

## **11.0 COORDINATION**

Agency and local government coordination started with the 1986 *I-494 Corridor Study* and has been an integral part of the EIS process for the proposed I-494 reconstruction. The sections that follow describe the coordination that has taken place during the environmental review process, including involvement of federal cooperating agencies, regional planning and local government staff, regulatory agencies, coalitions of parties with an interest in the I-494 corridor, and participation at public meetings.

### **11.1 LEAD AGENCIES/COOPERATING AGENCIES**

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) is the state of Minnesota Responsible Government Unit (RGU) for this project, and is taking the lead in preparing environmental documentation for the state and federal environmental review process. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is responsible for environmental decision-making for the project at the federal level. The Metropolitan Council assisted Mn/DOT in early studies, in light of the regional influence of the I-494 corridor. The Metropolitan Council participated in the early EIS studies as Joint Lead Agency. However, once the regional decisions were made, the Metropolitan Council chose to participate in an advisory role as part of the I-494 Project Management Team (see Section 11.2).

Various federal agencies were invited to be cooperating agencies. These include:

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Cooperating agencies were sent copies of the draft FEIS for review and comment. The final FEIS document reflects input received from these agencies. The Corps of Engineers stated in their comments that, because they will be evaluating future permit applications for parts of the project, they cannot be either an opponent or proponent of the proposed project and cannot have a preferred alternative.

### **11.2 PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM**

A Project Management Team (PMT), composed of representatives of agencies, cities, counties and organizations interested in the I-494 project, was initiated during the DEIS scoping process to discuss and resolve issues associated with project design and environmental documentation. Members of the Project Management Team are listed below:

- Federal Highway Administration
- Minnesota Department of Transportation
- Metropolitan Council

- Regional Transit Board (now incorporated into the Metropolitan Council)
- Metropolitan Airports Commission
- Hennepin County
- City of Minnetonka
- City of Eden Prairie
- City of Bloomington
- City of Edina
- City of Richfield
- Improve I-494 Transportation Management Organization

The PMT did not formally meet during the time when the environmental review process had been suspended due to funding issues as discussed in Section 1.2 of this FEIS. However, Mn/DOT staff continued discussions and updates with the PMT members on an informal basis to address corridor issues. The PMT meetings resumed in September of 2000, including the agencies identified above, with two exceptions: 1) Improve I-494 (which had been disbanded) was not represented, although Mn/DOT continued its liaison with the I-494 Corridor Commission (see Section 11.5), and 2) Southwest Metro Transit was added to the PMT. The Regional Transit Board was not in existence when the PMT meetings resumed, but its functions have been incorporated into the Metropolitan Council (still represented on the PMT).

### 11.3 SCOPING PROCESS

In December 1989, the *I-494 Scoping Document/Draft Scoping Decision Document* was circulated to all parties on the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) EAW Distribution List. This document was prepared following the requirements of Mn/DOT's Alternative State Environmental Review Process and the Federal Highway Administration's environmental review regulation 23CFR 771. A public meeting was held on January 17, 1990, to receive comments on the document. The availability notice for the scoping document and the time and place of the public meeting were announced in the *EQB Monitor*, the *Federal Register*, and local newspapers.

Written comments were accepted on the *Scoping Document/Draft Scoping Decision Document* from December 22, 1989 to January 24, 1990. Those comments were included in the *Final Scoping Decision Document*. The agencies listed below submitted written comments which are available for public inspection at the office of the Mn/DOT Assistant District Engineer.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • Minnesota Department of Natural Resources | • City of Eden Prairie                 |
| • Minnesota Pollution Control Agency        | • City of Richfield                    |
| • Metropolitan Council                      | • Earth Protector, Inc.                |
| • City of Bloomington                       | • U.S. Environmental Protection Agency |

The *Final Scoping Decision Document*, which was completed in September 1990, was also circulated to all parties submitting comments on the draft scoping document and to those agencies on the EQB distribution list.

