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City of Watertown Celebrates Main Street Bridge Replacement Contract Awarded to Zenith Tech by WisDOT

Watertown, WI - April 8, 2024 - The City of Watertown is pleased to announce that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has awarded the construction contract for the Main Street Bridge Replacement Project to Zenith Tech of Waukesha, WI. The city would like to extend its gratitude to the many people and organizations involved in successfully moving this project up two years earlier than its original planned date.

“When we were notified by the DOT that they were under contract for the bridge, it felt like the first time in the two plus years we’ve been fighting for this project that I exhaled,” Mayor Emily McFarland said. “So much work, by so many people has gotten us to this point; I never knew I could be this excited, grateful and relieved about a bridge project,” McFarland said.

The Main Street Bridge Replacement Project is scheduled to commence in late April, with a potential 30-day window for some review. It is expected to be completed in late fall of 2024, barring any unforeseen circumstances. Throughout the construction phase, the City will work closely with Zenith Tech and WisDOT to minimize disruptions to traffic and ensure the safety of workers and pedestrians. The Main Street Task Force will ensure that residents and visitors to Watertown are aware of changing access to local businesses during this time.

“It is imperative that we continue to support our downtown businesses during this time,” Mayor McFarland said. “I have witnessed this community show up for each other time and time again, so while I am confident that we will continue to patronize these businesses, it is still a good time to remember the impact of shopping local.”

This awarding of the bid to Zenith Tech represents the culmination of a two-year long effort to expedite the bridge’s replacement, which was originally scheduled by WisDOT to be done in 2026. Since the initial findings that the structure was deteriorating faster than anticipated, many studies and phases of work have been completed to make the necessary preparations to begin work early.

“So many barriers came up during this process, but one by one our city team, our common council, our state delegation, and our business and building owners chipped away at the problem and kept our eyes on the goal of replacing this bridge,” Mayor McFarland said. “There is no way we are here today without each and every person who compromised, who advocated, and who pushed to ensure our community was served.”

Bridge replacement is largely funded by WisDOT, with the City of Watertown responsible for funding non-eligible construction items like roadway parking lanes and minor utility adjustments. This project marks the first phase of major work in the downtown, with the second phase in 2028 with complete replacement of road and infrastructure from Church Street to Market Street, and then complete in 2029 with replacement of road and infrastructure from Market Street to Irene Street.

There is a public information meeting scheduled for April 17th at 5:00 pm at the Watertown Public Library. For more information and project updates, residents are encouraged to visit the City of Watertown's official website and follow its social media channels.

City of Watertown mission statement: To provide for, protect, and serve the citizens and businesses of Watertown in an efficient, strategic, and measured manner, while creating a community culture where close knit connections are key, that is rich in small town values balanced with modern conveniences, that is poised for development, and is an idyllic community that leverages location and outdoor opportunity.