
Western Federal Lands Highway Division
Project No. OR PFH 163(14)

**Crown Point Viaduct
Restoration Project
Public Open House Report**



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Crown Point Viaduct Restoration Project

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Introduction

The Crown Point Viaduct is located in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area approximately 15 miles east of Portland. Western Federal Lands Highway Division (WFLHD) plans to rehabilitate the Crown Point Viaduct and other elements of the Historic Columbia River Highway (HCRH) in the vicinity of Crown Point and Vista House. As part of project planning, WFLHD and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) sponsored a Public Open House on April 20, 2011 from 5:00 to 7:30 pm at the Corbett Fire Hall in Corbett, Oregon. The purpose of the open house was to explain the proposed project and to gather public input and concerns. Approximately 15 community members and interested parties attended.

Notice

Community members and interested parties were notified of the open house through a direct mail and email Fact Sheet and also through notice published in the Corbett School District's newsletter. Approximately 330 interested parties were notified, including elected officials and key staff from surrounding jurisdictions; major HCRH users; tour companies; special interest and recreation groups, emergency service providers, special districts, and other agencies; utilities; school districts and other parties with interests in the project.

Government-to-government notice to tribal governments in the vicinity was provided through WFLHD protocols.

A media release was distributed to 122 local area media outlets in the region.

Copies of the Fact Sheet were distributed to ODOT staff to distribute at community meetings and to Friends of the Vista House to make available for visitors and members.

Notices were posted at the Corbett Fire Hall, Corbett Country Market, Big Bear Market, Corbett Grange Hall, and Rooster Rock State Park on April 11, 2011.

Format

The format utilized was an interactive public open house with a 45-minute open house portion at the beginning of the meeting, followed by a welcome statement and project description presentation by Mike Odom, Project Manager with WFLHD. Kristen Stallman, ODOT, provided a presentation on coordination with HCRH restoration efforts. Participants were then given the opportunity to ask questions and provide comments. The public open house concluded with another 45-minute open house portion where participants could speak directly with project staff. Five storyboards were available for participants to review. Oral and written comments were actively encouraged throughout the open house. Each participant received an agenda, comment form, and Fact Sheet. There were also various other informational brochures available to participants. All material will be posted to the project website.

Storyboards

1. **Project schedule.** Agency coordination between March and June 2011. Public Open House April 2011. Design / Engineering between July 2011 and May 2012. Public Open House April 2012. Restoration between May and November 2012 with anticipated full road closure between September and October 2012. Intermittent and partial road closures anticipated during the remainder of the construction. Milling and overlay work could be delayed until 2013 in the event of weather delays or unforeseen schedule interruptions.
2. **Proposed Restoration.** 1) Repair or replace viaduct columns, footings, edge beams. 2) Repair and strengthen bottom of viaduct deck. 3) Repair cracks in top of viaduct deck and parapet. 4) Restore light fixtures. 5) Repair retaining wall beneath viaduct. 6) Restore curb height at the viaduct. 7) New pavement and gutter along 3.5-mile segment. 8) Restore guard rocks at three historic wall sites. 9) Rehabilitate upper west parking lot.
3. **Existing Conditions.** Column deterioration and temporary shoring; bottom of viaduct deck cracking; retaining wall failing; cracks in parapet; and curb deterioration.
4. **Need for Restoration.** Viaduct structure and retaining walls are deteriorating; significant safety impacts if left unrepaired; potential loss of historic structure; important resource for local and regional economies in jeopardy; and weight restrictions may be needed to reduce risk of collapse.
5. **Historic Photographs.** Three historic photos were displayed. Crown Point Viaduct was constructed in 1914; it is part of the Historic Columbia River Highway, which opened in 1915; and Vista House was constructed in 1918.

Summary of Presentations and Questions/Comments

Presentations

Mike Odom, WFLHD, provided a description of the proposed project. He explained the deterioration and potential structure failures that are driving the need for the project. While the focus of the project is rehabilitation of the Crown Point Viaduct, additional funding will allow expansion of the restoration area to include the HCRH from Larch Mountain Road to Latourell Falls.

Mike advised that the following key points need to be considered:

- a Proposed lane and road closures to accommodate construction equipment staging. The current thinking is to close the highway just below the Vista House and just above Latourell Falls so that vehicles can turn around. The road will be closed at other locations (yet to be determined) for large vehicles. The WFLHD would like to know when is the best time to effect a closure.
- a Construction funding will be available in 2012. Construction is expected to start in spring 2012 with single lane closures only.
- a Additional public outreach and involvement will occur prior to construction.

Kristen Stallman, ODOT, gave a presentation on coordination with HCRH restoration efforts. She thanked WFLHD for helping with this project. ODOT has been working on this for years and has not been able to obtain funding so they appreciate partnering with WFLHD and FHWA. Kristen stated this is an excellent opportunity to fix features that add to the beauty of the highway. Currently ODOT is working on reconnecting abandoned portions of the HCRH. Once

complete, bicyclists and pedestrians will be able to travel the entire 73 miles of the HCRH. ODOT is also working on a Viewshed Enhancement Project to increase views along the HCRH.

