

US 281 Bridgeport Bridge over South Canadian River *Initial Section 106 Consulting Party Meeting*

Meeting Date: June 26, 2015	Time: 10:15 a.m.
Location: State Historic Preservation Office Board Room Oklahoma History Center 800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive, Oklahoma City, OK 73105	
Project: US 281 Bridgeport Bridge over South Canadian River Blaine, Caddo, and Canadian Counties, OK	

In Attendance (20 Total):

Name	Organization/Affiliation
Scott Stegmann, Don Steel, David Neuhauser	CP&Y
Scott Sundermeyer	ODOT Env. Programs: Cultural Resources
Siv Sundaram, Dawn Sullivan	ODOT Environmental Programs
Brian Taylor	ODOT Field Division 4
Steve Jacobi	ODOT Bridge Division
Daniel Nguyen	ODOT Project Management Division
John Hartley, Randy Leonard (via phone)	FHWA
Melvina Heisch, Lynda Ozan, Cate Wood	State Historic Preservation Office
Kris Marek	Oklahoma Tourism & Recreation Dept.
David Pettyjohn	Preservation Oklahoma, Inc.
Kitty Henderson (via phone)	Historic Bridge Foundation
Kaisa Barthuli (via phone)	NPS: Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program
Wes Kinsler	Oklahoma Historic Bridge & Highway Group
Brad Nickson (via phone)	Oklahoma Route 66 Association

A Section 106 consulting party meeting for the US Bridgeport Bridge over South Canadian River was held at 10:15 a.m. at the Oklahoma History Center's State Historic Preservation Office on June 26, 2015. The meeting attendance roster was signed by 16 people, with four attendees appearing telephonically.

Purpose

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the need, purpose, and challenges posed by the proposed project involving the US 281 Bridgeport Bridge along the Bridgeport Hill-Hydro Route 66 Segment Historic District. In addition to discussing the bridge's decline as a functionally and structurally sound structure, the significance of the bridge and adjacent roadway corridor as both

iconic historic features and contributors to the region's tourism economy was also addressed. Initial input regarding ways to reconcile the needs, complexity, and constraints of the project was sought from the involved parties.

Presentation

Scott Sundermeyer, ODOT, opened the meeting with introductions and provided an overview of the proposed project, including the project's overarching need and purpose. To demonstrate the importance of preserving the bridge and adjacent roadway as a tourist destination, Mr. Sundermeyer touched on the bridge's existing condition and the historical character of the project site. With respect to the project's legal context, Mr. Sundermeyer identified the regulatory mechanisms that would guide the planning process, specifically Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 and Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966. Following Mr. Sundermeyer's introduction, David Neuhauser, CP&Y, elaborated on the bridge's structural deficiencies and functional obsolescence based on recent ratings and current standards. According to Mr. Neuhauser, the stress of daily loads and the types/amounts of traffic that the bridge receives has led to the need for continuous and costly maintenance of the deteriorating steel structure. Moreover, Mr. Neuhauser advised that the bridge is not appropriate for current traffic needs per AASHTO guidelines, which specifies a 36 foot minimum width (versus the bridge's current width of 24 feet).

The presentation then jumped back to Mr. Sundermeyer, who discussed Section 4(f) in more depth, highlighting the statute's stipulation that alternatives must be pursued when a DOT project involves a historically significant resource. Mr. Sundermeyer also emphasized the drivability of the bridge as having contributed to the significance of the proposed project and its subsequent alternatives—beyond its aesthetic appeal, the structure's association with Route 66 and the drive along the roadway corridor in and of itself afforded historical value to the region. Moving on, Mr. Sundermeyer and Mr. Neuhauser described the four proposed alternatives and various challenges associated with each of them. To supplement this description, Mr. Sundermeyer provided an analysis of the ways in which the bridge's viewshed would be altered depending on the chosen alternative.

To conclude, Mr. Sundermeyer outlined the next steps that would take place in the planning and design process. At the conclusion of the presentation, the floor was opened to questions from the involved parties.

Discussion

The involved parties expressed overall support for the US 281 Bridgeport Bridge project—there was a general consensus that the chosen alternative must, at a minimum, retain some form of traffic on the bridge, thereby ensuring historical continuity along the Bridgeport Hill-Hydro Route 66 Segment Historic District. However, several attendees expressed concern regarding the most appropriate approach for achieving this, specifically the feasibility of rehabilitating the bridge versus constructing an entirely new structure. Below is a summary of the main comments communicated at the meeting.

