



BRIDGE STREET
— B I G F O R K —

OPEN HOUSE
WELCOME!



VISION ZERO
zero deaths · zero serious injuries
MONTANA DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION



Stay in the Know



EMAIL

amy@bigskypublicrelations.com



PROJECT HOTLINE

406-207-4484, Monday – Friday, 9 AM – 5 PM



VISIT

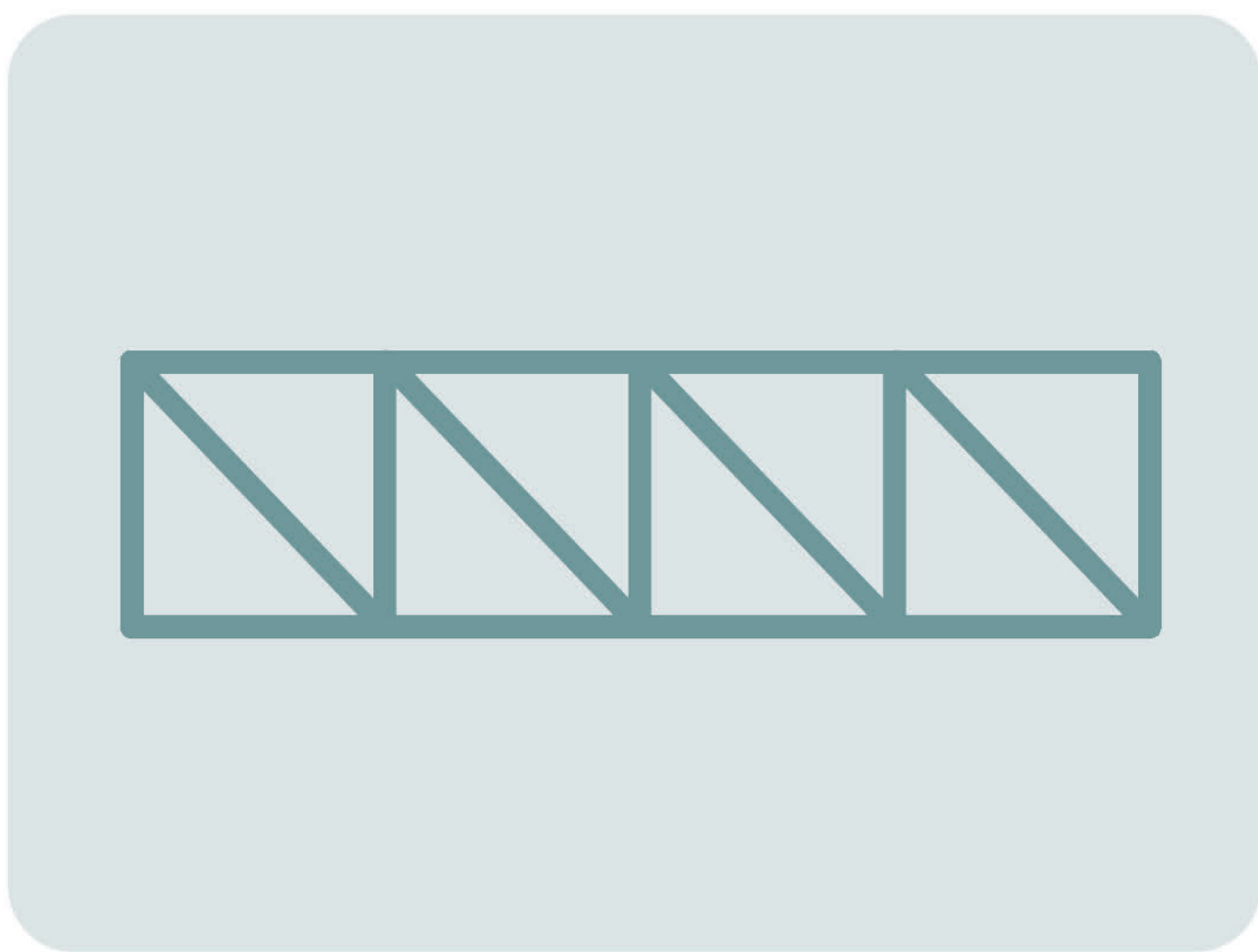
bit.ly/BridgeStreetBigfork

OR scan the QR code by using your smartphone. Just open your camera, hover over the QR code, and follow the prompt!

PROJECT DETAILS

The Bridge Street Bridge over the Swan River is due for essential restoration work. To maintain its structural integrity, it is imperative that MDT reconstructs the bridge in its entirety.

