

MEMORANDUM IBR REQUEST TO FTA TO ENTER PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PHASE OF CAPITAL INVESTMENT GRANT

The Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program, administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), is the U.S. Department of Transportation's largest discretionary and competitive grant program. The CIG program has four phases with significant oversight by FTA for risk, cost estimating, financing, and project management through each phase. The IBR program is seeking a total of \$1 billion in CIG funding and anticipates this grant will serve as the major funding source for transit elements.

The IBR program submitted the following letter to the FTA in June 2023 requesting entry into the Project Development phase of the CIG program. This letter is an important first step for consideration by FTA for funding from this grant program. The letter addresses the requirements that need to be met before approval to enter this phase will be provided. The dates in this letter identified for each phase are tentative target dates that may change as a result of other program work.

The program is also required to demonstrate to FTA that local funding for all of the Project Development phase is in place. The estimated \$104 million required to complete this phase is the estimate for the multimodal program work including the cost to complete the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and reach Record of Decision, community engagement, design work for highway, the bridge over the Columbia River and other bridges in the program area, and all transit elements. It is anticipated that approval to enter the Project Development phase will be granted in summer of 2023 and that it will continue through the middle of 2025.

Future CIG phases, and the current timeframes anticipated for IBR, include:

- Engineering (early 2026 through early 2028)
- Full Funding Grant Agreement (early 2028)
- Transit Construction Phase (early 2028 through 2033)

FTA must provide approval for the program to enter each of these phases, and the program must demonstrate that they meet the requirements of each phase. Work completed in each phase helps increase confidence that the IBR program will successfully receive funding when the Full Funding Grant Agreement phase is reached.

On September 8, the program received approval from FTA to enter the Project Development phase. That letter is attached. This kicks off IBR's commitment to the FTA to complete NEPA, obtain the required level of funding from non-federal sources, and advance design to a level of certainty that will allow the FTA to move the program into the subsequent phase of the CIG process.

June 15, 2023

Felicia James
Associate Administrator for Planning and Environment
Federal Transit Administration
Office of Planning and Environment
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, East Building
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Interstate Bridge Replacement Program – request to enter Project Development

Dear Ms. James:

With this letter, the Washington State Department of Transportation requests approval to enter the Project Development phase of the 5309 Capital Investment Grant, New Starts program, for the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) program. The Washington State Department of Transportation will be the local project sponsor and award recipient for this project.

The Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) program would replace the aging Interstate 5 (I-5) bridge across the Columbia River with a modern, seismically resilient, multimodal structure. Current planning work has defined the physical and contextual changes that have occurred in the program area since 2013, and builds upon previous planning efforts accomplished as part of the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) project. Two re-evaluations in 2012-2013 updated the 2011 Record of Decision (ROD), later adopted into the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). To address changes since the ROD, the IBR program, in coordination with program partners and the community, developed design options, desired outcomes, and transit investments, to identify a Modified Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for study in a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The program's Bi-State Legislative Committee, made up of eight legislators from each state, confirmed advancing the Modified LPA into the environmental process in July 2022.

The Modified LPA includes a 1.9-mile extension of TriMet's light rail system into the city of Vancouver, WA and a C-TRAN Express Bus service in dedicated bus-on-shoulder facilities. The purpose of these transit improvements is to more efficiently link the two regional transit system networks to provide more options for travelers to access reliable transit service between Vancouver and Portland. The improved system will move more people across the Columbia River and provide predictable travel times that are competitive with other modes.

Study Sponsor and Partners

The IBR program consists of multiple sponsors including the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), TriMet, and CTRAN. WSDOT and ODOT co-lead the IBR program and will advance the design and engineering of all program components. As the recipient, WSDOT has identified a designated representative who has the responsibility of acting on behalf of WSDOT for the IBR program, in coordination with the other sponsors. TriMet leads the Transit Team and will guide design and construction of the light rail extension and Express Bus On-shoulder, with C-TRAN co-leading these efforts. The Transit Team will work with the DOTs to secure all non-New Starts funding commitments for CIG including funding for operations and maintenance, development of the project management plan and other required sub-

plans and preparation of all necessary documentation for evaluation by New Starts Criteria. Program partners also include the cities of Portland and Vancouver, the MPOs Regional Transportation Council and Metro, and the ports of Portland and Vancouver.