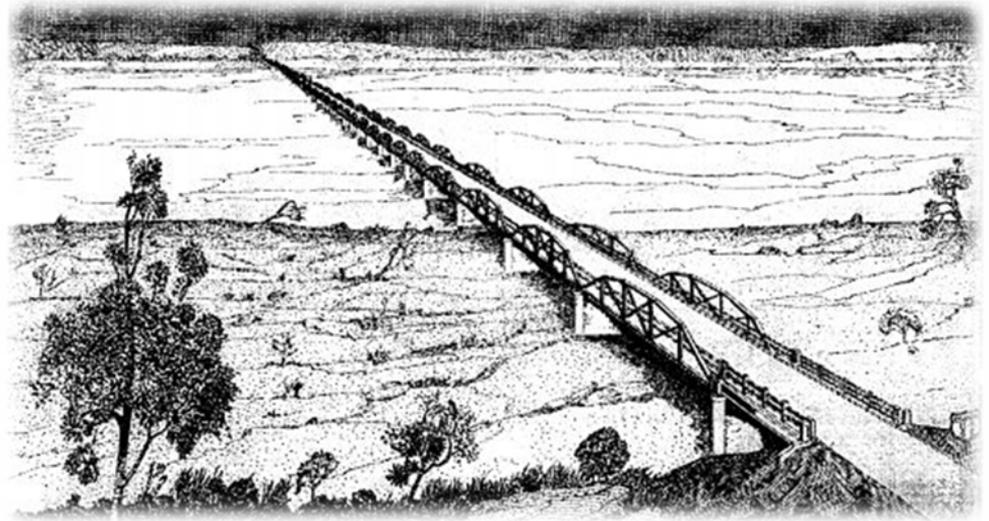
- **Kris Marek** commented on the great attraction that Route 66 represents, which is illustrated by the 47,000 individuals that requested a copy of the Route 66 Brochure in the last year. Ms. Marek also alluded to the value of more research on the regional economic significance of Route 66 and the potential for obtaining voluntary data from business vendors that are closely tied to the amenities found along the corridor.
- **Melvena Heisch** referred to a study completed by Preservation Oklahoma/SHPO in January of 2009 that analyzed the economic impacts of historic preservation programs statewide. This particular study included a chapter on heritage tourism, which touched on Route 66. Ms. Heisch also indicated that the NPS performed an economic study related to Route 66 in 2012. Although conservative estimates were utilized in this report, Ms. Heisch believed that this data attested to the economic importance of the roadway. Ms. Heisch wrapped up her comments by stressing the need to look at rehabilitating the bridge before other options are pursued.
- **Brad Nickson** agreed with Ms. Heisch in that rehabilitation of the bridge must be presented as a higher, if not preferred, option. Additionally, Mr. Nickson expressed concern that constructing a new bridge would radically alter the viewshed.
- **John Hartley** advised that in order to obtain federal funds for the project, the rehabilitation option will have to meet current standards, which require widening of the bridge and thus a significant degree of transformation. Doing so, however, will compromise the historic qualities of the bridge which have caused it to be historic.
- **Randy Leonard** confirmed that there was no feasible way to widen/rehabilitate the bridge without rendering it no longer historic (historic, in this instance, meaning eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places).
- **Melvena Heisch**, in response, expressed concern for what will happen to the historic bridge if a new alignment is chosen. In her opinion, although changes will have to be made that may diminish the historic character of the site, the community will still benefit more from a preservation outcome should the structure not be abandoned and moved a quarter of a mile away.
- **Brian Taylor** recognized the need to leave the bridge in place, but indicated that rehabilitation was not a feasible option. Instead, he suggested that the bridge be improved to a level at which passenger vehicles and motorcycles will be able to continue accessing it. Mr. Taylor also opined that it was in the state's best interest to take the bridge off of its transportation system.
- **David Pettyjohn** inquired as to who would take the bridge if it was taken off of the state's transportation system. In response, **Brian Taylor** advised that this question remains to be determined.
- **Dawn Sullivan** acknowledged that the bridge will need to be rehabilitated regardless of what alternative is selected.
- **Brian Taylor** suggested that taking truck traffic off of the bridge will greatly benefit the life of the bridge.
- **David Pettyjohn** commented on Preservation Oklahoma's annual Most Endangered Historic Places list and indicated that the Bridgeport Bridge was on this year's list. In addition to the safety issues threatening the bridge, Mr. Pettyjohn echoed the sentiment that the economic benefits of Route 66 elicit considerable attention.

- There was a discussion amongst several attendees regarding the viewshed experience along Route 66, and in particular, the historic and natural image that drivers encounter along this section of the corridor. **Dawn Sullivan** suggested that the viewshed be analyzed from other aspects instead of only the bridge.
- **John Hartley** indicated that this is the first time ODOT has approached a historic bridge issue with the idea of valuing the historic bridge and pursuing a mechanism for preserving it. Mr. Hartley further reiterated that the best compromise would be to preserve the bridge and allow access by pedestrians, small cars, and motorcycles while simultaneously directing heavier traffic to a newer, safer facility.
- **Kitty Henderson** asked whether the bridge is currently load posted. ODOT replied that it was not. Ms. Henderson followed-up this response by asking what the load capability of the bridge is. ODOT indicated that the bridge was not load posted for any of their legal loads. Ms. Henderson then asked whether the option of a one-way pair had been considered. **Steve Jacobi** answered that it is an alternative they are considering. However, the issue of heavy truck traffic and the effects of the viewshed with a new bridge parallel to the old bridge remain concerns. Lastly, Ms. Henderson inquired about the potential for design exceptions per AASHTO guidelines. **Randy Leonard** suggested this option is possible, but only in terms of design exceptions that address functional issues, not structural aspects.
- **Kaisa Barthuli** inquired into how the bridge is actually functioning with respect to safety concerns and whether there is a documented accident history. **Brian Taylor** advised that there are accident records associated with the bridge and how narrow it is. Mr. Taylor also suggested that this data be readily available on the project website. Ms. Barthuli stressed the importance of such information, especially when comparing safety records to other minor arterials with similar usage. Ms. Barthuli also indicated that the bridge was potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a property of national significance (it is currently listed as a property of statewide significance) and additionally as a National Historic Landmark (as a part of the Route 66 corridor). Ms. Barthuli concluded by advocating for preservation of the existing bridge for vehicular use regardless of what option is selected.

