



BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Bi-State Working Group Meeting Summary

Monday, February 6, 2023 | 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Port of Hood River – Via Zoom
1000 E Port Marina Drive, Hood River OR 97031

In Attendance:

Members: Chair, Mike Fox (Commissioner), Port of Hood River; Vice Chair, Jake Anderson (Commissioner), Klickitat County; Marla Keethler (Mayor), City of White Salmon.

Alternates: Arthur Babitz (Commissioner), Hood River County; Kristi Chapman, (Commissioner) Port of Hood River; Grant Polson, City of Hood River.

Staff/Consultants: Kevin Greenwood (Executive Director), Port of Hood River; Michael Shannon (Project Manager), HNTB; Jessica Pickul, JLA; Alice Hodge, JLA; Brian Munoz, HNTB; Steve Siegel, Siegel Consulting; Brad Boswell, Boswell Consulting; Hal Hiemstra, Summit Strategies; Kate Trimble, HNTB; Chris Kopp, HNTB.

Guests: Abigail Elder, City of Hood River; Ebony Wortham; Kelly O’Grady-Smith; Mary Francoeur; Pete Shellenberger; Rian Windsheimer; Drew Clark; Sean O’Connor, Story Gorge; Tamar Schurian; Thomas Wilson, COWI; Sam Hunaidi, ODOT; Carol Snead, ODOT.

Welcome

Michael Shannon called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

The Bi-State Working Group (BSWG) minutes for January 23 were approved by consensus.

Informational Items

- a. **Communications Update** – Alice Hodge, JLA, provided an overview of January and February communications. Hodge noted that the one-page legislative update sheets have been created for Washington and Oregon and are included in the packet for review. The new website (hoodriverbridge.org) is live. Upcoming communication materials will include an overview of Progressive Design Build, as well as roles and responsibilities for the Port of Hood River (“Port”) and the new bridge authority. Jessica Pickul, JLA, introduced Sean O’Connor of Story Gorge who creates video content for the bridge replacement project. O’Connor commented that he is looking forward to finding stories throughout the community to help demonstrate the need for a new bridge.
- b. **Government Affairs Update** – Shannon noted that Gorge-Ous Night will be on February 8 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Legislative outreach meetings have also been set up for February 8. Shannon commented that the hearing for SB 431 will take place on February 7 in Salem, Oregon. Some

members of the BSWG will be attending the hearing. Hal Hiemstra, Summit Strategies, will be setting up monthly virtual meetings with key congressional members starting in February.

- c. **Hood River-White Salmon Bridge Authority (HRWSBA)** – Shannon reported that the Primary Place of Business (PPB) has been finalized as Oregon. Both Hood River County and Klickitat County are working through the appointment process for the Commission Formation Agreement (CFA). Commissioner Anderson noted that an addendum to the CFA regarding the appointees will be added. A final draft of the CFA is included in the packet. There was consensus from the BSWG to present the final draft with the noted addendum to the 6 parties for approval. Shannon commented that there are three legal counsel recommendations for consideration in the packet. The BSWG will review and provide a final recommendation that will ultimately represent HRWSBA.
- d. **Funding Finance & Tolling** – Chris Kopp, HNTB, provided an overview of the preliminary toll rate scenarios. Kopp discussed the history of tolls on the current bridge, compared tolls with other similar bridges, and defined general parameters and criteria for toll rates. Kate Trimble, HNTB, presented Operations and Maintenance and Renewal and Replacement costs for the current bridge. A discussion ensued regarding the role of tolls in reference to the new bridge. Commissioner Fox requested to see an additional toll scenario with a \$1 increase.
- e. **Biological Opinion (BiOp)** – Shannon summarized the status of the BiOp and turned to Carol Sneed, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), for an update. Sneed noted that ODOT will use what WSP has submitted to update the Biological Assessment. ODOT is trying to coordinate with FHWA to discuss how it should be formatted and presented as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and move it forward into the BiOp. A discussion followed regarding the BSWG’s concern to complete the BiOp as soon as possible to stay on schedule with the Bridge Replacement Project.
- f. **Funding Finance & Tolling Continued** – A discussion ensued regarding the Ports use of the tolls. The BSWG concluded that the Port must commit to weaning itself completely from the tolls as soon as possible. A joint meeting was requested with the Port Commission and the BSWG to discuss this matter.
- g. **Biological Opinion (BiOp) Continued** – Rian Windsheimer, ODOT, proposed a meeting with National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), FHWA, ODOT and the BSWG. Windsheimer will work with Shannon to coordinate the meeting.
- h. **Pending Grant Funding Updates** – Shannon noted that HNTB is still working on the RAISE grant that is due February 28. The Build grant is also in process.
- i. **Treaty Tribe MOA’s** – Shannon reported that the draft MOA has been submitted to Yakama Nation, Nez Perce, and the Umatilla Tribe. Roy Watters will follow up with Yakama Nation and try to set up a meeting. There was a discussion with Nez Perce legal counsel on February 2. There were also a couple discussions with the Umatilla Tribe and a follow-up meeting is scheduled for February 22. Umatilla provided a letter of support for the Bridge Replacement Project. Commissioner Fox noted that someone from Umatilla will be attending the Port Commission meeting on February 7 to formally acknowledge their letter of support and to authorize non-revenue bridge passage for the

Umatilla Tribe. The MOA has not been submitted to Warm Springs and HNTB is working towards setting up a meeting. Commissioner Arthur Babitz suggested obtaining a letter of support from Friends of the Gorge.

- j. **RBMC** – Shannon noted that they are working through the Request for Proposal (RFP) for Progressive Design Build. The Oregon land borings have begun. HNTB did receive the right of entry from the private owner in Washington for the land borings. Surveys are underway to capture the control points, identify existing utilities, and map the parcels.

New Action Items

- a. Create an additional toll scenario with a \$1 increase.
- b. Coordinate a joint meeting with the Port and BSWG to discuss tolling.
- c. Coordinate a joint meeting with NMFS, ODOT, FHWA and BSWG to discuss the BiOp schedule.
- d. Obtain a letter of support from Friends of the Gorge.

Adjourn

Next meeting is on February 20. The meeting was adjourned at 4:06 p.m.

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