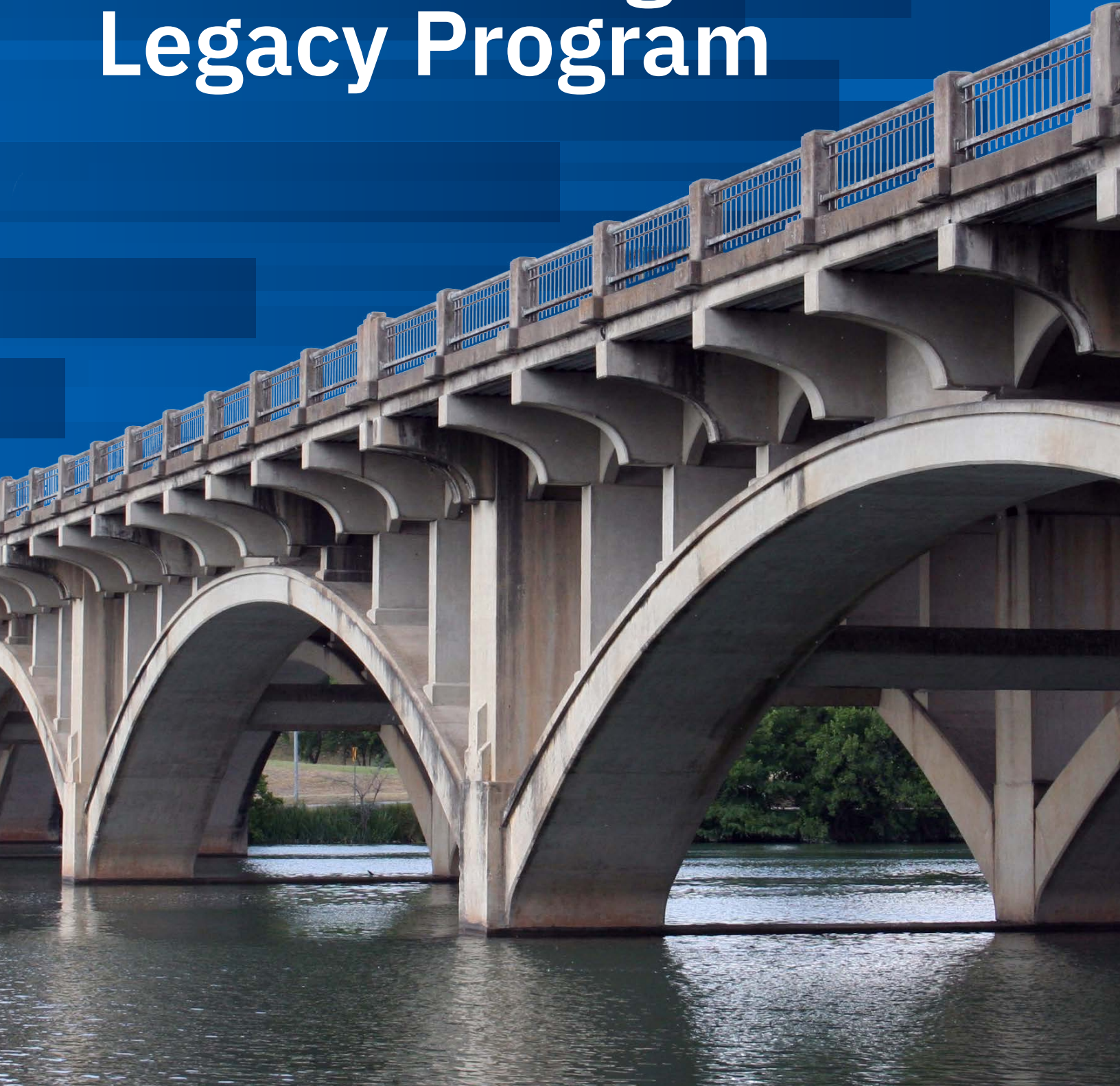




# Historic Bridge Legacy Program



Updated: 2025





Bedstead Truss, Wolters Park, Schulenburg, Texas

## ADOPTING A PIECE OF TEXAS HISTORY

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) oversees its Historic Bridge Legacy Program to fulfill Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requirements for the replacement of historic bridges. The program facilitates the adoption of historic bridges that can no longer safely carry vehicle traffic. 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. These bridges merit special consideration of their potential for preservation in the community. The goal of the program is to find a new use for the bridges; for example, 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 should be publicly 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, or if they want to transfer ownership.

