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Multnomah County Bicycle and Pedestrian Citizen Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 13, 2016

Board Room, Multnomah Building, 501 SE Hawthorne Blvd

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Laura Becker (A)
Jim Couch
Michael Dehner
Art Graves
Andrew Holtz
Talia Jacobson
Greg Olson
Tyson Poskochil
Rory Renfro
John Russell (A)
Chad Tucker
Susan Watt

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Martha Berndt
Carolyn Briggs
Ryan Farncomb
Jessica Ghiglieri (A)

STAFF: Kate McQuillan (Transportation Planner), Megan Neill (Bridges Operations Manager), Jon Henrichsen (Bridges Division Manager), Jessica Berry (Transportation Planner)

GUESTS: Rithy Khut, Joel Huffman, Michael Pyszka

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm. There was a quorum of members present.

2. Approve December 2015 Meeting Minutes

BPCAC members pointed out two typos – one on page 2 and one on page 4 – to the December 2015 meeting minutes. Kate also shared a proposed edit from Megan Neil in the Bridges Section correcting a statement that the County has never completed a bicycle and pedestrian study of multiple Willamette River Bridges. In fact, the County completed the Willamette River Bridges Accessibility Study in 1994.

MOTION: Andrew Holtz moved to approve the December 2015 meeting minutes with the proposed edits. Jim Couch seconded the motion.

APPROVAL: December 2015 meeting minutes were approved.

3. Public Comment

Rithy Khut, who serves on the Portland Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC), shared that the BAC recently reviewed the region's position on region's upcoming grant opportunity known as Regional Flexible Funds allocation. The Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT), the regional group of elected officials and community members who make recommends to Metro Council on regional transportation issues, recently voted to remove the funding allocation split of 75% to active transportation and 25% to freight developed in previous regional funding rounds.

4. Staff Report

Kate first thanked the four BPCAC members who volunteered to serve on the new to-be-named Willamette River bridges subcommittee. County staff is still working on soliciting participating from the City of Portland's modal committees, as well as the Bicycle Transportation Alliance and Oregon Walks. Staff expects the first meeting for this subcommittee will be held in late February.

This year the County has funds to send two BPCAC members to the first day of the Oregon Active Transportation Summit which will be held on Monday, March 14th 2016 in downtown Portland. Kate asked interested members to email her on a first come, first serve basis with priority given to those who have not yet attended a conference paid by the County and those whose employers would not pay for their registration fees.

Lastly, Kate shared that the May 2016 BPCAC meeting will likely be held off site since the Board Room is reserved for County budget hearings. Kate is open to ideas on where to hold the meeting as this is a fun opportunity for the Committee to see other areas of the County.

5. Chair Report

Chad proposed that each BPCAC meeting have a volunteer time keeper to help keep the agenda flowing. Particularly since recent agendas have been so full with important updates. For this meeting, Talia volunteer to be the role of timekeeper.

6. Burnside Bridge Bicycle and Pedestrian Detour for Upcoming Construction

Megan Neill, the Bridge Services Manager for Multnomah County, introduced Steve Drhota, the project manager for the Burnside Bridge Maintenance Project from the County's consultant team from HDR, Inc. Steve shared that the Burnside Bridge Maintenance Project is a \$24 million project that is currently at 30% design with a suite of proposed improvements to maintain the life of the bridge for the next twenty years (essentially until the bridge is completely rehabilitated or replaced).

During construction, the project team is proposing two phases of construction – one for the north side of the bridge deck, and one for the south side of the bridge deck. Each phase will include a shared 7-foot sidewalk and bike lane, two 11-foot travel lanes and a shared 7-foot pedestrian and bike path. The project team will also try to get approval from ODOT for a 25-mph posted speed. The project team expects the deck replacement to take approximately 18-months and may have intermittent full closures on evenings or weekends to help expedite the work.

