



Blatnik Bridge Update for HTAC

December 3, 2025

Agenda

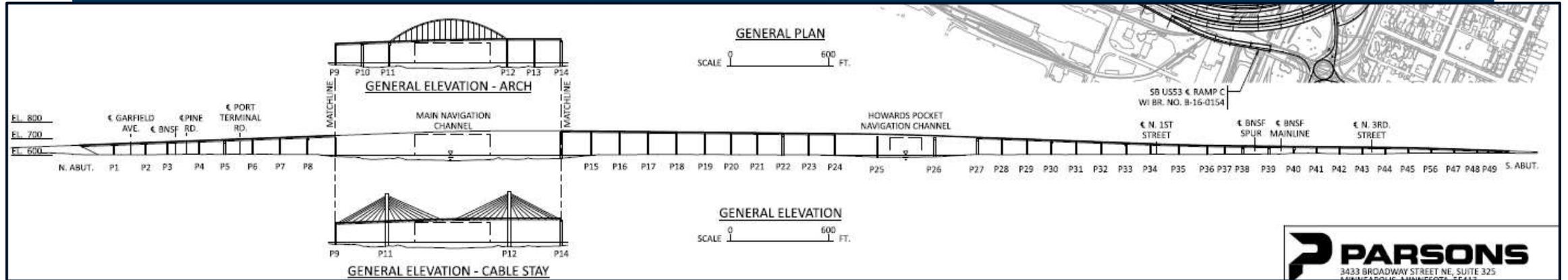
The last HTAC update was December 4, 2024

- Review (layout/alignment, bridge types, traffic mitigation)
- Schedule
- Updates (permits, agreements, right-of way, RFP, SOQ, shortlist of contractors pursuing the project)
- Future activities (Contractor 1:1s, ATCs, PAEs)