### ADOPTING A BRIDGE

Once the bridge adoption agreement is signed, the applicant becomes the new owner. The new owner may move the bridge so it can fulfill a new purpose; for example, a pedestrian bridge in a park or along a hike-and-bike trail. The new owner may temporarily place the bridge in an appropriate storage facility to raise funds for its rehabilitation and installation at the new location.



#### APPLYING FOR BRIDGE ADOPTION

Complete and submit a bridge reuse proposal to the TxDOT district office. A checklist is on page 6 to help guide you. You can also visit [txdot.gov](http://txdot.gov) and search "adopt a bridge."



#### STAYING INFORMED

TxDOT notifies certain groups and individuals when bridges become available for reuse. Contact Rebekah Dobrasko to be added to the list at [rebekah.dobrasko@txdot.gov](mailto:rebekah.dobrasko@txdot.gov) or 512.431.3422.



#### AVAILABLE FUNDING

TxDOT may provide modest funding to new owners 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.

## RELATED COSTS

There is no fee to adopt a historic bridge through TxDOT. Prospective owners must demonstrate they are capable of maintaining the historic bridge. Bridges in this program will need rehabilitation prior to any reuse. 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: Most 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.)*

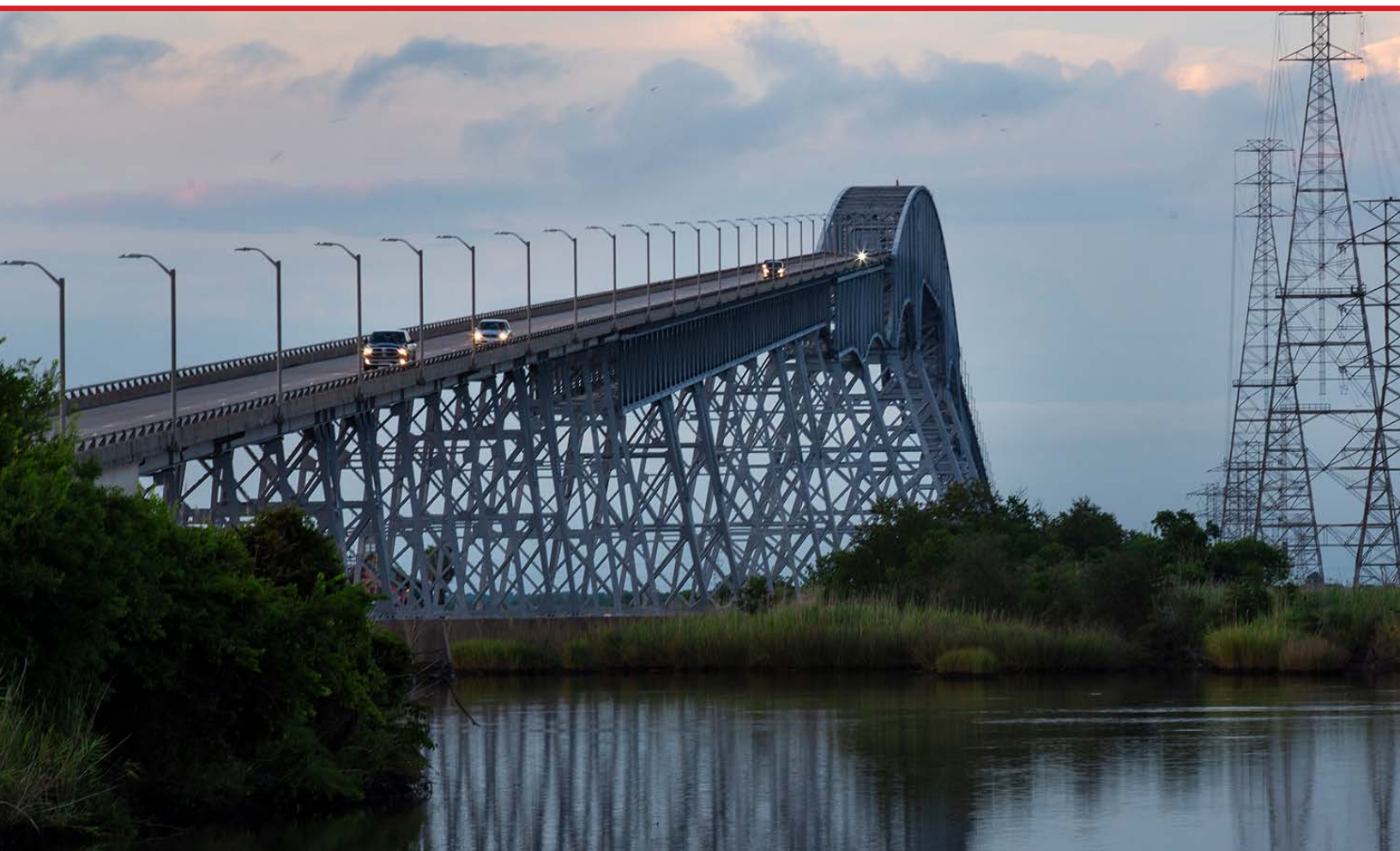
New owners may choose to phase the project based on funding concerns. However, all owners must be prepared to accept the bridge when TxDOT removes it as part of the overall project.

