

# PROJECT NEED AND PURPOSE

## Need:

This project is needed because the segment of Austin Avenue from Morrow Street to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, including the two bridges crossing the San Gabriel River is (a) load restricted and fails to meet current design standards on both bridges, and (b) has deteriorated resulting in falling debris on and below the bridges, which presents safety hazards to traffic and trail users.

## Purpose:

The purpose of this project is to improve mobility on Austin Avenue and ensure the safety of pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic along Austin Avenue between Morrow Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and on the multi-use trails below the two bridge crossings. This project offers opportunities to expand the accessibility and mobility of Austin Avenue for all modes of travel while preserving a gateway into historic Georgetown.



## Why NEPA?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is required for any project with a federal funding component. This project will follow the NEPA process in order to remain eligible for additional funding from state and federal sources.



# PROJECT HISTORY

**1940** Construction of bridges is completed

**1999** Bridges determined eligible for listing in National Register of Historic Places

**2000** TxDOT presented design for bridge replacement: City Council declined replacement

**2007** Maintenance responsibility passed from TxDOT to the City of Georgetown

**2013** TxDOT issues a load restriction per standard Bridge Inventory, Inspection and Appraisal Program (BRINSAP)

**2014** Fallen debris found under the south bridge; City initiates condition assessment and life-cycle analysis

**2014** Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) awards City \$1.3 million in Surface Transportation Metropolitan Mobility for reconstruction

**2015** TxDOT confirms need for load restriction per standard BRINSAP evaluations

**2015** Independent forensic study to further evaluate bridges performed

**2016** City initiates a study to evaluate and identify a preferred solution with a robust public involvement plan; City initiates advanced funding agreement with TxDOT



Texas. Department of Transportation. [South San Gabriel River Bridge on U.S. Highway 81], Photograph, July 9, 1940; <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapath167288/>; accessed March 16, 2016).



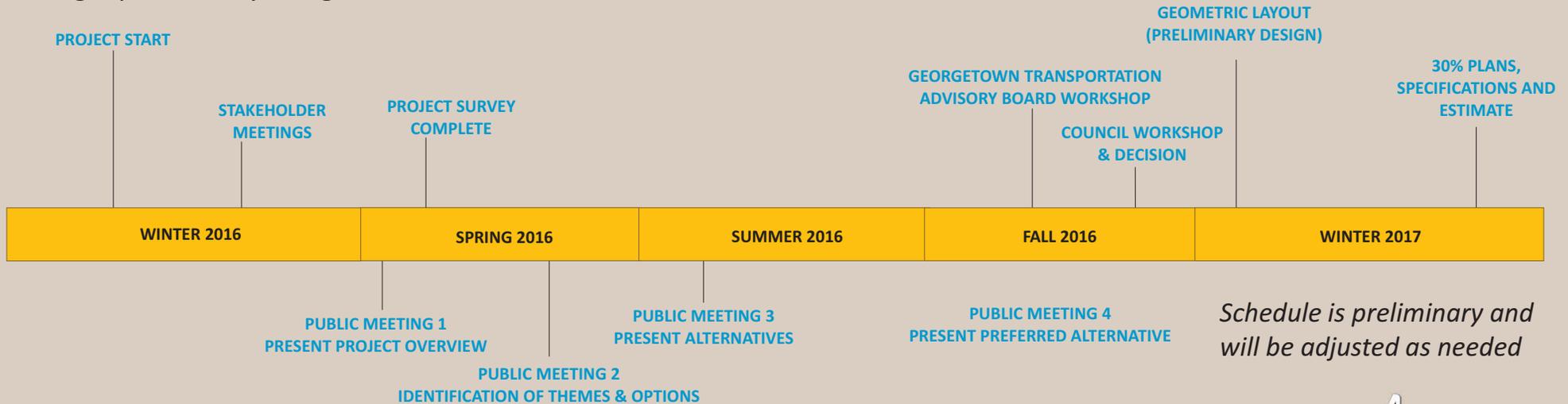
**AUSTIN AVENUE BRIDGES PROJECT**  
GEORGETOWN, TEXAS



# PROJECT OVERVIEW & PROCESS

This project is following the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) which includes working with the public through a range of alternatives to identify the preferred solution. Project elements include:

- Conducting a robust public involvement process
- Initiation of environmental services required by NEPA
- Collection of survey data, right-of-way mapping, and utility locating
- Identifying a range of alternatives for both short and long term solutions that will include options for no build, maintenance, rehabilitation, replacement, and various other alternatives
- Evaluation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Development of themes including landscape architecture and concept rendering
- Preparation of alternatives and cost estimates
- Identify preferred alternative
- City Council action on preferred alternative, subject to NEPA and other regulatory approvals
- Begin preliminary design



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# GOALS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

The City is working to identify the best solution for the Austin Avenue Bridges and is following the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Following the NEPA process, this study will evaluate many different alternatives to address deterioration, safety, mobility needs, and environmental regulations.

