



Interstate Bridge Replacement Program

December 2020 Progress Report



**Washington State
Department of Transportation**



December 1, 2020

(Electronic Transmittal Only)

The Honorable Governor Inslee
WA Senate Transportation Committee
WA House Transportation Committee

The Honorable Kate Brown
Oregon Transportation Commission
OR Joint Committee on Transportation

Dear Governors, Transportation Commission, and Transportation Committees:

On behalf of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program is pleased to submit the 2020 Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) program progress report and draft conceptual finance plan, as directed by Washington's 2019-2021 transportation budget ESHB 1160, Section 306 (24)(e)(iii). The progress report provides an update on the IBR program work from the end of 2019 through 2020 and a brief preview of the upcoming work planned over the next year in 2021. The Conceptual Finance Plan provides an early and high-level overview of initial estimated funding and financing needs and potential sources.

Following the direction from leadership in both states to open a program office to restart work to identify a bridge replacement solution for this nationally significant corridor, recent efforts have focused on reengaging stakeholders and onboarding critical staffing resources. This work included hiring a program administrator to lead the program on behalf of both states and hiring a consultant team to provide a wide range of expertise to support program work. Program work includes technical analysis and engagement with agency partners, stakeholders, and the public to identify a bridge replacement solution.

The Conceptual Finance Plan provides a high-level overview of the potential scale of need and a review of the possible funding options that might be available at the federal, state, and local levels. The plan includes a preliminary cost estimate as a range that would be broad enough to cover various bridge replacement alternative scenarios. This initial conceptual cost estimate range was informed by updated costs from the previous planning effort, which will serve as a starting point for possible IBR estimates until more details about the new program are developed. This information will be refined as the scope of the program evolves to eventually identify a feasible funding plan for the program.

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As part of comprehensive community engagement efforts, an Executive Steering Group, a Community Advisory Group, and an Equity Advisory Group are being convened to provide regional leadership guidance and recommendations reflecting a diverse range of perspectives on key program issues of importance to the community. A new website and a broad range of public engagement efforts will be launched starting in early 2021 to provide inclusive and ongoing opportunities for the community to meaningfully shape program work.

We thank the Washington and Oregon legislatures for their continued support and collaboration to move this critical program forward. We all share an interest in improving safety, reliability and mobility on our regional transportation system to provide transportation options for all travelers that meet the region's needs now and in the future. We are proud to share the IBR program progress report and Conceptual Finance Plan with you and the public.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Johnson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Greg Johnson, P.E.

IBR Program Administrator

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the only continuous north-south interstate on the West Coast between Mexico and Canada, Interstate 5 (I-5) is the region's main connector of communities along its corridor, and a vital trade route for regional, national, and international economies. A key component of the I-5 infrastructure is the Interstate Bridge, which connects the two vibrant cities of Portland, Oregon, and Vancouver, Washington, and spans the iconic Columbia River, revered for its extensive history, beauty, and bounty.

Replacing the aging Interstate 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 Oregon and Washington. In 2019, governors and legislative leadership in both states directed the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to launch the bi-state Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) program to continue this work.

Background and History

The Interstate Bridge is composed of two historic crossings, built in 1917 and 1958, which no longer satisfy the needs of modern commerce and travel. A solution that addressed these concerns was identified during the Columbia River Crossing project but did not move into the construction phase when it did not receive adequate state funding in 2014, which was needed to proceed forward.

Recognizing that regional transportation issues and necessary improvements to the Interstate Bridge remain unaddressed, both Washington and Oregon dedicated funding to restart the Interstate Bridge replacement work in 2019. A program team was assembled, and work began on reengaging stakeholders and reevaluation of transportation data.

The historical significance of uniting communities on both sides of the Columbia River still resonates today. Program development will center on equity and follow a transparent, data-driven process that includes collaboration with local, state, federal, and tribal partners. Throughout, the IBR program team is committed to working in tandem with regional partners to ensure consideration of the overall regional transportation system.

Program Update

The IBR program team is actively engaging with the public, legislators, stakeholders, and partner agencies from both states to build consensus in an open and public process. Key to this process is updating the Purpose and Need Statement and establishing the community Vision and Values Statement, which are the transportation problems that need to be addressed and regional perspectives on values that should be considered in identifying a replacement alternative. The range of alternatives that meet the Purpose and Need Statement will be measured against the Vision and Values Statement to determine the best performing alternative.

The Washington and Oregon legislatures formed the bi-state legislative committee, comprising eight members from each state, to provide direction and oversight to shape the IBR program work. In July 2020, Gregory C. Johnson was named IBR program administrator working on behalf of both states. In this role, he is leading the IBR program team to arrive at a bridge replacement solution that can build broad regional support, address the current transportation needs across the river, and meets the long-term regional needs. The IBR program team includes both agency and consultant staff with a wide range of expertise and experience on large transportation projects. Following a competitive advertisement process, ODOT and WSDOT, with feedback and guidance from partner agencies, selected WSP (in partnership with Parametrix) as the prime consultant for the general engineering consultant contract.

Program bi-state partner agencies identified the need to provide regional guidance during program development work, so a 12-member Executive Steering Group was convened to provide this guidance and had its first meetings in November 2020. With the goal of providing recommendations on key program issues of importance to the community, the Executive Steering Group is composed of representatives from state transportation and partner agencies that have a direct role in the integrated, multimodal transportation system in the Interstate Bridge corridor.

Community engagement is critical to identifying a bridge replacement solution that reflects community values and earns broad regional support through the environmental and pre-construction phases, so the partner agencies also recommended the creation of a Community Advisory Group, which is in development. Beyond this advisory group, the IBR program team is in the process of developing a comprehensive and equitable community engagement strategy to ensure the program is reaching an even wider variety stakeholders. In November 2020, the IBR program team presented a community engagement plan to the bi-state legislative committee that outlines efforts through 2021. This plan will be continually updated as the program progresses.

A Conceptual Finance Plan outlining a range of potential construction costs (based on work done in previous planning efforts) and potential funding pathways was presented to the bi-state legislative committee in November and submitted to the Oregon and Washington Legislatures on December 1, 2020. Low and high values encompassing a range of scope, transit alternatives and contingencies for program risks were addressed, and planning costs from the previous project were also considered and updated, as applicable.

Program Plan 2021

The next phase of the IBR program will emphasize community engagement and technical analysis, which is some of the initial work needed to identify possible bridge replacement solutions that resolve the unaddressed needs in the current bridge. Upcoming work will focus on identifying the needs and values that will be used to evaluate bridge replacement solutions. Equity will be threaded throughout all aspects of the IBR program, with consideration given to how communities will be affected by the IBR program during planning and construction, and in future generations.

Community engagement efforts will provide extensive and ongoing opportunities for meaningful two-way communication that prioritizes equity, diversity and inclusion; accessibility; transparency; and, creativity and innovation. The Community Advisory Group (CAG) will launch in early 2021 and will consist of a diverse and inclusive membership of approximately 25 to 30 people serving as individuals or representatives of varying organizations and interests. The CAG will provide a forum for community dialogue that reflects regional needs, issues, and concerns as they relate to the IBR program. The CAG will be convened throughout program development, and its charter and purpose will be reevaluated when the program is near the start of construction. Equity will be a key pillar of the CAG and will also be the primary focus of an additional advisory group.

The Equity Advisory Group (EAG) will also launch in early 2021 to help make sure that the IBR program remains centered on equity by making recommendations regarding program processes, policies, and decisions that have the potential to impact or benefit historically underrepresented and/or underserved communities. The EAG will be composed of approximately 30 members, including equity leads from partner jurisdictions and members from community-based organizations, nonprofits, and other stakeholders.

Planning and technical work necessary to obtain federal approval for a preferred alternative to move to construction will require successful completion of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. The IBR program will work with the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration to identify planning steps, including updating the program's Purpose and Need Statement and establishing the Vision and Values Statement, and how to advance bridge replacement alternatives screening for NEPA. Working with transit and transportation partners, the IBR program will screen high-capacity transit (HCT) alternatives to assess and identify the best solution. The program will also advance important analysis needed for federal regulatory decisions. This will include coordinating with agency partners to reevaluate the built and natural environments to pursue environmental permits, developing evaluation assumptions and modeling around transportation planning, and updating and refining the approach for identifying HCT alternatives to be analyzed in the environmental assessment.

For more than 100 years, the Interstate Bridge has served as a physical connector for communities on both sides of the Columbia River. As one of the most essential pieces of infrastructure in the Pacific Northwest, a new and modern Interstate Bridge will help strengthen the economic and cultural bonds between two cities and two states.

II. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

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. The Interstate Bridge crosses the Columbia River and connects Vancouver, Washington, and Portland, Oregon, with two similar bridge structures that include one vertical list span each. One bridge structure carries traffic northbound to Vancouver, continuing north to Canada; the other bridge structure carries traffic southbound to Portland, continuing south to Mexico. The northbound bridge was built in 1917; the southbound bridge was built in 1958.

The Interstate Bridge is approximately one mile long. The importance of this structure to connecting two communities has regional historical significance that must be recognized. During the earliest years of settlement along the Columbia River, the only way to cross the mighty Columbia River was by rowboat or a sporadic ferry service.¹

In 2019, the Regional Transportation Council reported that 138,530² vehicles cross the Interstate Bridge daily. These vehicles are accessing jobs and engaging in the communities between the two states. The river has also been the source of many culturally significant events. To ensure efficient and inclusive program development, it is important to understand both the context of the program and the history of the area.

Program History

Regional leaders identified the need to address the I-5 corridor (including the Interstate Bridge over the Columbia River) through past bi-state long-range planning studies. In 2004, the Washington and Oregon Departments of Transportation formed a joint Columbia River Crossing (CRC) project team to build a bridge between the cities of Portland, Oregon, and Vancouver, Washington. The intent of this project was to improve safety, reduce congestion, and increase mobility of motorists, freight traffic, transit riders, bicyclists, and pedestrians in this congested section of I-5. This project was active between 2005 and 2014 and successfully received a federal Record of Decision in December 2011. However, the CRC project did not secure adequate state funding to advance to construction.

Initiating Bridge Replacement Work

In 2019, both Washington and Oregon dedicated funding to restart the Interstate Bridge replacement work. The Washington State 2019–2021 Transportation Budget (ESHB 1160) allocated \$35 million, and the Oregon Transportation Commission allocated \$15 million as of November 2020. Governors and legislative leadership in both states directed Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to open a bi-state program office to lead this work. Each state legislature has identified eight lawmakers to provide direction and oversight to shape the program work.

¹ History Link, Columbia River Interstate Bridge, <https://www.historylink.org/File/20952>

² Regional Transportation Council, Columbia River Bridges, <https://www.rtc.wa.gov/data/traffic/bridges/daily.asp>

Acknowledging that both states have demonstrated a clear commitment to moving the program forward, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) granted the states' request for an extension on repayment of federal funds previously expended on the CRC project. The FHWA repayment extension gives Oregon and Washington until September 30, 2024, to begin right-of-way acquisition or start construction.

In 2019, the Washington State 2019-21 Transportation Budget (ESHB 1160) set the following target goals for the program office to meet:

- July 1, 2020: Reengage program stakeholders, update the Purpose and Need Statement, and reevaluate environmental permits (ongoing).
- December 1, 2020: Develop a finance plan and provide a final report to the governor and the legislature's transportation committees (complete).
- June 30, 2021: Make significant progress toward beginning the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement process (ongoing).

For more detailed information on the previous studies and legislative activities involved in initiating the IBR program work, please refer to the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program 2019 Progress Report.³ The following sections outline the progress and achievements made since the last update on December 1, 2019.

Related Regional Efforts

The IBR program is part of a broader solution to improve the transportation system in the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area. The program team will coordinate with regional partners to ensure efforts are considered within the regional transportation system. Several other land use and transportation projects are ongoing and could affect public and partner discussions throughout the program. The following project list is not exhaustive but rather provides context of the larger regional projects that could affect or interact with the IBR program.

PORTLAND, OREGON

- I-5 and I-205 Toll Project⁴
- I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project⁵
- I-205 Improvements: Stafford Road to OR 213 Project⁶

SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

- Fourth Plain Bus Rapid Transit Project
- Mill Plain Bus Rapid Transit Project
- Mill Plain Interchange Improvements (Connecting Washington)

³ Interstate Bridge Replacement Program, December 2019 Progress Report, <https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2019/12/09/Interstate-Bridge-Replacement-Program-December-2019-Progress-Report.pdf>

⁴ Oregon Toll Project, <https://www.oregon.gov/odot/tolling/Pages/I-5-Tolling.aspx#overview>

⁵ Oregon Department of Transportation, I-5 Rose Quarter, <https://www.i5rosequarter.org/>

⁶ Oregon Department of Transportation, I-205 Improvements, <https://www.i205corridor.org/>

III. PROGRAM UPDATE

With a large team in place, the program has made significant progress during 2020 on the next phase of program development. Work over the last year has established a framework to provide partner and community guidance and recommendations to identify possible bridge replacement alternatives, and to eventually arrive at a locally preferred alternative that can earn broad regional support and that addresses the identified transportation needs and goals of the community.

Key program highlights from the last year include the following:

- **Bi-State Legislative Engagement:** Over the course of the year, the IBR program team has continued regular engagement with the bi-state legislative committee, including initial guidance on the approach to key topics such as reevaluating the program’s purpose and need and community vision and values, community engagement, the approach to determining river-crossing alternatives and the approach to identifying HCT alternatives, and a draft Conceptual Finance Plan.
- **Reengage Regional Partners:** Bringing the IBR program partner agencies together is an essential step to establishing a strong foundation and defining how to work together through program development.
- **Program Administrator Hire:** Following a national recruitment process, ODOT and WSDOT—with input from partners and stakeholders—selected Greg Johnson as the program administrator to lead the IBR program on behalf of both states.
- **Consultant Team Selection:** Following a competitive advertisement process, ODOT and WSDOT—with feedback and guidance from partner agencies—selected WSP (in partnership with Parametrix) as the prime consultant for the General Engineering Consultant contract.
- **Convening the Executive Steering Group (ESG):** Following a facilitated partnering process with the program’s agency partners, one of the primary outcomes was creation of the ESG, which held a two-part kickoff meeting on November 6 and 30, 2020.
- **Program Advisory Groups and Recommendation Process:** Provides a high-level overview of how the program will develop decisions based on the guidance and recommendations received from the various oversight and advisory bodies. Steering and advisory groups will strive to develop recommendations by consensus to strengthen the weight of these recommendations.
- **Community Engagement Plan:** The development of a comprehensive, thoughtful, and inclusive Community Engagement Plan is an important step in creating a plan for engaging stakeholders and meeting them where they are, rather than expecting them to seek out information about the program.

- **Conceptual Finance Plan:** A draft Conceptual Finance Plan was presented to the bi-state legislative committee in response to direction from the Washington State 2019-21 Transportation Budget (ESHB 1160) to submit a draft finance plan by December 1, 2020. The draft Conceptual Finance Plan outlines estimated construction cost scenarios and potential funding pathways.

Bi-State Legislative Engagement

The Washington State legislature established a joint committee with the authorization of Washington State SSB 5806. The committee was named the Joint Oregon-Washington Legislative Action Committee. The bill invited the Oregon Legislature to participate, at which point Oregon formed the Joint Interim Committee on the Interstate Bridge. The combined committees, referred to as the bi-state legislative committee, comprises 16 members, eight from each state. The states' Senate majority leader and minority leader appointed four members, two from each of the two largest caucuses. The states' House of Representatives Speaker and minority leader appointed four members, two from each of the two largest caucuses.

- Washington Legislative Members:
 - Co-Chair, Senator Annette Cleveland
 - Representative Jake Fey
 - Representative Paul Harris
 - Senator Steve Hobbs
 - Senator Ann Rivers
 - Co-Chair, Representative Brandon Vick
 - Co-Chair, Senator Lynda Wilson
 - Co-Chair, Representative Sharon Wylie
- Oregon Legislative Members:
 - Co-Chair, Senator Lee Beyer
 - Senator Denyc Boles
 - Senator Lynn Findley
 - Senator Lew Frederick
 - Representative Shelly Boshart Davis
 - Representative Caddy McKeown
 - Co-Chair, Representative Susan McLain
 - Representative Ron Noble

Program work, including the work of the advisory committees, will be shaped by the direction and timelines established by the governors, legislatures, transportation commissions, and/or transportation departments from both states.

Ongoing bi-state legislative involvement will be essential to successfully complete the planning and design process and move to construction. Direction from the bi-state legislative committee members will shape program work by providing initial framework and guidance on the approach to developing key program decisions, reviewing and providing feedback on progress, and evaluating outcomes.

