

Transportation Committee

Meeting date: September 10, 2018

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of September 26, 2018

Subject: Controlled Access Approval: I-494 and I-694 between 10th St North and Tamarack Rd, Washington County

District(s), Member(s): Districts 11 and 12, Sandy Rummel and Harry Melander

Policy/Legal Reference: Mn. Statute 473.166

Staff Prepared/Presented: Nick Thompson, Director, MTS, 651-602-1754

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Division/Department: Metropolitan Transportation Services (Review #22073-1)

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council approve a request by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to add southbound auxiliary lanes along I-694 between 10th Street North and I-94 and along I-494 between I-94 and Tamarack Road, subject to further review and approval by the Metropolitan Council if there are any significant changes in the design of the proposed project.

Background

Minnesota state law (MS. 473.166) requires that the Council approve any controlled access highway in the metropolitan area before construction or right-of-way acquisition begins. This is to ensure that proposed highway projects are consistent with regional policies and plans.

Auxiliary lanes usually connect neighboring interchanges on freeways to serve high entering and exiting traffic volumes. The proposed project will add southbound auxiliary lanes along I-694 between 10th Street North and I-94 in Oakdale and along I-494 between I-94 and Tamarack Road in Woodbury. Buffer lanes are being used more frequently to separate slow entering and exiting traffic between loop ramps in Twin City cloverleaf interchanges from through traffic. This project will also add buffer lanes between the loops at I-94 in both northbound and southbound directions, replace two bridges at I-94 and replace pavement within the project area.

The interchange at I-94, I-494 and I-694 experiences regular congestion in the southbound and northbound directions (MnDOT, 2017 Congestion Report). The loop ramp carrying traffic from southbound I-694 to eastbound I-94 is part of the signed east-west freight bypass route of the Twin Cities and has a history of regular truck rollover crashes. This is not only a safety concern but regularly causes this important link in the highway network to be closed with no notice. The pavement and bridges in the project area need preservation work.

This project will add auxiliary lanes and buffer lanes to improve the efficiency and safety of the highways, reconstruct the loop ramp carrying southbound I-694 to eastbound I-94 to address the history of rollover crashes and replace pavement and two bridges to preserve the highway system.

MnDOT prepared an Environmental Assessment Worksheet and on July 16, 2018, MnDOT announced a conclusion that an Environmental Impact Statement is not

required and issued a Negative Declaration Order. The project is anticipated to begin construction in 2019.

This project is part of MnDOT and the region's ongoing efforts to preserve the regions highways, and improve their safety and mobility in order to support economic development and quality of life.

Rationale and Consistency with Regional Policy

This project is included in the regions 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program. It is consistent with regional policy as it most directly advances the Transportation Policy Plan's goals of Transportation System Stewardship, Safety and Security and Access to Destinations. It also supports the Thrive MSP 2040 outcomes of Stewardship and Livability.