Project Manager and key staff

- Greg Johnson, PE, Program Administrator jointly representing ODOT and WSDOT
- Frank Green, PE, Assistant Program Administrator and WSDOT designated representative
- Ray Mabey, PE, Assistant Program Administrator and ODOT designated representative
- Mark Dorn, PE, TriMet Interim Assistant Program Administrator
- Executive Advisors to FTA; Jamie Snook, Director of Major Projects, TriMet. Scott Patterson, C-TRAN - Chief Capital Projects and Planning Officer
- Jeb Doran, Transit Manager for the IBR program, TriMet

Corridor Description and Map

The IBR program's Modified LPA includes a new LRT corridor that extends the light rail from Expo Center to Evergreen Boulevard in Vancouver, WA. The corridor is approximately 1.9 miles in length, and travels adjacent to I-5, utilizing the proposed replacement bridge across the Columbia River. The proposed alignment includes three new stations connecting residences, jobs, services and other amenities at Portland's Hayden Island district, and Vancouver Central Business District, including the Vancouver Waterfront district and Development Plan area, the Fort Vancouver Historic Reserve, and downtown Vancouver library. This alignment allows for the preservation of C-TRAN's existing Vine bus rapid transit service and connects two new Vine lines, one planned and one under construction. Bus-on-shoulder facilities for C-TRAN's express service will be constructed across the bridge on I-5 to improve the reliability and travel times of this service. See attachment A for a map of the Modified LPA transit alignment.

Project Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed action is to improve Interstate 5 corridor mobility by addressing present and future travel demand and mobility needs in the Bridge Influence Area (BIA). The BIA extends from Columbia Boulevard in the south to SR 500 in the north. Relative to the No-build alternative, the proposed action is intended to improve:

- Travel safety and traffic operations on the Interstate 5 crossing's bridges and associated interchanges
- Connectivity, reliability, travel times and operations of public transportation modal alternatives
- Highway freight mobility and address interstate travel and commerce needs
- Interstate 5 river crossing's structural integrity

The specific needs to be addressed through an equity and climate lens by the proposed action include:

- Growing travel demand and congestion
- Impaired freight movement
- Public transportation operation, connectivity, and reliability
- Safety and vulnerability to incidents
- Seismic vulnerability
- Inadequate bike and pedestrian facilities

Current Levels of Transit Service in the Corridor:

The TriMet bus route in the IBR program area is line 6 and is considered a Frequent Service route and operates from downtown Portland, along MLK Blvd and ending in Jantzen Beach. The proposed LRT Yellow Line extension is approximately 1.9 miles. The existing Yellow line stops at Expo Center and is a Frequent Service route. This alignment intersects with all of C-TRAN's existing and planned Vine (BRT) routes as well as local service route

line 32. The proposed Evergreen and Waterfront stations would provide walk connections to all C-TRAN lines serving downtown Vancouver, including lines 2, 6, 25, 37, 39, 41, 47, and 71. The C-TRAN bus routes influenced by IBR improvements include the Line 60, and Express Bus routes 199, 190, 157, 134, and 105. The proposed alignment effectively links Portland and Vancouver and provides transfer opportunities to every regional light rail line, Vine line and most regional bus lines on the TriMet and C-TRAN systems.

Cost Estimate

The estimated cost for the IBR program is \$5 to \$7.5 billion, with a likely estimated cost of \$6 billion. The cost of transit portion of the program is estimated at \$1.8 billion. The cost estimate will continue to be refined during the Project Development phase.

Project Development Phase Cost and Funding

In November 2019, the governors of Oregon and Washington signed a bi-state Memorandum of Intent to start the IBR program, building on the previous work completed as part of the CRC project.

Due to the complexity and schedule of the program, IBR has already begun early project development activities. These activities are expected to conclude by August 2025. The program's 2023 Financial Plan estimates that \$104 million is needed to complete Project Development phase activities. As of May 2023, the program has secured \$1.2B in total program funds between both states to be advanced through future phases, including environmental permitting, procurement and contracting, supplemental FEIS, and Project Development. The program has secured \$137.5M million in funds to advance through Project Development as the initial allocation of the \$1B in funds from the Washington legislature.

The Move Ahead Washington ("MAW") bill signed by Washington Governor Jay Inslee provides \$137.5M to the IBR program for Project Development and ROW activities. This is a two-year allocation of funds available starting July 1, 2023. No further approvals are necessary for the IBR program to spend these funds over the next two years. Legislation allocating the funding can be found on page 101, line 6 [1125-S.SL.pdf \(wa.gov\)](#). The additional local funds referenced in this legislation are not an allocation of additional funds but are meant to demonstrate that similar matching funds will come from Oregon.

Project Development Timeline

The graphic below includes key Project Development activities and anticipated dates within the two-year Project Development phase.

