Interstate Bridge Replacement Program

Purpose and Need

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Oregon Department of Transportation

Brendan Finn
Director, Urban Mobility Office

Washington State Department of Transportation

Carley Francis
Regional Administrator

What is the Purpose and Need?

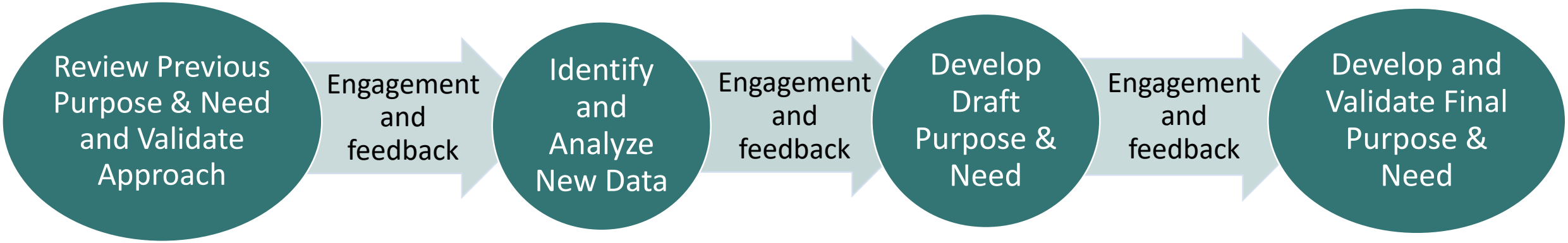
The purpose and need section is in many ways the most important chapter of an environmental impact statement (EIS).*

- 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

*FHWA Environmental Review Toolkit: https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/legislation/nepa/guidance_purpose_need.aspx

Steps to Develop IBRP Purpose and Need Statement

The following steps will be informed by feedback and guidance from bi-state legislative committees, advisory groups, and community engagement:



Previously Identified Purpose and Need

- Seismic vulnerability
- Limited public transportation
- Impaired freight movement
- Inadequate bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Safety concerns as a result of existing roadway design
- Growing travel demand and congestion

Bi-State Legislative Committee Engagement

Key questions to address to develop Purpose and Need Statement:

- Have the transportation problems previously identified been addressed?
- Are there new transportation problems in the project area?
- Is the draft final Purpose and Need Statement reflective of the problems today and the feedback received through the public process to develop it?

Bi-State Legislative Committee Engagement

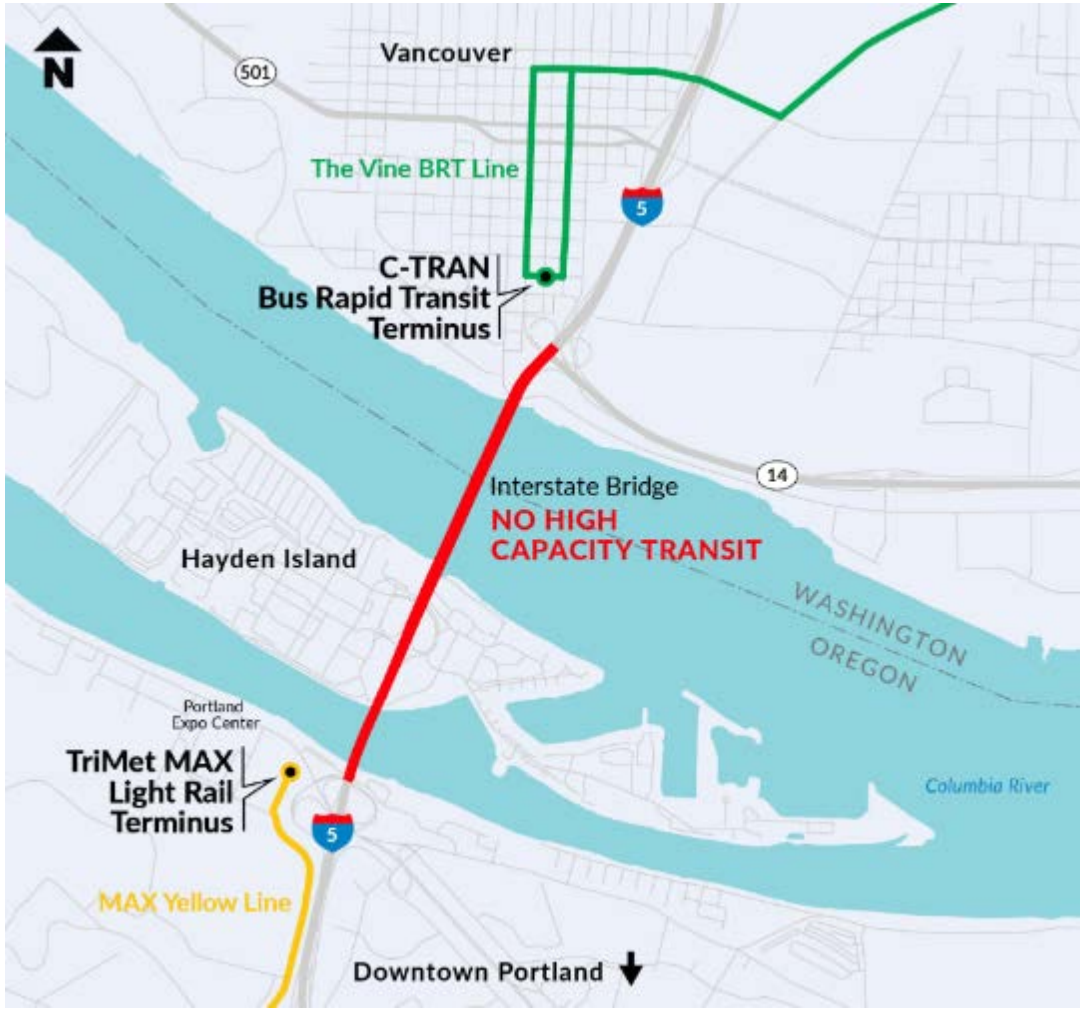
Committee touchpoints and target dates:

