

# Interstate Bridge Replacement: Program Development



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# Program Development Process

Delivering Interstate Bridge Replacement:

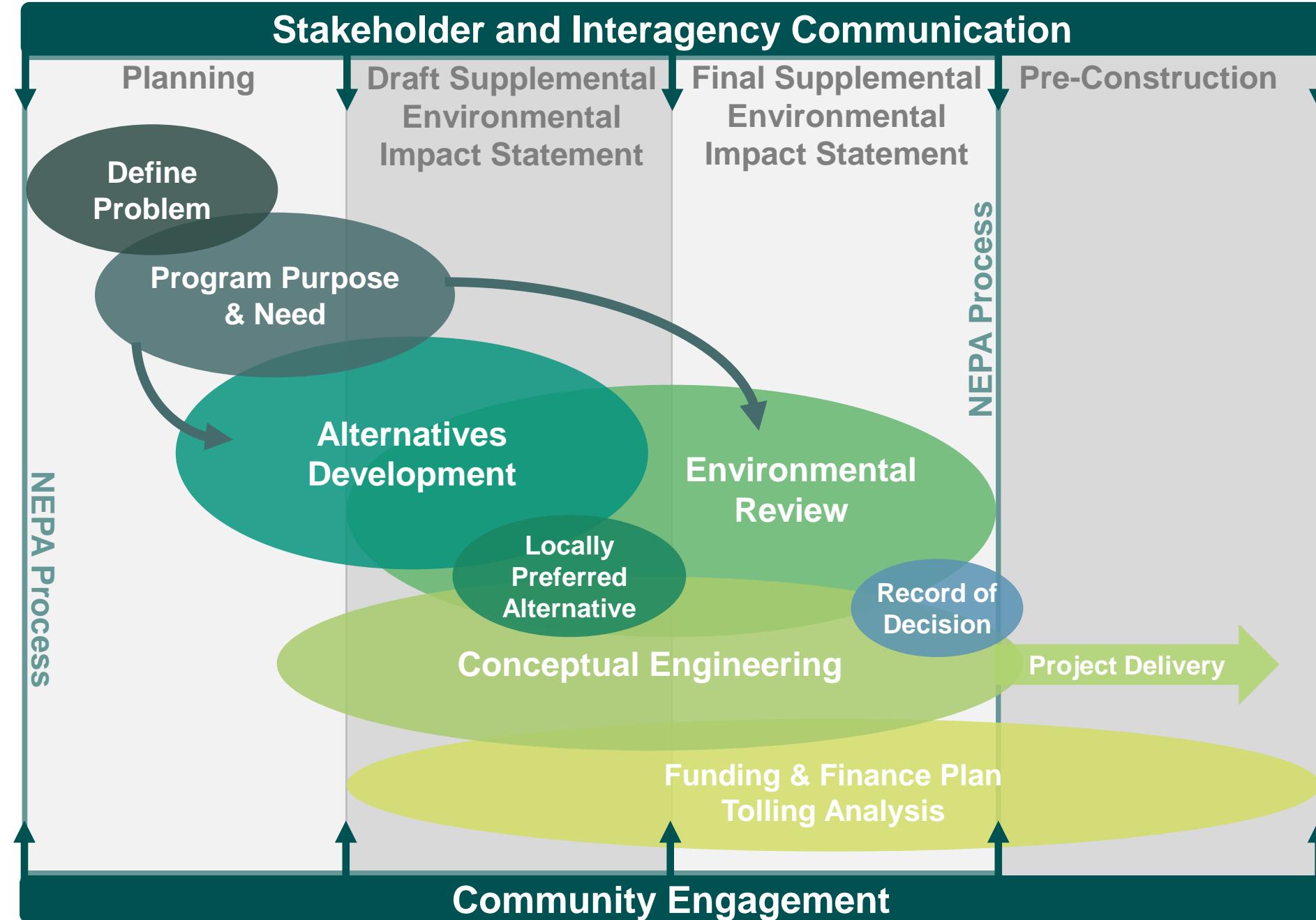
- Planning
- Draft SEIS
- Final SEIS
- Pre-Construction



