



Blatnik Bridge Replacement Project

June 24, 2025

Winter Street and Susquehanna Avenue Public Meeting

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Stephanie King | WisDOT Project Leader





Proposed Improvements

Winter Street and Susquehanna Avenue

- Current US 2 truck route
- Expected to carry additional traffic once the Blatnik Bridge is closed to traffic for bridge replacement
- Proposed work:
 - Scheduled for fall 2026
 - Expected to take two months to complete
 - Completed under traffic using lane closures, flagging and temporary pedestrian accommodations



Scope of Work

- Milling a portion of existing pavement and overlaying the roadways with a new layer of asphalt
- Adding 3-foot paved shoulders to preserve the pavement edge from Belknap Street to Oaks Avenue and Birch Avenue to Hill Avenue
- Adding a left-turn lane for northbound traffic at Susquehanna Avenue at the on-ramp to westbound US 2
- Adding pavement markings to delineate additional turn lanes, as room allows, on the corridor, which may require removal of on-street parking in various locations



Scope of Work

- Adding temporary traffic signals on Winter Street at its intersections with Catlin and Grand avenues
 - Signals will have interconnections to the railroad to eliminate the risk of a vehicle being stopped on the railroad tracks because of a red light and be removed at the end of the project.
- Constructing Americans With Disabilities Act-compliant sidewalk curb ramps along Winter Street and cross streets where necessary

