

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Aaron S. Reeves, City Administrator ^{AR}

SUBJECT: 52 North Stop Light Access Request

DATE: November 19, 2013

BACKGROUND

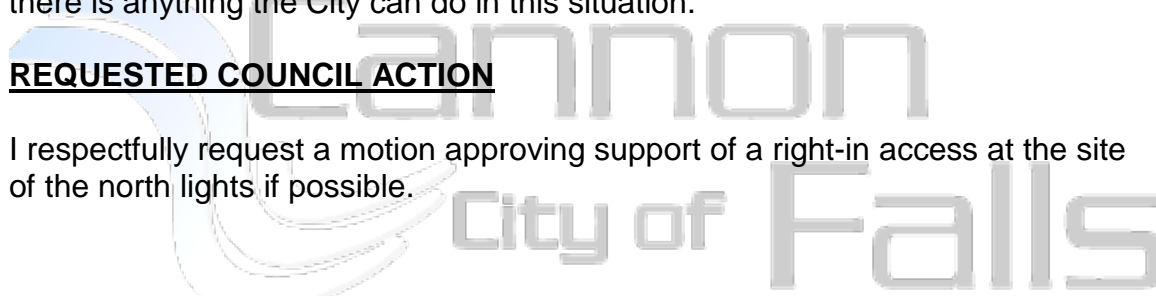
Business owners from around the north stop light will be at the meeting to request that the Council support a right-in access point remain open at that location. MNDOT will also have a representative at the meeting to address the situation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Review the business owners request and MNDOT's response to determine if there is anything the City can do in this situation.

REQUESTED COUNCIL ACTION

I respectfully request a motion approving support of a right-in access at the site of the north lights if possible.



Please find included in the attached packet a number of letters regarding the Highway 52 and County 24 interchange that will be affected when the exit ramp south of Cannon Falls is complete.

Several businesses have written individual letters explaining the impact they feel will happen once the access from Hwy. 52 is changed. We ask that you support all of the businesses on the south end of Cannon Falls as we will be greatly affected by this lack of access.

We are asking that MNDOT leaves the exits off and entrances back onto Hwy. 52 at the County 24 location. This would require less work for the construction crew, costing less money and thus saving the businesses in this area.

The reasoning for these requests are as follows:

- There are over 20 businesses that will be affected adversely by these exit closures.
- The amount of business from highway traffic varies for each business but the majority are at 50% or more.
- Without “easy” access a number of these businesses will most likely close down within a year to two.
- Losing these businesses would impact Cannon Falls greatly –
 - There are over 250 people employed by the businesses on the southern end of town, if even just the restaurants and Super America were to close this would be a serious hit for Cannon Falls.
 - Each of these businesses have assessments from the city for water and sewer – should these businesses close that money will be lost to the city – if the businesses that have been active for years can’t make it, they certainly won’t be able to sell their businesses. This in turn would cause the south end of town into a dead zone and we don’t believe that is what Cannon Falls would want.

We ask that the City of Cannon Falls support us when we bring this to MNDOT . As stated we are not asking for more money to be spent – it would be less and we feel that all of our businesses would then have a “fighting” chance.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

November 13, 2013

To Whom It May Concern

As small business owners in the Cannon Falls Mall we are concerned by the decision to close the County Rd 24/Hwy 52 intersection. Currently 28,000 cars drive by a day on average many stopping at one of the two lights giving them a reason to stop. This gives motorists an opportunity to pull off for gas, food, drinks and allows them to see other nearby business. We have seen what has happened to Hampton and are worried what the loss of this access means to our businesses. With Cannon Falls population around 4800, we rely on freeway traffic for a large part of our business. We are the first stop for many motorists and they ask for other attractions and business's downtown. Without that contact, our community will suffer.

