

February 24th, 2026

Honorable Sean Duffy  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Duffy:

Replacing the Stark Street Bridge is critical for our rural communities in east Multnomah County. **East Multnomah County Transportation Committee (EMCTC) fully supports Multnomah County's federal funding request for the Stark Street Replacement Project to ensure our local communities, emergency responders and visitors have a safe and reliable crossing for the next 100 years.**

The Stark Street Bridge is a crucial link for residents to get to jobs and other services in the metropolitan area. Emergency responders, agricultural vehicles and school buses rely on this crossing daily. Visitors cross the Stark Street Bridge frequently to access the beauty of the Columbia River Gorge. But at more than 110-years-old, it's time to replace this connection with a new structure that meets modern design and safety standards.

### **Emergency response**

The Stark Street Bridge is on a designated emergency transportation route – a specific road or path designated for emergency responders, patients and supplies during natural disasters and other emergencies. But this critical connection has been closed to all traffic multiple times in recent years, due to damage from vehicles trying to navigate the bridge's narrow width. These closures have a significant impact on first responders' ability to respond to calls and get to those who need help.

Full closures of the Stark Street Bridge also make commutes for communities in east Multnomah County much more challenging. Residents must make upwards of a 7 mile detour if they know the bridge is not open.

The County recently closed the bridge to all semi-trucks and commercial vehicles weighing more than 19 tons. These vehicles must use limited and lengthy alternate routes within the rural area. We need a bridge that meets modern standards and provides a dependable connection.

### **Visitor access**

The bridge provides access to the scenic Columbia River Gorge, which draws local and international visitors to the area year-round. Nearby state parks and local parks also have high

numbers of visitors for day use. Cyclists use the Stark Street Bridge to access the Historic Columbia River Highway. The existing width of the two-lane bridge is 18 feet, which is unsafe for modern vehicles. A cantilevered wooden sidewalk was added to the bridge decades ago but can feel frightening for those walking. A new bridge will create a safer crossing for all modes of travel.

We can't wait any longer to replace this aging infrastructure. EMCTC urges you to support the allocation of federal funds toward designing the new Stark Street Bridge.

Sincerely,

[Signature]