I-35W/Highway 62 Crosstown Commons Reconstruction

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Background

Highway 62/Crosstown Highway

- Built in the 1960s by Hennepin County
- Current alignment and design was decided in the 1950s and 1960s and were made to avoid land acquisitions and other impacts
- Was one of only a few county operated highways in the United States
- Operation was switched to the State of Minnesota in 1988
- Runs from I-494 to MN-55 through the cities of Minnetonka, Eden Prairie, Edina, Richfield and Minneapolis
Location of Crosstown
Current Status

- Interchange between I-35W and MN-62 is one of the most traveled and congested points in the Twin Cities.
- I-35W is the major north-south freeway in the region and has the largest transit ridership of any segment in the area.
- MN-62 serves as a major access route to both downtowns and the airport.
- Capacity in the area is exhausted during the morning and afternoon peaks.
- Congestion typical throughout the day.
Location of Project
Need for reconstruction

- On average 553 accidents occur yearly in the area, which is nearly five times higher than the average for metropolitan urban freeways.
- As congestion builds on the Commons drivers use local streets causing more congestion on the local network.
- When I-35W and MN-62 merge into a 6-lane freeway significant weaving movements are required.
Project Goals

- Improve safety and capacity needs in the Commons area
- Proposal will address needs identified in the Metropolitan Council Transportation Policy Plan
- Will decrease demand and congestion of local networks
- Increase capacity on MN-62
Timeline

- Final design and right of way acquisition - 2004-2005
- Contract letting - November 2005
- Begin construction - 2005-2006
- Complete construction - 2009
- Schedule on hold due to Minneapolis’ refusal to give Municipal Consent
Need

- Traffic Volume of 240,000 vehicles/day
- Congestion on some places for up to 13 hours/day
- Accident rate nearly five times the metro average
- Drivers using local streets during congestion

Benefits

- Add transit advantage on I-35W
- Additional highway capacity
- Separate traffic between highways
- Remove left exits, replace with right exits
- Meet current design standards
Goals

- Limit temporary highway closures during construction
- Increase Highway Capacity
- Minimize Right of Way acquisition
- Provide advantages for bus transit and HOVs
- Reconstruct aging highway facility
Stakeholders

- State Legislature
- Met Council/Metro Transit
- Hennepin County
- Cities of Minneapolis and Richfield
- Federal Highway Administration
- Department of Transportation
- Minnehaha Creek Watershed District
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Department of Natural Resources
- Property owners
- Neighborhood groups
- Local businesses
- Metro area transit and highway users
Projected Timeline

- **2002-2003 Refine Design Concept**
  - Submit for agency and public review
  - Respond to agency and public comments
- **2003-2004 Environmental Documentation**
  - Environmental Impact Statement
  - BRT study
- **2004-2005 Final Design**
  - Final design plan and specifications
  - Property acquisition and Permits
- **2005-2009 Construction**
Existing Conditions

- 6 shared lanes, 3 in each direction
- No HOV lanes north of 494 on 35W
- Uncommon left exits
2002 Concept

- **I-35W**
  - 7 lanes
  - 3 Southbound
  - 4 Northbound
  - 1 HOV lane in each direction

- **Highway 62**
  - 5 lanes
  - 3 Westbound lanes (North of 35W)
  - 2 Eastbound lanes (South of 35W)
I-35 and Hwy 62 West Interchange

LEGEND
- Pawed Roadway
- Pawed Shoulders
- High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lane
- Bridges
- Raised Medians & Concrete Median Barrier
- Trails and Sidewalks
- Existing Right of Way
- Traffic Signal

TH 121 Right of Way to Serve as Contractor Staging Area

Proposed new entrance ramp to W.B. Highway 62 from Lyndale Ave

Construction Limits

Pre-Liminary Subject to Approval
APRIL 16, 2004

Scale 1:2500

See Segment 1

Grass Lake

61st Street

Proposed Water Quality Pond

W.B. 62

E.B. 62

Lyndale Ave

Aldrich Ave

Garfield Ave

Harrison Ave

63rd Street

Construction Limits

I-35W
I-35 and Hwy 62
East Interchange
Limiting Factors

- Highway Access vs. Timely Construction
- Highway Access vs. Property Acquisition
- Property Acquisition vs. landscaping/buffering
- Construction Staging vs. Construction Cost
- BRT study due to legislature by Dec. 10, 2004
- Maintenance of facility during long construction process
Externalities

- Surrounding areas
  - Destruction of some parkland
  - Elimination of residential and commercial areas
  - Increased noise pollution

- Four-year construction
  - Lower capacity for I-35W and Highway 62
  - Parallel streets will see increased traffic volumes
  - Increased Travel Times
  - Driver confusion (more accidents)
Reasons for Municipal Consent Denial

- MnDOT report was incomplete
  - Did not include “final layout” design in request for consent report
  - Report did not address a design or funding for a continuation of the fifth HOV/Bus lane to downtown
  - Inadequate analysis of health and environmental impacts
  - Incomplete analysis of storm water runoff
  - Requested BRT study has not been completed

- Project’s impacts on surrounding area
  - Project appears to cause increases traffic on parallels and no solution is given
  - Insufficient pedestrian pathways
  - Unnecessary destruction of homes and businesses
  - Eliminates access of some streets to highways
Minneapolis Modification Requests

**BRT/HOV(3) Improvements**
- Dedicate fifth lane for BRT/HOV(3)
- Dedicate future fifth lane to downtown for BRT/HOV(3)
- Develop BRT/HOV(3) from Lakeville to Commons
- Construct BRT station at 46th St. and at least two other Minneapolis stations that are fully functional at completion of project
- Obtain full funding for project and transit improvements

**Neighborhood Improvements**
- Local street traffic management plan
- Preserve or permit redevelopment of affected homes and businesses
- Further minimize runoff effects
- Provide better pedestrian facilities
- “Replace trees . . . to prevent net loss in carbon sequestration. . . .”
- Others
Previous Alternative Plans

“Preferred Alternative” in 1995
- Included a Light Rail Transit line – lack of funding

“Deferred Project” in 1996
- Expand I-35W from I-494 to 42nd Street
- Denied by Legislature due to concerns about capacity and lack of transit

No-Build Alternative
- Major roadway maintenance and bridge repair
- Routine maintenance
- Minimal increased capacity (11 to 13 percent)
Questions

* Was the city of Minneapolis too demanding in withholding Municipal Consent?
* Were the original goals met in the current design?
* What role should cities play?
* What transit system should be used along I-35W?
* What will be the impact on local roads? Both during and after construction.
* What other externalities will result?
* Will some negative externalities be improved or worsened? i.e. noise, water, and air pollution
* Were there any stakeholders that were overlooked?
* Comment on the trade-offs between time, space and cost.