- Review previous Purpose and Need and provide feedback on approach to develop new statement: *August 2020*
- Provide guidance/direction on draft Purpose and Need Statement: *October 2020*
- Endorse Final Purpose and Need Statement: *December 2020*

Seismic Vulnerability

- Northbound bridge is over 100 years old and southbound bridge is over 60 years old
  - Existing foundations are set in sandy soils and don’t reach bedrock
  - Piers are susceptible to liquefaction in the event of an earthquake
- There is no way to retrofit the existing bridges to meet current seismic standards

Limited Public Transportation



- There are currently no high capacity transit options across the Columbia River
- Congestion in the corridor negatively impacts public transportation service reliability and travel speed
- Bi-State transit expansion is listed as a key need to address congestion in RTC's 2018 Congestion Management Report

Impaired Freight Movement

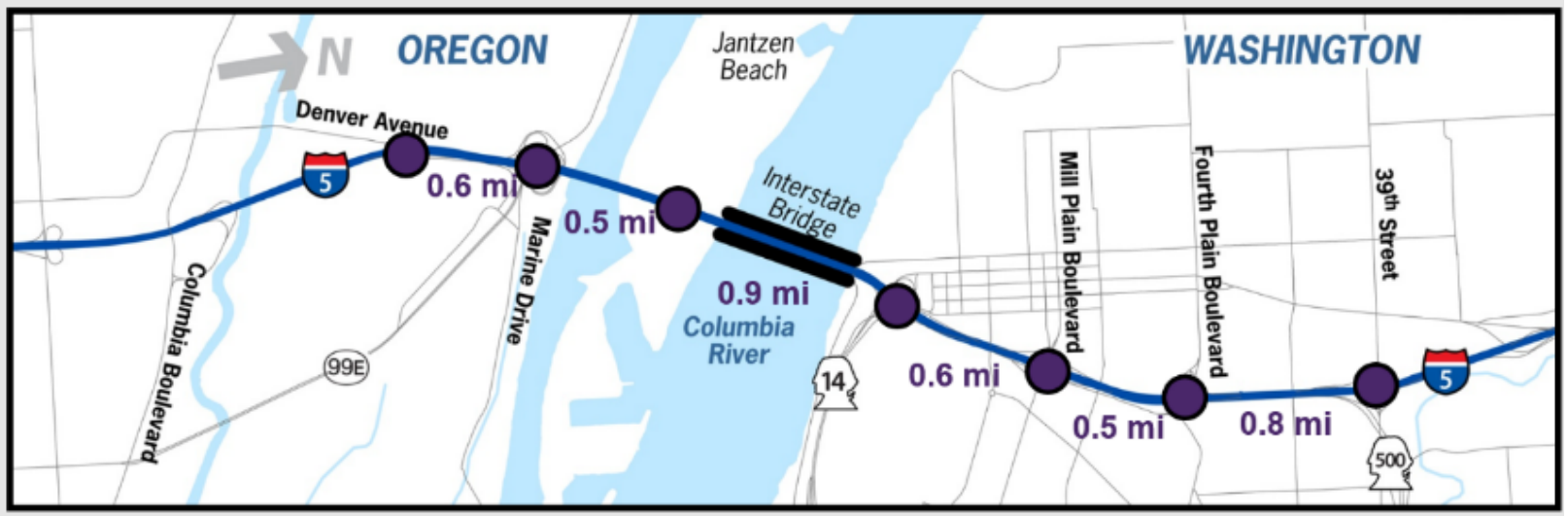
- Critical connection to two major ports, deepwater shipping, upriver barging, two transcontinental rail lines, and much of the region's industrial land
- 300-400 bridge lifts a year stop traffic for maintenance work and river navigation
- Ranked as the 29th worst freight bottleneck in the country in 2019 by the American Transportation Research Institute