# Program Priorities

- WSDOT and ODOT are dedicated to leading a transparent, data-driven process in collaboration with elected leaders, stakeholders and the public to identify and advance the best possible solution to meet the needs of the region
  - Will use an open public process that follows federal NEPA guidelines
  - Will prioritize extensive and inclusive community engagement to ensure informed decision making with broad regional input
  - Will utilize past work and lessons learned to ensure effective and efficient decision making throughout the process

# Stakeholder and Interagency Communication



# What is NEPA?

- The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) establishes a national environmental policy and framework for planning and decision making
  - Requires documentation comparing a range of reasonable alternatives, including:
    - Expected social and environmental impacts of each alternative analyzed
    - Ways to mitigate any impacts that cannot be avoided
  - Accurate data analysis, expert agency comments, and public input are essential to implementing NEPA

# NEPA – Essential Principles

- Assessment of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of a proposed action or project
- Analysis of a reasonable range of alternatives, based on the defined purpose and need for the project
- Consideration of appropriate impact mitigation: avoidance, minimization and compensation
- Interagency participation: coordination and consultation
- Comprehensive and ongoing public involvement to provide opportunities to inform and influence program development
- Documentation and disclosure

FHWA Environmental Review Toolkit: [https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/nepa/trans\\_decisionmaking.aspx](https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/nepa/trans_decisionmaking.aspx)

# NEPA – Who are Responsible Parties?

## Federal Lead Agencies:



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration      Federal Transit Administration

