



43 *at* PROJECT Willamette River Bridge (Oregon City Bridge)

July 2010

Frequently Asked Questions

When will the rehabilitation of the bridge begin?

Work will begin in July, 2010. The first part of the project will require intermittent single lane closures. Work will start this summer, including inspection of the arch ribs inside the chambers at the base of the bridge on each side. You will also see the contractor mobilizing equipment, establishing mooring points for the barges and the barges moving into place on the river.

Will the bridge be closed for all traffic?

Yes, the bridge will be closed to all traffic for about 24 months. The full closure of the bridge will occur no earlier than January 2011, ensuring it will remain open during the 2010 holiday season. Bicyclists and pedestrians will also not be allowed on the for safety reasons and to accommodate large construction equipment. Shuttle service for bicyclists and pedestrians is in development.

How long will construction take?

The overall project is expected to be completed in 2013 .

What is the detour route for vehicles?

Motorists will use the I-205 Abernethy Bridge to cross the Willamette River between West Linn and Oregon City.

Access to all businesses in downtown Oregon City will be open throughout the project. Signs will direct motorists.

What repairs are needed?

- The Gunite coating is cracked and portions of it have been adversely affected by water. This coating needs to be repaired to protect the steel underneath. The existing Gunite material on the arches will be removed and replaced.
- Several stringers supporting the deck have corrosion damage and need to be repaired.
- The ornate pedestrian rails will be replaced with vehicle rails that appear nearly identical, but are composed of structural steel hidden within pre-cast concrete.
- The deck will be re-paved.
- New roadway lighting will be installed including reproductions of the original lights.
- The Oregon City bridge approach will be reconstructed.
- Most utilities will be relocated underneath the bridge.

What kinds of repairs are allowed?

ODOT must follow the Secretary of Interior's standards which are required for rehabilitating National Register properties. Visually, the bridge should look as close as possible to original, while providing safe use by the public. ODOT has developed a replacement rail system which provides a level of safety appropriate while looking essentially the same as the original. Similarly, the historic lighting will be restored.

Will the bridge be widened?

No. The arch ribs cannot be moved further apart to facilitate a wider roadway in-between. Adding lanes outside of the arch ribs cannot be supported by the existing structure. Also, modifying the bridge in this way would result in significant changes that would not be allowed because of the bridge's historic designation. Additionally, widening the road would adversely affect the adjacent buildings in Oregon City

Will the bridge look new when completed?

Yes. The bridge will have a new coating of Shotcrete, new sidewalks, guardrail, lights and a new deck overlay.

History of the Bridge

When was the bridge constructed?

The historic bridge linking Oregon City with West Linn was officially opened on January 1, 1923. The bridge is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is likely the only one of its type in the world.

Is the bridge made of solid concrete?

The main structural portions of the arch section of the bridge are made of steel. The arch ribs are hollow steel boxes riveted together. These, and the steel floor beams and stringers which support the deck, are encased in a 1-1/2 inch coating of sprayed concrete, called Gunite.

What is Gunite?

Gunite is concrete that is sprayed onto surfaces with compressed air similar to the way they build in-ground pools today. It was a relatively new invention in 1922 and was used to protect the steel from corroding.

Why was it applied to this bridge and not others?

The designer, Conde B. McCullough, was concerned that emissions from the nearby mills and other industrial facilities were more corrosive than paint could resist. He elected to use Gunite, to provide a heavy duty protective layer. This system has worked quite well over the bridge's 87 year life.

Is the bridge safe for the traveling public?

Yes. Cars, light trucks and SUV's can safely cross. However, ODOT placed a weight restriction to the bridge. The structure is now closed to all commercial motor vehicles and all vehicles weighing more than 14 tons. Recent inspections have uncovered a few areas of concern which could be overloaded by the weight of larger commercial vehicles. Limiting the weight of vehicles to 14 tons will allow motorists to cross and protect the bridge until it can be repaired.

For more information:

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Oregon Department of Transportation Region 1

ODOT Website: www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/REGION1/