AGENDA ITEM FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING (X) Discussion only
( ) Action

FROM (DEPT/ DIVISION): Community Development Department

SUBJECT: BUILD Grant for Umatilla River Bridge

Background: Umatilla County, in coordination with the City of Hermiston and City of Umatilla, has applied for a BUILD planning grant for a new bridge crossing and roadway connection across the Umatilla River near Hermiston. The Board authorized the application at the February 18, 2026 Board Meeting. If awarded, the planning grant will design a comprehensive surface transportation plan including preliminary engineering up to 30% project readiness, environmental permitting, community outreach and a comprehensive benefit-cost analysis. The total planning project cost is estimated at $3,677,000. The grant requires a non-federal match of 20%. The total grant amount would be $2,941,600 and the County's 20% local match would be estimated at $735,400. It is anticipated that a significant portion of the match would be in-kind with the remainder coming from the Economic Development budget.	Requested Action: Discussion with staff was requested at the Board Meeting on February 18, 2026.

ATTACHMENTS: BUILD Project Budget and BUILD Project Description

Date: (2/27/26) Submitted By: Megan Davchevski, Planning Division Manager

**********For Internal Use Only**********

Checkoffs:

( ) Dept. Head (copy)
( ) Human Resources (copy)

( ) Fiscal
( ) Legal (copy)
( ) (Other - List:)

To be notified of Meeting:
Megan Davchevski, Robert Waldher

Needed at Meeting:

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Scheduled for meeting on March 5, 2026

Action taken:

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Follow-up:

DTOS59-26-RA-BUILD: Umatilla County, Oregon

Umatilla River Bridge Planning Project

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Umatilla County, in partnership with the City of Umatilla and the City of Hermiston, requests FY 2026 BUILD Planning Grant funding to advance the Umatilla River Bridge Planning Project. The project will complete the next phase of technical analysis and preliminary engineering necessary to advance planning and preliminary engineering for a new multimodal bridge crossing of the Umatilla River connecting Punkin Center Road to Powerline Road. The crossing will improve east–west connectivity between the City of Umatilla, the City of Hermiston, surrounding rural areas, and connections to U.S. 395 and I-84.

In 2022, the County, the City of Hermiston, and the City of Umatilla completed a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) that evaluated crossing locations' feasibility. This report identified the Punkin Center Road alignment as the preferred alternative due to improved traffic performance, reduced congestion on U.S. 395, stronger interstate connectivity, and compatibility with planned growth areas. However, additional technical development is required to advance the project toward construction readiness and future programming in state and federal funding cycles.

The planning effort will produce implementation-ready documentation, including 30 percent design, updated traffic forecasts, hydraulic modeling, environmental scoping, and a quantitative Benefit-Cost Analysis.

The Umatilla–Hermiston area serves as a regional economic and transportation hub in northeastern Oregon, with direct access to Interstate 84 and U.S. 395. The I-84 corridor carries a larger general transportation and freight load in comparison to the rest of the state, reflecting the concentration of agricultural production, food processing, warehousing, data center operations, and distribution activity in Umatilla County. Despite this regional economic role, the Umatilla River crossing network lacks redundancy. The area currently relies on a single primary river crossing to accommodate passenger vehicles, freight trucks, agricultural equipment, emergency responders, and tourism traffic.

This condition creates a major system vulnerability when periods of increased traffic usage, incidents, maintenance operations, or weather events affect the existing crossing, causing users to utilize alternative routes, increasing travel time, delay, and operational complexity. The proposed planning effort directly addresses this vulnerability by advancing analysis for a second crossing that strengthens system redundancy and reliability.

Freight reliability is a central component of project need. Umatilla County supports major agricultural production, food processing, cold storage, and distribution facilities that depend on reliable connections to I-84 and national markets. The absence of a redundant river crossing constrains routing flexibility and increases vulnerability to delay, affecting supply chain performance and time-sensitive goods movement.

Emergency response access further underscores project need. Fire, EMS, and law enforcement providers rely on predictable river crossings to serve residents and employment centers on both sides of the corridor. When rail activity, congestion, or incidents restrict movement near the existing crossing, response routes may lengthen or require detours, affecting time-sensitive service delivery. FHWA rural safety analysis highlights the importance of network connectivity and route options in reducing emergency response vulnerability in non-urban areas.