## 11.4 DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (DEIS)

In June 1992, the *I-494 Reconstruction – I-394 to Minnesota River Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)* was circulated to all parties on the EQB distribution list, required federal agencies, and those who provided comments or requested a copy during the scoping phase. The DEIS was prepared following the requirements of Mn/DOT's Alternative State Environmental Review Process and the FHWA's environmental review regulation 23 CFR 771.

A location/design public hearing was held on June 10, 1992 to receive written and oral comment on the major design features of the project and the content of the DEIS. The availability of the DEIS and the time and place of the public hearing were announced in the *EQB Monitor*, the *Federal Register*, and local newspapers. Written comments were accepted on the DEIS from May 11, 1992 to June 26, 1992. All substantive comments received during the DEIS comment period are included in Chapter 12 of this FEIS.

## 11.5 COORDINATION – GENERAL

Coordination has been maintained with the I-494 Corridor Commission, a joint powers entity formed initially by the cities of Richfield, Bloomington, Edina, Eden Prairie, and Minnetonka to coordinate land use and transportation and to facilitate travel demand management. More recently, the cities of Plymouth and Maple Grove have joined this organization. The Metropolitan Council is an ex-officio member of this organization, and Southwest Metro Transit and Metro Commuter Services are represented on its transit subcommittee. Minnesota Department of Transportation staff have held several meetings with the Metropolitan Council's Technical Advisory Committee and Transportation Advisory Board to discuss issues associated with the I-494 reconstruction project.

There are ongoing efforts to inform and involve the public regarding I-494 issues in addition to the public meetings described in Sections 11.3 and 11.4. A newsletter was printed and mailed periodically to people on mailing lists provided by the cities. The City of Bloomington has a Traffic and Transportation Advisory Commission that meets twice a month and has regularly been updated on proposed I-494 improvement projects over the years. Meetings were also held with groups such as the I-35W Solutions Alliance, the Bloomington and Eden Prairie Chambers of Commerce, the suburban chapter of BOMA (Building Owners and Managers Association), and city neighborhood associations, especially in Minnetonka.

A series of meetings were held by Mn/DOT early in 2001 to provide information to cities in the project corridor regarding the reinitiated FEIS process and the current Preferred Alternative. The following meetings were held:

- Eden Prairie Open House: February 12, 2001
- Edina Open House: February 6, 2001
- Edina City Council: February 6, 2001
- Bloomington East Open House (two locations) March 1 and 22, 2001
- Bloomington City Council: January 29, 2001
- Richfield Open House: February 20, 2001

## 11.6 COORDINATION – SPECIFIC ISSUE AREAS

This section summarizes the coordination activities that have occurred throughout the EIS process. The following information is organized according to environmental issue area.

### Land Use, Social and Community Issues

All of the cities within the project corridor were contacted, along with the Metropolitan Council, to identify issues and obtain the information used in the EIS analyses.

### Transportation

All of the cities in the project corridor were contacted to obtain existing and projected future land use and population information. This information was an integral part of the travel demand forecast process. Metropolitan Council staff was also contacted to obtain regional land use information and to coordinate regarding forecasting methodology.

In addition, public works/engineering staff from each of the cities along the corridor were contacted to identify local roadway and access issues adjacent to the I-494 corridor. Proposed design concepts affecting these cities were reviewed with staff representatives of affected cities and, if necessary, were revised to address local concerns to the greatest extent possible.

### Transit

Metropolitan Council staff was contacted to provide regional transit information. Information was also provided by the Regional Transit Board (RTB), Metropolitan Council Transit Operations (MCTO), Southwest Metro Transit, and Minnesota Valley Transit Authority. Early in the EIS process, several meetings were conducted with the agencies identified above to outline future transit facilities and how they relate and can be incorporated with proposed I-494 improvements.

### Air Quality

Minnesota Department of Transportation representatives coordinated with MPCA staff to determine appropriate air quality monitoring and analytical methods.

### Water Resources

Completion of the surface water drainage, water quality, and floodplains sections included coordination with the agencies listed below:

- City of Minnetonka
- City of Eden Prairie
- City of Bloomington
- City of Edina
- City of Richfield
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- Metropolitan Airports Commission
- Minnehaha Creek Watershed District
- Nine Mile Creek Watershed District
- Lower Minnesota Watershed District
- Metropolitan Council

During the EIS process, corridor field walks were held with many of these agencies.