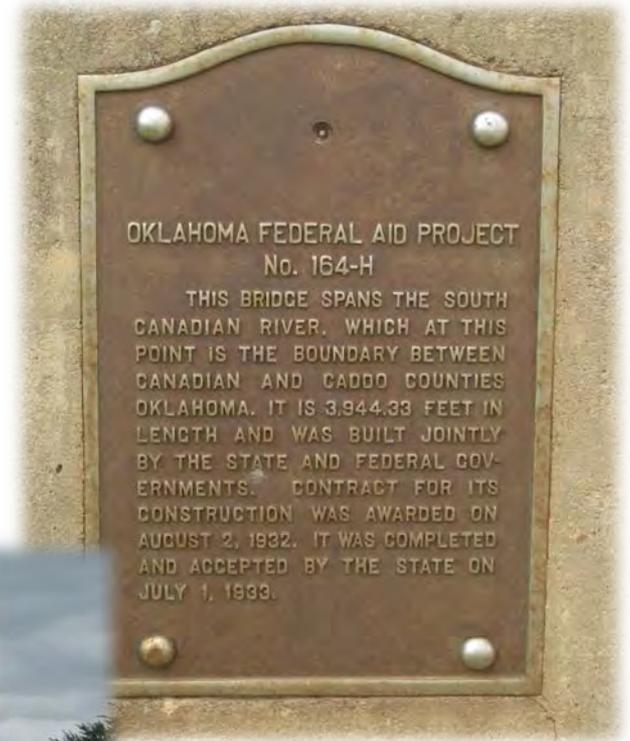
Consulting Party Meeting

US-281 Bridgeport Bridge over the
South Canadian River

Friday June 26, 2015



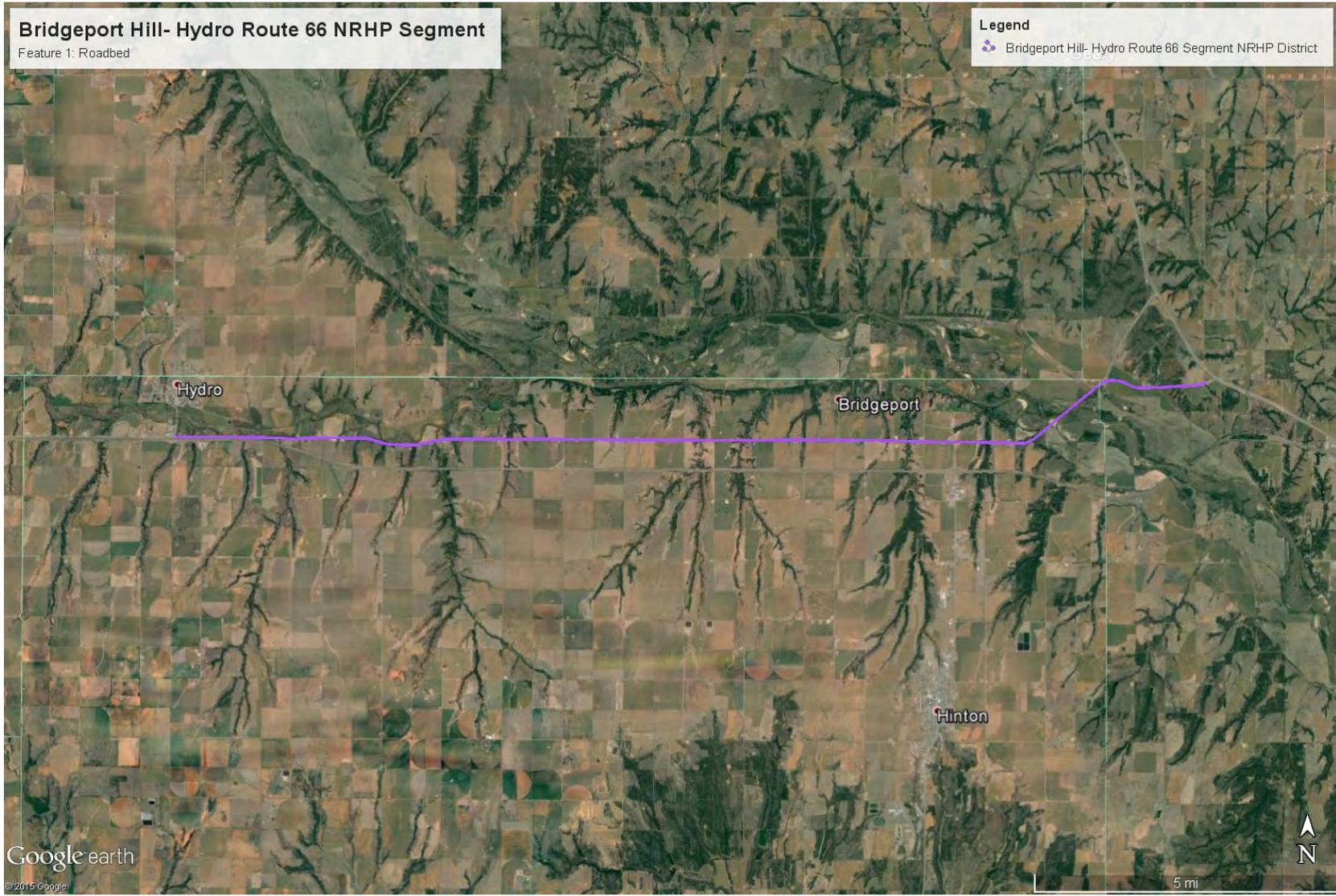
US-281 Bridgeport Bridge



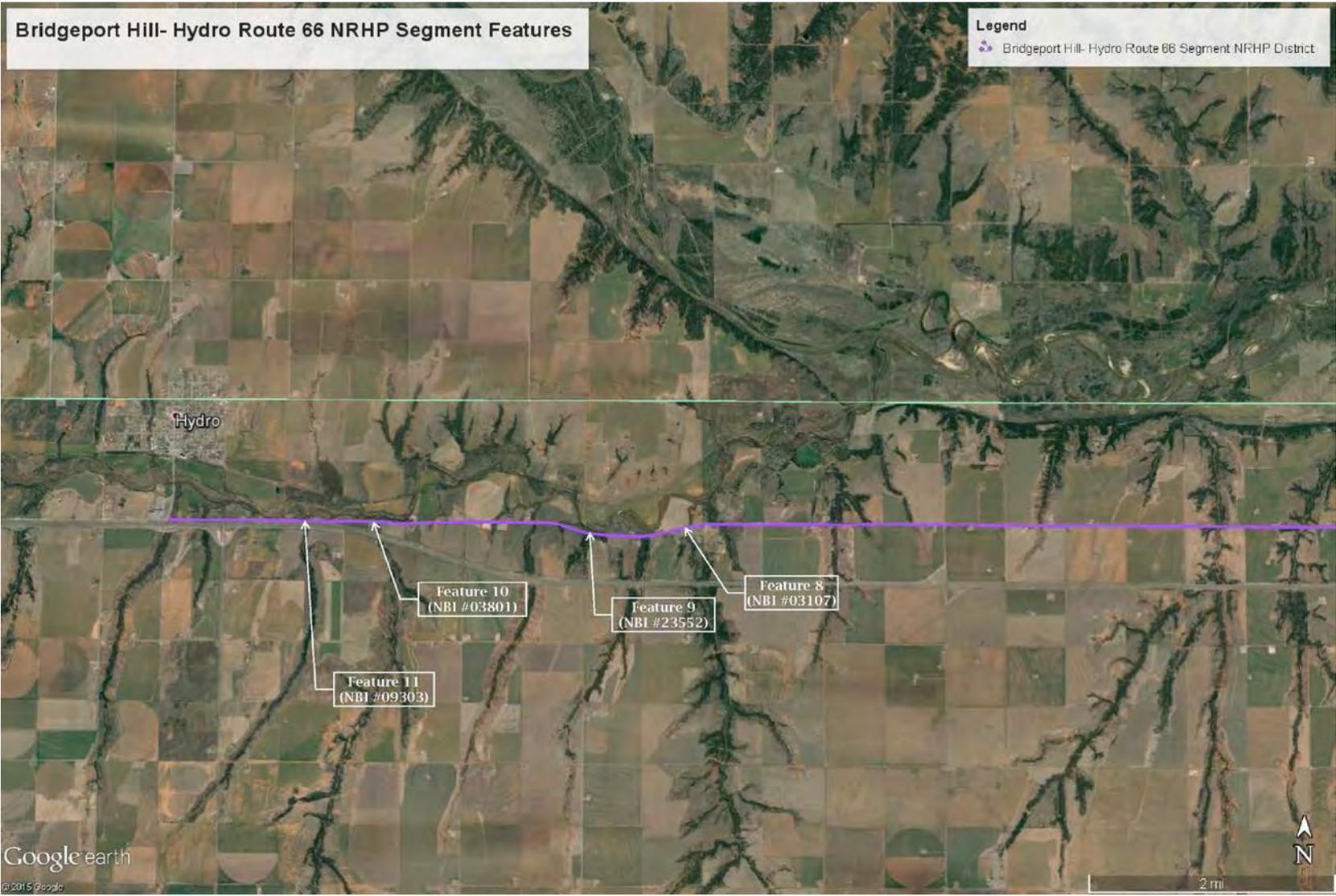
US-281 Bridge over South Canadian River:

- Also known as:
 - **The Bridgeport Bridge*
 - The Grapes of Wrath Bridge
 - The William H. Murray Bridge
 - “The Pony Bridge”