Population and employment growth trends in the Hermiston–Umatilla area reinforce the urgency of proactive planning. The region has experienced sustained growth associated with industrial development, logistics activity, and technology-sector investment. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) corridor planning recognizes that growth in freight-intensive regions places increasing demand on limited network assets, particularly bridges and interchange connections. Without additional crossing capacity, demand will continue to concentrate on a single facility, increasing congestion exposure and long-term maintenance stress.

SCOPE OF WORK

The BUILD Planning Grant will fund a coordinated package of technical, environmental, and community engagement activities necessary to advance the preferred Punkin Center Road alignment toward implementation readiness. Building on the 2022 PER examining potential river crossings, this effort will refine technical assumptions, reduce project risk, and position the project for future funding.

The planning phase will begin with updated base year (2025) and horizon year (2040) traffic forecasts to validate travel demand, freight volumes, agricultural movements, tourism-related traffic, and corridor capacity using current ODOT data and regional growth projections. This analysis will refresh assumptions used in the PER and ensure that mobility, safety, and economic modeling reflect recent development trends and anticipated population and employment growth in the Umatilla–Hermiston area.

Updated planning-level cost estimates will be developed in 2026 dollars and disaggregated based on identified construction components, including the new bridge structure, expansions of intersections along U.S. 395, Umatilla River Road, Powerline Road, and Punkin Center Road, and the roadway corridor.

Land use compatibility and right-of-way validation will be conducted through a GIS-based corridor assessment that confirms zoning consistency, urban growth boundary considerations, parcel ownership, and environmental constraints.

Environmental and regulatory readiness will be advanced through further study analysis, including wetland delineation, stream functionality assessment, fish salvage planning, stormwater management, ODOT noise analysis, and biological assessment. This project will also advance necessary permitting planning at the state and federal level.

The planning effort will advance the preferred alternative at Punkin Center Road to approximately 30 percent design, refining bridge alignment, structure type, approach geometry, intersections, utilities, and multimodal accommodations. Advancing design to this level will significantly improve cost accuracy, confirm constructability, and identify potential conflicts early. Complementing this work, detailed hydraulic modeling and floodplain analysis will evaluate flood conveyance, water surface elevations, and structural performance during high-flow events, supporting future FEMA coordination and long-term infrastructure resilience.

Comprehensive stakeholder engagement and community outreach will be integrated throughout all phases of the planning effort. Umatilla County, in coordination with the Cities of Umatilla and Hermiston, will implement a structured engagement strategy that includes public meetings, stakeholder briefings, coordination with emergency service providers, agricultural and freight operators, tribal governments, regional employers, tourism representatives, and state and federal agencies. Engagement will occur at key decision points to inform alternatives refinement, environmental considerations, and design development. Feedback will be documented and incorporated into technical memoranda and future NEPA documentation, ensuring transparency and alignment with community priorities. This collaborative process strengthens partnership outcomes and supports smoother transition into implementation.

Finally, the project team will prepare a comprehensive quantitative Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) consistent with USDOT guidance, incorporating updated safety, mobility, freight reliability, resilience, and economic data derived from the planning process. The BCA will provide a defensible economic framework for a future construction application and demonstrate alignment with BUILD program merit criteria.

CURRENT DESIGN LEVEL

The project is based on a 2022 Preliminary Engineering Report that evaluated the need for an alternative crossing of the Umatilla River and identified potential crossing locations, including the preferred alternative at Punkin Center Road. The current design level is conceptual.

The proposed BUILD Planning Grant will advance the preferred alternative to approximately 30 percent design. This level of development will define alignment, structure type, approach

geometry, multimodal accommodations, environmental readiness documentation, and community engagement. No final design or construction drawings are currently complete.

