



# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is the I-35 Corridor Plan?

The MIC and MnDOT are engaging stakeholders and the public to develop an implementation plan to systematically address current and future needs along the I-35 corridor from Midway Township to 26th Avenue East in Duluth.

## What is included in the project area?

The plan area covers I-35 starting at the County Road 61 interchange in Midway Township and ending about 14 miles northeast at the intersection of 26th Avenue East in Duluth.

## What is included in the scope of work?

The work includes an assessment of current and future conditions including congestion, design and safety issues, transportation infrastructure, and land use. Then concepts, designs, or improvements will be created to visualize how I-35 can help reach community goals. Finally, an implementation plan will be created to guide future improvements.

## What are the expected outcomes of the plan?

A variety of stakeholders will help to create an implementation plan that will reflect the values of the community including maintenance and safety needs, bicycle and pedestrian needs, and freight and transit needs. The plan will then inform future investment in changes to I-35.

## Who is going to be involved and how?

Staff from local and regional agencies will form a Steering Committee, which will coordinate with elected officials and other stakeholders. The Steering Committee will connect with community members through engagement tools like open houses, focus groups, and social media.

## Who are the decision-makers?

The Steering Committee will provide advice to the MIC and MnDOT. MnDOT is the owner of I-35 and has ongoing responsibility to operate and maintain state highways and interstates in Minnesota.

## How much will it cost to create the plan, and who is paying for it?

The budget for creating the plan is \$250,000. It will be paid for by federal and state funding, with matching regional funding.

## How will pedestrians and bikes be addressed?

Existing, planned and potential pedestrian and bike facilities will be assessed for future improvements, such as bike lanes, wider sidewalks, and pedestrian-activated traffic signals.

## **How will future travel needs be evaluated?**

Travel needs and demands may change in the future. The Metropolitan Interstate Council (MIC) forecasts future conditions and evaluates how potential changes may impact safety and performance, reduce carbon emissions, and reflect new technology like connected and automated vehicles. Recommendations may include modifications to interchanges and ramps, and expanded pedestrian and bike connections.

## **How will the plan prioritize which recommendations to act on?**

Factors like safety, maintenance, funding, and construction plans will be considered when prioritizing which recommendations to take action on.

## **What changes will be considered in the Midway Township and Proctor section of the project area?**

Several recommendations from the Proctor Transportation Plan will be considered in the I-35 Corridor Plan, including an interchange study at Russell Road and South Ugstad Road, a redesign of the Boundary Avenue/I-35 interchange bridge, and using corridor upgrades to draw more visitors to Proctor.

## **What changes will be considered for the Spirit Valley section of the project area?**

The project team will focus significant community engagement efforts and design attention on the Spirit Valley area. The project seeks to correct substandard interchange ramp conditions like the left-hand exit at the westbound ramp from I-35 to southbound Grand Avenue (TH 23). Additionally, entry and exit ramps that are too close together will be evaluated for safety improvements. Any potential changes will be carefully considered as they will affect access to businesses and the neighborhood.

## **What changes will be considered for the downtown Duluth section of the project area?**

Having a large freeway like I-35 so close to downtown Duluth and Canal Park, with high-speed traffic and not many crossings, has prompted many proposals from differing groups for ways to overcome the freeway's hostile barrier effect. Proposals have included flyover bridges, decks over the freeway, and turning the freeway into a narrower, ground-level street. While addressing these proposals is not a driver of this project, the community engagement process will help identify the community values to consider in developing concepts, designs, and potential improvements.

## **What is the timeline for the plan?**

Work on the plan began in June 2022 and will be completed by the end of 2023. The community will be continuously engaged throughout the process, especially around important milestones.

## **How can I get updates and meeting announcements? Who can I contact for more information or to give input?**

Our project website has a survey link to share your thoughts at [dsmic.org/i35/](https://dsmic.org/i35/).