The following topics were addressed by the bi-state legislative committee at meetings held in 2020:

- July 16, 2020
 - Received updates on the status of the program office and the stakeholder groups.
 - Received introduction to the program administrator.
 - Reviewed program planning calendar and other process documents.
 - Discussed community Vision and Values Statement developed during the previous project.
 - Began discussion of the previous project's Purpose and Need Statement.
- August 6, 2020
 - Discussed key questions regarding development of Vision and Values and Purpose and Need Statements.
 - Discussed community engagement approach, including the key parties and the principles of engagement for the following:
 - Purpose and Need Statement
 - Vision and Values Statement
 - Reviewed previous finance plan and discussed preliminary approach to finance plan.
- October 1, 2020
 - Reviewed HCT alternatives analysis from previous planning efforts and approach to identify new HCT alternatives.
 - Reviewed river-crossing alternatives from previous planning efforts and the approach to identifying new river-crossing alternatives.
- November 24, 2020
 - Received program update.
 - Reviewed draft Conceptual Finance Plan.
 - Reviewed conceptual community engagement plan.
- December 15, 2020 (planned)
 - Endorse finance plan.
 - Endorse community engagement plan.

Reengage Regional Partners

Due to the magnitude and complexity of a bi-state bridge replacement program, it is critical that key partners have a shared understanding of how to work together. Beginning in the winter of 2019 and continuing through spring 2020, ODOT and WSDOT invited agency program partners to participate in a series of workshops to identify how to best work together on a bridge solution that reflects community values. ODOT and WSDOT reengaged the following regional entities central to program development:

- TriMet
- C-TRAN
- Oregon Metro
- Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council
- City of Portland
- City of Vancouver
- Port of Portland
- Port of Vancouver

These program partners have a direct role in any future improvements due to their position as an owner, operator, transportation policymaker, or public economic development entity reliant on direct access to operations within the Interstate Bridge area.

Individuals from these bi-state partner agencies participated in a series of interviews to provide feedback on lessons learned from previous program efforts. These agencies also participated in workshops and staff work sessions to determine how best to work together to develop a bridge solution that earns broad regional support and successfully advances to construction. A key piece of this work was the recommendation to form an ESG to provide regional leadership recommendations and a Community Advisory Group to provide a forum for community dialogue.

Program Administrator Hire

Following a national recruitment process, ODOT and WSDOT worked with agency partners and local stakeholders, to select Gregory C. Johnson as the program administrator to lead the replacement program on behalf of both states. Greg is authorized to act on behalf of both ODOT and WSDOT and is equally responsible to both states. Having a single program administrator responsible to both states will help ensure direction for the program is consistent and unified as work progresses.



Greg has a strong engineering background, demonstrated leadership skills, previous work experience on major infrastructure and bi-state projects, and a dedication to authentic community engagement. Greg also brings well-rounded expertise in both the public and private sectors.

A message from Greg Johnson:

Thank you for being a part of the team providing Legislative oversight, input and guidance to the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program. My name is Greg Johnson, and I serve as the Program Administrator jointly hired by both the Oregon and Washington. I am the leader of a talented team of professionals seeking to find an equitable solution to the challenges facing the replacement and modernization of the Interstate Bridge. I bring over 38 years of experience in solving transportation problems in numerous states around the nation. I come to this project, over 2400 miles away from family and friends, because I am passionate about infrastructure projects being completed in a manner that reflects the best in our industry. Listening, innovation, equity, inclusion, transparency, and efficiency are all hallmarks of the best projects around the country. It is these traits that I will strive to bring to every issue and circumstance on this program.

The Interstate Bridge Replacement Program presents a great engineering challenge as well as a unique opportunity to better connect two communities divided by the iconic Columbia River but ultimately dependent upon one another and the bridge for their economic vitality. Interstate 5 is a critical corridor serving local, regional and national transportation needs. This five-mile stretch of highway is facing a series of issues, including infrastructure beyond its projected life span, traffic congestion and safety concerns, susceptibility to damage from earthquakes, and inadequate accommodations for transit as well as people walking and biking.

The IBR team has been working diligently to establish a framework that will ensure broad and quality input from the public and all stakeholders. With a focus on communication and engagement, I have personally reached out to numerous individuals and groups in both communities (both for and against a replacement bridge), to gain a well-rounded perspective on local concerns. Our team has a specific focus on equity and inclusion issues as well as proposing innovative solutions to reach and receive input from traditionally underrepresented groups in the area. It is my commitment to lead the communities through a transparent and efficient process that listens and incorporates ideas that are aligned with the purpose and need as well as the vision and values voiced by our communities and stakeholders.

Consultant Team Selection

WSP, in partnership with Parametrix, was selected, with feedback and guidance from agency partners, as the prime consultant for the general engineering consultant contract to provide a wide range of specialized expertise and experience to support program development through the environmental and pre-construction phases of work.

Ensuring the opportunity for Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) firms to participate in the program was an important goal. This goal, the contract selection process was designed to solicit participation by DBE firms and as well as consultants. A pre-submittal consultant workshop addressed questions and gave small and/or disadvantaged firms an opportunity to meet prospective prime consultants.

Recognizing the unique circumstances of a bi-state program that will utilize federal funds, the program has specific DBE goals that do not fall under either state's DBE programs. ODOT and WSDOT worked closely together and in tandem with FHWA to develop approved goal setting to identify a mandatory 15% DBE goal. This included an analysis of available qualified and / or certified firms in both states. WSP committed to surpassing the mandatory goal with a voluntary goal of 20% DBE firms under contract and has successfully met its goal by engaging a consultant team that includes 17 DBE partners.

The consultant team began working with ODOT and WSDOT on September 10, 2020. The team has made a concerted effort to ensure cross-discipline collaboration and a shared commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. As part of the program, the consultant team is also committed to following a transparent, data-driven process that includes collaboration with federal, state, regional, and local partners in developing an outstanding program.

Convening the Executive Steering Group

The ESG is being convened to develop and demonstrate broad regional support for key IBR program activities of interest to the community. The ESG will guide IBR program development with recommendations to ensure that the program:

- satisfies legislative requirements.
- is broadly supported by diverse stakeholder communities in the region.
- provides safe, healthy, reliable and affordable transportation that supports access to jobs, education, culture and recreation.
- is viable for state and federal funding.
- can be successfully implemented.

Recommendations from the ESG will provide regional leadership guidance for the IBR program, informed by the community.

The ESG membership comprises 12 regional leaders representing the interests of their agencies or the community. This includes representatives from the 10 bi-state partner agencies, as well as a community representative from each state. The two community representatives will also serve as the interim co-chairs of the Community Advisory Group (CAG) once it is convened. They will remain in interim status until the CAG is convened and fully formed with its other members. The members of the ESG include the following representatives:

- Oregon Department of Transportation: Kris Strickler, Director
- Washington State Department of Transportation: Roger Millar, Secretary
- TriMet: Doug Kelsey, General Manager
- C-TRAN: Shawn Donaghy, CEO
- Oregon Metro: Lynn Peterson, Council President
- Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council: Scott Hughes, Board Chair
- City of Portland: Ted Wheeler, Mayor
- City of Vancouver: Anne McEnerny-Ogle, Mayor
- Port of Portland: Kristen Leonard, Chief Public Affairs Officer
- Port of Vancouver: Julianna Marler, CEO
- Interim Community Advisory Group Co-chair (WA): Lynn Valenter
- Interim Community Advisory Group Co-chair (OR): Ed Washington

The ESG will operate in accordance with shared expectations and will approach their guidance based on established values and outcomes, data, and public input to make recommendations about IBR program development. This group will seek public input in making its recommendations, including considering recommendations that come out of the CAG, to identify recommendations that best address community needs and concerns.

