

# A modern connection for a growing community

The Interstate Bridge is a vital transportation link for the greater Portland-Vancouver region. The bridge connects tens of thousands of people daily to offices, industries, schools, sporting events, places of worship, stores, restaurants and entertainment venues. It connects families, friends and neighbors.

## **It connects communities.**

As the only continuous north-south freeway between Canada and Mexico on the West Coast, the Interstate Bridge is part of a critical trade route for regional, national and international commerce. Beyond the concrete, asphalt and steel of the Interstate Bridge is a thriving background of scenic views, natural systems, and a rich history of our region's national heritage.

The states of Oregon and Washington are working together to replace the aging Interstate Bridge with a modern, seismically resilient, multimodal structure that provides improved mobility for people, goods and services well into the next century.

## **Why we need a replacement bridge**

The Interstate Bridge is two bridge spans, side by side. The northbound span is over 100 years old, dating back to 1917. The southbound span opened in 1958. The existing structures were not designed to support the needs of today's transportation system. The program is in the early stages of working with stakeholders and the public to identify the problems we need to solve. We already know, however, that problems identified over the past decades remain and have not been addressed.



## Problems we still face



**Congestion:** Over 138,000 vehicles crossed the Interstate Bridge each weekday in 2018, resulting in 7 to 10 hours of congestion during peak travel times.



**Safety:** Narrow lanes, no shoulders, poor sight distances on and near the bridge, frequent bridge lifts, and substandard ramp merging and diverging contribute to an increase in accidents.



**Earthquake vulnerability:** The current bridge's foundations are set in sandy soil and do not reach bedrock. In a major earthquake, the bridge could be significantly damaged.



**Impaired freight movement:** Congestion and bridge lifts on the Interstate Bridge slow down freight trucks carrying goods along I-5, a critical economic trade route on the West Coast.



**Inadequate bicycle and pedestrian pathways:** The bridge's narrow shared-use paths, low railing heights, and lack of dedicated pathways on either side of the bridge impede safe travel for pedestrians and cyclists.



**Limited public transportation:** There are limited transit options across the bridge, and existing bus service can be unreliable due to traffic congestion or bridge lifts.

## A bi-state commitment to mobility

Replacing the aging Interstate Bridge across the Columbia River is a high priority for Oregon and Washington. Leaders from both states recognize that regional transportation issues and necessary improvements to the Interstate Bridge remain unaddressed, and as of January 2021 have dedicated a combined \$50 million for initial Interstate Bridge replacement planning work. A bi-state legislative committee, composed of 16 Oregon and Washington lawmakers, provides additional guidance and oversight for the program.

## Program partners

To provide coordinated regional leadership, the Oregon and Washington Departments of Transportation are jointly leading the Interstate Bridge Replacement program work in collaboration with eight other bi-state public agencies.

The eight agencies are:

- ▶ TriMet
- ▶ C-TRAN
- ▶ Oregon Metro
- ▶ Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council
- ▶ Cities of Portland and Vancouver
- ▶ Ports of Portland and Vancouver

## Environmental review process

How our transportation infrastructure is developed has an impact on the character and health of our communities, and that of the natural environment. **The Interstate Bridge Replacement program is committed to promoting best ways to minimize, avoid, and mitigate impacts of replacing and operating this key connection within our community.**

Based on previous planning activities, it is estimated that it will take three to five years to complete the planning and federal environmental review process and obtain federal approval before beginning construction. The federal environmental review process is required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and requires federal agencies to assess and disclose the environmental effects of federal actions prior to making decisions.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will oversee the federal environmental review process, NEPA, and may have a funding



role if federal funding sources are identified. These agencies are responsible for ensuring that the program complies with the requirements of NEPA along with other applicable federal regulations.

## Our commitment to equity

**The Interstate Bridge Replacement program is committed to centering equity in our processes and our outcomes. We will engage the community by elevating the voices of historically marginalized communities throughout our processes and ensuring that these communities can realize the program's economic and transportation benefits. We commit to not furthering harm to these communities.**

The program team will build its own capacity and understanding of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and is committed to learning directly from the region's diverse communities, their lived experiences and stories. To help ensure our program is meeting our equity commitment, we've hired an equity team, led by a Chief Equity Officer.

## A community-driven process is key to success

To ensure a bridge replacement solution meets the region's needs, the program will seek to understand the priorities of individual travelers, from riding a bus or bike across the bridge, relying on wheelchair access, transporting freight from one of our ports, or commuting to work. Engagement with historically marginalized communities is core to the success of this effort.

Two advisory groups will provide input and feedback to help shape program work. The Equity Advisory Group will help ensure that the IBR program remains centered on equity. The group will make recommendations to the program regarding processes, policies and decisions that have the potential to affect historically underrepresented and underserved communities. The Community Advisory Group will develop recommendations on key issues to ensure that program outcomes reflect community needs, values and priorities.



## Key goals of our community engagement

- ▶ Seek feedback from a diverse range of stakeholders
- ▶ Include underrepresented and/or underserved populations
- ▶ Embrace innovation
- ▶ Minimize barriers to engagement
- ▶ Demonstrate accountability through transparency and feedback
- ▶ Establish credibility and trust with stakeholders and the community
- ▶ Provide opportunities to meaningfully shape program work

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**The program is planning numerous activities throughout 2021** to seek public feedback and engage the community in a variety of ways. The program will meet you where you are - let us know if you would like to schedule a briefing with your organization. Please visit [www.interstatebridge.org](http://www.interstatebridge.org) for updates and to connect with us.

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# Program timeline



## How to stay engaged with us



### GET EMAIL UPDATES

- ▶ [Sign up](#) for our monthly e-newsletter and periodic email updates

### PROVIDE FEEDBACK

- ▶ Use our online [comment form](#)
- ▶ Email us at [info@interstatebridge.org](mailto:info@interstatebridge.org)
- ▶ Call our program office at
  - 360-859-0494 (Washington)
  - 503-897-9218 (Oregon)
  - 888-503-6735 (toll-free)

### VISIT THE WEBSITE

- ▶ Regularly check the IBR program website at [www.interstatebridge.org](http://www.interstatebridge.org)

### FOLLOW US

- ▶ Follow us on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram



### OREGON

For ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) or Civil Rights Title VI accommodations, translation/interpretation services, or more information call 503-731-4128, TTY 800-735-2900 or Oregon Relay Service 7-1-1.

### WASHINGTON

Accommodation requests for people with disabilities in Washington can be made by contacting the WSDOT Diversity/ADA Affairs team at [wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov) or by calling toll-free, 855-362-4ADA (4232). Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may make a request by calling the Washington State Relay at 711. Any person who believes his/her Title VI protection has been violated, may file a complaint with WSDOT's Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) Title VI Coordinator by contacting (360) 705-7090.