

I-35W Access Project

Overview of Preliminary Environmental Assessment Findings

EA Category	Adverse Impacts?	Mitigation & Enhancement
Social and Cultural Environment		
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed project is consistent with the City of Minneapolis Plan - Guidance for I-35W Access Project. The proposed project is consistent the Metropolitan Council and policies set forth in the "Regional Blueprint". The proposed project is consistent with Mn/DOT's Transportation System Plan (TSP). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent with local, regional and State plans; no proposed mitigation. The project will also receive greater recognition in future planning processes and projects when it is approved at the local, regional, state, and federal levels.
Social Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary inconveniences associated with construction activities will occur; however, no significant long-term changes in community activities, use of facilities, or neighborhood cohesion are expected. The project's mitigation and enhancement features are expected to strengthen community identity and social integration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigation and Enhancement Sub-Committee recommendations include enhancing community cohesion and community identity (<i>see Sub-Committee report for details</i>). A new and improved transit station at Lake Street, combined with transit corridor improvements along I-35W, will result in safer, more convenient transit service in the area.
Visual Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed project will modify the visual environment in many areas. A visual impact assessment has been performed to inventory existing conditions and assess the level of change that will occur with the construction of the preferred build alternative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of comprehensive aesthetic and landscape design themes will be used throughout the project area. Mitigation and Enhancement Sub-Committee recommendations include enhancements to streetscapes, community gateways, noise walls, retaining walls, and vegetated areas (<i>see Sub-Committee report for details</i>).
Environmental Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are sizable and readily identifiable low income and minority groups that will be affected by the proposed project. There are also direct impacts on residential and business properties that will receive special attention to comply with Executive Order 12898 and ensure that all practicable alternatives have been evaluated to avoid or reduce impacts on low income and minority groups. There are no impacts to public housing owned and managed by the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved access resulting from project improvements are expected to enhance the business climate for proposed and existing small businesses that may be owned, operated, and/or patronized by low-income and minority groups. Major project area employers will benefit from transit opportunities, which will better serve the area population with job opportunities. To address Environmental Justice, the project sponsors, neighborhood organizations, and public/private partnerships will be engaged in studying and implementing outreach efforts (implementation programs) to address indirect and direct impacts for the project's dislocated residential and business populations who are also determined to qualify as low-income and/or minority groups.

EA Category	Adverse Impacts?	Mitigation & Enhancement
Impact on Infrastructure and Public Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently, adequate infrastructure (sanitary sewer, storm sewer and water main) is in place to service the proposed project. The preferred build alternative will not limit neighborhood infrastructure redevelopment planning and improvement opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will be no new or expanded public services (fire protection, police protection, schools) necessary to serve the proposed project and accessibility through infrastructure modification is expected to enable improvements in emergency response services.
Bicyclists and Pedestrians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No adverse impacts to bicyclists and pedestrians are anticipated as a result of proposed improvements to I-35W and associated roadways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project's Mitigation and Enhancement Sub-Committee recommendations include a comprehensive enhancement to the pedestrian and bicycle (active) transportation network. Sidewalks have been widened, traffic calmed, and amenities added (<i>see Sub-Committee report</i>).
Historical, Archaeological and Cultural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse effects to properties in 3 areas: The Healy Block, the Minerva Apts., and the CM & SP Grade Separation District (the Greenway). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If SHPO concurs with the recommendation of adverse effects, mitigation will be determined in consultation with FHWA, Hennepin County, Mn/DOT, and other interested parties.
Freeway Traffic	<p>Freeway traffic impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weaving issues related to new entrance from Lake Street to northbound I-35W Loss of existing direct connection from 5th Avenue to eastbound I-94 to allow new northbound connection to eastbound I-94 Weaving issues related to new exit from southbound I-35W to Lake Street 35th Street to 31st Street short weaving distance (northbound and southbound) Northbound exit to 28th Street adds a driver decision point 	<p>Freeway mitigation to smooth traffic flow on mainline I-35W</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add a northbound auxiliary lane beginning at the Lake Street entrance extending to a new ramp connection to eastbound I-94 at prior to the I-94 commons Reconfigure 5th Avenue entrance to northbound I-35W which will allow indirect access to eastbound I-94 at the east end of the I-94 commons Extend the existing southbound auxiliary lane that currently ends at 25th Street to the Lake Street exit Replace the 35th and 36th Street interchange with a new interchange at 38th Street allowing much longer weaving opportunities for both northbound and southbound traffic Extend northbound auxiliary lane beyond the 31st Street exit to the 28th exit smoothing traffic flow on mainline I-35W and relieving traffic demand on the 31st Street exit

