



FORB – Friends of the Rail Bridge

Established 2018 | Burleigh & Morton County | (701)220-4513 | friendsoftherailbridge@gmail.com

March 22, 2021

Randy Bina
Bismarck Parks and Recreation District
400 East Front Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58504

Recognizing the Bismarck Parks and Recreation's strong interest, support, and mission to work with the community to provide residents and visitors the highest quality park, program, facility and event experience, FORB is excited to present the attached proposal for your consideration.

We understand it is the role of Bismarck Parks and Recreation to provide affordable, accessible, and sustainable public park and recreation services. In January 2021, local, state, and federal entities signed a Programmatic Agreement (PA) under Sec. 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, along with FORB and BNSF, regarding the proposed demolition of the 1883 Rail Bridge. The PA encourages development of a preservation alternative that will allow for BNSF to construct a new river crossing and transfer ownership of the existing Rail Bridge to a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) that can retain and convert it for use as a public trail. FORB has assumed the responsibility of establishing the PPP. FORB will then work with members of the PPP to develop a workable concept for preservation.

The PPP's preservation concept will assist BNSF and the USCG in meeting the requirements of Sec. 106 and be included in the draft Environmental Impact Statement in June 2021. Implementation of the PPP's preservation concept would occur if the USCG, in issuing a permit to BNSF, identifies the concept as a viable alternative and BNSF and members of the PPP agree to pursue the project.

We ask that the Bismarck Parks and Recreation District (BPRD) participate in the PPP to the extent that Commissioners and BPRD Staff lend expertise to the collaborative development of a preservation concept in ways that align with your goals and objectives. Should the preservation concept be adopted and move forward, we ask that Bismarck Parks and Recreation District commit to one or more of these additional roles:

- Act as a conduit for trail grants from the state and federal government
- Be a part of the planning process of the trails prior to and when the bridge is saved

A copy of the 2019 feasibility study by NDSU and FAQs was forwarded to you last week. I've attached an updated PPP Executive Summary with the same roles outlined above. Since no action was taken at the March 18, 2021 board meeting, can we please request to be on the agenda the next time the board will consider the request to be a public partner? Please do not hesitate to contact us for further discussion. We look forward to any opportunity to collaborate with you.

Sincerely,

Margie Zalk Enerson
FORB Board Member