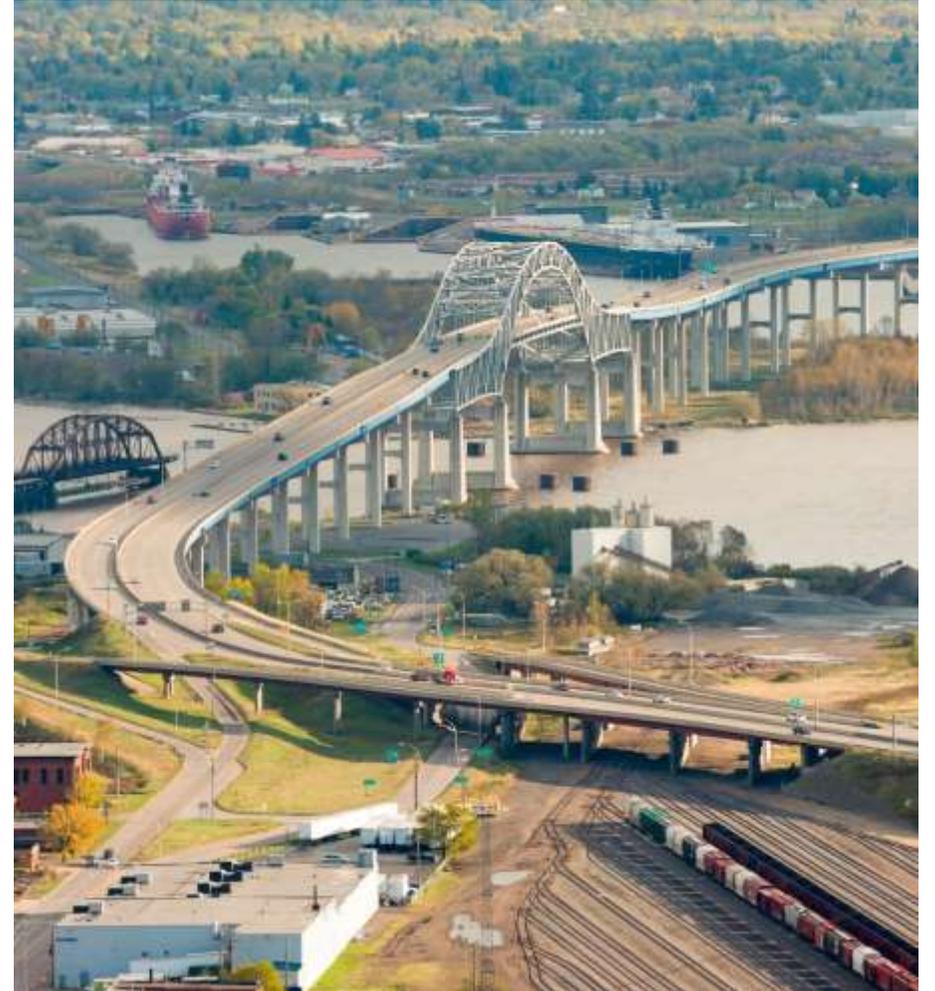
Alignment

Final Alignment



Why was the existing alignment selected?

- **Minimizes impacts** to property and wetlands
- Allows for one phase construction, providing the **shortest overall construction duration**
- **Provides the greatest schedule acceleration opportunity** since crews can work on any portion of the project at any time
- Closing the existing bridge **eliminates risk** of construction next to traveling vehicles
- Provides the **lowest cost alternative**