- Constructed in 1932-1933, put into use in 1934
- 38-Span Camelback Pony Truss Bridge, 2nd Longest Bridge still in existence in Oklahoma
- A contributing feature of the NRHP-listed 17.7-mile-long Bridgeport Hill-Hydro Route 66 Segment Historic District AND is individually eligible
- **Arguably the most historically significant bridge still standing in Oklahoma**

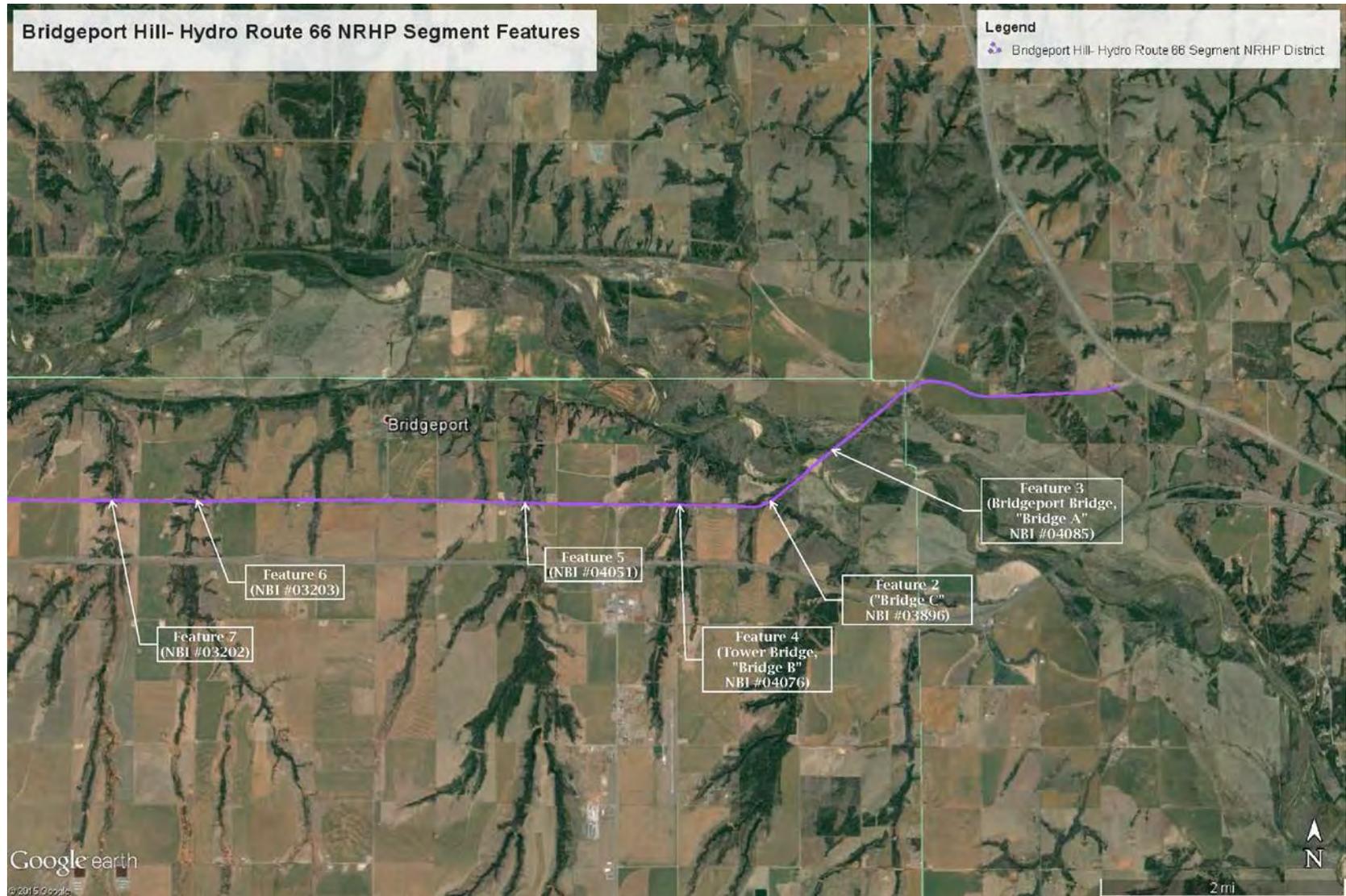
Bridgeport Hill-Hydro NRHP District: Feature 1 Roadbed