EA Category	Adverse Impacts?	Mitigation & Enhancement
<p>Local Street Network Traffic</p>	<p>Local street network traffic pattern changes and impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38th Street traffic increases • 36th and 35th Street reduction in freeway ramp traffic • 31st Street traffic pattern changes • Lake Street traffic volume increases • 28th Street traffic increases • Blaisdell and 1st Avenue traffic between 38th Street and 36th Street • Traffic issues on 2nd Avenue and Stevens Avenue – 40th Street to 32nd Street • 2nd Avenue traffic issues – 32nd Street to 31st Street • 1st Avenue traffic issues – 28th Street to Downtown 	<p>Local street network traffic mitigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38th Street traffic demands can be served by 2 lanes in each direction between 3rd Avenue and Blaisdell Avenue as necessary during peak periods without street reconstruction. A roundabout interchange at I-35W is proposed to enhance safety and provide neighborhood identity • Convert 36th street and 35th Street from one-way to two-way streets between Nicollet Avenue and Chicago Avenue • New northbound exit to 28th Street relieves traffic demand on 31st Street. New northbound entrance and southbound exit add to traffic demand in the area. Traffic volume increases will be served by Lake Street. • Turn lanes, auxiliary lanes, and transit stop lanes are proposed to maintain east-west traffic flow, distribute ramp and collect ramp traffic and provide improved transit service. The 28th Street exit reduces traffic demands on Lake Street minimizing the amount of widening required east of the freeway • New exit to 28th Street directly serves vehicles destined for 28th Street. Relieves demands on 2nd Avenue adjacent to the historic Healy block and relieves demands on other local streets leading to 28th Street • Nicollet Avenue will be promoted as the primary route between 38th and 36th Street to serve freeway traffic accustomed to using 36th Street to and from areas west of Lake Harriet. Left turn arrows will be provided on Nicollet at 38th Street and at 36th Street to facilitate these movements and discourage traffic from using 1st and Blaisdell. • 2nd Avenue and Stevens Avenue will be narrowed to one lane roadways with parking bays except where additional lanes are needed approaching the 38th Street interchange. • Exit ramp traffic will be physically separated from 2nd Avenue traffic along the Healy Block. Northbound 2nd Avenue will serve local residential access needs only • 1st Avenue between 28th and downtown will be converted from 1-way (northbound) to 2 way operation to provide improved accessibility and circulation and to calm traffic speeds