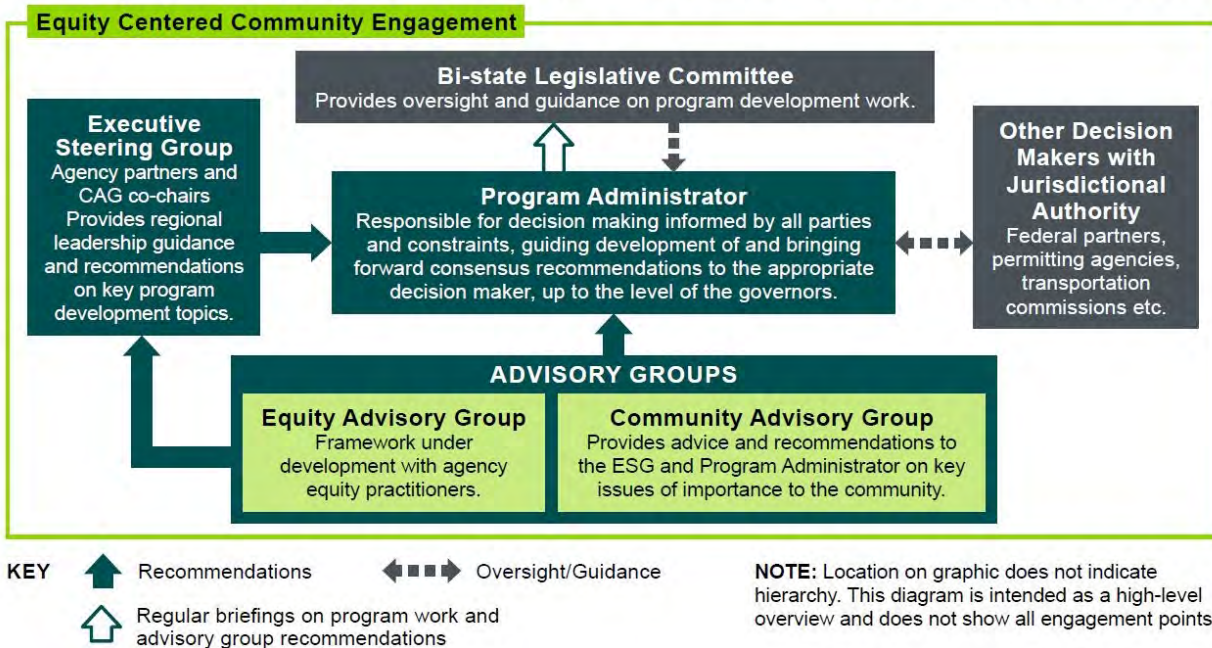
The ESG was formally convened with a two-part meeting November 6 and 30, 2020. The two-part kickoff focused on the following:

- Providing progress updates from the IBR program team
- Reviewing and asking for concurrence on the ESG charter
- Discussing program equity considerations including the formation of an Equity Advisory Group
- Reviewing and asking for concurrence on a CAG framework
- Beginning the process to update the Purpose and Need Statement and establish a community Vision and Values Statement

Program Advisory Groups and Recommendation Process

The following graphic provides a high-level overview of how the program will develop decisions based on the guidance and recommendations received from the various oversight and advisory bodies. This graphic does not show all engagement points between groups, and also does not display other working groups that might be formed to provide feedback or expertise on specific issues or interests.

Interstate Bridge Replacement Program Decision Development Framework



Steering and advisory groups will strive to develop advice and recommendations by consensus to strengthen the weight of these recommendations and demonstrate their guidance reflects broad regional values. Consensus means that members can live with the recommendation; such recommendation is consistent with a member’s interests, duties and obligations; and can be supported by that member. These recommendations will be informed by community engagement and input. The program administrator is responsible for considering recommendations from these groups, ensuring they meet permitting and regulatory standards, and considering how to implement them on the program.

If consensus on a recommendation is not reached, the outcome of the discussion will be documented and brought forward by the program administrator along with a recommended course of action to the appropriate decision-maker, depending on who has the jurisdictional authority. This could include WSDOT and ODOT leadership, FHWA, Federal Transit Administration, the Oregon Transportation Commission, the bi-state legislative committee, the governors of each state, or other decision-makers.

Regular updates will be made to the bi-state legislative committee by the program administrator to provide an overview of these recommendations throughout the program. Members of the steering or advisory groups may be invited to participate in briefings to provide additional information, context, or perspectives on group activities.

Community Engagement Plan

With the program underway, initial plans for robust community engagement are also in development. This engagement will be critical to identifying a bridge replacement solution that

reflects community values, earns broad regional support, and ultimately, clears a path to construction. Community engagement efforts will provide extensive and ongoing opportunities for meaningful two-way communication that prioritizes the following:

- Equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Accessibility
- Transparency
- Creativity and innovation

The community engagement plan outlines the approach to work with partners to inform and engage stakeholders and the public through 2021. The plan sets goals and guidelines for how to perform outreach in an equitable and holistic way. Targeted tools and tactics will be created at specific stages of outreach to continue the work to ensure transparency and active public participation. Inclusive, two-way community engagement is critical to moving the purpose and need, and vision and values forward, to help screen bridge replacement alternatives. The draft community engagement plan was presented to the bi-state legislative committee November 24, 2020.

Conceptual Finance Plan

As directed by the Washington State 2019-21 Transportation Budget (ESHB 1160), a draft Conceptual Finance Plan has also been delivered to the governors and the legislative transportation committees of each state on December 1, 2020.

The IBR program will require an estimated three to five years and up to \$100 million to complete the environmental process and obtain federal approval to move to construction, which is anticipated to begin by summer 2025. Meeting these milestones will be contingent upon reaching bi-state agreement and obtaining program funding. As of September 2020, the two states have dedicated a combined \$50 million in funding to the IBR program. The Washington State 2019-2021 Transportation Budget (ESHB 1160) allocated \$35 million. The Oregon Transportation Commission allocated \$15 million.

The draft Conceptual Finance Plan provides a high-level initial overview of the potential scale of need and a review of the possible funding options available at the local, state, and federal levels. Cost estimates from the previous project serve as a foundation for the IBR program's current work of identifying funding sources and financing options. The draft Conceptual Finance Plan will be refined as stakeholder and community engagement continues to help inform program work and provide additional guidance around replacement alternatives. Prior efforts based their estimates off a specific design and associated scope and right-of-way costs. It should be anticipated that the IBR program's cost estimates, with a new planning and design process underway, will change substantially in terms of design, scope, and other variations that have occurred in the years since 2012. The draft Conceptual Finance Plan⁷ gives an overview of some of those changes that the next iteration of cost estimates will incorporate.

⁷ <https://wsdot.wa.gov/projects/i5/interstate-bridge/home> and <https://www.oregon.gov/odot/projects/pages/project-details.aspx?project=21570>

PREVIOUS FINANCE PLAN

The prior project's finance plan assumed that Oregon and Washington would share the costs for the bridge, with the highway components funded primarily by leveraging future toll revenues and the transit extension components coming from a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant. Each state would use their own funds to pay for interchange and highway improvements on their respective sides of the river.

The three primary funding sources for the prior project were assumed to be the FTA grant, tolls, and contributions from the two states.

CONCEPTUAL FINANCE PLAN APPROACH

The IBR program's funding options, eligibility, and probability of award differ depending on scope. The replacement river crossing, transit mode options, and highway/interchange improvements could be eligible for different funding sources, so the report contains an assessment of potential funding sources and probabilities, with some promising potential options. It is expected that an FTA Capital Investment Grant, other competitive discretionary federal grants, tolling, and regional/local funds will be considered in concert with different financing methods and tools. To be eligible for many federal funding sources, the IBR program will need to secure matching funds from other sources.

The draft Conceptual Finance Plan offers updated conceptual cost estimates, adapted from previous planning efforts' estimates for low- and high-cost replacement estimates for different transit option scenarios (Light-Rail Transit and Bus Rapid Transit). The draft Conceptual Finance Plan then uses a financial model to align the potential sources and uses of funds by year and identify the funding gaps. A range of options to address the funding gap are discussed, including a target range for the funding contribution required from each state. This is a target range given the various potential options for reducing this funding gap.

The draft Conceptual Finance Plan will be presented to the bi-state legislative committee for feedback and guidance in November and December 2020. The finance plan will be refined as stakeholder and community engagement continues to help inform program work and provide additional guidance around replacement alternatives.

FUTURE FINANCING STEPS

- Refine estimates as IBR program scope progresses.
- Apply for and obtain state funding commitments and approvals (tolling authorization / state funds) for right-of-way acquisition and construction.
- Additional coordination with regional tolling plans and programs.
- Apply for and obtain federal funding commitments.
- Provide ongoing updates on spending activities.

IV. PROGRAM PLAN 2021

With key resources now in place, the program team is transitioning into the next phase of program development work. This will include technical analysis as well as community engagement with a wide range of stakeholders to identify a bridge replacement solution that reflects community values and can build broad regional support. Part of this work will also include a report studying possible governance structures for a bridge authority that could provide joint administration of the bridges between the two states.

