Tilikum Crossing, Bridge of the People, brings new connections and new options in 2015

Construction on the cable-stayed Tilikum Crossing continues in 2014. OHSU’s Schnitzer Campus rises at the upper left of the photo, while Portland Opera’s Hampton Center can be seen at the lower right.

A vital element of the Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail Project is a new bridge across the Willamette River. In Portland, the city of bridges, Tilikum Crossing, Bridge of the People, will be the first span built over the river since the addition of the Fremont Bridge in 1973. On the river’s west bank, this bridge begins at the property line between Oregon Health & Science University’s (OHSU) South Waterfront campus and Zidell Marine Corp. property, and then crosses the river to land on the east bank at the former SE Sherman Street right-of-way just north of Portland Opera and south of OMSI.

Tilikum Crossing will be distinctive in the United States, carrying light rail trains, buses, streetcars, bicyclists and pedestrians. The bridge will not accommodate private vehicles, although the structure will be designed to allow emergency responders to drive on to it if necessary.

Importantly, this bridge will also add capacity to the region’s overall transportation system by:

• Adding a second light rail connection between the eastside and downtown Portland

• Creating new access points to important destinations such as Portland State University, OHSU, the Central Eastside and OMSI

• Potentially moving bus lines that now use the Ross Island Bridge to the new bridge, thus reducing their travel time and operating costs

• Providing bike and pedestrian access to existing and planned greenways and bike routes on either side of the Willamette River

Tilikum Crossing connects the educational, job and recreational centers in Portland’s South Waterfront and Central Eastside districts.
In fact, project partners made the integration of bike and pedestrian facilities a priority. The original bridge plans called for two 12-foot bike and pedestrian paths, one on each side of the bridge deck. Discussions with the bicyclist and pedestrian communities led to an increase in path width to 14 feet, providing 28 feet of pedestrian and bike facilities, more than on any current Portland bridge.

Bridge details
- Year-of-expenditure budget: $134.6 million
- Tower height, from pier cap to top: 180 feet
- Total length: 1,720 feet (0.326 miles) between landside abutments
- Length of midspan between towers: 780 feet
- Typical width of span: 72.5 feet
- Maximum width at towers: 110.5 feet
- Width of multi-use paths: 14 feet each side
- Clearance height at 150-foot-wide center section between towers: 77.52 feet
- Maximum speed of buses or rail vehicles on bridge: 25 mph
- Design/Build Contractor: Kiewit Infrastructure West Co./T.Y. Lin

Bridge timeline
- Preliminary Engineering ...................... 2009–2010
- Final Design ..................................... 2011–2012
- Construction .................................. 2011–2014
- Light rail, bus and streetcar operator training ........................................ Spring 2015
- Bridge opens/service begins .................. 2015

Stay involved
View live bridge construction at trimet.org/pmbridgecams. Behind-the-scenes videos of construction are at trimet.org/pm/construction/bridgeview.

Sign up for project email updates at trimet.org/pm. For more information, please call TriMet Community Affairs at 503-962-2150.