



August 24, 2021

To Biloxi City Council and Citizens of Biloxi:

The Popp's Ferry Bridge is one of the two north-south connectors onto the Biloxi peninsula. Over the last 20 years, plans have been in place for a new four-lane structure with no drawbridge. Due to the lack of funding, these plans have never materialized. Meanwhile this bridge continues to experience wear and tear, outages along with increasing maintenance expense. Based on current discussions with Mississippi Department of Transportation, using the traditional method of waiting on federal funding would delay the construction of a new bridge for another 10-15 years.

Biloxi cannot afford to wait 10-15 years in the hopes that funding will be available. That's why in August 2020 the City released and advertised a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Popp's Ferry Bridge P3 Project. The goal was to hear from bridge builders about what they could bring to the table in delivering a new bridge to the City, including the possibility of a toll bridge.

December 30, 2020, the City received three proposals. On January 29, 2021, the City notified bidders it would continue to explore traditional public financing. The Administration has continued to discuss bridge options with officials at the state and federal level since that time. After completing additional due diligence, the Administration believes it is in the best interest of the City of Biloxi to select the United Bridge Partners proposal. Its proposal provides for funding all bridge costs, including all future maintenance, and deliver a bridge in less than four years.

United Bridge Partners would explore and present various options. If approved by Council, they will pay for design, permits, construction and on-going cost of operations.

It should be stressed that this selection does not guarantee a contract will be executed or that the project will be implemented. Rather, this selection allows the City to proceed with negotiations and drafting of contract terms and conditions. One such term would be reduced fees for Biloxi residents. Once these terms and conditions have advanced to a satisfactory stage, a presentation on project and contract specifics is requested to be made to the City Council. Workshops and public hearings would also take place before any final vote on the contract by City Council.

While this selection completes the RFP process, the City reserves the right to reject any proposed contract terms or conditions. I look forward to working with this company to turn this project into a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A.M. Gilich, Jr.", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

A.M. GILICH, JR.
Mayor