



(CLOCKWISE FROM THE TOP LEFT) Pile driving for the Orchard Road bridge, concrete forms for the bridge abutment, excavation for utility relocation, and crews installing new valves on a water main.



(Story continued from front page)

Concrete has been poured for the new southbound bridge decks over Highway 62 and Baker Road. Excavation and piling work preceded construction of bridge abutments at Excelsior Boulevard, and Orchard and Oakland Roads. The bridges over Baker Road, the Hennepin County bike trail, and Highway 62 are scheduled to be completed by the end of summer, while the bridges at Orchard and Oakland Roads and Highway 7 are all scheduled to be completed before next Thanksgiving.

Drivers will also see work beginning on the north end of the project between Minnetonka Boulevard and Carlson Parkway, as another travel lane is added in each

direction and a median barrier is constructed. That phase will also include construction of auxiliary lanes at Carlson Parkway, which will allow I-494 and I-394 traffic to merge more safely.

In addition to all this work on the I-494 mainline, construction crews will also begin widening the ramp and collector-distributor road connecting northbound I-494 to eastbound I-394, all the way to Plymouth Road. Ridgedale Drive, the business access frontage road that runs parallel to I-394 will also be reconstructed. This widening will help reduce the north-to-east congestion that occurs during evening rush hour and frequently backs up traffic on to I-494.

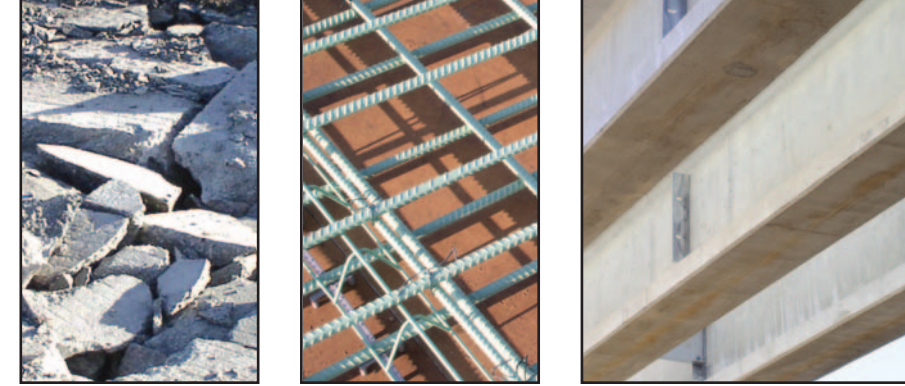
Project Related Questions?

A full-time public information coordinator is on staff to answer your questions about the project. To find out more about construction activities see our project website at <http://projects.dot.state.mn.us/gcinc/494/> and sign up for a weekly e-mail newsletter, or call our telephone hotline at (952) 908-2929.



I-494 Reconstruction

Stage 2 – Hwy 5 to I-394



Minnesota Department of Transportation ¥ Summer 2005

Summer Construction Season Will See Big Changes On I-494

Along with increasing temperatures comes an increase in the work underway on the I-494 freeway reconstruction project in Minnetonka and Eden Prairie. This construction season will be the busiest yet for the \$135 million design-build project.

A great deal of progress has already been achieved. The eight-mile long effort to widen the freeway between Highway 5 and Carlson Parkway began in late summer 2004 and crews continued to work through the winter months. In December 2004 all traffic was shifted between Highway 5 and Minnetonka Boulevard, putting both directions of travel on the same side of the freeway, and allowing construction crews full access to the southbound lanes, which were then demolished.

Excavation crews have been busy removing and replacing the old road base between Minnetonka Boulevard and Baker Road, while similar work is being completed between Highway 62 and Valley View

Road. Once the new roadway base has been replaced concrete-paving operations can begin, and plans are to have the new southbound pavement completed and all traffic shifted on to it by late September. That's when work will begin on creating the new northbound lanes.

Meanwhile, bridges at Excelsior Boulevard, Baker Road, the Hennepin

County bike trail, and Orchard and Oakland Roads have all been demolished and reconstruction has begun on new, wider replacements. Improving the Highway 62 and Highway 7 interchanges is also part of the project, and bridges on those two roadways have been demolished and reconstruction started there as well.

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Concrete beams for the new I-494 southbound bridge over Baker Road.



