



Multnomah County is creating an earthquake-ready downtown river crossing.

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# Draft Environmental Impact Statement Engagement Summary

## Overview

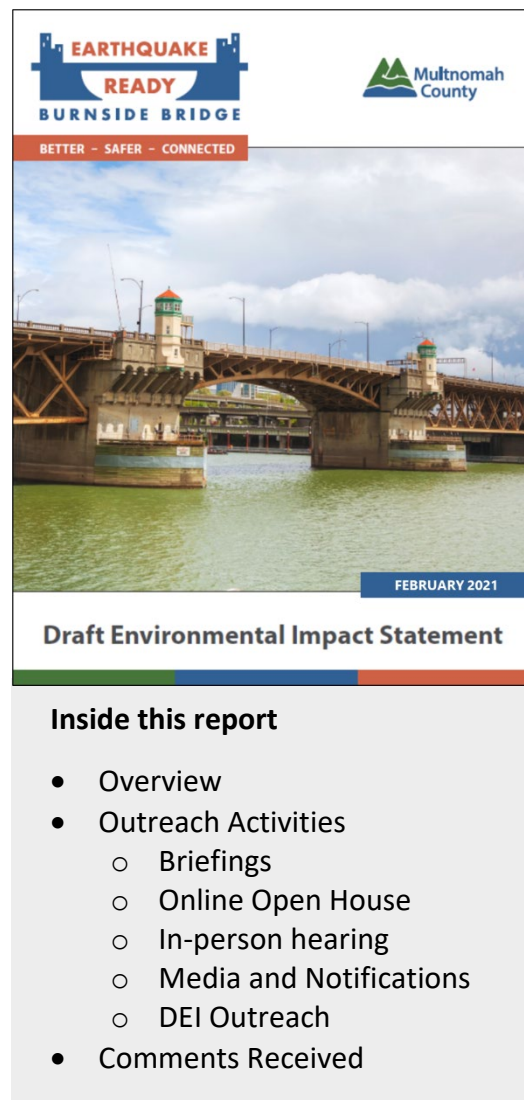
As part of the federally required National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, process the project team, working with the Federal Highway Administration (the federal lead agency), prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS, for publication in February 2021.

The Draft EIS described a range of alternatives being considered, their impacts, and potential ways to mitigate those impacts. It also recommended a single preferred alternative that the public provided input on and was selected by Multnomah County in fall 2020.

The public was invited to examine and comment on the analysis presented in the Draft EIS during a 45-day public comment period from February 5, 2021, through March 24, 2021.

The primary engagement activities included numerous project briefings, an online open house and comment form, an in-person hearing, and email and social media notifications. The public comment period coincided with outreach regarding the Bridge Type Selection phase in January and February 2021. Many outreach activities included information about the Draft EIS and Type Selection. See the [Type Selection Engagement Summary](#) for more information.

Responses to the public comments that were received will be included with the Final EIS, expected in late 2022.





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## Public Outreach Activities

Draft EIS outreach and engagement activities included:

60+	Briefings to agencies, individuals, and organizations
686	Unique visitors to the online open house
364	Total comments received
3,183	Project e-newsletter recipients
120	Text message recipients
6	News releases and e-newsletters
2	Media stories

### BRIEFINGS

The project team conducted more than 60 briefings with community organizations, individuals, agencies, and elected officials leading up to and during the Draft EIS comment period. Many briefings coincided with the Bridge Type Selection outreach. The intent of the briefings was to share information about the Draft EIS comment period and Bridge Type Selection, keep interested stakeholders engaged about the project, and continue to build and maintain meaningful relationships.

Opportunities to request a project briefing were offered through emails, phone calls, project newsletters, and the project website.

For more details about briefings, see the [Bridge Type Selection Engagement Summary](#).

### Public Involvement Goals

#### Awareness

Build awareness and share information through regular, meaningful, and consistent project communications about the important role this project plays in creating an earthquake-ready river crossing in downtown Portland.

#### Transparency

Inform all stakeholders and community of how the project team has thoroughly considered their feedback, interests, issues, and concerns in project solutions and transparently communicate how project decisions are being made.

#### Inclusion

Provide equitable, inclusive, and accessible opportunities for stakeholders and community to influence and shape the project by reducing participation barriers, ensuring culturally responsive practices, and offering diverse ways for all people to participate in project conversations.

#### Coordination

Engage and build authentic relationships with agencies, industry stakeholders, and County departments, securing cross-government coordination, commitment, alignment, and industry readiness, to ensure an Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge in the future.