Removing the lights, moving access further south and closing County 24 intersection and ramps will have a big impact on all of our business. We all agree it is great for safety of motorists but not for business. The overpass at 24 is not scheduled for quite some time and still may not happen at a later date. We would like to see the turning lanes on County 24 left open and add multiple signs promoting local business. We need and rely on Hwy 52 traffic. What is the plan of the City/ County/State to give people a reason to stop and not bypass Cannon Falls? From our research motorists are more likely to continue on to their destination than to exit on a ramp.

Signed Concerned Local Business's

Jim St
CVO

Huan M. Sates
Owner
Shora Maes Antiques

Phil Smith
owner Ace Hardware

[Signature]
Country Kitchen



BANKS OUTDOORS

31785 64th Avenue Cannon Falls, MN 55009

Phone: 800-262-4129
FAX: 507-263-4891

**HUSKY
HAULER™
PRODUCTS**

www.banksoutdoors.com
E-Mail: husky@banksoutdoors.com

11/12/13

Dear CF City Council Members,

Re: Strike Tool, Banks Outdoors located on the west side along Hwy 52 off Country Road 24.

It is our opinion that closing off the access onto Cty Rd 24 as an exit ramp on the southbound lane off Hwy 52 would affect our business as well as several other businesses along Hwy 52. By closing off the Cty Rd 24 southbound access on to our frontage road would no longer be beneficial to us and for the taxes we pay for the convenience for our current and or future customers.

Please reconsider supporting MNDot closing off this access and support the Cannon Falls businesses that has brought employment and business to this community.

Robert Banks, President
Strike Tool, Inc.
Banks Outdoors



October 30, 2013

To whom it may concern;

I am writing this letter in regards to the exchange that is currently being build south of us on Highway 52 in Cannon Falls. Cannon Power Sports has been located on the west side of Hwy 52 in Cannon Falls for the past 14 years. Seeing exactly where the interchange is at and how people coming off of 52 will have to get to us has brought up several concerns for all of the business owners located in our area. We currently have at least 35% of our business come off of Hwy. 52, with the interchange located where it is and the Cannon Falls exit where it is, people coming off of 52 will have to be very determined to access our business.

I am asking that you leave the exit lane going north bound on Hwy 52 as well as the exit lane going south bound so that each side of 52 will have some form of easier access for their customers. This doesn't involve any extra work on your part – in fact it eliminates some of your work. The exits are there already - just leave them open. We understand that people would not be able to get back onto 52 without going to one of the exits, just like they have to in Hampton where the entrance was left as is for Little Oscars, the hotel and the gas station.

I truly feel that if these exits are not left open my business along with all of the other businesses on the south end of Cannon Falls will be hit significantly by a drop in business. It is my understanding that you "are not in the business to hurt local businesses" if that is truly the case you will leave these exits open. As stated there would be no extra work involved and it would only continue to help current businesses located along each side of 52. We have already been hit hard by the circumstances of the economy, add another deterrent to accessing our business and we may not be here in 2 years.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter. If you should wish to speak to me directly my cell number is 612.812.0762

Sincerely,

Ray Schoenfelder



31633 64th Avenue
Cannon Falls MN 55009
Phone: 507.263.4532 Fax: 507.263.3516





November 13th, 2013

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing to express support for common sense accommodations to minimize the detrimental impact to local businesses at the completion of the US 52 interchange project in Cannon Falls.

As a retail business heavily dependent on access to US 52, we are frustrated by the rigid MnDOT policies and decision making structure that have driven this process. These policies and their disregard for basic concessions to local businesses will limit our growth, and the economic potential of many other businesses like ours. We ask MnDOT, in cooperation with businesses and local government, to reconsider right-turn-only access at the current County 24 intersection and to amend signage policies at the new interchange.


Although we understand the safety impetus behind the interchange project, a right-turn-only access point from both the northbound and southbound lanes would resolve the safety issues by eliminating cross-traffic, while providing continued convenient access to over a dozen existing businesses. In fact, MnDOT has implemented this exact method 10 miles north on US 52 in Hampton, to support access and preservation of local businesses.

