



Process/Policies:

- Q1.** Who really controls the decisions regarding when, where and what bridge?
A1. Mn/DOT, WisDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are members of the stakeholder resolution group that could lead to a consensus decision. Although the final decision making authority falls to Mn/DOT, WisDOT and FHWA; 17 permits also need to be obtained from other agencies for the project to proceed.
- Q2.** How have the needs of all interested parties been represented?
A2. It is extremely difficult to give an equal place to each viewpoint. It is the DOT's goal to hear every voice through public meetings and hearings, the stakeholder resolution group, and community involvement.
- Q3.** Is there enough political will to get this project completed?
A3. Until there is a final outcome no one knows for sure. Minnesota and Wisconsin state government staff members continue to actively work on the Supplemental Draft Environmental Statement (SDEIS) and are committed to seeing that development to conclusion. The federal government, as well, has indicated its willingness to support the project by including it as one of seven projects nationwide that is eligible for environmental streamlining.
- Q4.** When and how do the choices get narrowed down and finally selected? Will the community get to vote on this?
A4. The Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) will include all of the alternatives and their potential environmental impacts. The goal is to release this document in August 2004 for public comment. In addition there will be public hearings in September 2004 to formally document the public's comments. After these comments are compiled and reviewed, a decision regarding which bridge alignment and design warrants further study will be made by the DOT's and FHWA, unless a stakeholder consensus is reached. There will not be a community vote.

Congestion:

- Q5.** What will best alleviate congestion from current lift bridge?
A5. An additional river crossing would best alleviate congestion from current bridge. Additional measures to reduce congestion will be incorporated in a feasibility study and possibly incorporated into the preferred alternative.
- Q6.** Which plan provides simplest route from Stillwater to Wisconsin for commercial through traffic?
A6. Analysis of this continues and depends upon the location of a new crossing, future of the lift bridge, and how the whole regional transportation system functions.
- Q7.** How do you plan to address the bottlenecks on Twin Cities' freeways?
A7. Mn/DOT continues to study regional transportation needs and plans for upgrading metro freeways over the next 30 years.



Congestion – continued:

- Q8.** Is anyone looking at changing traffic signal operation in Stillwater as a solution?
- A8.** Many options, including signal timing, were studied in earlier phases of the project to determine if a cost-effective and less impactful solution could be found. These studies concluded that while these may provide minor improvements in the future, they could not fully address the transportation needs.

Costs:

- Q9.** Are costs comparable in all the alternatives?
- A9.** It is too early in the process to have a definite answer on the cost of the various bridge designs and alignments. At this time, planning estimates for construction costs range between \$230 Million and \$355 Million.
- Q10.** Which bridge would require the least amount of maintenance?
- A10.** No design requires inherently more maintenance than any other design, although all bridges require routine maintenance.
- Q11.** Can you estimate and publish costs incurred by agencies since crossing was first proposed decades ago?
- A11.** Mn/DOT and WisDOT estimate approximately \$6 million of effort, since 1995.
- Q12.** Does the rising cost of steel impact costs?
- A12.** The cost of steel at time of bridge construction would have a significant impact on the total cost of the project.
- Q13.** Which bridge costs the most? Which bridge costs the least?
- A13.** The cost of a specific bridge would not be available until an alignment is selected and the design work is completed.

Highway 36:

- Q14.** Won't more traffic at Highway 36 & 694 create more noise and air problems?
- A14.** Traffic at the I-694 and 36 interchange will not be studied with this project. Generally, air quality is influenced by congestion, and noise pollution is dependent on traffic volumes as well as traffic speed. A more detailed traffic analysis and study of the surrounding development patterns and topography in the area would have to be looked at to properly analyze the impacts.
- Q15.** What impact will a new bridge have on the properties along Highway 36?
- A15.** A number of properties will be taken by the project. These impacts are being refined and will be confirmed in the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS).



Highway 36 – continued:

Q16. What will the speed limit on Highway 36 be?