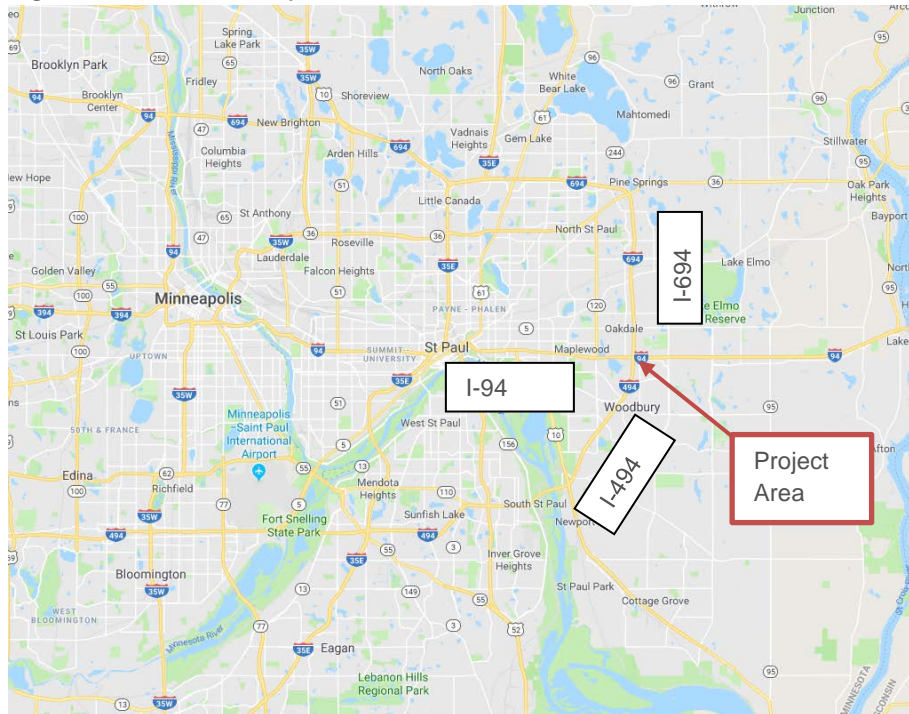
Funding

This project is estimated to cost \$28.5 million and is funded entirely by MnDOT.

Known Support / Opposition

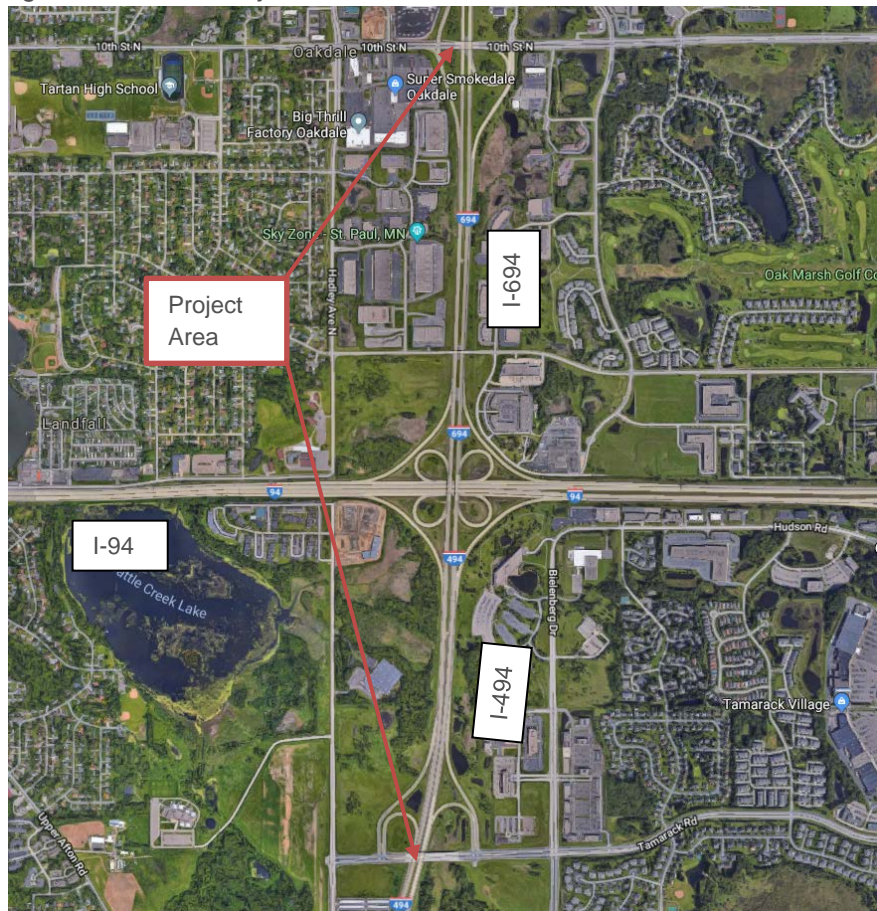
The Federal Highway Administration and local partners had sought a flyover ramp to be included with this project, but the consideration of that will occur depending on the results of the ongoing Freeway System Interchange Study and could be constructed with an unbonded concrete overlay project along I-94 planned for construction in 2023 and 2024.