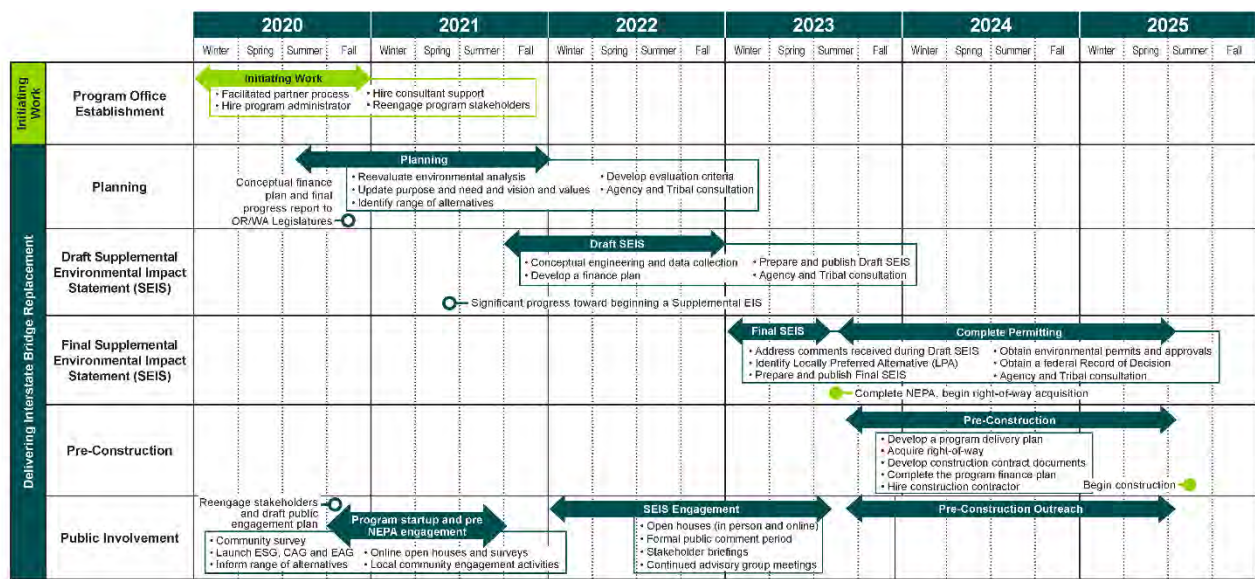
Work over the next year will involve a comprehensive evaluation of what environmental factors and context have changed since the previous program. This will include an update to critical transportation data needed to identify bridge replacement alternatives. Simultaneously, an inclusive and robust community engagement program is underway to engage partners and the community in guiding development of alternative bridge replacement solutions. Establishing effective tools for sharing program information and incorporating public input at critical milestones and decision points will be essential to identifying a solution that has broad public support.

Once the Purpose and Need Statement for the program is established, the program team will work with program partners, stakeholders and community to identify the range of alternatives that could address the program's purpose and need. Ultimately, program development includes the planning and technical work that will be necessary to obtain federal approval for a preferred alternative to move to construction. This will require successful completion of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. All program development work will be conducted through a public, transparent process with extensive and inclusive community engagement. The key initiatives the program is initially addressing include:

- **Centering equity:** The IBR program will consider the needs of historically underrepresented and underserved communities and the barriers those communities face so that the program improves access to jobs, goods, services, and key destinations. An Equity Advisory Group (EAG) is under development to provide a specific and formal way of ensuring equity is centered throughout the program and advisory groups.
- **Implementing a comprehensive community engagement program:** The program will implement an extensive and inclusive community engagement program that will include a range of tools and tactics for meaningful two-way dialogue.
- **Establishing a Community Advisory Group (CAG):** The program will establish a CAG framework and recruit members. The CAG will represent regional constituent interests and input and will provide recommendations to the ESG and IBR program team on key issues driving community or business perspectives. The CAG will hold its first meeting in January 2021.
- **Environmental Process and Permitting:** The environmental process includes coordination with agency partners, including a reevaluation of the built and natural environments. Early in 2021, the program will update the program's Purpose and Need Statement and establish a community Vision and Value Statement, and identify screening criteria and a range of bridge replacement alternatives.

- **Transportation Planning:** Initial program work in 2020 and 2021 will involve understanding the current transportation system and developing evaluation assumptions and modeling to develop the approach for identifying transportation design alternatives that will address future transportation demands.
- **Transit Mode Analysis:** The program will develop the approach for identifying HCT alternatives to be analyzed during the NEPA process. This will include updating the previous analysis and collecting new data.

The program will rapidly launch several key initiatives to ensure the program meets the FHWA repayment deadline of September 30, 2024, while emphasizing a two-way, transparent public-engagement process. This following program timeline describes, at a glance, the key milestones in order to meet repayment deadlines.



KEY ○ Legislative Milestone ● Milestone Submitted to FHWA

NOTE: All milestones shown are contingent upon funding and bi-state agreement. FHWA milestones were submitted by ODOT/WSDOT as part of the 2019 federal repayment extension request. FHWA granted the states an extension until September 30, 2024 to begin right-of-way acquisition or start the construction phase.

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Title VI Notice to Public: It is the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) policy to ensure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin or sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any of its federally funded programs and activities. Any person who believes his/her Title VI protection has been violated, may file a complaint with WSDOT's Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO). For additional information regarding Title VI complaint procedures and/or information regarding our non-discrimination obligations, please contact OEO's Title VI Coordinator at (206) 709-7090.



wsdot.wa.gov/projects/15/interstate-bridge/home
oregon.gov/odot/projects/pages/project-details.aspx?projectId=21570

The 2019 Progress Report detailed the following milestone goals. Meeting these goals are contingent upon reaching bi-state agreement and obtaining funding:

- December 1, 2019: Provide progress report (completed)
- Spring 2020: Begin NEPA reevaluation (ongoing)
- July 1, 2020: Reengage stakeholders, reevaluate permits, and purpose and need (ongoing)
- December 1, 2020: Finalize Conceptual Finance Plan (completed)
- June 30, 2021: Show significant progress toward beginning Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (ongoing)

Leading up to the September 30, 2024, extension deadline, the IBR program team developed further detailed target dates to meet the above stages, and these dates are part of the FHWA repayment extension conditions:

- Summer 2023: Complete NEPA process (Record of Decision); begin right-of-way acquisition (on track)
- Complete right-of-way acquisition, begin construction – Summer 2025 (on track)

Area History

To ensure inclusivity as the program moves forward, the current landscape and its history must be thoroughly understood by the IBR program team, agency partners, and stakeholders. This is crucial to ensuring that community engagement proceeds with an emphasis on equity. The experiences of communities in the immediate program corridor and the broader Portland-Vancouver metro region are shaped by this history, including many individuals and families who were directly affected by pivotal events, including (but not limited to) the following:

- **Chinook villages** on the shores of the lower Columbia River that thrived for centuries until the 19th century, when settlers brought disease and ultimately removed Indigenous peoples to the Grand Ronde and Yakama Reservations⁸
- The history of Indigenous peoples on the land where **Fort Vancouver** now sits; subsequent establishment of the fort; and the role that Asian immigrants, Hawaiians, and African American soldiers played throughout its history
- **Oregon's Constitution**, which prohibited Black people from entering or residing in the state, and was later updated to exclude Chinese Americans from basic rights, including property ownership and voting
- African American and Native American workers at the **Kaiser Shipyards** in Portland and Vancouver during World War II⁹
- The flooding of **Vanport**, resulting in the displacement of thousands of families who were housed there (many of whom were Black)¹⁰
- Construction of **I-5, Memorial Coliseum, and the Emanuel Hospital** expansion that collectively displaced thousands of Black Portlanders from the 1950s through the 1970s¹¹
- **Redlining** and other housing discrimination experienced by communities of color
- Historical and ongoing **gentrification and displacement** in Portland and Vancouver¹²

⁸ https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/wappato_valley_villages/#.X5CtT9BKhEZ

⁹ https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/vanport/#.X43S_tBKhEa

¹⁰ https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/vanport/#.X43S_tBKhEa

¹¹ https://oregonhumanities.org/rll/magazine/skin-summer-2013/a-hidden-history/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwuL_8BRCXARIsAGiC51DFgf6-

¹² <https://pamplinmedia.com/pt/9-news/361975-241172-waves-of-displacement-began-washing-over-black-portlanders-long-ago>

Centering Equity

Centering equity means elevating the voices of historically marginalized communities in our engagement, design, planning, environmental, and construction processes. It also means not furthering harm to these communities, achieved by learning from and acknowledging past harms caused by departments of transportation to communities of color in the program corridor. The IBR program will consider the needs of historically underrepresented and underserved communities and the barriers those communities face to improve their access to jobs, goods, services, and key destinations. To accomplish this goal, the program is integrating an equity lens that will ensure thoughtful consideration of the potential benefits and burdens to marginalized communities. Additionally, program staff are working with equity staff from partner agencies to determine and develop the best approach to monitor and guide the program's equity considerations.