Bridge Type Option 1: Tied Arch

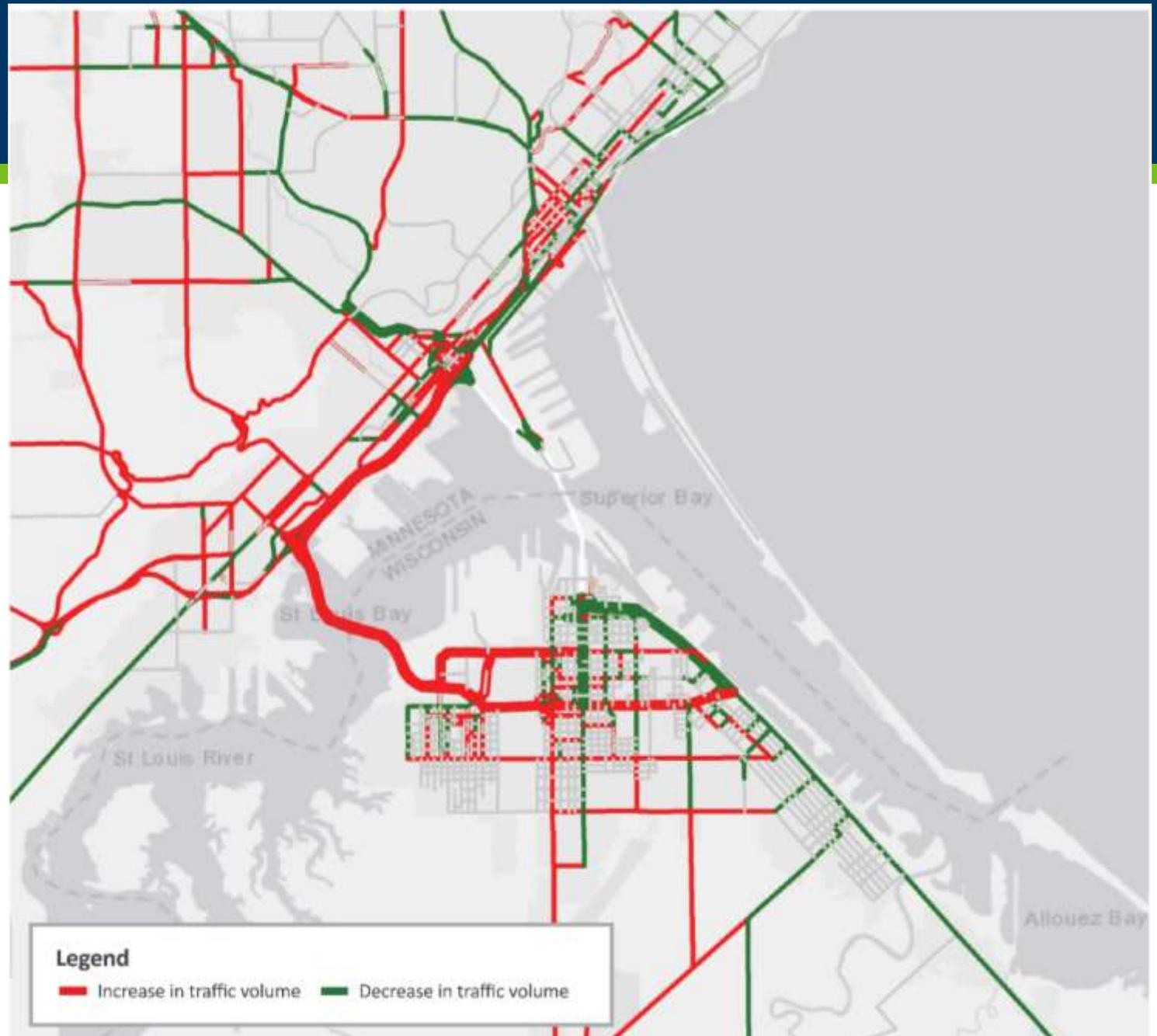


Bridge Type Option 2: Cable Stay



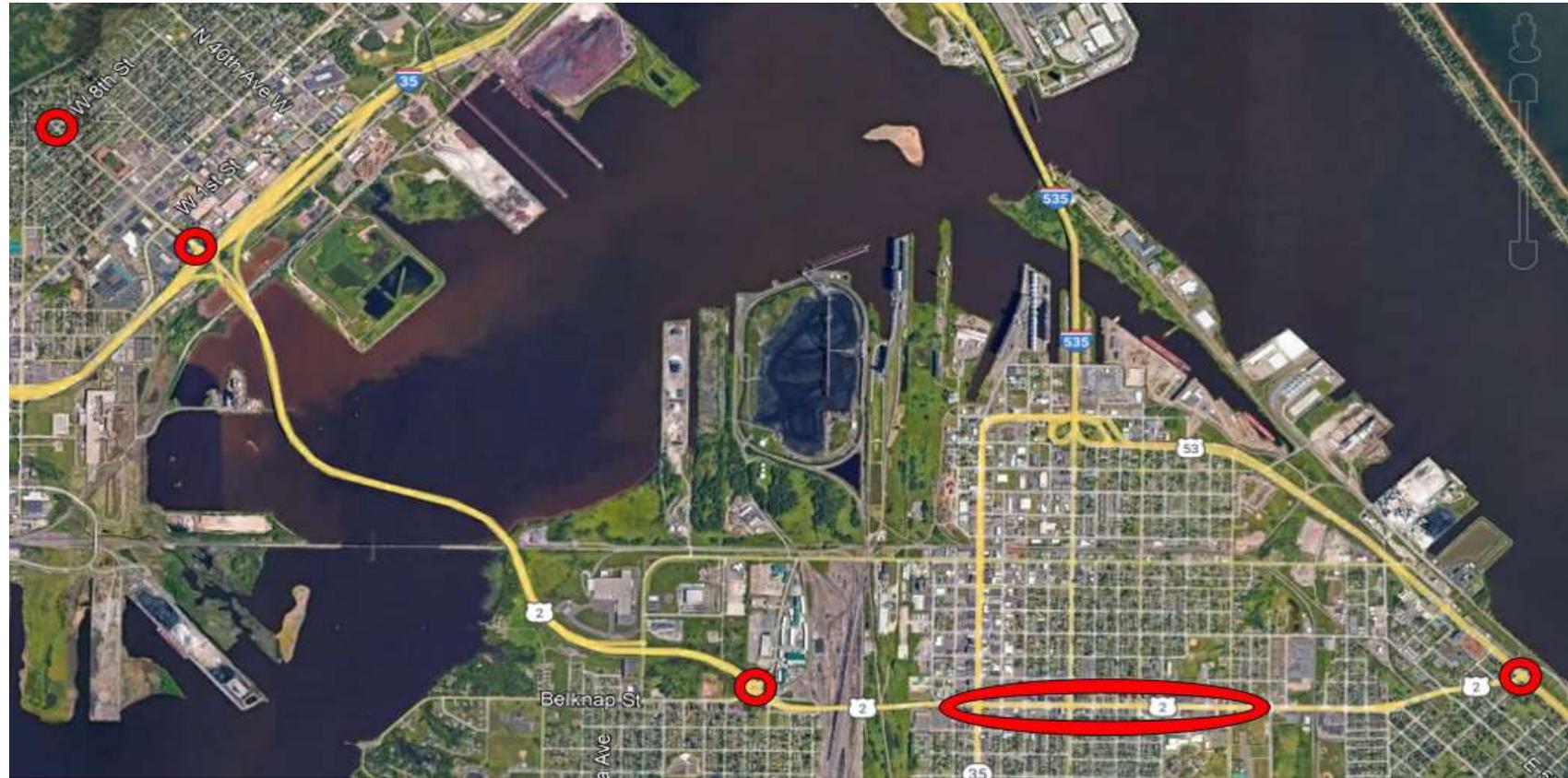
Diversion

- 2019 MIC Diversion Study confirmed routes of interest during full closure.
- Studied routes in WI: Belknap, Winter, North 21st and North 28th streets.
- Studied routes in MN: Haines Rd., Highland St., Grand Ave. and I-535.



Traffic Management

- Current Phase
- Defining congestion hot spots expected during I-535 Closure
- Modeling anticipated traffic patterns based on predicted congestion
- Beginning of corridor planning to help traffic flow efficiently through Belknap corridor



