

A RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE CLOSURE OF THE SCOTT STREET BRIDGE

WHEREAS, in long need of repair, the Poplar Viaduct began a redesign project in 2003 with initial plans to keep Scott Street and Poplar Avenue connected; and

WHEREAS, the plan to redesign the Poplar Viaduct changed in 2018 after the City of Memphis' engineering division recommended to the Tennessee Department of Transportation that the intersection be severed over traffic safety concerns; and

WHEREAS, the Scott Street bridge connects the neighborhood of Binghampton to Poplar Avenue, the primary economic corridor in Memphis, stretching from Collierville to Downtown Memphis; and

WHEREAS, residents of Binghampton discovered plans for the proposed closure two years later in late 2020, only receiving official written notice from the city's engineering department on January 27, 2021; and

WHEREAS, Binghampton, a predominantly lower-income and minority neighborhood, would lose quick access for emergency services, commercial traffic for businesses, and close access to the MATA 50 Poplar bus route that runs on Poplar Avenue; and

WHEREAS, on April 27, 2021 Councilmen Ford Canale, Chase Carlisle, Worth Morgan, and Dr. Jeff Warren, co-hosted a community meeting where the people of Binghampton were able to give public comments and questions about the proposed closure; and

WHEREAS, quoting the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, the powerful and inspiring Mr. Jimmie Franklin, concluded his comments with these words, "Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor. It must be demanded by the oppressed. And we, as the oppressed, are demanding Scott Street stay open."; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Jacquelyn Webb, a retired teacher and current healthcare provider, remarked "In the end, you're only going to be hurting the people of his neighborhood – the residents and business owners."; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Joseph Morrow, owner of Morrows Auto Body and Sales, a staple in the Binghampton Community for over 50 years, spoke of the devastating affects the closure would have on his business, "People remember what they see. If you cut off access to the other end of Scott Street, now business is nonexistent for my business. Poplar Avenue gives full access to the city and you're trying to cut us off from it."; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Peter Wofford commented on the responsibility the city has to its residents saying, "For one hundred years, this bridge has provided nice access for the people of Binghampton, businesses on Scott Street like Mr. Morrow's, and that produces a promise to the citizens from the city, that there will be continued access for these businesses."; and

WHEREAS, when citizens call out a great injustice taking place, the Memphis City Council must recognize this achievement, listen to theses voices and join their chorus.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Memphis City Council does hereby oppose the closure of the Scott Street Bridge.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Memphis City Council requests the Division of Engineering to propose an alternative construction recommendation to the Tennessee Department of Transportation that does not close off Scott Street from Poplar Avenue.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Memphis City Council requests the Tennessee Department of Transportation explore financing for the Poplar Viaduct redesign project that keeps the Scott Street Bridge intact, as it is in the best interest of Binghampton, the City of Memphis, and the State of Tennessee to invest into this historic, resilient, and proud neighborhood.

Sponsors
Ford Canale
Chase Carlisle
Worth Morgan
Dr. Jeff Warren

Chairman
Frank Colvett