## Joint Lead Agencies:



Washington State  
Department of Transportation



SW Washington Regional  
Transportation Council



Metro

## Cooperating Agencies:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

U.S. Coast Guard

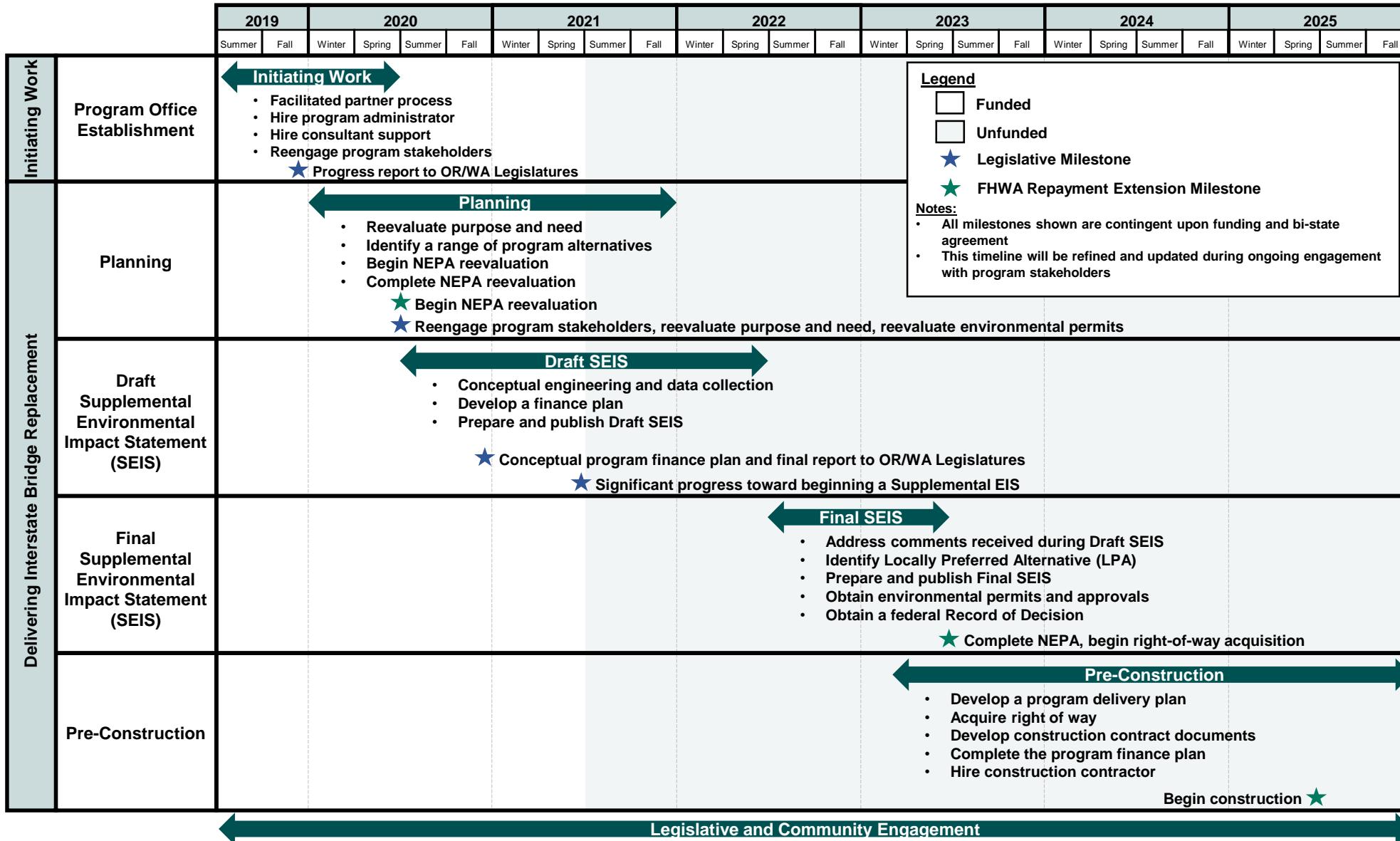
Federal Aviation Administration

National Park Service

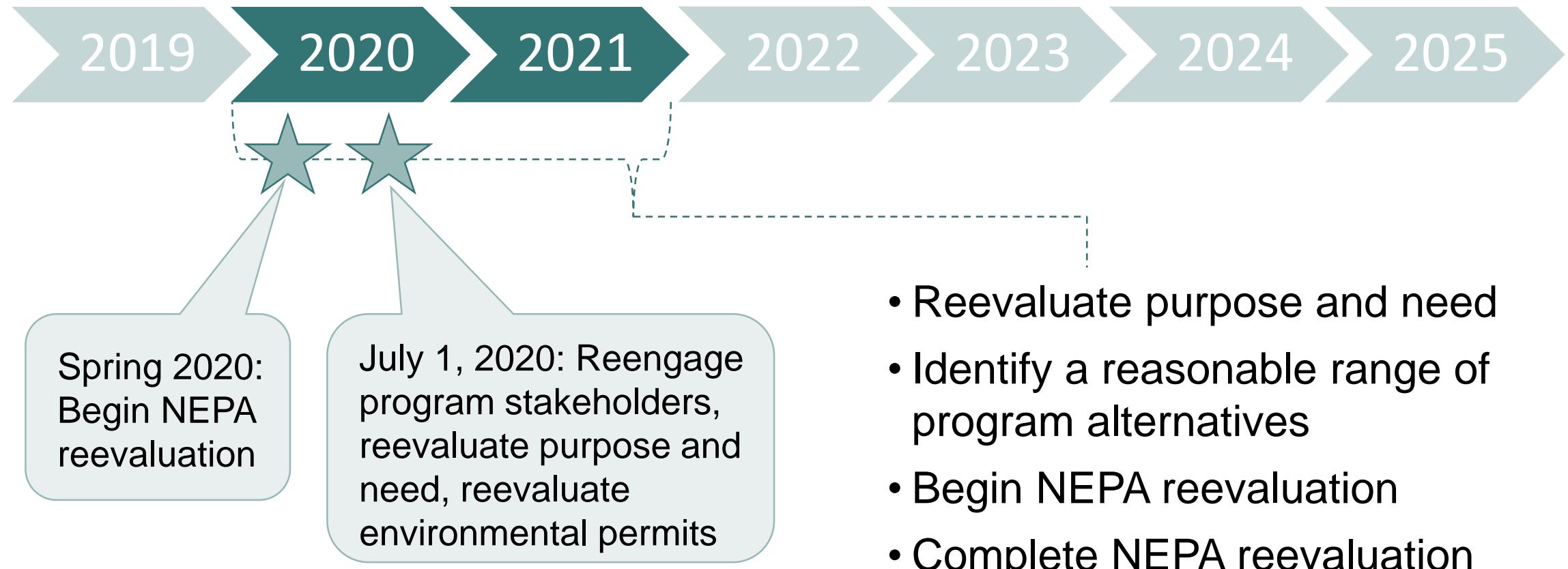
U.S. General Services Administration

Washington State Department of  
Archeology and Historic Preservation

# Conceptual Program Timeline



# Planning: Conceptual Timeline



Initiating Work

Planning

Draft SEIS

Final SEIS

Pre-Construction

# Reevaluate the Purpose and Need

- The purpose and need section is in many ways the most important chapter of an environmental impact statement (EIS).\*
  - Explains **what** is being addressed and **why** it is being considered
  - Establishes why financial investment is necessary and justifies why any unavoidable environmental impacts are warranted
  - Informs alternatives consideration, in-depth analysis, and final selection
- Previously identified Purpose and Need statement will be reviewed and revised if necessary in coordination with program partners and other stakeholders

