

## Project Design and Visual Quality Open Houses to be Held September 14 and 15, 2005

The Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Transportation (DOTs) are working with local, state and federal agencies and other interest groups on a preferred design for the new St. Croix River Crossing. The DOTs are committed to a project that is sensitive to the valley's scenic, natural and cultural resources.

Because of this commitment the DOTs are developing a Visual Quality Planning Guide as project planning continues. A Visual Quality Review Committee (VQRC) is providing input for the development of the Visual Quality Planning Guide. The VQRC includes representatives from interest groups, local governments in Minnesota and Wisconsin as well as federal and state agencies.

These open houses are being held for you to review project information and meet with VQRC and DOT members to discuss the visual options being considered.

Information presented at the open houses includes:

- **Background on the Preferred Alternative**

The plan includes roadway improvements in Minnesota and Wisconsin, a new bridge crossing the St. Croix River, a five-mile loop trail for bicyclists and pedestrians that use the new bridge and the Lift Bridge, and other design measures to protect the environment.

- **Landscape Architecture and Bike/Pedestrian Trail Concepts**

The VQRC is considering a wide range of options for trees, shrubs, and other vegetation that will be incorporated into the project. The VQRC is exploring the appearance of the Loop Trail and options for how the Lift Bridge can be best adapted for bicycles and pedestrians.

**MINNESOTA**  
**WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 14**  
**5p.m. - 8p.m. Open House**  
Stillwater Senior High School, Cafeteria  
5701 Stillwater Blvd. N (Hwy 5)  
Stillwater, Minn.

**NOTE:**  
LIFT BRIDGE IS **CLOSED** FOR REPAIRS

**WISCONSIN**  
**THURSDAY, SEPT. 15**  
**5p.m. - 8:00p.m. Open House**  
Houlton Elementary School  
#70 County Road E  
Houlton, Wis.

- **New River Bridge Architectural Concepts**

The new river bridge will be designed in the "extradosed" form with short towers above the bridge and low-angle cables extending down to the bridge surface. The VQRC and the DOTs have provided considerable input on a number of extradosed bridge options, of which three alternatives will be presented at the open houses.

- **Other Information**

The open houses will also highlight the criteria being used to develop the Visual Quality Planning Guide and the project measures planned to preserve or enhance the visual quality of the bridge and surrounding area.

After the September 14 and 15 open houses, the DOTs and the VQRC will incorporate the public's input and decide on a design concept for the bridge, what landscape architectural components to use, and how other visual elements will be carried forward into the design process. Another open house is tentatively planned for December 6, 2005, and the key recommendations of the VQRC will be presented.



Members of the Visual Quality Review Committee review preliminary plans at recent meetings.



## Final Environmental Impact Statement Available this Fall

The Federal Highway Administration and the Minnesota and Wisconsin DOTs are working together with a 28-member stakeholder group to resolve traffic congestion and safety problems in Stillwater and Oak Park Heights, Minn. and in Houlton, Wis. In July 2005, the three transportation agencies published a draft of the Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (SFEIS) for Cooperating Agencies and the Stakeholder Group review.

This fall the SFEIS will be available for public review. The SFEIS describes the *Preferred Alternative Package*, which includes improvements that best meet transportation needs, and a mitigation package that helps preserve or compensate for project impacts on the scenic, natural, and cultural resources of the St. Croix River Valley.

The Preferred Alternative Package is anticipated to include:

- Roadway improvements along Highways 36 and 95 in Minnesota and Highway 35/64 in Wisconsin.
- A new river crossing (Alt. B-1), which is located about one mile south of the Stillwater Lift Bridge.
- A bridge designed in the "extradosed" form with short towers above the bridge and low-angle cables.
- Maintenance of the Stillwater Lift Bridge as part of a bicycle and pedestrian trail system.
- Other design features and mitigation measures to address natural, social, and cultural impacts in the project area.

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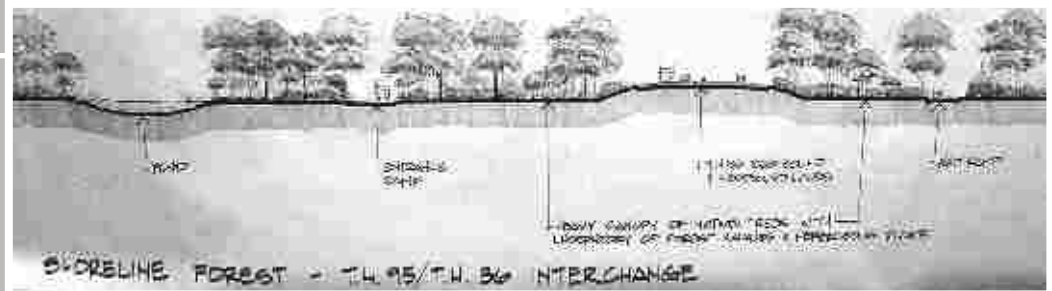
Copies of project documents can be viewed on the project Web site and at local libraries.

## What Design Features Are Proposed for the St. Croix River Crossing Project?

Come to the public open houses on September 14 and 15 or visit the project Web site

### LEARN MORE ABOUT:

- The visual quality planning process.
- Design concepts for the bridge and approach roadways.
- The status of the overall project planning process.



Landscape concept sketch

The Open Houses will provide a good opportunity to review project materials and talk with VQRC and DOT members.

Project information is also available on the project Web site: [www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/stcroix](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/stcroix)

