



CITY OF OAK PARK

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Officials Move Forward with Coolidge/696 Bridge Project

With construction to begin this summer, new design will help with branding, beautification

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OAK PARK, MI – Today, the City of Oak Park is announcing that it has taken a major step forward in its plan to maintain and beautify the fencing on the overpass bridge on Coolidge Highway over I-696. The project previously faced a funding hurdle as construction costs continue to rise at a record pace due to labor shortages and federal steel tariffs. These issues caused City officials to take a second look at the plans. At the City Council Meeting on Monday, March 18, the project overcame its final hurdles as City Council voted to fund the project and award a bid for construction to Z Contractors Inc. of Shelby Township.

The origins of this project began in September 2017 and stemmed from a necessity to fix parts of the bridge's fencing that had become dilapidated. It then grew into a desire to take this opportunity as one to brand and beautify the City via the improvement of public infrastructure.

“Branding is important for our community in terms of attracting new residents and businesses. Taking advantage of this opportunity to create a distinct impression by marketing ourselves to the thousands of motorists who use I-696 every day to commute through Oak Park is a good business move,” said City Manager Erik Tungate. “Cities that take on these kinds of quality of life improvements are cities that are typically thriving. It is no longer enough to rest on our laurels. We have to seize every chance we can to establish ourselves as a unique place to live and work.”

The project will cost approximately \$628,000, with the vast majority being funded by the City's Major Streets Fund. The project is broken down into two phases. The first phase is the fabrication of the metal design, which is expected to take about two months. Shortly thereafter, the second phase will begin, which is the construction phase to affix the fabricated metal design onto the overpass bridge, expected to begin mid-summer.

“Now, when travelers pass under Coolidge on I-696, what they see is barren-looking cyclone fencing. Soon this entryway to the City of Oak Park will look inviting with an attractive new fencing design and lights,” said Mayor Marian McClellan. “Just as realtors stress the importance of curb appeal when selling a house because of the importance of a good first impression, the City will be making a great first impression on passers-by, visitors, and potential residents.”

The project is anticipated to wrap up in the fall.

Note: Due to past confusion, it is important to note that this is an entirely separate overpass bridge than the one the [Michigan Department of Transportation \(MDOT\) will be replacing in 2024](#) due to leaks.

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About:

Situated within the southeast corner of Oakland County, the City of Oak Park has a long history of being an integral, inner-ring suburb of Detroit. With approximately 30,000 residents in 5.16 square miles, we pride ourselves on the richness of our cultural diversity and our safe, secure neighborhoods.

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