

I-35W/Highway 62 Crosstown Commons Reconstruction



Image from the Metropolitan Design Center Image Bank.

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Background

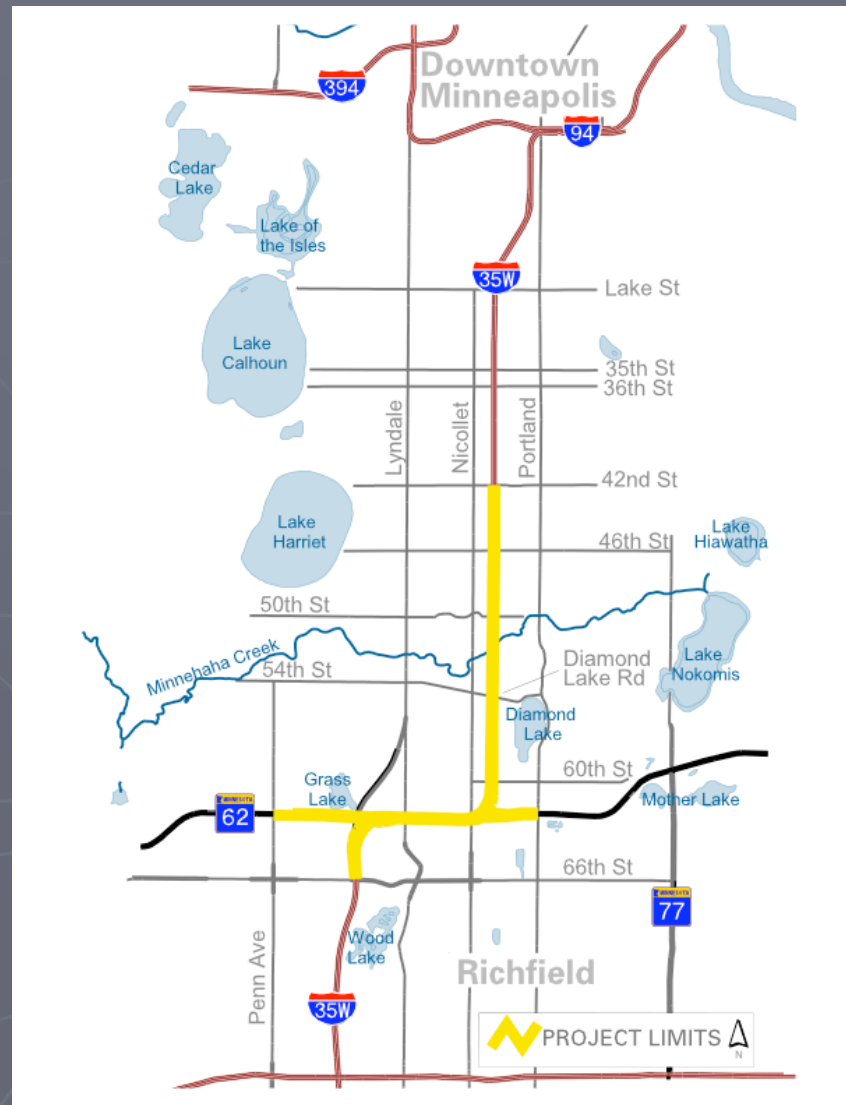
* Highway 62/Crosstown Highway

- ⦿ 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

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

