If You Build It they Will Come – Communicating to the Public During Major Construction Projects

Crosstown Commons

John Griffith, MnDOT
West Area Manager
Linking of I-35W, Crosstown was ’60s political deal

The common section of the highways has been a problem since it opened in 1967. The freeways are to be separated by 2003.

By Laurie Blake
Star Tribune Staff Writer

When the common section of Interstate Hwy. 35W and Crosstown Hwy. 62 opened in January 1967, it was immediately obvious that the marriage of the highways was a blunder.

In the first six months, 75 accidents — almost three times as many as on surrounding roads — were reported on the common section, which straddles the Minneapolis-Richfield city limits and carries both north-south interstate traffic and east-west crosstown highway traffic. State police dubbed it “Blood Alley.”

Nine months later, Robert P. Janes, then chairman of the Hennepin County Board, was quoted in the Minneapolis Tribune as saying: “The whole thing has been unbelievably botched. It’s strictly pre-World War II in design.”

Since then, the stretch has become the metro area’s busiest freeway, with the common section used by more than 100,000 vehicles a day. Now there’s a plan to separate the freeways by 2003.
Crosstown Closure Coming

Minneapolis Star-Tribune - Published on January 10, 2001
By Laurie Blake; Staff Writer

Commuters, brace for bad news: Rebuilding the junction of Crosstown Hwy. 62 and Interstate Hwy. 35W will require closing key segments of the Crosstown for a year and a half to four years. The westbound Crosstown lanes will be closed for an unprecedented three to four years between Penn and Portland avenues, and the eastbound lanes will be closed in the same location for a year and a half to two years. Both detours will begin in the spring of 2002 as part of a five-year, $100.....
Crosstown Rebuilding to be Delayed

By Robert Whareatt
Star Tribune Staff Writer
June 30, 2001

The 10-month moratorium is part of a $3.5 billion transportation bill that gained final legislative approval Friday night.
Communication Efforts

1. ACTT – Accelerated Construction Technology Transfer
   a) Communication Recommendation

2. Communications Spec
   a) Full time PR firm as part of Contractor’s Bid
   b) Website, Hot-line, e-mail

3. News Releases

4. Ombudsman’s Involvement

5. Peer Review
Communication Tools

1) Animation

2) Graphic Renderings
   a) Noisewalls
   b) Bridges
   c) Retaining Walls

3) Small scale models

4) One Pagers
Existing I-35W Bridges at Minnehaha Creek - Looking East
New I-35W Bridges at Minnehaha Creek – Artist Concept
I-35W/46th Street BRT Station Site

Platform Level: Full Enclosure
I-35W/ Highway 62 Crosstown Commons
I-35W/46th Street and median BRT station
I-35W/ Highway 62 Crosstown Commons
46th Street median BRT station
Proposed Crosstown Commons

Access Modification

“ACCESS FROM LYNDALE AVE. TO WB HWY 62”

Access Modification

“ACCESS TO NB I-35W ONLY”

APRIL 16, 2004
SUBJECT TO CHANGE
I-35W/Highway 62, Minneapolis Crosstown Commons Reconstruction
• Reduce road closures to nights and weekends for work directly over the freeway
• Increase road capacity
• Minimize additional right of way takings while balancing impacts on adjacent properties.
• Provide for continuous High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to support transit on I-35W
• Implement safety improvements that eliminate left lane exits and weaving movements
• Create neighborhood benefits by reducing traffic diversions to local streets, both during construction and in the long term.
Quality Process and Results

• Buses used shoulders to maintain service during construction
• Deliveries to the project occurred during off-peak hours minimized traffic disruption
• Full weekend freeway closures were allowed for specific activities, such as bridge demolitions and overhead structure erections
• Nightly closures were allowed for work not specified within the full weekend freeway closures
• Specific restrictions were also prescribed including the prohibition of any lane closures during selected events, including the 2008 Republican National Convention
Construction Statistics

- $285 million
- 4 years of construction
- nearly 50 lane miles of new construction
- 8+ miles of noisewall
- 10+ miles of retaining wall (3’ up to 25’)
- 15+ miles of storm sewer (8” up to 120”)
- 26 bridges
- 9 interchanges
- 26 total acquisitions – including Peter’s Billards
- 1st center running on-line BRT Station in nation
Customer Focus

- Noise mitigation barriers and vibration control installed to isolate the work zone from the neighborhoods
- Seasonal and time of day restrictions were imposed on when water mains could be taken out of service to ensure adequate water and firefighting capabilities
- Public Information Coordinator hired for public and business outreach
- A peer review was conducted to review and document the Department’s performance in public communications and public engagement during the course of construction
NEWS
WHISTLEBLOWER; MnDOT finally takes care of couple's splitting concern
JAMES ELI SHIFFER; Staff Writer
273 words
25 March 2009
At last, a home without a view -- of road work; Crosstown construction left Mary VanSlooten without neighbors; that's soon to change.
JAMES ELI SHIFFER; Staff Writer
354 words
17 June 2009
The New Crosstown // The Wicked Weave is Dead // The biggest road construction project in state history is expected to shorten commuting times.

LAURIE BLAKE; STAFF WRITER
STAR TRIBUNE (Mpls.-St. Paul)
7 November 2010
Hwy. 62 draws cross reviews // East-west drivers still find frustration along the Crosstown Commons.

LAURIE BLAKE; STAFF WRITER
STAR TRIBUNE (Mpls.-St. Paul)

27 December 2010
Separate shared lanes, alleviate congestion and increase roadway capacity.
Thank You!

Minnesota Department of Transportation
John Griffith, West Area Manager