Questions and comments from the BPCAC include:

- Generally speaking, 7-feet is not sufficient width for two-way bicycle traffic
- Propose placing a concrete barrier between the inner-most travel lane and the shared pedestrian and bicycle path
- Can bollards be placed between the shared sidewalk and the outer-most travel lane? Bollards would require additional shy distance, effectively narrowing the use of the sidewalk. The existing curbs may be sufficient in being a barrier between the sidewalk and travel lane
- A thoughtful transition from the construction zone to the street network is needed so that motorists can clearly expect as they merge back to the existing street grid. One member suggested extending the temporary travel lanes beyond the construction zone to keep the pedestrians and bicyclists in the inner shared path safe.
- Please don't place any construction or detour signage in the bicycle lane or sidewalk
- Are there TriMet stops that will be impacted? Yes. Transit stops could be closed or moved depending on each individual stop. This will be coordinated with TriMet.
- Will County coordinate with TriMet during the potential weekend or week night closures? Yes, absolutely. Transit detours are fairly common with construction projects and the County has a good relationship with TriMet.
- One member is concerned about bicyclists and pedestrians sharing northbound sidewalk at the west end of the Bridge where there is currently a TriMet bus overlay area in addition to large crowds queuing for social services located at the west end of the bridge.
- ADA concerns require serious consideration in this construction staging, particularly with the high number of people with mobility limitations who use the west end of the bridge.
- Has project team considered closing the bridge to all motor vehicle traffic but allowing bicycle, pedestrian and transit traffic? No. The Board of County Commissioners must approve any bridge closures. In the past, the Board has not been too receptive to bridge closures.
- Has project team considered reducing the vehicle lanes to one-way depending on peak travel flow? The space on the bridge deck saved by consolidating the travel lane can be used to accommodate additional pedestrian space. This option would require a much more complex traffic control plan as well as detour planning with TriMet.
- Will lighting on the bridge be impacted? Generally the bridge doesn't have much lighting to begin with. The temporary shared bike/ped path in the center of the bridge will likely have less lighting than normal. The BPCAC requested the County look into temporary lighting for the temporary shared bike/ped path.

- Will there be any weight or vehicle restrictions during the construction phase? The project team does not expect any.
- Is the County planning to remove the storm grates from the existing bike lanes on the bridge? No. The storm drains are already there. For the temporary construction staging, the temporary shared bike/ped path will not have these as it will be located in an existing travel lane.

For next steps, Megan suggested that the project team return to the BPCAC for updates at major milestones. In the future, such detailed construction phasing plans would be discussed at the newly-formed Willamette River Bridges subcommittee.

7. Follow up to Bicycle / Pedestrian Feasibility Study

As a follow-up to last month's agenda item on the Bicycle/Pedestrian Feasibility Study for four of the Willamette River bridges, Jon Henrichsen (Bridges Manager for the County) presented a history and overview of County's Bridges Section. A highlight of the presentation include the Burnside Bridge being selected in the 1990's by the region as the metro area's lifeline bridge during an emergency and is thus is a focus for future improvements. John also highlighted the recently adopted Willamette River Bridges Capital Improvement Plan which has prioritized the Burnside Bridge Maintenance Project, the Burnside Bridge Feasibility Study, the Broadway Bridge Rall Wheel Replacement, the Morrison Bridge Repainting Project and the Morrison Bridge Deck Replacement project as the near-term priorities. Another priority in the adopted plan is the Bicycle and Pedestrian Feasibility Study.

John shared the draft vision and goals for the feasibility study with the BPCAC for feedback. Jon also shared a proposed budget of \$500,000 with an \$100,000 ask from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Fund, a \$100,000 ask from the Board of County Commissioners, and a \$300,000 ask from the upcoming Oregon Transportation and Growth Management (TGM) grant program.

Questions and comments from the BPCAC for Jon and/or the Feasibility Study:

- In the vision and goals, include how people will access the Willamette River Bridges on either side of the river. It will be critical to partner with PBOT and possibly include an "influence area" for the study that takes into account the nearby city street grid to highlight this access issue.
- How much did the 1994 Willamette River Bridges Accessibility Study cost? Unknown.
- How does the County select consultants for such a project? The County's Bridges staff are most familiar with selecting consultants for construction projects. Staff hasn't yet considered how to score proposals from consultants. The County can seek feedback from the newly-formed Willamette River bridges subcommittee on the proposal selection process.
- It is important to use the equity lens to consider the impacts to the surrounding neighborhoods and how users access the bridge.
- How long will this study take? Staff's first draft of the scope has the study lasting for 6-8 months.

