



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** AUT 18-037, **Version:** 1

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Consideration of and action on selecting an option (repair, replace, remove) the Pratt Truss Bridge structure at the Battleground Golf Course.

### Summary:

The Pratt Truss Bridge located at the Battleground Golf Course was originally constructed in 1891 in Coryell County, Texas. The bridge is a 90-foot-long metal pin-connected Pratt through truss. 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. The bridge was relocated in the mid-1990's from Coryell County to the Battleground Golf Course as part of an Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) transportation enhancement project. The ISTEA grant application for the project included \$100,000 in federal funds and a \$25,000 local match from the City.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed by the Federal Highway Administration, the Texas State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and TxDOT in late 1994, indicates that these three parties agreed to the relocation of the bridge to the Battleground Golf Course. According to the MOA, at the time of the bridge relocation, the City of Deer Park was to sign a separate "preservation and maintenance agreement" subject to review and comment by the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). The City of Deer Park and the Texas Historic Commission (THC) have been unable to locate a copy of this agreement. However, subsequent to the February 20, 2018 Council Workshop, and as a result of receipt of an open records request, the City's Public Works staff have found the "Agreement for the Acquisition of the Historical Bridge" that was executed between the City of Deer Park and Coryell County in 1995. This agreement contains a clause that states that the recipient (City of Deer Park) agrees to preserve and maintain the bridge and the features that give it its historic significance.

Since being relocated to the Battleground Golf Course, the bridge has been used for golf cart traffic on the Course; however, the decking and support structure of the bridge have been replaced and the iron truss elements have deteriorated over time. In 2012, a contract in the amount of \$229,635 was approved by the City which transferred the loads from the existing truss members to the new structural support system and provided a safe path across the new deck and curb system and a new stainless steel pedestrian rail. However, the Pratt Truss structure has continued to deteriorate. Due to its condition, the City engaged RPS (formerly Klotz Associates) to perform an evaluation of the historic significance of the Pratt Truss Bridge located at the Battleground Golf Course. Additionally RPS was asked to explore options for the truss bridge which included 1) repairing the historic truss structure, 2) replacing the truss structure with a similar type structure to maintain the historic appearance of the bridge, or 3) removing the truss structure. RPS responded by providing the following estimates for the Truss bridge:

- 1) \$241,785 for repairing the historic truss structure
- 2) \$159,300 for replacing the truss structure with a similar type structure to maintain the historic

appearance of the bridge

- 3) \$40,500 for removing the truss structure.

As previously stated, a “preservation and maintenance agreement” document for the bridge has not been located. However, the “acquisition agreement” containing a clause stating that the City of Deer Park agrees to preserve and maintain the bridge and the features that give it its historic significance has been located. The “acquisition agreement” document also has a couple of other interesting components. First, it contains a termination section, which includes an option for either party (City or Coryell County) to terminate upon 30 days written notice to the other party. Second, it contains a “right of first refusal” clause stating that should the City decide to sell, donate or otherwise transfer the title to the Bridge, the City shall notify the Mother Neff State Park Association of Moody, Texas at least 30 days in advance. Based on the “acquisition agreement” verbiage and after a discussion between the city attorney, city staff, and RPS, it was determined that the best course of action was to:

- A. Request the Texas Historical Commission’s comments and input on the options being considered; and
- B. Request the Texas Historical Commission’s input on the status of the historical marker if the replace or remove option is selected.

A letter, dated March 12, 2018, was sent to the Texas Historical Commission requesting a response. Also, a follow-up email was sent to THC on April 5, 2018. The THC responded on April 17, 2018. In summary, the THC response states:

- 1) The bridge acquisition agreement among TxDOT, Coryell County, and the City of Deer Park requires that the City "preserve and maintain the Bridge and the features that give it its historic significance, adhering to the provisions of the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation."
- 2) No separate maintenance agreement has been located to date, and neither the MOA nor the acquisition agreement stipulate ongoing oversight by THC.
- 3) Texas Historical Commission's preference is in-kind repair of the existing historic truss bridge, as the City of Deer Park committed to do in the bridge acquisition agreement.
- 4) THC does not recommend additional documentation at this time. Instead, they encourage placing copies of the 1990s documentation at local libraries or archives in Deer Park and Coryell County.
- 5) Should a new bridge be desired, rather than construction of a replica of this bridge they encourage consideration of a historic truss bridge marketed by TxDOT, as that could save another significant bridge from demolition.
- 6) THC encourages salvaging bridge members that remain in good condition for interpretive efforts at the site or for use in repair of other similar truss bridges.
- 7) Retaining the Official Texas Historical Marker describing the engineering significance and

relocation of this bridge would not be appropriate if the bridge is removed or replaced.  
Coordinate return of the marker to the Harris County Historical Commission.

The THC recognizes that the decision rests with the City,

The following information is attached:

- a. Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed by the Federal Highway Administration, the Texas State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)
- b. Agreement for the Acquisition of the Historical Bridge
- c. Cost estimates submitted by RPS
- d. Marker file for the Pratt Truss Bridge Historical marker number 11958 Atlas number 5201011958
- e. Letter to THC - dated March 12, 2018.
- f. Email to THC - dated April 5, 2018
- g. Response from THC - dated April 17, 2018

Fiscal/Budgetary Impact:

Options:

- 1) \$241,785 for repairing the historic truss structure
- 2) \$159,300 for replacing the truss structure with a similar type structure to maintain the historic appearance of the bridge
- 3) \$40,500 for removing the truss structure.

Select an option to repair, replace, or remove the Pratt Truss Bridge structure at the Battleground Golf Course.