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## IN-PERSON HEARING

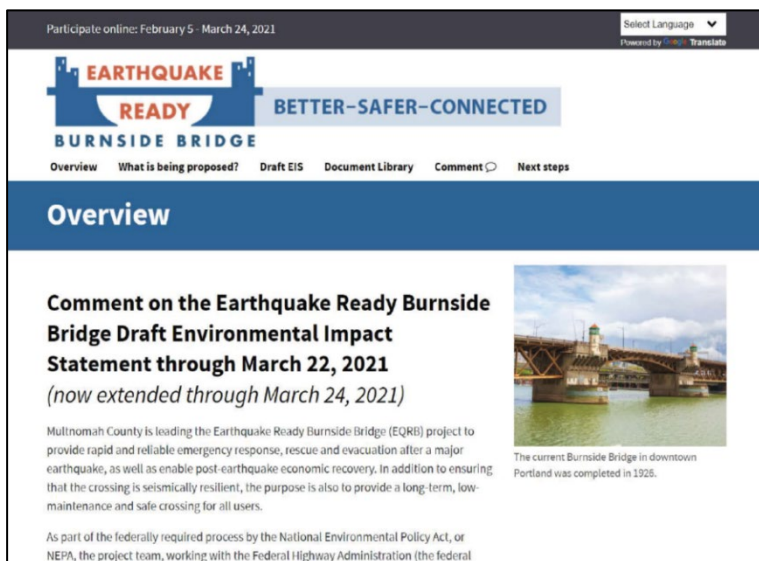
An in-person hearing was held on Wednesday, March 3, 2021, from 4:00-6:00 p.m. at the Multnomah Building at 501 SE Hawthorne Boulevard, Portland for anyone who wished to provide oral comments on the Draft EIS. Notice of the in-person hearing was included in the online open house, project website, e-newsletters, project website, and press releases.

Because of limitations on indoor gatherings due to the Covid-19 pandemic, members of the public were asked to make an appointment to comment in advance.

There were no appointments made and no walk-ins at the hearing.

## ONLINE OPEN HOUSE

The online open house and comment form were available to the public from February 5, 2021, through March 24, 2021. This online activity provided an overview of the project and the content of the Draft EIS, including the range of bridge alternatives studied, temporary bridge option or full bridge closure during construction, and identification of a Preferred Alternative. The online open house site also included links to the Draft EIS chapters, attachments, technical reports, and other supporting documents.



*Draft Environmental Impact Statement Online Open House*

The online open house had 1,122 sessions.

Of the 686 unique visitors, 19 comments were submitted through the embedded comment form.

Notice of the online open house was included in the project website, e-newsletters, press releases, and social media posts.

## MEDIA AND NOTIFICATIONS

Multnomah County notified members of the public about the comment period through a variety of methods, including:

- Project website
- Briefings
- E-newsletters





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- News releases (with resulting news coverage)
- Social media posts
- Banners on the Burnside Bridge
- Targeted emails to community-based organizations
- The Community Engagement Liaisons Program to reach Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) audiences

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION OUTREACH

In collaboration with the Community Engagement Liaisons Program, the project team was encouraged to devote more time and direct outreach to diverse communities as part of the Bridge Type Selection outreach that overlapped with the Draft EIS comment period. Diverse communities had been engaged during the previous round of outreach in fall 2020 that asked the public to weigh in on the recommended Preferred Alternative that was included in the Draft EIS.

Community Engagement Liaisons let their communities know about the Draft EIS comment period and served as liaisons to the project team if further engagement or briefings were of interest. The online open house included a Google Translate option into all of Google’s available languages and Draft EIS documents were available for translation upon request.

## Comments Received

A total of 364 comments were received during the public comment period. 50 of those comments were submitted by members of the public and 314 were from the City of Portland.

The project team provided a variety of channels to receive comments. The total number of comments received per method is listed in the table below

Communication channel	Number of comments received
Online open house and comment form	19
EIS-specific email address, <a href="mailto:burnside-eis@multco.us">burnside-eis@multco.us</a>	29
Voicemail number	2
Postal mail to the Multnomah County Bridge Services Section	0
In-person testimony at public hearing	0
City of Portland spreadsheet	314

Once comments were received, they were cataloged in an online database and sorted by specific topic areas. Many comments applied to more than one topic. The number of relevant comments for each topic area is listed in the table below.



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Topic area	Number of relevant comments
Active Transportation Access Options	106
Transportation - Short Term Bike, Ped & ADA	44
Comment Noted	42
Vegetation, Wildlife and Aquatic Resources	33
Archaeological and Historic Resources	30
Transportation - Long Term Traffic, Freight & Transit	26
Visual and Aesthetic Resources	26
Parks and Recreation	24
Transportation - Short Term Traffic, Freight & Transit	21
Preferred Alternative	21
Social and Neighborhood Resources	20
Sustainability and Climate Change	19
Air Quality	17
Land Use	16
Environmental Justice and Equity	15
Transportation - Long term bike, ped & ADA	15
Acquisitions and Relocations	15
Public Involvement	14
Wetlands and Waters	9
Purpose and Need	8
Section 4(f)	7
Stormwater	7
NEPA Process	7
Cumulative Impacts	6
Economics	5
Floodplain and River Hydraulics	5
Utilities	4
Public Services	3
Construction Methods	3
Project Cost	3
Noise and Vibration	2
Project Timeline	1
Hazardous Materials	1



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## KEY TOPICS AND THEMES

From all the activities and engagement performed, the following key topics and themes emerged:

- Active transportation access
  - Interest in ramps and the design of potential ramps/elevator connections to the bridge
- Pedestrian/Bicycle impacts during construction
  - Concerns about the impacts of detour routes to pedestrians and cyclists without the option of a temporary bridge
  - Interest in traffic safety measures
- Vegetation and wildlife
  - Concerns about tree removal or replacement
  - Concerns about in-water impacts to fish and vegetation
- Historic resources
  - Concerns about removal of the historic bridge
- Transit
  - Interest in prioritizing transit on the new bridge