Minnesota Department of Transportation

Metropolitan District
Waters Edge
1500 West County Road B-2
Roseville, MN 55113-3174

August 21, 2007

The Honorable Mayor R.T. Rybak
City of Minneapolis
331 City Hall
350 South 5th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Subject: I-35W Bridge at the Mississippi River
Previous Bridge No. 9340
Proposed Bridge Nos. 27409, 27410
Municipal Consent Package
State Project 2783-120

Dear Mayor Rybak:

This letter reports information to assist the governing body of Minneapolis in their review of the Interstate (I) 35W bridge replacement project State Project (SP) 2783-120 in compliance with the Municipal Consent Law, as revised by the 2001 Minnesota Legislature (Minnesota Statutes Section 161.162 to 161.167). The Municipal Consent Law sets forth the process for municipal approval of the projects that alter access, increase or reduce highway capacity, or require acquisition of permanent rights of way through municipalities.

The Municipal Consent Process is initiated with Mn/DOT's submittal to the municipality of the final layout and project report, covering the purpose, route location, and proposed design of the highway, a good faith cost estimate of all costs in which the municipality is expected to participate, and any supporting data deemed helpful to the project review. This report along with the final layout constitutes the Municipal Consent Package.

Project Purpose

The purpose of this project is to replace the I-35W Bridge over the Mississippi River that collapsed on August 1, 2007, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Carrying an average traffic volume of over 144,000 vehicle/day, the I-35W Bridge over the Mississippi River is a major artery for not only the downtown Minneapolis area, but the Twin Cities metropolitan area and is one of Minnesota's Interregional Corridors. Currently, this traffic is being detoured through already congested corridors and bottleneck locations, which increases travel times throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan transportation system.

Project Route Location

Located in the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County the new I-35W Bridge over the Mississippi River will generally follow the same alignment of the previous bridge between University Avenue on the north side and Washington Avenue on the south side. In addition to the Mississippi River, the bridge will continue to span over Second (2nd) Street SE, the Minnesota Commercial Railroad (MCRR) tracks, the service roads on the north side, the access road to the lock and dam on the south side, and West River Road.

Proposed Project Design

The new I-35W Bridge will be about 189 feet wide and 1,900 feet long with five 12-foot lanes, 13-foot right shoulders and 14-foot left shoulders in each direction. The previous bridge was 113 feet wide and 1,907 feet long with four 12-foot lanes and 2-foot or less right and left shoulders in each direction. It is estimated that by 2030 the I-35W Bridge will have an average traffic volume of approximately 186,000 vehicles/day.

The bridge will be designed and constructed through a design-build process and will be consistent with the long range plans for the corridor. The profile and grades on I-35W will be similar to what they were and will have a design speed of 55 miles per hour. The north abutment location will be at about the same location as it had been just north of 2nd St SE. The south abutment will be at about the same location as the in place south abutment with the option to move it north, so that it is at the south edge of West River Road.

The interchange geometry at University Avenue and Washington Avenue will remain generally as it is today, providing the same access and movements as it had previously. One of the five lanes across the bridge will be an auxiliary lane in each direction between University Avenue and Washington Avenue ramps.

Currently, Mn/DOT's right-of-way width for I-35W is about 150 feet for mainline. With the new bridge, a width of about 235 feet will be needed, which is 25 – 30 feet outside the new bridge drip line on each side. As a result, portions of several properties (identified in the right-of-way graphic attached), including property owned by the Minneapolis Park Board, will need to be acquired. A portion of 14th Avenue South and 1st Street South located adjacent to the northbound I-35W entrance ramp will be permanently closed.

In addition, the design of the new bridge will:

- Accommodate future transit options by including a new lane that could in the future be operated as a Bus Rapid Transit, High Occupancy Vehicle, Managed lane, or converted to Light Rail Transit. In the latest design iteration the bridge was strengthened to allow it to carry Light Rail Transit.
- Include the width needed for a potential managed lane, thereby incorporating strategies described in the Urban Partnership Agreement (UPA)

- Include a context sensitive solution developed by a multi-agency team, so that the bridge is aesthetically consistent with the area and will respect the history and significance of the site
- Consider sensitive areas like the dredging material stockpile transfer site used by the Army Corps of Engineers that will continue to be functional through construction
- Include coordination with the many utilities in the area
- Meet current environmental standards including storm water treatment facilities (either ponding or grit chambers) possibly on both sides of the river, although locations will be determined as part of the design-build process
- Add 13-foot right shoulders and 14-foot left shoulders to improve safety, reduce crashes, improve driver comfort, improve drainage, and potentially allow for future bus shoulder usage
- Include continuous roadway lighting
- Include traffic management systems
- Include an anti-icing system for snow and ice removal efforts
- Accommodate a future separate project that would extend the 4th lane in each direction north from University Avenue while minimizing the impacts to the University Ave. and 4th St. profiles
- Accommodate a future separate project to improve the existing and future freeway access at Washington Avenue and areas to the south

The project is expected to be funded with federal emergency relief funds. State funds may be needed to pay for the strengthening necessary for Light Rail. No cost participation from the City of Minneapolis is expected given the understood scope of work.

Given the urgency of the situation Mn/DOT appreciates the City's prompt response to this Municipal Consent submittal.

Please contact Tom O'Keefe, Mn/DOT Area Manager, at 651-234-7725, or Jon Chiglo, Mn/DOT Design Build Project Manager, at 651-775-8778 with any questions.

Sincerely,

Khani Sahebjam, P.E.
Metro District Engineer
Telephone: 651-234-7700

Attachments:
Right-of-way graphic
Layout

CC:Steve Kotke, City of Minneapolis Engineer