## Wetlands

Meetings were held with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR), Mn/DOT, COE, EPA, USFWS, and the Soil Conservation Service staff (now the Natural Resources Conservation Service) in order to accurately document existing wetland areas, potential impacts to these areas, and potential mitigation measures. Agency coordination was reestablished during the FEIS process, including coordination with Hennepin Conservation District staff regarding mitigation sites, and will continue through the permitting/construction process.

## Potential Soil and Groundwater Contamination

The MPCA provided information on sites in the corridor with recorded contamination concerns. In addition, each city in the study area was contacted and asked to provide any documentation on potentially contaminated sites within the corridor. A set of historic aerial photographs was analyzed to assess pre-I-494 conditions, and land uses that have been replaced since completion of the freeway in the 1960s and 1970s. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment investigation obtained relevant information from all available governmental databases.

## Noise

Minnesota Department of Transportation representatives coordinated with MPCA staff to determine appropriate noise monitoring/analytical locations and methods.

## Vegetation and Wildlife

At the request of Mn/DOT, MnDNR performed a review of this project for potential impacts on rare, threatened, or endangered species, sensitive vegetation/flora, or life-sustaining habitat. The Mn/DOT Wildlife Biologist performed a review of the potential for project impacts to federal threatened and endangered species.

## **11.7 OTHER MAJOR ACTIONS**

Planning and design activities for the reconstruction of I-494 have been and continue to be coordinated with other major actions in the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area including those addressed below.

### Light Rail Transit (LRT)

The Hiawatha Corridor LRT line will link downtown Minneapolis to the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) and the Mall of America. The full length of the Hiawatha line is scheduled to be operational by 2004. The Hiawatha LRT corridor crosses I-494 at 34th Avenue South. The closest LRT stations to I-494 are MSP Main Terminal, MSP Hubert H. Humphrey

Terminal, “Bloomington South” Station (Ceridian Drive and 28th Avenue South), 34th Avenue and 80th Street Station, and Mall of America. This project is being developed jointly by Mn/DOT and the Metropolitan Council.

#### Reconstruction of I-35W/TH 62 (Crosstown) Interchange

Mn/DOT is initiating a major reconstruction of this interchange (the “commons area”) to improve its safety and operation. It is scheduled to begin construction in 2001. According to current plans, portions of the interchange and associated ramps will have to be closed for up to four years to allow the necessary construction activities to be performed. Interstate 494 will be used as a detour route to accommodate closure and/or restricted use of the I-35/TH 62 interchange. The interchange reconstruction would not coincide with the scheduled reconstruction of I-494 in the I-35W Bloomington/Richfield area.

#### Parallel Arterial System

The parallel arterial concept focuses on enhancing the existing parallel street system immediately north and south of the I-494 alignment within the cities of Bloomington, Richfield and Edina. This system is being developed to provide access to the commercial/office uses along the corridor and to help keep local trips off of the I-494 mainline. The implementation status of this system is described below.

Seventy-seventh Street in Richfield, between I-35W and TH 77 has been partially completed. The portion near TH 77 is currently under construction. This project, which is being led by the City of Richfield, connects with 76th Street east of I-35W. Seventy-sixth Street continues into Edina to west of Xerxes Avenue where it becomes 77th Street and Edina Industrial Boulevard. Future City of Richfield plans call for extending 77th Street on the east end under TH 77 and connecting it with 24th Avenue adjacent to the airport.

Complementing the 77th Street corridor on the south side of I-494 is the 79th/80th Street corridor being developed by the City of Bloomington. The first phase of this project upgrades existing 79th and 80th Streets between 34th Avenue and TH 100, including a bridge across I-35W. Portions of this phase have already been completed. The second phase calls for an extension west from TH 100 to East Bush Lake Road via Bridge Road and Green Valley Drive. Segments of this section have also been completed, including the bridge over TH 100/Normandale Boulevard.

#### Penn Avenue Bridge Replacement at I-494

This project is being undertaken by the City of Richfield to support a major commercial development project (Best Buy Campus) north of I-494 at Penn Avenue. Construction for this project is scheduled to begin in 2001, with substantial completion by 2002.