A16. The speed limit has not been determined at this point.

Q17. Why not have the same parkway design for Houlton, Wisconsin as for Highway 36?

A17. An aesthetic study will be completed for the whole project during final design to address issues such as landscaping, bridge/overpass/interchange design, lighting, etc.

Design:

Please note: The majority of design questions are answered in the attached table.

Q18. Which bridge type will last the longest?

A18. Each new bridge is expected to last over 50 years.

Q19. Why is a tunnel not one of the options?

A19. A tunnel was considered but it was found to be excessively expensive and extremely disruptive to the river bottom.

Q20. What happened to the Braun Plan?

A20. Alignment C is the same as the previous Braun Plan.

Q21. Will the new bridge be 4 or six lanes?

A21. Four lanes of traffic will be accommodated on a new river bridge in alternatives B-1, C, and D; alternative E uses the lift bridge for two lanes of traffic and a new crossing for another two lanes.

Q22. Is there a walkway for people?

A22. Each build alternative incorporates pedestrian and bicycle accommodations. Alternatives B-1, C, and E provide a walkway for pedestrians on a new river bridge, and also possibly on the lift bridge. Alternative D provides a walkway for pedestrians on the lift bridge.

Q23. Will light rail be accommodated?

A23. A feasibility study will look at several different modes of transportation as additional measures to reduce congestion.

Q24. Where are the proposed interchanges on the Wisconsin side for Highway 35 and County E?

A24. The transportation system in Wisconsin differs with each alternative. Details are described in the Final Scoping Decision Document (available on the project website and at local libraries), and will be presented at the June 2004 public meetings.

Q25. Do all alternatives maintain current access?

A25. Access is generally maintained in each alternative. Access may be altered or relocated, but a few properties may be affected due to removal of access.



Design – continued:

Q26. What is going to happen to the land that was purchased for the previous project?

A26. Every effort is being made to design the alternatives to maximize the use of land already owned by the DOT's. If areas of land are not used, the DOT's will work with the communities to turn back the properties.

Q27. How far inland would the first exit from Highway 36 be in Wisconsin?

A27. Within one mile, depending on the alternative.

Q28. How do the alternatives differ in the removal of bluff and rock cliff?

A28. Bluff impacts continue to be analyzed and minimized where possible. On the Wisconsin side existing bluff cuts or natural ravines are used to minimize the impact. Work is being done to quantify these impacts within the DNR's definition of "bluff line" for the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS).

Q29. Can you avoid the potential relocation of residents in Wisconsin?

A29. A number of residential properties in Wisconsin will need to be acquired depending upon the alternative. Every effort is being made to reduce these impacts. The Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) will confirm all right-of-way acquisitions.

Q30. How and why has E changed from the "three architects proposal"?

A30. Many of the ideas from those proponents have been incorporated into the current design of Alternative E. Several changes have been made to meet design and safety guidelines. Two significant differences from the previous proposal in the current design are: accommodating the required height of the bridge deck above normal pool elevation of the river; and incorporating four lanes of traffic (2 lanes in each direction) throughout the design.

Schedule:

Q31. When might a bridge be built?

A31. If we are able to stay with the current schedule, construction could be completed in 2010.

Q32. Why have as many options and locations? Does this slow down decision making?

A32. Mn/DOT and WisDOT are required by law, and in order to make a sound decision need to investigate the most viable options that emerge from the scoping document, which is what we are in the process of doing. Spring 2005 is the current goal for a final decision on a preferred alternative.



Other questions:

Q33. Have the DOTs given fair consideration to the no-build option?

A33. Yes, it is included in the studies, and every effort is being made to examine the no-build option thoroughly.

Q34. When looking at lift bridge expectancy are we taking into account Hudson and Taylor's Falls bridge closures?

A34. Yes, those details have been figured into the lift bridge life expectancy.

Q35. Why is the meeting in Hudson and not in Somerset or New Richmond?

