CITY OF DEER PARK
Birthplace of Texas
EST. 1892

GARY M. JACKSON
ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

710 E. San Augustine • P. O. Box 700 • Deer Park, Texas 77536 • (281) 478-7260 • Fax: (281) 542-0879
E-Mail: gjackson@deerparktx.org

March 12, 2018

Ms. Elizabeth Brummett
Division of Architecture
Texas Historical Commission
P.O. Box 12276
Austin, Texas 78711-2276

Dear Ms. Brummett:

I am writing to you regarding the Pratt Truss bridge located on Battleground Golf Course in the City of Deer Park. The bridge which dates from 1891, originally provided a crossing of the Leon River in Coryell County, Texas. In the early 1990s, when the bridge was over 100 years old, a determination was made by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) that the bridge could no longer support modern road traffic. As documented in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed by the Federal Highway Administration, the Texas State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and TxDOT in late 1994, these three parties agreed to the relocation of the bridge to the Battleground Golf Course as part of a transportation enhancement project (see Attachment A).

The bridge is a 90-foot-long metal pin-connected Pratt through truss and at the time it was constructed, was common for short to medium-length spans over Texas rivers and creeks. It was built by the Clinton Bridge and Iron Company of Clinton, Iowa, and is the only known bridge built by this company remaining in Texas. At the time of its relocation, it was considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The bridge has since been used for golf cart traffic on the Battleground Golf Course. The bridge deck had been replaced at the time of relocation and in 2012, the bridge deck was replaced again, an anti-rust coating and weatherproof paint was applied to the truss structure, and additional structural support was added. The truss elements have, however, continued to deteriorate over time. A historic marker is located adjacent to the bridge. Photos are included in Attachment B.

The City of Deer Park is exploring options to keep the bridge on the golf course while maintaining safe conditions for golfers and other users of the golf course. According to the MOA, at the time of the bridge relocation, the City of Deer Park was to sign a preservation and maintenance agreement subject to review and comment by the SHPO (see MOA Stipulation 2 in Attachment A). The City of Deer Park does not have a copy of such an agreement. Our engineering and environmental consultant, RPS, has coordinated with Linda Henderson, History Programs Division, at the Texas Historic Commission (THC) to locate a copy of this agreement, but there are no records of it at the THC either. In conversations with

Linda, she has explained that typically these preservation and maintenance agreements expire after ten years. As the bridge was relocated in the mid-90s, any agreement that may have been executed would be expected to have expired years ago. In the absence of such an agreement, we can find no obligations that the City of Deer Park is under with regard to the bridge. Linda has expressed that the THC would prefer that this historic bridge be maintained.

Options available to the City of Deer Park include repairing the historic truss structure, replacing the truss structure with a similar type structure to maintain the historic feel of the bridge, or removing the truss structure altogether. Based on the RPS analysis of the truss structure, they estimate that over 50 percent of the truss members show substantial section loss which would require the members to be replaced or repaired. It's estimated that at least 25 percent of the truss members would be replaced, and another 25-50 percent would have new structural steel welded or bolted to the original truss members leaving very little of the structure untouched. The cost of repairing the bridge is estimated to be approximately $241,000 and would substantially alter the historic nature of the truss. The cost to replace the existing truss structure with a similar style structure that maintains the historic feel of the bridge is estimated to be $156,000. Removal of the truss structure is estimated to cost $40,000. If either the replace or remove option is selected, the City proposes mitigation in the form of a bridge documentation package consisting of large and/or medium format photography and a written summary to document the history, current condition of the bridge and reasons for replacement/removal. This information would supplement the photography, dimensioned sketch plans and write-up that TxDOT prepared prior to the relocation of the bridge to the City of Deer Park (see MOA Stipulation 3 in Attachment A).

The City of Deer Park is formally requesting your comments and input on the options presented above. We would also appreciate your input on the status of the historic marker if the replace or remove option is selected. While a final decision has not been made by City Council, a previous discussion in Council Workshop favored the removal option.