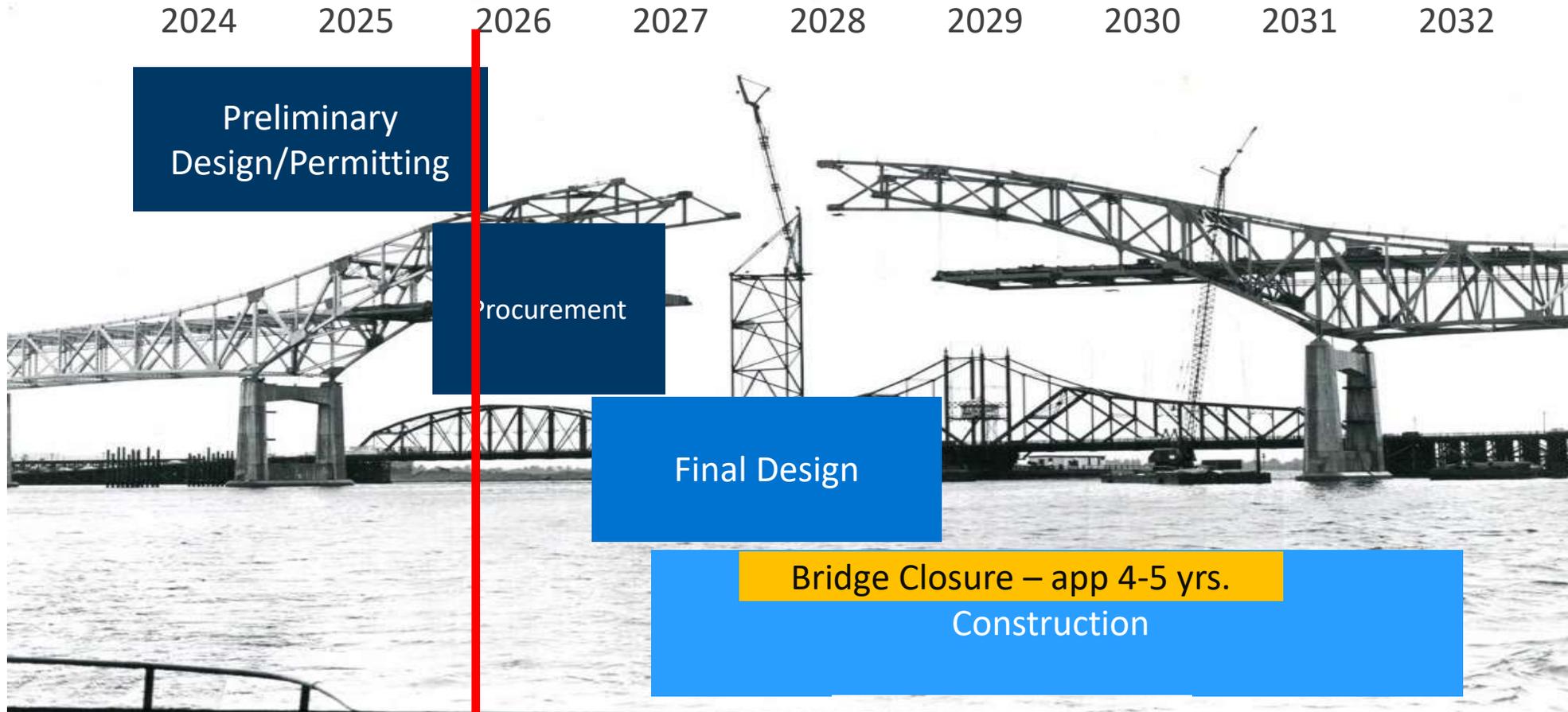
Traffic Management Plan (TMP) Overview



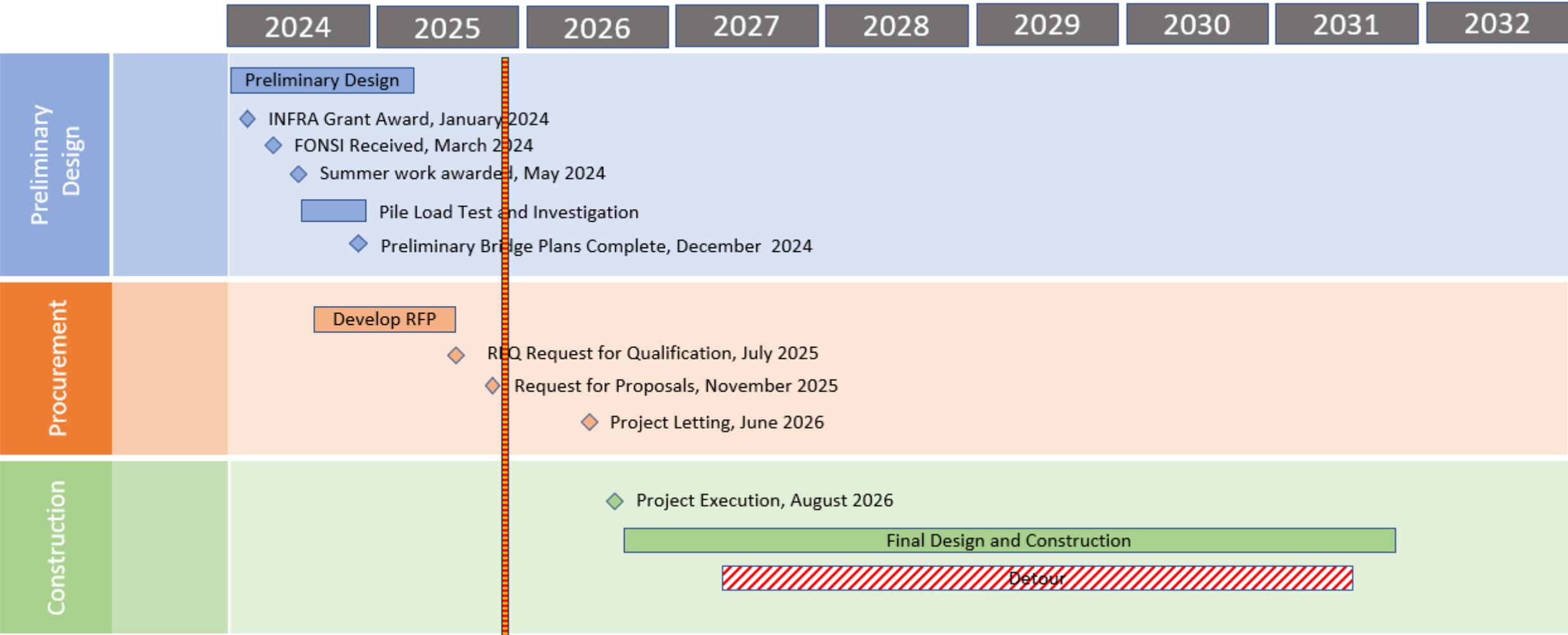
Schedule



Project Schedule (overview)



Project Schedule



Project Schedule (updated procurement schedule)

June 30, 2025	Release draft RFQ and draft RFP	Complete	✓
July 30, 2025	Release final RFQ and kick-off meeting	Complete	✓
August 5, 2025	RFQ Kick-off meeting	Complete	✓
August 20, 2025	Start contractor 1:1 (up to two with each contractor prior to RFQ due, Sept 2, 2025 is the second opportunity)	Complete	✓
September 24, 2025	SOQ due	Complete	✓
November 7 10, 2025	Release RFP	Complete	✓
June 2, 2026	Technical Proposals due	On schedule	
June 23, 2026	Bid opening/Letting	On schedule	