Bridgeport Hill-Hydro NRHP District Features (West)



Bridgeport Hill-Hydro NRHP District (East)



Purpose and Need of the project:

Purpose:

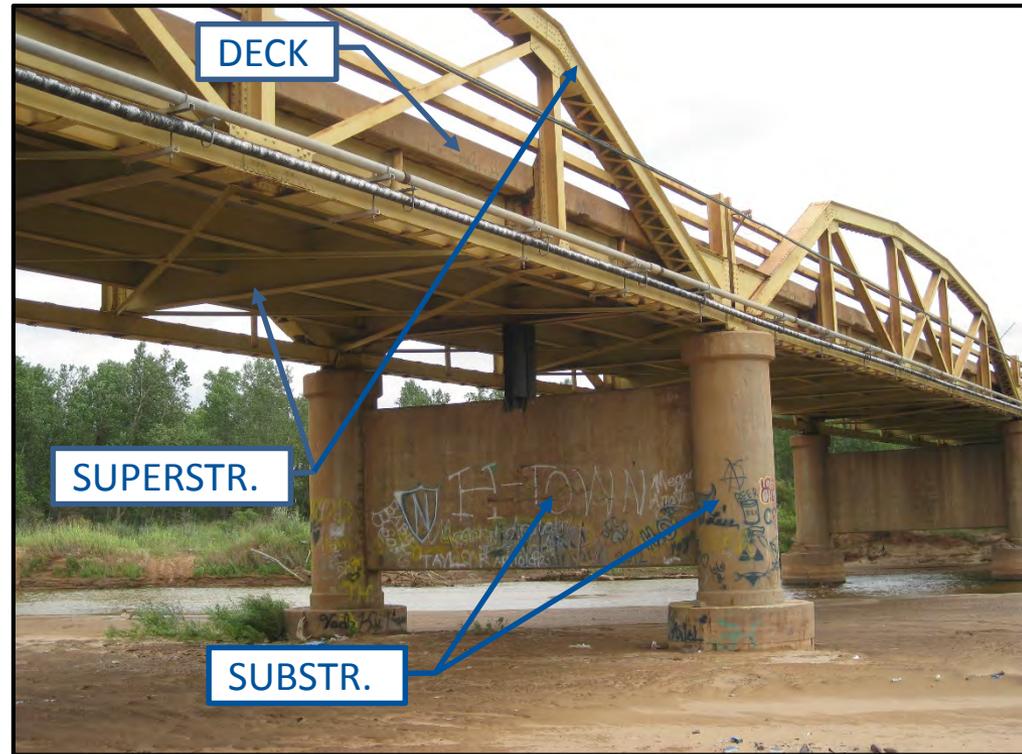
To provide a structurally safe bridge that meets current design standards, and to preserve Route 66 as a tourist destination in Oklahoma

Need:

The existing bridge is structurally deficient and functionally obsolete, and the Bridgeport Bridge and adjacent roadway segments are iconic historic features integral to the regional tourism economy.

Structurally Deficient

- Bridge Inspection Reports
 - Routine and Fracture Critical
 - Other Special
- Condition Ratings
 - Deck = 5 (Fair)
 - Superstructure = 4 (Poor)
 - Substructure = 5 (Fair)
- Functionally Obsolete
 - Existing 24 ft. Roadway
 - 1,100 Vehicles Per Day/ 16% Trucks
 - Rural Minor Arterial
 - AASHTO Guidelines: 36 ft. Minimum Roadway



Photograph 36 - Looking south at west U1, span 31. Note: the inboard flange of U1L2 has a tear as a result of collision damage and the inboard gusset plate has two gouges.

Maintenance Repairs

- Last Month:
 - 5 Repairs
 - 200+ Man Hours
 - \$10,000 Cost
- Previous 6 Months:
 - 1,100+ Man Hours
 - \$53,000 Cost
- Last 3 Years Total:
 - 2,800+ Man Hours
 - \$130,000 Cost



Photograph 23 - Looking northeast at floor beam 4, span 16 at the east truss connection. Note: 3 1/2-inch vertical by 4 1/4-inch horizontal corrosion hole through the floor beam web at the connection to the truss.