Maintaining a safe crossing and protecting golf course patrons is our highest priority. To do so, we are requesting your response within the next 30 days so that City Council can be fully informed of all interests and issues surrounding the bridge prior to making a decision about the bridge's future.

We appreciate the assistance your agency has already provided on this project. If you have any questions, please contact me at 281.478.7260.

Sincerely,

Gary M. Jackson
Assistant City Manager
City of Deer Park

Attachment A

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
826 FEDERAL OFFICE BUILDING
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701-3276

December 15, 1994

IN REPLY REFER TO

HN-TX

CSJ: 0909-39-010
Memorandum of Agreement
Bridge Replacement at County Road
322 at Leon River
Coryell County

Dianna f. Noble, P.E.
Director of Environmental Affairs
Texas Department of Transportation
Austin, TX 78701-2488

Dear Ms. Noble:

Enclosed are two copies of the signed Memorandum of Agreement for the above referenced project. Please provide a copy to the Texas State Historic Preservation officers.

Sincerely yours,

John R. Mack
Acting District Engineer

Advisory
Council On
Historic
Preservation

The Old Post Office Building
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, #809
Washington, DC 20004

Reply to: 730 Simms Street, #401
Golden, Colorado 80401

November 21, 1994

Jesse I. Gray
Environmental Coordinator
Federal Highway Administration
826 Federal Office Building
Austin, TX 78701-3276

RE: *Memorandum of Agreement regarding the removal and relocation of the County Road 322 Bridge at the Leon River, Coryell County, Texas*

Dear Mr. Gray:

The enclosed Memorandum of Agreement regarding the above referenced project has been accepted by the Council. This action constitutes the comments of the Council required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Council's regulations. Please send copies of the signed Agreement to the Texas State Historic Preservation Officer and your Federal Preservation Officer.

The Council appreciates your cooperation in reaching a satisfactory resolution of this matter.

Sincerely,

Claudia Nissley
Director, Western Office
of Review

Enclosure

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
REGARDING THE REMOVAL AND RELOCATION OF THE
COUNTY ROAD 322 BRIDGE AT THE LEON RIVER
CORYELL COUNTY, TEXAS

WHEREAS, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has determined that the removal and relocation of the bridge on County Road 322 at the Leon River, Coryell County, Texas, will have an effect upon the bridge, a property eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, and has consulted with the Texas State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (Council) pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800, regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C., Part 470f); and

WHEREAS, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has participated in the consultation and has been invited to concur in this Memorandum of Agreement;

NOW, THEREFORE, the FHWA and the Texas SHPO agree that the undertaking shall be implemented in accordance with the following stipulations in order to take into account the effect of the undertaking on historic properties.

STIPULATIONS

The City of Deer Park, Texas, will relocate the County Road 322 bridge to The Battleground at Deer Park Golf Course as part of a transportation enhancement project funded in accordance with the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA).

The FHWA will ensure that the following measures are carried out in consultation with the SHPO prior to the removal and relocation of the County Road 322 bridge at the Leon River.

1. The SHPO shall be afforded 30 days to review and comment on the City of Deer Park's relocation plan.

2. The City of Deer Park shall be required to sign a preservation and maintenance agreement prior to relocating the subject bridge. The SHPO shall be afforded 30 days to review and comment on this agreement.

3. TxDOT shall prepare a bridge documentation package consisting of the following items:

   a. large format (4" x 5") and/or medium format (120 film) photographs of the bridge in its current setting;

   b. dimensioned sketch plans; and

   c. written data to include physical description, statement of significance, and brief history.

4. Three (3) documentation packages shall be provided to the SHPO. The SHPO shall be afforded 30 days to review and comment on the documentation package.