Mental Health in the Construction Industry (points from Minnesota AGC)

- 83% of construction workers struggle with mental health challenges
- Several factors tied to the construction industry and company culture, along with worker lifestyle, increase the risk
- Our negative perceptions have prevented too many workers from seeking the help they need
- **The construction industry has one of the highest rates of suicide at 56 per 100,000 workers**
 - **More than four times greater than the national average (14.4)**
 - **Five times greater than the rate of all other construction fatalities combined**

Mental Health in the Construction Industry

- The industry is working on this nationwide
- We, as project owners, need to work with the industry to address this problem
- We, as project owners, need to consider this as we develop project schedules
- We, as project owners, need to share this message with the public – they do not know
- The Blatnik project is the perfect platform to work with our industry and public to make a difference (1.5 – 1.75 million labor hours, public desire for highly accelerated construction and reduced closure time)



Updates

Permits Update (13 of 14 complete)

Agency	Permit Type	Submitted	In hand?
 USGC	Section 9 Final Permit Application	2/18/2025	<i>In DC for approval</i>
 US Army Corps of Engineers®	Section 404 Permit	1/24/2025	Yes – 9/24/2025
 WI DNR	Final Concurrence Letter Package (inc. Section 401)	2/13/2025	Yes – 9/5/2025
 US Army Corps of Engineers®	Section 408 Permit	1/24/2025	Yes – 5/23/2025
 MPCA	Section 401	1/24/2025	Yes – 4/22/2025
 DNR	Public Waters Permit	2/5/2025	Yes – 6/12/2025

Permits (continued)

- FAA Notice of proposed construction or alteration (Form 7460-1)
- Bald Eagle Incidental Take Permit
- NPDES
- FEMA Map Floodplain
- Municipal Consent: City of Duluth
- Wisconsin Coastal Management Certification
- Wetland Conservation Act
- Section 10 of Rivers and Harbors Act Permit

MN Agreements (11)

Title	Status
City of Duluth Maintenance Agreement	Executed on 11/6/2025
City of Superior Maintenance Agreement	Sent for signatures
Seaway Port Authority Maintenance Agreement	Executed on 9/26/2025
Temporary Signals with Saint Louis County Agreement	Executed on 11/26/2025
Minnesota Power/Allete Utility Agreement	Sent for signatures
CenturyLink Utility Agreement	Sent for signatures
Merit Utility Agreement	Sent for signatures
City of Duluth Utility Agreement	Sent for signatures
Financial Partnership Receivable Agreement with WisDOT	Executed on 10/27/2025
Financial Partnership Payable Agreement with WisDOT	Sent for signatures
BNSF Railroad Agreement	Executed on 11/5/2025

WI Agreements (12)

Title	Status
BNSF Stipulation	In process, targeting 6/23/2026 completion
BNSF Catlin Ave Letter Agreement	In process, targeting 6/23/2026 completion
BNSF Winter Street Surface Agreement	In process, targeting 6/23/2026 completion
BNSF Railroads Street Signal & Surface Agreements	In process, targeting 6/23/2026 completion
CPKC Winter Street/Catlin Ave/Grand Ave Permits	In process, targeting 6/23/2026 completion
CPKC Ogden Ave Surface Agreement	In process, targeting 6/23/2026 completion
UP Interconnect Agreements	In process, targeting 11/1/2028 completion
UP Catlin Ave and Winter Street MCL	In process, targeting 6/23/2026 completion
UP Winter Street Surface Agreement	In process, targeting 6/23/2026 completion
UP Ogden Ave Surface Agreement	In process, targeting 6/23/2026 completion
City of Superior Municipal Financial Agreement	In process
City of Superior Municipal Maintenance Agreement	In process

Right of Way Update

Minnesota (3 parcels):

- All Minnesota acquisitions complete (except BNSF, acquired by agreement, pending)
- All relocations complete

Wisconsin (8 parcels):

- All acquisitions and relocations are on schedule

Request for Qualifications (RFQ) & Statement of Qualifications (SOQ)

