

# ROCK ISLAND SWING BRIDGE

## AN ANALYSIS OF ADAPTIVE REUSE

Dakota and Washington Counties are studying removal of the Rock Island Swing Bridge, and Dakota County is exploring the potential reuse of the western approach as a recreational pier that extends into the Mississippi River. The reuse study is in progress and Dakota County has not yet taken an official position on reuse or removal of the structure. At this time, there are no funds available to restore the western approach as a recreational pier.

This brochure highlights the unique design and historic importance of the bridge, as well as potential recreational reuse opportunities from the reuse study.

### Historic bridge facts

- 1,661 feet long
- 440 foot swing section
- Rare bridge design with rail on top deck, road on bottom
- Served historic South St. Paul stockyards
- Owned by state of Minnesota
- Managed by Dakota and Washington counties
- Built in 1894
- Slated for demolition in Winter 2008



### Local context and public investment

Within the direct vicinity of the bridge there will be upwards of \$30 million of public investment over the next five years. This public investment will transform this area and attract additional private investment. Public investment includes:

- Concord Reconstruction (Great River Road)
- Mississippi River Regional Trail
- Heritage Riverfront Park

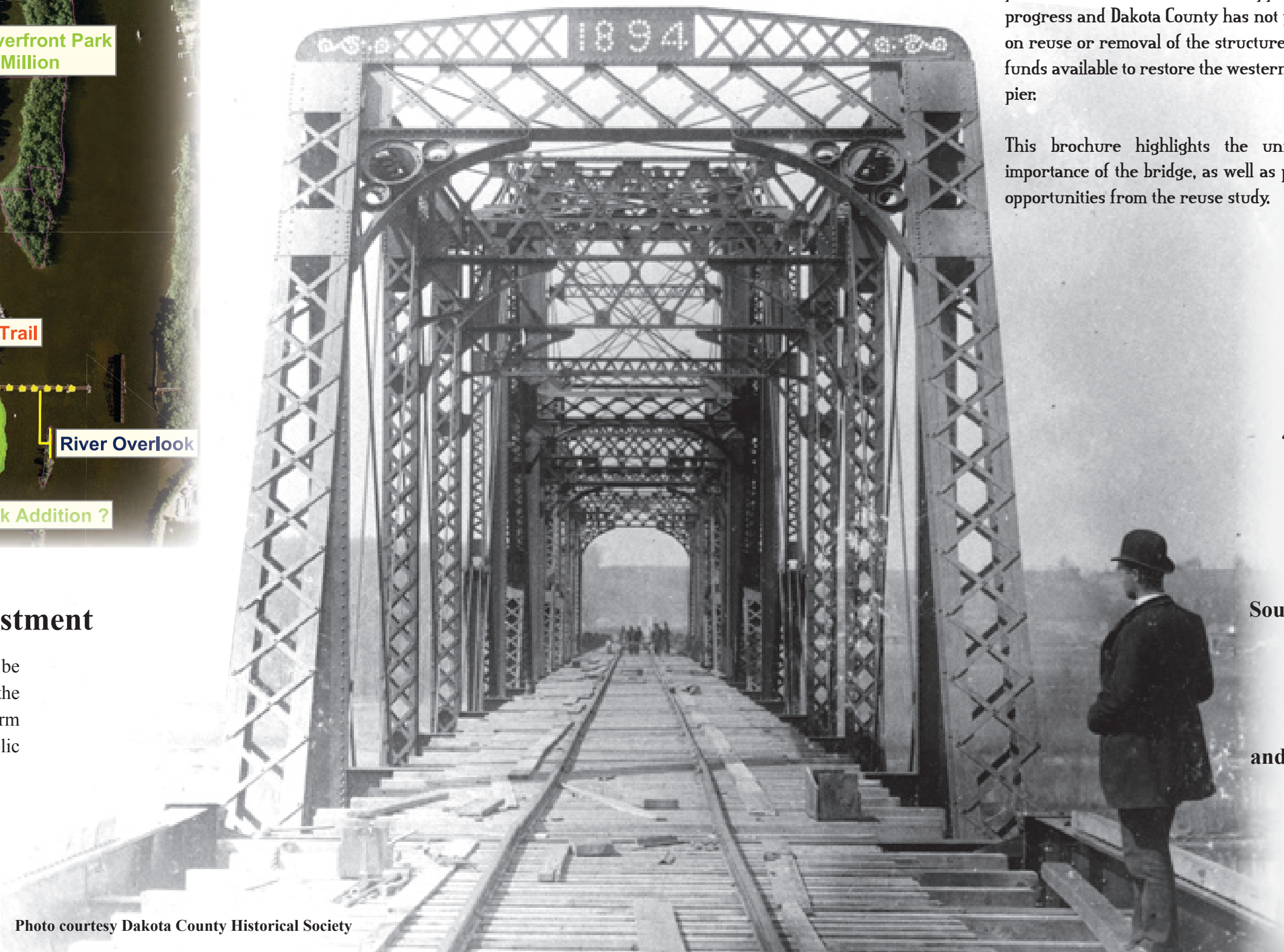


Photo courtesy Dakota County Historical Society



# An Analysis of Adaptive Reuse

In 2007 Dakota and Washington County initiated a study to determine the costs and procedures necessary for bridge removal. In addition the study evaluated the cost and feasibility of reusing the western approach sections as a permanent 700 foot pedestrian river pier. The draft study indicates that it is feasible to reuse the western sections of the bridge.

Public officials and residents have recognized the bridge as an opportunity to create a unique river experience for users of the Mississippi River Regional Trail and the new Heritage Riverfront Park. The 700 foot pedestrian river pier could provide a historic interpretive opportunity as well as a place for community gatherings on the Mississippi River. Currently this section of the Mississippi River does not have good public access. It is envisioned that such a river amenity would provide access for people of all ages and incomes to walk, fish, bird-watch and enjoy the one-of-a-kind river views provided by this historic bridge.



## The math

- Full removal, no reuse** \$5M to \$5.5M
- Partial removal, single-deck reuse** \$6M to \$7M

*Based on 2007 draft bridge Reuse Summary Report prepared for Dakota and Washington counties*

Looking east, toward Washington County side



Potential partners in future of the Rock Island Swing Bridge:

- United States Coast Guard
- Inver Grove Heights
- St. Paul Park
- State of Minnesota (DNR) & (MNDOT)
- Washington County
- National Park Service (MNRRA)
- Army Corps of Engineers
- Dakota County
- Minnesota Historical Society
- Metropolitan Council
- McKnight Foundation
- Dakota County Historical Society

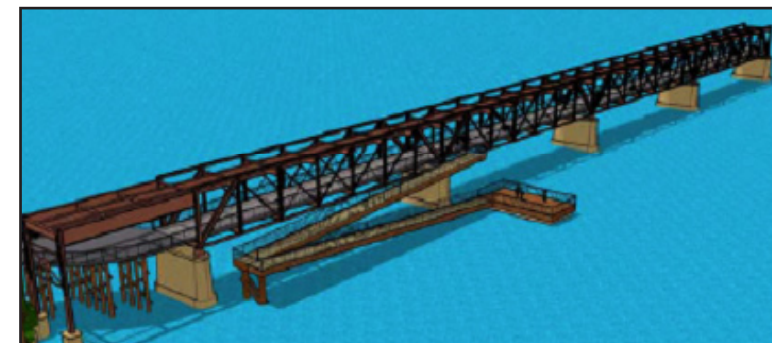
View from lower deck



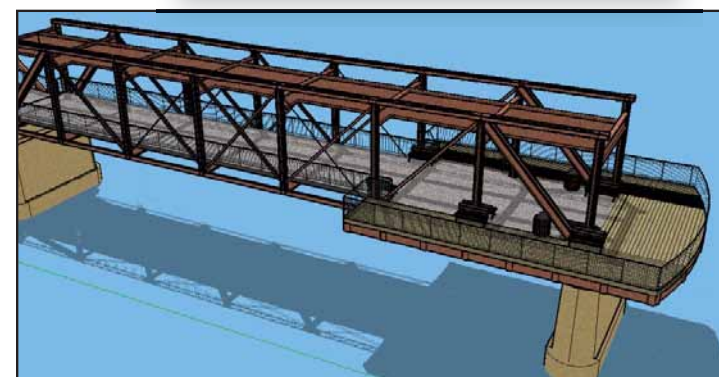
View from upper deck



Community gathering space



Four-span reuse concept



Single-deck reuse concept

Long river views



## Why reuse the bridge?

- Adjacent to Mississippi River Regional Trail
- Great river views in area without good access
- Supports other investment in the area
- Adjacent to Great River Road

Rock Island Swing Bridge completed

Carries trains, horse-powered vehicles

John Dillinger eludes police using the bridge  
Carries trains, motor vehicles

Rock Island RR goes bankrupt

Operates as J.A.R. toll bridge

MNDOT orders bridge closed

Bridge in tax forfeiture

Fate of Rock Island Swing Bridge decided

1860s

1870s

1880s

1890s

1900s

1910s

1920s

1930s

1940s

1950s

1960s

1970s

1980s

1990s

2000s

Minnesota statehood

World War I

Great Depression

World War II

President Kennedy assassinated

Soviet Union falls