

A Bridge at Stillwater MN/ Houlton WI

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This bridge for the Stillwater MN/Houlton WI crossing of the St Croix River is one that makes a unique and significant cultural statement. This design would be a viable asset to the community of Stillwater and to both Minnesota and Wisconsin . It will serve commercial vehicles, recreational vehicles, family automobiles, pedestrians, and bicycle traffic as a year around facility and is a simple, straight forward, beautiful piece of engineering design which would meet all the needs of everyone using this bridge for many generations to come.

This proposed bridge is intended to be a true lasting legacy for today's children and future generations that is memorable, that all parties can be enthusiastically proud of, and that the future generations will thank us for.

It will be practical and yet so attractive that it will be the pride and joy of not only those living near it but for all the citizens of the state of Minnesota and the state of Wisconsin drawing visitors from all over the world, because it will be an asset to the communities on both sides of the river, to both states in general, and a joy to behold both day and night.

Of the ideas presented here: the first consideration is the composition of bridge, the second is the amenities that are functional parts of this proposed new bridge, and third is the aesthetic quality.

Though the components of the bridge are standard construction where the majority of the structure consists of supports similar to those of the great Swiss engineer Maillart (1872-1940), the center portion is cable staid similar to the the one built at Alton Illinois . Where these occur in the river 3 islands serve as foundations both structurally and aesthetically for the structures above them with additional amenities as part of them. The main road bed parallels the surface of the water only to rise on the Wisconsin side in the same manner as do the bridges at Hudson Wisconsin .



As Highway 36 approaches the St. Croix it would turn north about a half mile on the way into downtown Stillwater before turning east on the new bridge across the St. Croix to the deepest ravine on the Wisconsin side.

This location on the Minnesota side does not disrupt or eliminate areas of existing residences or business. The deep ravine on the Wisconsin side allows for the bed of the bridge to be essentially level before rising gradually to the intersection with Highway 35.

The three islands out in the river are recreational areas landscaped with trees, gardens, and flowers, park benches and picnic tables for gatherings of family and friends with possibly an outdoor chapel for memorable occasions such as weddings. The perimeters, replacing the shore lines which no longer exist, are there for many hours of quiet fishing for young and old alike.

Going across at the center of the bridge above the traffic is the PRT (Personal Rapid Transit) coming from parking lots and other parts of the city for the enjoyable ride with nearly almost unobstructed views of the river or to drop passengers at the islands or the central tower.



At the central tower an elevator takes visitors up to the observation deck similar to the Eiffel tower in Paris where everyone could experience and enjoy spectacular views up and down the St Croix, all of Stillwater with its historic landmarks, and the richness of the Natural landscape of the Wisconsin shoreline with possibly a restaurant for the same fantastic panoramic views of the river and the surrounding areas while below the water there could be a room for watching the natural underwater activities in the river.

It might be noted that tourist dollars fully paid for the Eiffel tower in just 3 years.

Here are 4 tourist attractions, the PRT, the observation deck, the restaurant, and the underwater room, all of which would provide income to reimburse both Minnesota and Wisconsin for the cost of the bridge and its maintenance.

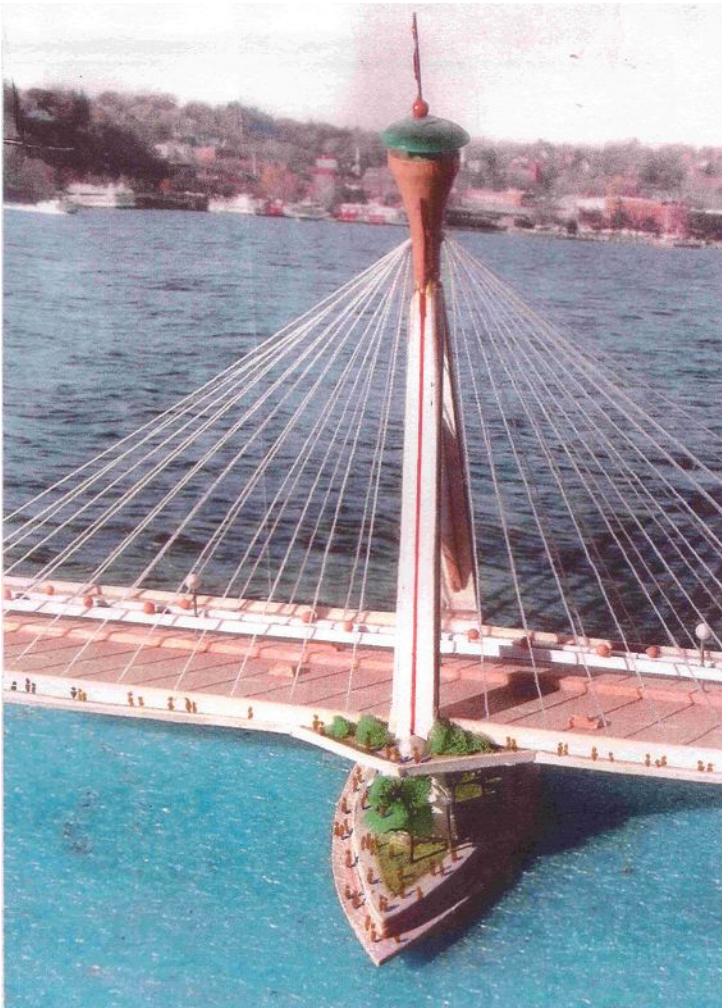
On the south side below the level of traffic and shielded from its noise is a promenade for those