\*FHWA Environmental Review Toolkit: [https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/legislation/nepa/guidance\\_purpose\\_need.aspx](https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/legislation/nepa/guidance_purpose_need.aspx)

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# Identify or Confirm Community Values

- Community Values will be identified and validated in coordination with program partners, stakeholders and the public
- Values can be used in screening and to compare alternatives

## Values identified in previous work

1. Community Livability and Human Resources
2. Mobility, Reliability, Accessibility, Congestion Reduction, and Efficiency
3. Modal Choice
4. Safety
5. Regional Economy/Freight Mobility
6. Stewardship of Natural Resources
7. Distribution of Benefits and Impacts
8. Cost Effectiveness and Financial Resources
9. Growth Management and Land Use
10. Constructability

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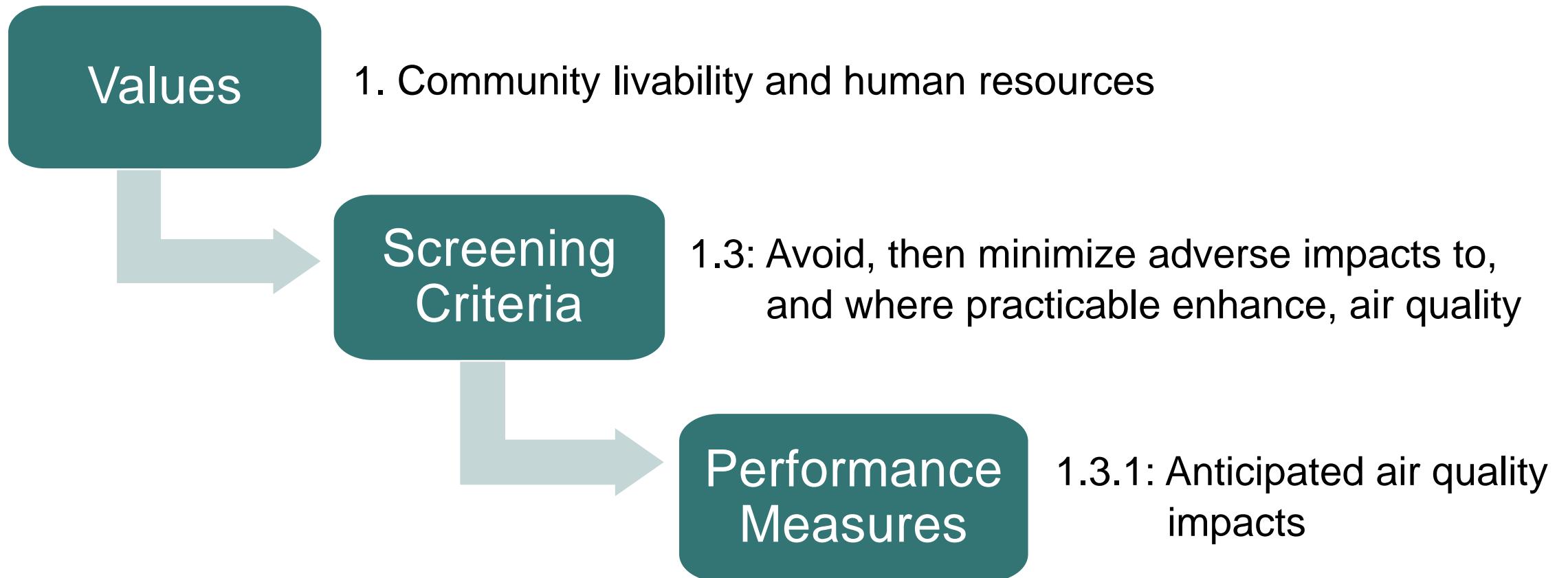
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# Community Values as Screening Criteria