PROJECT LOCATION

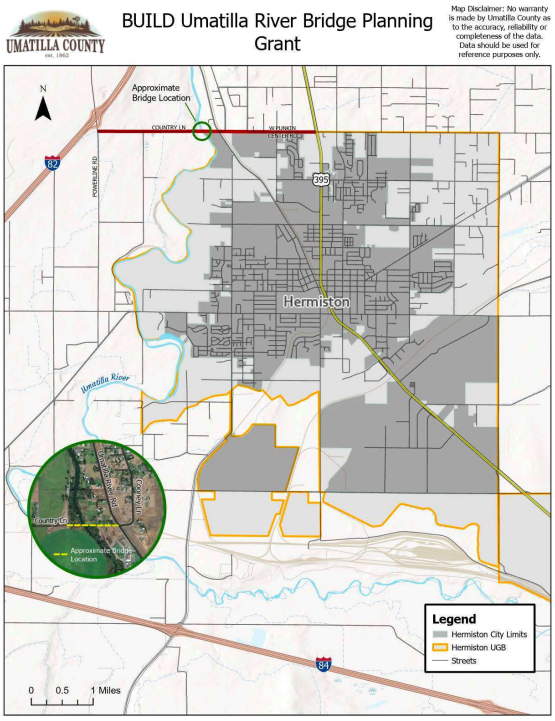

Figure 1: Project Location Map

The planning project would conduct further analysis of an area adjacent to the northern-western boundary of the City of Hermiston. The preferred alternative would connect the western part of Punkin Center Road and Country Lane via a bridge over the Umatilla River. The corridor serves passenger vehicles, freight traffic, agricultural equipment, emergency responders, and visitors. The project lies outside a metropolitan planning organization boundary and supports both rural and regional travel patterns. The map below demonstrates the project area and proposed bridge crossing:

TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES

The Umatilla River Bridge Planning Project responds to documented transportation safety and mobility challenges that affect every day travel and regional connectivity in Umatilla County. According to Oregon Department of Transportation crash data viewer dashboard, the Cities of Umatilla and Hermiston have experienced 327 total crashes in the ten-year period between 2015 and 2024, including 20 severe injuries and 262 total injuries. These figures reflect not only statewide crash reporting trends but also the reality that even rural counties with lower population densities experience significant crash volumes with serious injuries and fatalities.

The existing transportation network serving the Hermiston–Umatilla area relies largely on a single primary river crossing to facilitate east–west travel for passenger vehicles, commercial freight, agricultural machinery, and visitor traffic. This concentration of demand on one crossing elevates crash risk when traffic diverts to alternate local routes due to congestion, construction, or temporary closures, exposing road users to unfamiliar conditions and greater potential for serious collisions. The county's overall crash totals, including multiple injury outcomes, demonstrate the need for improved network design that distributes traffic safely. This is especially pertinent given the projected economic and population growth in the region in the coming decades.

In addition to general crash exposure, the mixed nature of travel in this corridor, which includes local commuting, long-distance travel to employment centers, agricultural movements, and tourism traffic accessing regional destinations, creates operational complexity that magnifies

safety risk. Umatilla County is a regional hub with a population of more than 80,000 that serves both local residents and visitors drawn to outdoor recreation and cultural activities, and traffic data reflect steady usage of regional facilities that connect to broader state and interstate networks. Without an additional crossing, long detours over secondary routes increase miles traveled and time on roads not designed for high volumes of transient or mixed-vehicle traffic, raising the likelihood of crash exposure.

The lack of redundancy in the river crossing network also affects mobility and emergency response. When traffic is constrained at the existing crossing due to temporary incidents or maintenance, travel delays increase substantially, and households, employers, and services on either side of the river experience reduced connectivity. In time-sensitive situations, longer travel routes can delay emergency response vehicles, compounding risk for injury and public safety outcomes. Providing a second crossing improves emergency access flexibility and helps to distribute traffic volumes more evenly across the road system, enhancing safety for all users.

Moreover, the project supports quality of life and economic competitiveness by improving predictability and reliability of travel between communities and major destinations. Reducing the need for indirect reroutes on county roadways will decrease exposure to high-crash environments and improve access to jobs, health services, education, and tourism assets. The comprehensive planning process funded by this BUILD grant will prioritize safety improvements informed by the county's crash history, integrating design strategies that respond to actual crash patterns and align with best practices for rural safety enhancement.

By strengthening network connectivity and reducing concentrated risk at a single crossing location, the Umatilla River Bridge Planning Project directly advances USDOT priorities related to safety, mobility and community connectivity, economic competitiveness, state of good repair, and resilience.

PROJECT HISTORY AND BROADER TRANSPORTATION CONTEXT

Regional partners initiated evaluation of a new crossing through the 2022 Preliminary Engineering Report. Continued economic growth, freight activity, and development in the Umatilla–Hermiston area has reinforced the need to advance the preferred alignment toward implementation readiness.

