

Mitchell Point Tunnel

Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail



The iconic Mitchell Point Tunnel was a highlight of the original Historic Highway, but the construction of Interstate 84 destroyed the tunnel.

Now, in spring 2021, we are breaking ground on a new tunnel and Historic Highway State Trail segment. There will soon be a 655-foot tunnel with five arched windows reminiscent of the original tunnel at Mitchell Point.

Location: Mitchell Point
(I-84 Exit 58)

Connections: The State Trail segments on either side of Mitchell Point have yet to be connected. Access by I-84 Exit 58.

Schedule: Construction is scheduled to begin in early 2021 and be complete in 2023.

Length: 1.5 miles

Cost: About \$18 million through the Federal Lands Access Program.

Management: Western Federal Lands Highway Division is the contract administrator.

ODOT owns and operates the Historic Highway. Oregon Parks and Recreation Department manages the State Trail in partnership with ODOT.

Contractor: Crestline Construction.

Features: A 655-foot tunnel with five arched windows. A plaza on the west side of the tunnel with picnic tables, rest and pause areas, an overlook area and an expanded restroom at the trailhead.



At the west entrance to the tunnel, there will be an overlook area. Each tunnel entrance, or portal, will have stone features as shown in the rendering above.

Mitchell Point History

1915: Original tunnel constructed.

1953: Tunnel closed and filled.

1966: Destroyed during I-84 construction.

2015: Seven alternatives for constructing a crossing at Mitchell Point developed.

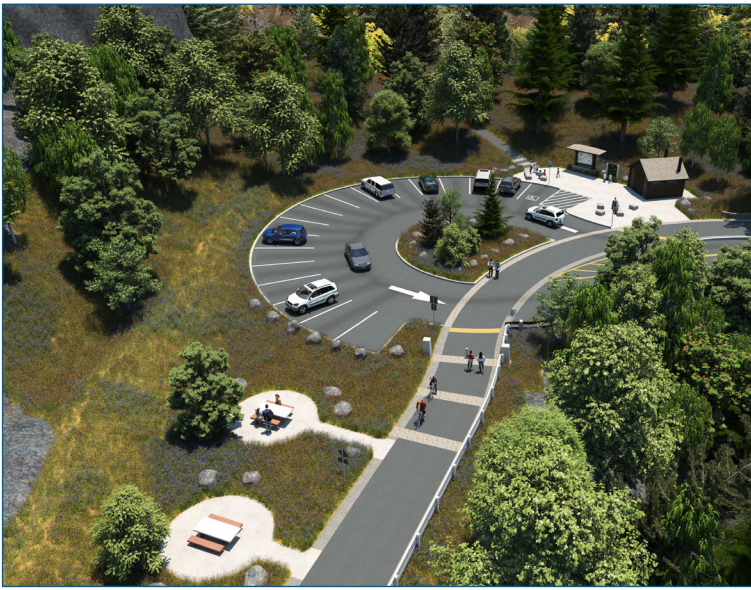
2018: Alternatives presented for public comment & tunnel concept selected.

2020: Design finalized.

Construction Impacts

Mitchell Point Overlook will be closed throughout construction, including Exit 58 off-ramps. Travelers should expect the right lane of I-84 east to be closed weekdays, but open on weekends.

Crews will use rock blasting to form the new tunnel. Due to the risk of rocks reaching the highway, we will use rolling slowdowns to create a window where no cars are in the work zone during blasting operations. Dates will be announced online so travelers can plan ahead.



The Mitchell Point Tunnel design includes a plaza on the west side of the tunnel with picnic tables, rest and pause areas, an overlook area and an expanded restroom at the trailhead.



It's an amazing project. It's an amazing part of our legacy, as the Mitchell Point Tunnel is the key piece to all 73 miles of Historic Highway being fully restored."

— U.S. Representative Earl Blumenauer

What is the Historic Columbia River Highway?

Constructed between 1913 and 1922, the Historic Columbia River Highway overcame all odds. At the turn of the century, after visiting Europe's great roads, two men had a vision to create an even better road here in the United States designed exclusively for this new contraption called the automobile. This road would lay lightly on the land and take its users to the most beautiful spots and breathtaking vistas of the Columbia River Gorge.

In the early 1950s, many miles of the Historic Columbia River Highway were damaged or destroyed to pave the way for Interstate 84. The passage of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act in 1986 motivated the Oregon State Legislature to commit to restore the entire Historic Highway to its glory days of the 1920s.

Currently, an effort is underway to restore all 73 miles of the Historic Columbia River Highway from Troutdale to The Dalles. Some segments are accessible to cars and cyclists. Some segments, known as the Historic Highway State Trail, will be accessible only by people walking, rolling or biking.

We are so close to completing the restoration of all 73 miles. Another project, connecting to the west side of Mitchell Point, is scheduled to begin construction in 2022. Learn more at www.HistoricHighway.org.



Historic images of Mitchell Point from the tunnel looking west and from the river.

Questions?

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