	Project Development Activity
June 2023	Submit letter request to enter Project Development
August 2023	FTA approves entry into Project Development
November 2023	Notice of Availability of Draft SEIS
November 2023	Update RTP to include modified LPA
July 2024	Onboard PMOC / begin review of PD deliverables
August 2024	Submit Draft rating materials
November 2024	Final SEIS completed and Record of Decision prepared
December 2024	Complete 30% design
February 2025	Complete 30% cost estimate
March 2025	Complete Risk Assessment
August 2025	Submit rating materials for entry into engineering / Complete PD activities

The IBR Program anticipates securing a Full Funding Grant Agreement in late 2027/early 2028 with Revenue Operations beginning in 2033.

WSDOT, the award recipient, recognizes that FTA processes are different than FHWA’s. WSDOT has Intergovernmental Agreements with TriMet and C-TRAN to ensure that program development is approached in accordance with the CIG process. With entry into the Project Development phase, the IBR program will address the requirements of FTA’s New Starts Project Development phase with the adoption of the Modified LPA, preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, preparation of New Starts Rating materials, and progression of design. We respectfully request approval to enter FTA’s Project Development Phase. This and other program materials, including previous studies, can be accessed via IBR’s website site as follows:

<https://www.interstatebridge.org/>

Thank you for your consideration. If you have questions or need additional information please contact Frank Green, IBR Assistant Program Administrator via phone 360-600-2632 or email frank.green@interstatebridge.org.

