

Proposed Bike-Pedestrian Bridge at the Old West Main & Upper Harbor Renewal Project Explained

Q: Can you tell me more about the bike-pedestrian bridge that is being planned as part of the Old West Main-Upper Harbor Renewal project over the next few years?

A: In 2021, the entire Old West Main Street (and underground utilities) will be reconstructed. When finished, Old West Main Street between Highway 61 and Buchanan Street will have wider sidewalks, angled parking, additional off-site parking, enhanced pedestrian crosswalks, and boulevard trees. (You can watch a short video of what the street is planned to look like when you go to the website: www.red-wing.org.)

As part of a larger project encompassing this whole area, improvements are also being planned for the Upper Harbor site just south of Bay Point Park. This is the place where many people park for River City Days and other big events. As you know, this particular area is currently just an open grass-and-gravel stretch of land, but in the future, it's slated to be a recreational and gathering site with potentially an event lawn, berm, and hillside seating.

To connect these two areas—Old West Main Street and the Upper Harbor area—a new bridge for walkers and bicyclists is being planned. The bike-pedestrian bridge would be built at Old West Main Street near Kelly's Tap House Bar and Grill, travel north over the railroad tracks toward the river, and land in this Upper Harbor area. (A general bridge location is noted below in the red circle.) You'll notice that the image below also shows the bridge crossing a new road. This is where Levee Road will someday be rebuilt, entering the roundabout from a new location.



Why connect Old West Main Street and the Upper Harbor with a bike-pedestrian bridge? There are multiple reasons. Creating a safe, easy way for people of all ages and abilities to get from Bay Point Park to a major part of our city can pave the way for increased business and housing development, more visitors, more recreational opportunities, and additional amenities (including more safety and accessibility) for everyone who lives in Red Wing. Currently, people on foot travel between the riverfront and Old West Main Street by walking along the narrow sidewalk on Jackson Street over the railroad tracks. In some cases, people trespass through the railroad right-of-way area, which is dangerous.

How long has this been in the works? Planning for the whole Old West Main-Upper Harbor Renewal project, including the bike-pedestrian bridge, started more than 13 years ago. Community members, staff, and current and former City Council members began planning this multi-phase project in 2006, with the Upper Harbor Master Plan being adopted in 2007. In 2013, a team of Old West Main area residents, business owners, and other city residents, along with designers, engineers, and planners, collaborated to refine the 2007 Plan, and Council adopted the Renewing Old West Main Master Plan in 2014. Since then, the City has worked to secure state and federal funding for the bike-pedestrian bridge and the entire Old West Main Street project. Connecting with residents has also continued to make sure the final product fits the needs and character of this unique part of town. During the summer of 2018, the Red Wing 2040 planning process continued to gather additional feedback and ideas from people all across the community.

How much would the bike-pedestrian bridge cost and how will we pay for it? The bridge itself is estimated to cost \$1.7 million and the entire bridge project with an entry plaza, berm, and trail connection is estimated at a bit over \$2.6 million. At least \$1 million would come from state and federal funding. The rest could potentially come from the city's tax levy. (Additional Upper Harbor improvements such as the event lawn, would come from separate funding.)

Are all the plans set in stone? No. All projects of this scope take years to plan, design, get input from the public, and secure funding from multiple sources. That's why it's important to plan for large capital improvement projects early. In this case, it means planning for the bike-pedestrian bridge now, even though the two areas it will connect are not renovated yet. Plans can change at various phases based on many factors, including the availability of project funding and shifting of community priorities.

Is there a chance the bridge will *not* be built? Yes, there is always a chance that portions of a large project like this will not happen. Staff and City Council will keep the public up to date on the funding process. Red Wing's City Council members are the ultimate deciders on each portion of the project, including the bridge, once various funding sources and specific dollar amounts have been secured.

Where can I get additional information? Simply go to our City of Red Wing website at www.red-wing.org and click on the City Projects button. There, you can go directly to the Old West Main-Upper Harbor Renewal page for lots of details.

Also feel free to contact Community Development Director Dan Rogness, Project Manager of the Concept Development Phase, at dan.rogness@ci.red-wing.mn.us / 651-

385-3697. Or, contact City Engineer Jay Owens, Project Manager of the Design and Construction Phase, at jay.owens@ci.red-wing.mn.us / 651-385-3625.

If you wish to contact your City Council members and Mayor about this issue, you can email them all at citycouncil@ci.red-wing.mn.us.

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