

Ross Island Bridge Rehabilitation Project Frequently Asked Questions

What does the project involve?

Starting in October 2014, contractors will remove about 250 deteriorating rivets and upgrade the steel members. This first phase will take six to eight weeks to complete. In the spring of 2015, crews will begin preparations to paint the bridge. This involves stripping old paint down to the bare steel, treating the bare steel for rust and then applying the new paint.

Why paint the Ross Island Bridge?

The paint on the U.S. 26 Willamette River Bridge (Ross Island Bridge) has deteriorated and no longer provides the necessary corrosion protection and aesthetic appearance. The bridge was last painted in 1967. This work will preserve its structural integrity and help extend its useful life.

Why do the rivets need to be removed?

Many of the rivets haven't been replaced since the bridge opened in 1926 and are being removed because of rust and corrosion. Removing and replacing the rivets will help strengthen the bridge, preserve its structural stability and extend its service life.

What's the schedule?

Rivet removal will take place in the fall of 2014 and will require six to eight weeks to complete. The painting will take place in the dry season, spring to fall, in 2015, 2016 and 2017. The project is scheduled for completion in late 2017, although the schedule is subject to change due to weather and site conditions.

What are the work hours?

The rivet work will occur during the day between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Painting will occur mostly during the day and may also occur at night].

Will the work require closure of the bridge?

No. The rivet work starting in the fall of 2014 and the painting starting in spring 2015 will have no impact on daytime traffic. No full bridge closures are planned during the bridge painting although occasional nighttime single lane closures may be necessary.

Will the sidewalk remain open?

Pedestrians and bicyclists who use the sidewalk on the north side of the Ross Island Bridge should expect intermittent sidewalk delays of up to 20 minutes at a time at night while contractors access the work zone beneath the bridge deck. Flaggers will control the work zone.

During what hours would lane closures and sidewalk delays take place?

Under the contract, the contractor is authorized to close a lane as needed between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. Monday through Friday, between 7 p.m. and 8 a.m. Saturday and between 7 p.m. and 9 a.m. Sunday.

Why not widen the bridge to add more capacity for vehicles, bikes and pedestrians?

The bridge structure prevents making the bridge any wider and its historic designation prevents significant changes. Any effort to widen the bridge would be quite expensive.

What will be done to protect water quality and air quality?

Containment tarps will keep the existing materials that will be sandblasted off – debris and the old lead-based paint -- from contaminating the river and the air.

Who will perform the work?

Contractor crews working for the Oregon Department of Transportation will do the rivet work and the painting of the bridge. The contractor selected is Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. The contractor for the painting has not been selected.

Will travelers on the bridge see the work?

Travelers on the bridge will see little of the work. All work will occur beneath the bridge deck. Barges and/or work platforms for crews will be visible from nearby roadways and vantage points. Tarps will cover active work areas to keep debris and paint from the river and the air.

How will workers reach the bridge to do their work?

Details are still under development, but the work likely will involve barges in the river and work platforms beneath the bridge deck. Lifts will carry workers and equipment to the underside of the bridge.

How long will the new paint last?

The new paint is expected to last 30 years with minimal maintenance.

How much will the project cost?

The estimated project cost is approximately \$30 to \$40 million, almost all in federal funds in addition to some state funds.

Will the work be noisy?

Yes. Replacing rivets, sandblasting and removing rust is noisy. Noise from rivet removal will be heard in intermittent bursts during daytime hours only, Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., starting in fall 2014.

When was the last time the Ross Island Bridge was rehabilitated?

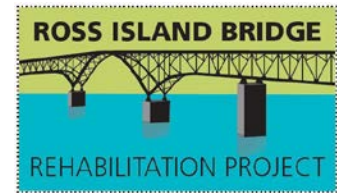
In 2001, ODOT completed an 18-month rehabilitation that included new lighting, new pavement, new guardrails and a new stormwater collection and filtration system.

Why wasn't the bridge painted during the previous rehabilitation?

The 2000-2001 project was already complicated, lengthy and meant traffic delays. Painting at that time would have significantly added to the cost and created unacceptable disruptions to the public.

Who owns the Ross Island Bridge?

The state of Oregon owns and maintains the bridge.

**What role does the Ross Island Bridge play in the Portland transportation system?**

The Ross Island Bridge carries U.S. 26 (Southeast Powell Boulevard) across the Willamette River between Portland east and west sides with an average load of 64,000 vehicles every day. The bridge is 3,700 feet long and was the first downtown Portland bridge built without streetcar tracks. Two 24-inch water mains attached to the bridge carry Bull Run water to Portland's West Side.

What color will it be?

Five coats of paint will be applied to the Ross Island Bridge with the last coat a deep blue-green, the color it was last painted in 1967. Faded remnants of the 1967 paint job can be seen in places on the bridge.

The bridge was black when it opened in 1926. Why paint it blue?

In the early 1960s, Portland business leaders hired architect Lewis Crutcher to develop a new color palette for the Willamette River bridges, many of which were black. Crutcher wanted to bring more pizzazz to the city and his efforts resulted in the Broadway Bridge being painted Golden Gate red, the Sellwood Bridge green and the Ross Island Bridge blue. The city had no luck in painting the Steel Bridge, owned then and now by a railroad.

Who owns the Willamette River Bridges in Portland?

The St. Johns, the Fremont, the Marquam and the Ross Island bridges are owned by the state of Oregon. The Broadway, the Burnside, the Morrison, the Hawthorne and the Sellwood bridges are owned by Multnomah County. The Steel Bridge is owned by the Union Pacific Railroad.

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