wishing to enjoy the river as pedestrians, bikers, or even for those with deck chairs who wish to spend some leisure time in the sun because on those clear brisk days of early spring and late fall, if one is protected from the northwest wind and the bright sun warms the area , these spaces would feel like summer. What more could be asked of a public space?

The tourist centers at either end would have the usual materials and relevant information about the area, parking appropriately near the PRT stations for those wanting to go to the bridge and its picnic/fishing islands, observation deck or restaurant, to the historic sites about the town, and to the shopping centers or to the downtown for its shops and restaurants making the downtown a large mall without traffic problems.

From the standpoint of navigation, this bridge opens the river to almost what it was when native Americans still roamed freely, unlike the existing lift bridge which obstructs about half the flow of the river. These islands also protect the piers that support the bridge in times of flooding because the debris would, for the most part, follow the natural flow created by these islands and deflect it thus preventing any damage to the bridge from flood and in the spring these islands act like ice breakers moving the ice and any other debris more quickly down the river.

Aesthetics is a primary consideration because Stillwater is no longer an industrial or manufacturing community. It is a city of historical importance with many fine restaurants and shops. This bridge becomes a part of the activities of the community concerned with people while meeting the basic requirements of moving cars and trucks across the St Croix . This becomes the historic bridge of the future because there is no other bridge like it in the world with a gentle flowing into the landscape using Nature's colors making it belong here and nowhere else.



The graceful tower, the barriers along the road deck and the north wall of the walking, jogging, and bicycle promenade on the south side, and the concrete spans below at the shore line having the sublime synthesis of the bridges of Maillart are soft cream tan similar to but more delicate than the

sand of the beaches along the shore. The supporting cables from near the top of the tower down to the deck below are of soft sky blue to blend with the water when overlooking the bridge from above or fading into the sky when on the river. All metal work including handrails, lamp posts, screens, and the roof of the observation deck and restaurant are the delicate olive green of weathered copper whether natural or painted. The piers for the arches at the shoreline and the walls rising out of the water in the river containing the parks with picnic areas and a continuous perimeter for fisherman above are of rough cut projecting stones similar to the walls of the cliffs along the St Croix . The shapes of these island piers are in harmony with the flow of the river and because there are only 3, the river has essentially been returned to its full width.

A well designed bridge may even inspire future builders to become more aware of the aesthetics of well designed buildings and future homeowners would demand and expect it rather than continuing the present and anticipated urban sprawl.

If only for cars and trucks with people only secondary, then a new bridge becomes a liability rather than an asset especially to the town of Stillwater or any future development on the Wisconsin side or the river. Without doubt, similar businesses and homes will develop on the Wisconsin side and with careful thoughtful planning these become community centered for families to enjoy neighbors because all back yard in a cluster would be one large backyard where children can play under the watchful eyes of every household without any need to play in the streets, and all share recreational facilities which are designed into and are a part of where they live and where everyone knows the shop owners because their shops are within walking distance. Such communities would avoid chaotic urban sprawl and miles and miles of almost cookie cutter like housing.



Let this bridge be such as to inspire the imagination for all future bridges everywhere in the world based on principle and concern for people who can fully enjoy it rather than just simple utilitarian expediency.

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