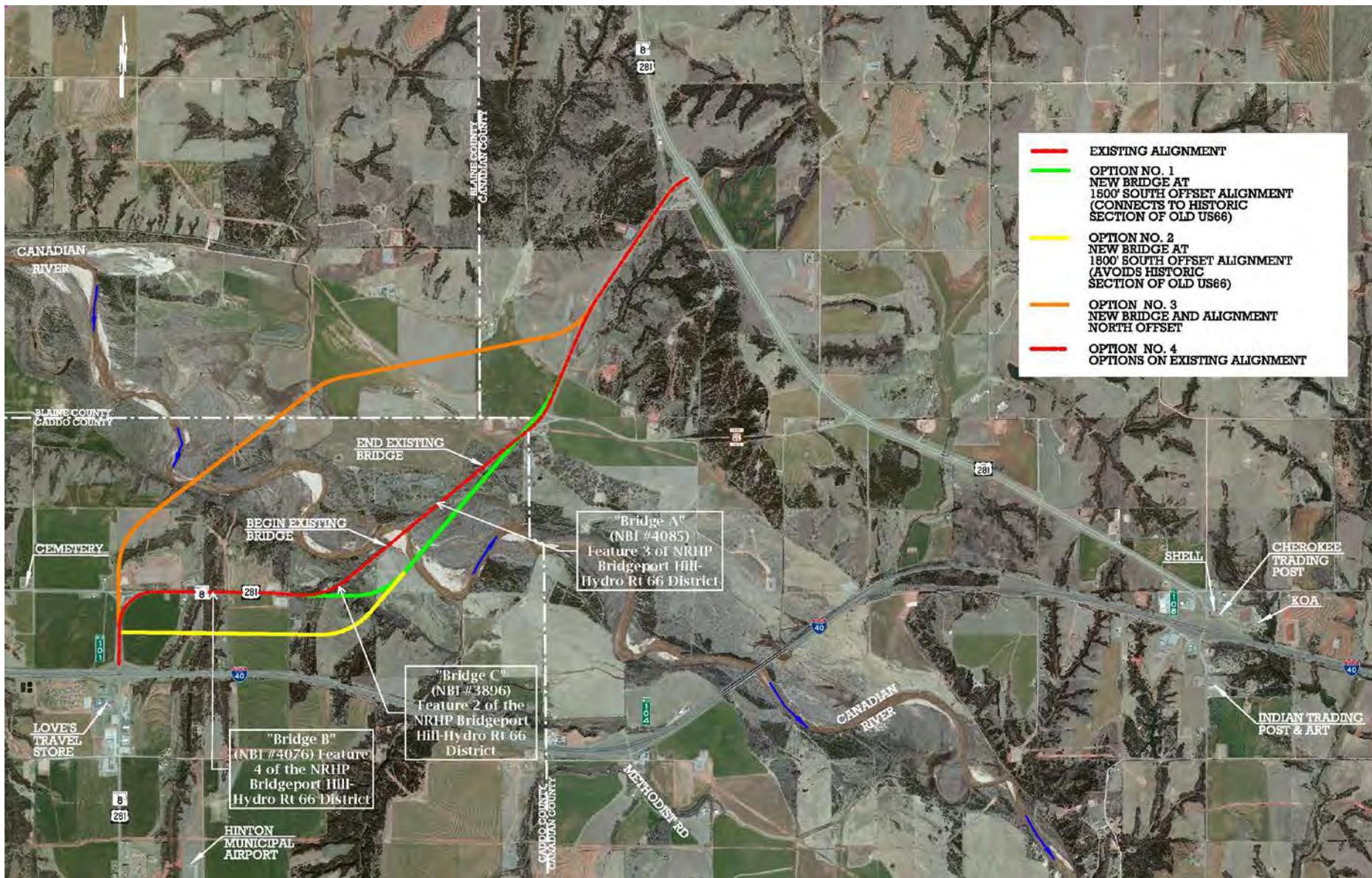


Photograph 14 - Looking northwest at span 2, L0, east truss, inboard gusset plate. Note: Crack has grown 5 7/8 inches since 2013 bringing the crack to 15 1/8 inches total length.