Regarding signage, we were notified by MnDOT on August 15th, 2013 that our Specific Service Sign will be permanently removed at the completion of the interchange construction project. We applied for, paid for, and received our Specific Service Sign in 2008, with the contractual understanding that our sign would remain for a minimum period of 12 years. Now, when we will already be suffering from loss of convenient access to US 52, MnDOT is placing additional -and undue- burden by concurrently removing business directional signage. We have made requests for accommodation with placement at the new interchange, but MnDOT policy dictates that there shall be no Specific Service Signage at the new location.

As a business owner and tax payer, it's frustrating to see a process being driven without input from those that will be most heavily impacted: local businesses. We simply ask MnDOT to reconsider their position on right-turn-only access and Specific Service Signage. We feel our requests are reasonable and equitable, given the obvious impact that full closure of the current County 24 intersection will have on our business.

May common sense and collaboration prevail.

Sincerely,


John Peterson
General Manager

From: kay.butler@partners.mcd.com
To: naji763@msn.com
Subject: Cannon Falls
Date: Wed, 13 Nov 2013 19:31:55 +0000

Dear Naji Aljabry,

We also are concerned about the closing of our access on Highway 52.

Our business is heavily dependent on commuters on the highway and the ease of which they can access our location. We are extremely concerned that any closure of access will negatively impact our business. Customers make the decision to stop based on accessibility and visibility and they will not see us traveling north until they have passed the exit. It is also unlikely that they will double –back travelling south once they have passed by. We estimate that over 65% of our business comes from travelers and visitors to the city.

This closure will impact not only our ability to remain in business but will have a great economic impact on the area.

We employ over 70 people in our peak season with an estimated annual payroll of \$720,000.00. If we cannot maintain a certain level of transactions, we would be forced to lay off employees or potentially close the location. That would result in lost tax revenue, jobs, and local business and school support. We appreciate your reaching out to us regarding this issue.

If you have any other questions, or need any additional information, please call us at 651.203.4170.

Sincerely,
Tom and Kay Butler
McDonald's of Cannon Falls

Cannon River Catering Company, LLC

DBA Nick's Diner

PO Box 161
Cannon Falls, MN 55009
Phone 612/423-6164
Email c.r.caterinco@gmail.com

TO:

1. MDOT
Transportation Building
395 John Ireland Boulevard
St. Paul, MN 55155

2. Goodhue County Government Center/Public Works
509 West 5th Street
Red Wing, MN 55066

3. Cannon Falls City Hall
918 River Road
Cannon Falls, MN 55009

11/13/2013

To Whom It May Concern,

As the newest business at the South end of Cannon Falls, we are writing in concern of the removal of the intersection at Highway 52 and Highway 24 in Cannon Falls. Our family owned restaurant, Nick's Diner, and catering company, Cannon River Catering Co, has been growing steadily since our opening in February of this year. "Highway traffic" has been a critical part of this growth and our success. With the removal of the intersection, we fear our business would be critically hurt by less traffic being routed directly past the building out of which we operate.

We employ many local Cannon Falls residents, who would then be out of a job. We provide the community with local catering options, including individual families and the business corporations around town. We provide Cannon Falls with a family friendly restaurant with good home-style foods. We feel we can continue to grow and be a great asset to local business and the economy of Cannon Falls.

We would plead to consider the existing exit lanes at this intersection be left open, much like the intersections North of Cannon Falls at Little Oscar's, so that we too can continue to operate and grow as a local business.

Sincerely,

Chris & Barbara Weigman
Owners
Cannon River Catering Company, LLC
dba Nick's Diner



To whom it may concern

My name is Jeremy Lohrke, I own the Dairy Queen located at 31943 64th avenue in Cannon Falls. I've worked at Dairy Queen for 17 years. I started out as the Dilly Bar dipper at age 15. At age 21 I was managing the store in Mahtomedi Minnesota. I purchased the Cannon Falls store on a contract for deed in 2007. I have invested a lot of blood, sweat, tears and money to improve the appearance and customer experience at my DQ. I have encountered many challenges owning and operating a middle volume store over the last 6 years, but I'm afraid those will pale in comparison to those ahead.