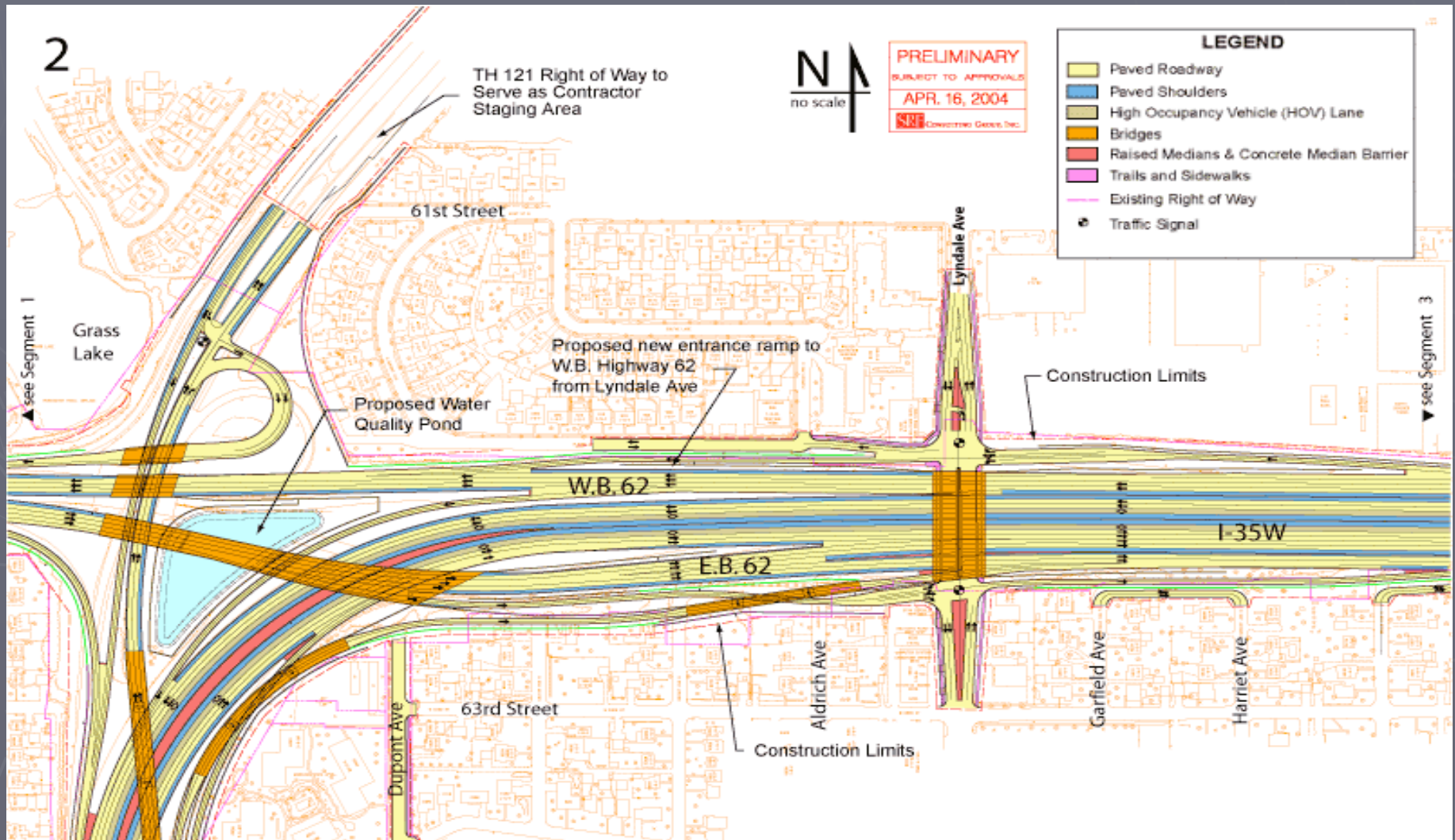
* I-35W

- ⦿ 7 lanes
- ⦿ 3 Southbound
- ⦿ 4 Northbound
- ⦿ 1 HOV lane in each direction

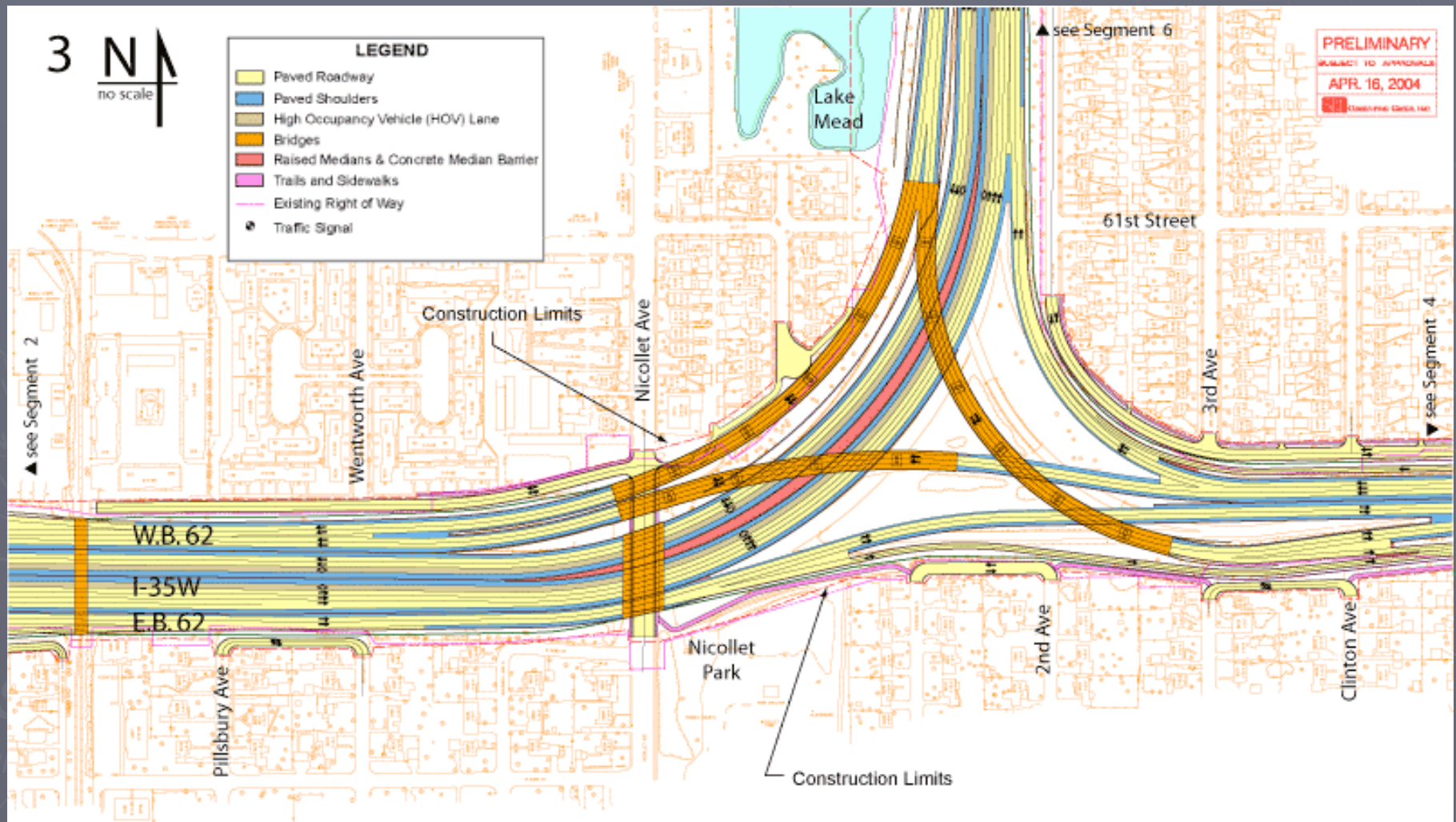
* Highway 62

- ⦿ 5 lanes
- ⦿ 3 Westbound lanes (North of 35W)
- ⦿ 2 Eastbound lanes (South of 35W)

I-35 and Hwy 62 West Interchange



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.