Inadequate Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

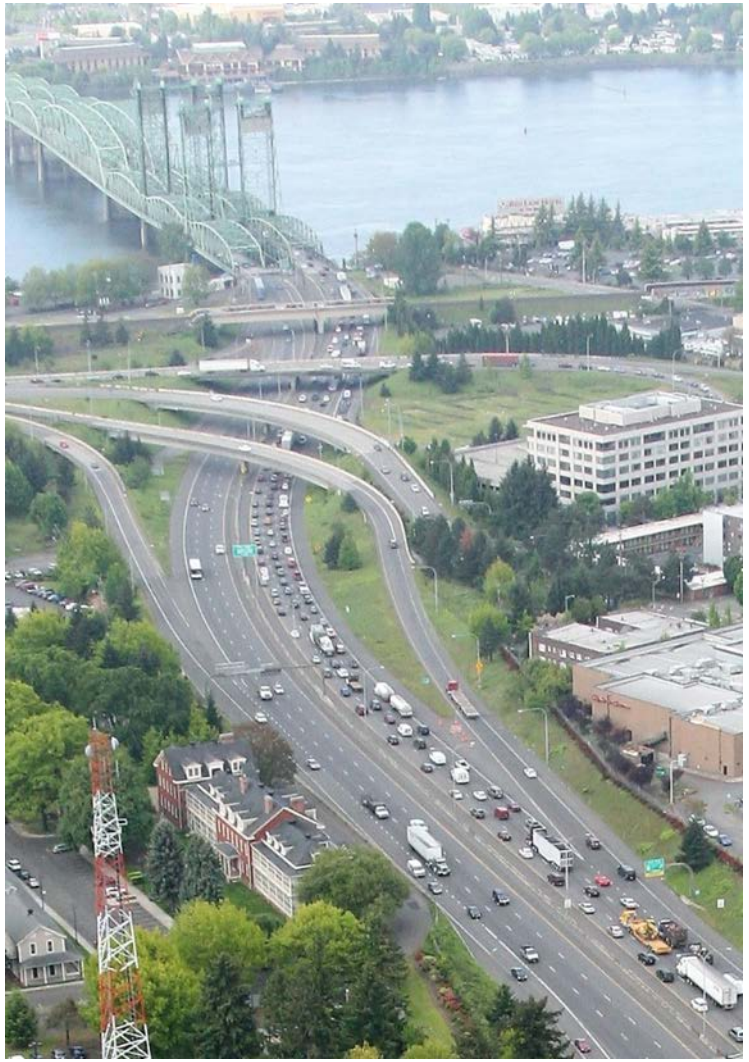
- Direct pedestrian and bicycle connectivity is poor throughout the Interstate Bridge corridor
- Bicycle and pedestrian lanes are narrow and difficult to access
  - Current shared-use paths are 3.5-4 feet wide, compared to a standard of 10 feet
- Shared-use paths are located extremely close to traffic lanes, impacting safety for pedestrians and bicyclists

Safety Concerns as Result of Existing Roadway Design

- Current bridge lanes are narrower than highway standards
- Roadway constraints contribute to frequency of crashes
- No safety shoulders for accidents or broken down vehicles
- Crash rates increase up to four times during bridge lifts



Growing Travel Demand and Congestion



- Over **300,000** vehicles cross the I-5 and I-205 bridges each weekday:*
  - Interstate Bridge: over 138,000 daily crossings
  - Glenn Jackson Bridge: over 165,000 daily crossings
- Duration of weekday congestion continues to increase:
  - **4 hours** southbound during the a.m. commute
  - **7 hours** northbound during the p.m. commute**
- Average traffic speed averages **below 15 mph** on I-5 southbound during morning peak**

*Source: RTC Traffic Counts – Columbia River Crossings
**Source: RTC Congestion Management Report 2018

Discussion