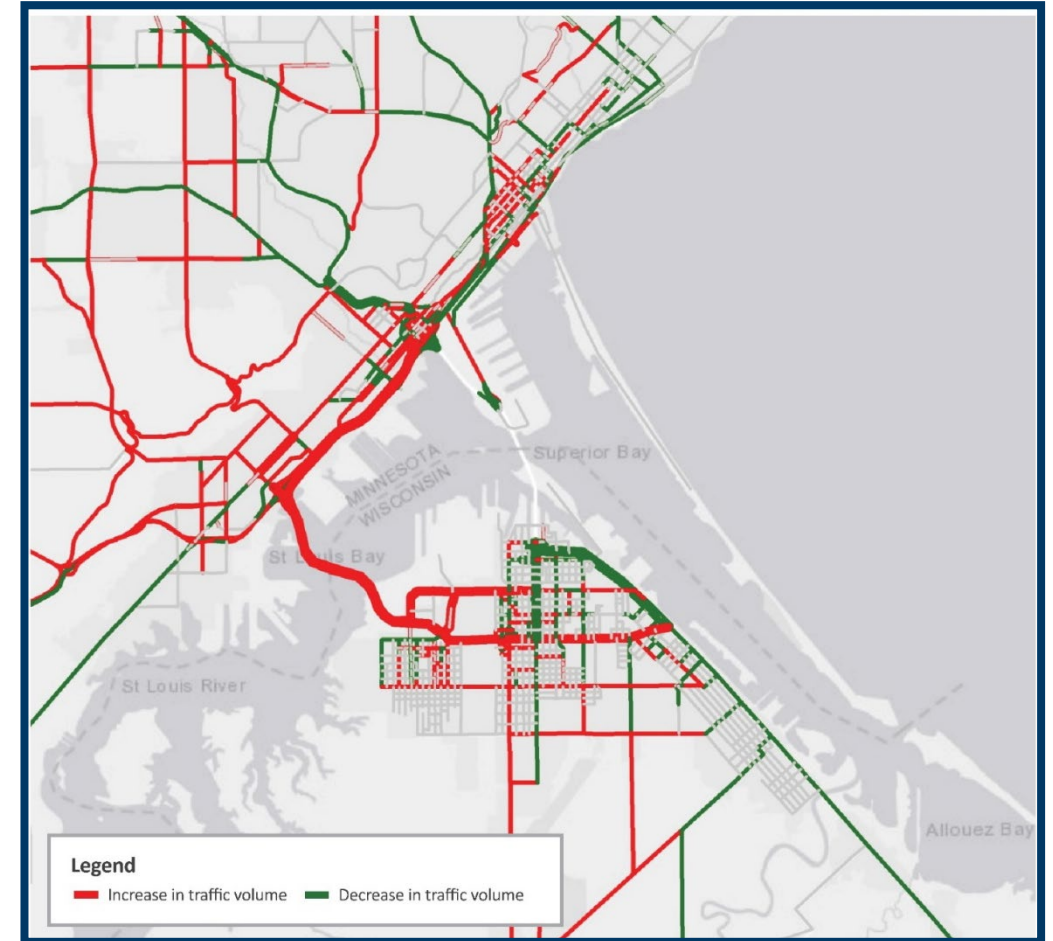




Traffic Management Plan

Anticipated Traffic Diversion Routes

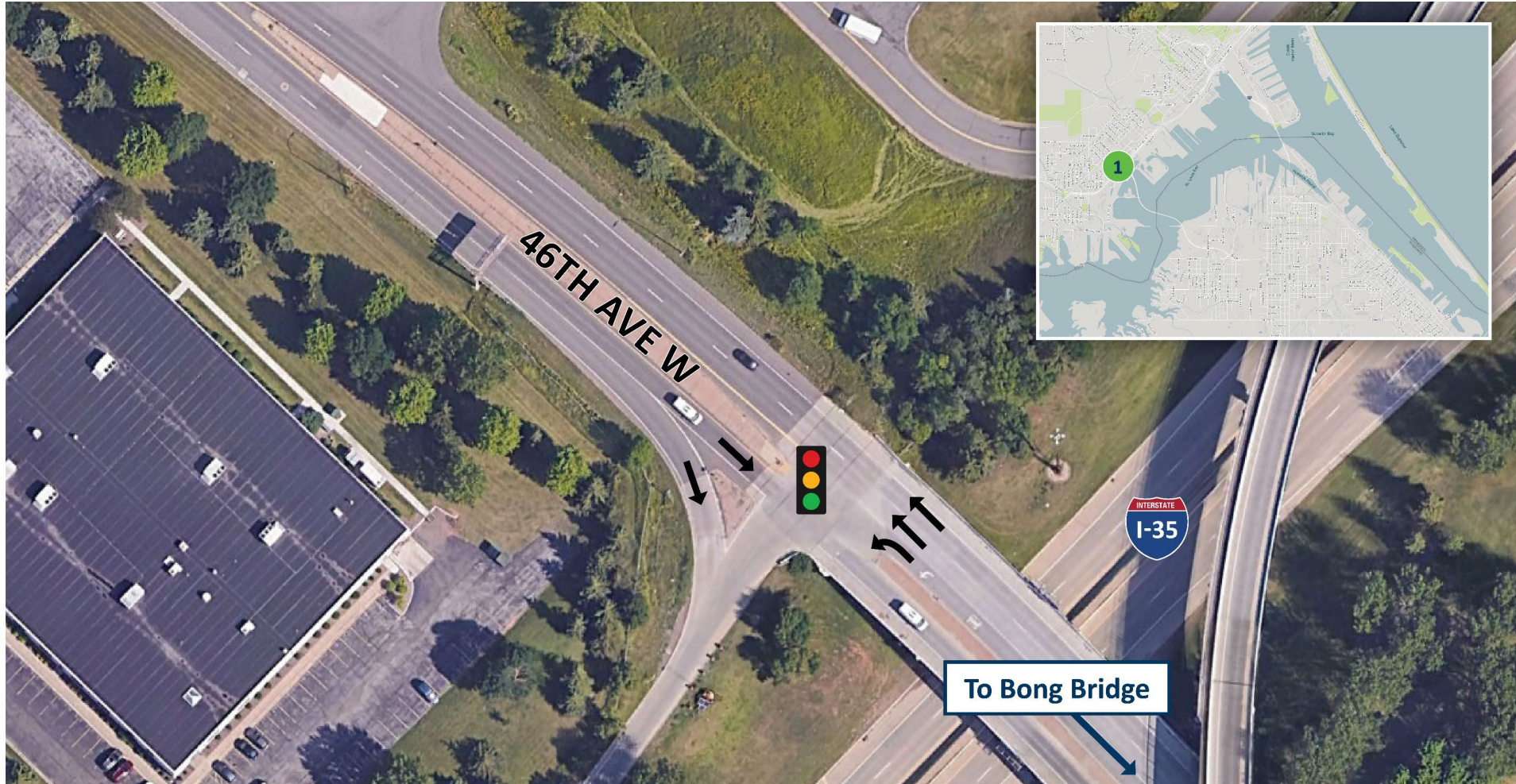
- The 2019 MIC Diversion Study confirmed routes of interest during full closure of the Blatnik Bridge.
- It studied routes in Wisconsin: Belknap, Winter, North 21st and North 28th streets.
- It also studied routes in Minnesota: Haines Road, Highland Street, Grand Avenue and I-535.



Traffic Management Plan Overview



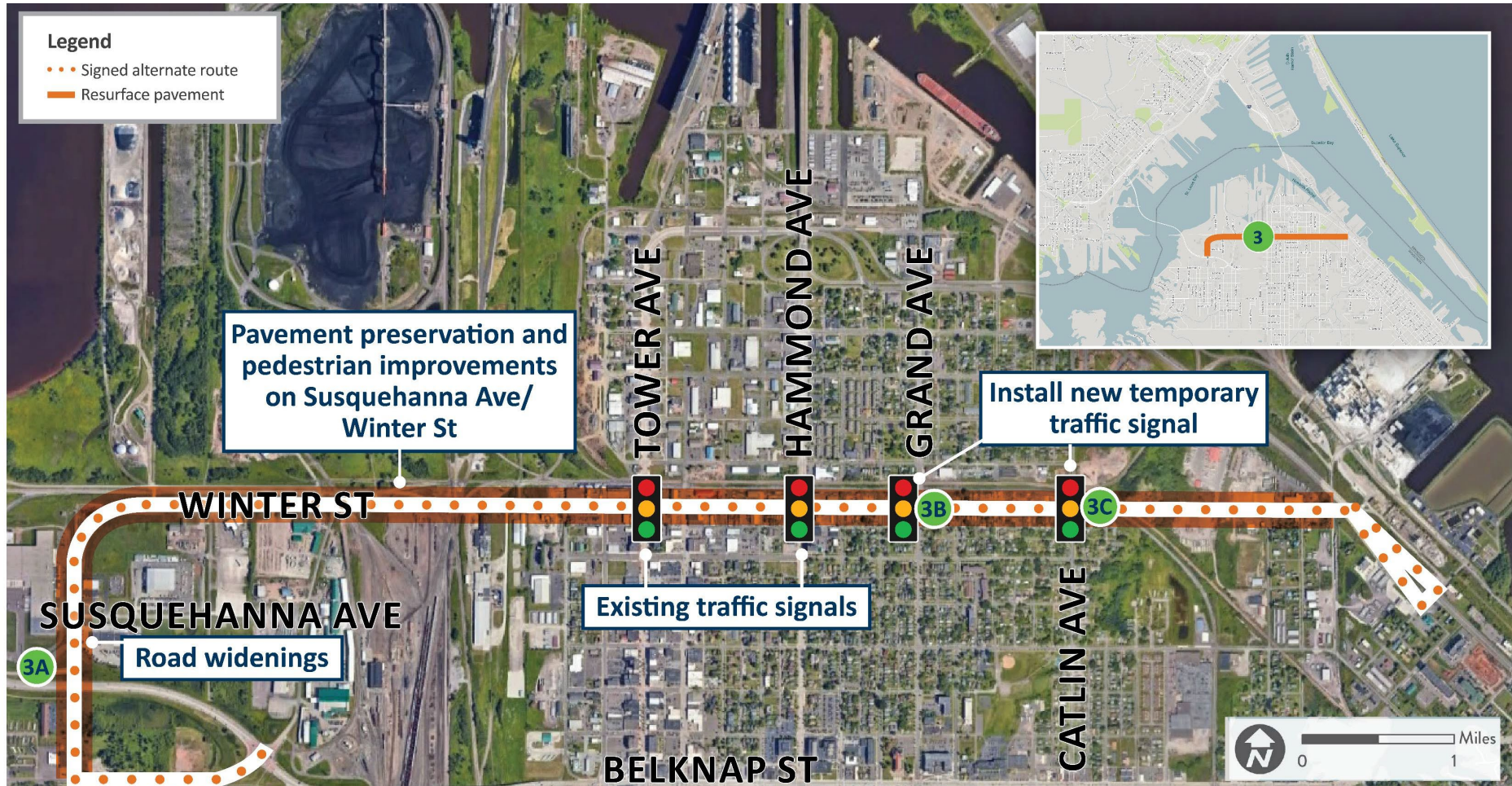
1. 46th Avenue West/US 2/I-35 Southbound Entrance Ramp