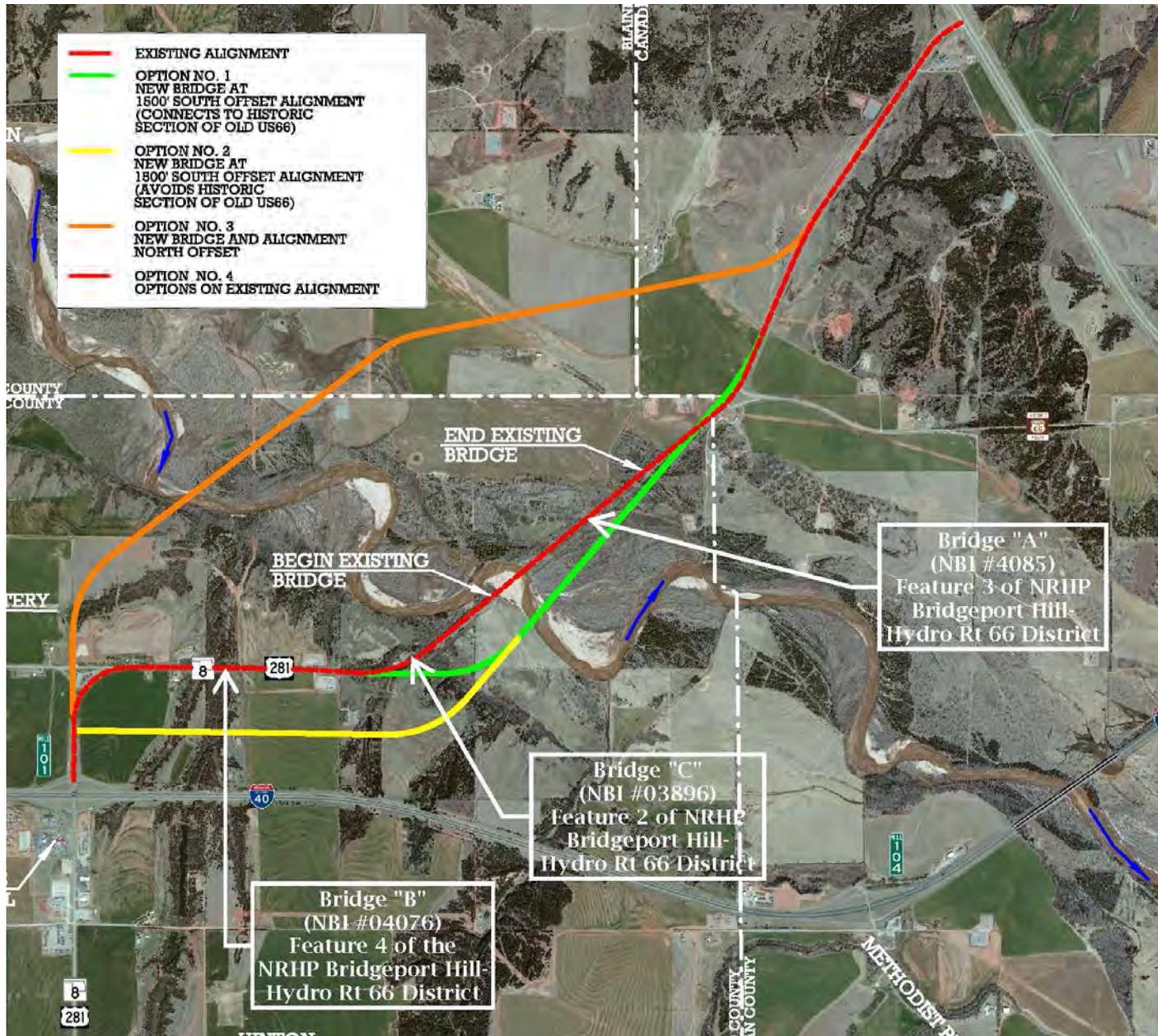
Alternatives to Consider

- Section 4(f) USDOT Act 1966:
 - Stipulates that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other DOT agencies cannot approve the use of land from publicly owned parks, recreational areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, or public and private **historical sites** unless there is no feasible and prudent avoidance alternative
- Historic Bridges (three alternatives must be considered):
 - Do Nothing
 - Build a new structure at a different location without affecting the historic integrity* of the old bridge
 - Rehabilitate the historic bridge without affecting historic integrity* of the structure
 - *as determined by procedures implementing NHPA

