

You're invited!

I-5 Willamette River Bridge (Eugene/Springfield)

OPEN HOUSE/HEARING

January 31, 2008

11:30 am to 1:30 pm (drop-in)
Tykeson/Bascom Rooms
Eugene Public Library
(100 West 10th Avenue)

5:30 pm to 7:30 pm (drop-in)
Library Meeting Room
Springfield City Hall
(225 Fifth Street)

The Open House is your opportunity to:

- Learn more about the project.
- Share your concerns and ideas with the project team.
- Provide comments on the Environmental Assessment
- A court reporter will be available at both meetings to receive formal testimony.

Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations, please contact Kalin Schmoldt at (503) 235-5881 or kschmoldt@jlainvolve.com at least seven days prior to the open house.

Visit the project web site at: www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/REGION2/I-5WRB.shtml

I-5
Willamette River
Bridge
Eugene & Springfield

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I-5 Willamette River Bridge

Eugene & Springfield



Environmental Assessment (EA) is Complete

January 2008

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) has completed assessing the environmental impacts associated with the replacement of the I-5 bridge over the Willamette River in Eugene and Springfield. The Environmental Assessment (EA) will be available for public comment from mid January 2008 through February 19, 2008, with public hearings scheduled for January 31, in both Eugene and Springfield (see the back page for more information.)

EA Began in Spring of 2006

Work on the EA began in the Spring of 2006 with several "scoping" meetings to develop an initial set of issues including suggestions for how to engage the community. These early conversations with the community, local jurisdictions, and public agencies led to the development of a Community Advisory Group (CAG) and Project Development Team (PDT). The CAG includes representatives from local neighborhoods, recreation groups, parks, and the University of Oregon. The CAG has met seven times since its formation in January 2007 and has been instrumental in developing project goals and objectives, design considerations, and ensuring that public values

are part of the environmental analysis. The CAG makes recommendations to the technically focused PDT. The PDT is the decision-making group and has met eight times since January 2007. The PDT includes representatives of Lane County, the cities of Eugene and Springfield, the Federal Highway Administration, ODOT, and a member of the CAG.

Analysis Focuses on Piers in the River

After much discussion, the CAG and PDT determined that the most important consideration for the EA was to analyze the impacts associated with the number and configuration of bridge piers in the river as well as the overall "footprint" of the new bridge. The CAG and PDT agreed that two side-by-side bridge structures with no more than three piers per bridge in the river (below ordinary high water) should be considered. Building two side-by-side bridge structures would allow for natural light under the bridges, construction in phases, and would be easier and less costly to maintain than one wider structure. ODOT determined that a decision regarding bridge types should be made as part of the design phase beginning in the Spring of 2008.

Outcomes of the Analysis

The EA analysis confirmed that two side-by-side bridges able to accommodate a total of six traffic lanes would fit within the existing right of way and meet traffic needs for the next 20 years. The analysis did not identify any significant environmental impacts anticipated from these structures. The EA analyzed the potential impact of the existing bridges being demolished, temporary structures being constructed, and the permanent structures being completed.

Next Steps for the EA

Following the public comment period that ends February 19, ODOT will develop a response to public input on the EA and will publish a Revised Environmental Assessment (REA) in June 2008. The REA will also respond to any additional information developed during the comment period. For example, based on new information since publication of the EA, ODOT is now recommending constructing a noise wall on the east side of I-5 in the northern part of the project. The REA will reflect this new recommendation. Information about noise impacts and ODOT's recommendation will be available at the open house/hearing and on the website.

Give us Your Comments

Comments on the EA will be taken at the January 31, hearings or in writing through February 19, 2008. The EA will be available for review at locations within the local area and on the project website beginning January 16, at www.oregon.gov/odot/hwy/region2/I-5WRB.shtml. To request a copy, contact Jim Cox, ODOT NEPA Coordinator, at (503) 986-6612 or jim.b.cox@odot.state.or.us.

A complete list of public comments received will be available in early spring and the CAG and the PDT will review the comments in March. Comments will be addressed in a revised EA that is anticipated to be completed in June of 2008.

Contact for More Information

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Why is the Project Needed?

A 2002 inspection identified substantial cracks in the bridge structure. Weight limits were posted that forced heavy trucks to detour 200 miles.

A temporary bridge was built in 2003-2004 as a short term solution to keep the highway open for freight and other vehicles until a new bridge could be built. The temporary bridge does not meet standards for permanent interstate bridges.

The old bridge cannot safely carry all highway traffic and cannot be feasibly repaired or widened to accommodate projected traffic increases. A new bridge is needed to improve safety and maintain connectivity and mobility for all users of I-5 over the Willamette River in the Eugene/Springfield Metropolitan Area.

The bridge replacement project is part of the Oregon Transportation Investment Act program. OTIA is ODOT's 10-year, \$3 billion program to repair or replace hundreds of bridges, pave and maintain city and county roads, improve and expand interchanges, add new capacity to Oregon's highway system, and remove freight bottlenecks statewide.

Design Process to Begin!

The environmental analysis is nearing completion but the design phase of the bridge is just beginning. The bridge types that were considered in the EA are stripped down versions that show only the basic structure and pier locations necessary to determine potential impacts. ODOT will hire a design team in April 2008 to continue to work with the CAG, the PDT, and the broader community to further develop the bridge design concepts and ultimately to choose which bridge type is best suited for this location.

In addition to the design of the overall bridge type, design features can include pier shape, railings, color, architectural elements above/below the deck, and "rustication" or textured surface treatments.

The CAG, PDT, and the community have already identified several design priorities and considerations. These include the use of natural colors and curves, close up design

features for the benefit of park and water users, above deck features that let highway travelers know they are in Eugene and Springfield, as well as other elements that draw from Oregon's many beautiful and historic bridges.

At the January EA hearings you can learn more about the design process and offer your input on the bridge type and design considerations. The design process will begin in the spring and continue through the summer. The process will include several opportunities for community involvement.

Steps and Schedule

