

# ANALYSIS

## Department of Transportation Bullards Bridge

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**Analyst:** Ben Ruef

**Request:** Approve the submission of a federal grant application to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development grant program, in the amount of \$3,200,000, for the Bullards Bridge project.

**Analysis:** The Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development program funds transportation projects of national and regional significance. Its purpose is to improve safety, sustainability, equity, economic competitiveness, and infrastructure condition. The program supports innovative, multimodal projects, promotes funding equity between rural and urban areas, addresses environmental impacts, and leverages public-private partnerships. Eligible projects include roads, bridges, transit, rail, ports, and intermodal facilities.

ODOT would utilize the grant funds to conduct preliminary investigations and develop conceptual designs for a new bicycle and pedestrian bridge adjacent to the existing Bullards Bridge on the Oregon Coast along US 101. This work includes studies to assess the environmental, cultural, geotechnical, and structural requirements for the proposed bridge. The new structure will separate pedestrian and bicycle traffic from vehicle traffic on the current bridge, enhancing safety and addressing a gap in both the Oregon Coast Trail and the Oregon Coast Bike Route.

Additionally, the bridge will be designed as a multimodal, seismically resilient facility, capable of accommodating light-duty emergency vehicles, providing an essential component for regional disaster and evacuation planning. These planning efforts will support a future application for construction funding and ensure the corridor's long-term viability for both non-motorized and emergency transportation needs. Total cost for this phase of the project is estimated at \$4 million. Matching funds of \$800,000 will come from Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act flexible funds designated by the Oregon Transportation Commission for match of federal grants.

ODOT provided notice of intent to apply on January 17th, and the grant application is due on January 30, 2025. RAISE grant funds are available for obligation through September 30, 2029, and all funds must be expended by September 30, 2034. If funding is awarded, ODOT will request an increase in expenditure limitation, as needed.

**Recommendation:** The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends approval of the request.

## Department of Transportation Parada

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**Request:** Authorization to apply for a grant of \$3,200,000 to fund a planning study for Bullards Bike and Pedestrian Bridge on the Oregon Coast from the U.S. Department of Transportation under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

**Recommendation:** Approve the request.

**Discussion:** The U.S. Department of Transportation, through the Infrastructure and Jobs Act (IIJA), is offering federal funding to support surface transportation projects with significant local or regional impacts. Specific criteria in the grant materials outlines prioritization for projects addressing climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving environmental justice outcomes for communities disproportionately experience climate change-related consequences, and seeks to proactively address racial equity and barriers to opportunities (i.e. automobile dependence). The planning study for Bullards Bike and Pedestrian Bridge has been identified by the Oregon Department of Transportation as an excellent candidate for the grant. The application due date is January 30, 2025. The awards are anticipated to be announced in June of 2025.

The grant requires an \$800,000 match expected to come from the IIJA flexible funds allocated by the Oregon Transportation Commission.



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Department of Transportation

Director's Office

355 Capitol St. NE, MS 11

Salem, OR 97301

January 17, 2025

Senator Kate Lieber, Co-Chair  
Representative Tawna Sanchez, Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
900 Court Street NE  
H-178 State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs:

## **NATURE OF THE REQUEST**

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Delivery and Operations Division requests permission to apply for a Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) for \$3,200,000 from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT).

## **AGENCY ACTION**

RAISE grants are for investments in surface transportation that will have a significant local or regional impact. USDOT seeks to fund projects that:

- reduce greenhouse gas emissions and are designed with specific elements to address climate change impacts.
- address environmental justice, particularly for communities that disproportionately experience climate change-related consequences.
- proactively address racial equity and barriers to opportunity, including automobile dependence as a form of barrier, or redress prior inequities and barriers to opportunity

The Notice of Funding Opportunity was published on November 1, 2024, and the grant application is due January 30, 2025. Awards will be announced by June 2025. A total of \$1.5 billion is available in the Fiscal Year 2025 RAISE Grant Program. ODOT has identified a planning study for the Bullards Bike and Pedestrian Bridge on the Oregon Coast as an excellent candidate that aligns with program criteria by improving the safety of people biking and walking filling a critical gap on the Oregon Coast Trail system as well as the Oregon Coast Bike Route.

