

[View this email in your browser.](#)



The Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project

Our community has had a few very difficult years. While we work to recover from a pandemic, we also must continue to prepare for another catastrophic event. A large-scale earthquake is still a major threat to our region, with a 1 in 3 chance that it will occur in the next fifty years. The Burnside Bridge is nearing its 100-year design life and needs a major upgrade to support our transportation needs for the next century. It is important that the EQRB project keeps moving forward in order to provide our region with a seismically resilient bridge that can both support emergency response and regional recovery following a major earthquake as well as meet our long term transportation needs.

Reducing our project's cost

Multnomah County and the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge project team

appreciate the hard work of the Community Task Force and public input on the recommendation of the Replacement Long Span as the project's Preferred Alternative, the lowest cost of the alternatives studied. However, given the current competition for funding of large infrastructure projects, the County's elected leaders and managers who oversee the EQRB project have asked the project team to consider ways to bring the project cost down.

At the same time, the County is working to identify and secure more funds. The aim is to achieve the right balance between the project design and the project cost, ensuring that the project can get built. The County has access to about \$300 million for the project from its local vehicle registration fee. The cost range for the Preferred Alternative in the Draft EIS exceeded \$800 million.

Finding cost-savings will require changes to the Preferred Alternative that do not reduce the bridge's ability to withstand a major earthquake. Before making any decisions, we will carefully analyze the implications of these potential cost-reduction measures:

- **Reducing the overall width of the bridge** by eliminating a vehicular lane and providing bicycle/pedestrian facilities of at least 14-feet on each side with a crash worthy barrier. This change could lower project cost by approximately \$140-\$165 million.
- **Selecting a 'girder' structure type for the west approach** that would place two rows of support columns in Waterfront Park. This would have fewer than the four rows of columns in the park that support the existing bridge, but more than some of the span types initially considered for the west approach. The girder structure type was endorsed by the Portland Historic Landmarks and Design Commissions because it does not conflict with the lower building heights in the historic districts and provides more open space above and below the bridge on the west approach. This change is expected to lower project cost by about \$5-\$10 million.
- **Adding Support Columns at East End.** Adding a row of support columns on the east approach in or adjacent to the Burnside Skatepark if a Tied Arch design is used. (The extra columns would not be needed if a Cable Supported design is used.) The project will explore ways to add the columns with minimal impact to the Skatepark below the bridge. Cost savings are estimated at \$15-\$20 million.
- **Funding the least cost option for connections to the Skidmore MAX station and Eastbank Esplanade.** This analysis will ensure ADA access is provided to these important facilities below the bridge. The County is seeking opportunities to partner with other agencies to fund facilities and amenities beyond the lowest cost option.

alternatives beyond the lowest cost option.

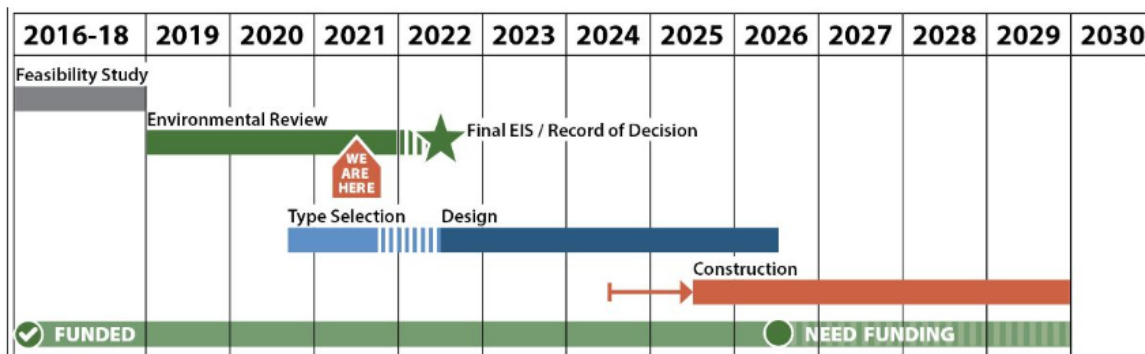
- **Limiting the budget for aesthetic enhancements** by focusing on the main structural form of the new bridge to define its look and feel.
- **Others.** We'll keep looking for additional opportunities to keep costs down.

Next Steps

The evaluation of proposed cost reductions, development of detailed cost estimates and continued funding work will occur from spring to winter 2021. County leadership will use this information to establish a cost cap (or 'not to exceed') number for the project to ensure the project stays at an affordable price and can be funded. The project team will document these findings along with an updated recommended Preferred Alternative in a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement in early 2022 for public and agency review and comment.

Schedule Impact

The additional analysis will add about nine months to the Environmental Review Phase, which will push the start of the Design Phase to mid-2022. Depending on when funds are secured, construction could begin as soon as 2025. Watch for an update this fall on our efforts to reduce project costs and secure funding.



The impacts of the additional analysis to the project schedule are shown in dashed lines and the orange arrow.

BurnsideBridge.org



This email was sent to <<Email Address>>

[*why did I get this?*](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

Multnomah County Attn: EQRB · 501 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd. · Portland, OR 97214 · USA