History and Development of the St. Croix Crossing Project

2015 AASHTO Subcommittee on Right-of-Way, Utilities & Outdoor Advertising Control
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Project History, Development and Current Status:

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St. Croix Crossing Project Coordinator

Right of Way:

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MnDOT Metro District Right of Way Engineer
St. Croix Crossing Project Location

New St Croix River Crossing

Minnesota / Wisconsin Boarder near Stillwater, Minnesota
St. Croix Crossing Project Area
1837 – White Pine Treaty -- ceded territory – Ojibwa and Dakota native tribes and the U.S. Government
1837 – on – lumbering of white pine timber forest in northern MN and WI
1848 – Stillwater platted, nicknamed Birthplace of MN
1880’s – lumber production peaked
1910’s – Minnesota’s white pine sawlog era was ending.
1876 - Timber toll bridge was built by the City of Stillwater, with pontoon style opening.
1897 – portion of bridge collapsed, need a replacement
1904 - timber bridge caught on fire, 3 dead trying to extinguish
1912 - City of Stillwater dropped tolls
1925 – MN Dept of Highways takes over ownership of bridge
1931 - Lift Bridge was constructed by MN Department of Highways
1970’s - discussions of a new replacement crossing due to congestion
Today’s Needs

• Traffic Congestion
• Mobility
• Safety
• Delays From Lift Bridge Operation/Flooding
• Physical Restrictions
• Needs Of Pedestrians
• Lift Bridge Condition
Context/Environment-
Protected Resources – Historic Properties

Location of Properties that are listed or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
St. Croix River Crossing Project - SFEIS from 2006
Protected Resources – Park Properties

Stillwater Municipal Barge Facility Property
Now called “Bridgeview Park”

Kolliner Park

Photo courtesy of Washington County Historical Society
Threatened Or Endangered Species and Wetlands

Wetlands

Dotted Blazing Star

“Good” Mussels

Bald Eagle

Northern Long-eared Bat
Protected Area – Waterway

- **St. Croix National Scenic Riverway:**
  - Scenic
  - Recreational
  - Geologic
  - Water Quality
Invasive Species

- Invasive Species
Federal Legislation interpretation and State Laws

Conflicting federal laws protecting cultural resources and the Wild and Scenic Riverway

- Oak Park Heights
- Stillwater
- Bayport
PHASE 1: “1995 Project”:

1985 – Notice of Intent for EIS – issued by FHWA 10/11/85

1985: Draft Study Outline and Scoping Document for Proposed Stillwater-Houlton Bridge over the St. Croix River & Approaches

1987: Scoping Decision Document/Final Study Outline

1990: Stillwater-Houlton Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Section 4(f) Evaluations

1995: Final Environmental Impact Statement and Section 4(f) Evaluation for the New St. Croix River Crossing. MnDOT was acquiring R/W.

3 Phases of Project Development

PHASE 1: “1995 Project”:

1996: Legal action by Sierra Club North Star Chapter v. Pena

1996: National Park Service evaluated project as a “water resources” project under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Adverse effect determined.

1997: Federal Court ruling upholding NPS determination of adverse effect on Wild and Scenic River. No Corp of Engineers or Coast Guard permits could be issued. Phase 1 ended.

Lessons learned:
- Permitting Agencies comments
- Wild & Scenic Rivers Act
- Water Quality
- Lift Bridge future
3 Phases of Project Development

Phase 2: “Braun “C” Project”:
Facilitated a 21 member coalition of interests

1998: St. Croix River Crossing - A Graceful Solution for a Magnificent River by Richard Braun
- new 4 lane river bridge, on new alignment south of Lift Bridge
- must address long term solutions for lift bridge

1999: Notice of Intent for Supplemental EIS – issued by FHWA 1/20/99
1999: Amended Scoping Decision Document for the TH 36/STH 64 St. Croix River Crossing
2001: Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluations for the TH 36/STH 64 St. Croix River Crossing (not published)

Phase 2 suspended due to 1) inability of federal agencies to reach consensus on future of lift bridge; 2) insufficient federal funding for the lift bridge alternatives and mitigation; 3) lack of municipal consent of project.

Lessons learned:
- Context consideration
- Municipal Consent
- Lift Bridge future
Consensus Possible?

2001: FHWA brought in US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution

2002: Executive Order from President G.W. Bush included the St. Croix Crossing Project
Phase 3: “Stakeholder Group” Project:

2002: U.S. Institute of Conflict Resolution hired a facilitation, mediation team – RESOLVE

2002: Facilitated Stakeholder Resolution Process monthly meetings began with 28 member group – purpose and need, location, design, bridge type, mitigation

2002: TH 36 Partnership Study Final Report


2004: Notice of Intent for Supplemental EIS -- issued by FHWA 3/18/04

2004: Amended Final Scoping Decision Document - St. Croix River Crossing Project

2004: SDEIS Public Hearings and open houses on-going

2004: Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement - St. Croix River Crossing Project
Phase 3: “Stakeholder Group” Project:

2006: Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement - St. Croix River Crossing Project
- 28 member Stakeholder meetings ended, but smaller subsets still continue

New river crossing design and location

Mitigation Package
Phase 3: “Stakeholder Group” Project:

2006: Record of Decision by FHWA – issued 11/13/06
2006: Right of way acquisitions
2006: Mitigation items implemented
2006: Cities of Stillwater and Bayport offered municipal consent
2006: Oak Park Heights v. MnDOT – municipal consent
2007: Sierra Club v. FHWA and NPS – NEPA, 4(f), 7(a)
2007: State of MN Judge ruling on OPH v. MnDOT – use “old” municipal consent law
Phase 3: “Stakeholder Group” Project:

2009: Lift Bridge Management Plan and Endowment Account established
2009: Right of Way Acquisitions and Mitigation items on-going
2010: Oak Park Height’s Mayor contests MnDNR permit for load testing
2010 spring: Federal Court ruling on Sierra Club complaint - FHWA-o.k., vacated NPS’s draft section 7(a)
2010 fall: NPS Wild and Scenic Rivers Act-Section 7(a) Evaluation and Determination Report – adverse effect
Phase 3: “Stakeholder Group” Project:

2010 fall: Coalition established of local individuals, businesses and elected officials in support of the project

2011: Congressional House and Senate Subcommittee hearings began on authorizing project under Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. House and Senate approved bills.