5. Should the SHPO object within 30 days to any documents provided for review and approval pursuant to this Memorandum of Agreement, the FHWA shall consult with the objecting party to resolve the objection. If the FHWA determines that the objection cannot be resolved, the FHWA shall forward all documentation relevant to the dispute to the Council. Within 30 days after receipt of all pertinent documentation, the Council will either:

a. Provide the FHWA with recommendations, which the FHWA will take into account in reaching a final decision regarding the dispute; or

b. Notify the FHWA that it will comment pursuant to 36 CFR, Part 800.6(b), and proceed to comment. Any Council comment provided in response to such a request will be taken into account by the FHWA in accordance with 36 CFR, Part 800.6(c) (2) with reference to the subject of the dispute.

Any recommendation or comment provided by the Council will be understood to pertain only to the subject of the dispute; the FHWA's responsibility to carry out all actions under this Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that are not the subjects of the dispute will remain unchanged.

6. At any time during implementation of the measures stipulated in this agreement, should an objection to any such measure be raised by a member of the public, the FHWA shall take the objection into account and consult as needed with the objecting party, the SHPO, or the Council to resolve the objection.

Execution of this Memorandum of Agreement by the FHWA and the Texas SHPO, its subsequent acceptance by the Council, and implementation of its terms, evidence that the FHWA has afforded the Council an opportunity to comment on the bridge replacement on County Road 322 at the Leon River in Coryell County, Texas, and its effects upon historic properties, and that the FHWA has taken into account the effects of the undertaking on historic properties.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
REGARDING THE REMOVAL AND RELOCATION OF THE
COUNTY ROAD 322 BRIDGE AT THE LEON RIVER
CORYELL COUNTY, TEXAS

SIGNATORIES

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

BY: _____ DATE: 11/3/94
Frank M. Mayer
Division Administrator

TEXAS STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

BY: _____ DATE: 24 Oct. 1994
Curtis Tunnell
State Historic Preservation Officer

CONCUR:

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

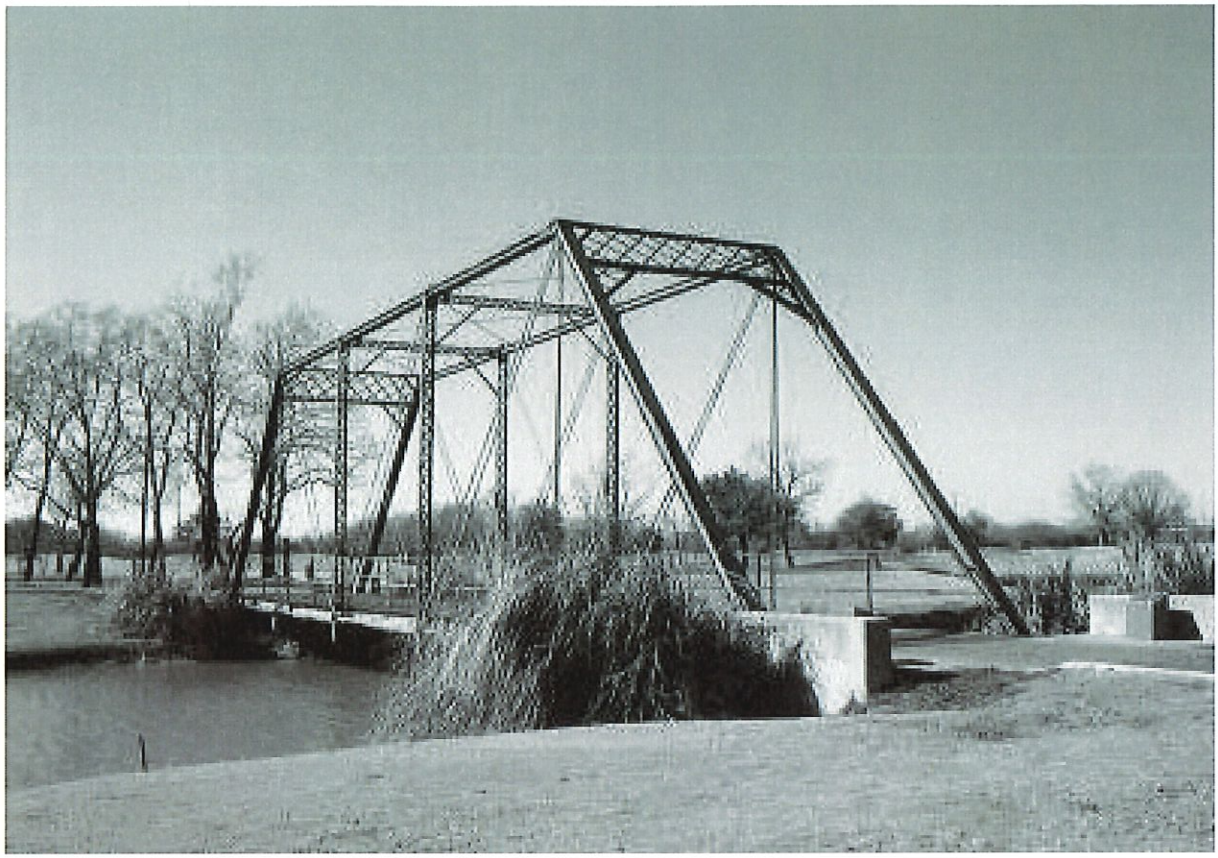
BY: _____ DATE: 10-26-94
Dianna F. Noble, P.E.
Director of Environmental Affairs

