



MASON STREET BRIDGE STUDY: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Q) When will there be another public meeting?
- A) The next meeting is planned for Fall 2025 where refined alternatives will be presented, depending on study progress. There are four public involvement meetings planned for the project. PIM #3 is planned for Fall 2025, and PIM #4 is planned for Fall 2027.
- Q) What is the study schedule?
- A) The study phase began in Spring of 2023 and will conclude in the Fall of 2028. The study phase will include two studies: a Planning and Environmental Linkages Study (PEL; current) which will conclude in mid-2027, and a National Environmental Policy Act Study (NEPA) which will begin after the PEL and conclude in Fall 2028. There will be 4 public involvement meetings to help us arrive at a preferred alternative, and a potential public hearing. The study phase will conclude with the approval of the environmental document.
- Q) Can new ideas still be introduced or are these alternatives “final”?
- A) Yes. Some other alternatives not shown here have been reviewed and dismissed as non-viable. WisDOT anticipates identifying a preferred alternative late 2027.
- Q) What are the criteria for identifying the preferred alternative? What is most important.
- A) We have a purpose and need identified for the study. The study team has developed a purpose and need for the study, the purpose and need along with input from stakeholders and the public will be utilized to develop screening criteria. The study team plans to have screening criteria available at the anticipated fall 2025 PIM.
- Q) What is the age of the existing structures?
- A) The structure was built in 1973, it is 51 years old.
- Most of the primary elements of its structural, electrical, and mechanical systems remain from that original construction. Although more than 50 years old, the bridge continues to provide reliable service as a result of regular maintenance and rehabilitation projects that took place in 1987, 1992 and 2004.
- Q) What has been studied to date?
- A) A feasibility study was completed by WisDOT in 2015 to determine the cost of a broad range of alternatives. This study yielded a range of alternatives that were estimated to cost between \$43M (reconstruction) - \$120M (full replacement) in 2014 dollars. This study did not consider hybrid alternatives.
- The current study began in spring 2023 with data gathering and a public meeting last fall. Alternative development followed that meeting and is being presented at today’s public meeting. Refinement of these alternatives will continue until the next public meeting.
- Q) Who operates the Mason Street Bridge today?
- A) Staff from Brown County Highway Department operate the bridge.
- Q) What is being studied and what are the geographic limits?
- A) The study area includes approximately 1.5 miles of Mason Street from 12th Avenue on the west side of the Fox River to Webster Avenue on the east side of the Fox River. It also includes the ramps at S. Broadway, S. Jefferson Street, S. Madison Street, and S. Quincy Street that carry traffic between the elevated portion of Mason Street and the at-grade downtown street network.

The study is being conducted following FHWA Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study process guidelines. Following the PEL study, the study will follow National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process to allow for a broad range of funding options for eventual implementation of a preferred alternative. The study includes a comprehensive review of alternatives that will address the condition of the infrastructure and the safety and mobility of all users through the corridor.

- Q) Is the study considering the impact of the alternatives on the neighborhoods along the corridor?
 A) The PEL and NEPA process both consider neighborhood impacts. Under any scenario, balancing the issues and needs of both the neighborhoods and the highway users is important. WisDOT will seek input from the local neighborhood groups on design aspects for the study.
- Q) Are additional bicycle and pedestrian accommodations being considered?
 A) Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations will be considered with each alternative developed for study. The study team will work with the city of Green Bay during alternative development to coordinated planned connectivity throughout the city.
- Q) How many boats require Mason Street to open each year?
 A)

Bridge Location	Bridge Openings for Marine Traffic		
	'20	'21	'22
Ray Nitschke (Main Street/US 141)	1,120	413	268
Bart Starr (Walnut Street/WIS 29)	1,430	574	311
Donald A. Tilleman (Mason Street/WIS 54)	174	128	98

