

TEXAS HISTORIC BRIDGES

WINTER 2016

PROJECT MISSION STATEMENT:

Identify ways to retain historic truss bridges as viable assets open to vehicular traffic or repurposed for new uses.

JOIN US FOR BRIDGE DIALOGUE:

V.G. Young Institute School for County Commissioners Courts in College Station **Feb. 17**
TxDOT and THC will explain the management planning process.

Preservation Summit in Austin **Feb. 18**

TxDOT historians will discuss how preservation advocates can engage in the historic bridge management process.

County Historical Commissions Regional Training in El Paso, Alto, Fredericksburg, Rockport **March-May**

TxDOT historians will discuss opportunities for CHCs to engage in the Section 106 planning process.

Texas Historical Commission Summer Event in Austin **June**
TxDOT historians will lead a discussion of the historic bridge management program.



BRIDGE MANAGEMENT PLANS PROVIDE PREDICTABILITY THROUGH GROUPINGS

A bridge management plan is a standard tool used by transportation departments across the nation to plan the maintenance, preservation, and replacement of historic bridges. Management plans include maintenance schedules for bridges, address rehabilitation potential, identify significance factors as a decision-making tool, or provide predictability for project outcomes. Not all historic bridges can be saved as part of the transportation system, but management plans identify those candidates for preservation.



Pecos River Bridge constructed in 1957

TxDOT, along with the Texas Historical Commission and the Historic Bridge Foundation, tested the management planning approach with the state's bridges constructed after World War II. Over 50,000 bridges fell into this category but only 100 were determined historically significant. By grouping these bridges into further categories as shown below, TxDOT is able to allocate resources to the bridges that are the most significant (such as the Corpus Christi Harbor Bridge or the Pelican Island Seawolf Parkway Bridge). TxDOT aims to do something similar with truss bridges.

The process of developing a management plan is complex and involves many players, considerations, and questions about funding. During the metal truss bridge management planning process, TxDOT will be seeking feedback from local bridge owners, as cities and counties manage the majority of the state's historic trusses. The grouping of bridges in the management plan can ensure the preservation or replacement of a local bridge, so your feedback and participation in the process are vital.

Below please find **DRAFT** groupings for the preservation potential of truss bridges, based on the process. We continue to seek our public's input. You can learn more and give us your comments by going to www.txdot.gov and search "historic bridges."

GROUP I

TxDOT system bridge meeting current functional goals – high preservation potential.

GROUP II

Local system bridge meeting current functional goals with readily addressed conditions – to be assessed on individual basis.

GROUP III

TxDOT or local system bridge not meeting current functional goals – not a good candidate for preservation.

TRUSS BRIDGES COUNTDOWN

Truss bridges in vehicular service

146

Owned by TxDOT

37

Owned by 56 cities and
counties

109

(For photographs of truss bridge
types, please go to www.txdot.gov
and search “historic bridges.”)

Warren Truss Bridges

72

Pratt Truss Bridges

27

Parker Truss Bridges

26

Other Truss Bridge Type (such as Whipple and Lenticular Trusses)

21

Programmed for Potential Replacement over the Next Five Years:

57



The Wharton CHC inspects the
Wharton truss bridge

FINDING NEW USES FOR OLD BRIDGES

When bridges become too fragile to use, they can still contribute to the community through new purposes in new locations. In a park or on a hike-and-bike trail, these increasingly rare bridges may create new legacies for the community to enjoy.

TxDOT’s Historic Bridge Legacy Program makes certain historic bridges available for public use once TxDOT engineers determine they are no longer sufficient to carry vehicular traffic. All bridges available under this program are listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places so merit special consideration of their potential for preservation in the community, with the emphasis on finding a new use for the bridge.

Since the bridges are owned by either TxDOT, cities, or counties, successful projects tend to involve governments or non-profit organizations “adopting” a historic bridge to preserve it in their community. There are also special requirements and costs associated with the relocation and maintenance of the bridges that should be considered before committing to adopt a bridge.

See available bridges and learn more about the program guidelines on TxDOT’s website. Visit www.txdot.gov and search “adopt a bridge.”



Goodman Bridge on its way to Pecan Park
in Nacogdoches

SUCCESS STORY!

The Worley Bridge is nestled in a wooded area over the San Gabriel River in Milam County. In 2011, TxDOT engineers determined it was no longer safe to carry vehicular traffic, but under the Historic Bridge Legacy Program, the bridge was rehabilitated under the Highway Bridge Program and reopened for vehicular use in 2014. Go online to learn more about how TxDOT and Milam County worked together to successfully preserve the Worley Bridge. Visit www.txdot.gov and search “adopt a bridge.”



TRUSS BRIDGE WEBINAR DRAWS 100

New County judges, historical commissioners, consultants, and other state DOTs tuned in for TxDOT and THC’s fall webinar on historic truss bridges. Participants learned about TxDOT’s process for completing a bridge project, the THC’s role in the process, and how Historic Bridge Foundation can serve as a resource for grant funding, project planning, and other preservation activities. Key points emphasized the need to meet with community leaders and TxDOT staff about historic bridges, and developing a plan to reuse historic truss bridges in the community. TxDOT and the THC hope to offer more webinars in 2016. Stay tuned!

Details of the bridge planning process (Historic Bridge Manual), a map of Historic Bridges in vehicular service, and useful guides to aid local bridge owners in their care of historic truss bridges (Toolkits) are all posted at www.txdot.gov, search “historic bridges.”