2. 46th Avenue West and West 8th Street



3. Winter Street



3A. Susquehanna Avenue and Westbound US 2



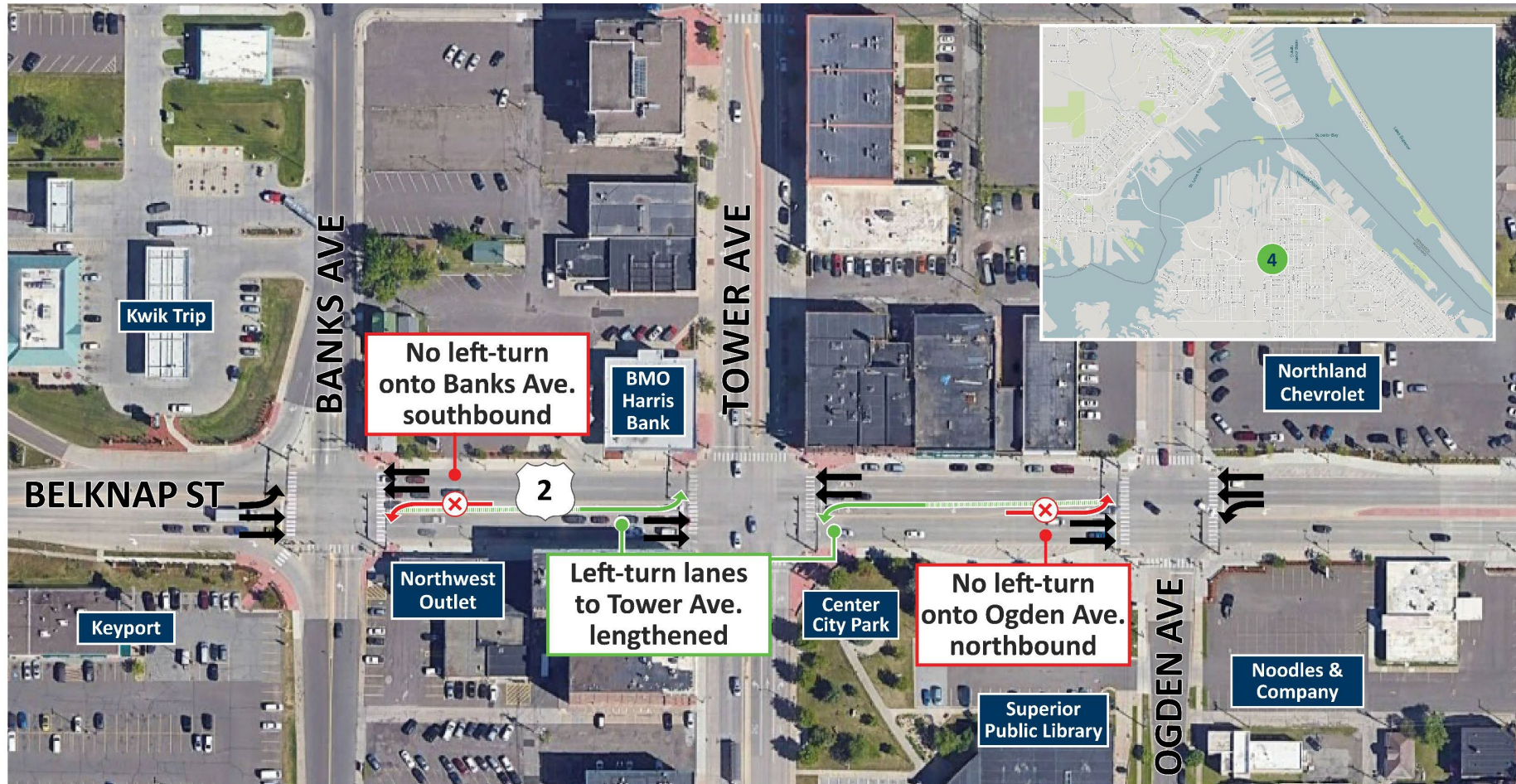
3B. Winter Street and Grand Avenue



3C. Winter Street and Catlin Avenue



4. Belknap Street: Banks Avenue to Ogden Avenue





Project Background

Blatnik Bridge History

- Opened to traffic: Dec. 2, 1961
- Originally known as: The High Bridge
 - Renamed the Blatnik Bridge in 1971 in honor of U.S. Rep. John A. Blatnik of Minnesota for his congressional efforts
- Cost: \$21 million. If inflated to 2028 dollars, that's about \$2.2 billion.
- Current project total cost estimate: \$1.8 billion



