

Program #90019 - Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge FY 2026 Department Requested

Department:	Community Services	Program Contact:	Jon Henrichsen
Program Offer Type:	Capital	Program Offer Stage:	Department Requested
Related Programs:	90015		

Program Characteristics:

Program Description

The Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge (EQRB) is a project in downtown Portland, Oregon, aimed at replacing the existing Burnside Bridge with a seismically resilient structure. This new bridge will be designed to withstand a major earthquake, ensuring that it remains operational for emergency response, evacuation, and recovery efforts immediately following such an event

PURPOSE: There is a one in three chance that Portland, Oregon will experience a magnitude 8+ earthquake in the next 50 years, a result of its location along the Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ), a source of some of the world’s most powerful recurring earthquakes. Right now, none of downtown Portland’s Willamette River vehicular bridges will be immediately usable after a major earthquake.

PROGRAM GOAL: The goal of the EQRB Project is to create a seismically resilient Burnside Street lifeline crossing of the Willamette River that will remain fully operational and accessible immediately after the next CSZ earthquake. The EQRB Project was selected as the top priority project in the County’s 2015 20-year Capital Improvement Plan due to its status as the only County-owned downtown bridge that is part of a regionally designated lifeline route. First responders will use the new bridge to reach those in need after the CSZ earthquake. Its tall cable stay tower will be a beacon for safety, emergency response and recovery operations. The new bridge will also provide safer and more accessible multimodal transportation facilities in the heart of Portland, serving the community for the next hundred or more years.

STATUS: The planning and environmental review phase of the project is complete. The project initiated the Design Phase in October 2023 and has currently completed the 30% design phase milestone.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY: During the Design Phase the project team works closely with engineers, architects, contractors, agency partners and regulatory bodies to balance how the bridge will react during an earthquake and with just regular traffic on it, how hard it is to build the bridge, how the bridge will be taken care of after it is built so it will last a long time, and how much everything will cost to make decisions about what the new bridge should be made of and what it should look like. In FY 2026, the project anticipates achieving the 60% design milestone of the main bridge package, 98% design milestone on the detour route improvement package, and 60% design milestone of the existing bridge demo package.

The construction phase includes Project Labor Agreement (PLA) which includes local hiring preferences, workforce equity and diversity requirements relating to hiring practices, on-the-job training and apprenticeships, and other aspirational goals to help facilitate the entry and retention of historically disadvantaged people interested in careers in the construction industry.

Performance Measures

Measure Type	Performance Measure	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budgeted	FY25 Estimate	FY26 Target
Output	Percent complete of the main bridge design package	15%	30%	30%	60%
Output	Percent complete of detour route improvement design package complete	N/A	N/A	N/A	90%
Output	Percent complete of existing bridge demo design package	N/A	N/A	N/A	60%

Performance Measures Descriptions

In FY 2026, the project anticipates achieving the 60% design milestone of the main bridge package, 90% design milestone on the detour route improvement package, and 60% design milestone of the existing bridge demo package.

Legal / Contractual Obligation

The County is required to maintain the Burnside Bridge in accordance with; State Law; ORS 382.305 through 382.425, MB 2041 subsection 3a and HB2001 and the 1984 IGA with the City of Portland as amended in 1989.

Revenue/Expense Detail

	Adopted General Fund	Adopted Other Funds	Department Requested General Fund	Department Requested Other Funds
Program Expenses	2025	2025	2026	2026
Personnel	\$0	\$1,142,628	\$0	\$1,216,903
Contractual Services	\$0	\$44,492,016	\$0	\$25,976,942
Materials & Supplies	\$0	\$34,673	\$0	\$12,000
Internal Services	\$0	\$5,600,081	\$0	\$5,619,171
Capital Outlay	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$200,000
Total GF/non-GF	\$0	\$51,269,398	\$0	\$33,025,016
Program Total:	\$51,269,398		\$33,025,016	
Program FTE	0.00	5.30	0.00	4.95

Program Revenues				
Fees, Permits & Charges	\$0	\$7,753,722	\$0	\$0
Intergovernmental	\$0	\$22,500,000	\$0	\$0
Financing Sources	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$20,100,542
Interest	\$0	\$500,000	\$0	\$350,000
Beginning Working Capital	\$0	\$20,515,676	\$0	\$12,574,474
Total Revenue	\$0	\$51,269,398	\$0	\$33,025,016

Explanation of Revenues

In FY 2026, the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge project remains primarily supported by funds from Vehicle Registration Fee (VRF) revenue. The VRF is a revenue source dedicated to the Willamette River Bridges, collected from Multnomah County residents. The fee, previously \$38 biannually, was raised to \$112 biannually on 1/1/21. The project has been awarded \$7m in federal funds and \$20m in state funds to advance the design phase of the Project. The project is actively pursuing additional revenue sources at the local, state, and federal level.

Significant Program Changes

Last Year this program was: FY 2024: 90019 Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge

In Fall 2024, after robust community engagement and ten Community Design Advisory Group meetings, the Board adopted the Inverted Y Cable Stayed bridge type design for the east approach, an important first step in the design process.

In addition, this program has a decrease of 0.35 FTE from FY 2025 to FY2026. As the project proceeds, the consultants become more involved and the need for County personnel decreases.