

Oregon's Bridges

Modern-day bridges play a critical role in every aspect of Oregon life. Because our state has thousands of miles of waterways, it is important that bridges are built and maintained to preserve and protect the environment while safely moving people and goods throughout the state.

- Oregon has approximately 6,700 bridges included in the National Bridge Inventory. ODOT owns nearly 2,700 of these bridges; counties, cities and other public agencies own the remainder.
- In addition to the 81 Oregon bridges listed on the National Register of Historic Places, 120 more are eligible for listing.
- Federal law requires thorough inspection of bridges included in the National Bridge Inventory at least once every two years.

Aging bridges appear statewide

- The average age of ODOT's bridges is 42 years. **Thirty-four percent of Oregon's bridges are 50 years old or older.** Older bridges were not designed for today's weights, traffic volumes and speeds.
- Because of demands on the transportation system for maintenance, preservation and modernization, many of Oregon's bridges have not been replaced at a sufficient rate.
- To ensure public safety, if bridge needs are not met, ODOT must consider restricting the weight a bridge can carry. These weight restrictions can contribute to congestion and make it difficult to deliver goods. This can result in higher shipping costs and higher prices for basic commodities. (Note: if a bridge is deemed unsafe, it is immediately closed to travel.)

Bridge replacement now in high gear

- In 2003, the legislature passed the Oregon Transportation Investment Act (OTIA III), providing \$1.3 billion to repair and replace state-owned bridges over a 10-year period.
- Under OTIA III, ODOT is currently repairing and replacing hundreds of bridges across the state to ensure the unrestricted movement of freight and spur economic growth. Halfway into the 10-year schedule, 73 bridges have been completed and open to traffic and 99 bridges are currently under construction.
- These bridges are located on important freight routes including Interstate 5, Interstate 84, U.S. 20, U.S. 26 and U.S. 97.
- In 2008, 179 ODOT bridges were classified as "structurally deficient." This indicates the bridge has deteriorated physical conditions in its structural elements (primarily deck and supporting members) and reduced load capacity. More than 60 of these bridges are currently programmed for repair or replacement through the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) or OTIA III. With an average of 12 bridges becoming structurally deficient each year, there is an ongoing need for bridge repair and replacement to address structural and functional needs.
- The bridge repair/replacement program is being carried out in phases to minimize impact and create efficiencies.
- OTIA also provided local agencies, cities and counties with \$300 million to repair and replace other bridges.
- Bridges repaired or replaced by OTIA III solve load capacity issues on the most heavily used routes of the Oregon State Highway Freight System. Meeting other bridge needs throughout Oregon will require additional funding (see more information about funding needs in the "Oregon Transportation Plan" section).

Oregon has 81 bridges listed on the National Register of Historic Places.