Sincerely,

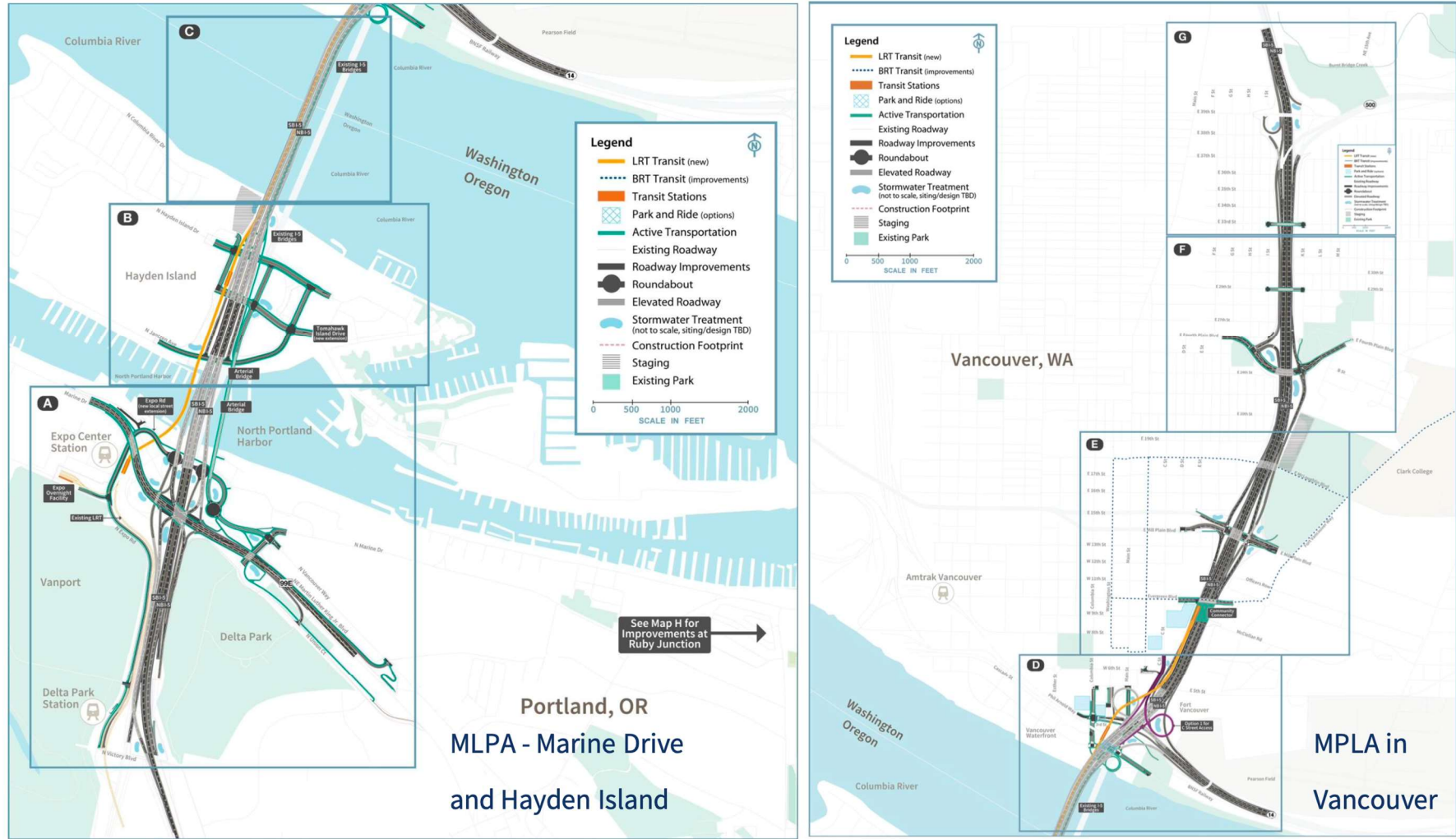


Roger Millar, P.E., FASCE, FAICP
 WSDOT Secretary of Transportation

Cc: Susan Fletcher, Peter Mazurek, Jeff Horton, Greg Johnson, Sam Desue, Shawn Donaghy, Jamie Snook, Jeb Doran, Scott Patterson, Mark Dorn, Frank Green and Ray Mabey



Attachment A – Corridor MAP





U.S. Department
Of Transportation

**Federal Transit
Administration**

Headquarters

1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.
Washington DC 20590

The Honorable Roger Millar
Secretary of Transportation
Washington State Department of Transportation
310 Maple Park Avenue SE
P.O Box 47300
Olympia, WA 98504-7300

Re: Project Development Initiation – Interstate Bridge Replacement Program

Dear Secretary Millar:

Thank you for your letter, dated June 15, 2023, requesting entry into the Project Development (PD) phase under the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Capital Investment Grants (CIG) New Starts program for the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program (the Project), sponsored by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) on behalf of the multi-state Interstate Bridge Program team (IBR team). After reviewing your initial letter, FTA requested additional information that was submitted by July 24, 2023. At that time, FTA determined that the information provided was sufficient to enter the PD phase.

Please note that as the project sponsor, WSDOT undertakes the PD work at its own risk, and that the Project must still progress through further steps in the CIG program to be eligible for consideration to receive CIG funding.

Per the requirements in law, the following activities must be completed during PD:

- Select a locally preferred alternative;
- Have the locally preferred alternative adopted into the fiscally constrained long range transportation plan;
- Complete the environmental review process; and
- Complete the activities required to develop sufficient information for evaluation and rating under the CIG criteria.

The FTA encourages you to familiarize yourself with the information found on the CIG program webpage at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grant-programs/capital-investments/about-program>. There you will find more details and information on the activities mentioned above including answers to frequently asked questions and the information that must be provided to FTA for eventual project evaluation and rating.

The FTA will be in contact to discuss its technical assistance and project oversight plans as the Project moves through PD. The FTA would appreciate periodic updates from WSDOT and the IBR team on the status of completion of PD activities. WSDOT must contact FTA no later than six months prior to your anticipated request to enter the Engineering phase so that we can proceed with our formal project oversight process and take the steps necessary to undertake our evaluation and rating.

As the project sponsor, WSDOT must formally request an extension from FTA if the PD activities mentioned above and outlined more fully on our website cannot be completed within the two-year timeframe specified in law. In determining whether to grant an extension, FTA will consider the reasons an extension is needed, the reasonableness of the proposed revised schedule, and the timeframe needed to complete PD activities. The FTA anticipates extensions will be granted only on an occasional basis rather than on a routine basis, and only for unforeseen and unusual circumstances that might arise. If an extension to the two-year timeframe is not granted by FTA, the Project will be withdrawn from PD. WSDOT and the IBR team will be asked to complete additional work before being allowed to reapply for entry into the program.

With this entry into PD, WSDOT and the IBR team have pre-award authority to incur costs for PD activities prior to grant approval and to retain eligibility of those activities for future FTA grant assistance. PD activities include the work necessary to complete the environmental review process and as much engineering and design activities as WSDOT and the IBR team believe are necessary to support the environmental review process. Upon completion of the environmental review process, FTA extends pre-award authority to project sponsors in PD to incur costs for as much engineering and design as necessary to develop a reasonable cost estimate and financial plan, utility relocation, and real property acquisition and associated relocations. This pre-award authority does not constitute a commitment that future Federal funds will be approved for PD or any other Project cost. As with all pre-award authority, relevant Federal requirements must be met prior to incurring costs in order to preserve eligibility of the costs for future FTA grant assistance.

If you or your team have any questions or comments, please contact Pete Mazurek at (202) 366-1627 or peter.mazurek@dot.gov.

Sincerely,

9/6/2023

X Felicia L. James

Felicia L. James

Signed by: 523452

Associate Administrator for Planning and Environment

cc: Susan Fletcher, Acting Regional Administrator, FTA Region 10