The new interchange is coming. I have been driving on the new road and it is going to make it much more difficult for my customers to frequent the store. Right now cars only have to drive 150 feet to visit my store. After the project is complete, they will have to drive over 4/10ths of a mile. I proactively reached out to MNDOT to get the store on the road signs with arrows where to turn off the exit. Unfortunately they will only be putting up a generic sign that says "food" with no direction.

I'm in the business of serving delicious food & top shelf deserts in a quick service restaurant. I have some of the most loyal customers that would drive 5 miles to patronize my store. The majority of my customer base comes right off the highway, and those customers are very fickle & impulsive. With actual highway signs that give advance notice of the exit and what is available at the exit, & leaving the right turns at both intersections like the right turn only at Oscars in Hampton it will deaden the blow & make it easier to get through the first couple years. With a massive road project adding some road signs & right turns wouldn't cost anything. If you are able to do these 2 simple things you will give us a fighting chance.

Thanks in advance from myself and my 24 employees.

Jeremy Lohrke 651-262-4854.

DQ Cannon falls

October 30, 2013

To whom it may concern;

I am writing this letter in regards to the exchange that is currently being put in place on Highway 52 in Cannon Falls. We have owned and operated the Country Kitchen in Cannon Falls for the past 36 years. Seeing exactly where the interchange is at and how people coming off of 52 will have to get to us has brought up several concerns for all of the business owners located in our area. We currently have at least 50% of our business come off of Hwy. 52, with the interchange located where it is and the Cannon Falls exit where it is, people coming off of 52 will have to be very determined to access our business.

We are asking that you leave the exit lane going north bound on Hwy 52 as well as the exit lane going south bound so that each side of 52 will have some form of easier access for their customers. This doesn't involve any extra work on your part – in fact it eliminates some of your work. The exits are there already - just leave them open. We understand that people would not be able to get back onto 52 without going to one of the exits, just like they have to in Hampton where the entrance was left as is for Little Oscars.

We truly feel that if these exits are not left open our business will be hit significantly by a drop in business. It is our understanding that you “are not in the business to hurt local businesses” if that is truly the case you will leave these exits open. As stated there would be no extra work involved and it would only continue to help current businesses located along each side of 52. If this doesn't happen we honestly are unsure of how our business will proceed once the exits are blocked off. We have already been hit hard by the circumstances of the economy, add another deterrent to accessing our business and we may not be here in 2 years.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter. If you should wish to speak to us directly the Country Kitchen phone number is 507-263-2307.

Sincerely,

Dennis Dahl
Karol Dahl
Debbi Howden

Best Buy Liquor

From: Peter Bodette [pbodette@frontiernet.net]
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2013 9:28 PM
To: Best Buy Liquor

To: Cannon Falls City Council

The new interchange project has caused major concern for our business along with several other businesses in our area. When this project was being considered I was on the City Council and after more than two years of study and public input the original location of county road 24 was chosen. This would have worked best for the existing businesses and far cheaper to boot.

Then out of the blue came the new rule of 1000 ft. between off ramp and next intersection or access. I think they might have used this new "law" as an excuse to indulge the new hospital with a direct access and hence left the existing tax paying businesses without a voice in the location and design of the the new layout.

I am not sure if the Mayo Clinic as a non-profit will pay taxes or not but I think that the way the existing long time tax paying businesses in the area that came to all the meetings and hearings to participate in the process got the bait and switch.

I am asking our representatives to consider a study of making better and more direct access to the existing businesses.

Thank you for your consideration,

**Peter Bodette
Best Buy Liquor
Subway Sandwich**

From:
Triangle Automotive Machine Inc.
31685 65th Ave
Cannon Falls Mn 55009

November 11, 2013

To:
Cannon Falls City Council,

We are encouraging you as a council to consider making a one way off ramp lane into Cannon Falls from Hwy. 52. This would make for a easier access into our town and businesses.

In today's business climate it is so difficult to get people to stop at your place of business. Having at least one more option to do business in Cannon Falls is a huge asset to our community . Even if it only helps a little, it means A LOT.