WisDOT, MnDOT Partnership

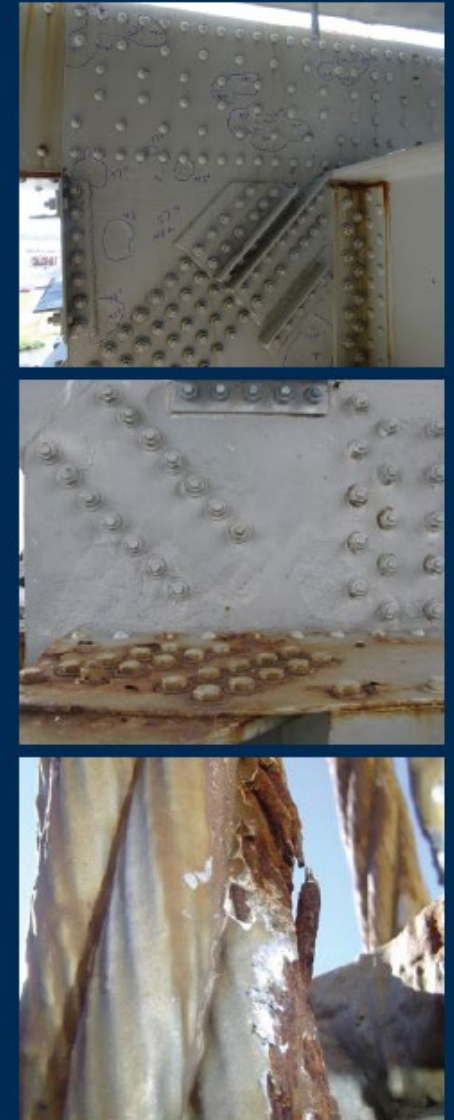
- Wisconsin and Minnesota share all border bridges.
 - MnDOT is lead on the Blatnik; WisDOT is the lead on the Bong.
- Both states are part of the decision-making process.
- Funding of the structures is shared.



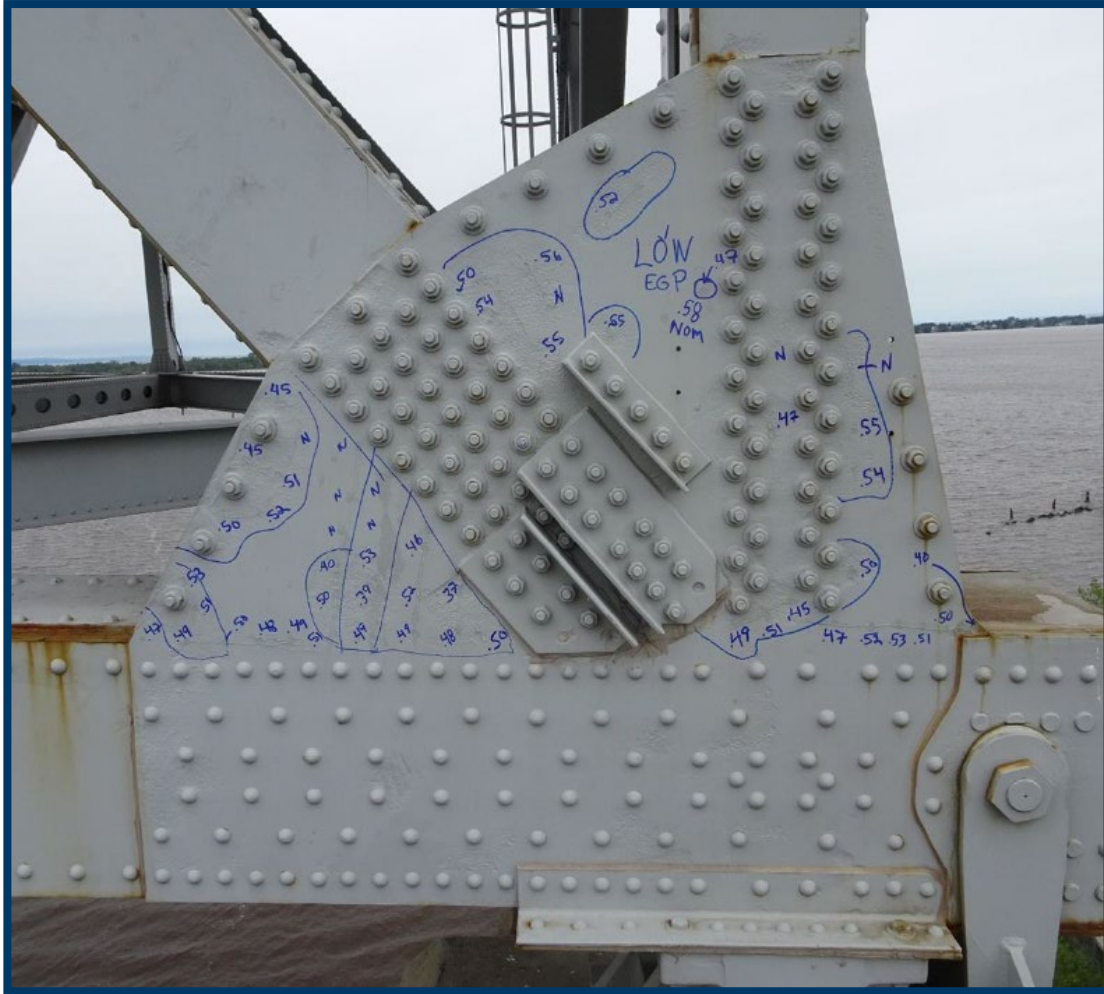
Bridge Condition

- The Blatnik Bridge in “poor” condition with deterioration rates anticipated to accelerate until **eventual closure, which is predicted to occur by 2030.**
- The structure is currently load posted to 40 tons (80,000 pounds).
- The bridge currently is ranked as the number one risk of service interruption in MnDOT’s bridge inventory.
- The project will replace the deteriorating bridge and return the facility to a “good” condition rating.

FIGURE 2: CORROSION IN TRUSS MEMBERS AND CONNECTIONS
Photos from recent inspections showing significant deterioration.