EA Category	Adverse Impacts?	Mitigation & Enhancement
Local Street Network Traffic (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicollet Avenue reopening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reopening of Nicollet Avenue north of Lake Street is not part of this project, but has been considered in the comprehensive traffic study. Reopening Nicollet provides a new continuous route from downtown through south Minneapolis relieving traffic demands on other parallel streets in the area. New freeway accesses to/from the north at Lake Street relieve traffic demands on Nicollet and other north-south streets especially during periods that the freeway is not at capacity.
Economic Environment		
Right of Way and Relocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential direct project effects would occur to 5 single-family residences and 5 businesses. An estimated 20 residents and 70 employees could be affected. Partial takings for right-of-way and easements will also occur (quantities depend on final design of project). Changes to private property accessibility will also occur with the proposed project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design measures will be used to the extent possible to minimize right-of-way impacts. The project's final design will determine specific changes in private property access and confirm partial and total takings for right-of-way and easement purposes. The project sponsors in cooperation with existing public/private partnerships will aggressively seek and prepare opportunities to relocate affected residents and businesses in appropriately suitable safe, decent, and comparable replacements. All right-of-way and relocation impacts will be conducted in accordance with federal regulations without discrimination.
Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Five businesses will be impacted by the preferred build alternative. A planning-level benefit-cost analysis has been conducted to help determine how to prioritize the implementation of project improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacted businesses will be assisted in relocating in their respective neighborhoods or provided options for alternative site relocations. The proposed project will be designed to improve business accessibility for the economic enhancements for neighborhood businesses (particularly along the City's Commercial Corridors.)
Construction Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dust will be generated during construction activities. Construction activities will disturb existing vegetative ground cover and allow soil material to become airborne. This will be a temporary impact associated with grading activities. Odor may be generated by exhaust from engines engaged in construction activities. In addition to traffic noise from the surrounding roadway systems, there will be noise generated during construction of the roadway improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All construction machinery will be properly equipped to control odor emissions. Construction equipment will be properly muffled and construction noise will be regulated by the MPCA and by standards regulated by the EPA. Traffic control plans will be prepared and designed to control impacts and minimize disruption for neighborhood residents and community businesses and institutions.
Natural Environment		
Fish, Wildlife & Ecologically Sensitive Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MnDNR Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program identified 11 records of rare features in the project area. The MnDNR indicated that no impacts to such resources are expected in the project area. The MnDNR Division of Waters indicated no concerns with the proposed project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No mitigation or enhancements are anticipated.

EA Category	Adverse Impacts?	Mitigation & Enhancement
Endangered Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State-endangered, threatened or special concern species have been identified as residing within the City of Minneapolis; however, due the nature and location of the proposed project, no adverse effects to these species are anticipated. The project is within the breeding range of the bald eagle, a Federally-listed Threatened species. It has been determined the project's location and design is such that it will not likely have any adverse effects on this species. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No mitigation or enhancements are anticipated.
Natural Environment		
Physical Impacts on Water Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will be no adverse impacts to water bodies such as rivers, creeks, lakes and wetlands. There will be no adverse impacts to a delineated 100-year floodplain, or state or federally designated wild or scenic river land use district. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No mitigation or enhancements are anticipated.
Water Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No wells will be installed for the proposed project. No dewatering is anticipated during the construction process. No wells on or near the project area will be used as water resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wells have been identified in close proximity of the proposed project. If the proposed project encounters wells, the well(s) will be properly sealed following all applicable Minnesota Department of Health regulations.
Erosion and Sedimentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing ground cover adjacent to I-35W and slope embankments on I-35W will be temporarily disturbed during construction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination (NPDES) permit, which includes and erosion control plan will be required for the proposed project.
Water Quality and Storm Water Runoff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The volume of runoff will increase as a result of the proposed project. However, the peak discharge rate in the 12-foot diameter storm sewer tunnel will not be increased. No changes in normal pressure surges that occur in the project area will result from the proposed project. The peak discharge rate added by the project will have passed through the storm sewer system prior to the peak rate in the storm sewer tunnel (i.e., the system will not be overloaded). The pollutant encountered with the proposed project will be the same as the existing conditions. Currently, water quality treatment is not provided under the current drainage system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Because of the developed urban setting, underground best management practices (BMPs) will be provided to treat runoff for the additional impervious surface and existing highway right-of-way.