Kate then shared financial information requested by the BPCAC about the Bicycle and Pedestrian Fund. Included in this information is (a) a list of expenditures from the fund dating back to fiscal year (FY) 2008, and (b) forecasting the fund amount based on future commitments including a scenario where \$100,000 is committed in FY 2017 for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Feasibility Study. Staff clarified that if the BPCAC votes to commit the \$100,000 from the Bike/Ped Fund but the County does not receive all funds needed to complete the study, then the Bike/Ped Funds will not be used.

MOTION: Susan Watt made a motion to approve committing \$100,000 of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Fund to the Willamette River Bridges Bicycle and Pedestrian Feasibility Study. Jim Couch seconded the motion.

APPROVAL: Motion approved. (One “no” vote from Tyson Poskochil.)

Follow-up comments from the BPCAC:

- Several members felt the \$100,000 was a good investment from the Bike/Ped fund
- Please ensure that partner agencies like ODOT, Metro, TriMet, and modal groups like the Bicycle Transportation Alliance, Oregon Walks, and the Portland modal committees are involved in the plan.
- Please return to the BPCAC with updates at project milestones.

Staff Follow-up: Kate will send out a copy of John’s informative presentation including the spreadsheet of which projects from the 1994 Willamette River Bridges Feasibility Study have been implemented.

8. Multnomah County Draft Transportation System Plan Project List and Bicycle Map

Jessica Berry, Transportation Planner at the County, brought the draft Transportation System Plan Bike Map and Project List for an additional review. At the TSP Community Advisory Committee’s last meeting in December, members reiterated the need for both neighborhood groups and the BPCAC to review the draft Bike Map and project list one last time before staff completes the first draft TSP document.

Jessica shared with the BPCAC the definitions for the bicycle route classifications on the Bike Map, emphasizing that bikeways are generally separated from travel lanes, shared roadways are shared lanes, and that there is no-one-size-fits all approach for bikeway design. The BPCAC had no additional comments or amendments for the definitions.

With regards to the draft Bike Map, Jessica also briefly updated the BPCAC on concerns raised by neighborhood community groups. Generally speaking, residents in Corbett and East Multnomah County are concerned about lines drawn on a bicycle map on unsafe or very residential roads that may encourage cyclists to use them more frequently. Also generally speaking, residents in the West Hills indicated that context sensitive improvements to NW

Skyline Boulevard are their priority, as is using signage to promote alternative routes to NW Cornelius Pass Road.

Questions and comments raised by the BPCAC include:

- The BPCAC is concerned that signage indicating alternative routes for cyclists (for NW Cornelius Pass Road or any other road) would create confusion with motorists that if an alternative route is available then bikes are prohibited from using the main road which is not true.
- Signing that encourages alternate routes may also encourage a false sense of safety for cyclists who use the alternate routes.
- Generally speaking, BPCAC members feel there may be some misunderstanding about what these bicycle routes mean. BPCAC members would like greater emphasis that bicyclists are legally allowed on any County road; and that a bicycle designation on the County's Bike Map does not mean the County (or anyone else) encourages bicyclists to use these routes.
- While some members initially felt uncomfortable about designating NW Cornelius Pass Road as a bikeway, the BPCAC generally feels it's important to keep the designation for NW Cornelius Pass Road for the purposes of long-range planning. With the future of NW Cornelius Pass Road unknown, a bikeway designation in the long-term will help ensure multi-modal improvements are considered when the time comes. The BPCAC agreed that the associated project to improve bicycle facilities on NW Cornelius Pass Road can be a very low priority.
- Greg specifically mentioned that upgrading Larch Mountain Road from Historic Columbia River Highway all the way to the logging gate to a bikeway and an associated project of context sensitive shoulder widening be a top priority.
- The BPCAC agreed that Evans Road can be 'downgraded' to a shared roadway.

Staff Follow-up: Kate will forward the meeting details for the upcoming open house in Corbett to further discuss the TSP draft bike map and project list with neighbors.

Meeting Adjourned

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28pm.

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Meeting minutes written and submitted by:

Kate McQuillan, Transportation Planner and BPCAC Staff Liaison

The next BPCAC meeting is scheduled for: Wednesday, February 10, 2016 from 6:30-8:30pm, at the Multnomah Building.