



## I-35W North Corridor Project – Ready to deliver within 18 months

### Construction Cost Estimate:

\$208 million

### Current Funding:

Total: \$129.76 million

\$50M Mobility SPP FY 19

\$50M Mobility SPP FY 20

\$13M Pavement SPP FY 19

\$10M Pavement SPP FY 20

\$6.76M Bridge SPP FY 20

### Funding Needed:

\$78.24 million

### Project Benefits:

- Reduce congestion and improve safety for both commuters and freight traffic
- Increase person throughput and improve trip duration reliability during peak periods
- Improve travel times for transit and carpools

### For more information about the I-35W North Corridor Project contact:

**Jerome Adams**

Project Manager

[jerome.adams@state.mn.us](mailto:jerome.adams@state.mn.us)

651-234-7611

### Project Website:

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/i35wroseville/index.html>

### Scope and Location: Roseville to Lino Lakes, Minnesota (12 Miles)

MnDOT is planning future construction of an additional lane in each direction on I-35W between Highway 36 in Roseville and Sunset Ave (CR 53) in Lino Lakes, Minnesota. The Project Length is 12 miles. Based on preliminary engineering completed to date, MnDOT is recommending that these additional lanes operate as MnPASS lanes.

### What is the problem?

The I-35W north corridor is a major radial freeway corridor connecting greater Minnesota and the growing north suburban area to downtown Minneapolis. As the region has grown, traffic volumes have increased and a number of segments along the corridor experience significant peak period congestion each day. Congestion is expected to increase by year 2040 as additional growth and development occurs in communities throughout the corridor. Additionally, the pavement and some bridges have reached the end of their service life and are scheduled to be replaced in the near future.

### Corridor Vision: What has been done to date?

The North Metro I-35W Corridor Coalition was established as a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) organization in December, 1996 in response to growing concerns about daily congestion on I-35W north of downtown Minneapolis. Current membership in the Coalition includes the Cities of New Brighton, Mounds View, Circle Pines, Lexington and Blaine along with Anoka County and Ramsey County.

After several years of study on land use and traffic options supported in large part with grants from the McKnight Foundation, requests for Federal funding were submitted with the help of the North Metro I-35W Corridor Coalition, Federal, State, and Local elected officials, resulting in two allocations in Federal Fiscal years 2008 and 2009. The FFY 2009 funds, \$882,000, were used to support a Feasibility Study for the potential use of Managed Lanes to address capacity issues, which was completed in 2013.

That study evaluated many alternatives. Its conclusion was that adding a lane to this corridor was the most feasible and practical. It also concluded that corridor improvements should be split up into multiple phases:

- First add the lane from Roseville to Lino Lakes, because this area has the greatest congestion and synergy can be achieved with adding the lane and replacing existing aging pavement and bridges,
- Second add the lane from Minneapolis to Roseville, because this will complete the connection of the Minneapolis central business district to the first and second ring suburbs.

In March 2014 and with the help of the North Metro I-35W Corridor Coalition and Federal, State, and Local elected officials, \$814,086 in Federal Interstate Maintenance Discretionary (IMD) Funds were procured to fund the

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preliminary design for this project. In January 2015, the Minnesota Legislature, with the support MNDOT, the Governor, and local elected officials, provided another \$1.1 million in Corridors of Commerce State Bonds to fund the preliminary design from this project.

In October 2014, the Preliminary Design Contract was started for this project. The goal of this Contract is to select a preferred alternative, complete the environmental documentation, produce a detailed cost estimate, which will enable this project to be delivered to construction within 18 months of receiving funding for construction. The major deliverables of this Contract will be complete May 2016.

## **What is the status of environmental documentation and what is the public and political support for the project?**

Federal and state laws require MnDOT to complete an environmental review of the project. Preliminary engineering and the environmental review process began October 2015. MnDOT completed the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) February 2016. It is anticipated that environmental approvals will occur December 2016. That draft EA evaluated alternatives as part of the environmental review process:

- A General Purpose (GP) lane – open to all vehicles at all times.
- A High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane –only transit buses, carpools with 2 or more people, and motorcycles can use the lane.
- A MnPASS lane – open to all vehicles most of the day with restricted use during peak hours. Transit buses, carpools, and motorcycles use the MnPASS lane for free. Single occupant vehicles have the option to use the lane for a fee.

MnDOT has conducted more than half of its public involvement plans, and results to date indicate broad support for the project from both elected officials and the public.

MnDOT fully expects that this process will validate the results of previous studies which demonstrated the greater long-term benefits to commuters and freight of MnPASS lanes. MnDOT will be working with its project partners to further develop the MnPASS vision for the I-35W north corridor, and will be soliciting public input as part of project development.

## **How are you using technology to maximize the efficiency of the freeway for commuters and freight traffic?**

Traffic analysis on this corridor indicates that we can't build our way out of congestion. Adding one lane in each direction is relatively easy to do with minimal impacts to homes, businesses, people, and the environment. However, only adding one lane in each direction does not eliminate congestion over the next 20 years. Adding 2-lanes in each direction would mostly eliminate congestion over the next 20 years, but this causes two major problems:

1. Homes and businesses would need to be bought, environmental impacts are far greater, all of the bridges and interchanges would need to be reconstructed, and the resulting impacts and costs are far too high to be practical. For example, the costs hit \$1 billion plus very quickly.
2. Analysis and experience indicate that even those 2 additional lanes will get congested again after 20 years and after that we don't have any other solutions. Adding yet another lane is likely unachievable.

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Therefore, MnDOT is proposing to make the added lanes a MNPASS lane. A MNPASS lane is a High-Occupancy-Toll (HOT) lane. The lane is open to all traffic 20 hours of the day. The lane has a restriction on it for the 4 hours during the peak travel time. The lane may be used for free to vehicles carrying 2 or more people, and a vehicle with a single occupant may use it if they pay a fee. This concept maximizes the people moved, while reducing the number of vehicles used, guarantees a reliable trip time every day for those that choose to use the lane, and allows single occupants to take advantage of that reliable trip time for a fee. Another benefit is that the MNPASS lane will allow the other general purpose lanes to operate more freely over a longer period of years as the population continues to build, which will give benefits to other users including freight traffic. As stated before, we can't eliminate the congestion, but we can maximize the efficiency of this freeway using the technology of a MNPASS lane. Please watch this video for more details on MNPASS lanes: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yS4DC6cb\\_6U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yS4DC6cb_6U)

### **Synergy with the I-35W Mississippi River Bridge**

The I-35W Mississippi River Bridge in downtown Minneapolis was replaced after the previous bridge tragically collapsed in 2007. The new bridge was constructed both wide enough and with enough structural capacity to receive the traffic from an added lane to the north. The I-35W North Corridor Project will maximize the investment made in the I-35W Mississippi River Bridge.

### **What are the major project costs?**

Add the MNPASS Lane: \$103 million

Replace existing aging pavement: \$76 million

Construct eight low cost high benefit improvements (such as add auxiliary lanes): \$29 million

Total cost for a 12 mile long project: \$208 million

### **Project Schedule (Dependent on funding)**

This project is ready to deliver within 18 months depending on receiving additional funding for the project. MNDOT can achieve the following proposed schedule:

- December 2016: Complete environmental process and receive all approvals for the project.
- August 2017: Construction Letting
- September 2017: Construction begins
- November 2022: Construction complete

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