



Valley View northbound, Before



Now that the I-494 project is coming to an end, some commuters and local residents will be happy to know that the conclusion of this project marks the end of construction on I-494 for several years. Under current funding plans MnDOT won't finance any more expansion of the freeway (such as the addition of another lane between Hwy 55 and I-694) until around 2016. If you are interested in finding out more about MnDOT's future construction plans go to their main website project information page at <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/i494/>



In little more than two years, the I-494 design build project has completed:

- Demolition, removal and replacement of almost eight miles of pavement, including removal of the old roadbed and its replacement with three feet of sand
- Construction of about four miles of soundwall
- Demolition and reconstruction of 14 bridges that either cross over I-494 or its cross streets
- Removal and replacement of about 14 miles of fencing
- Reconstruction of the interchanges at Hwy 62 and Hwy 7
- Reconstruction of the I-394 collector distributor road creating a merge lane for northbound I-494 traffic wanting to go east



"It's Done!"

"Ribbon Cutting" Marks End of I-494 Reconstruction Project



With the exception of some final touches at the interchanges of Hwy 62 and Hwy 7, the I-494 design-build project is finished!

Over the next couple of weeks that interchange work will be completed along with other punch list items, such as final grading and painting. The project's official completion date was September 15, but most drivers on I-494 got what they were waiting for on Labor Day weekend: the opening of the new lanes between Hwy 5 and Carlson Parkway, which occurred August 31st.

The \$137.5 million project took about two years to complete, removing and replacing the existing freeway lanes and adding a new lane in each direction along nearly

eight miles of I-494 through Eden Prairie, Minnetonka and Plymouth.

Crews also widened 14 bridges that cross the freeway or its cross streets so that at some point in the future MnDOT can more easily add an additional travel lane. Both the interchanges at Hwy 62 and Hwy 7 were completely rebuilt and about four miles of soundwall were constructed at various locations along the corridor. A merge lane was also completed along eastbound I-394 to clear up the nightly congestion that used to occur as traffic tried to go east from northbound I-494.



To commemorate the I-494 project's completion a "ribbon cutting" ceremony was held on the Orchard Road bridge over I-494 at on Wednesday, September 6th. Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty and other local officials attended to express their appreciation to the workers who got the project completed in near record time, and to the residents along the project corridor who had to deal with so much construction occurring in their backyards, in some cases literally.



Before

After, From Excelsior Boulevard, looking south



Before



After

From Oakland Road, looking south



After

Before

From Excelsior Boulevard, looking north.



Before

From Excelsior Boulevard, looking north.



Before

From Orchard Road, looking north



After

New Soundwall
Existing Soundwall



From Orchard Road, looking south



Before



After

Thank you!

All of us appreciate improvements to our transportation system once those improvements have been completed. Being able to get where you want to go quickly, without the aggravation of traffic congestion is something we all look forward to during a construction project, and something we all enjoy after it's finished.

What we sometimes forget as we're enjoying the results of a project is the impact it had on nearby residents while it was taking place.

To those people in the neighborhoods around I-494, we want to say a special thank you. Thank you for putting up with the noise and mess while we improved I-494. Though you may not have been directly involved in the project's construction you were a part of the project just the same. You can take comfort in knowing that we won't have to do something like this again for many, many years to come