

LPLA CULVERT COMMITTEE REPORT

July 20, 2026

June 14, 2025 Annual LPLA meeting:

Krysten Foster, OTC Engineer, Wes Keller, Houston Engineering, Nick Gludt & Luke Schalekamp, DNR gave a presentation about the poor condition of the Hwy 51 culvert. It would have to be removed or replaced in two to five years, but no sooner than 2027.

June 14, 2025 LPLA Board meeting:

The LPLA Board decided to form a committee to research the history and condition of the Hwy 51 culvert. Ken Krajsa, John Martodam, Daryl Kowitz, and Jon Chose were appointed.

June 14 to September 24, 2025:

The culvert committee sent concerns about the culvert to OTC, Houston, and DNR and requested a meeting with them.

September 25, 2025:

The culvert committee met with Dan Bucholz, OTC commissioner, Rick West, interim OTC engineer, and Bob Ehlert from OTC. Wes Keller & Erik Jones from Houston & Nick Gludt, DNR. A presentation was given that stated there has been an 8' box culvert, three 24" RCP, and a 14' metal culvert in place since at least 1939. The present 14' metal culvert was installed in 1978. It currently has a Local Plan Index rating of 53 with 100 being the highest and 0 the lowest. A culvert or bridge needs to be replaced when it reaches 40. It was assumed the culvert would not have to be replaced for 2-5 years.

The lake side end of the culvert is four feet higher than the river side end and has five feet of silt in the culvert. It also has some cracks in the top of the culvert. Moderate to extensive surface corrosion.

Currently there is a load limit posted of 45 tons.

The presentation's conclusion was to close the culvert as it was the cheapest solution.

The culvert committee asked for some options.

Options: 1. A less than 10' box culvert.

2. Two or more concrete culverts 4-6' diameter.

3. One concrete culvert less than 10' diameter

Rick West stated that if the culvert was less than 10' it would not be considered a bridge which entails more maintenance and inspections.

Dan Bucholz stated that OTC would not use a metal pipe. It would have to be concrete.

It was basically agreed that doing nothing was not an option.

The committee asked for some more options and to meet again before the spring Board meeting to update the Board.

September 25, 2025 to June 13, 2026:

The committee tried to meet with OTC and Houston, but they would not meet.

June 13, 2026 Annual LPLA meeting:

Jodi Teich, the new OTC engineer and Wes Keller from Houston gave a presentation to LPLA with three options for the culvert.

1. A 12' by 12' concrete box culvert.
2. A 24" high water concrete culvert.
3. Remove the culvert and not replace it.

A spirited discussion occurred with the LPLA members and Jodi. Pros & cons.

Jodi said she had to make a decision and report to the OTC commissioners within a month.

Questions about what happened to the 2-5 (now 1-4) year timespan. Jodi claimed the bridge had to be contended with sooner due to it's condition.

Current Concerns of the committee:

1. Request for information about the water clarity of North Little Pine Road before the culvert was installed in 1978. Many long-time residents have stated it was a "slough" and the culvert cleaned up the water. What will happen if the culvert is closed?

We have not received any information and need that ASAP before any decision is made.

2. Why has the replacement or removal been moved up to 2026 when it was 2-5 years with no action until at least 2027.

The committee has requested copies of the two year inspections to see how fast the culvert is actually deteriorating. In 2024 it was 53 and again in 2026 it was 53. It was stated the culvert should be replaced at 40.

We need to see those inspection reports.