Comments and Questions (Questions / comments are in italics followed by staff responses in regular text.)

How long will the road closures last?

We are not exactly sure at this point, but probably about a month. We are looking for input from the public.

Late fall or early spring would be best. There are still a tremendous number of tourists in September and May; October and April would be better.

There is concern about completing construction in a timely manner due to weather in those months.

How will local residents be able to access their homes and services?

A detour from Latourell Falls to Bridal Veil to I-84 will need to be used. There will be out-of-direction travel.

This would be an inconvenience for them, but not too bad.

We spoke with the Fire Chief today and these closures will add to response time.

Very happy that you are doing this project and believe that most people in the area are happy as well.

Will this be a complete road closure for cars, pedestrians and bicyclists?

Yes, in the fall. Summer will be a single lane closure and will affect bus traffic. We will try to mitigate as much as possible.

How long will construction take?

We do not know yet. Viaduct restoration can be difficult and we're not certain what will be required.

The modification to existing structures – will you be replacing or restoring?

We will maintain the existing structure, deepen the deck to add additional support, and widen the columns.

The road surface is going to stay where it is?

We will mill down levels of pavement that have been added over the years and build a new gutter to the original height.

Will you be replacing sidewalks?

No, we will fix cracks.

There is damage to the sidewalk from cars hitting it while going around the corners; will you take measures to mitigate this?

Not sure what those would be; please let me know if you have ideas.

Are you concerned about bicyclists making their own trails through the closed area?

This could be a concern. Controlling pedestrians and cyclists will be a challenge because of the popularity of the Vista House.

For bicyclists traveling from Troutdale through this area, has there been any consideration in routing them up and over Woodard rather than going past the Job Corps center? It is stressful with bicyclists on the road while hauling a horse trailer and all the sudden a log truck comes up. There is less traffic on Woodard. From a drivers point of view the "S" corners between Woodard and Springdale have terrible visibility which can be scary. It can be dangerous when you unexpectedly come upon bicyclists.

This would be outside WFLHD's authority and the scope of the project. If it's a planned cycling event, permits are needed from the county and could designate a certain route.

You can encourage casual cyclists but you cannot require them to take a certain route.

Written Comments

Forms were available for participants to record additional comments. Two completed comment forms were submitted at the open house. Questions posed in the comment forms and responses are reflected below.

1. Have informational materials adequately explained why this project is needed at this time? If not, please explain.

Yes: 11

No:

Comments:

- ^a I read the type, size and location – not all of it was covered, but probably enough explained.

2. What concerns do you have regarding the impacts of single lane or full road closures? What are your suggestions to minimize these impacts?

- ^a Visitors at Vista House – bus restrictions will be difficult for Friends of Vista House (FOVH). Without visitors, FOVH income will be significantly impacted. September is a heavy visitation month; please try to avoid full closure then.
- ^a None, if work has to be done and it costs less to close the road then do it.

3. What techniques would work best to keep you or your organization informed and involved as this project proceeds?

- ^a Email.
- ^a Mail or email.

4. Is there anything else you'd like to add about the proposed restoration project?

- ^a It's important that the work is completed.
- ^a Glad to see more money spent for East Multnomah County roads.

- a East end of Stark Bridge – trees are eroding gunite on hillside. Could be removed now with less money than later when previous work would have to be redone.

Informal Input

In informal conversation with agency staff and other meeting participants, the following input was obtained:

- In addition to broadly advertising HCRH road closures, periods that the highway is open during the construction period should be announced.
- There may be an opportunity to announce road closures and openings using ODOT's reader boards on I-84.
- Both Friends of Vista House and Friends of HCRH would welcome presentations to their boards or at general membership meetings on the project in the future (several months prior to initiation of construction would be ideal).
- Kevin Price, Oregon State Parks, will work with Friends of Vista House on the display of the project storyboards at Vista House. Informational materials may also be provided to Vista House volunteers for public distribution.
- Friends of Vista House will help identify tour bus companies to be informed of road closures.
- Information on road and lane closures should be posted at Vista House, Multnomah Falls and other locations accessed by HCRH users.

List of Participants

- Mike Odom, Project Manager; Erin Chipps, Environmental Protection Specialist -- WFLHD
- Susan Hanson, Community Affairs Coordinator; Kristen Stallman, Scenic Area Coordinator -- Oregon Department of Transportation
- Carol Snead, HDR; Jim Owens and Alisha Dishaw, Cogan Owens Cogan -- Contractors
- Glenn Littrell and Kevin Price – Oregon State Parks
- Louise Yarbrough, George Perry and Virginia Perry -- Friends of Vista House
- Jeanette Kloos and Gary Brannan -- Friends of Historic Columbia River Highway
- Glenn Putnam and Dave Mysinger -- NEMCCA
- Christine Plourde – USFS
- Tom Cayton – Multnomah County RFPD #14
- David Sell
- Bob Leipper
- Kathy Johnson

