

# Historic Bridge Legacy Program

## ADOPTING A PIECE OF TEXAS HISTORY

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) oversees its Historic Bridge Legacy Program to fulfill certain Federal Highway Administration requirements for the replacement of historic bridges. The Program facilitates the adoption of historic bridges that outlive utility for vehicular service. All bridges available under this program are listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The bridges are owned by TxDOT, cities, or counties. Such bridges merit special consideration of their potential for preservation in the community. The primary emphasis of the program is to find a new public use for the bridges, such as along a hike-and-bike trail or in a public park.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR BEING A BRIDGE OWNER:** Legacy Program bridges may not be reused on a public road for vehicular purposes. Legacy Program bridges must be publically accessible. All new owners in the Legacy Program must sign an agreement accepting responsibility for all legal and financial aspects related to the bridge. Owners must agree to maintain the bridge and its historic features according to the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation* (<http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation.htm>). Owners must consult with the Texas Historical Commission prior to any future work on the bridge, including the transfer of ownership.

**ADOPTING A BRIDGE:** Once TxDOT approves the application for adopting a bridge, the applicant becomes the new owner. Owners may move the bridge to a new location and purpose, such as on a high-and-bike trail or in a park. Owners may store the bridge in an appropriate storage facility in order to raise funds for rehabilitation prior to placing the bridge at its new site. All rehabilitation work must meet the Secretary's Standards (<http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation.htm>) and must be coordinated with the Texas Historical Commission.

**RELATED COSTS:** There is no fee to adopt a bridge through TxDOT. Prospective owners must demonstrate they are capable of funding the rehabilitation and maintenance of a historic bridge received under this program. Costs vary widely depending on bridge type, condition, and other factors, but typical rehabilitation costs include:

- New concrete abutments and/or foundations for the bridge
- New deck
- Pedestrian railing
- Lead paint containment or abatement

(Note: the majority of historic metal truss bridges have some form of lead-based paint on the bridge. The new owner has multiple options to handle the presence of lead paint, based on the reuse of the bridge and liability concerns.)

New owners may choose to phase the project based on funding concerns. However, all owners must be prepared to accept the bridge when TxDOT removes it to complete the project.

After rehabilitation, historic bridges need additional maintenance. New owners should be prepared to spend future funds. Typical maintenance costs include:

- Cleaning—removing debris collected in the joints of the bridge
- Cleaning—removing debris collected underneath the bridge
- Removing any vegetation from the bridge and its supports
- Replacing worn decking
- Repainting.

**COSTS FOR PEDESTRIAN USE:** For each bridge available for reuse, TxDOT provides an estimated work schedule and estimated costs. It is the responsibility of any organization interested in reusing a historic bridge to hire a structural engineer and develop their own work plan and estimated costs. TxDOT's estimated costs are based on TxDOT's past projects in the region of the bridge. Different regulations, requirements, and contracting capabilities may affect estimated costs. Potential bridge recipients may choose to phase a project to address funding concerns.



Bedstead Truss, Wolters Park, Schulenburg, Texas

### APPLYING FOR BRIDGE ADOPTION:

Proposals should be submitted to the contact listed on each individual bridge page. A Proposal Checklist is available for download at [www.txdot.gov](http://www.txdot.gov), search "adopt a bridge" to assist in the preparation of your proposal.

### STAYING INFORMED:

TxDOT notifies certain groups and individuals when bridges become available for reuse. To be added to this list, contact Rebekah Dobrasko, 512.416.2570 or [rebekah.dobrasko@txdot.gov](mailto:rebekah.dobrasko@txdot.gov), with your name, organization, phone number and email address.

### AVAILABLE FUNDING

TxDOT may provide modest funding to assist owners with the reuse of historic bridges based on percentages of project costs mandated by federal regulations. The range can vary depending on bridge type, condition, and other factors, but funds can cover costs such as relocation and installation on a sound foundation, and some structural stabilization.