

Testimony in Opposition to HB2800: known as the Columbia River Crossing en
by Mel Conrad, February 18, 2013.

My name is Mel Conrad. I have lived and worked in Oregon for over thirty-five years, during which time I have been employed as both a Traffic Signal Designer and a Traffic Investigator in the Highway Division for the Oregon Department of Transportation. During my eleven years with the Department, I became aware of and regularly used information and data related to this state's transportation systems, accident statistics and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program priority calculations. I also became aware of the fact that the ratio of Federal funding dollars to state tax dollars was far more plentiful for new construction than for the maintenance of existing roadways and transportation structures. Simply said, as a result of time, climate and usage, the cost of maintaining the 8000 miles of highways and 1665 bridges throughout the state requires more state tax dollars than the funding resources have been produce. To prioritize where the limited tax funds go, for example, all accidents are coded and scored by severity. Fatalities are of course rated much higher than injury accidents or property damage only accidents. These calculations are then calculated with other parameters like the projected cost of re-engineering, upgrades, construction or other maintenance strategies. The sad reality is that the state can't fix all that needs fixing. A recent article in The Daily Journal of Conerce, cited a study that found 71% of Oregon's bridges were functionally obsolete and 40% of those bridges were structurally deficient. Therefore, I urge you to consider the significant funding impact the proposed new Columbia River Crossing construction cost would have on the rest of the state transportation system. An investment in one new bridge would surely diminish monies needed to manage and maintain the transportation system throughout the rest of the state.

Further, as a Traffic Investigator, I became aware of the number of motor vehicle accidents, and personally became involved in collecting data, evidence

and providing court displays to help the Highway Division defend taxpayers resources against Tort Liability Claims brought about by accidents on state highways. These cases were not centralized in large population, urban areas. These cases represented instead, locations throughout the state where weather and geological issues combined with various engineering features and available funding limitations. The cases I worked usually involved fatalities, many times where children were the victims. Rock fall zones, curves, slide zones, changing population areas and driver error all served to keep me, and other Highway Division and Department of Justice Attorneys busy. I'm not suggesting here that the proposed new Columbia River Crossing would cause the death of children, but I am truly concerned that the passage of such an expensive piece of construction would detrimentally affect the funding resources needed to upgrade and maintain the rest of the 8000 miles in the State Highway Transportation System. For these reasons, I urge you all, who represent so many counties and districts throughout Oregon, to cast your vote against House Bill 2800.



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Oregon bridges deficient, but not yet broken

POSTED: Monday, July 26, 2010 at 03:16 PM PT
BY: Daniel Savickas
Tags: bridges, ODOT



The Willamette River Bridge in Eugene was one of 477 bridges that fit the criteria to be labeled structurally deficient by ODOT engineers. The bridge is currently in the process of being repaired and is expected to be open to traffic by 2013. (Rendering courtesy of ODOT)

In a recent study released by a federal committee, the Oregon Department of Transportation reports that 1,665 bridges in the state are deficient. But that doesn't mean all of those bridges are unsafe or that commuters need to worry every time they drive over one.

The majority of the Oregon bridges on the list did not end up there because they are structurally unsafe, but because they can no longer meet the demands of traffic that has increased as populations have grown.

The bridges are what engineers refer to as functionally obsolete, and according to a new report by the Committee of Transportation and Infrastructure in the U.S. House of Representatives, 1,188 Oregon bridges on the list fall into this category.

The good news is the state's functionally obsolete bridges are perfectly safe for now, according to ODOT. The bad news, the agency says, is that most communities don't want to pay for or simply can't afford to add traffic lanes or build new bridges to alleviate congestion, so in the long run these bridges will require investment by the state.

"We don't have the money to provide the capacity the bridges need, so you're going to see more congestion," said Dave Thompson, a spokesman for ODOT. "A lot of the communities don't want to pay for bridges with more lanes. That's the fight over the (Columbia River Crossing), too many lanes. A lot of these functionally obsolete bridges will remain functionally obsolete because the communities don't want to fix them, so we pay for it every day in waiting."

The other Oregon bridges on the federal list, 477 of them, fall into the category of structurally deficient. A bridge is often labeled structurally deficient when it needs structural help, when it needs repairs, or when it needs to be monitored but is not considered to be in imminent danger.

ODOT engineers inspect every bridge in Oregon at least once every two years, unless a bridge that's been labeled as structurally deficient has raised concern. In that case, the structure will be inspected more often. Bridges in the latter category are the ones most likely to receive money for repairs or replacement.