- RFQ is a document that defines the scope, goals and requirements of the contract, including required contractor qualifications.
 - Released June 30, 2025
- SOQ is the document prepared and submitted by interested contractors who are pursuing the project (in response to the RFQ). The SOQs are evaluated to “shortlist” contractors.
 - Contractors submitted SOQs to the project team September 24, 2025
- SOQs are formally and objectively evaluated by a panel in accordance with the requirements in the RFQ
 - Evaluations occurred 10/30/2025
 - Shortlisted contractors announced 11/04/2025

Shortlisted Contractors

Lunda Construction with Michael Baker International



Ames – Kraemer Joint Venture with HNTB



Request for Proposals (RFP) Status

- The RFP is the contract document/requirements that will be bid on
- Developed last year and released November 10, 2025
- Think of it as “the sandbox” of project requirements



RFP – it's a big document!

... > Blatnik Bridge > RFP - OFFICIAL RELEASE 11-10-2025

 Name	Modified
 Book 1	November 10
 Book 2	November 10
 Book 3	November 10
 ITP	November 10
 RID	November 10
 Non-Contractual Note - PLA.pdf	November 7

- Book2_Section_01_General
- Book2_Section02_Project_Management
- Book2_Section03_Public_Involvement
- Book2_Section04_Environmental
- Book2_Section05_Quality
- Book2_Section06_Utilities
- Book2_Section07_ROW
- Book2_Section08_Geotechnical
- Book2_Section09_Land_Survey
- Book2_Section10_Pavements
- Book2_Section11_Roadway
- Book2_Section12_Drainage
- Book2_Section13_Structures
- Book2_Section14_Vegetation
- Book2_Section15_Visual_Quality
- Book2_Section16_Traffic
- Book2_Section17 ITS
- Book2_Section18 MOT
- Book2_Section19_Maint_During_Const
- Book2_Section20_Bike_&_Ped
- Book2_Section21_Rail
- Book2_Section22_Other_RWIS



What now?

- ATC = Alternate Technical Concepts proposed by teams. Must be equal or better than contract requirements
- PAE = Pre-approved Elements. Pre-approval process outlined in the contract for specified items to reduce risk for owner and contractor
- Contractor teams will be developing their concepts/technical proposals to bid this winter
- Bi-weekly 3 hour 1:1 meetings with each of the two contractor teams
November 2025 – May 2025
 - Design development, ATCs, PAEs, etc.

Looking ahead at the calendar

- June 2, 2026: Technical proposals due
- June 23, 2026: Bid opening (best value selection)
- \$4.2 million stipend will be paid to the unsuccessful proposer
 - Intended to cover one-third to one-half the pursuit cost
- September 5, 2026: Contract execution
- Fall 2026: Traffic mitigation project (required before closure of I-535)
- February/March 2026: Major work anticipated to begin
- October 31, 2031: Substantial completion/open to traffic

Stay Connected

- Sign up for email updates on the project website
- Summary of public comments will be posted on the project website
- Look for upcoming events

I-535 Blatnik Bridge

Duluth, Minn. and Superior, Wis.

[Project Home](#) [Accessibility](#) [Meetings](#) [History](#) [Contacts](#)

About this project

MnDOT is working toward a future project to address concerns about the John A. Blatnik Bridge, one of two bridges that connects Duluth, Minn., to Superior, Wis. Carrying I-535 over the St. Louis Bay, the Blatnik is an important freight and commercial connection between the Twin Ports.

Jointly owned and managed by MnDOT and WisDOT, it is Minnesota's second longest bridge and serves an average of 33,021 cars traveling between the two cities each day. MnDOT will lead the project, which will address aging infrastructure, improve safety and better accommodate oversize/overweight loads.

For more information on the bridge, [click here](#).

Project purpose

- Significant deterioration in truss elements



Schedule

- 2020 to 2024: Preferred Alternative Selection and Environmental Documentation
- 2024 to 2026: Preliminary Design
- 2026 to 2028: Final Design
- 2028 to 2031: Construction

Location

- I-535 over the St. Louis Bay between Duluth, Minn., and Superior, Wis.

