



Blatnik Bridge Update *for the* Metropolitan Interstate Council Policy Board December 9, 2020

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Agenda

- Provide an overview
- Project process
- Project Purpose and Need
- Questions

Partnership – MnDOT and WisDOT

- Two DOTs but one Twin Ports
- Frequent Collaboration
 - Border bridges
 - Maintenance
 - Inspection

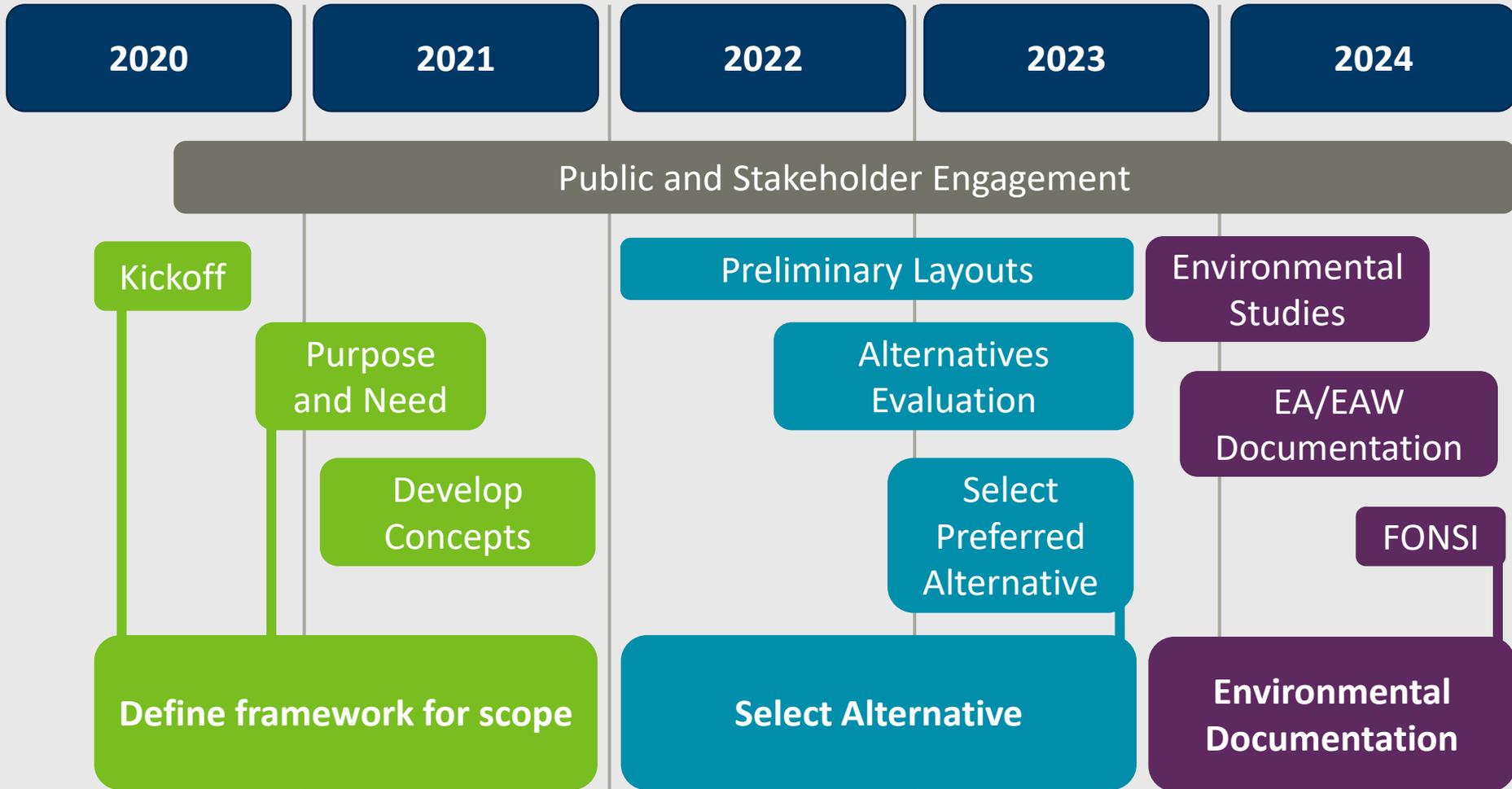


Why are we here?

- Significant deterioration developed in truss elements
- Maintenance issues
 - Safety inspection required yearly
 - Additional maintenance ongoing
 - Structural maintenance required every 4 years for safety and serviceability
 - Next project scheduled for 2022



Where are we in the NEPA process?



How will an environmental review be conducted?

- Documentation will include:
 - Purpose and need
 - Evaluation of alternatives
 - Impact assessment
 - Natural, cultural, social
 - Environmental commitments
 - Preferred alternative
 - DOT/FHWA approvals



What is being investigated?

- Maintain a fully operational connection across the Saint Louis Bay navigation channel
- Evaluate rehabilitation or replacement of truss
- Evaluate the option of extending service life of the approach spans or replace in entirety
- Replacement on existing or new alignment

What will it cost?

- Project scoping and preliminary engineering has not been completed on the Blatnik Bridge project to date
- Appropriate project cost levels cannot be determined without that work
- High level planning cost estimates for a range of alternatives will be developed by the project team after the first round of screening
 - Time frame: 9-12 months
- Scoping level cost estimates will be developed as part of the Blatnik preliminary engineering contract
 - Timeframe: 2-3 years
- MnDOT/WisDOT share costs on all border bridges

How long before construction starts?

- **2020 to 2024: NEPA Process**
 - Working towards preferred alternative selection and environmental documentation
- 2024 to 2026: Preliminary Design
- 2026 to 2028: Final Design
- 2028 to 2031: Construction

Outreach and Communication Opportunities

- Inform
 - Project website / Govdelivery sign up
 - Public Information Meetings
 - Open houses (next meeting January 12, 2021)
- Consult
 - Stakeholder small group meetings
- Collaborate
 - Public Advisory Committee (PAC) (next meeting January 5, 2021)

Public Advisory Committee (PAC)

- The PAC is a high-level group that is the conduit to and from other specific groups
- Two meetings have been held to date
- Next PAC meeting is to review draft purpose and need

Draft Purpose and Need

The following three basic needs have been identified as the existing problems that are driving the Blatnik Bridge project:

- Bridge Condition
- Mobility
- Safety

Draft Purpose and Need

DRAFT Secondary Needs

- Multi-modal considerations

Draft Purpose and Need

DRAFT Purpose Statement

Based on the needs described above, the following objectives summarize the intent for this project:

- To create a sustainable connection over the St. Louis Bay between the cities of Duluth and Superior
- To restore the intended freight movements of the crossing - original operational performance
- To provide reliable movement of goods and services locally and regionally
- To improve the geometric deficiencies at the 53/35/ I-535 interchange and the Hammond/5th street intersection

Draft Purpose and Need

DRAFT Purpose Statement

Using the above needs and objectives, MnDOT and WisDOT define the purpose of this project as:

- *Provide a multi-modal, interstate connection over the St Louis Bay that does not restrict the movements for freight and provides local, regional, and international movement in a safe and efficient manner.*

Questions?



Project Websites:

MnDOT: <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/d1/projects/blatnik-bridge/>

WisDOT: <https://wisconsin.dot.gov/Pages/projects/by-region/nw/blatnikbridge/default.aspx>

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Thank you!