This includes developing a framework around creating an Equity Advisory Group (EAG) that will launch in early 2021 to fulfill the commitment to prioritize equity throughout the course of the program. The EAG will make recommendations to the IBR program for consideration regarding the program's processes, policies, and decisions that could affect historically underrepresented and/or underserved communities. The EAG will be composed of approximately 30 members, including equity leads from partner jurisdictions and members from community-based organizations, nonprofits, and other stakeholders.

The program team recognizes that it is critical to earn the trust of communities who have experienced harm as a result of past government infrastructure decisions. Community engagement efforts will be intentional and proactively reach out to communities of concern. With a recognition that "one size doesn't fit all," strategies will be used that meet communities—especially historically marginalized communities—where they are in order to ensure the program truly reflects the whole community.

Purpose and Need Statement & Vision and Values Statement

The program team will work with stakeholders and the public to both update the Purpose and Need and establish Vision and Values Statements for the program. Both statements rely on extensive community outreach as well as agency and tribal coordination. The Purpose and Need Statement identifies the problems that must be addressed from a transportation perspective, consistent with federal requirements. The community Vision and Values Statement will identify regional values and goals related to potential transportation improvements and program outcomes. Both the Purpose and Need and Vision and Values Statements will be used during the NEPA process to evaluate all project alternatives and to ultimately select the preferred alternative.

Community Engagement

Community engagement efforts will seek to provide extensive, inclusive, and ongoing opportunities for meaningful two-way communication that prioritizes the following:



As the IBR program moves forward, the program team will continue to work with a variety of stakeholders and seek public feedback—with ample opportunities for community input on program elements—so that the benefits and impacts of this work are well understood. The effectiveness of community engagement efforts will be regularly evaluated throughout the life of the program and adjusted to meet changing needs.

COVID-19 AND COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBLE VIRTUAL OUTREACH

In response to the Washington and Oregon governors' direction to help slow and prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), all community engagement will occur virtually for the foreseeable future. The program is committed to maintaining accessibility and transparency for all virtual engagement and public meetings and is aware of the technological barriers that virtual engagement may have on communities, especially communities of concern. The IBR program team will be intentional in addressing barriers to engagement and rely on virtual best practices and the guidance from community-based organizations, community leaders, and program partners.

UNDERSTANDING OUR AUDIENCE

Conducting direct outreach to historically underrepresented and/or underserved communities will be vital, and embracing innovative ways to achieve meaningful, two-way communication will be necessary for success. The IBR program will identify and include currently and historically underrepresented and/or underserved communities by implementing a demographics analysis in the program area early in program development. This analysis will employ both quantitative and qualitative research to understand perspectives of communities on both sides of the river.

Intentional and inclusive community surveys and focus groups will be conducted with outreach on both sides of the river to help inform program work. This will include specific outreach to diverse communities and racial minorities to proactively engage current or historically underrepresented and/or underserved communities. The feedback gathered from the community will help inform program work when updating the Purpose and Need Statement and

identifying what is important to the community to inform development of the Vision and Values Statement by May 2021.

TOOLS AND TACTICS

In alignment with our commitment to reach the communities where they are and minimize barriers to engagement, we will utilize a variety of tools. Engagement tools based in innovation, equity, and traditional tactics will blend to deliver an engagement program that meets the needs of a variety of stakeholders, meeting them when and where they are mostly likely to engage. Some tools and tactics the program will use include, but are not limited to the following:

- Podcast, possibly in English and Spanish
- Videos, including livestreaming events and regular storytelling
- Social media channels
- Print materials and in-person displays
- Digital media
- Radio advertisements
- Paid advertising and earned media
- Direct telephone outreach
- Comprehensive and interactive program website

TRANSPARENCY AND STRATEGIES

The public needs and expects transparent communication on updates and outcomes from advisory groups and knowledge about how public feedback is considered in the program development process. As part of efforts to support transparency and accountability in program work, common questions and public comment themes will be publicly documented and addressed.

The program is also committed to intentional outreach that clearly defines the decision-making process and opportunities for the public to inform and shape program work. This includes reporting back how public input is being taken into consideration and is or is not being implemented.

The program is committed to continuously evaluating communications and engagement strategies to ensure ongoing and substantive progress toward the following shared goals:

- Continuously evaluate and, as needed, revise these goals to ensure program alignment with community feedback and values.
- Track previous and future objectives to ensure completion.
- Ensure newly identified objectives align with goals as new phases of work are identified.
- Develop, continuously refine, and track key indicators of success.

Success indicators will help the program team quantitatively measure communication and engagement activities to help evaluate the effectiveness of outreach efforts and determine if adjustments are needed. Program activities must consider and include success indicators in each individual plan (e.g., meeting, briefing, online open house). Success indicators may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Quantity and quality of comments received
- Percentage of participants expressing satisfaction with the quality and accessibility of information presented
- Project email list growth rate and depth of engagement (e.g., open and click rates)
- Demographics of engaged stakeholders, particularly from communities of concern

Community Advisory Group Framework

The formation of a CAG will be a key component of a broader, comprehensive community engagement strategy to ensure ongoing, extensive, and inclusive public dialogue.

The CAG will include diverse and inclusive membership to provide a forum for community dialogue to ensure the program reflects regional needs, and to discuss and provide feedback on important issues to the community. The CAG will represent a range of regional interests and will serve to advise and provide recommendations to the ESG and the IBR program team on key issues from a community perspective. The CAG will be convened throughout program development, and its charter and purpose will be reevaluated when the IBR is near the start of construction.

ODOT and WSDOT selected the interim CAG co-chairs—with validation from partner agencies, prior to the CAG's formation—to allow the ESG to meet with full membership. They were needed to complete formation of the ESG, but remain interim co-chairs until the CAG is convened and membership is finalized. To ensure increased expertise and input from stakeholders, topical subgroups could be formed as needed, to more fully explore specific subjects under the CAG's purview and to provide additional guidance to the program.

It is anticipated that the CAG will include approximately 25 to 30 members, who will effectively represent a diverse range of regional interests, with balanced representation from both states. Every effort will be made to identify and include members that can represent more than one interest area.

Toward the end of 2020, the program team will begin recruitment for the CAG. Recruitment will emphasize diversity, inclusion, and equity, and include individuals in a range of fields with varying interests and backgrounds. Support and assistance from ESG partners will be sought to utilize their outreach channels to publicize the CAG formation and the opportunity to participate.

Invitations will be sent to individuals and organizations to participate in informational sessions with program staff. Following an initial information session, individuals will complete an application to represent an organization or a community-at-large position. In coordination with the agency partners, organizations will be identified and considered for appointment.

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE / TOPICAL WORK GROUPS

Technical and topical advisory committees will be convened as needed throughout the program. These groups may form as a result of conversations with the ESG, CAG, or EAG and will provide the program with technical recommendations and work with the IBR program team on technical and/or design issues.

Technical advisory committees will include partner agency experts, with support from the program. These groups will likely be ongoing and will help the program develop and advance technical program deliverables.

Topical working groups will be convened on an as-needed basis to provide recommendations on key issues. Topical working groups could include agency representatives, key stakeholders, and expert consultants.

Environmental Process & Permitting

As part of the NEPA process, the program team will conduct early and continuous interagency and community engagement to ensure the solution identified in the future addresses transportation needs and incorporates community values. As an initial step, following community and stakeholder engagement, the program team will work to identify the current transportation problems that need to be addressed to update the Purpose and Need Statement, in collaboration with the lead federal agencies—FHWA and FTA—other agencies and tribes.

The program team will convene a collaborative agency group to meet regularly and address environmental compliance with federal, state, and local regulations (e.g., the Endangered Species Act, Section 106, U.S. Coast Guard permit, etc.). The program team will also initiate consultation with all interested tribes.

REEVALUATING NEPA DOCUMENTATION

Recent changes in the federal NEPA regulations require advance work on the program's Purpose and Need and Vision and Values Statements before the NEPA process officially starts. The NEPA process will rely on coordination with program partners to advance transportation planning and to conduct preliminary screening of bridge replacement alternatives and removal of alternatives that do not meet screening criteria before a new Notice of Intent is issued. While the program is working with its transportation partners, critical federal analysis will be advanced regarding navigation, shipping channels and levees, and impacts to endangered species.

