



**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Matt Ransom, Executive Director   
**DATE:** June 30, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** **Hood River-White Salmon Bridge Replacement Project**

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***AT A GLANCE***

*The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Board with an update on the Hood River-White-Slamon Bridge Replacement Project. Kevin Greenwood, Port of Hood River, will be in attendance at the July RTC Board meeting to provide an update on the Hood River-White Salmon Bridge Replacement Project.*

**BACKGROUND**

The Hood River-White Salmon Bridge was built in 1924 and spans the Columbia River, connecting the cities of White Salmon/Bingen, Washington to Hood River, Oregon. This major transportation route serves as an important link to local communities, the region, and interstate travel. The economic well being of this region is dependent on this Columbia River crossing.

The existing Hood River-White Salmon Bridge is functionally obsolete. Its deficiencies include: narrow travel lanes, lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, low load carrying capacity, and substandard river channel span. Given these deficiencies, there is a need to continue the process for the long-term replacement of the existing bridge.

**1999-2011 REPLACEMENT EFFORT**

Planning for a bridge replacement has been under way since 1999 led by Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), and the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT). A feasibility Study and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) with a Record of Decision was completed in December 2003. A Type, Size and Location Study was then completed in 2011.

**CURRENT PROJECT**

During the 2017 Oregon Legislative Session, the Port of Hood River was successful in obtaining a \$5 million appropriation to conduct final environmental impact studies related to the replacement of the Hood River Bridge. In July of 2018, the Port of Hood River commenced work on completion of the Final Environmental Impact Study.

Kevin Greenwood, Port of Hood River, will be in attendance at the July RTC Board meeting to provide an update on the Hood River-White Salmon Bridge Replacement Project. Attached is the most recent project update folio.

**Attachments:** June Hood River Bridge Update Folio

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# EIS UPDATE

## BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

**JUNE 2020**

In December 2003, a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) was published as part of a bi-state collaborative effort. This draft EIS was the first step in complying with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Currently, the Port of Hood River (Port) is advancing the project to complete the EIS effort and position the project for future funding and construction.

### What's new on the project?

- Submitting an archaeological fieldwork plan to the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office and Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation for additional investigations that supplement the work conducted in Fall 2019. Expect authorization in late June.
- Documenting impacts to viewsheds toward the bridge from potential historically significant residences that are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places to submit to the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.
- Coordinating with ODOT on the assumed construction schedule to include in the revised draft biological assessment; submit to FHWA, ODOT, and liaisons to the National Marine Fisheries Service for technical review. The biological assessment documents Project impacts to threatened and endangered species and habitat and associated proposed conservation measures.
- Obtaining permits for geotechnical investigations on land and in the water to support design advancement.
- Due to the coronavirus pandemic, consultations with the Native American tribes are on hold.

### What are the next steps?

- Conduct additional archaeological investigations in areas where more information is needed.
- Consult with Native American tribes on cultural resources, access to the Columbia River, fishing activities, treaty rights, and any other interests identified by the tribes that relate to the Project.
- Continue to consult with the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) and other federal, state, and local agencies, as needed.
- Advance the draft Supplemental Draft EIS with new historic, cultural, tribal, and biological information gained during the past few months.

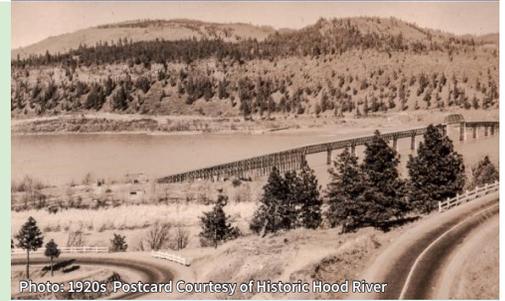
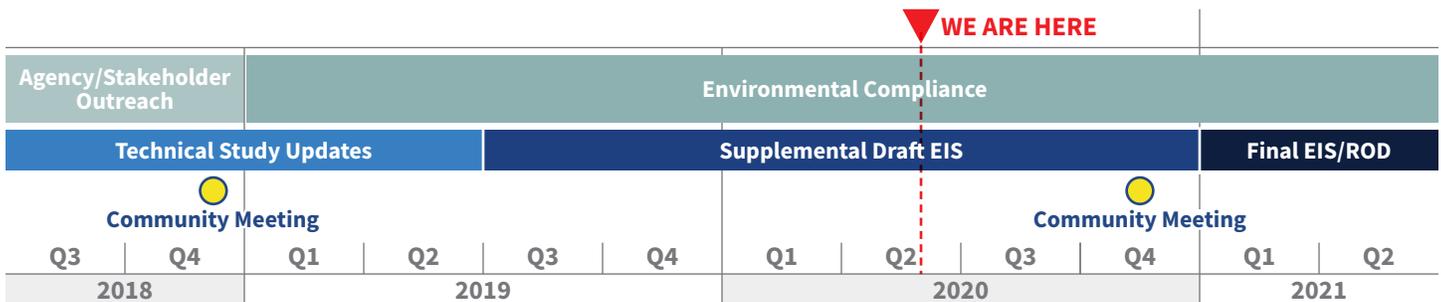


Photo: 1920s. Postcard Courtesy of Historic Hood River

### How would bridge replacement benefit the Columbia River Gorge communities?

*The Hood River Bridge provides a critical connection for residents and visitors to the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. One of only three bridges spanning the Columbia in this region, the bridge is a critical rural freight network facility for agriculture, forestry, heavy industry and high-tech companies with freight originating throughout the northwest. The existing bridge is nearing the end of its serviceable life and is obsolete for modern vehicles with height, width, and weight restrictions and is also a navigational hazard for marine freight vessels. The bridge has no sidewalks or bicycle lanes for non-motorized travel and would likely not withstand a large earthquake.*

*If project funding is secured, the new bridge would provide a safe and reliable way for everyone to cross or navigate the Columbia River—by car, truck, bus, bicycle, on foot, or on the water. A new bridge would support a thriving economy and livable communities.*



To learn more about the project, please visit us at:

[www.portofhoodriver.com/bridge](http://www.portofhoodriver.com/bridge)

### PROJECT CONTACT

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