"When we add a weight restriction to a bridge or close it down completely is when we really have concern over a bridge," Thompson said.

That is what happened to the Willamette River Bridge located on Interstate 5 near Eugene. When sheer cracks were found in the bridge in 2003, freight traffic was immediately detoured

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across a temporary structure, which is still in use today by all vehicles.



149, 647 deficient bridges in the U.S.

1,665 deficient bridges in Oregon

1,188 of those bridges are functionally obsolete

477 of those bridges are structurally deficient

Sources: Oregon Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration

"We are now building what will be the southbound bridge, and both directions of traffic will be opened in 2013," said Jyll Smith, public affairs specialist for ODOT. "Whether we replace or repair a bridge depends on the severity of the sheer cracks. We try to keep costs down, so if we can repair instead of replace, that's what we do."

The Willamette River Bridge was one of 506 deficient bridges that are being repaired or replaced with money from the Oregon Transportation Investment Act.

"The OTIA has three parts; the bridge program is part of the third stage," said Thompson. "The OTIA has allowed us to do a number of things, the main part being the bridge project."

Through OTIA, the state has put \$1.3 billion dollars toward repairing 365 state-owned bridges and \$300 million toward repairing city- and county-owned bridges.

Various groups and stakeholders at the city and county levels worked together to identify the non-state-owned bridges that received money from the third phase of OTIA.

The 10-year bridge repair project, which started in 2003, is in its eighth year. Thompson said the project is on time and on budget to repair and replace the bridges selected by the project.

"In the last 8 years, through the OTIA bridge program and the ODOT bridge program, we've reduced the number of structurally deficient and functionally obsolete bridges in Oregon," Thompson said.

Of the state-owned bridges, 64 are currently undergoing construction, while another 199 have been completed and are open to traffic. But even with the number of bridges the state and local governments have tackled and completed with OTIA money, a large number of functionally obsolete bridges will remain.

"As those bridges continue to age, we will replace them in their natural lifecycle, if we have the money," Thompson said. "At the time we'll analyze the data of what is better to put in, reexamine the priorities and find out the desires of the community. We take them on one at a time, but it could be a long time before we take them on simply because they're functionally obsolete."



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tallbridgeguy » Oregon bridges deficient - a problem in every state says:

[...] From DJC Oregon, In a recent study released by a federal committee, the Oregon Department of Transportation reports that 1,665 bridges in the state are deficient. But that doesn't mean all of those bridges are unsafe or that commuters need to worry every time they drive over one. [...]

Posted on 07/27/10 at Tuesday, July 27, 2010

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2012-2015 Current Amendment Log

Table with columns: Amendment Number, Proj Number, Section, Title, Pl Cost, Pl Yr, PE Cost, PE Yr, RW Cost, RW Yr, LR Cost, LR Yr, Cn Cost, Cn Yr, DTH Yr, DTH Yr, Total Cost, Applicant, Requested Action, Process Date, Approval Date.

