

Date: April 11, 2018

To: EQB Distribution List
Interested Parties

SUBJECT: Negative Declaration Regarding the Need for an Environmental Impact Statement for the I-35W Over the Minnesota River Project (S.P. 1981-124)

On behalf of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) Metro District, SRF Consulting Group, Inc. is transmitting this memorandum regarding the Negative Declaration Order for the I-35W Over the Minnesota River Project (S.P. 1981-124). The project proposes reconstruction of Interstate 35W (I-35W) from Cliff Road in Burnsville to West 106th Street in Bloomington, including reconstruction of the I-35W Minnesota River Bridge. On northbound I-35W, MnDOT proposes an extension of the existing northbound truck climbing lane from south of West 106th Street to the Cliff Road entrance ramp. At the West 106th Street interchange, MnDOT proposes reconstruction of the I-35W bridges, including reconstruction of the south ramps. Additional project elements include drainage improvements, retaining walls, a noise wall, and trail construction.

Under Minnesota Rules, MnDOT is the Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU) for the project. MnDOT described and analyzed the proposed project in a combined Environmental Assessment (EA)/ Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) that was circulated to the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) Distribution List and other interested parties. A Notice of Availability appeared in the EQB *Monitor* on December 18, 2017. A public hearing meeting was held on January 11, 2018 in Bloomington. The public hearing meeting was held in an open house format. The comment period closed on January 25, 2018.

MnDOT has undertaken a thorough analysis of the project and its potential impacts. Through its own analysis, coordination with affected agencies, public and community involvement, and comments received, MnDOT has determined that the proposed improvements to I-35W and the I-35W Minnesota River Bridge, as described in the EA/EAW and in the Findings of Fact and Conclusions, do not have the potential for significant environmental impacts. MnDOT has concluded that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required and has issued a Negative Declaration Order for the project. This decision and determination is supported by the full administrative record of the project, including the Findings of Fact and Conclusions. This concludes the Minnesota state environmental review process for the project.

In addition, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has concluded that the project will not cause significant environmental impacts and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the project on April 11, 2018. This concludes the Federal environmental review process for the project.

MnDOT does not intend to circulate paper copies of the Findings of Fact and Conclusions document or the FONSI. The Findings of Fact and Conclusions document, FONSI, and other project related items are available on the I-35W Over the Minnesota River Project webpage at:

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/i35wbloomington/index.html>.

Should any readers not have access to the Findings of Fact and Conclusions and FONSI electronic documents, paper copies may be obtained by contacting Rick Dalton, MnDOT Metro District Environmental Coordinator, at 651-234-7677, or via email at richard.dalton@state.mn.us. To request the document in an alternative format, please contact the MnDOT Affirmative Action Office at 651-366-4718 or 1-800-657-3774 (Greater Minnesota); 711 or 1-800-627-3529 (Minnesota Relay). You may also send an e-mail to adarequest.dot@state.mn.us.

Thank you.

For the Minnesota Department of Transportation:



Scott Pedersen, PE

Project Manager

Minnesota Department of Transportation

4-11-18
Date