing structure and constructing a new bridge; or extending existing public streets to link Wayne Street and Roanoke or Hardy Streets via a newly constructed public road. The latter alternative would use the northern edge of Norfolk Southern's property between these streets, ultimately linking with the new Martin Luther King Jr. bridge near Pulaski and Roanoke Streets.

After considerable analysis, it is clear that alternatives beyond the scope of rehabilitating the existing structure would require substantially longer development times. We also note that Norfolk Southern has no contractual obligations under the 1940 maintenance agreement to build a new bridge or to construct additional access roads for the City.

Given our prolonged discussions with the City of Bluefield, and because Norfolk Southern has no obligation to participate in the construction of any new, publicly-owned access road or a new bridge, Norfolk Southern believes the best, most expedient, and most feasible course of action is to make the necessary repairs to the existing bridge. We are willing to discuss the other alternatives, but our financial contribution for any such alternative will be capped at the limit of our maintenance obligations for the repairs needed to restore the current structure.

We understand that our neighbors in the community are frustrated by the closure of the Grant Street Bridge and we write this letter to let you know we understand the desire to re-open the bridge as quickly as possible.

Norfolk Southern stands ready to meet with the Task Force for further discussions. We are hopeful that, by working together, we can reestablish access for the residents of Bluefield to its revitalized downtown commercial district and the vibrant East End and North Side communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darrell Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "D".

Darrell Wilson