



Feb. 22, 2021

House Finance Committee Members,

I am writing this letter in support of the City of Carver's Levee Improvement Project. Carver's levee system was constructed nearly 55 years ago following the devastating 1965 flood, which damaged 50 historic structures, mainly homes, in downtown Carver. The levee was constructed as a community response to flood events in the 1960's, and as a result no engineering plans and specifications exist for the levee. In addition, the levee has several documented deficiencies including freeboard elevations, steep slopes, lack of internal drainage and clear zone issues. Unfortunately, these deficiencies led to the City's removal from the US Army Corp's of Engineers' Levee Safety Program. All the while, The Minnesota River has reached flood stage at least 22 times in the past 10 years. In 2019, the Minnesota River in Carver was at flood state more weeks than it was below flood stage.

The City of Carver is asking for \$9M from the State of Minnesota so we can make the necessary improvements to our levee. These improvements will not only prevent future flooding in Carver's historic downtown, but will also set Carver on the path toward getting the levee certified by FEMA. Once this process is complete, home and building owners in the 100-year floodplain will no longer need to purchase exorbitant flood insurance on their structures, and the restrictions on certain improvements (expansions and additions) to the homes and businesses in the 100-year floodplain will no longer exist.

While we're asking for a significant amount of support from the State, Carver has invested in this project as well. In addition to levee certification plan, we've also made improvements in our storm water lift stations. In the **last three years we've spent \$1.2M** in improvements to the levee including replacing a stormwater lift station, drainage systems improvement and a concept plan for levee improvements.

Carver's levee is a *prime* example of aging infrastructure. As a community of just under 5,000 we cannot afford to bear the costs of improving it alone. We need the State of Minnesota's support to help insure the safety of our residents and the vitality of our historic downtown. Carver's historic downtown is an important part of our community's heritage and we are committed to investing in it for future generations. The City of Carver has one of the largest contiguous districts on the National Register of Historic Places. We have 90 structures which are on that list, many of which are located within the 100-year flood plain.

Thanks for your consideration, your service and your partnership on this very important issue.

Sincerely,

Courtney Johnson
Mayor, City of Carver