

# FAQ

## FAQ for Historic Metal Truss Bridges available through the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Historic Bridge Marketing Program

1. Why are these bridges available?
  - PennDOT has determined that these bridges are in need of replacement because they cannot be rehabilitated to meet the needs of the travelling public. Since these bridges are eligible for listing, or are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, state and federal law requires the owners to market them for adaptive reuse.
2. What is wrong with these bridges?
  - In most cases, these bridges are over 100 years old. Many of them were designed for a load capacity of 10 to 15 tons, and simply cannot handle some common modern vehicles like fire trucks or fuel or material trucks. Because of their age, many of these bridges have significant structural deterioration that would need to be addressed by the buyer, depending upon the needs at the new location. The bridges also typically contain lead paint. The amount, or need for rehabilitation will depend upon the intended use.
3. What costs can the buyer expect?
  - Typical costs associated with the process include:
    - The cost of purchasing the bridge.
    - The cost of relocating the bridge to the desired location (transportation fee) including any oversize load permit.
    - The cost of disassembly/reassembly of the bridge.
    - Costs associated with structural engineering and planning (e.g. abutment design, waterway permit, etc.).
    - Modification or structural repair costs according to its intended use.
    - Any future maintenance costs.
4. Is money available to assist in activities such as dismantling, moving, or reassembling?
  - Potential funding is available to aid in any of these processes if the project is funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), who determines the amount of preservation assistance available to the buyer; this amount is usually no less than the amount allocated to demolish the bridge. In some cases, the amount of money available to the buyer could exceed the cost of demolition; that information should be available on the individual bridge marketing page.
5. What does it cost to rehabilitate and move a bridge?

- The answer will vary depending on the size of the bridge, the structural condition of the bridge, the intended future use of the bridge, the distance between present and future locations, and the fees of the hired contractor(s). A reputable contractor should be able to furnish a realistic estimate that accounts for all costs.
6. Who is typically involved in the disposition process?
- PennDOT
  - Pennsylvania Department of General Services (for state owned bridges only)
  - Local owner (for locally owned bridges). Typically either a county or township
  - Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission).
  - One or more of the following, selected by the buyer: professional engineer, rehabilitation contractor, moving contractor.
7. Do these bridges always have to be moved or can I buy a bridge and keep it at its existing location?
- It is dependent upon the plans for the replacement structure. Most of the time the bridge will need to be relocated.
8. Does the bridge have to stay in Pennsylvania?
- No the bridge can be moved anywhere, though a preference is given to buyers who intend to keep the bridge in Pennsylvania.
9. Am I allowed to make changes to the bridge?
- A preservation covenant with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) will be required if financial assistance is provided. The preservation covenant will require the owner to contact the SHPO if they intend to make changes to the historic characteristics of the bridge. When financial assistance is not provided a preservation covenant is desired but may not be required; preference is given to bidders who are willing to sign a preservation covenant.
10. What services does PennDOT offer?
- PennDOT will coordinate the disposition process, and potentially provide minor technical services. PennDOT will provide copies of records related to the bridge's condition to the buyer, including inspection reports.
11. Who can buy these bridges?
- Anyone can buy the bridge as long as they are committed to reusing it. Preference is given to public uses but private property owners are able to bid on these bridges. State owned bridges are first offered to other state agencies, then regional municipalities; if there is no

interest, they are then offered to the highest, best-use bidder. In the past, we've placed some of our historic bridges with State Parks, rail-trails, and university campuses.

12. How do I buy one of these bridges?

- The answer depends upon whether the bridge is state owned or locally owned.

For state owned bridges:

- State owned historic bridges follow the disposition process of the PA Department of General Services (DGS) through their Bureau of Supplies and Surplus Operations. In advance of the DGS public offering the bridge will be advertised on PennDOT's bridge marketing website. Interested parties should send in a letter of interest to PennDOT. PennDOT will provide the letter to DGS who will notify any parties who have expressed an interest in the bridge prior to the public auction.
- DGS will offer the bridge to the highest bidder willing to ensure that the historic characteristics of the bridge are preserved (i.e. bidders cannot be parties who will sell the bridge for scrap); the auction will be open for a period of not less than 30 days, but will typically be between 60 and 90 days. The bridge is subject to special terms and conditions which are enumerated in the bid documents which will be available on DGS's website prior to the start of the auction.
- Following the bid process, the potential buyer will be permitted up to 90 calendar days to conduct engineering studies confirming the suitability for the intended use. If the potential buyer wishes to go forward, the buyer must make a formal offer to purchase the bridge (consistent with the terms and conditions previously provided). After acceptance of the offer, the Commonwealth will provide the buyer with a sales contract and with the name of the PennDOT project manager with whom the party will need to work to arrange for removal of the bridge.

For locally owned bridges:

The disposition process will vary according to the regulations imposed by that jurisdiction. In most cases a high bid process similar to the state's bid process is required. As with state owned bridges, parties potentially interested in a bridge are requested to provide a letter of

interest to the owner (county or municipality) which describes the intended use. The owner will then coordinate further with the interested party.

- 13. When are these bridges available?
  - This information is listed underneath the bridge, when known. Certain restrictions may affect the timing of the bridge's availability. In some cases the bridges are available for removal by a buyer at any time because traffic has already been rerouted. In other cases the bridge is not available for removal until the replacement bridge is built; in some cases this can be years after the marketing of the bridge. Utilize the contact information under the bridge for more information regarding estimated dates, and also potential restrictions.
  
- 13. Where can I find more information about a specific bridge?
  - The following websites often have historical information on the bridges:
    - [www.bridgehunter.com](http://www.bridgehunter.com)
    - [www.historicbridges.org](http://www.historicbridges.org)
    - <http://www.bridgemapper.com/>
    - <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/hh/>
  - The following websites contains information on the environmental clearance for the replacement project, including information on the consideration of rehabilitation:
    - <https://www.dot7.state.pa.us/ce>
    - [www.paprojectpath.org](http://www.paprojectpath.org)
  
- 14. What if none of the bridges you are currently marketing meet my requirements?
  - In addition to the currently available historic bridges that are being marketed through our website, there are a limited number of state, county, or municipally owned historic bridges that have been closed to traffic with no plans for reuse. In addition, there may be bridges likely to be marketed that have not yet reached that point in the process. Contact Kara Russell, Historic Bridge Marketing Program Coordinator, at 717-405-1484 or [krussell@pa.gov](mailto:krussell@pa.gov) for more information on other bridges.
  
- 15. What if I have general or further questions about the program?
  - Please contact Kara Russell at 717-405-1484 or [krussell@pa.gov](mailto:krussell@pa.gov).