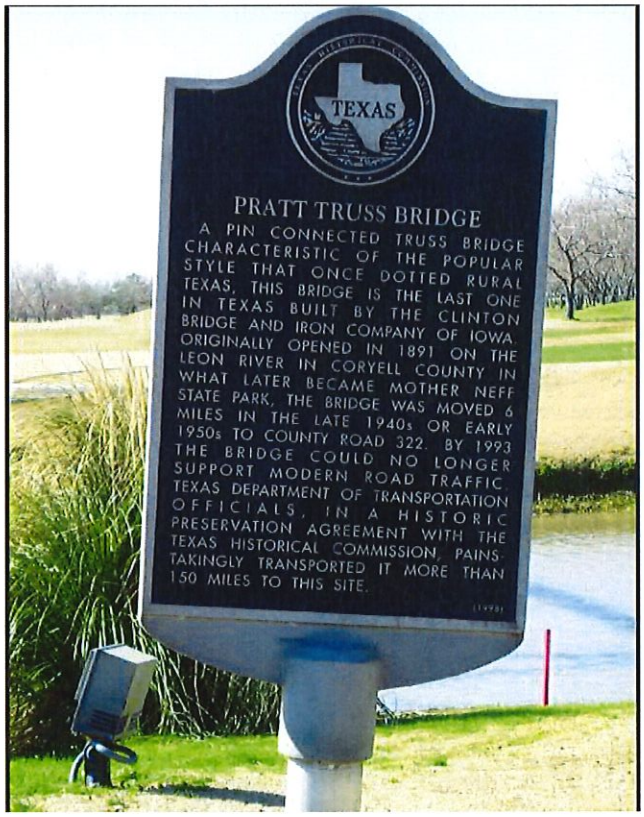
ACCEPTED BY:

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

BY: _____ DATE: 11/16/94

Attachment B – Bridge Photographs





"A pin connected truss bridge characteristic of the popular style that once dotted rural Texas, this bridge is the last one in Texas built by the Clinton Bridge and Iron Company of Iowa. Originally opened in 1891 on the Leon River in Coryell County in what later became Mother Neff State Park, the bridge was moved 6 miles in the late 1940s or early 1950s to County Road 322. By 1993 the bridge could no longer support modern road traffic. Texas Department of Transportation officials, in a historic preservation agreement with the Texas Historical Commission, painstakingly transported it more than 150 miles to this site."