

Cass River Trailhead Park



The Fort Road and State Street Bridge

Pre-1906 a wooden floating bridge was used to cross the Cass River. The State Street Bridge was built in 1906 by the Joliet Bridge & Iron Company of Joliet, Illinois. The Township of Bridgeport paid about \$13,500 with tax money and financing through Second National Bank of Saginaw, starting in 1907, until the bridge was completely paid for in 1915.

The State Street Historic Bridge is a two-span, steel, Pratt through truss structure with pinned connections. Each span is 126-feet in length. This bridge is one of only six surviving late 19th and early 20th century multi-span through truss highway bridges left in Michigan, and one of two surviving examples of bridges in Michigan produced by the Joliet Bridge & Iron Company.



In 1927 the bridge's center beam was torn out by ice flowing down the Cass River. It was repaired in 1928 and two supports were built under the bridge and an ice breaker was built upstream. The ice-breaker is gone except for a few wooden pilings still visible today.

The State Street bridge served as the only access over the Cass River until 1958 when the Fort Road Bridge was constructed about 1/2 mile upstream. In 1969 the County Road Commission abandoned the State Street bridge and left it to the Township, it was closed to vehicular traffic in 1976.

It was turned into a pedestrian bridge, with repainting and repairs done by State Representative Robert D. Young and the Bridgeport Jaycees. The bridge was added to the National Register of Historic Places on November 29, 1995. The bridge was closed in 2002, due to safety concerns.



A Transportation Enhancement Grant was awarded to the Township in 2009 which allowed for a complete restoration of the bridge. In 2010, the State Street Bridge was taken off its supports and moved to near the Post Office where it was disassembled and restored. Meanwhile, new abutments and piers were constructed in the river bed.

The restored bridge was put back into place in 2010, the deck was replaced, and finally, the bridge was opened to the public in November 2010. The complete restoration of the bridge cost \$2.3 million. The Township held a ribbon cutting ceremony on June 12, 2011.

Today, the State Street Historic Bridge is the number one restored iron bridge in the State of Michigan, containing at least 80% of the original parts. This bridge is one of the most important survivors of metal truss bridges because it is in its original location and due to its large size in comparison with other surviving examples in Michigan. The Bridge is a main component of the non-motorized trail in Bridgeport and is also part of the statewide Iron-Belle Trail.



Site Sponsors

- Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund
- Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative (WIN)
- Harvey Randall Wickes Foundation
- Frank N. Andersen Foundation
- William McNally Family Foundation
- Bridgeport Charter Township DDA
- Bridgeport Charter Township