2012-2015 Current Amendment Log

Amendment Number	Key Number	Section	PL COST	FL YR	RE COST	BE YR	RW COST	BN YR	UR COST	UM YR	GN COST	DN YR	DTH COST	DTH YR	TOTAL COST	Applicant	Requested Action	Process Date	Approval Date
12-15-029a	318270	LITTLE SOUTH FORK HUNTER CR RD MP 1.1-1.35)	\$0	\$0	\$607,000/2011	2011	\$4,000/2012	2012	\$0	\$0	\$1,445,000/2013	2013	\$15,000/2013	2013	\$1,460,000/0000	CURRY COUNTY	Add ER project.	8-Feb-13	8-Feb-13
12-15-029a	116142	FFO - OR69WY 145 RB RAMPS	\$0	\$0	\$627,000/2011	2011	\$4,000/2012	2012	\$0	\$0	\$1,445,000/2013	2013	\$15,000/2013	2013	\$1,460,000/0000	CURRY COUNTY	Add OTH phase per MTP.	8-Feb-13	8-Feb-13
12-15-029a	615006	2011 TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT DISCRETIONARY FUND	\$0	\$0	\$627,000/2011	2011	\$4,000/2012	2012	\$0	\$0	\$1,445,000/2013	2013	\$15,000/2013	2013	\$1,460,000/0000	CURRY COUNTY	Split funds to 14316 per MTP.	8-Feb-13	8-Feb-13
12-15-029a	214316	CHEMUNAWA RD/RIVER RD-HEIDER RAPIDS PKWY/BIKE & SWALKS	\$0	\$0	\$392,000/2010	2010	\$1,152,000/2012	2012	\$0	\$0	\$2,443,000/2013	2013	\$0	2013	\$3,991,000/0000	CITY OF AXELER	Adjust local funding and add funds split from 15559 per MTP.	8-Feb-13	8-Feb-13
12-15-030a	518273	US 730, US 395, US 30 AND HWY 331 CHIP SEALS 2014	\$0	\$0	\$40,000/2013	2013	\$0	2013	\$0	\$0	\$954,000/2014	2014	\$0	2014	\$994,000/0000	CITY OF AXELER	Name change to project.	15-Feb-13	15-Feb-13
12-15-030a	318232	I-5 EVANS CREEK - ROCK POINT	\$0	\$0	\$100,000/2013	2013	\$0	2013	\$0	\$0	\$60/2013	2013	\$0	2013	\$160,000/0000	CITY OF AXELER	Name change to project.	15-Feb-13	15-Feb-13
12-15-030a	216107	OR225 MCWAY HWY @ 30TH AVE (EUGENE)	\$0	\$0	\$337,000/2011	2011	\$184,000/2013	2013	\$0	\$0	\$766,000/2013	2013	\$0	2013	\$1,317,000/0000	CITY OF AXELER	Change to CN phase per MTP.	15-Feb-13	15-Feb-13
12-15-030a	216109	LANE CO SIGNALS-RANDY PAPE BELTLINE AND MCWAY HWYS	\$0	\$0	\$410,000/2011	2011	\$187,000/2013	2013	\$23,000/2013	2013	\$1,507,000/2013	2013	\$0	2013	\$2,197,000/0000	CITY OF AXELER	Change to CN phase per MTP.	15-Feb-13	15-Feb-13
12-15-030a	918553	BIPOD ELECTRONIC FUELS TAX SYSTEM	\$0	\$0	\$0	2011	\$0	2011	\$0	\$0	\$0/2013	2013	\$3,550,000/2013	2013	\$3,550,000/0000	CITY OF AXELER	Add discretionary project.	15-Feb-13	15-Feb-13
12-15-030a	118197	SE LANFLELO ROAD CORRIDOR(205-SE 125ND AVE)	\$0	\$0	\$11,000/2011	2011	\$29,000/2011	2011	\$500,000/2011	2011	\$89,742,000/2013	2013	\$37,000/2013	2013	\$127,255,000/0000	CITY OF AXELER	Split funds to 16167 per MTP.	15-Feb-13	15-Feb-13
12-15-030a	114400	SE LANFLELO ROAD CORRIDOR(205-SE 125ND AVE)	\$0	\$0	\$815,000/2013	2013	\$1,800,000/2013	2013	\$0	\$0	\$4,760,000/2013	2013	\$0	2013	\$7,405,000/0000	CLACKAMAS COUNTY	Add CN phase with funds split from 15555 per MTP.	15-Feb-13	15-Feb-13
12-15-030a	116155	OR211 EAGLE CR - SANDY HWY @ DUBARSKO RD (BEAVERTON)	\$0	\$0	\$640,000/2011	2011	\$540,000/2012	2012	\$0	\$0	\$3,096,000/2013	2013	\$0	2013	\$4,806,000/0000	CITY OF BEAVERTON	MTP	15-Feb-13	15-Feb-13
12-15-030a	116155	OR211 EAGLE CR - SANDY HWY @ DUBARSKO RD (BEAVERTON)	\$0	\$0	\$640,000/2011	2011	\$540,000/2012	2012	\$30,000/2013	2013	\$2,333,000/2013	2013	\$0	2013	\$3,543,000/0000	CITY OF BEAVERTON	Add funds to RW and create LR phase from CN funds.	15-Feb-13	15-Feb-13
12-15-030a	117866	SE HOLGATE & RAMONA 122ND-138TH AVE (DUN/PORTLAND)	\$0	\$0	\$367,000/2011	2011	\$0/2013	2013	\$0	\$0	\$1,149,000/2013	2013	\$0	2013	\$1,516,000/0000	CITY OF PORTLAND	Rebutal CN funding due to reduced award per MTP.	15-Feb-13	15-Feb-13