EA Category	Adverse Impacts?	Mitigation & Enhancement
Geologic Hazards and Soil Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No adverse impacts to geologic sensitive resources such as karsts, fault lines or other geologic hazards are known to occur in the proposed project area. Soils in the project area are highly disturbed as a result of historic urban development. Soils in the project area consist of glacial outwash, which contributes to higher sensitivity to groundwater. However, no additional disturbances to groundwater or contamination is likely with the proposed project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No mitigation or enhancements are anticipated.
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Twin Cities Metropolitan Area was previously designated as a carbon monoxide (CO) non-attainment area as a result of violations of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQs). However, as a result of the vehicle inspection and maintenance program and improved emission controls on motor vehicles, no violations have occurred recently. As a result of the reduction of CO concentrations, the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area has been re-designated as a CO maintenance area. Since CO violations have not occurred in the Twin Cities recently at even the highest volume intersections, it is anticipated that no violations of the NAAQs or the State air quality standards will occur. It is anticipated that project impacts will result in reasonably small changes in CO concentrations due to the improved capacity construction of project alternatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No mitigation or enhancements are anticipated.
Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing conditions exceed Federal and State Noise Standards. Proposed improvements will likely continue to exceed State Noise Standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noise will likely continue to exceed Federal and State Noise Standards. Mitigation will not reduce impacts to acceptable standards. Noise attenuation measures (barriers) will need to be replaced in many project segments. Barrier aesthetics will be enhanced and coordinated with the City of Minneapolis.
Designated Parks, Recreation Areas, and Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 28th Street Totlot will be reduced in size as a result of the preferred build alternative. The Mitigation and Enhancements Sub-Committee recognizes that an adequate totlot can be reestablished on Mn/DOT right-of-way, which requires ¼ acre (the remnant parcel is approximately ½ acre.) The totlot property is owned by Mn/DOT and leased to the City of Minneapolis. There is no Section 4(f) involvement of this property; the lease is subject to cancellation by Mn/DOT if the property is needed for highway purposes. 28th Street Totlot Potential 6(f) Impacts: The proposed project will not cause the conversion of any land acquired, planned or developed using LAWCON funds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 28th Street Totlot will be reestablished on the remaining parcel. Sloping as a result of an exit ramp addition may encroach into the Greenway ROW, in which case a temporary easement will be necessary. Section 4(f) does not apply to a temporary occupancy of publicly owned parks, recreation areas, wildlife or waterfowl refuges, or any historic site where there is documentation that the officials having jurisdiction over the protected resource. Therefore, Section (f) does not apply as a recreation impact. Section 4(f) will apply to a potentially historic bridge that would be taken for the proposed project that currently spans the Greenway. Section 4(f) applies to non-renewable NRHP

EA Category	Adverse Impacts?	Mitigation & Enhancement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Midtown Greenway Corridor Potential Section 4(f) Impacts: No adverse impacts are expected to occur as a result of roadway improvements and a Section 4(f) Evaluation is not anticipated. Midtown Greenway Potential Section 6(f) Impacts: The proposed project will not cause the conversion of any land acquired, planned or developed using LAWCON funds. 	<p>resources that warrant preservation in place. A separate evaluation will be completed for this purpose and coordinated with the findings of the cultural resources investigation and its mitigation commitments. The aesthetics of a proposed replacement bridge near this location will be designed and coordinated with recommendations from trail advocates, neighborhood organizations, Mn/DOT's Cultural Resources staff and the SHPO.</p>
<p>Hazardous Waste Sites/Contaminated Properties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 77 known or potentially contaminated properties have been identified in the project study area 8 sites identified in close proximity of the project limits have the potential to be impacted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior to construction activities, any known or potentially contaminated properties suspected to be impacted by the project would be investigated to determine the extent and magnitude of contaminated soil or groundwater in the area of concern. Results of any investigation will be used to determine if the contaminated areas can be avoided, or the project's impacts to the contaminated properties can be minimized. A contaminated property with the potential to incur cleanup cost or expose the purchaser to unacceptable conditions may need to be avoided if possible.

N:\Transportation\Hennco\99026.00\Trans\Meetings\040129 City Council ea handout.doc