PROGRESS TOWARD SUPPLEMENTAL DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (SDEIS)

Progress toward the SDEIS will include conducting the reevaluation to help define the NEPA strategy, as well as developing a timeline for NEPA milestones. As the ESG and CAG are informing updates to the program's Purpose and Need Statement and establishment of the Vision and Values Statement, the program is working with the lead federal agencies (FHWA and FTA), other agencies, tribes, and the public to ensure the updates are sufficient for NEPA.

ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT

With approval of the updated Purpose and Need Statement, and the Vision and Values Statement, the program will define the evaluation criteria to be used for screening bridge replacement alternatives. The team will go through an iterative process to develop, refine, and screen alternatives to identify the alternatives to be evaluated in the SDEIS. This evaluation will consider environmental, design, transit and transportation program elements, as well as input from partner agencies, tribes, and the public

TRIBAL CONSULTATION

The IBR program will also initiate consultation with all interested tribes—over 25 letters were sent out in the summer of 2020 to begin the consultation process, recognizing and respecting the unique and important rights of Native American tribes as sovereign nations. During the previous program, 11 tribes were formally consulted. The IBR program will partner with and communicate with tribes through appropriate government to government consultation and channels. The program anticipates consulting with at least the same tribes as the previous program.

Bridge Authority Report

The Washington State 2019–2021 Transportation Budget (ESHB 1160) directed the IBR program office to study possible governance structures for a bridge authority that could provide joint administration of the bridges over the Columbia River between Oregon and Washington. A bridge authority may:

- Review bridge needs for repair, maintenance and new construction.
- Prioritize the identified needs.
- Make recommendations to both states regarding financing specific projects, timing, authority and operations.

The study is planned to include six key elements:

- Review national best-practice examples of multistate transportation authorities to understand what responsibilities have been placed with these organizations and how they are structured, as well as who identifies decision-makers and how those decision-makers are responsible to the public.
- Review how Oregon and Washington handle governance responsibilities and comparison to best practices to identify gaps. The review will include current efforts related to the interest in legislation to create a bi-state authority to fund and construct a new bridge in Hood River.
- Develop criteria (key considerations) for assessing bridge authority governance structures, based on best practices and local context.
- Identify alternative bridge authority governance structures (may include bi-state agreement, authority, interstate compact, or other governance structure). Consideration of an interstate compact approach will be informed by consultation with the National Center for Interstate Compacts.
- Assess alternative bridge authority governance structures by applying criteria to the governance structure alternatives. The assessment will frame tradeoffs in the context of best-practice and local considerations.
- Develop a recommendation for next steps.

Projects of Statewide Significance

ESHB 1994 was passed during the 2019 Washington legislative session, creating the ability to recognize transportation projects of statewide significance and expedite their completion within the state of Washington by establishing a formal process of coordination. WSDOT is directed to develop an application for this designation; the program office will conduct this work, including rule-making as necessary. The permanent rule-making process involves three formal steps and will take several months.

Transportation Planning

Moving forward, part of program development will include gathering new data to identify what has changed in the program area, as well as working with local stakeholders and experts to determine if there are any new considerations that should be accounted for in updating the Purpose and Need Statement and identifying replacement alternatives. The intent will be to identify if the same circumstances exist in the area surrounding the existing bridge.

The IBR program is relying on a data-driven process to make recommendations that will identify a bridge replacement solution that aligns with community-informed values and serves the communities in the region. WSDOT and ODOT and the partner agencies will provide transportation data such as volumes, speeds, congestion, and freight classification information. The program will supplement existing data with new data that includes freeway volumes/speed, travel times for different modes, transit ridership and travel time data, intersection volumes, and non-motorized traveler data. The program team is also working to gather safety data for the

most recent 5-year period, as well as bridge lift information. This data will be collected and compared from 2019 to 2020 to analyze the impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.

This technical data helps determine the current conditions for each of the identified transportation problems, such as current crash rates and locations, origin-and-destination data of vehicles using the corridor, transit ridership and trends, and current congestion statistics. Collecting this new data is necessary to make sure that current conditions are understood and that the updated transportation problems adequately reflect the current state of transportation issues to be addressed.

After collecting the existing transportation data and developing the transportation methods and assumptions for new data collection, the program will begin evaluating the existing transportation characteristics and deficiencies. To accomplish future analysis, a Travel Demand Forecasting Modeling Working Group will be established and will coordinate with other projects in the region. The working group will work with both Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area planning organizations—Metro and Regional Transportation Council—to develop preliminary travel demand ridership and traffic forecasts.

Transit Mode Analysis

The IBR program team will develop an approach for identifying and analyzing high-capacity transit (HCT) alternatives. The approach will review and build on existing transit policies and plans within the program corridor, the existing and planned transit service of both C-TRAN and TriMet, origin-and-destination patterns and other ridership data, and HCT alternatives analysis from previous planning efforts. Changes and new information about existing transit systems will be taken into consideration, including but not limited to, C-TRAN's bus rapid transit system.

The program team will review the previous project's data and locally preferred design alternatives. Where possible, the IBR program will utilize this information, and update it to reflect any significant changes to existing conditions and/or design requirements. This information will be used to work with agency partners, stakeholders, and the public to inform development of alternatives to move forward for further consideration.

After collecting the existing transit information (in coordination with the metropolitan planning organizations and transit agencies), the program's transit team will begin to develop the high-level concept range of HCT options.

Highway and Interchange Analysis

The IBR program team will develop an approach for identifying and analyzing highway and interchange design alternatives. The approach will build upon work from previous planning efforts and take into account any changes in the system, policies, and regulations. Analysis will review previous data from the locally preferred alternative to identify a range of improvements and potential impacts to inform the NEPA process.

Highway and interchange design alternatives could include river-crossing configurations, bicycle and pedestrian access, and interchange layouts. New ideas will be generated by seeking input from local agencies and the public through an extensive public-engagement process. The steering and advisory groups will help provide advice and feedback to the program team to help generate these ideas as well. There will also be close coordination with the analysis for HCT to help ensure an integrated multimodal transportation system.

As new ideas are generated, the program team will utilize previous work and current conditions to help identify if there are potential increases or reductions to impacts. Knowledge previously gained from working with regulatory agencies on permitting is valuable for this analysis. For the river crossing, the program will collect river user data to understand today's use of the river as well as its planned future use. Program staff will work with the U.S. Coast Guard and use this new data to identify and document the vertical clearance needs for river navigation.

The program will develop more detail for the best performing conceptual ideas to understand cost, benefit, and potential impacts. The best ideas will then be evaluated against the program's Purpose and Need Statement and will be screened by utilizing performance criteria that is determined from the Vision and Values Statement. The results of the analysis will provide a range of alternatives, including both transit and highway, to move forward into the NEPA process.