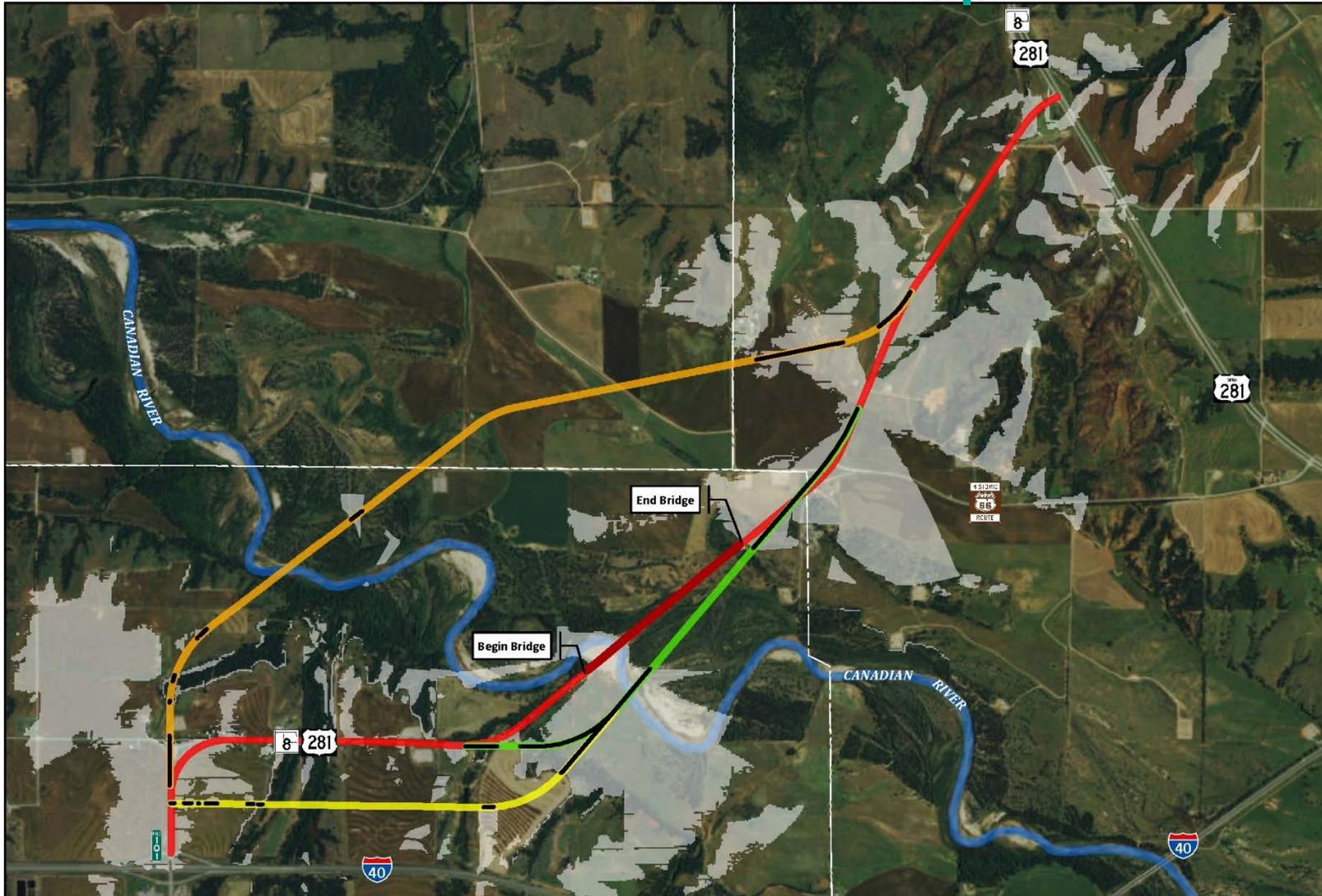
Proposed Alternatives



Proposed Alternatives: Closer View

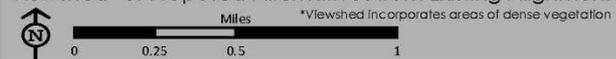


Viewshed Aerial Map



US 281 over South Canadian River

Viewshed* of Proposed Alternatives from Existing Alignment



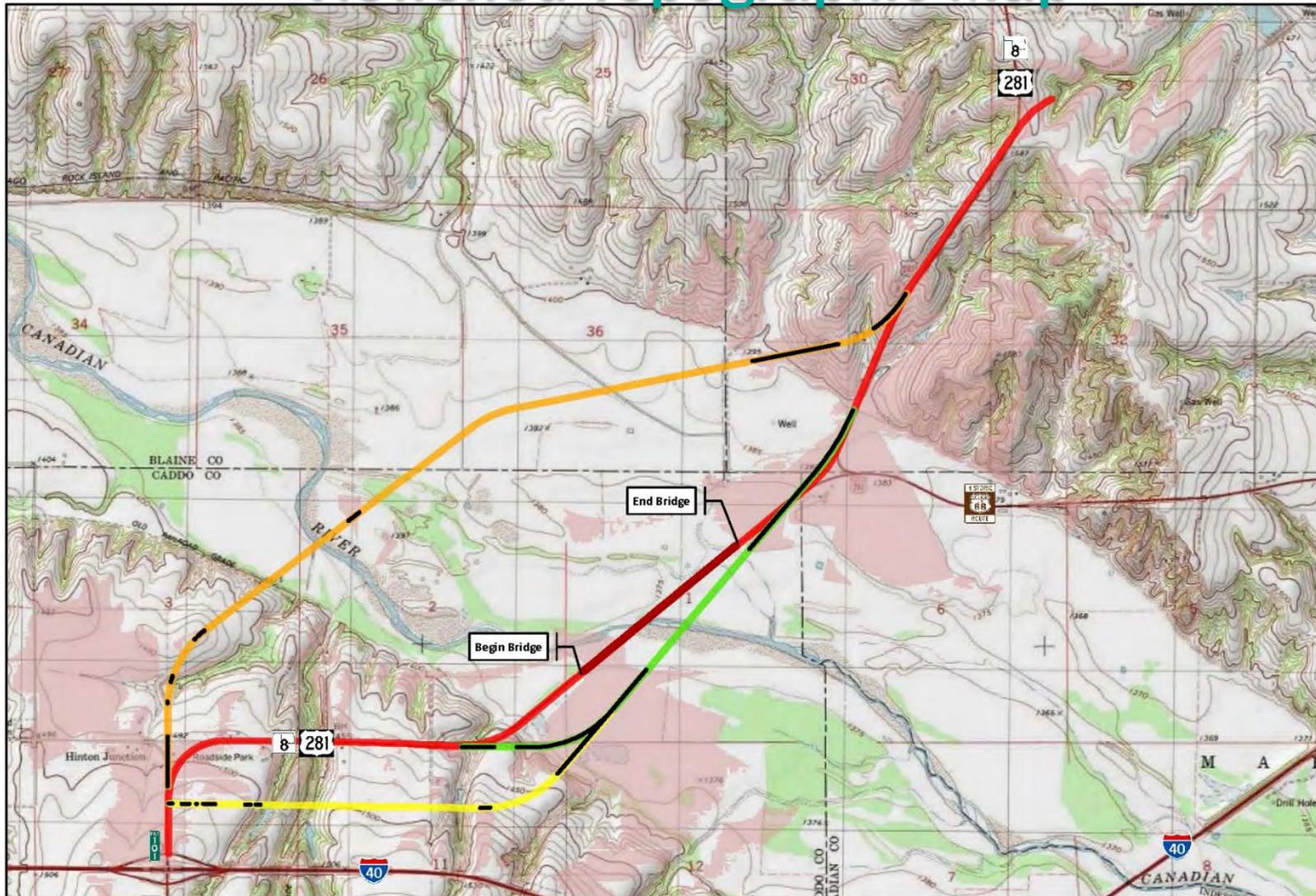
- Visible Segments of Alternative
- Visible Area from Existing Alignment
- Existing Alignment

Proposed Alternatives

- Option No. 1
- Option No. 2
- Option No. 3

USGS 10m DEM, ESRI World Imagery

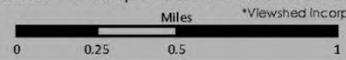
Viewshed Topographic Map



US 281 over South Canadian River

Viewshed* of Proposed Alternatives from Existing Alignment

*Viewshed Incorporates areas of dense vegetation



- Visible Segments of Alternative
- Visible Area from Existing Alignment
- Existing Alignment

Proposed Alternatives

- Option No. 1
- Option No. 2
- Option No. 3

USGS 10m DEM, USGS Quad South Geary, ESRI Topo

Next Steps

- Gather Input: *Ongoing*
- Gather Reconnaissance Data (Summer 2015)
- Draft Cultural Resources Reconnaissance Report (Summer 2015)
- Draft Design Alternatives Report (Spring 2016)
 - Field Meeting (Spring 2016)
- Section 106 Consulting Party Meeting (Summer 2016)
 - Public Meeting (Fall 2016)
- Selection of Preferred Alternative (Winter 2016)

Project Website

ODOTculturalresources.info/bridgeportbridge.html

- Check website for access to project information and reports as they are available
- Provide comments via website

We value your input!