2012: President Obama signed Public Law 112-100 on March 14 authorizing the St. Croix River Crossing Project under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, with mitigation.

2012 fall: Re-evaluation of the 2006 SFEIS

2012/13: Permitting and began construction

2013: McCrossan v. MnDOT – DBE goal for Design Build of Minnesota roadway

2013: Minnesota Design-Build approach, new river bridge foundation construction and mitigation items.
Within The Context, How Did We Choose A Location For The New Bridge?

**Stakeholder And Public Involvement**

St. Croix Crossing Project Stakeholders, Interests, Issues

- Riverway
- Historic Properties
- Threatened & Endangered Species
- Watershed
- Social
- Economic
- Community
- Environmental
St. Croix Crossing Project – Balancing Needs

Transportation — Social, Economic, Environmental

Historical Resources

Natural Resources

Stakeholder and Public Involvement to Determine Project Location, Design and Mitigation
Preferred Alternative Package — New River Crossing Location, Design and Mitigation Package
The New St. Croix Crossing

St. Croix Crossing project
Aerial view looking west toward Sunnyside Marina
The New St. Croix Crossing

St. Croix Crossing project
Aerial view looking west toward Xcel King power plant

This photo simulation is based on designs available in June 2013. It does not necessarily represent the final appearance.
The New St. Croix Crossing
The New St. Croix Crossing

http://youtu.be/wH058zyvHfU
1994-98

TH 36 Corridor

Four Parcels
$3.6M certified appraisals
$341,000 Administrative settlements
94 Relocations (90 relocations of Storage Facility units)

~$ 4M
R/W Acquisitions

1995-98

Lower Oak Park Heights Neighborhood

80 Parcels
  67 total acquisitions & 13 partial
  63 parcels secured in DP & 17 parcels condemnation

$6.57M certified appraisals
49 Housing supplements totaling more than $1M
75 Relocations

~$7.6M
2009

Five parcels
$975,000 certified appraisals
Three Housing Supplements: $76,500
Three Administrative settlements: $38,700
One Minimum compensation: $127,000

~$1.1M
2012-Present
R/W Acquisition Priorities
Have R/W so that traffic can be on newly aligned TH 95 and south Frontage Rd

Metro R/W used Right of Entry Easements (ROEE) = $1,000
  • With Federal approval
  • $30,000
R/W Acquisitions

38 Parcels (partial acquisitions)

31 parcels for TH 36 & TH 95 Roadways projects
   5 parcels for Bridge Project
   2 parcels for Loop Trail Project
16 acquired in DP
22 parcels in condemnation
15 parcels have been settled

Have spent $7.5M
Will spend approximately $1M more to complete acquisitions
R/W Acquisitions
Limited Right of Way
Relocation challenges
Coordination of all Facilities
Utilities ... 2015
Project Tour Background and Highlights
River Bridge
River Bridge Overview
Column Blades and Crossbeam
Crossbeam Construction
Crossbeam Construction
Crossbeam and Pier Table Construction
Crossbeam and Pier Table Construction
River Bridge Construction Status

River Piers Progress

- Pier Table
- Crossbeam
- Driving Surface

*As of April 1, 2015

- Pier 8
- Pier 9
- Pier 10
- Pier 11
- Pier 12

- Section under construction
- Section complete
2014/2015 River Bridge Construction
Minnesota Approach

Current Construction Area

LEGEND
- Traffic crossover
- Traffic signal
- Open - single lane in each direction
- Open
- Closed

*Traffic will remain in this pattern until fall 2015*
Minnesota Approach Bridge Piers

- Segments
- Column
- Future Groundline
- Footing
- H-Piles
Minnesota Approach Bridge Piers

As of March 2015, all 23 of 23 total land piers are at full height.
- 338 pre-cast segments make up the Minnesota approach bridge superstructure
- Average weight: 90 tons
- Average length: 8-1/2 feet
On-Site Casting Yard - OPH
Segment Placement - MN Approach Bridge

Legend:
U = Upstream
D = Downstream
Segment Erection

4/10/15
First Segment placed on Pier

4/11/15
First Cantilevered section placed
River Bridge Cross Section –
Two Precast Box Segments

Segments

18 ft.

100 ft.
Grey Cloud Island Casting Yard

River bridge segments
- 5 casting beds
- 650 segments
- 18 ft. deep
- 10 ft. long
- 50 ft. wide
- Weighs 180 tons
- Barged on Mississippi and St. Croix rivers to project site
Grey Cloud Island Casting Yard

100’ x 600’ Building
Construction Sequence
Schedule

- Mn Roadway – majority completed by 2015
- WI Roadway – completed by 2016
- New River Bridge – Open to traffic by fall of 2016
- Mitigation items - implemented “before”, “during” or “after” construction
Project Information

Project Office
1862 Greeley Street S., Stillwater

Project Website – Webcams and Weekly Update
www.mndot.gov/stcroixcrossing/

Hotline
1-855-GO-CROIX

E-mail
stcroixcrossing.dot@state.mn.us

Facebook
www.facebook.com/saintcroixcrossingmndot

Twitter @stcroixcrossing
Animations

Lift Bridge

New St. Croix Crossing
Questions?