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Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project awarded \$10 million from Oregon Metro

Multnomah County is pleased to announce the [Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project](#) will receive \$10 million in funding through Oregon Metro's [Regional Flexible Funding Allocation](#). On Thursday, July 31, the Metro Council [approved](#) nearly a quarter billion dollars for the 2028-30 regional flexible funding allocation cycle.

"We are encouraged and thankful for this vote of confidence from our regional partners," Design Phase Project Manager Megan Neill said "This funding adds to the momentum of this project and gets us one step closer to building the first downtown Portland bridge that will be immediately operable after a major earthquake."

Thank you to everyone who provided written and verbal comments in support of the project through Metro's Regional Flexible Funds (RFFA) online open house this spring.

With RFFA funds, Multnomah County can advance permanent safety improvements along transit, pedestrian and bicycle detour routes that will be utilized during the construction of the new bridge, and after, increasing mobility resiliency and safety long-term. Additionally, the new bridge's eastbound bus-only lane will include an additional one-foot of bridge width, improving transit speed, reliability and reducing crossing delay for the three bus lines that serve almost seven million riders each year.



Rendering of transit improvements on the future Burnside Bridge.

Creative Solutions for Cost Savings Under Review

The project team recently completed a Value Engineering (VE) workshop to explore innovative ways to manage construction costs. The session generated several promising ideas, which were vetted by the project team. From that process, the engineering team refined a set of viable options and assessed their potential cost savings.

In parallel, additional design refinements were developed to help reduce overall project expenses. These ideas also went through rigorous analysis, including quantity estimates and contractor input, to calculate realistic savings and assess their impact on project scope.

The County is currently reviewing all recommendations and providing final direction to the team on which ideas to implement in the design. These efforts reflect the team's commitment to leaving no stone unturned in identifying smart, cost-effective solutions while staying focused on delivering a seismically resilient river crossing for the region. Stay tuned for more in our next newsletter.

Project Unveils New Logo

The project is excited to unveil its new logo! The team went through several brainstorming and editing sessions to develop a new concept that incorporates the inverted-Y cable stay design on the east approach. The new logo was inspired by a vision to also embody Portland and the Pacific Northwest – complete with the Portland sign and the mountains in the background. The public will start seeing the new logo on future printed materials and at



Out in the Community

Future Engineers Get a Close-Up Look at the Project

In May, the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project team hosted a bridge tour for graduate students attending the Portland State University Engineering Graduate Student Symposium. This year's group included 30 students from universities across Oregon and Washington who are studying structural, civil and geotechnical engineering.

The walking tour included the Burnside Bridge, portions of Tom McCall Waterfront Park and the Eastbank Esplanade. Students learned about the unique challenges and opportunities in replacing the nearly 100-year-old Burnside Bridge. The project team discussed the project's geotechnical conditions, historic context, operator towers and answered in-depth questions about design, construction, planning and public impact considerations. The project team has participated in this annual event for several years and it continues to be a valuable opportunity to engage with the next generation of engineers working to make our infrastructure safer and more resilient.



Engineering students learned about the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project as part of PSU's May 2025 Engineering Graduate Student Symposium.

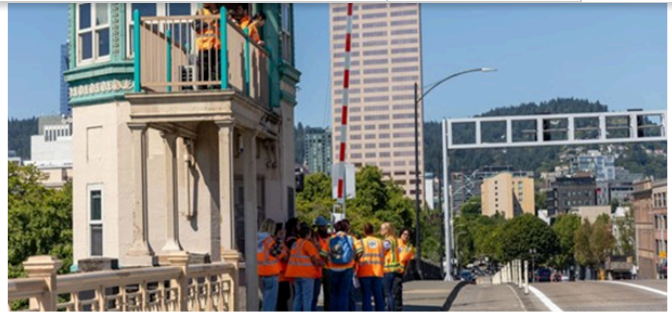
Burnside Bridge Partners Connect with Constructing Hope

For more than a year, the project's contractor, [Burnside Bridge Partners](#) (BBP), has been actively working with pre-apprenticeship programs to build relationships and get the construction workforce excited about potentially working on the new Burnside Bridge.