The existing bridge will be replaced with a new, structurally similar bridge. Some design features include:



Similar Steel Truss

Meets modern design standards



Single Travel Lane



ADA-Compliant Pedestrian Walkway



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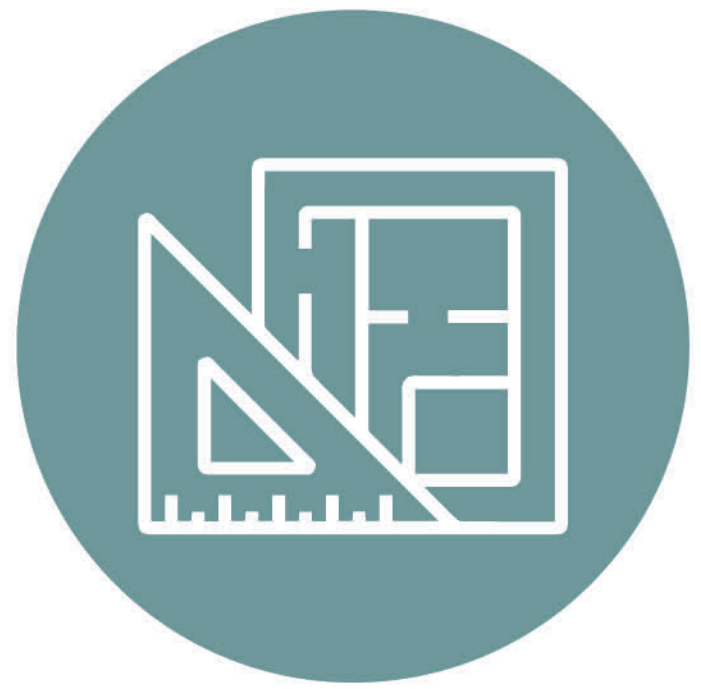
PROJECT DETAILS

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) will be replacing the existing Bridge Street structure with a similar one-lane bridge over the Swan River. The following is a tentative timeline for the reconstruction.



2021

Early Bridge Design and Surveying



2022

Bridge Design & Pre-Construction Prep



2023

Design Finalization & Construction Planning



2024

Construction Begins



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Was this studied before plans were solidified?

Yes. A feasibility study recommended removing and replacing the existing bridge with an overhead steel truss, carrying a single lane for vehicles and a separated walkway. This study was an initial step to identify options to repair, replace, or rehabilitate the existing bridge and to seek public comments.

Who did the study?

MDT hired a consulting firm, KLJ, to complete the study on behalf of Flathead County in 2016.

Why not a modern, two-lane bridge?

Though this option was considered, Flathead County and MDT recognize that the unique nature of Bigfork, low traffic numbers and the community's feedback support continuation of the current one-lane width. Widening the bridge was also anticipated to require additional right-of-way of the roads leading up to the bridge.

Will the bridge have a pedestrian walkway?

Yes. A sidewalk has been identified as a requirement and would provide a single walkway meeting current standards for accessibility.

How is this project being funded?

The project is being funded through the Federal Aid Off-System Bridge Program. No local tax dollars will be used.

How long will the existing bridge be open?

Due to the uncertainty of use and corrosion, we cannot predict a date when the bridge would be closed. However, historical records and the observed deterioration indicate the bridge is near the end of its ability to safely carry traffic. Regular bridge observations and inspections by Flathead County and MDT will continue and may determine that the bridge needs to be closed sooner than its reconstruction date in 2024.

Is there special funding available for a historic bridge?

There are no funds reserved solely for historical bridges in the most recent federal highway bill.

Can we preserve pieces of the Bridge Street Bridge?

MDT is working with community partners to explore the potential of preserving material from the existing structure.



How can I provide further comment?