A35. There were no spaces large enough in Somerset or New Richmond to accommodate the expected number of attendees.

Q36. Where will the toll booth be located for eastbound traffic into Wisconsin?

A36. There has been no decision regarding tolling.

Q37. Why not make trucks cross at Hudson?

A37. A legislative change would have to occur for this to happen.

Q38. Who would benefit from a new bridge?

A38. One of the reasons to complete a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) is to fully understand the benefits a new bridge could provide.

Q39. How do you measure factors like historical, cultural, and environmental in determining benefits and cost? How are money and weights for each value determined?

A39. This type of measurement is very difficult, which is why we work with agency and technical experts to fully understand all factors when making a decision.

Q40. What are the strategies to preserve the lift bridge?

A40. There are a number of strategies being considered to preserve the lift bridge as well as a \$5m repair project that will begin in summer 2005. More information on the lift bridge is available at the website www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/liftbridge/

Q41. Can the public read the stakeholders meeting minutes to learn about progress of project?

A41. Yes, the meeting minutes are available, and the public can track the progress of the project by checking the website at www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/stcroix



Other questions – continued:

- Q42.** Legal issues emerged during the last project why didn't DOTs know about that ahead of time?
- A42.** The DOT's attempt to work within the rules and regulations in place at the time of project development; not all legal issues can be anticipated. The previous legal issues addressed the definition of a "water resources project" and whether or not a bridge would be considered a "water resources project" under Section 7a of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and whether that previous project had adverse impacts to a wild and scenic riverway.
- Q43.** Will a new bridge increase or create urban sprawl? If there is urban sprawl, what will be done if the new bridge can't handle it?
- A43.** Recent discussions with planning agencies in Minnesota and Wisconsin show that development has occurred and will continue to occur regardless of a bridge. New infrastructure could have an impact on development patterns and the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) will address this. Future traffic projections show that a four lane bridge would have adequate capacity to handle increased traffic as it occurs.



Design Comparison of Build Alternatives

		Alternative B-1	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
Number of lanes on new river bridge		4 lanes	4 lanes	4 lanes	2 lanes
Lift Bridge usage		Pedestrian facility and/or local vehicles	Pedestrian facility and/or local vehicles	Pedestrian facility only	Pedestrian and Trunk Highway (TH) vehicles
Height of bridge deck above normal pool elevation¹ of the river	Minnesota shore	113 feet	105 feet	68 feet	61 feet
	Wisconsin shore	159 feet	150 feet	82 feet	61 feet
Bridge width		98 feet	98 feet	85 feet	56 feet
Trail access		New river bridge and/or the Lift Bridge	New river bridge and/or the Lift Bridge	Lift Bridge	New river bridge and/or the Lift Bridge
Bridge length over the river		2,840 feet	2,000 feet	2,545 feet	2,530 feet
Total bridge length (abutment to abutment)		4,953 feet	4,040 feet	3,974 feet	2,987 feet
Bridge grade from Minnesota shore to Wisconsin shore		1.74%	2.25%	0.50%	+1.80%/-1.50%
Distance of new bridge south of Lift Bridge	Minnesota shore	7,480 feet	4,390 feet	1,940 feet	2,010 feet
	Wisconsin shore	5,465 feet	3,600 feet	160 feet	200 feet
Potential Bridge Types		B1-1 and B1-2: Cable Stay B1-3: Extradosed B1-4: Haunched Box Girder	C1: Haunched Box Girder C2: Deck Arch C3: Extradosed	D1: Thru Trusses D2: Bow String Truss D3: Arches D4: Arches with Thru Arch	E1: Thru Trusses E2: Bow String Trusses E3: Bow String Truss
Estimated Cost (planning level of accuracy)		Project construction costs range between \$230 Million and \$355 Million, depending on many items, including bridge type.			

¹Normal pool elevation of the river = 675 feet above mean sea level (msl)

This figure shows the Build Alternatives being considered in the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement

