



## City of Loveland

Community and Strategic Planning  
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### Loveland City Council Staff Report

From: Marc Cittone, Community and Strategic Planning  
Meeting Date: May 1, 2007  
Re: Nomination for Historic Landmark Property Designation

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#### **SITE DATA**

**Address:** Bridge Crossing Big Thompson River at 700 S. Railroad Ave, Loveland, Colorado

**Request:** Application for Historic Landmark Property Designation

**Historic Name:** Fairgrounds Bridge

**Architectural Style:** Pratt through truss bridge

**Current Building Sq. Ft.:** N/A

**Construction Date:** 1915

**Legal Description:** The Pratt Through Truss Bridge crossing the Big Thompson River, depicted in the Map in attachment A, Fairgrounds Third Addition, recorded at reception number 955074, book 1396, page 128, City of Loveland, County of Larimer, State of Colorado.

**Owner(s):** City of Loveland  
500 E 3<sup>rd</sup> St.  
Loveland, CO 80537

**Applicant:** City of Loveland Parks & Recreation Department

**Application Summary:**

On January 31, 2007 Parks & Recreation Department staff submitted the application for nomination. As the owner is the City of Loveland, staff did not mail a certified letter as generally required by ordinance. The Community and Strategic Planning Division published notice of the public hearing for designation of the landmark property in the *Loveland Reporter-Herald*, and physically posted a sign at the property as required by ordinance.

Larimer County Assessor records identifies the property at the following address: 700 S. Railroad Ave., Loveland, Colorado. This application refers only to the Fairgrounds Bridge for which a separate parcel has not been created. See attached map.

**History:**

*Sources:*

*Larimer County Fairground Historic Overview and Survey Report, prepared by Carl McWilliams, Cultural resource Historians, June/November 2004.*

The bridge exhibits the distinctive characteristics of a Pratt Truss bridge. Patented in 1844 by Caleb and Thomas Pratt, the Pratt configuration had become the most popular bridge type throughout America by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The bridge's superstructure was constructed by Omaha Steel Works, and bridge was completed by G.E. Washburn of the Lowith Iron Works. It is the oldest Pratt through truss in Colorado which is still capable of carrying vehicular traffic.

The bridging of the Big Thompson River at First street occurred in 1915, and the bridge continued to carry traffic until 1970. The bridge is therefore important to the historical context of transportation and exemplifies the economic heritage of the community as Loveland developed. The River itself is an important part of the community's development. The bridge has withstood two major floods of the Big Thompson River.

Further, the bridge became part of the Larimer County Fairgrounds. While this use dates only to the 1970s, the Fairgrounds site has been an important part of Loveland history since 1879. The bridge continues to span the Big Thompson River.

**Architectural Description:**

*Larimer County Fairground Historic Overview and Survey Report, prepared by Carl McWilliams, Cultural resource Historians, June/November 2004.*

The bridge at the Larimer County Fairgrounds is a medium-span steel, rigid-constructed, Pratt through truss which spans the Big Thompson River, supported by concrete piers, with a roadway width of 15.3', and an overall width of 16.4'. Two steel channels, with cover plate and lacing, comprise the span's upper chord; the lower chord is composed of two steel channels with lacing; the verticals feature four steel angles with lacing; the diagonals are made of two steel channels with lacing; and the guardrails are made of steel angles. A builder's plate which was affixed to the east portal has been removed.

**Determination of Significance and Integrity**

*Significance* should be used as the starting point in determining eligibility for placement on a historic register. Significance has two distinct attributes – the “area of significance” which answers the question of context, or what is significant about a resource in terms of its association to agriculture, architecture, commerce and industry, education, politics and government, and transportation.

The Fairgrounds Bridge is significant for its link to the historical context of the “Transportation” as defined in the Historical Contexts (1997) document by Jennifer H. Strand, Ph.D. for the Loveland Museum Gallery.

The second attribute of the *significance* of a structure is its “period of significance” which places the resource on a historic timeline and answers the question of when a resource was significant. As noted in a previous section of this staff report, the Fairgrounds Bridge is greater than 50 years old. It may also be considered significant as part of the Larimer County fairgrounds, although this period is earlier than 50 years ago.

*Integrity* refers to the ability of a structure to convey its original design or some later period of significance through the intactness of its historic form, original or historic use of materials, setting and site. Integrity has seven (7) particular aspects: location, setting, feeling, design, materials, workmanship, and association with some attribute of historic significance.

Although the Bridge has been relocated, it continues to span the Big Thompson River and serve as a means of crossing that river, meaning that the setting is similar to the original. It retains most original workmanship, design and materials.

### **Staff Recommendation**

To be considered eligible for designation as a historic landmark on the Loveland Historic Register, a property must be at least fifty (50) years old and must meet one (1) or more of the criteria for architectural, social cultural, or geographic/environmental significance as identified in Loveland Municipal Code 15.56.090. The Fairgrounds Bridge satisfies the age requirement and meets the following criteria for designation as a Loveland Historic Register landmark of property:

- a) Architectural
  - 1) Exemplifies specific elements of an architectural style or period.
  - 3) Demonstrates superior craftsmanship, or high artistic value.
  - 4) Represents innovation in construction, materials, or design.
- b) Social/Cultural
  - 2. Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the community.

#### Physical Integrity:

- a) Shows character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the community, region, state, or nation;
- b) Retains original location or same historic context if it has been removed.

Given available information for the Fairgrounds Bridge at 700 S. Railroad Ave., staff has determined that the Fairgrounds Bridge exhibits both adequate *integrity* and *significance* to support its eligibility for designation as a Loveland historic landmark. This determination is based on the Colorado Historical Society’s recommended framework for determining landmark eligibility (see Figure 1 and Figure 2, below). The Historic Preservation Commission unanimously passed a resolution on March 19, 2007 recommending approval by the City Council of the request for designation of the Fairgrounds Bridge, crossing the Big Thompson River at 700 S. Railroad Ave., as a Loveland Historic Register landmark property.

**Attachments:**

- A. Location Map, prepared by staff
- B. Nomination Application submitted by applicant

**Attachment A: Location Map**