*Universe of Alternatives → Range of Alternatives → Preferred Alternative*

## Goals & Evaluation Criteria

Below are initial goals that will be used to develop evaluation criteria to evaluate the different alternatives. This preliminary list will be refined as we work with the public and through the project process.

### *Enhance Safety*

- Vehicular traffic using bridges
- Load restrictions and enforcement
- Pedestrian and bicycle traffic on bridges
- Trail users under bridges

### *Reduce Impacts*

- Temporary and long term impacts to business and property owners
- Impacts to the environment
- Impacts to historic resources
- Construction impacts
- Duration of construction
- Impacts to existing aesthetics

### *Meet Infrastructure Needs*

- Primary north and south thoroughfare
- Removing load restrictions
- Pedestrian and bicycle access to downtown and trails
- Improvements to function and operation
- Longevity of improvements
- Growth projections

### *Incorporate Enhancement*

- Provide a gateway to Historic Downtown
- Aesthetic opportunities
- Scenic viewing enhancement opportunities

### *Evaluate Cost*

- Short term cost benefit analysis
- Long term cost benefit analysis
- Possible funding sources



# NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA)

NEPA requires federal agencies and agencies receiving federal funds to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making final decisions on their projects. Agencies must evaluate the environmental, social, and economic effects of their proposed projects while providing opportunities for public review and comment on those evaluations.

## Agency Coordination

- Texas Department of Transportation - Austin District, Environmental Affairs Division
- Texas Historical Commission; Local and County Historic Organizations
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Texas Commission on Environment Quality
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- National Resources Conservation Service



## Environmental Considerations

- Right-of-Way / Displacements
- Land Use
- Farmland
- Air Quality Impacts
- Noise
- Utilities / Emergency Services
- Visual / Aesthetics
- Archeological Resources
- Water Quality
- Floodplains
- Soils and Geology
- Hazardous Materials
- Biological Environment - Wetlands, Wildlife, and Vegetation
- Threatened & Endangered Species
- Construction Impacts
- Indirect Impacts
- Cumulative Impacts
- Parks and Recreational Resources
- Historic Resources
- Community Impacts
- Changes in Travel Patterns
- Traffic and Transportation / Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities



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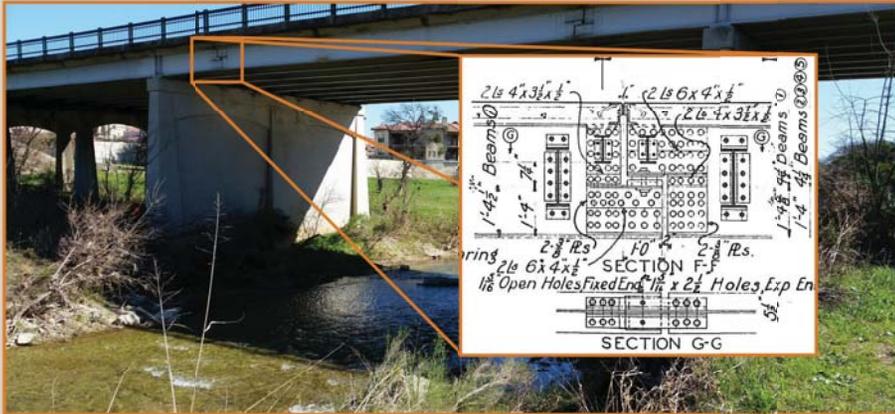


# HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

## New Bridges For Williamson Built Recently



"Bridges for Williamson Built Recently," Williamson County Sun, February 16, 1940. Accessed March 7, 2016. [www.newspapersarchive.com](http://www.newspapersarchive.com)



Riveted Notched Beam Seats

Cantilever Span

Cantilever Span

Suspended Span

- Two bridges constructed in 1940 over the North and South Forks of the San Gabriel River
- Determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1999
  - Good representative examples of the State Highway Department's utilization of a cantilevered-suspended span configuration
- Cantilevered-suspended span configuration
  - independent steel unit placed between cantilevered arms projecting beyond the main supports
  - connected together by riveted notched beam seats
- The advantage of configuration was that it enabled bridge to have significantly longer span and thinner deck, which reduced the number of the supports needed
- Noted significant features of bridges also include:
  - riveted beam seats suspending the cantilevered span
  - metal picket railings
  - Art Deco style inspired concrete bents

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# EXISTING CONDITIONS



**Bridge Load Restriction** means loads that exceed the posting will accelerate deterioration but do not pose imminent danger. Examples of vehicles that exceed limits are loaded garbage trucks, and 18 – wheelers.



**Concrete** breaks off and drops from the bridge superstructure. Temporary netting or wire mesh has been installed in an area of concern for safety of trail users.



**Deterioration** is visible in areas that will need to be addressed over time.



**Trail** is missing connections to Austin Avenue. **Sidewalk** on the bridge is four feet wide and does not meet standard accessibility and safety requirements.



