

## An Earthquake-Ready Boone Bridge

May 8, 2024

### Replacing the Boone Bridge to keep I-5 connected following earthquake

The I-5 Boone Bridge is an important bridge on Interstate 5, but it is not earthquake-ready. After an earthquake, we need the Boone Bridge to be open for travel to support emergency response and access to services.

The Oregon Department of Transportation’s I-5 Boone Bridge Replacement Project will provide a bridge that can withstand major earthquakes. Currently, there is about a 40% chance that a very powerful [Cascadia Subduction Zone](#) earthquake will occur in the next 50 years. The earthquake will affect bridges and other infrastructure throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Currently, there is no interstate bridge across the Willamette River near the Boone Bridge that is ready for a major earthquake. ODOT is currently constructing seismic upgrades to the closest interstate bridge alternative, the Abernethy Bridge on I-205. Once that project is complete, a wider Abernethy Bridge will be the first earthquake ready bridge across the Willamette River in the Portland area. However, the Abernethy Bridge is almost 15 miles away from the Boone Bridge. For our communities living near the Willamette River, the Boone Bridge is critical for north and south travel, especially following an emergency. The Oregon City Arch Bridge and the St. Paul Bridge in Newberg also will not survive a major earthquake.

There are 2,700 state-owned bridges in Oregon, and very few of them are designed to withstand the shaking of a Cascadia-level earthquake. The realities of our limited budget mean we can’t replace or retrofit them all—instead, we’re focusing our efforts on making sure we have critical “lifeline routes” across the state.



*I-5 is a designated Tier 1 Lifeline Route in the Oregon Seismic Lifelines Identification Project. It is important that I-5 remain open during emergencies, like earthquakes.*



*The Boone Bridge would not hold up in a major earthquake. There is no other earthquake-ready bridge nearby. The St Paul Bridge and the Oregon City Bridge are not earthquake ready.*

### Community concerned about safety, access following disaster

The community agrees that being ready for earthquakes and emergencies are a top concern for the project area. Last fall, ODOT held two open houses, one online and one in-person, to hear from the community in the Boone Bridge project area. About 34% of people driving on I-5 are worried about earthquakes and other disasters. One respondent shared, “bridge replacement is a critical priority, ASAP. In the event of an earthquake it will likely not survive, leaving our community stranded and vulnerable. That’s the worst case.” Another stated, “my main concern is the seismic safety of the bridge.”

### What’s Next

During the early Planning Environmental Linkages or [PEL phase](#), ODOT is working with the City of Wilsonville, other interested parties and the community to look at options for replacing the bridge to make it earthquake ready. As outlined in the timeline below, funding is not yet identified to move this project forward into construction. ODOT is working with partners across the region and the Legislature to identify resilient funding solutions to maintaining a safe, accessible and sustainable transportation system.

WE ARE HERE



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