### ***Project: Bullards Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge***

The Oregon Coast Highway (US 101) runs approximately 370 miles from Astoria to the California border, adjacent to the Pacific Ocean. This route is highly popular with residents and tourists accessing the Oregon Coast Trail and the Oregon Coast Bike Route, both of which were established in the 1980s. Thousands of bikers and hikers utilize these trails on an annual basis.

Coastal residents and visitors also travel the route to reach school, work, shopping, services, and recreation. An Oregon Coast Trail connection strategy has identified 31 gaps along the highway as critical, or where a hiker currently must use a transportation corridor that was not designed for pedestrians.

One such gap is at Bullards Bridge, where the route takes hikers from the beach to US 101 at Bullards Beach State Park to cross the Coquille River at the mouth of the Pacific Ocean and return to the beach in nearby Bandon. Bullards Bridge, built in 1954, is one of only two vertical-lift bridges on the Oregon Coast Highway. Current width of the roadway is approximately 26' providing eleven-foot travel lanes in each direction, with a minimal 2' shoulder on each side. The narrow width of the highway does not provide adequate room for bike and pedestrian traffic to move safely across the river.

To adequately and safely move bicycle and pedestrian traffic across the bridge, ODOT would like to construct a bicycle and pedestrian specific bridge adjacent to the existing vehicle bridge to the west. The study conducted that resulted in the updated (January 2022) Oregon Coast Bike Route Plan ([OCBR](#)) identifies Bullards Bridge as a critical link needing to be addressed. Separating bicycle and pedestrian traffic from daily vehicle traffic aligns with ODOT's mission of providing a safe and reliable multimodal transportation system that connects people and helps Oregon's communities and economy thrive. A new multi-modal seismically resilient facility would also be an important component of a local and regional disaster or evacuation route plan as it will accommodate light-duty emergency vehicles as well as be available for evacuations if the existing bridge were to be rendered unusable.

To achieve this goal, preliminary investigation and conceptual designs must be rendered to better understand the environmental, cultural, geotechnical and structural needs of this new bridge. If awarded, ODOT is proposing to utilize this planning grant to perform preliminary investigation and some design work that would bolster an application for construction funding of the new bridge in the future.

Grant Request:	\$3,200,000
<u>Matching Funds:</u>	<u>\$ 800,000</u>
Total Project Cost:	\$4,000,000

RAISE grant funds are available for obligation only through September 30, 2029, and all funds must be expended by September 30, 2034. Matching funds for the project will come from the IIJA flexible funds being allocated by the Oregon Transportation Commission for match for federal grants. If awarded, this RAISE grant will allow for critical studies and investigations into cultural, environmental, geotechnical and structural needs to be obtained for future construction of a bridge that will fill a critical gap in both the Oregon Coast Trail and the Oregon Coast Bike Route by separating bicycle and pedestrian traffic from daily truck and automobile traffic on the narrow roadway of US101.

If this proposed project is not funded, needs will not be identified to ensure this segment of the corridor has adequate space for bicycle and pedestrian traffic and will reduce response

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time during a seismic event. This will leave a gap in both the Oregon Coast Trail and the Oregon Coast Bike route, limiting the amount of non-motorized traffic that can be safely accommodated and impacting the future efficiency of the corridor. ODOT is committed to ensuring this work is completed and, if the grant is not awarded, will continue to seek funding to ensure the viability of this essential corridor.

**ACTION REQUESTED**

ODOT requests approval to apply for \$3,200,000 in funding under the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program. No additional expenditure limitation or staffing will be required if funds are awarded.

**LEGISLATION AFFECTED**

None.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kristopher W. Strickler".

Kristopher W. Strickler  
Director