Doug & Jan Rechtzigel

612 298 7421

Minnesota Department of Transportation

Transportation Building
395 John Ireland Boulevard
St. Paul, MN 55155
City of Cannon Falls

Goodhue County Government Center

Public Works

509 W. 5th Street
Red Wing, MN 55066

Cannon Falls City Hall

918 River Road
Cannon Falls, Minnesota 55009

Cannon Falls Super America

Naji and Melinda Aljabry

31600 65th Ave.
Cannon Falls, MN 55009

October 30, 2013

Craig Lenz (MN DOT), Greg Paulson (MN DOT), Jeffrey Bunch (MN DOT), Goodhue County Public Works, and Cannon Falls City Counsel,

Recently, we received a letter, from Country Kitchen in Cannon Falls stating their concerns regarding the removal of the stop light intersection at Hwy 52 and Hwy 24. As you recall, we emailed you in January, 2011 with the same concerns. We met with Craig Lenz finally in March, 2011. And, put our concerns on record at the Cannon Falls City Council Meeting in March, 2011. Now, we understand that approximately 16 of the businesses in Cannon Falls have finally understood that the on/off ramp at Hwy 52 & Hwy 24 is scheduled to be removed **and also believe this will be a detrimental to their businesses.**

We concur with Dennis and Karol Dahl, owners of the Country Kitchen. We are very concerned about our business and believe that the access to the Super America from the on/off ramp currently planned ¼ of a mile south, will be devastating to our business. We get approximately 70% of our business from Hwy 52 traffic. Gas station business is an 'ease of use' business. Without easy access, the business will fail. We have been in this business for 15 years and would never buy a gas station without visibility and easy access (in & out). They just are not successful and eventually close.

We intend to get together as a group of local businesses and would like the proper attention to this matter and the plans adjusted. Although after meeting with Craig Lenz in March 2011, we understand the safety concerns, we are not understating the concerns of loosing local business and economy. This needs to be readdressed. There must be a compromise between loss of business/jobs and road safety.

If these businesses fail, hundreds of local people, families, will lose their jobs.

All we are asking is that you leave the existing exit lanes at Hwy 52 and Hwy 24 open. This is already done by Little Oscar so it seems that it should be able to be done in Cannon Falls, too.

I am CC'ing all of the local businesses and our State Representatives and asking for their help.

Sincerely,

Naji AlJabry (Owner)
Melinda AlJabry (Co-owner)
Cindy Heinlein (Manager)
Ashley Giefer (Asst. Manager)
Richard McConnell (Asst. Manager)
Owner, Cannon Falls Oil Co. Inc, DBA Cannon Falls Super America

CC

Local Businesses
McDonalds
Attn: Owner
31675 65th Ave
Cannon Falls, MN 55009

Country Kitchen
Attn: Owner
31303 64th Avenue Path
Cannon Falls, MN 55009

Sol De Mexico
Attn: Owner
21518 64th Avenue Path
Cannon Falls, MN 55009

Cannonball Truck Stop
Attn: Owner
31627 65th Ave
Cannon Falls, MN 55009

Best Buy Liquor Store
Attn: Owner
31517 County 24 Blvd
Cannon Falls, MN 55009

Mileage

Attn: Owner
31168 County 24 Blvd.
Cannon Falls, MN 55009

D& G Ace Hardware Store

Attn: Owner
31265 County 24 Blvd
Cannon Falls, MN 55009

Country Side Antique Mall

Attn: Owner
31752 65th Ave
Cannon Falls, MN 55009

Napa Auto Parts

Attn: Owner
31685 65th Ave
Cannon Falls, MN 55009

O'Reilly Auto Store

Attn: Owner
31285 County 24 Blvd
Cannon Falls, MN 55009

State Representatives

Representative Tim Kelly

335 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155
rep.tim.kelly@house.mn

Senator Matt Schmit

75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Capitol, Room G-24
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
sen.matt.schmit@senate.mn