

Progress Report for HB 2800 – Interstate 5 Bridge Replacement Project

Second quarter 2013 (4/1/13 to 6/30/13)

The following information is submitted by the Oregon Department of Transportation following Section 21 of HB 2800, concerning the Interstate Bridge Replacement Project:

SECTION 21. Each calendar quarter, the Department of Transportation shall prepare and submit a report on the progress of the Interstate 5 bridge replacement project described in Section 2 of this 2013 Act to the Legislative Assembly as provided in ORS 192.245 or, if the report is submitted during the interim between sessions of the Legislative Assembly, to the appropriate interim committees related to transportation.

Information in this progress report addresses project activity during the period April 1 through June 30, 2013. The report covers four areas:

- Permitting
- Design and procurement planning
- Financial planning and investment grade traffic and revenue analysis
- FTA New Starts application
- State equity contributions

Permitting

In addition to the U.S. Coast Guard General Bridge Permit work, the project focused during this period on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Navigation 408 permit application and Endangered Species Act consultation with National Marine Fisheries Service.

U.S. Coast Guard General Bridge Permit

In mid-2012, the project began individual discussions with three metal fabricators (Oregon Iron Works, Greenberry Industrial and Thompson Metal Fab) that ship large structures by barge using the current I-5 bridge lift span. The purpose of the discussions was to develop a common understanding of the potential impact a 116-foot replacement bridge could have on the fabricators' ability to transport very large shipments downriver under the proposed I-5 replacement bridge.

In January 2013, the joint Oregon and Washington Columbia River Crossing project submitted a general bridge permit application to the United States Coast Guard (USCG). The application described the economic and transportation benefits of the project, and proposed mitigation for potential impacts on the fabricators' navigation-dependent operations.

On May 6, the USCG released the CRC permit application for public review and accepted written comments on the application until June 20, 2013. The USCG scheduled two public meetings in Portland on June 4 and in Vancouver on June 5 to receive comments on the permit application. The permit application identifies and outlines avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures for impacts. It includes proposed mitigation for these impacts and the number of jobs potentially affected by a replacement bridge with a vertical clearance of 116 feet.

The purpose of the informal public meetings was to consider an application submitted by CRC for USCG approval of the proposed bridge across the Columbia River. All interested parties were invited to present data, views and comments, verbally or in writing, concerning the impact of the proposed bridge project on navigation. Verbal comments provided at the meetings were transcribed and placed into the docket. A total of 120 verbal comments were made at these two meetings. A total of 251 comments were received by the USCG during the 45-day comment period and are published on their [online docket](#).

On June 4, 2013, the Oregon and Washington departments of transportation announced they had signed agreements with two Columbia River manufacturers, Oregon Iron Works and Greenberry Industrial, whose operations would be affected by construction of a new I-5 bridge across the Columbia River. At that time, negotiations continued with a third manufacturer, Thompson Metal Fab.

US Army Corps of Engineers Section 408 permit

Section 408 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 requires authorization for modifications to an existing U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) project. CRC is working to obtain two Section 408 authorizations for modifications to the Columbia River navigation channels and to river levees on the south bank of the river. These authorizations allow the project to move forward with obtaining a Section 404 permit (regulating the discharge of dredged and fill materials into waterways), submitted by CRC to USACE in November 2012.

The multi-step application process for the modifications to the navigation channel began in December 2012 and is scheduled to be finalized in July 2014. The project submitted a 30 percent design package to USACE for Navigation 408 for a 30-day technical review in April 2013. The levee modifications application process will extend from August 2013 through August 2015.

National Marine Fisheries Service ESA consultation

CRC formally re-engaged Endangered Species Act consultation with National Marine Fisheries Service by submitting the re-initiation document by the federal lead agencies on April 4, 2013 (document included the proposed Critical Habitat Listing of lower Columbia Coho effective January 14, 2013).

Staff supported several ongoing environmental permitting activities during the period, including agency coordination and consultation, preparation of responses to public comments received during public comment periods and ongoing work related to the Oregon Department of State Lands removal-fill permit application, USACE 404 permit application and Washington Department of Ecology 401 permit application, Endangered Species Act consultation with National Marine Fisheries Service, tribal consultation, and Section 106 consultation for environmental mitigation sites.

Design and Procurement Planning

CRC project staff continued project design and the development of draft documentation necessary to solicit several future construction procurement packages, including the River Crossing, Washington Transit, Mainland Connector and Transit Systems contracts. During this period, project staff was primarily focused on the River Crossing package, the largest of the construction contracts. A request for proposals for the River Crossing package is anticipated in fall 2013 to meet a fall 2014 construction start

date. Work completed during this period included development of an engineering plan set, multi-discipline technical coordination, and bi-state review of draft documentation.

Financial Planning and Investment Grade Traffic and Revenue Analysis

The CRC finance plan relies on funding from three major sources: the federal government, the states of Washington and Oregon, and toll revenue. The project continues to advance financial plan development with ODOT and WSDOT financial offices and both state treasury offices, as well as coordinating with tolling staff on toll system planning and design and the toll rate setting process.

Work in this period to support the project's finance plan was primarily focused on toll revenue analysis. An investment-grade toll and revenue study was initiated in October 2012, resulting in a preliminary toll revenue estimates in February 2013. Since then, the team has been working to complete an update of the preliminary toll revenue estimate, in terms of gross revenue, net revenue, and the estimated project funding capacity of net toll revenue.

FTA New Starts Application

The project produced deliverables related to pursuit of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA), slated for full application in fall 2013 and award of the FFGA in summer 2014. Key deliverables required by FTA are guided by the project's FFGA roadmap. Primary work during this period was in development of an updated Project Management Plan, submitted to FTA May 1, 2013, describing a framework for project design and construction. Work during this period for future New Starts application submittals was also performed in support of procurement planning for River Crossing, Washington Transit, Mainland Connector and Transit Systems contracts.

State Equity Contributions

The Washington Legislature adjourned *sine die* on June 30 without passing a transportation revenue package that would have provided the state's share of funding for the project, a condition of HB 2800 that must be met before the Oregon State Treasurer can issue the \$450 million in bonds authorized for the I-5 Bridge Replacement Project. Therefore at this time, neither Oregon nor Washington have committed the necessary state equity contribution to the project.