Figure 1: Context of Project Area



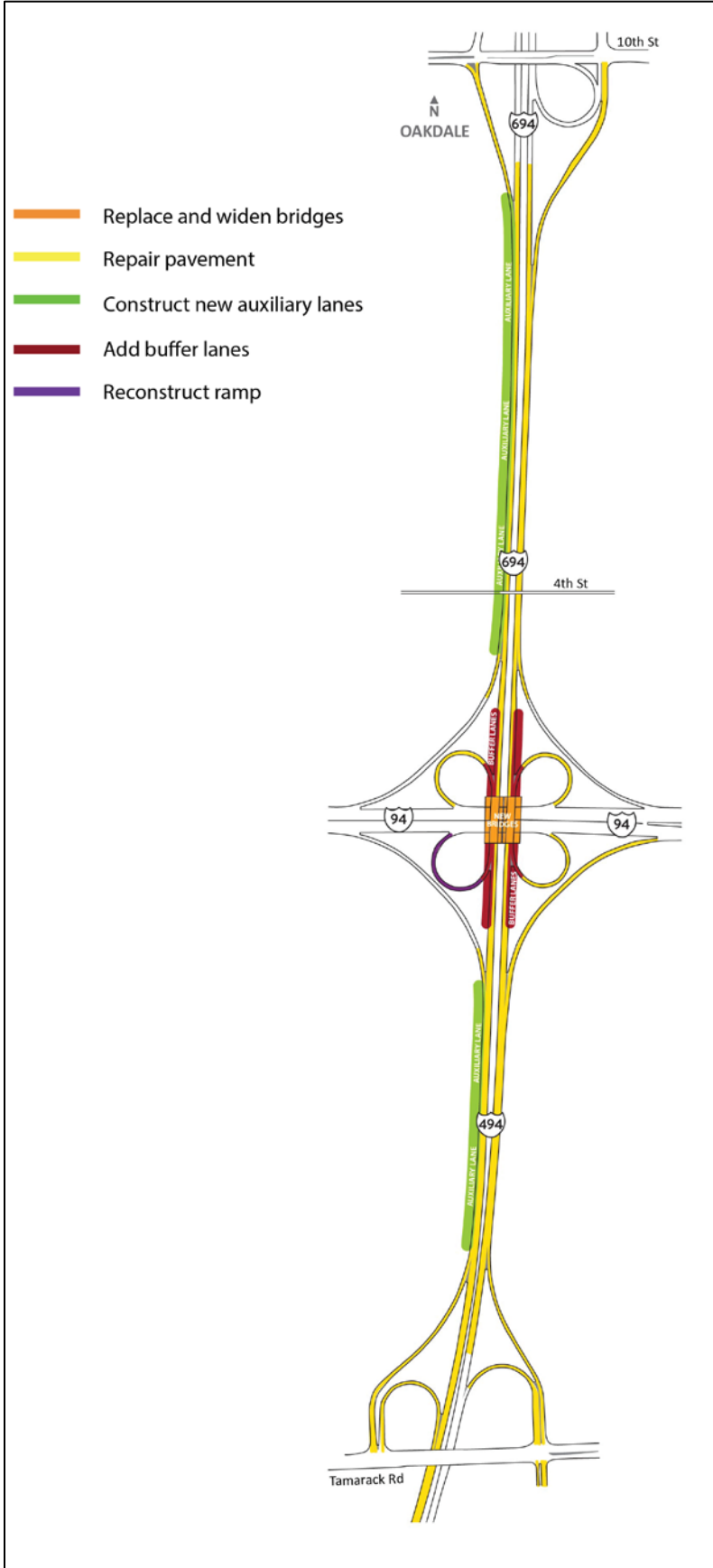
Source: Google Maps

Figure 2: Detailed Project Area



Source: Google Maps

Figure 3: Proposed Improvements along I-694 and I-494 at I-94



Source: MnDOT