- Q) What is the average daily traffic on Mason Street/WIS 54?
 A) The 2022 annual average daily traffic along WIS 54, Mason Street over the Fox River is 34,200 vehicles.
- Q) What is the existing speed on Mason Street/WIS 54?
 A) 35 mph
- Q) Will the speed be reduced on Mason Street/WIS 54?
 A) This is not part of the study at this time. This segment of WIS 54 is within connecting highway limits for City of Green Bay. The City would be the authority to modify regulatory speed limit.
- Posted regulatory speed limit will likely be based on proposed design speed of roadway segment, ultimate cross section and presence of access points along segment.
- Q) When is construction planned to occur?
 A) The construction of the Mason Street Bridge Reconstruction or Replacement project is planned to start in the Fall of 2031 and will extend into 2032 and potentially 2033 depending on the construction schedule associated with the preferred alternative.
- Q) Will the bridge be closed during construction? If so, for how long?
 A) It is too early tell. The study team will assess constructability of all study alternatives and will determine an approximate construction duration and traffic pattern associated with each alternative. This information will be available later in the study phase (after we have identified viable alternatives).

ALTERNATIVES

- Q) How many alternatives are being studied?
 A) There are currently four alternatives under study; however, additional alternatives will be considered as appropriate following the fall 2025 public meeting.

- Q) Will the at-grade alternative change access along Mason Street?
- A) The at-grade alternative was determined to have feasibility concerns with the at-grade crossing of the railroad; therefore, it is not being shown.
- Q) Will the one-way roadways be changed with the alternates?
- A) Yes, H2 & H3. The alternatives that look at reconnecting the street grid on the east side of Mason Street will also look to convert some of the one-way streets to two-way streets.
- Q) How high does the new bridge have to be?
- A) The vertical clearance is directly related to the number of times the bridge needs to open to accommodate ships that pass through this portion of the Fox River. Guidance provide by the US Coast Guard indicate is that the bridge should be able to accommodate 75% of marine traffic without opening.
- A replacement alternative with a high-level fixed span over the navigational channel has been evaluated and has been determined not to be feasible as it would need clearance that matches the Leo Frigo bridge which is 120'.
- All alternatives in the range of alternatives for study will need to include a lift bridge
- Q) Does any alternative require the closure of Howe Elementary?
- A) It is too soon to tell. A couple of alternatives impact parking underneath the existing Mason Street structures and the playground. As alternatives are studied in further detail, the team will investigate mitigation for these impacts and share with the city/school district for collaboration and feedback. Impacts to the school are not only physical impacts to infrastructure, but the team will consider circuitry, safe pedestrians crossings, drop-off\pick-up – if an acceptable solution cannot be found, this may eliminate the alternative. Additional information will be available at the next public involvement meeting.
- Q) What is a hybrid alternative?
- A) An alternative that allows some portions of the existing corridor to remain elevated (similar to existing) and other portions are switched to connect to the street grid; a hybrid alternative could consist of a mix of elevation and at-grade roadway sections.
- Q) If bascule is lowered (Alt H2), how much more often will the bridge need to open?
- A) It is unknown at this time how much more often the bridge would need to open. It is anticipated to open the same amount for all large ship traffic. This alternative of Mason Street would have a higher clearance than the other downtown bridges. The design team is preparing a navigation study and will be able to determine if the number of openings will change during the refinement phase of the alternatives.
- Q) What will happen to the parking under the bridges in the alternatives that bring Mason down to grade?
- A) TBD – if the alternatives that remove the elevated structure move forward, we will work with the city on alternatives to mitigate the impacts that will be shared at the next public meeting.
- Q) How much lower will H2 be than the existing bridge?
- A) The bridge in Alternate H2 will be 10 feet lower than the existing bridge at the bascule portion of the span. The bridge will meet the requirements of WisDOT for a structure over a trail where it crosses the Fox River Trail on the East Bank of the river.
- Q) Are there bike accommodations along the entire length of E2 and H3?
- A) No, due to safety issues at the ramps that are in these options only bicycle accommodations would be possible over the river, west of Ashland Avenue, and East of Monroe Avenue. Bicycles wishing to continue across the river will need to leave Mason Street between these areas.

Q) Why E2, what happened to E1?

A) E1 was an option to replace the bridge in kind, or exactly as it is today. We wanted to fix the safety issue with the EB entrance ramps from Ashland and Broadway. By flipping which ramp gets its own lane instead of being forced to merge we anticipate fewer accidents. E2 is the option that maintains most of the existing configuration but changes this ramp layout.

