Coal Creek Bridge Replacement Project

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is a new bridge needed?

The existing bridge is deteriorating and needs to be replaced. Specifically, the 61-year-old timber support structure (piles) is decaying, the 106-year-old steel floor beams are severely rusting, the paint is peeling, and the road geometry (curve in the road and bridge) does not provide adequate sightlines (visibility to oncoming traffic).

The bridge has been categorized as structurally deficient and functionally obsolete.

What does "structurally deficient" mean?

Structurally deficient means there are significant load carrying elements of the bridge that are in poor condition due to deterioration and/or damage or the waterway opening provided by the bridge is insufficient causing water overtopping with significant traffic delays. The fact that a bridge is "structurally deficient" does not imply that it is likely to collapse or that it is unsafe. It means that the bridge must be frequently monitored, inspected and maintained.

What does "functionally obsolete" mean?

A functionally obsolete bridge is one that was built to standards that are not used today. Functionally obsolete bridges are those that do not have adequate load carrying capacity, lane widths, shoulder widths, approach roadway alignment, horizontal and vertical clearances to serve current traffic demand, or those that may be occasionally flooded.

Is the existing bridge safe to use until it is replaced?

Yes. The Road Services Division bridge inspection team has inspected the bridge every 6 months since 2017 to ensure the bridge is safe for vehicular traffic under current weight restrictions. This is more frequent than the required 24-month inspection cycle. If repairs are needed due to findings during the inspections, the inspection team works with our maintenance staff to perform the work to keep the bridge safe for public use until the bridge is replaced.

Are there any restrictions on bridge use until it's replaced?

Yes, there are. The current weight limits for single unit vehicles are:

4 Axles – 26 tons
5 Axles – 30 tons
6 Axles – 32 tons
7 Axles – 35 tons

The Road Services Division regularly inspects the bridges it is responsible for maintaining. If new restrictions are required based on these inspections, a notice will be posted on the bridge. We will also note any new restrictions on the Bridge Weight Restrictions website at: www.kingcounty.gov/bridgeweightrestrictions

To request this document
in an alternative format, please call
206-477-9094 (TTY Relay: 711)

King County
Department of Local Services
Road Services Division

How is the project funded? How much will it cost?

The primary source of funding is the Federal Highways Bridge Program, which is administered by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). The County also provides supplemental funding from the County Road Fund.

The preliminary estimated total project cost is $4.7 million. This includes engineering studies and design, environmental documentation and permitting, right-of-way acquisition if necessary, construction, inspection and project closeout.

Will the new bridge be in the same location?

The final selection of the bridge location depends on the result of an ongoing study that is analyzing various bridge types, sizes, and locations. One of the options for a new bridge is at the existing bridge location.

What types of materials will be used to build it?

The new bridge is expected to be constructed primarily out of concrete. Concrete is commonly used for bridges of this size and type, as it is economical and durable.

Will there be weight restrictions on the new bridge?

No, the new bridge will be designed to meet current bridge structural standards.

What is the project schedule and when will the project be constructed?

Bridge Type, Size and Location Study Complete and Alternative selected: May 2019
Preliminary Design of Selected Alternative: July 2019
Final Design: October 2020
Construction: Anticipated to start in 2021

How will King County maintain access during construction?

Access will be maintained throughout construction. The exact location of this temporary access is still being determined as part of the current study, but it will be in close proximity to the existing bridge.

How long will construction last?

Construction will be substantially complete in approximately 6 to 9 months. During that time, the detour will be in place, heavy equipment will be on site and construction activities such as concrete pours and crane lifts will occur. After 6 to 9 months, the new bridge will be open to the public, and the detour will be removed. Some finish work, such as planting and clean up, may remain at that time, but construction will be substantially complete.

How will you dispose of any contaminated materials when removing the existing bridge?

The existing bridge is supported by creosote treated timber piles, which are known as contaminated materials. The plan is to fully remove these piles. If full removal is not possible, the piles will be cut at a minimum of 2 feet below the mudline of the creek and capped with substrate suitable to support fish habitat requirements.

CONTACT US:

Brent Champaco,
Community Relations Planner
Brent.champaco@kingcounty.gov
206-477-9094

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