**Bridge Joint** areas have been patched but continue to pop out and create pot holes.



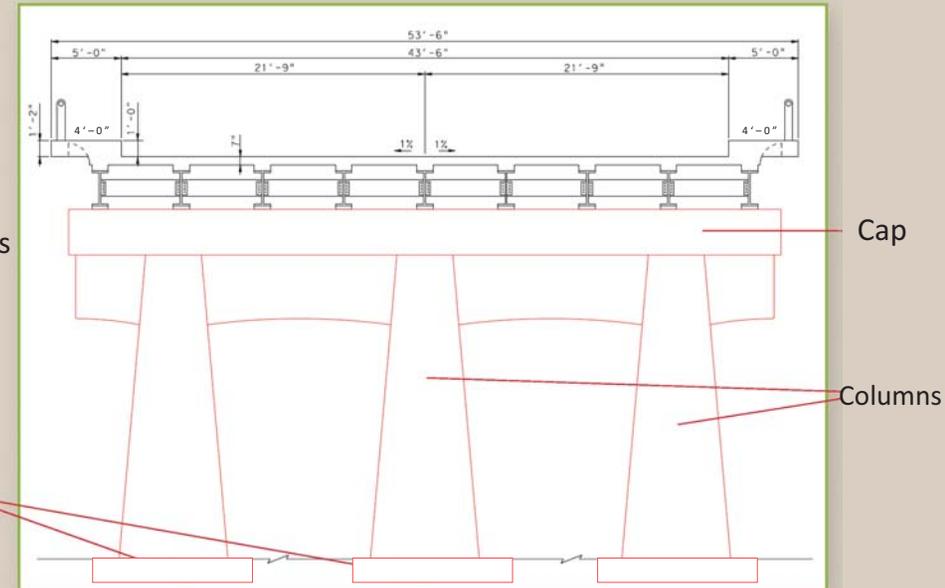
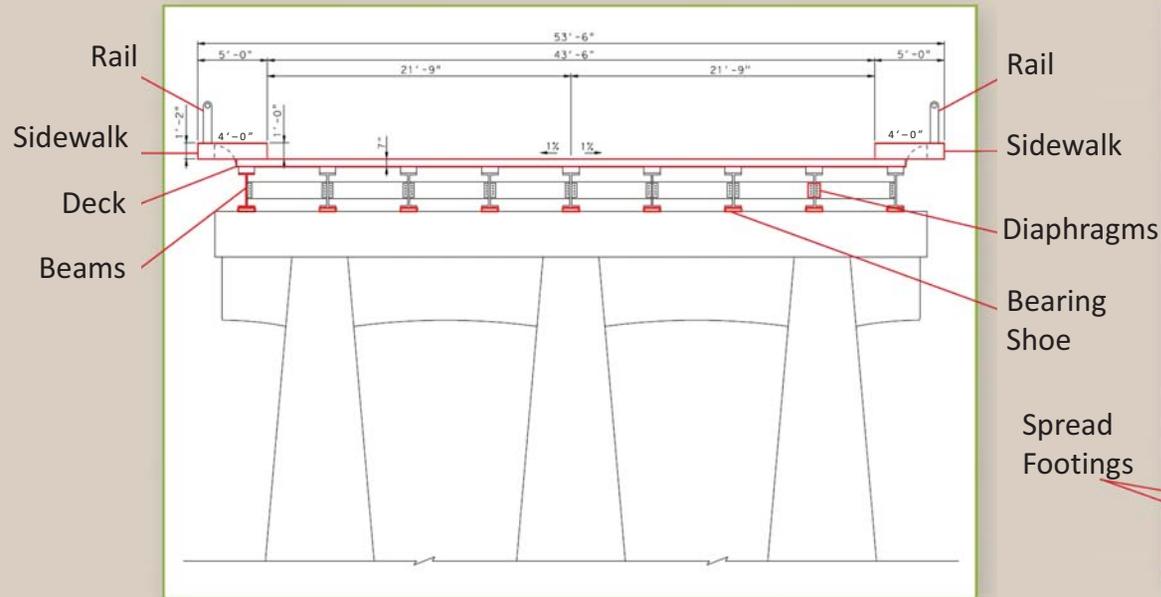
**Decorative Railing** on the bridge contained lead paint. The City performed lead abatement when the railings were repainted in 2009.



# EXISTING BRIDGE TYPICAL SECTIONS

## SUPERSTRUCTURE (TOP PORTION OF BRIDGE)

## SUBSTRUCTURE (SUPPORTING STRUCTURE)



# SHARE YOUR INPUT ON THE AUSTIN AVENUE BRIDGES

## Share Input on the Project

Take a survey here or access it from home via the project website: <http://AustinAve.Georgetown.org>

Share the survey link with those that might be interested.

Share general comments on a comment card or send them to us via email at: [AustinAve@georgetown.org](mailto:AustinAve@georgetown.org)

Leave your comments on the project maps.

## Share your Photos and Stories!

Do you have any photos or stories of the Austin Avenue Bridges? We would like to catalog these as a part of this project!

Send your photos to the team or use these hashtags to submit on social media:

[#georgetownxbridges](#)

[#austinavebridges](#)

[#austinavegeorgetown](#)

[#georgetowntx](#)



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