

# A modern connection for a growing community

Replacing the aging Interstate Bridge with a modern, earthquake resilient, multimodal structure is a high priority for Oregon and Washington. The bridge connects tens of thousands of people daily to offices, industries, schools, sporting events, places of worship, stores, restaurants and entertainment venues. As the only continuous north-south freeway between Canada and Mexico, the Interstate Bridge is part of a critical trade route for regional, national, and international commerce.

The IBR program seeks to improve mobility for all travelers crossing the Columbia River, whether traveling by vehicle, public transit, or active transportation. **A regionally supported solution must prioritize safety, reflect community values, and address identified problems.**

## 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

## Current problems

- ✘ In a major earthquake, the existing bridge would likely be damaged, potentially beyond repair.
- ✘ Bridge lifts slow down freight carrying goods along I-5, a critical economic trade route on the west coast.
- ✘ Safety issues in the corridor, along with the over 143,000 vehicles crossing the bridge each weekday in 2019, resulted in 7-10 hours of congestion during peak travel periods.
- ✘ Buses are stuck in the same traffic as everyone else.
- ✘ Interchanges within the Interstate Bridge corridor are closely spaced, contributing to congestion and traffic accidents.
- ✘ Current bike/pedestrian lanes are about 4 feet wide, near vehicle traffic, and hard to access.
- ✘ Large transportation infrastructure projects have historically harmed many low-income communities and communities of color.
- ✘ The transportation sector is one of the largest contributors of greenhouse gases in the United States.

### OREGON

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### WASHINGTON

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## Solutions

- ✓ A replacement bridge will be built to meet current seismic standards. The North Portland Harbor bridge, connecting North Portland to Hayden Island on I-5, will also be replaced to meet seismic standards.
- ✓ A replacement bridge will be built tall enough to eliminate the need for bridge lifts.
- ✓ Equitable tolling and pricing strategies will be used to help improve reliability within the corridor and fund bridge construction.
- ✓ High-capacity transit (e.g., light rail) will be on a dedicated guideway across the bridge separate from vehicle traffic.
- ✓ A replacement bridge will include safety shoulders and ramp-to-ramp connections, known as auxiliary lanes, to optimize traffic flow and improve safety by giving drivers more space to merge safely.
- ✓ A new shared-use path will be at least 10 feet wide and improve low-stress connectivity for people, walking, biking, or rolling across the bridge.
- ✓ The program's Equity Advisory Group provides input and makes recommendations regarding processes, policies, and decisions that have the potential to affect equity-priority communities
- ✓ An Equity Framework outlines the program's approach to equity and the resources it will use to advance equity.
- ✓ The IBR program is proud to support state climate goals, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving air quality by:
  - Increasing access to high-capacity transit
  - Improving low-stress active transportation options
  - Improve reliability through equitable tolling and pricing strategies
  - Use of low-carbon equipment, construction materials, and other innovative construction methods

## A bi-state commitment to mobility

Leaders from both states recognize that regional transportation issues and necessary improvements to the Interstate Bridge remain unaddressed. As of March 2022, both states have dedicated a combined \$90 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. The recently passed Move Ahead Washington transportation revenue package allocates \$1 billion to fund Washington's share of the anticipated costs needed to complete the IBR program. Given the funding reality for large transportation projects nationwide, it is assumed that construction of a bridge replacement will require revenue from a diverse range of sources, including federal funds, state funds from both Oregon and Washington, and tolling.

## Equity leads our process and outcomes

The IBR program is committed to centering equity in all aspects of work to not only avoid further harm to equity-priority communities, but also ensure they have a voice to help shape program work and realize economic and transportation benefits. Equity-priority communities for the IBR program include:

- ▶ BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color)
- ▶ People with disabilities
- ▶ Communities with limited English proficiency (LEP)
- ▶ Persons with lower income
- ▶ Houseless individuals and families
- ▶ Immigrants and refugees
- ▶ Young people
- ▶ Older adults

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