The project aligns with:

- Ongoing Transportation System Plan updates
- Oregon Transportation Plan resilience and safety priorities
- ODOT corridor and interchange coordination efforts
- Regional economic development strategies
- Ongoing development of the Umatilla County Comprehensive Safety Action Plan

By advancing the project to 30 percent design with updated technical documentation, Umatilla County will significantly reduce implementation risk and position the project for competitive construction funding.

DTOS59-26-RA-BUILD: Umatilla County, Oregon

Umatilla River Bridge Planning Project

PROJECT BUDGET

Umatilla County, in conjunction with the Cities of Hermiston and Umatilla, is requesting planning funding through the FY2026 BUILD program to undertake the *"Umatilla River Bridge Planning Project."* This rural project will advance the next phases of planning and preliminary engineering for a new multimodal bridge crossing over the Umatilla River, connecting Punkin Center Road and Powerline Road. The proposed crossing will enhance east–west connectivity between the City of Umatilla, the City of Hermiston, surrounding rural communities, and key regional routes, including U.S. 395, Interstate 82, and Interstate 84.

The total project cost is **$3,677,000** with **$2,941,600 in BUILD funding (80%)** and a voluntary **$735,400** non-Federal match (20%) provided by Umatilla County. Of the non-Federal match, $100,000 will be provided as in-kind contributions, including County staff time for community engagement, intergovernmental coordination, and grant administration. The remaining $635,400 will be provided through County-controlled funds.

Umatilla County's match contribution is included in the project budget in Tables 1 and 2, and committed through the attached resolution which passed the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners on February 18th. This project is entirely located within a rural community, so there is no required local cost share. However, as confirmed in the resolution, the County will contribute 20% in matching funds for the project.

No other Federal funds are included in this budget. All requested funds will be used exclusively for eligible planning activities. No construction, right-of-way acquisition, or final design activities are included.

TABLE 1: Project Component Source Breakdown

Funding Source	Project Component 1 – Traffic Analysis and Community Engagement	Project Component 2 – Preliminary Engineering and Design	Project Component 3 – Benefit-Cost Evaluation	Total Funding
BUILD Funds	$130,000	$2,511,600	$300,000	**$2,941,600**
Other Federal Funds	$0	$0	$0	**$0**
Non-Federal Funds	$222,000	$363,400	$150,000	**$735,400**
Total Project Cost	**$352,000**	**$2,875,000**	**$450,000**	**$3,677,000**

TABLE 2: Cost Classification Table

Cost Classification	BUILD Funds	Other Federal Funds	Non-Federal Funds	Total Project Costs
Project Management & Community Engagement	$100,000	$0	$222,000	**$322,000**
Preliminary Engineering and Design (Roadway Design, Traffic Design, Utilities, Bridge/Structure Design)	$1,950,000	$0	$0	**$1,950,000**
Technical Analysis (Traffic and Growth Updates, Environmental & Regulatory Update, PS&E)	$591,600	$0	$363,400	**$955,000**
I-84 Interchange Area Management Plan Coordination & Integration	$300,000	$0	$0	**$300,000**
Benefit-Cost Analysis	$0	$0	$150,000	**$150,000**
Total Funding	**$2,941,600**	**$0**	**$735,400**	**$3,677,000**

TABLE 3: 2020 Census Tract Project Cost Breakdown

2020 Census Tract(s)	Project Cost per Census Tract
41059950900	$275,755
41059951000	$3,401,245
	Total Project Cost: $3,677,000

TABLE 4: USDOT Urban and Rural Designations

Urban and Rural	Project Costs
Rural (Located outside of a 2020 Census-designated urban area with a population greater than 200,000)	$3,677,000
Urban (2020 Census-designated urban areas with a population greater than 200,000)	$0
	Total Project Cost: $3,677,000

PROJECT COMPONENTS

Component 1: Traffic Analysis and Community Engagement – $352,000

The Traffic Analysis and Community Engagement component establishes the technical and community-informed foundation needed to advance the preferred Punkin Center Road alignment toward implementation readiness. Engineering contractor project management, budgeted at $50,000, will coordinate technical tasks, maintain schedule and quality control, and integrate modeling and engagement findings into the overall planning framework. Traffic and growth analysis updates, budgeted at $30,000, will refresh base and horizon year forecasts using current Oregon Department of Transportation data, recent Transportation System Plan updates, and local development trends, updating assumptions from the 2022 Preliminary Engineering Report and

evaluating passenger, freight, and tourism travel demand to inform corridor modeling and future Benefit-Cost Analysis inputs.

