

Lac qui Parle Bridge

Response to Public Questions



Lac Qui Parle bridge on Highway 40 (built in 1938)

Question: When was the bridge put in place?

Answer: The bridge was originally constructed in 1938. In 1967, work was done on the bridge again to ensure safety.

Question: Was it new at that time or was it moved in from somewhere else?

Answer: It was a new bridge at the time it was built.

Question: When did the bridge become historical?

Answer: In September 2010, the MnDOT Cultural Resources Unit, on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration, determined that the bridge was a contributing element to the Lac Qui Parle Historic District, and the State Historic Preservation Office concurred in October of 2010.

Question: How did the bridge become historical and who was the local voice of the idea?

Answer: The designation of the Lac Qui Parle Flood Control Historic District was not just a local decision. The historic district is historic to the state and many factors contribute to the historic designation. Determinations of eligibility are made by the lead federal agency for a



project (or by their designated agent, in this case the MnDOT Cultural Resource Unit) and are agreed to by the State Historic Preservation Office, who represents the interests of the citizens of the state regarding historic properties.

Question: How many overhead bridges are like this in the state?

Answer:

- Combined historic steel high (through) and low (pony) truss bridges – 34
 - Historic steel low truss bridges - 9
 - Historic steel high truss bridges – 25
 - Steel high truss bridges contributing to a historic district – 6
 - Steel high truss bridges individually eligible/listed – 19

Question: Is refurbishing rusted metal common practice?

Answer: Steel bridges (both historic and non-historic) are blasted and painted for many rehabilitation projects across the state and the nation. Steel is an extremely strong and versatile building material for bridges, and there are tens of thousands of such structures across the nation, many of which are of a similar age to the Lac Qui Parle bridge. While it is often not possible to remove all of the pack rust from a structure, it can be substantially cleaned, primed and painted so the bridge can continue to provide a safe crossing for many years to come. This is a very common practice.

Question: What would the cost of new construction be?

Answer: By our early scoping estimates, a new bridge in this location would be around \$6 million due to significant grading work needing to be done surrounding the bridge.

Question: What would the timeline of new construction be?

Answer: This is unknown because we'd have to secure or identify funding for the bridge which, we currently do not have identified in our program. We are programmed out through 2019, however we have projects in our 10 year work plan through 2025, and we would need to shift projects and funding around to accommodate paying for a new, more costly bridge if that was the case. Not worrying about funding, it would take a minimum of a couple of years to get the project going just due to our project development and design process.

Question: A similar bridge was just replaced in Montevideo, why wasn't this listed as historical?

Answer: That bridge was not in a historic district. It also was not the original bridge; apparently that bridge was moved to that location from a different roadway.



Question: Is refurbishment really the safest option for the public?

Answer: Metal bridges (including non-historic) are rehabilitated often, and provide a safe crossing in many locations throughout the state. An old bridge does not equal an unsafe bridge. Also, rust does not equal a bridge that cannot be repaired. We clean, prime and paint numerous bridges each year, and they are an integral and safe part of our overall transportation network across the nation.

Question: The local resort owner has expressed concern about refurbishment versus new and feels new would be best.

Answer: Due to cost and the historic nature of the bridge, a new bridge was not the preferred alternative.

Question: Has the bridge been assessed on the quality of rehabilitation by an engineering firm? If so, when was this done and by whom?

Answer: The determination of rehabilitation as opposed to replacement was made through a study performed by an engineering firm. The bridge repair calculations and plans were prepared by registered, professional engineers of the MnDOT Bridge Office. All calculations and plans go through an extensive quality control and quality assurance process including independent review by a second engineer.

Mead & Hunt evaluated rehabilitation alternatives for Bridge 5380 on behalf of MnDOT. The findings are presented in *Lac Qui Parle Bridge 5380: Section 106 Evaluation of Rehabilitation Alternatives (June 2012)*.

MnDOT CRU can elaborate on the purpose of the rehab study, development of alternatives and the environment process.

For More Information

Visit: mndot.gov

Or contact: Susann Karnowski, Assistant District Engineer, 320-214-6370, susann.karnowski@state.mn.us

