



Andrew Cibor <[andrew.cibor@bloomington.in.gov](mailto:andrew.cibor@bloomington.in.gov)>

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## Fwd: bridge maintenance

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**Christopher Wheeler** <[wheelech@bloomington.in.gov](mailto:wheelech@bloomington.in.gov)>

Fri, May 8, 2026 at 12:30 PM

To: Gretchen Knapp <[gretchen.knapp@bloomington.in.gov](mailto:gretchen.knapp@bloomington.in.gov)>, Margie Rice <[margie.rice@bloomington.in.gov](mailto:margie.rice@bloomington.in.gov)>, Audrey Brittingham <[audrey.brittingham@bloomington.in.gov](mailto:audrey.brittingham@bloomington.in.gov)>, Andrew Cibor <[andrew.cibor@bloomington.in.gov](mailto:andrew.cibor@bloomington.in.gov)>

Good Afternoon, below is the email that I just sent to Mr. Cockerill and Mrs. Ridge.

Thank you.

Chris Wheeler

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Christopher Wheeler** <[wheelech@bloomington.in.gov](mailto:wheelech@bloomington.in.gov)>

Date: Fri, May 8, 2026 at 12:29 PM

Subject: bridge maintenance

To: Jeff Cockerill <[jcockerill@co.monroe.in.us](mailto:jcockerill@co.monroe.in.us)>, Lisa Ridge <[lridge@co.monroe.in.us](mailto:lridge@co.monroe.in.us)>

Good afternoon,

Thank you for keeping us up to date on your inspection and your findings. As this bridge provides access to City Parks, we do need to know when and if you'll be closing it so we can inform the public.

I.C. 8-17-1-46(c) makes it very clear that any bridge located within corporate city limits of a municipality that has a span length equal to or less than 20 feet and is not part of the state highway system is the responsibility of a municipality to construct, reconstruct, and maintain. This bridge, like many others within the corporate city limits of the City of Bloomington, does not meet that criteria.

I.C. 8-17-1-46(b) as currently written places the responsibility for the construction, reconstruction, maintenance and inspection of all bridges in the county that have a span of 20 feet or longer that are not a part of the state highway system squarely with the county. We understand that one new piece of the law seems to allow a county to sidestep this obligation if the county had not inspected such bridges before January 1, 2024 or added them into its inventory by December 21, 2024. But the law does not assert that in that case, the bridge becomes the municipality's responsibility—and as noted, municipal responsibilities are clearly defined in I.C. 8-17-1-46(c) and exclude this bridge.

This leaves a gap in coverage. The county's argument rests on lack of documentation of previous inspections. It would be understandable if the county cannot locate possibly decades-old records proving that it had inspected the bridge at any time in the past, though it seems unlikely to us that this bridge has never been inspected, given that under the previous law there would have been no question that this was a county bridge. We assume the county would have met its obligations to the law and to safety. If indeed the county had never inspected the bridge even under the old law, that would be worrisome.

In short, the City believes in good faith that the County is responsible for these bridges, as it has been historically. If your inspection has found safety issues, we trust your judgment to close the bridge and ask that you notify us of the timing.

I will be leaving the country this evening and will be gone until May 20, 2026. Responses should be directed to Margie Rice and cc Deputy Mayor Knapp.

Sincerely,

Christopher J. Wheeler  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Bloomington Legal Dept.  
[401 N. Morton St.](#), P.O. Box 100  
Bloomington, IN 47402-0100  
Telephone: 812-349-3549  
Facsimile: 812-349-3441

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Christopher J. Wheeler  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Bloomington Legal Dept.  
[401 N. Morton St.](#), P.O. Box 100  
Bloomington, IN 47402-0100  
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