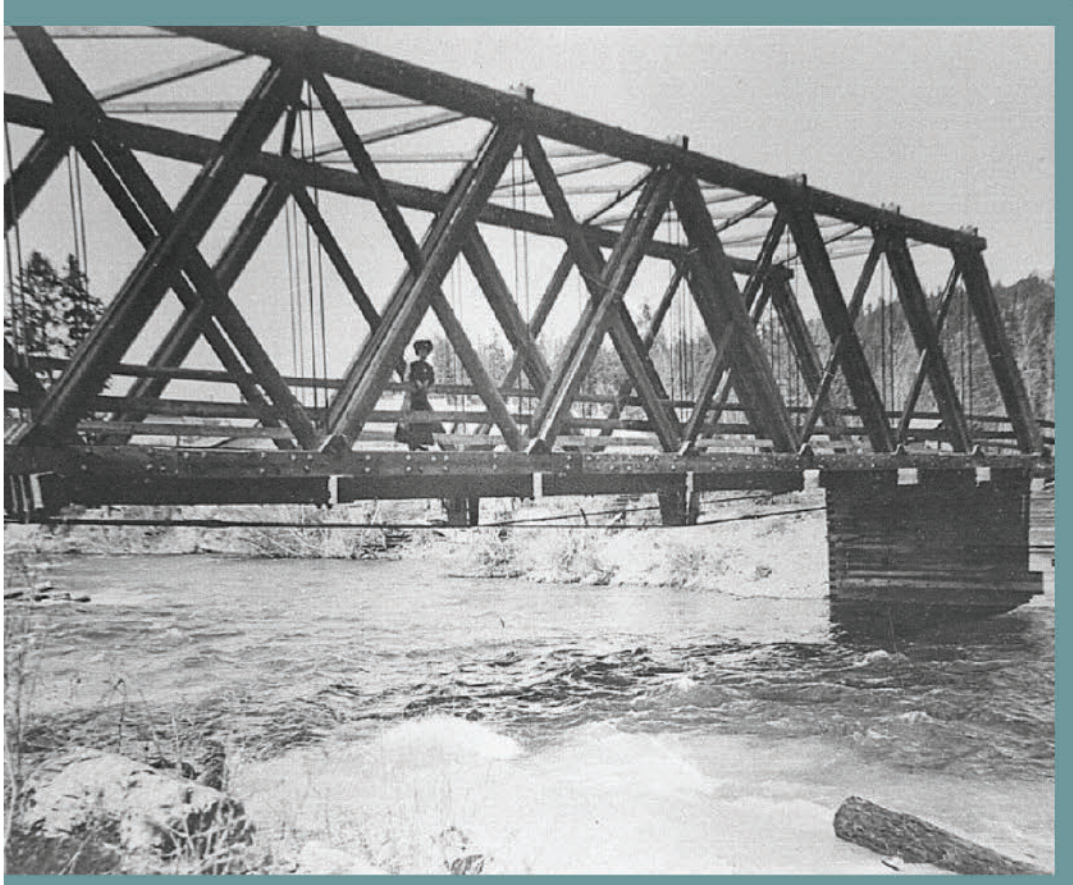
Anyone wanting to provide further comment is encouraged to reach out to the project's communication manager, Amy, at amy@bigskypublicrelations.com. You can also call the project hotline at **406-207-4484** Monday through Friday, 9 AM – 5 PM.

How would you like to see the existing Bridge Street Bridge memorialized?

Write your ideas on a sticky note and place them here.



THE HISTORY OF BRIDGE STREET BRIDGE



The Bridge Street Structure in the 1900's

1900 – 1912

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BRIDGE STREET BRIDGE

In 1900, while Everit Sliter was in the midst of founding Bigfork, Montana, a small, wooden bridge spanned the Swan River. This bridge was used for light foot traffic to access the frontier commerce center. In mid-November of 1911, construction began on the Pratt pin-connected, steel truss, single-lane bridge that stands today. The cost of the bridge was \$4,400, and the bridge was built by the spring of 1912. Sometime after officially opening for traffic in 1912, the county added a pedestrian walkway outside the truss on the upstream side. Exactly how, when, and by whom this pedestrian walkway was added to the bridge is still unknown.

1912 – 2000

THE USE OF THE BRIDGE STREET BRIDGE

In the 20th century, the bridge spanning over the Swan River was in its peak performance. Residents hosted parades and festivals, most of which involved the bridge. In many ways, this bridge became an icon of the Bigfork village, and as such, became a symbol of the town's togetherness and strength. Local traditions formed around the bridge, and for this reason, those in charge of maintaining it began talks of restoration and/or reconstruction work to keep this community asset alive for years to come.



The Bridge Street Structure today

2000 – Today

THE DETERIORATION OF THE BRIDGE STREET BRIDGE

After a century of use and admiration from the village of Bigfork, the steel truss bridge over the Swan River, now referred to as the "Bridge Street Bridge", is still traveled regularly by residents and tourists. In 2015, the Bridge Street Bridge was added to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Due to the damage from time and corrosion, the Bridge Street Bridge is no longer able to carry heavier vehicles and has been limited to a maximum three-ton load. The Bridge Street Bridge is owned and maintained by Flathead County, and the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) provides technical and financial assistance through its off-system bridge funding. MDT is leading the operation to reconstruct this bridge in 2024.