- Example of previous community values screening:



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# Identify Range of Alternatives – Develop Process

- Any process developed can consider a broad range of ideas, but must identify an alternative or alternatives that meet the Purpose and Need and otherwise adheres to NEPA
- Bi-state program partners will help shape the process by:
  - Developing alternative(s)
  - Identifying screening criteria
  - Determining how to measure these criteria
  - Determining reliance on prior analysis
- The alternative(s) identified through the process will be analyzed in the NEPA reevaluation

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# Identify Range of Alternatives - Screening

- Alternatives that meet Purpose and Need and are consistent with community values may be eliminated from further consideration if they are:
  - Technically or economically infeasible
  - Inconsistent with policy objectives for management of the area
  - Have too great of an environmental impact
  - Substantially similar to another alternative being analyzed
- Provide clear explanation of how the range of alternatives was developed including why/how alternatives were eliminated from consideration

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# Complete NEPA Reevaluation

- FHWA guidelines require a reevaluation if proposed work has not moved forward within three years of receiving a Record of Decision
  - Identifies if there could be significant environmental impacts not previously evaluated based on new alternative(s)
  - Determines steps needed to obtain new federal approval
- It is anticipated that a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) will be necessary

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# Reevaluate Environmental Permits

- The program team will reengage with regulatory permitting agencies to review the permits and approvals previously received.
- This review will:
  - Confirm all of the environmental permits and approvals that will be required to advance through program development
  - Identify what data or analysis will be necessary to obtain new permits
  - Determine if there are new analysis areas, permits or approvals that may be needed

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# Develop a Bridge Authority Report

- ESHB 1160 directs the program office to study the concept of a bi-state bridge authority that could jointly manage bridges over the Columbia River between Oregon and Washington. This study will:
  - Examine national examples of multi-state transportation authorities, their responsibilities, and how they are structured
  - Review how Oregon and Washington currently handle these responsibilities
  - Identify key considerations to aid in determining if these responsibilities would be best served through a bi-state agreement, authority, interstate compact, or other arrangement

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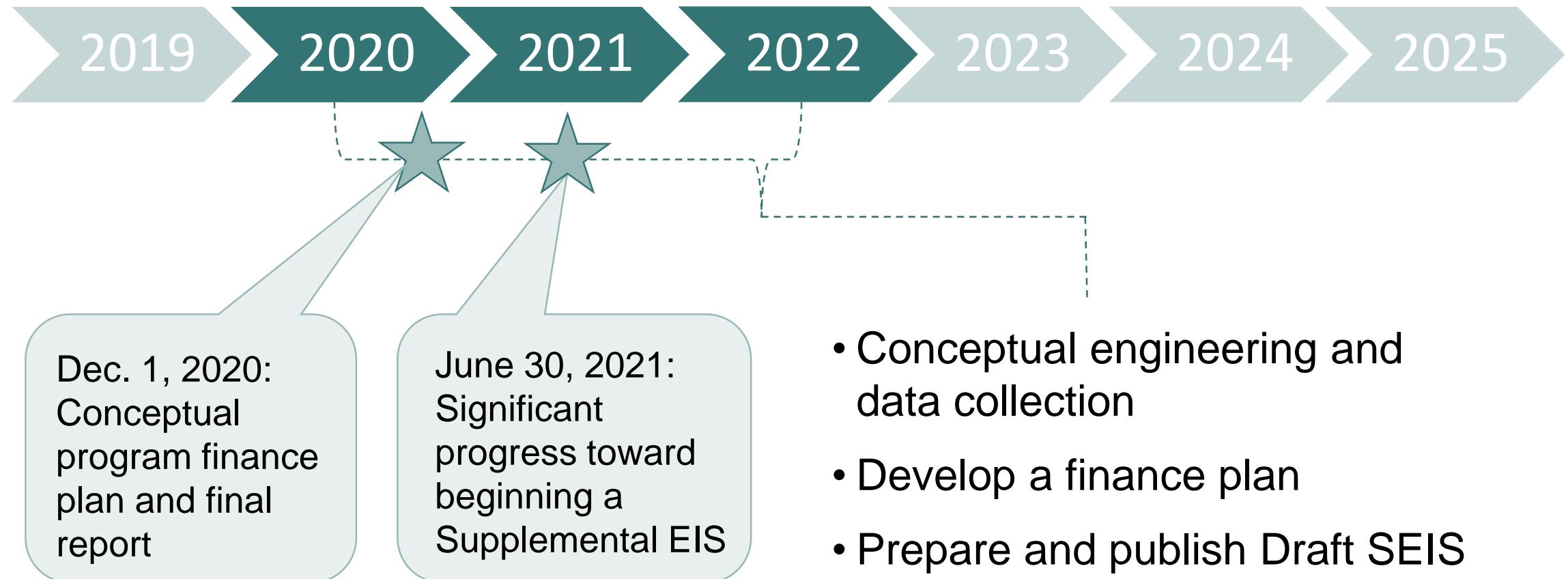
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# Draft EIS: Conceptual Timeline