During recent outreach in July, BBP and County engineers led a group from [Constructing Hope](#) on a Burnside Bridge tour. Constructing Hope is a local nonprofit that helps formerly incarcerated, houseless and low-income individuals rebuild their lives and get connected to training and education in the construction industry.

"The first thing for our folks is just learning what's out there and seeing themselves in that position," Constructing Hope Deputy Director Noah Kone said. "So doing things like a bridge tour, working with contractors like Stacy Witbeck, gives us an opportunity to expose our trainees to those possibilities. And it's really just rewarding to see folks come from all kinds of different backgrounds – we've had individuals who've come directly from the criminal justice system and within five years they're owning their homes, reuniting families, buying cars."

The group learned about the overall project timeline/logistics, history of the bridge and how it was constructed as well as what would happen to the current bridge and local community during a large seismic event in the area. The group also heard about the different teams on the project and their responsibilities. The County and BBP shared the different types of jobs that would be needed for this project and why it's important that apprentices like those from Constructing Hope finish their schooling and join the workforce. The group also got to see the inner machinery that opens and closes the bridge as well as a bridge lift in action. Bridge operators gave an overview of their jobs and the steps they need to take to keep everyone safe during bridge lifts.



On Tuesday, July 29, Burnside Bridge Partners and County engineers led a group from Constructing Hope on a Burnside Bridge tour.

Save the Date! The Burnside Bridge turns 100 in 2026

The historic Burnside Bridge will turn 100 next year! It first opened to traffic on May 28, 1926. Multnomah County is planning a community celebration on the bridge next year to celebrate this major milestone and recognize the ongoing work to design and construct a resilient river crossing for the next century.

Stay tuned for details on the event's date, community events and related updates in future newsletters.

In the News!

County Communications release: “Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project awarded \$10 million from Oregon Metro” quotes Chair Jessica Vega Pederson and Design Phase Project Manager Megan Neill; references the Board of County Commissioners and Multnomah County.

Oregonian: “Downtown Portland is \$10M closer to its only earthquake-ready bridge” quotes Chair Jessica Vega Pederson; references the Board of County Commissioners and Multnomah County.

KATU: “Multnomah County secures \$10M for earthquake-ready Burnside Bridge project” quotes Chair Jessica Vega Pederson and Design Phase Project Manager Megan Neill; references the Board of County Commissioners and Multnomah County.

KGW: “Oregon Metro awards Burnside Bridge project \$10M” quotes Chair Jessica Vega Pederson and Design Phase Project Manager Megan Neill; references the Board of County Commissioners and Multnomah County.

[KATU](#): “**Multnomah County to apply for federal grant to replace Burnside Bridge**” references the Board of County Commissioners and Multnomah County.

[KOIN](#): “**Portland's earthquake-ready Burnside Bridge project moves forward despite federal grant uncertainty**” quotes Transportation Engineering Services Manager Megan Neill; references the Board of County Commissioners and Multnomah County.

[KBND](#): “**Multnomah County Seeks Federal Funding To Replace Burnside Bridge**” references Multnomah County.

[Daily Journal of Commerce](#): “**\$447M federal grant sought for Burnside Bridge work**” cites the County website; references the Board of County Commissioners and Multnomah County.

Did You Know?

The Burnside Bridge doesn't just lift, it uses a special type of drawbridge design called a bascule system (in French, it means “see-saw”), where very large counterweights help the bridge swing open smoothly to let boats and ships pass through.

It was designed by Joseph Strauss, the same engineer who became famous for the Golden Gate Bridge. When it opened in 1926, Burnside was the first large-scale bascule bridge in the U.S. with a concrete deck on its lift span—and at the time, it was also the largest double-leaf bascule bridge ever built! (Source: BURNSIDE BRIDGE HAER Report NO. [QR-101](#), Researched and written by Sharon Wood Wortman, July, 2000)



Source: *Portland City Archives, Record Number: [AP/23369](#). Burnside Bridge completed : looking north toward railroad bridge (Steel Bridge), 1926.*

Stay Involved

There are many ways to follow the project and stay engaged. We encourage you to regularly check the [website](#), [sign up](#) for newsletters, or [watch Community Design Advisory Group meetings](#).

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office hours, please submit a request to: burnsidebridge@multco.us.

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