

= Congress Street Bridge (Connecticut) =

The Congress Street Bridge was a movable deck @-@ girder Scherzer rolling @-@ lift bridge in Bridgeport , Connecticut , United States . In 1909 , the City of Bridgeport tasked a special commission to oversee the construction of a bridge at Congress Street . The original construction was completed in 1911 for \$ 300 @,@ 000 . The bridge served as a street car , vehicle and passenger bridge throughout its service life . In 1997 , the bridge was closed after the Connecticut Department of Transportation found the substructure to be moving . The bridge was demolished in 2010 and \$ 40 million funding for a new bridge has since been secured . The Congress Street bridge was on the Connecticut Historical Commission 's list of bridges .

= = History = =

In 1909 , the City of Bridgeport created a special commission to oversee the construction of a bridge at Congress Street . A local engineer , Raymond F. Stoddard was hired as design consultant and obtained the license to use the Scherzer design . A Scherzer rolling @-@ lift bridge with a double @-@ leaf bascule was chosen for construction . The design is a Deck @-@ type plate girder bridge ; using two plate girders to support the deck . The Scherzer bascule was a popular design because it avoided the expense of high @-@ stress pivot bearings ; though it requires stronger foundations to support the weight of the bridge 's operation . The engineering firm , J. R. Worcester and Company designed and constructed the concrete @-@ arch approach and Fort Pitt Bridge Works fabricated the movable bridge . The cost of construction was \$ 300 @,@ 000 , which was offset through funding from the Connecticut Company . A contemporary account from the Hartford Courant gave stated the contract was for \$ 305 @,@ 000 to Snare , Tristo and Company . The bridge was opened to the public July 16 , 1910 .

The Congress Street Bridge spanned the Pequonnock River and was designed to carry both street cars , vehicles and pedestrians across the river . It was closed and left in the " open position " in 1997 when the Connecticut Department of Transportation found that the substructure was moving . With its closure , traffic has been diverted to the East Washington Avenue Bridge . In 2002 , the estimated cost to repair the bridge was \$ 30 million , which could be partly funded by Connecticut 's " Local Bridge Program " . A total of \$ 5 @.@ 8 million would be provided by the State of Connecticut with an additional \$ 8 @.@ 8 million loan .

= = Demolition = =

According to Congressman Jim Himes ' website , the demolition funding was appropriated in 2009 and consisted of more than \$ 2 million through federal funding . The money was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act , the Comprehensive Appropriations Act of 2009 , and a Community Development Block Grant . According to the Connecticut Post , the State of Connecticut funded \$ 1 @.@ 2 million for the demolition of the bridge , and the first phase of the project was expected to cost \$ 500 @,@ 000 . The contract for the demolition of the bridge was given to S & R Corporation and the first task was to remove the eastern portion of the bridge . The entire process was expected to take six weeks to demolish the bridge . It was estimated that another \$ 450 @,@ 000 would be needed to remove the bridge 's concrete counter @-@ weights and \$ 8 million to remove the approaches . In 2010 , the Drawbridge Operation Regulation ; Pequonnock River , Bridgeport , CT struck the rule pertaining to the operation of the bridge due to its removal .

= = Importance = =

The Congress Street Bridge was on Connecticut Historical Commission 's list of bridges . Local businesses and residents have claimed that are experiencing reductions in traffic as a result of the closure of the bridge and that it has increased emergency response times . In 2002 , Bridgeport 's official historian , Charles W. Brilvitch , stated that the City of Bridgeport promised P. T. Barnum to

keep the bridge open and free , forever . The promise was made when the city purchased the previous bridge from Barnum and annexed East Bridgeport in 1864 . However , limited funds became a concern , with the money needing to be directed to more important projects .

As of 2013 , federal funding has secured \$ 40 million for a new bridge , but estimations project \$ 60 million would be needed to complete the project . In a 2008 letter to Congress , the rehabilitation of the bridge was projected to secure 440 jobs as a " shovel @-@ ready " project example .