



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Oregon Transportation Commission

Office of the Director, MS 11

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**DATE:** November 12, 2019

**TO:** Oregon Transportation Commission

*[Original signature on file]*

**FROM:** Kristopher W. Strickler  
Deputy Director

**SUBJECT:** **Agenda E** – Receive an update on the Interstate 5 Bridge Replacement Project

**Requested Action:**

Receive an informational update on the status of the Interstate 5 Bridge Replacement Project.

**Background:**

Between 2005 and 2013 the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) collaborated to develop the Interstate 5 Columbia River Crossing project to address multiple challenges associated with transportation on the Interstate 5 corridor between Oregon and Washington, including safety, congestion, lack of adequate transit and active transportation connections, freight immobility, and seismic vulnerability of the existing Interstate Bridge. The two states, local partners, and federal agencies endorsed a replacement bridge with light rail, enhanced bicycle and pedestrian connections, and interchange improvements as the solution to these challenges.

This project failed to advance to construction and was closed down in 2014. However, in recent months the project has come back to life, with action on a variety of fronts.

- In the spring, Governor Kate Brown provided direction to the Commission to engage on standing up a new project with Washington. More recently, Governor Brown has worked with Governor Jay Inslee of Washington to provide direction to move forward on the project.
- The Washington Legislature provided \$35 million to start new work and stand up a project office; in response, the Commission provided \$9 million in federal funds as Oregon's initial contribution.
- As a result of the financial commitment and a plan for restarting the project, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) provided an extension of the timeframe for the states to repay more than \$130 million in federal funds expended on the Interstate 5 Columbia River Crossing. Under FHWA's extension, ODOT and WSDOT will not have to repay federal funds if by 2024 right of way for the project has begun.

- Both state legislatures appointed members to committees that are collaborating across state lines to determine a path forward.

**Next Steps**

With direction from Governor Brown and Governor Inseele, ODOT and WSDOT are beginning the process of standing up a new project. WSDOT and ODOT will serve as lead partners in coordination with six other agencies: C-TRAN, TriMet, Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council, Oregon Metro, City of Vancouver and City of Portland. Before program development begins, the agencies must develop a shared understanding for working together. To achieve this, in the next month WSDOT and ODOT will engage an impartial, experienced facilitator to lead partnering work among the eight bi-state agencies to identify roles and responsibilities and develop a process to ensure informed decision-making, provide policy guidance, and provide regional perspectives and guidance.

Program development will begin once this partnering work is complete and key staff resources have been added. WSDOT and ODOT will hire a program administrator and consultant support with input from partner agencies on desired qualities for these roles. Program development will begin by creating detailed management and development plans for Interstate Bridge replacement, including a schedule.

ODOT and WSDOT have laid out the following target dates for the major milestones for the project.

- Notice of Intent for Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) published in Federal Register: Spring 2020
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) work complete and begin right of way phase: Summer 2023
- Right of way acquired and begin construction: Summer 2025

**Copies to:**

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