

Grant Street Bridge

Mercer County



The Grant Street Bridge was built in 1941 by the Virginia Bridge Company of Roanoke Virginia. It is a two-span, riveted-plate Warren through truss bridge. The overall length of the structure is 320 feet, with an overall width of 20 feet, excluding the pedestrian walkway that runs along the northeast elevation. The structure consists of trusses that are connected by riveted floor beams, sway struts, and upper and lower laterals. It has a metal grid deck, and the pedestrian walkway has wooden floor beams. The bridge is supported at each end by stone and concrete abutments and intermittently by two reinforced concrete open-bent type piers.

The bridge is located in the town of Bluefield. It carries Grant Street over the Norfolk Southern railyard, connecting the residential neighborhood known as the East End to the north of the railyard to the downtown commercial center of the town located to the south of the railyard. The first Grant Street Bridge was built around 1903. That bridge collapsed under the weight of an overloaded truck in September of 1940, leading to a protracted negotiation between the City of Bluefield and the Norfolk & Western Railroad over the responsibility and expense of replacing and maintaining the bridge. It was eventually agreed that the Norfolk & Western would fully fund the construction of the new bridge and that the railway would maintain the superstructure and abutments while the city was responsible for maintaining the timber deck, roadway, sidewalk, handrails, and installing and maintaining load limit signs. Work got underway in March of 1941, and the piers and abutments were completed in May. The delivery of steel to complete the bridge was delayed over the summer as the Norfolk & Western and the Virginia Bridge Company prioritized defense contracts, but the bridge was opened to pedestrian traffic on October 5, and finally to vehicle traffic on October 20, 1941.

The Grant Street Bridge is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the Norfolk & Western Railroad and with planning and development in Bluefield. Bluefield was the social and commercial center of the southern West Virginia Coalfields from ca. 1889 to 1960. The bridge is also eligible under Criterion C for its association with the Virginia Bridge Company, a nationally recognized steel bridge fabricator. The bridge is scheduled for replacement in 2022.

What Historical Services Unit Does

- Research and Write Historic Reports
- Determine National Register Eligibility
- Determine Historic Boundaries
- Determine Effects to Historic Properties
- Mitigate Adverse Effects to Historic Properties
- Complete Historic Documentations for Specific Historic Properties
- Historic Turnpike Research and Analysis
- Coordinate with Federal, State, and Local Resource Agencies
- Conduct Public Workshops for Specific Bridge and Highway Projects



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