Up Close

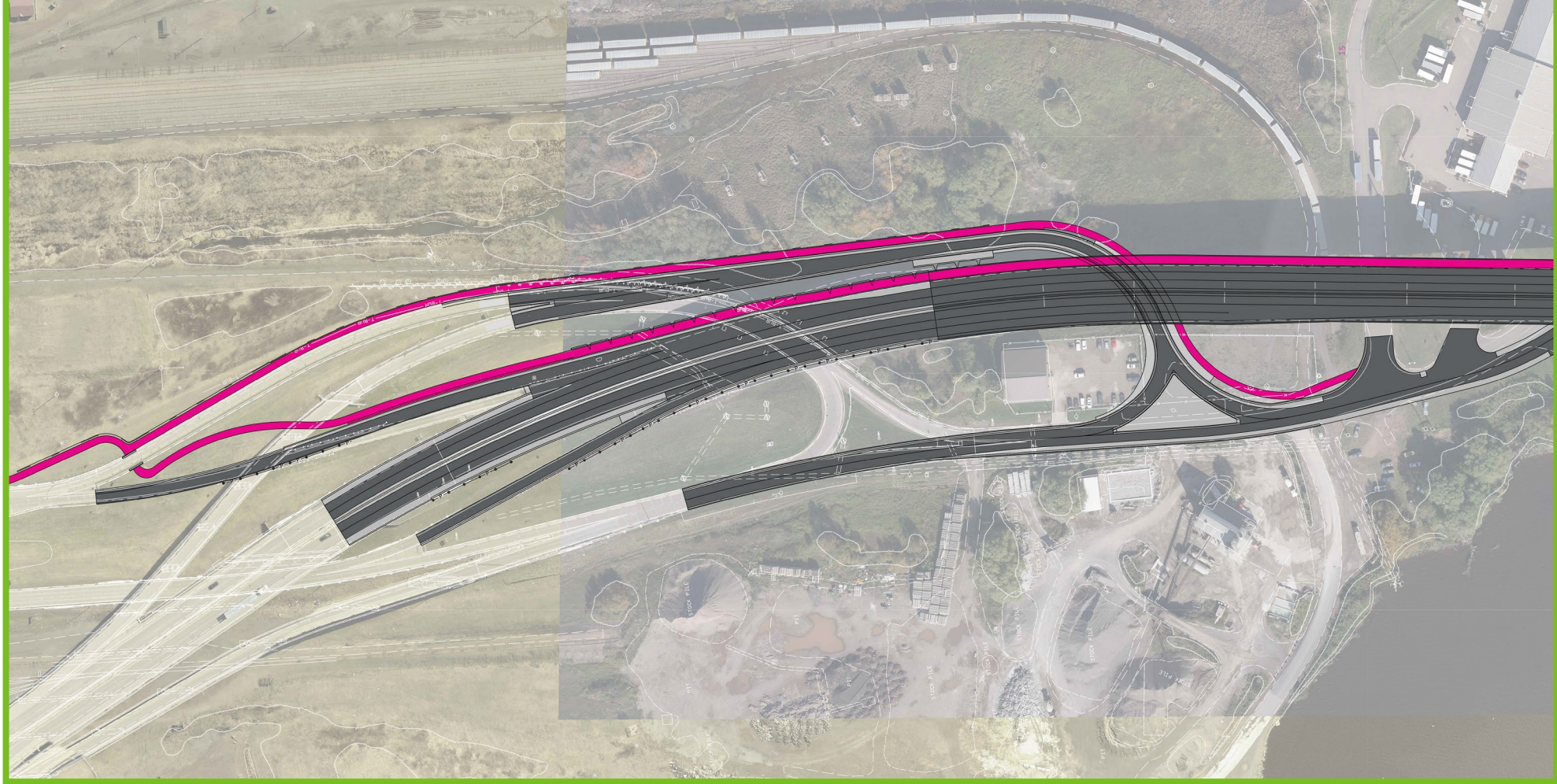


ST035 9030_2020 Span 17 Floorbeam 10 West Side Top FFlange Losses

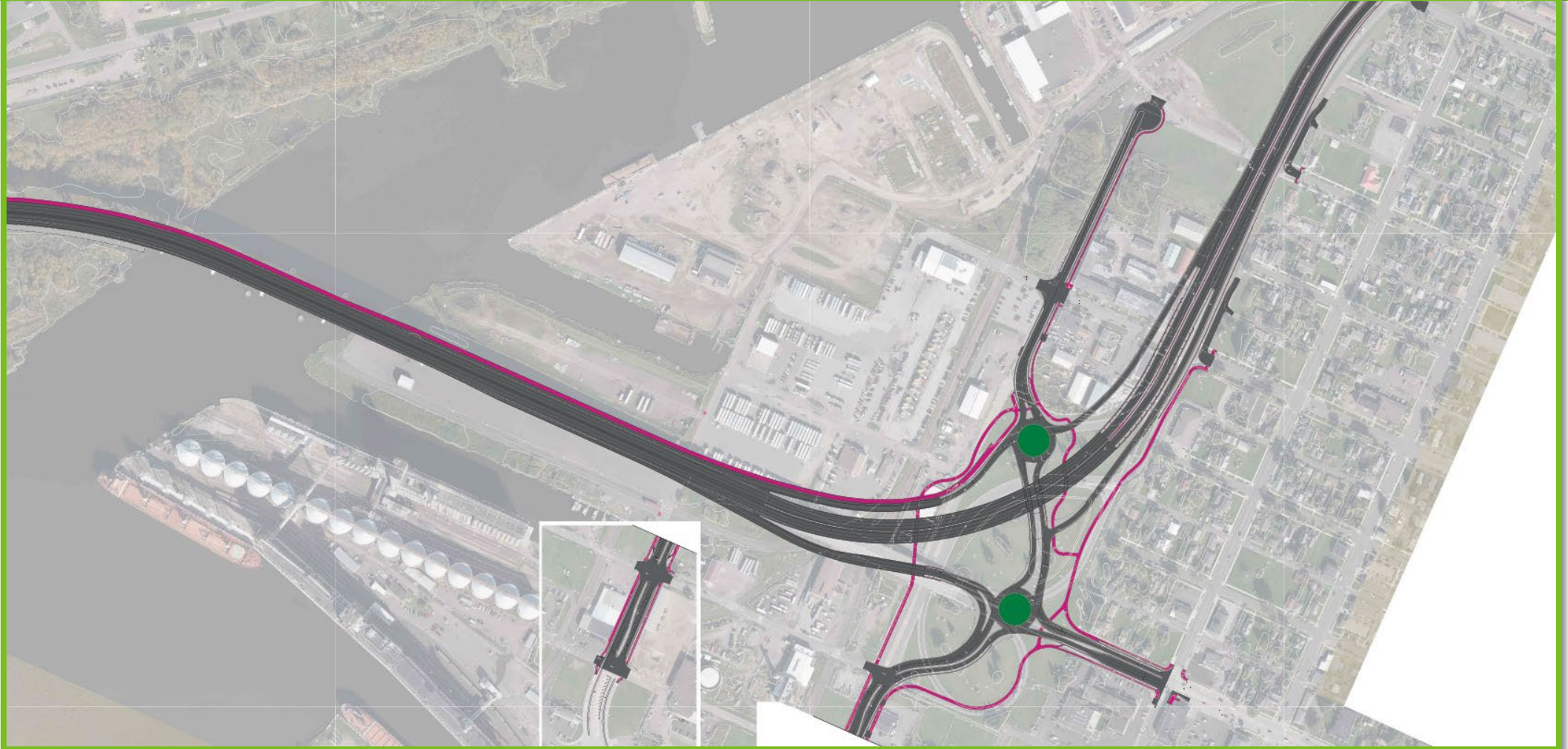


Project Update

Project Layout – Minnesota Approach



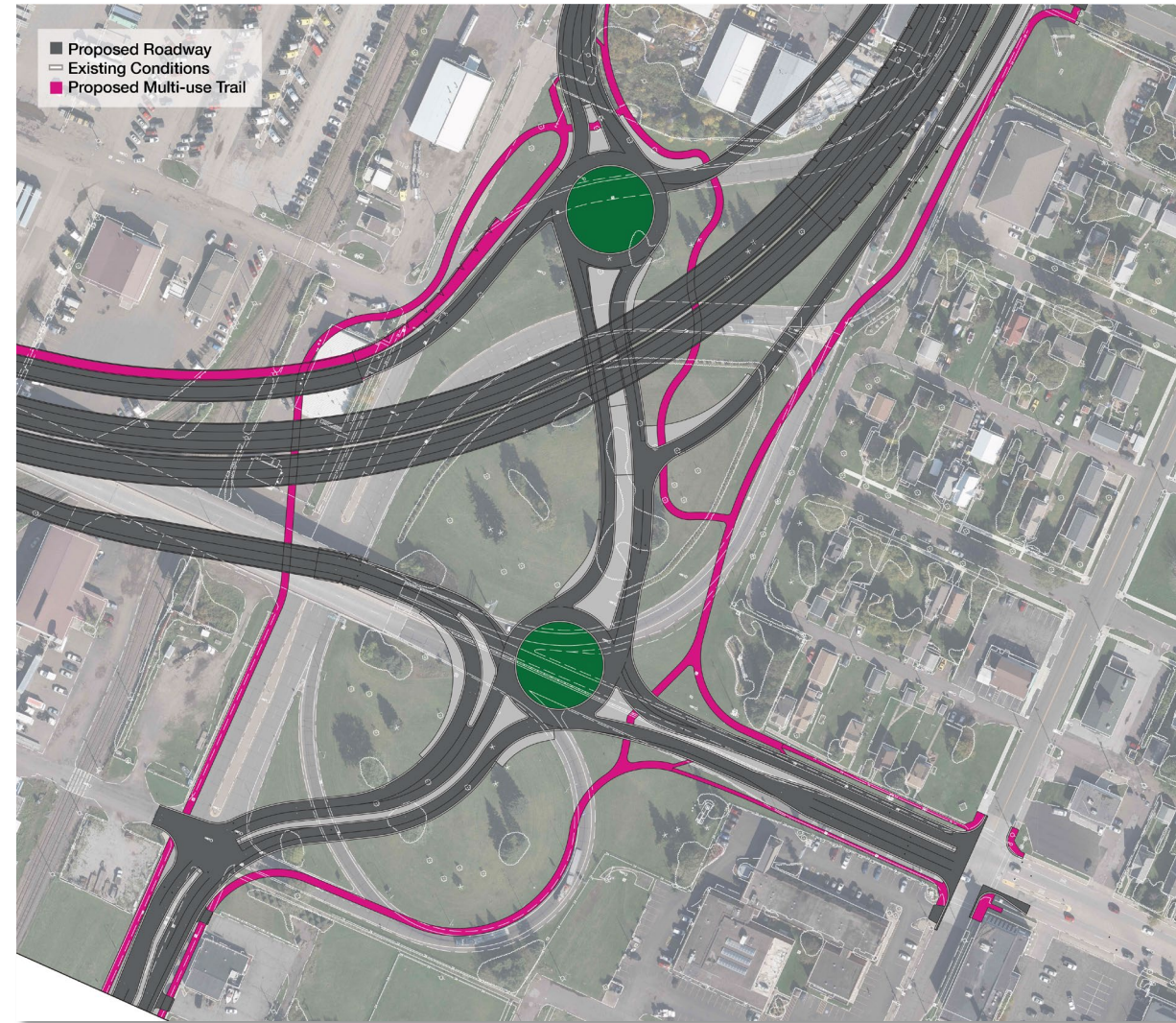
Project Layout – Wisconsin Approach



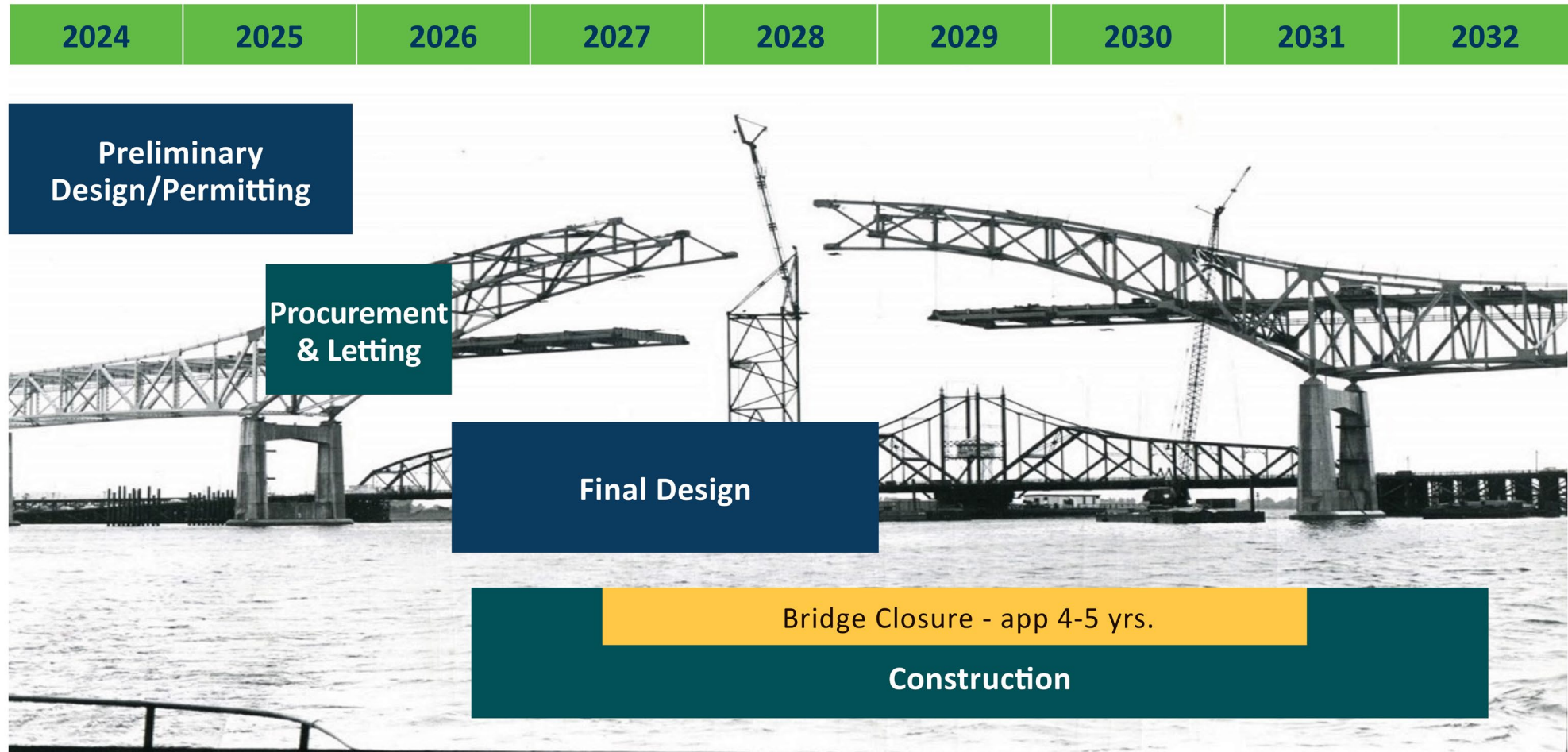
Proposed Wisconsin Interchange

City of Superior US 53/I-535 interchange

- Offset roundabout interchange
 - Provides a direct connection to US 53
 - Includes pedestrian connections
 - Handles oversize/overweight loads



Anticipated Schedule



* Durations are approximate.



Visual Quality Update

Bridge Type Option 1: Tied Arch



Bridge Type Option 2: Cable Stay





2025 Construction Projects (Separate from Blatnik Bridge Replacement)

Bong Bridge Maintenance

- Improvements will include:
 - Completing spot painting of existing steel arch structure of center span
 - Making concrete surface repairs to bridge piers
 - Placing a concrete sealer on bridge deck
