



**Port of Cascade Locks  
Bridge of the Gods  
Status Report  
January 23rd, 2019**

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The Bridge of the Gods was built in 1926, and has been owned and operated by the Port of Cascade Locks since 1961. Approximately 1.5 million vehicles and \$35 million in goods cross the Bridge every year. Additionally, the Bridge provides important access across the river for local residents of Hood River, Skamania, Wasco and Klickitat Counties. Without this critical connection, there would be far less commerce, access and enjoyment of our incredibly beautiful and diverse region. The Port Commission continues to be committed to long term maintenance and preservation of the Bridge of the Gods.

- **Bridge Traffic:** Growth in the Columbia River Gorge continues to contribute to increasing traffic on the Bridge of the Gods. In 2018, the BOG had 1.56 million crossings, increasing from 1.44 million in 2017. 2018 also brought a record high of 7352 bicycle and pedestrian crossings, which increased from 3083 in 2017. In the month of August alone, 2375 pedestrians crossed the Bridge. This explosion of pedestrian use is a mix of Pacific Crest Trail hikers, and sightseers eager to experience the view or take pictures from the Bridge of the Gods. The heavy mix of vehicle and pedestrian traffic throughout the summer creates challenges on a narrow Bridge that was not originally designed for pedestrian use.
- **Automated Tolling Technology:** Breezeby tolling technology will be coming soon to the Bridge of the Gods. The Port of Cascade Locks has partnered with the Port of Hood River, and is developing a tolling system which will serve users for both the BOG and the Hood River Bridge. Current

Hood River Bridge users with transponders and Breezeby accounts will already be set up to use the BOG. Cash and credit cards will continue to be accepted at the Toll Booth, but discounted tolls from coupon books and local stickers will eventually be phased out. Eventually users will need to be set up with a transponder and Breezeby account to continue to get the discounted \$1 crossing. Infrastructure and hardware will be installed at the Toll Booth in February, and the Port hopes to have its system active by the end of March or early April. The new technology will help move traffic across the Bridge more efficiently and reduce wait times to cross the Bridge during peak traffic times.

- **Bike/PED Crossing:** Pedestrian safety and access has been an ongoing issue at the Bridge of the Gods. Last year, the Port was successful in being approved for grant funding through the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) for the planning and design phase to build a Bike/Pedestrian structure on the Bridge. However, due to Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations and specific restrictions and language regarding tolled facilities, the Port opted to withdraw its application. The future completion of the Historic Columbia River Highway State Bike Trail will add more recreational users in to the mix and provide more value to this important safety and access project. Currently, out of our bike/pedestrian users, bicyclists only account for about 10% of that group. Future completion of the Historic Bike Trail will likely change that and safety considerations for bicyclists will be even more important. The Port is actively seeking other funding alternatives for this project.
- **Pedestrian Striping Improvements:** Pedestrian wayfinding at the Oregon bridge approach and toll booth area has been an issue. Some of the issues included pedestrians crossing the roadway at blind spots, crossing the Bridge facing the wrong direction and spending too much time in the roadway. These and other behaviors were creating an increased risk for conflict or accident. The Port recently added pedestrian striping, improved signage and a crosswalk at the toll booth, all to route pedestrians to more ideal locations and improve overall safety. The Port also plans to make similar improvements on the Washington side of the Bridge as well.

- **Washington Approach Bridge Deck Rehab:** Wheel ruts, delamination and pot holes are appearing on the concrete Bridge deck on the Washington side of the Bridge. Recent core drilling tests have revealed high levels of chloride in the concrete, concentrated mostly in the southbound lane. During winter weather, WSDOT currently uses salt to treat SR 14 and other roadways and it appears some of that is being tracked onto the Bridge and may be contributing to some of the breakdown and delamination seen. A deck rehab project is planned this Spring to address this issue and make the appropriate repairs.
- **15 Year Maintenance and Preservation Plan:** On January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019 the Port Commission adopted its newly revised version of the 15 year maintenance plan. The Port developed its first long term Bridge maintenance plan in 2014 and this plan is revised annually. The plan outlines all of the important maintenance projects and associated costs needed to properly maintain and preserve the Bridge of the Gods. The 15 Year Maintenance Plan can be found on the Port of Cascade Locks website.



Bridge of the Gods – Prior to construction of Bonneville Dam

**If you have questions, please call the Port at 541-374-2418 or 541-374-2401**