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PRESS RELEASE

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City officials met with Canadian Pacific Railway Company officials on Thursday, November 12, 2015 to discuss the structural stability and overall condition of the railroad overpass bridge on West Main Street. It has been to the concern of several citizens that, in its current condition, the bridge is structurally deficient and unsafe. Of those representing Canadian Pacific were Scott Paradise, Chief Engineer of Track and Structures, Bill McCarthy, Director of Structures in the United States, Dan Sabatka, Director of Structures in the South Region, and Andy Cummings, Manager of Media Relations. Canadian Pacific officials stated that their program falls under strict federal oversight by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). Canadian Pacific representatives went into detailed description of their Bridge Management Plan (BMP). The FRA has required Class 1 railroads, which Canadian Pacific is, to have a BMP since 2011. Canadian Pacific's BMP includes annual bridge inspections by a qualified individual who monitors qualitative changes to the bridge from year to year. Canadian Pacific officials reviewed the bridge inspection report of the West Main Street Bridge with City officials. The inspection report indicated that there are no components of the bridge which require immediate attention. Canadian Pacific officials stated that no significant changes had been observed between the 2014 bridge inspection and the 2015 bridge inspection. Mayor John David mentioned vertical cracking that had occurred in both abutments. Canadian Pacific officials explained that the cracks are not structural issues and are due to the original construction of the bridge; the bridge was constructed in three segments causing the cracks to appear from cold-jointing the concrete. Mayor David referenced the openings which appear in the railway deck which can cause debris to fall onto traffic below. Canadian Pacific agreed to address the problem. The conclusion of the meeting was that although the West Main Street overpass bridge is not aesthetically pleasing, it is structurally sound. In 2016, Class 1 railroads will have even stricter BMP standards as set forth by the FRA. The City of Watertown will maintain annual communication with Canadian Pacific regarding their BMP and the West Main Street overpass bridge. Canadian Pacific currently has a program in place called Community Connect where the public can call a toll-free number or email concerns to a general email inbox. The program has full-time staffed employees to address public concerns. Canadian Pacific has future plans for programs to improve public relations and concerns. The railroad company is celebrating 70 years without a railroad bridge failure nationwide.