 - Replacing rubber seals on main span joints and lights
- Traffic impacts:
 - Minimum of one lane of traffic maintained in each direction during construction
 - Occasional ramp closures and detours to ramps on Minnesota side
 - Existing sidewalk on bridge anticipated to be closed for two to three weeks



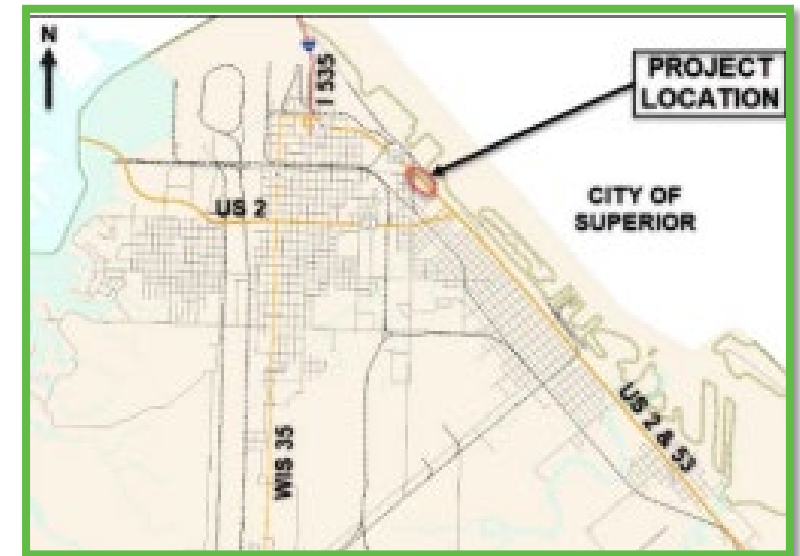
US 53 Resurfacing: 2nd Avenue East to Hughitt Avenue

- Construction will include:
 - Milling the existing asphalt pavement and placing new asphalt pavement
 - Making spot underlying concrete pavement repairs
 - Resurfacing the Blatnik Bridge ramps that abut East 2nd Street
 - Making spot curb and gutter repairs
 - Repairing various inlets and storm and sanitary sewer manholes
 - Upgrading or installing curb ramps at pedestrian crossings
- Traffic impacts:
 - Single-lane closures for more work.
 - Blatnik Bridge ramp closures during the overlaying of the ramps



US 53 Safety Improvement Project: E Street Intersection

- To address a higher-than-average number of crashes at the intersection, construction will include:
 - Closing the existing median on US 53 at E Street
 - Adding new right-turn bays to US 53, which would allow vehicles to enter and exit US 53 after the median closure
 - Widening Lenroot Drive, currently a one-way street, to accommodate two-lane, two-way traffic
 - Installing new storm sewer lines and inlets to adequately drain the improved Lenroot Drive
 - Repairing existing storm and other utility manholes on E Street



WIS 105, Minnesota State Line to WIS 35

- Construction in 2025* includes:
 - Resurfacing WIS 105
 - Upgrading and modernizing select sidewalk curb ramp slopes
 - Replacing curb and gutter in the village of Oliver
 - Replacing guardrail at the Oliver Bridge and County W
- Traffic impacts:
 - Single-lane closures controlled by flagging
- Construction in 2026 includes:
 - Replacing an undersized culvert west of WIS 35 with a bridge



* This is second year of two-year project; work in 2024 included addressing drainage-related issues.



