

Interstate Bridge Replacement Program

Restarting bridge replacement work

Replacing the aging Interstate 5 Bridge across the Columbia River with a seismically resilient, multimodal structure that provides improved mobility for people, goods and services is a high priority for the region and both states. As the only continuous north-south interstate on the West Coast between Mexico and Canada, I-5 is a vital trade route for regional, national and international economies and communities.

Recognizing that needed improvements to the existing structures remain unaddressed, both Washington and Oregon dedicated funding to restart Interstate Bridge replacement work in 2019 and agreed to share planning costs equally. The Washington State 2019-21 Transportation Budget (ESHB 1160) allocated \$35 million and the Oregon Transportation Commission has approved allocating \$15 million as of September 2020 for the program restart. Both governors and legislative leadership in each state directed the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to open the bi-state Interstate Bridge Replacement Program (IBR) office to lead this work. Each state legislature formed a committee with eight representatives to provide direction and oversight to shape IBR program work.

Recent efforts over the past year have focused on reengaging regional partner agencies, bringing on a program administrator and consultant team to provide a wide range of specialized expertise, and forming steering and advisory groups to provide recommendations to inform program work.

The program is now transitioning to the next phase of program work, which will include technical analysis and community engagement with a wide range of stakeholders to identify a bridge solution that reflects community values and can build broad regional support. Program development work will follow a transparent,



A view of the current Interstate Bridge northbound traffic span that continues I-5 from Oregon into Washington. Photo credit: ODOT

data-driven process that will include collaboration with federal, state, regional and local partners.

Program history

A project development process from 2005 to 2014, known as the Columbia River Crossing project, successfully received a federal approval to advance to construction but did not secure adequate funding to move forward. New federal approval will be necessary to advance a program to construction. The program office will leverage past work as appropriate to ensure effective and efficient decision making that includes new data and public input to address current and future needs.

Acknowledging that both states have demonstrated a clear commitment to moving a program forward, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) granted the states' request for an extension on repayment of federal funds previously expended on the former Columbia River Crossing Project until September 30, 2024.

Why replace the Interstate Bridge?

A key part of early program development work is establishing the Purpose and Need and the community Vision and Values. The Purpose and Need identifies the problems that must be addressed from a transportation perspective, and the community Vision and Values will identify regional values and goals related to potential transportation improvements. Together, the Purpose and Need and Vision and Values will set the foundation for screening alternatives to eventually arrive at a preferred solution. These will be developed through a public process that involves extensive stakeholder and public engagement to ensure the program is reflecting regional community values.

While the program is in the early stages of working with stakeholders and the public, we know that all six of the problems previously identified remain current issues:

- Seismic vulnerability
- Limited public transportation
- Impaired freight movement
- Inadequate bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Safety concerns with existing roadway design
- Growing travel demand and congestion

Community engagement is essential

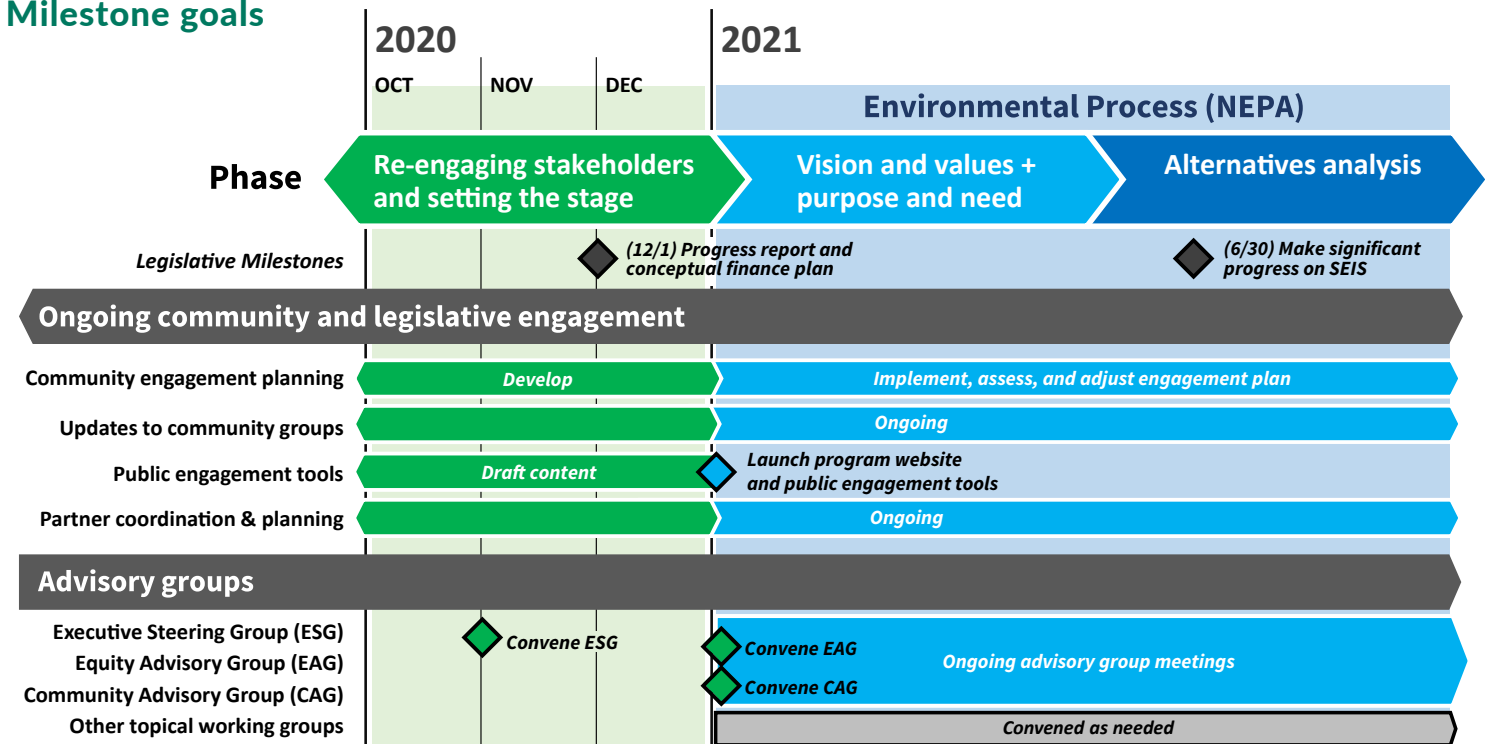
A comprehensive community engagement program will be critical to identify a bridge solution that reflects community values, earns broad regional support and can successfully advance to construction.

Community engagement efforts will seek to provide extensive and ongoing opportunities for meaningful two-way communication that prioritize:

- Equity
- Diversity
- Inclusion
- Accessibility
- Transparency
- Innovation

An Equity Advisory Group is also being convened to provide input on the program's processes, approaches and decisions that may affect historically underserved or underrepresented communities. An equity strategy is being developed to further ensure the program development process is inclusive and equity principles are embedded into all aspects of the program. A new website and a broad range of public engagement tools will be launched starting in January 2021.

Milestone goals



*FHWA repayment extension gives states until Sept. 30, 2024 to begin right-of-way acquisition or start construction

MORE INFORMATION

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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.

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