



Citing ongoing federal uncertainty, County moving forward with design, pushing back construction for Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project

While Multnomah County works to complete key design work for the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project, the County will again push out the start of construction in light of ongoing uncertainty around the availability of federal funds.

Previously the County [announced construction would start in 2028](#); a new date has not yet been determined. The project in the meantime will reach what's called the 60% design milestone by summer 2026.

Completing this work will ensure the project is construction-ready. It's a proactive approach that will ensure the County is well-prepared to move quickly once the necessary federal funding becomes available. Receiving federal funding is a necessary step that will allow the project to bring family wage jobs to the region and improve seismic resiliency on a regional lifeline route.

"The current federal climate is impacting local public agencies nationwide, making it challenging to carry out crucial infrastructure projects without critical funding," Multnomah County Department of Community Services Director Margi Bradway said. "As uncertain as the future appears, if and when things change, our goal is for the County to be as resourceful and prepared as possible to offer a construction-ready project. When the federal government is ready to invest in our region again, we will be prepared to hit the ground running and maximize the benefits that federal funding offers. Multnomah has been successful at securing local, state and federal funds for the design of the bridge; and more recently, \$10 million dollars of regional funding, which will keep the project moving forward."

Rising costs for labor and materials have pushed the estimated range of costs for this project to \$1.6 billion to \$1.8 billion. To address this, the project team spent months on a process called value engineering, which is a thorough review of the project's design and construction methods to ensure the maximum value for taxpayer dollars spent on the project.

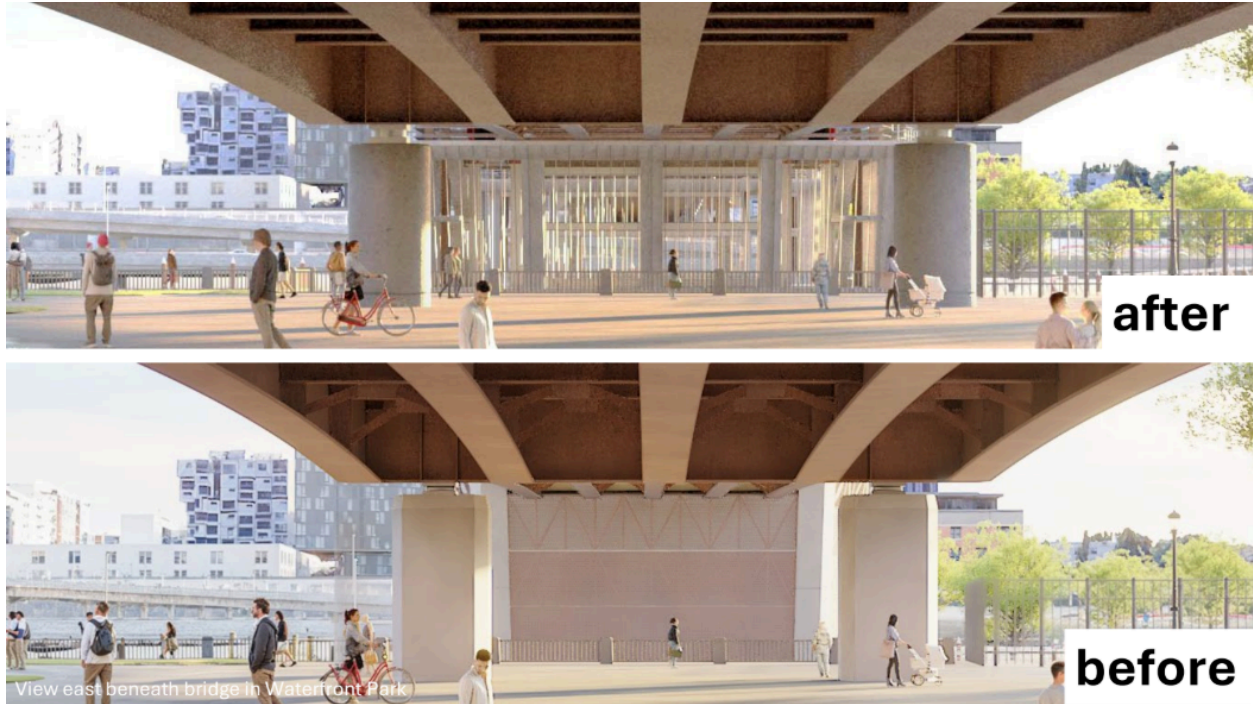
The team successfully identified nearly \$160 million in cost savings without compromising the bridge's safety or functionality. These savings were found by making the design and construction more cost-effective.

"We even revisited the design of the bridge to evaluate whether different choices would still meet the goals of the project at a lower cost," Multnomah County Transportation Division Director Jon Henrichsen said. "The team and independent construction industry experts determined there were no major changes that would result in significant savings. Between recent increases in construction costs and funding uncertainty, it is not the right time to move forward with construction. We want to proceed cautiously as stewards of public funds."

Community Design Advisory Group Final Meetings

This fall, the Community Design Advisory Group (CDAG) is holding its final meeting after serving the project for more than two years. The CDAG is made up of community members who represent a range of interests and backgrounds from the broader community. The committee has provided input to the project team on bridge aesthetics including colors, materials, lighting as well as the shape of certain features on the bridge.

At its [October 23 meeting](#), the project team gave the group an update on the recent announcement about pushing back construction. The project team also gave an overview of design changes from the project's recent value engineering process.



CDAG members reviewed design changes from the project's value engineering process. This rendering illustrates the improved pier transparency, making the counterweight and other working elements visible from more viewpoints. Location: east side of the river, beneath the bridge near Portland Saturday Market.

The final CDAG meeting and celebration is [November 20th](#). The group will review and provide input on bridge lighting and have the opportunity to share reflections and feedback to help guide the project's future work.

The County and the project team deeply appreciate the CDAG members' time, input and dedication. The group's feedback helped shape an earthquake-ready bridge that will serve the community for generations to come.

Save the Date! The Burnside Bridge turns 100 years old 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.



Crowd at Burnside Bridge dedication ceremony, May 28, 1926. Source: [Oregon Historical Society Library](#), Reference number 371N3006

In the News

[County Communications release](#): “NEWS RELEASE: Citing ongoing federal uncertainty, County moving forward with design, pushing back construction for Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project”

[Portland Business Journal](#): “Uncertain federal funding puts Burnside Bridge project on hold” quotes Department of Community Services Director Margi Bradway and a Communications release.

[Daily Journal of Commerce](#): “Start of Burnside Bridge construction postponed again”

[OPB](#): “Construction delayed again for earthquake-ready Burnside Bridge in Portland”

[Oregonian](#): “Portland’s Burnside Bridge rebuild faces indefinite delay amid federal funding uncertainty”

[Portland Tribune](#): “Multnomah County delays Burnside Bridge Earthquake Project amid federal funding uncertainty”

[KATU](#): “Rising costs, federal uncertainty delays start of new Burnside Bridge construction”

[KGW](#): “New Burnside Bridge construction delayed indefinitely; county blames federal uncertainty”

[KOIN](#): “‘Uncertainty’: Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge pushed back due to federal funding”

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](#).

If you would like the project team to brief your organization, or you would like to book an appointment during their office hours, please submit a request to: burnsidebridge@multco.us.

[Button to ‘Join the Email List’ or ‘[Get the Newsletter](#)’]