Public Outreach

Ways We can Help

- Meeting presentations
- Newsletter updates
- Pop-up events
- Display boards
- Roundabout education
- Maps, information



Stay Connected

I-535 Blatnik Bridge

Duluth, Minn., and Superior, Wis.

[Project Home](#) [FAQs](#) [Documents](#) [Meetings](#) [History](#) [Business](#) [Industry](#) [Accessibility](#) [Contacts](#)

About this project

The John A. Blatnik Bridge, one of two bridges that connects Duluth, Minn., to Superior, Wis., opened to traffic in 1961 and carries I-535 over the St. Louis Bay. The Blatnik Bridge 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 33,000 cars traveling between the two cities each day. In early 2024, the two agencies received more than \$1 billion in federal funding to replace the aging bridge. Both states are also contributing funding for the project. MnDOT will lead the bridge replacement project, which will address aging infrastructure, improve safety and better accommodate oversize/overweight loads.



Scroll down



Schedule

- 2020-24: Preferred Alternative Selection and Environmental Documentation
- 2023-26: Preliminary Design
- 2026-27: Final Design
- 2026-31: Phased construction, with complete bridge closure approximately 4 years beginning in 2027

Location

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

Benefits

- Improve safety
- Better accommodate oversize/overweight loads

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- Follow us on Facebook
- Follow us on Twitter



- Blatnik Bridge website:
 - <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/d1/projects/blatnik-bridge/index.html>

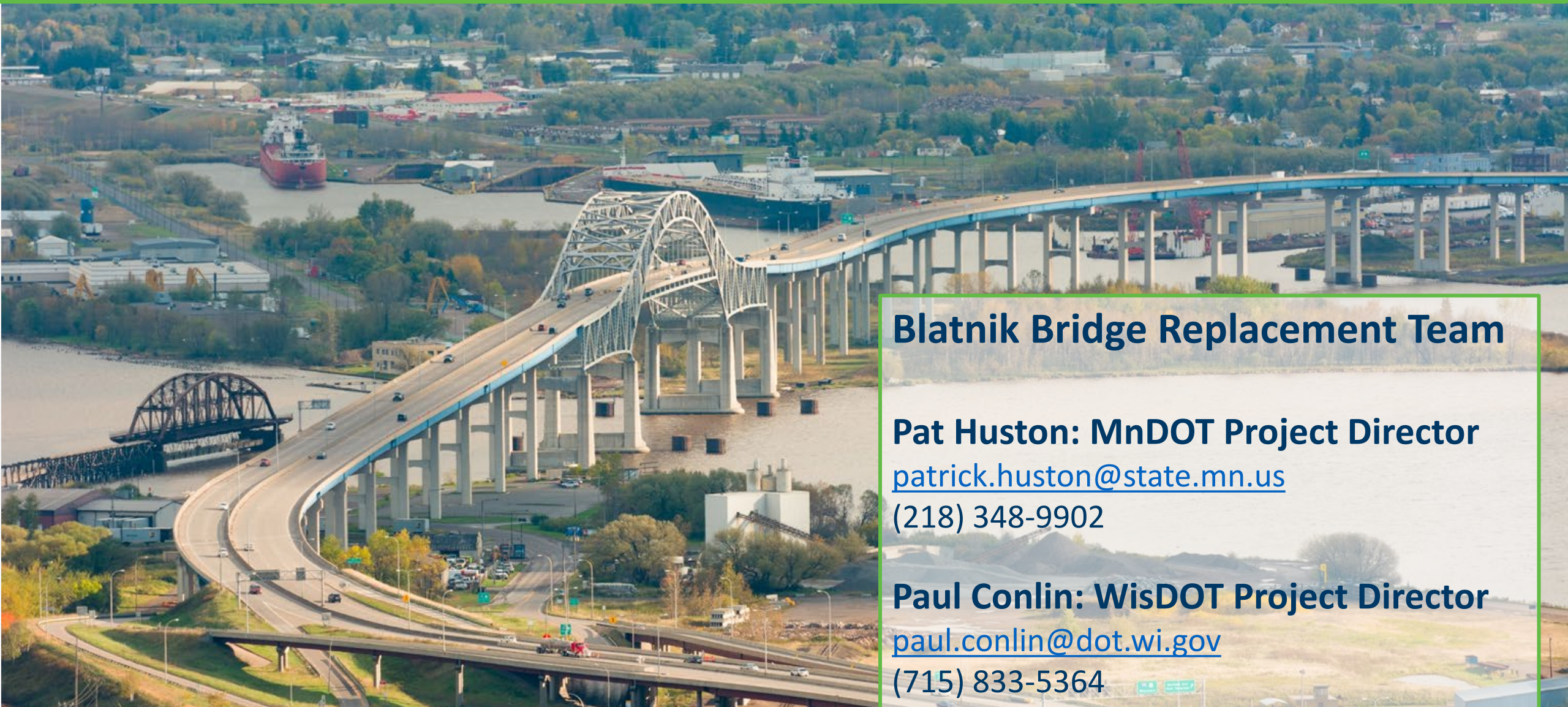


Wisconsin Project Information

- US 2, Bong Bridge rehabilitation project:
 - <https://projects.511wi.gov/us2/>
- US 53, resurfacing and safety improvement project:
 - <https://projects.511wi.gov/us53superior/>
- WIS 105, resurfacing project:
 - <https://projects.511wi.gov/nwr4/>
- Winter Street and Susquehanna Avenue improvement project:
 - <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/projects/by-region/nw/winterstreet/default.aspx>



Project Contacts



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