



Wisconsin Avenue Bridge Rehabilitation Project Information Update January 4, 2011

Plans are being finalized for the rehabilitation of the Wisconsin Avenue Bridge. The purpose of this document is to provide information about those plans to residents and businesses most closely affected by the bridge construction.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When will the bridge be closed and for how long?

A: The bridge will be closed on or after October 3, 2011 and is scheduled to be opened on or before August 3, 2012.

Q: Why does this work have to be done now? We have had so much construction with Wisconsin Avenue streetscaping and soon on Plankinton Avenue (Wisconsin to Wells).

A: The bridge, built in 1975, needs to be repaired and sufficient City funds have not been available. The City was successful in obtaining federal funds in the amount of \$23.8 million (of an estimated total construction cost of \$30.5 million) toward rehabilitation of the Wisconsin Avenue Bridge and reconstruction of the Juneau Avenue Bridge. Most of the federal dollars are stimulus funds and have construction timing requirements.

Q: How will you guarantee that the bridge will not be closed longer than that?

A: The City of Milwaukee has established an incentive for the contractor to have the bridge open earlier than August 3, 2012 (\$5,000 a day up to \$300,000) and a disincentive for not having the bridge open by August 3 (\$5,000 a day in penalties for every day after August 3) plus liquidated damages in the amount of \$3,500 per day if the contract completion date of November 16, 2012 is missed. In addition, the contractor will be selected in spring of 2011, allowing several months to prepare preliminary shop drawings, order materials, etc. There is no guarantee, but every attempt is being made to open the bridge within ten months or less.

Q: Why is the work not starting until October?

A: It is essential that construction of the Clybourn Bridge and Plankinton Avenue (between Wisconsin Avenue and Wells Street) be completed before the Wisconsin Avenue bridge is closed. The work on the Clybourn Bridge is scheduled to be completed before Summerfest, and work on Plankinton Avenue is scheduled to be completed in September 2011.

Q: What does "rehabilitation" of the bridge entail?

A: The rehabilitation work will include rehab of the structural, electrical, hydraulic and mechanical elements of the bridge--as well as new decking, railings, sidewalks and bridge approaches.

Q. Is this a City project?

A: The contract will be let by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. The State will be responsible for project management and on-site inspection. The City will have technical and project oversight as the owner of the bridge, but is not part of the contract. The City will work closely with the State, particularly on the special provisions.

Q: What hours will the contractor work?

A: The City noise ordinance limits noisy construction work to 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Any exception to this would require aldermanic approval and notice to stakeholders. Similarly, weekend work is possible with permission and stakeholder notification. Generally contractors work between 7 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. With the incentives in mind, a contractor might be encouraged to work longer hours to assure an early completion and bridge opening.

Q: What are the plans for traffic detours?

A: The contractor will install signs notifying vehicles that the bridge is closed and pointing to an alternative route. The signs will be located at 4th Street, Water Street, and at Michigan and Wells. The City will provide signs indicating that Wisconsin Avenue is open to Plankinton; the City will also provide signs at all detour sign locations indicating that all businesses are open for business. Left turns will be allowed for east bound Wisconsin Avenue traffic turning north on Plankinton. Milwaukee County Transit will detour Wisconsin Avenue buses onto Michigan Street and post notices for bus riders.

There will be no parking on Wisconsin Avenue east of Plankinton or west of Water Street. The City is currently studying how accommodation can be made for emergency vehicles and delivery trucks to serve businesses east of Plankinton on the north side of the Avenue.

Q: What are the plans for pedestrian circulation?

A: Sidewalks will remain open from both Plankinton Avenue and Water Street to the actual construction zone. Sidewalk connections to the Riverwalk will be maintained at the northwest, southwest and southeast corners of the bridge--except for temporary closure to accommodate specific construction activity. The Riverwalk at the northeast quadrant of the bridge will be closed. Signs will be posted along the Riverwalk indicating that the crossing at Wisconsin Avenue will be closed throughout construction.

In addition, signs will be posted directing pedestrians to skywalks on the north and south side of Wisconsin Avenue which can be used to cross the river while the bridge is closed. The signs will describe the hours the skywalks are open and point pedestrians to the entrances.

Pedestrian access to all businesses will be maintained throughout construction.

Q: How will stakeholders be kept informed of progress on the bridge construction? And who do we contact with questions or concerns?

A: The City has assigned a public information liaison to keep you informed of bridge construction activities. You will be invited to attend meetings and receive newsletters and email updates. (Two stakeholder information meetings have been held already, on October 13 and December 16, 2010.) The public information liaison is Jenann Olsen. She can be reached via email (Jenann.Olsen@att.net) or phone (414-271-6908).

Jenann will be your primary contact because we want you to be able to make one call and get your question answered or your concern addressed. When the construction begins, there will be an on-site inspector at the construction site. You will also be given that person's contact information so if there is an immediate problem it can be addressed immediately.

Q: On a related project, what's happening with Plankinton Avenue reconstruction?

A: The City will be scheduling a stakeholders meeting in January. Those of you east of the river will be invited to hear the latest information on that project.