More Than a Bridge: The Challenges in Developing an International Border Crossing Project

28th Annual CTS Transportation Research Conference
November 2, 2017
Agenda

1 Location, History, & Need
2 Project Challenges
3 Communications
Baudette Regional Airport
Wetlands
Gravesites
CNRR Bridge
Waste Water Treatment Ponds
City Park
Stormwater Management

Issues/Constraints
- Ports of Entry
- Regional Airport
- CNRR Bridge
- Wetlands
- Gravesites
- City Park
- Baudette River
- Stormwater
- Power Sub-Station
- Treatment Ponds
Challenges

Merging English and metric units of measurement wasn’t the only challenge. We needed to balance:

• Environmental studies
• Design criteria
• Public involvement processes
• State/provincial/national regulations and requirements
• Historic issues
• Border security concerns
Initial Issues

• Ports of Entry
  - No impacts to operations, road closures limited to 15 minute maximum
• No detours available nearby
• Split ownership of bridge
• Not a typical project
  - Only 3 international crossings in MN
  - No “manual” or “how-to” guides
Start-Up

• Initial discussions considered each partner building their half and meet at the center of the river
• Agency meeting in Duluth, MN 2013
• Who leads, who decides?
• Developing an Inter-Agency Agreement
Project Goals

Bridge
Environmental
Electrical
Hydraulics
Highway
Foundations
Agency
Involvement

US Task Manager

Canadian Task Manager

Project Team: HNTB | HZ United | PML | Novus Environmental | Gannett Fleming
Challenges

1 Bridge, 2 Perspectives

“There may only be one bridge, but that doesn’t mean we all see it the same way.”
Environmental

Historic/Cultural Issues
Challenges

Bridge Standards

“You never use that type of construction? On our side of the border we don’t use anything else!”
Technical Design Standards
Challenges

Non-traditional Agencies

“We have to contact who? Does anyone have an idea of how we find who we are supposed to talk to?”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Canada</th>
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<tr>
<td>• State Department</td>
<td>• Consulate General</td>
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<td>• Customs and Border Protection</td>
<td>• Canada Border Services Agency</td>
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<td>• Coast Guard</td>
<td>• Transport Canada</td>
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<td>• General Service Administration (GSA)</td>
<td>• Global Affairs Canada</td>
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<td>• Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency</td>
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Legal

- Presidential Permit
- International Joint Commission
- Government to Government Agreement
- State Department involvement on agreements
- Buy America
Challenges

Avoid Surprises

“I’m worried that we are going to get ambushed by something we didn’t even know we had to do.”
Developing the Project

Environmental Studies & Permitting

Permit Flow Chart for Baudette-Rainy River International Bridge
Challenges

Communications

“I don’t think we can tell too many people about this project too many times.”
Project Communications

• Guide was developed early in the project
• Keeping management up-to-speed
• Agency involvement
• Reaching out to other states and provinces
• A number of “spin-off” meetings were held with impacted stakeholders
• Public meetings were coordinated on both sides of the border
Project Communications

• TAC was formed
  - Monthly meetings, alternating venues
  - Border protection agencies were invited to participate as regular TAC members

• Decision Request and Record
• Risk Analysis
• Value Engineering—not just about saving $$ but also for collecting ideas
• Public Advisory Committee was formed
Contractor Communications

- International Laws and requirements may be new to otherwise qualified contractors
- Contractor Information Guide
- Educational Workshops
Questions?