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# Conceptual Engineering and Data Collection

- Conceptual engineering is preliminary design work that is necessary to evaluate the performance of the alternative(s)
  - Requires updating information within the program area, such as current traffic data and any changes to the surrounding environment
  - Design must advance far enough to develop technical reports on expected community and environmental effects
  - This work is also needed to complete a risk assessment and develop conceptual cost estimates for the alternative(s)

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# Develop a Finance Plan

- Legislative milestone goal to develop a conceptual finance plan by Dec. 1, 2020
- As part of developing a conceptual finance plan, the program team will:
  - Identify possible eligible funding sources and their purpose
  - Analyze the viability of funding sources and selection criteria
  - Determine possible range of toll revenue to fund construction
- The finance plan for a program of this size is dynamic and will be updated over the life of the program

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# Prepare and Publish a Draft SEIS

- Draft SEIS will be developed in coordination with the federal leads, program partners, stakeholders and the community
  - Requires more in-depth technical analysis on each alternative that passed initial screenings
  - Documents how each alternative performs in relation to the program Purpose and Need and community values
- Draft EIS will be published and include public comment period for review and feedback

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# Final EIS: Conceptual Timeline



- Address comments received during Draft SEIS
- Identify Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)
- Prepare and publish Final SEIS
- Obtain environmental permits and approvals
- Obtain a federal Record of Decision

Summer 2023:  
Complete NEPA;  
Begin right-of-way  
acquisition

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# Identify a Locally Preferred Alternative

- The program team will work in coordination with local, state and federal partners to select a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) that best meets the program Purpose and Need and community values
  - The LPA will be developed through a data-driven, transparent process using technical analysis reported in the Draft SEIS
  - This process will include input from program partners, stakeholders and the public to ensure the LPA has broad regional support
- The LPA will be the alternative that is analyzed in the Final SEIS and may include a phased approach to program construction

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# Federal Approvals to Move to Construction

- Publish Final SEIS
- Federal Record of Decision from FHWA and FTA
- Other federal permits/approvals include (but are not limited to):
  - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Biological Opinion
  - U.S. Coast Guard General Bridge Permit
  - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Navigation Permit

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Final SEIS

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# Pre-Construction: Conceptual Timeline



- Develop a program delivery plan
- Acquire right of way
- Develop construction contract documents
- Complete the program finance plan
- Hire construction contractor

Summer 2025:  
Right of way complete;  
Begin construction

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# State Approvals to Move to Construction

- Allocation of funding by both states to complete planning work, right-of-way acquisition and construction
- Authorization for tolling and associated borrowing needed in both states
  - Oregon and Washington Legislatures
  - Oregon Transportation Commission
- Tolling rates set by state transportation commissions

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# Questions?

[www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/i5/interstate-bridge/home](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/i5/interstate-bridge/home)

