

I35W Bridge Replacement – Rebuild Plans

Mn/DOT's preliminary design for the new I-35W bridge calls for 10 lanes of traffic, five in each direction. That is two lanes wider than the former bridge.

The new bridge will be 180 feet wide to provide more lane and shoulder capacity; that's 80 feet wider than the former bridge. The structure will be designed for a 100-year life span. Mn/DOT engineers will consider steel or concrete-and-steel construction as design possibilities.

Five contracting teams—Ames/Lunda, C.S. McCrossan, Flatiron Constructors, Inc. and Johnson Bros., KTM Constructors (JV of Kiewitt/Traylor Bros/Massman) and Walsh Construction/American Bridge—have submitted Statements of Qualifications to bid on the I-35W bridge reconstruction project. The teams will now submit a proposal and cost estimate.

Design-build program

Mn/DOT has chosen to accelerate the delivery of the I-35W Mississippi River replacement bridge project using the design-build procurement process. Design-build brings designers and contractors together early in the project development process. Quality design-build projects differ from traditional design-bid-build projects in that they allow for the overlapping of design and construction. That means construction can begin after only a portion of the final detailed design has been completed. By using the design-build method for the I-35W bridge replacement project, Mn/DOT will be able to deliver the project sooner than later. Some of the benefits of the design-build process are:

- Shortened completion time by overlapping design and construction
- Construction can begin before all design details are final
- Greater innovation and flexibility in selecting design, materials and construction methods
- Reduced claims due to design errors because construction happens under same contract
- Accelerated response time and dispute resolution through a team effort
- Single contact point for quality, cost and schedule from design through construction
- Shortened project delivery time which can reduce user costs

Mn/DOT has awarded six Best-Value design-build projects since 2001. These projects and their value include:

Highway 212 in the west Twin Cities Metro	\$238 Million
ROC 52 in Rochester	\$232 Million
I-494 in the west Twin Cities Metro	\$135 Million
Highway 52 in Oronoco	\$37 Million
Highway 10/32 in Hawley	\$8.6 Million
District 4 Signs	\$1.0 Million

Many of these projects were completed in record time, which far exceeded the expectations of Mn/DOT and other units of government. For example, ROC 52 was completed two years earlier than projected.

Based on the success of Mn/DOT's current and past design-build projects, Mn/DOT is confident that using design-build on the I-35W project will result in a quality project being constructed in record time.

For more design-build information and a list of other design-build links, visit Mn/DOT's design-build Web site at: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/designbuild/>

Transit components

Mn/DOT engineers are analyzing the feasibility of building the new bridge to accommodate a potential light rail line in the future.

The proposed design includes options to include transit advantages such as a Bus Rapid Transit lane or some other form of managed lane, e.g, a High Occupancy Toll (HOT – MnPASS), or High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane.

Federal Emergency Relief program

Mn/DOT is expected to receive \$250 million from the federal emergency relief program. Federal guidelines require that Emergency Relief funds be used to repair and restore highway facilities to pre-disaster conditions. In the case of the I-35W replacement bridge, these funds can be used to help cover the costs of a replacement bridge built to current standards for the type and volume of traffic that the bridge will carry over its design life of 100 years. Emergency relief funds are not intended nor can they be used for new expansion projects or to otherwise improve highway facilities.

Any expansion of the project to include what are defined as “betterments”, i.e. features above and beyond pre-disaster conditions, would either need to be reviewed and approved by the Federal Highway Administration or added to a revised Metropolitan District transportation improvement plan or work program. That would entail the need for Mn/DOT and its federal, state and local partners to secure the necessary resources and go through the appropriate environmental review and permit processes, which could cause delay in the project.

Environmental review

Mn/DOT and the Federal Highway Administration have not and will not bypass any environmental or permit requirements. Mn/DOT is using existing environmental review streamlining measures that have been developed with federal, state and local partners over the past decade. Mn/DOT has had a high level of cooperation from federal, state and local resource agencies to expedite the existing review and permitting processes during this emergency.

Environmental review for the bridge replacement is being performed through a federal categorical exclusion document and the state and federal permitting process. This environmental process still includes thorough analysis of the full range of potential environmental issues, including but not limited to threatened and endangered species, historic and archeological resources, park and recreation impacts, and many others.

Federal and state permits are still required as a part of the development process for the new bridge. To date Mn/DOT has received permits from the Corps of Engineers and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Permits from the Coast Guard and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency are pending. The National Park Service is a part of the visual quality team, along with City of Minneapolis, Friends of the Mississippi River, State Historic Preservation Office and many others to address aesthetics/visual quality of the new structure.

PERMITS LIST Demolition & Debris Removal Project permits/approvals

National Environmental Protection Act - Categorical Exclusion approved Threatened and Endangered Species - Clearance Letter

Section 106 (State Historic Preservation Officer) Concurrence Letter

Minnesota Environmental Protection Act - Exempt

Corps of Engineers Permit - Nationwide issued

Department of Natural Resources Permit - General issued

Coast Guard Section 9 – is not needed for the demolition review

Regulated Material Report - (debris sampled, no asbestos in bridge debris)

Contamination issues - consultants on call

National Pollution Discharge Elimination System - Draft Storm Water Pollution Protection Plan prepared, review underway

I-35W St Anthony Bridge Replacement permits/approvals

National Environmental Protection Act - Project Memo / 4(f) complete - ready to sign
Threatened & Endangered Species - Clearance Letter received
Section 106 (State Historic Preservation Officer) Concurrence Letter received
Air Quality Conformity - Exempt under the current scope of bridge replacement
Minnesota Environmental Protection Act - Exempt
Corps of Engineers Permit - General issued
Coast Guard Section 9 in progress
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency 401 Cert – in progress
Department of Natural Resources Permit - General issued
Contamination issues - Consultants on board; Phase 1 investigation complete, coordination ongoing
National Pollution Discharge Elimination System – Storm Water Pollution Protection Plan discussions ongoing for language in Request for Proposals
Visual Quality – Request For Proposal language being edited, preparing for initial interagency team meeting

Recovery of Traffic permits/approvals

National Environmental Protection Act - Categorical Exclusion approved for August projects
Minnesota Environmental Protection Act - August projects exempt or cleared
NPDES - SWPPP August projects less than 1 acre not required
Air Quality Conformity - All Emergency Repair projects exempt
Contamination issues - consultants on call as needed, coordination with PCA ongoing
No Department of Natural Resources or Corps of Engineers permits needed for August projects

Public involvement

Mn/DOT representatives will continue to meet with community leaders, affected agencies and the public during project development and construction.

In a series of open houses and public meetings Mn/DOT representatives are reaching out to federal, state, county, city and neighborhood groups to get input on their concerns and vision for the reconstruction of the I-35W bridge.

Many decisions need to be made regarding all aspects of the rebuilding process. The involvement of all participants helps provide a constant flow of information and Mn/DOT hopes to continue the conversations with its regional partners and members of the community as it moves forward.