The Project Will:

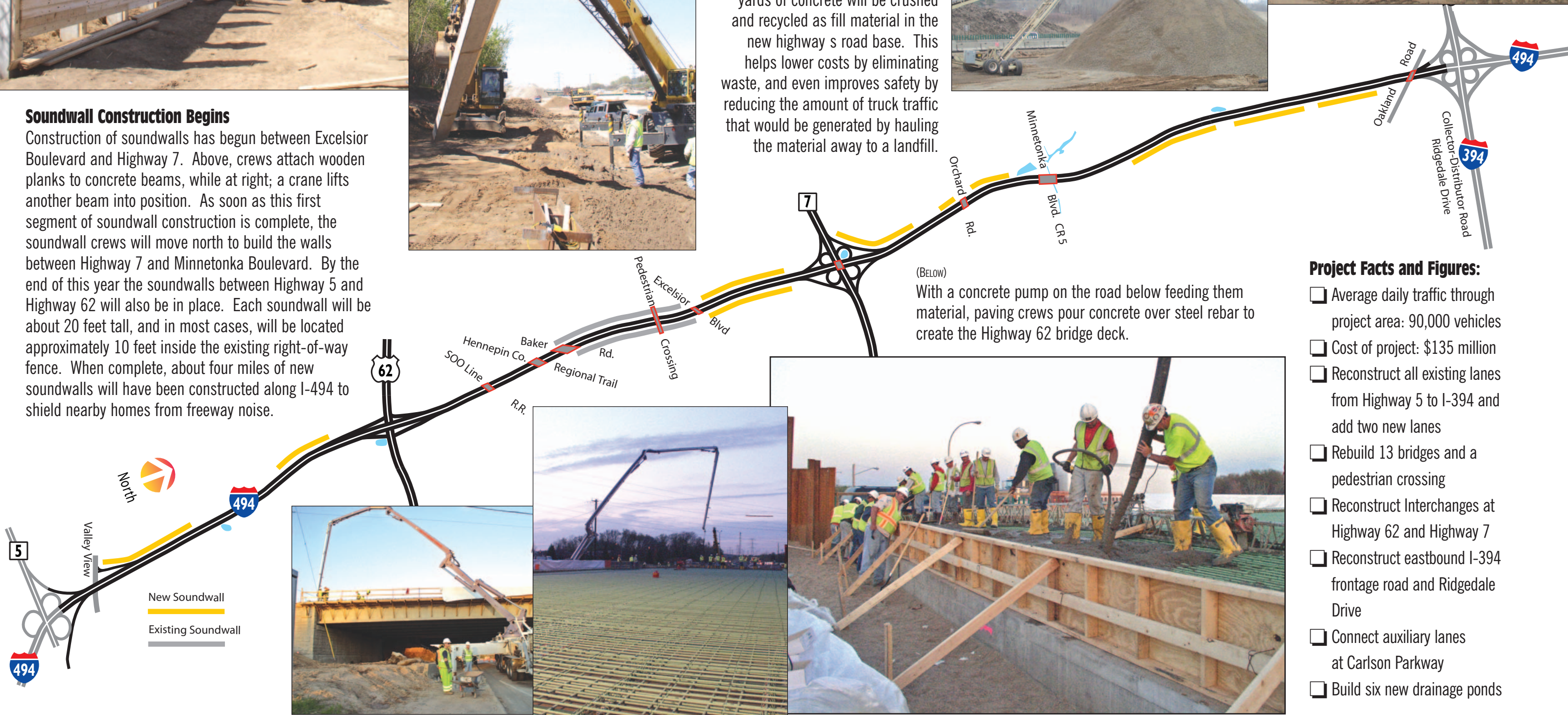
- Use 73,000 tons of asphalt paving
- Place 131,000 cubic yards of concrete paving
- Construct 351,000 square-feet of sound wall (four miles long, 20 feet tall)
- Move more than one million cubic yards of earth



(AT RIGHT)
A concrete crusher prepares concrete rubble for reuse on the project. A total of 108,000 cubic yards of concrete will be crushed and recycled as fill material in the new highway's road base. This helps lower costs by eliminating waste, and even improves safety by reducing the amount of truck traffic that would be generated by hauling the material away to a landfill.

Soundwall Construction Begins

Construction of soundwalls has begun between Excelsior Boulevard and Highway 7. Above, crews attach wooden planks to concrete beams, while at right; a crane lifts another beam into position. As soon as this first segment of soundwall construction is complete, the soundwall crews will move north to build the walls between Highway 7 and Minnetonka Boulevard. By the end of this year the soundwalls between Highway 5 and Highway 62 will also be in place. Each soundwall will be about 20 feet tall, and in most cases, will be located approximately 10 feet inside the existing right-of-way fence. When complete, about four miles of new soundwalls will have been constructed along I-494 to shield nearby homes from freeway noise.



(BELOW)
With a concrete pump on the road below feeding them material, paving crews pour concrete over steel rebar to create the Highway 62 bridge deck.



Project Facts and Figures:

- Average daily traffic through project area: 90,000 vehicles
- Cost of project: \$135 million
- Reconstruct all existing lanes from Highway 5 to I-394 and add two new lanes
- Rebuild 13 bridges and a pedestrian crossing
- Reconstruct Interchanges at Highway 62 and Highway 7
- Reconstruct eastbound I-394 frontage road and Ridgedale Drive
- Connect auxiliary lanes at Carlson Parkway
- Build six new drainage ponds