V. CONCLUSION

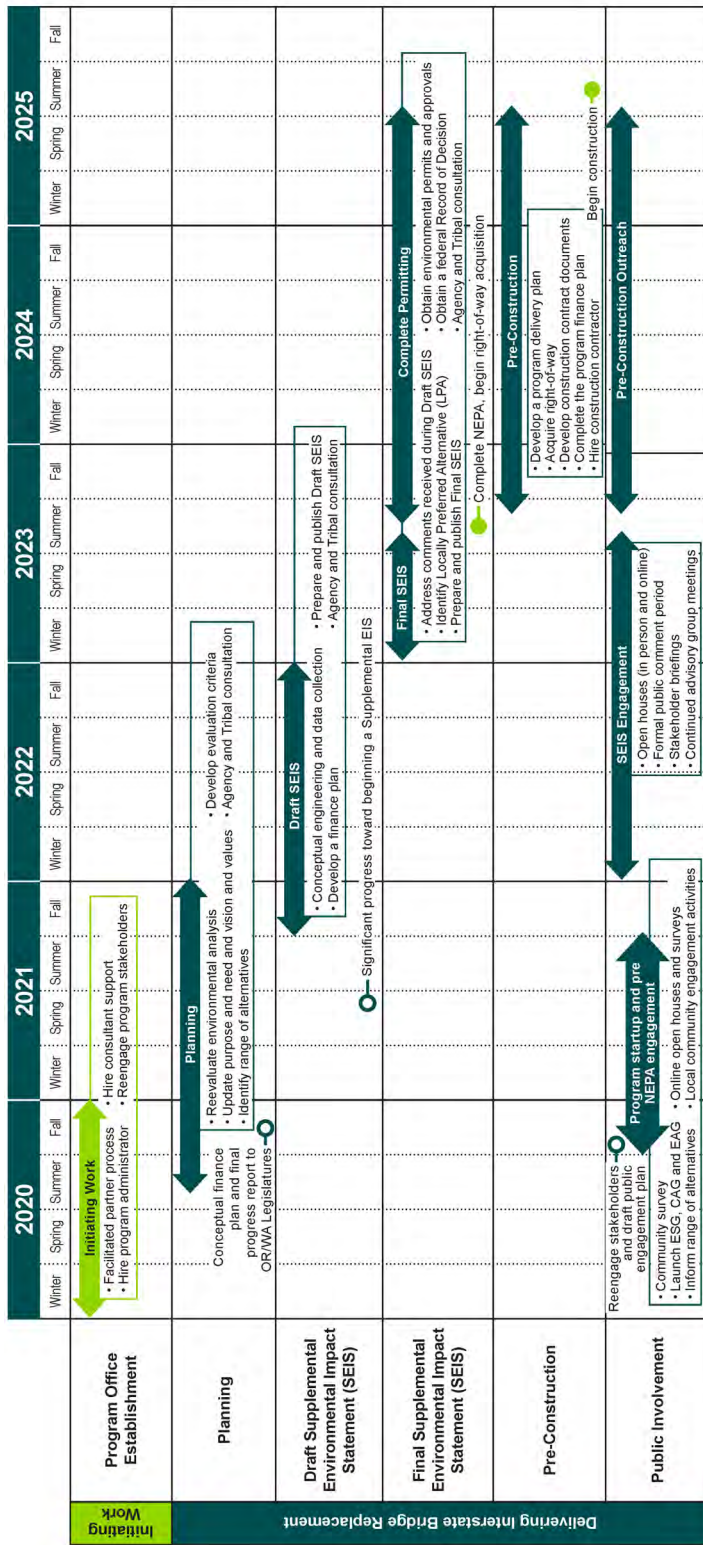
The Interstate Bridge has and will continue to be an important transportation corridor connecting the communities of Oregon and Washington. Previous planning efforts identified critical concerns that remain unaddressed. The IBR program team will learn from these previous efforts and leverage the investment made in the previous project to inform upcoming program development efforts. The commitment by executive and legislative leadership to restart Interstate Bridge replacement efforts demonstrates a clear recognition that addressing these issues is a critical transportation need for both states.

Work over the next year will involve a comprehensive reevaluation of the current environment and an update to critical transportation data needed to identify bridge replacement alternatives. In addition, the reevaluation analysis and data collection, and inclusive and robust community engagement program is underway. Establishing effective tools for sharing program information and incorporating public input at critical milestones and decision points will be essential to identifying a solution that has broad public support.

The deliberate and thoughtful steps taken to reengage partners will be a solid foundation for advancing this program. A number of key milestones remain ahead of the IBR program and will require continuous coordination with regional partners, permitting agencies, tribal governments, elected officials, and the communities in Oregon and Washington. Over the next three years, the program expects to complete draft and final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statements, receive a Record of Decision, and begin pre-construction work.

The IBR program is dedicated to leading a transparent, data-driven process in collaboration with elected leaders, stakeholders and the public to identify and advance the best possible solution to meet the needs of the region.

VI. APPENDIX A: INTERSTATE BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROGRAM TIMELINE



NOTE: All milestones shown are contingent upon funding and bi-state agreement. FHWA milestones were submitted by ODOT/WSDOT as part of the 2019 federal report. Extension request. FHWA granted the states an extension until September 30, 2024 to begin right-of-way acquisition or start the construction phase.

KEY ○ Legislative Milestone ● Milestone Submitted to FHWA

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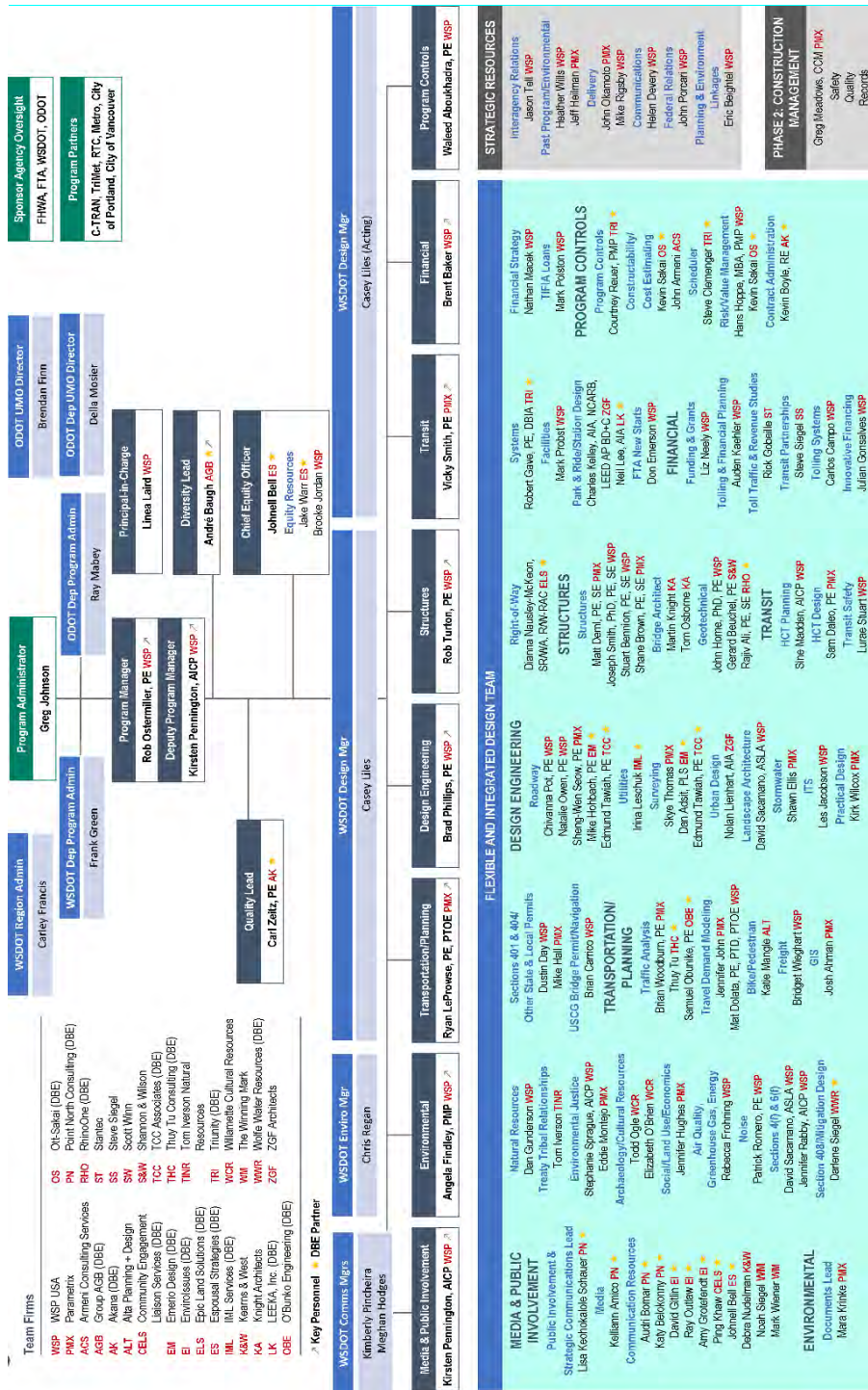
www.oregon.gov/odot/projects/pages/project-details.aspx?project=21570

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wsdot.wa.gov/projects/interstate-bridge/home

VII. APPENDIX B: INTERSTATE BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROGRAM TEAM ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The consultant team will add resources as needed with an anticipated team structure as follows (note that not all staff resources listed below are actively engaged in program work at this stage, nor does every staff resource listed necessarily represent a full-time employee):



VIII. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) INFORMATION

Accommodation requests for people with disabilities in Washington can be made by contacting the WSDOT Diversity/ADA Affairs team at wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov or by calling toll-free, 855-362-4ADA (4232). Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may make a request by calling the Washington State Relay at 711.

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IX. TITLE VI STATEMENT TO THE PUBLIC

It is IBR program's policy to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin or sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any of its programs and activities. Any person who believes his or her Title VI protection has been violated may file a complaint with WSDOT's Office of Equal Opportunity. For additional information regarding Title VI complaint procedures and/or information regarding our non-discrimination obligations, please contact the Office of Equal Opportunity's Title VI Coordinator at 360-705-709.