Benefits

- Improve safety
- Better accommodate oversize/overweight loads

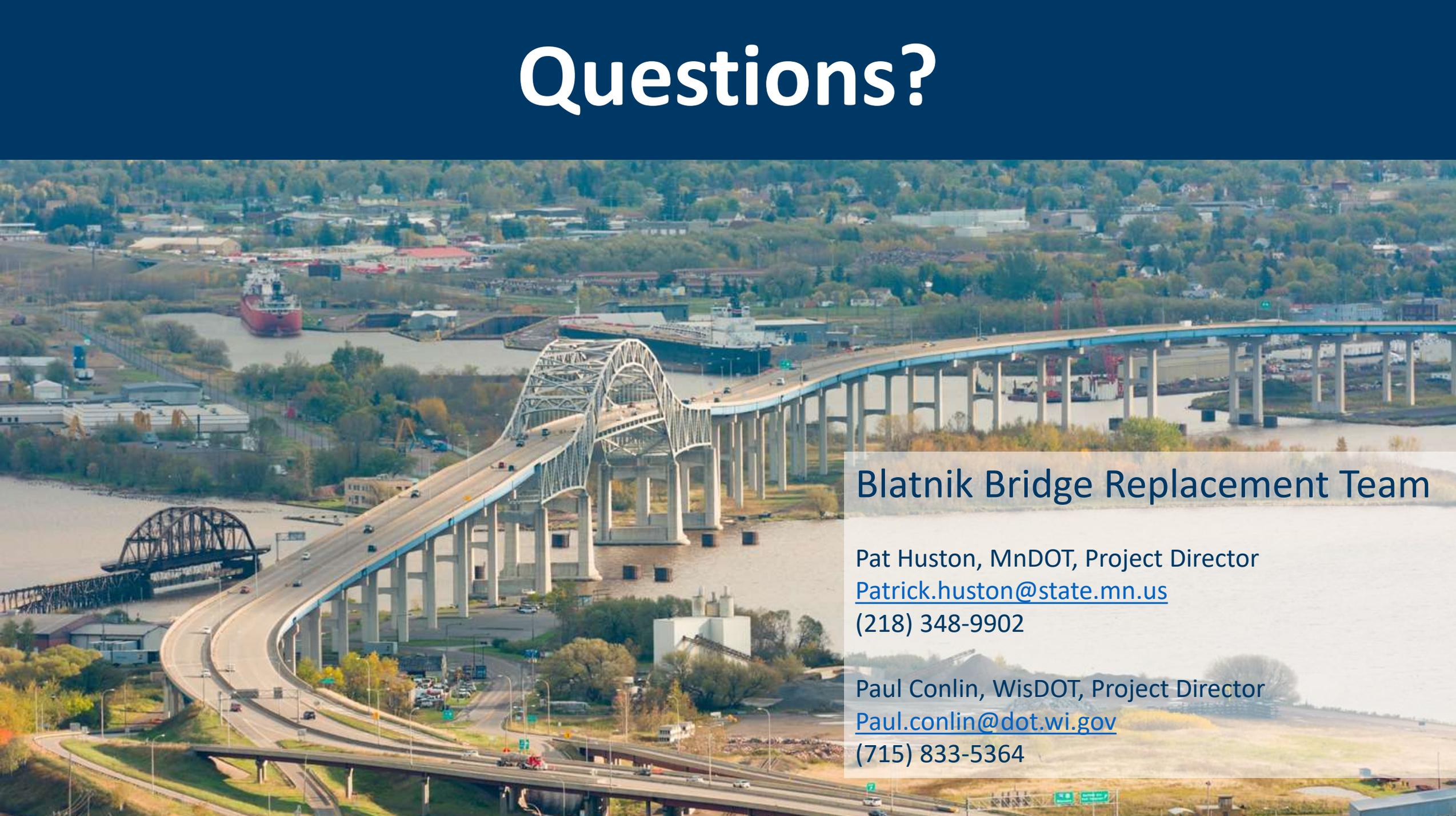
Cost

- Unknown at this time

Connect with us

-  Sign up for project email updates
-  Follow us on Facebook

Questions?



Blatnik Bridge Replacement Team

Pat Huston, MnDOT, Project Director
Patrick.huston@state.mn.us
(218) 348-9902

Paul Conlin, WisDOT, Project Director
Paul.conlin@dot.wi.gov
(715) 833-5364