Land use and right-of-way validation, budgeted at $12,000, will use ArcGIS Pro to analyze zoning, parcel ownership, and corridor constraints, develop custom datasets, conduct quality control, and publish hosted feature layers and interactive web maps to support planning and environmental readiness. Grant administration by the Umatilla County team, budgeted at $10,000, will ensure BUILD compliance through financial tracking, reporting, reimbursement coordination, and intergovernmental communication.

Stakeholder engagement budgeted at $250,000 for both County and Engineering personnel, will support structured outreach including public meetings and coordination with emergency providers, agricultural and freight operators, tribal governments, regional employers, tourism representatives, and state partners. Input gathered through this process will inform modeling assumptions, alignment refinement, and environmental documentation, strengthening project readiness and regional collaboration.

Component 2: Preliminary Engineering and Design – $2,875,000

Component 2 advances the preferred Punkin Center Road alignment through detailed preliminary engineering and design activities necessary to position the project for environmental clearance and future construction funding. This work will refine technical assumptions, reduce implementation risk, and substantially improve cost accuracy and constructability confidence.

Utilities considerations, budgeted at $50,000, will identify existing utility conflicts and coordination needs to inform alignment refinement and relocation planning. Geotechnical services, budgeted at $200,000, will include subsurface investigations and soil analysis to support foundation design and structural feasibility. Roadway design, budgeted at $800,000, and bridge and structure design, budgeted at $900,000, will advance horizontal and vertical alignment, intersection configurations, structural type selection, and multimodal accommodations. Traffic design, budgeted at $200,000, will address signalization, signing, striping, and operational treatments.

Plan, specification, and estimate (PS&E) development, budgeted at $50,000, will further refine cost estimates and technical documentation. Environmental services, budgeted at $250,000, along with stormwater considerations at $275,000 and cultural resources and archaeology at $150,000, will support regulatory coordination, resource identification, and environmental documentation readiness.

Collectively, these activities advance the project toward implementation-level definition while minimizing downstream redesign, permitting delays, and cost escalation.

Component 3: Benefit-Cost Evaluation & IAMP Integration – $450,000

Component 3 converts the project's engineering and traffic analysis into a defensible economic framework while ensuring coordination with regional interchange planning.

Benefit-Cost Evaluation development, budgeted at $150,000, will produce a quantitative analysis consistent with USDOT guidance, incorporating updated safety, mobility, freight, and resilience data to support future construction funding applications. IAMP coordination and integration, budgeted at $300,000, will align project assumptions with ODOT's Interchange Area Management Plan to ensure compatibility with corridor access management, traffic operations, and long-term system planning.

SOURCES, USES, AND AVAILABILITY

This project will be funded through a $2,941,600 request for BUILD funds, representing 80 percent of the total project cost, and a $735,400 non-Federal match (20 percent) provided by Umatilla County. The County's contribution includes $100,000 in in-kind support for staffing and community outreach activities and $635,400 in direct County funds. No other Federal funding sources are included in the project budget.

Funds will be used for the activities outlined above, which are eligible planning activities consistent with BUILD requirements and USDOT priorities. No construction, right-of-way acquisition, or final engineering is included.

Matching County funds will be available once the project is awarded. On February 18, 2026, the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution committing local matching funds. Per this resolution, these funds will be available for the duration of the period of performance and not encumbered in any way that may preclude their use. This resolution has been attached to the application package.

CONTINGENCY AMOUNT AND PLAN

As Umatilla County is requesting BUILD funding only for planning activities, no additional budget line has been requested for contingency funds. County leaders will practice effective cost control through real-time budget tracking and regular audits of expended funds. However, the County will use internal mechanisms to cover unanticipated costs, if they arise.

LEVEL OF DESIGN

In 2022, the County, in conjunction with the Cities of Hermiston and Umatilla, published a Preliminary Engineering Report that outlined alternative crossing options, including the Punkin Center Road preferred alternative. That being said, as this application is for planning only, no comprehensive design or engineering has been completed.

COST ESTIMATES

Estimated costs for this planning application were completed in early 2026 by County and City officials, as well as a contracted engineering consultant.

COST SHARE

The Umatilla River Bridge Planning Project is entirely located in a USDOT-designated rural area, so has no required local cost-share. To demonstrate the County's commitment to the completion of this project, a voluntary cost-match of $735,400 equaling 20% of the total project cost will be provided upon award.