## 11.8 AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVING COPIES OF THE FEIS

The following agencies and organizations will receive copies of the FEIS. In accordance with the procedures outlined in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a thirty- (30) day review period will begin after official notice in the *Federal Register*. Also, in compliance with Minnesota environmental regulatory requirements, a FEIS availability notice will be published in the Minnesota Environment Quality Board (EQB) *Monitor* and local newspapers, and a public review/comment period will be provided in conjunction with the federal review period.

### Federal Agencies

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
U.S. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers  
St. Paul District  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
– Ecology and Conservation Office  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
– Fish and Wildlife Service (including Minnesota Valley Wildlife Refuge)  
– National Park Service  
– Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance  
– Regional Environmental Review Officer  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
– Federal Aviation Administration  
– Second Coast Guard District  
– Federal Transit Administration  
– Safety and Consumer Affairs  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
U.S. Department of Energy  
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation  
Defense Civil Preparedness Agency  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Council on Environmental Quality  
Federal Railroad Administration  
Federal Emergency Management Agency

### State Agencies

Minnesota Department of Agriculture  
Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development  
Minnesota Department of Health

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
Minnesota Environmental Quality Board  
Minnesota Historical Society  
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
Minnesota State Planning Agency  
Minnesota Department of Commerce  
Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

Regional Agencies

Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities  
Metropolitan Airports Commission

Counties

Hennepin County Department of Transportation  
Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority

Cities

Minnetonka  
Eden Prairie  
Edina  
Bloomington  
Richfield

Local Water Organizations

Minnehaha Creek Watershed District  
Nine Mile Creek Watershed District  
Lower Minnesota River Watershed District  
Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District

Libraries

Environmental Conservation Library, Minneapolis  
Legislative Reference Library, St. Paul  
Hennepin County Library, Edina, Minnetonka, Eden Prairie, Bloomington and  
Richfield Branches

## 11.9 RELATED GOVERNMENTAL ACTIONS

Review and approval by the agencies listed in Table 11.1 will be required as part of the I-494 project approval process.

**TABLE 11.1  
PERMITS AND APPROVALS**

GOVERNMENT AGENCY	ACTION
<p><b>FEDERAL:</b></p> <p>U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers</p> <p>Federal Highway Administration</p> <p>Federal Aviation Administration</p> <p>Advisory Council on Historic Preservation</p> <p><b>STATE:</b></p> <p>Minnesota Department of Transportation</p> <p>Minnesota Department of Natural Resources</p> <p>Minnesota Pollution Control Agency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 404 Permit</li> <li>• Access change approvals</li> <li>• Location approvals</li> <li>• Approval of design exceptions</li> <li>• EIS approval</li> <li>• Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement</li> <li>• Record of Decision</li> <li>• Section 4(f) Approval</li> <li>• Part 77 of FAA Regulations Clearance</li> <li>• Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement</li> <li>• EIS Approval and Adequacy Determination</li> <li>• Wetlands Conservation Act Permit (as LGU)</li> <li>• Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement</li> <li>• Layout Approval</li> <li>• Public Waters Permit</li> <li>• Groundwater Appropriation Permit</li> <li>• Air Quality Indirect Source Permit</li> <li>• 401 Water Quality Certification</li> <li>• National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit for construction activities</li> <li>• Noise Exemption Process</li> </ul>

GOVERNMENT AGENCY	ACTION
<p>State Historic Preservation Officer</p> <p><b>REGIONAL:</b> Metropolitan Council</p> <p><b>LOCAL:</b> Cities of Bloomington, Richfield, Edina, Eden Prairie, and Minnetonka; Hennepin County</p> <p><b>WATERSHED DISTRICTS:</b> Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, Nine Mile Creek Watershed District, Riley Purgatory Creek Watershed District, Lower Minnesota River Watershed District</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement</li>   <li>• Controlled access highway approval</li> <li>• Release park restrictive covenants</li>   <li>• Layout approvals and continued review of construction plans</li>   <li>• Surface Water Management Permits</li> </ul>