



## CITY OF WASHINGTON, ILLINOIS Committee of the Whole Agenda Communication

**Meeting Date:** January 13, 2025

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**Agenda Item:** TP&W Railroad Bridge Painting Discussion

**Explanation:** The Toledo, Peoria & Western (TP&W) Railroad bridge over Business Route 24 (Peoria Street) was constructed decades ago. For many years, it has been an eyesore. It was formerly painted with the tagline “Fast Freight Service” to promote the railroad. Attached is a historic grainy photo of the bridge. The steel has considerable rust. However, the rust that formed is the only visible sign of the lettering. The concrete supporting infrastructure, while also not visually appealing, is structurally effective according to staff from the Genesee & Wyoming (G&W) Railroad, the parent company of the TP&W. Its operations are not impacted whether the bridge is painted or not.

Staff has reached out to G&W staff to find out if aesthetic improvements could be made to the bridge in the City’s bicentennial year. G&W staff have indicated that it would be open to having the bridge painted utilizing a contractor of the City’s choice. The railroad must provide written authorization of the work through a right-of-entry permit or contractor occupancy/access agreement. A non-refundable application fee of \$1,750 is required and the G&W has indicated that upon its approval, an agreement will be drafted and sent to the applicant for signature. The entire process is estimated to take between 6-8 weeks, though “expedited processing” reduces the processing time to 1-2 weeks for an additional \$3,000. Should the application and plans require engineering approval, the expedited process could take longer than two weeks.

The two bridge faces total approximately 864 square feet. Staff is unfamiliar with bridge painting costs and has requested assistance from IDOT staff to help estimate. IDOT provided painting costs that range from \$12-\$100 per square foot with the average cost over \$20. As a result, staff estimates that the cost to power wash and paint the bridge is \$30 per square foot, though this could fluctuate. This does not include sandblasting and staff does not know if sandblasting should be completed nor if the railroad would allow it. The cost estimate also does not include adequate insurance, which the railroad will require, nor traffic control. Staff has not received sufficient feedback to know how the timing of the work may be handled and whether it could be completed while Business Route 24 is at least partially open to traffic or if it would be closed for a short period of time with traffic diverted.

**Fiscal Impact:** At a minimum, staff estimates the construction at \$30,000 plus the \$1,750 application fee. It is anticipated that with insurance, traffic control, and construction oversight, the total cost would be at least \$50,000. Should sandblasting be undertaken, that cost would increase and could likely be more than \$100,000. The cost would also increase should there be interest in painting the undercarriage of the bridge.

**Action Requested:** Staff assumes that there is consensus on the poor aesthetics and that it warrants at least a fresh coat of paint to improve a structure that experiences nearly 11,000 passing motorists each day. Staff requests feedback on whether to apply to the G&W to request consent to the painting of the bridge. If the application is accepted, the standard term for a right-of-entry permit or contractor occupancy/access agreement is 60 days. As a result, such an application would signify a commitment to complete the work in a relatively short timeframe. Finally, the source of such funds to complete the project would need to be identified. Should the City be responsible for all of it, staff would plan on allocating sufficient funds as part of the FY 25-26 budget.