Q) How will we control speed on E2/H3?

A) Speed along Mason Street is primarily an enforcement issue. The design of the actual roadway will be similar to today.

Existing speeds on Mason Street between the interchanges with Ashland Avenue and Monroe Street range between 36 mph and 43 mph, based on time of day and congestion. The travel times are approximately 2 - 2.5 minutes. Under E2 and H3, the speeds and travel times are expected to be similar to current conditions.

These speeds are actual data from (National Performance Management Research Data Set) NPMRDS that we used to calibrate the existing conditions base model. The NPMRDS contains field-observed travel time and speed data collected anonymously from a fleet of probe vehicles (cars and trucks) equipped with mobile devices. Using time and location information from probe vehicles, the NPMRDS generates speed and travel time data aggregated in 5-minute, 15-minute, or 1-hour increments.

Q) Why is there not a fully at grade alternative like the other downtown bridges? i.e. what happened to G1?

A) A fully at grade alternative would require an at grade railroad crossing on the west side of the river as well. This has been determined to be a fatal flaw. Trains currently can tie up the other streets downtown for an extended period of time and there are switching locations near Mason Street that could cause this to be worse. Retaining a grade separated crossing also has benefits including:

A potential to locate a future passenger rail depot near the shipyard district.

Traffic operations on Mason Street will not be impacted by rail traffic. This also allows for at least one route for emergency vehicles in the downtown area to bypass rail traffic.

The Wisconsin Office of the Commissioner of Railroads (OCR) has jurisdiction to determine if a new crossing of Mason Street is viable. Based on the existing level of Rail and vehicle traffic this may not be considered a viable location.

Q) Could the study team look at bringing the railroad "under" Mason Street to allow an at-grade intersection at Broadway, or other study alternative that would create a signalized intersection at Broadway?

A) Yes, we are open to hearing about new alternative ideas and will take them back for further study. There may be an option to shift Broadway to the west and/or raise the profile of Broadway to achieve access at this location. The design team continues to investigate these ideas.

Q) Can Broadway be realigned so that it's feasible to create an at-grade intersection at Mason Street?

A) It is something that the team will study following this meeting. It would be very challenging to change the railroad.

Q) How many new at-grade intersections are in each alternative?

A) E2 remains the same. H1, H2, and H3 all provide additional connections; H2 has the newest at-grade connections of all the current alternatives.

The specifics of the design of each new intersection have not been fully designed. The configuration and traffic control may differ at each: signalized; stop controlled; right in, right out; or cul-de-sac that does not connect.

E2 – the same as today

H1 – new at-grade intersections at Ashland Ave, Chestnut Ave (west); Jefferson St, Madison St, Monroe Ave (east)

H2 – new at-grade intersections at Ashland Ave, Chestnut Ave (west); Adams St, Jefferson St, Madison St, Monroe Ave (east)

H3 – new at-grade intersections at Ashland Ave

Q) Are there more pedestrian connections in the alternatives?

A) The specifics of each alternative differ. Alternatives for improved quality pedestrian and bicycle facilities are being studied, including a separated bike lane and/or a separated multi-use trail along portions of Mason Street in some alternatives.

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are included in all alternatives on the bridge itself (which does not have bike facilities currently).

The City has asked the design team to consider safer pedestrian crossings on the east end of Mason Street (Quincy, Jackson & Van Buren) – the team will be looking at this for viable alternatives in the “refinement” stage.

Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) and other safe crossing options will be considered as part of this process at non-signalized intersections.

Q) Right now, I can walk under Mason Street. Will it be difficult to cross Mason Street for the portions that are coming down to grade for the H (hybrid) alternatives?

A) The design provides crosswalks at all legal crossings that are at grade. Each alternative provides a median which is an area of refuge at the midway point for pedestrians. An area of refuge is approximately 10' wide at a minimum, to provide an area to wait should a pedestrian not be able to get across the entire intersection in one light cycle at a signalized intersection.

Q) What will happen to the murals?

A) TBD – the impact to the murals will be dependent on the alternative and the condition of the infrastructure and if the structures are to remain. The murals MAY be affected. Each alternative will have varying potential impacts to the murals. (More information available next meeting)