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

- Cleaning to remove debris collected in the bridge joints
- Cleaning to remove debris collected underneath the bridge
- Removing any vegetation from the bridge and its supports
- Replacing worn decking
- Repainting

## COSTS FOR PEDESTRIAN USE

Anyone interested in reusing a historic bridge must hire a structural engineer and develop their own work plan and estimated costs. Different regulations, requirements, and contracting capabilities may affect estimated costs. Potential bridge recipients may phase a project to address funding concerns.







## MOVING HISTORIC BRIDGES

Moving a historic bridge can be a complex process. Below are the major steps:



### STEP 1:

TxDOT and/or local government identifies Historic Bridge in project.



### NEXT STEPS:

The next stages for bridge adoption can take up to a year or more.



### STEP 2:

TxDOT conducts engineering studies and determines needs at crossing.

- 3 TxDOT announces adoption opportunity online, through social media, and through local media.
- 4 Potential new owner submits Reuse Proposal Checklist.
- 5 TxDOT reviews the proposal and approves new owner.
- 6 Agreement to transfer liability/responsibility to the new owner is signed.
- 7 Contractor bids on project.
- 8 TxDOT accepts bids.
- 9 New owner works with contractor to remove bridge from roadway.
- 10 TxDOT demolition funds MAY help pay to move bridge to new location.
- 11 Bridge set at new location.
- 12 New owner rehabilitates or maintains the bridge.
- 13 Project opens to the public (if bridge will be publicly accessible).





## A NEW LIFE FOR AN OLD BRIDGE

When a historic bridge in Bastrop could no longer safely carry traffic, TxDOT needed to replace it. The Texas Highway Department (TxDOT's predecessor) built the Old McDade Road bridge at Sandy Creek, a metal pony truss, in 1922 using a standard bridge plan. Pony truss bridges were a popular choice for many decades, given their strength and relatively simple design. Instead of sending the bridge to the scrap yard, TxDOT moved it to a new home. Bastrop County now has the bridge in a maintenance yard, where it crosses a small drainage channel.

## HISTORIC BRIDGE PRESERVATION BY THE NUMBERS

Since 1989, TxDOT has relocated and reused **58** historic truss bridges.

**39 (67%)**

Relocated to parks

**7 (12%)**

Relocated to hike  
and bike trails

**4 (6%)**

Converted in-place  
for pedestrian use

**3 (7%)**

Relocated to  
Municipal properties

**5 (8%)**

Relocated to private  
ranches/farms



# Historic Bridge Legacy Program Reuse Proposal Checklist

Please inform TxDOT of your interest in historic bridge adoption as soon as possible to ensure enough planning time.

## Proposals submitted to TxDOT for the adoption of a historic bridge should include the following information:

- ☐ Name and contact information for new owner/organization.
- ☐ Name and contact information of structural engineer hired to develop work plan.
- ☐ Distance the bridge will need to be moved from its current site to the new site.
- ☐ Location and estimated time that bridge will be kept in storage prior to reuse, if applicable.
- ☐ Map(s) showing the new location of the historic bridge. This could include aerial photographs, city street maps, or USGS topographic maps.
- ☐ Images of the site where the historic bridge would be relocated.
- ☐ Cost estimate for rehabilitation of the bridge once placed at the new site.
- ☐ Funding source for rehabilitation work and continued maintenance.
- ☐ Lead paint removal or abatement plans, if necessary.
- ☐ Estimated time for rehabilitation work and/or anticipated schedule of when the bridge will be put into reuse, if storing the bridge. If the project is phased, list the steps in each phase.

### Statement indicating willingness to:

- ☐ Accept title to (ownership of) the bridge.
- ☐ Sign maintenance and rehabilitation agreements (contact TxDOT to see a sample agreement).
- ☐ Assume all legal and financial responsibility for the bridge.
- ☐ Hold TxDOT harmless in any liability action.

### Questions about the historic bridge adoption process or requirements?

Contact the TxDOT District Environmental Coordinator listed in the bridge adoption announcement.