



Multnomah County is creating an earthquake-ready downtown river crossing.

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OCTOBER 26, 2020

# Community Task Force (CTF) Meeting #18

## Meeting information

**Project:** Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge

**Subject:** CTF, Meeting #18

**Date:** Monday, October 26, 2020

**Time:** 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

**Location:** WebEx Video Conference Call and livestream

### Attendees:

#### CTF Members:

Amy Rathfelder, Portland Business Alliance  
Art Graves, MultCo Bike and Pedestrian Citizen Advisory Committee  
Ed Wortman, Community Member  
Frederick Cooper, Laurelhurst Neighborhood Emergency Team and Laurelhurst Neighborhood Association  
Gabe Rahe, Burnside Skate Park  
Howie Bierbaum, Portland Saturday Market  
Jackie Tate, Community Member  
Jane Gordon, University of Oregon  
Jennifer Stein, Central City Concern  
Marie Dodds, AAA of Oregon  
Paul Leitman, Oregon Walks  
Peter Englander, Old Town Community Association  
Peter Finley Fry, Central Eastside Industrial Council  
Sharon Wood Wortman, Community Member  
Stella Funk Butler, Coalition of Gresham  
Susan Lindsay, Buckman Community Association  
Tesia Eisenberg, Mercy Corps  
William Burgel, Portland Freight Committee

#### Project Team Members:

Megan Neill, Multnomah County  
Mike Pullen, Multnomah County  
Heather Catron, HDR  
Cassie Davis, HDR  
Steve Drahota, HDR  
Liz Stoppelmann, HDR  
Michael Fitzpatrick, HDR  
Jeff Heilman, Parametrix  
Allison Brown, JLA  
Sarah Omlor, EnviroIssues  
Patrick Sweeney, PBOT

**Apologies:** Timothy Desper, Neil Jensen





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## Summary Notes

This online virtual meeting was held over WebEx and livestreamed to the public via Vbrick. 10 public attendees logged in to view the livestream. A recording of this meeting is available on the [Committee Meeting Materials](#) page on the project website.

This summary includes the nature and dialogue of the meeting, including questions and comments submitted by CTF members through the WebEx chat function.

### WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND HOUSEKEEPING

Allison Brown, JLA, welcomed everyone to the meeting, went over the virtual meeting protocols and took roll call. New CTF member, Amy Rathfelder, Director of Government Affairs for the Portland Business Alliance, introduced herself and noted that she would be replacing Kiley Wilson on the CTF. Amy's background is in policy development and electoral politics.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

In advance of the meeting, the public was invited to submit comments to the CTF. No comments were received.

### PROJECT UPDATE

Heather Catron, HDR, shared an update on the project's recent meetings and the EIS process. She announced that the Policy Group approved the recommended Preferred Alternative (PA) and she praised Susan Lindsay for representing the CTF at the Policy Group meeting. The recommended PA was also expected to be adopted by the Board of County Commissioners later that week. Heather said that the Urban Design and Aesthetics as well as the Bridge and Seismic Working Groups have met since the last CTF meeting. Working Groups are made up of subject matter experts and will be providing technical information to help inform the CTF's recommended bridge type and evaluation criteria.

The project team is also continuing to advance the federal permitting process which is also tied to permitting work at the city level. The project team is continuing to coordinate with the City of Portland on that process. The draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is on track to be published in January.

Steve Drahota, HDR, provided an update about what the Urban Design & Aesthetics Working Group (UDAWG) and Bridge & Seismic Working Group are exploring. The UDAWG is thinking about how to answer questions regarding visuals that will impact the CTF's recommended bridge type. This group is comprised of urban designers, bridge architects and other design-conscious individuals who are walking through a process to help inform the CTF on the attributes and characteristics of various bridge types. They are considering the spirit and character of Portland along with the type of bridge elements the CTF should be considering. The Bridge & Seismic group is considering similar bridge elements from a much more technical standpoint.



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CTF members who attended working group meetings shared their takeaways:

- Ed Wortman, community member, shared that he attended both working group meetings and was impressed with the size and expertise of the groups. He noted that there were representatives from many national engineering firms at the Bridge and Seismic Working Group. He looks forward to the information that they will be bringing to the CTF.
- Peter Finley Fry, Central Eastside Industrial Council, said he was struck by how thoughtful the conversation was. He shared that he had learned about the quality of the spaces under either side of the bridge and enjoyed the UDAWG's presentation about how different the surroundings around the east and west sides of the bridge are.
- William (Bill) Burgel, Portland Freight Committee, shared his surprise to learn that one of the bridge options is one million pounds lighter than others and that could be a major advantage during an earthquake.
- Peter Englander, Old Town Community Association, shared his interest in the UDAWG's idea that the bridge is technically made up of three separate bridges, the west side, east side, and the center lift span. This could allow for some asymmetry in structure and design. He also shared the idea that while the bridge design itself is important, the bridge also needs to blend in for other parts of the city to shine.

### SITE CONTEXT

Steve gave a presentation regarding the aspects of the project area that the bridge must be designed to accommodate. He began by giving an overview on the seismic performance criteria for the bridge. The technical team must design the bridge with the assumption that it will be the only functioning bridge within weeks or months following a major earthquake. The Burnside Bridge must sustain only minimal damage, be useable to all travel modes immediately after the earthquake, have its movable span operational within 1-2 months of the earthquake, and allow heavy material-hauling vehicles to cross. The amount and scale of debris and materials that will need to be hauled will be very large. Steve reiterated that the Long Span bridge only requires one set of supports in liquifiable soils on the east side. Construction of the new bridge will have a few right of way impacts as well as new ramp and stair access points on either side of the river. He also shared the idea that the bridge is really three separate pieces: the fixed west approach (~425 feet long), movable river span (~450 feet long), and the fixed east approach (~650 feet long). Steve reminded the group that the bridge's planned cross section is constrained by buildings on each side to 106 feet wide at both approaches. The plan is to make the bridge slightly wider over the river at 115 feet.

Steve showed a map of the surrounding sites and businesses around each section of the bridge and covered each site constraint that is driving design. They include the light rail on the west side, city facilities and sewer pipe easements, existing and future modes that cross the bridge, the I-5 and I-84 freeways, Union Pacific Railroad Mainline, and vertical clearance for river navigation. From west to east, other elements to be considered include:



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- Portland Rescue Mission – Impacting their operations would put many vulnerable populations at risk. Abutments have been adjusted to allow for the Rescue Mission’s continuous access throughout construction.
- TriMet Skidmore Fountain Station – The MAX line under the bridge will maintain operation throughout construction as much as possible, although there are expected to be short periods of shutdown.
- Naito Parkway – The clearance under the bridge will be maintained as much as possible for traffic on Naito Parkway. Lanes may need to be shifted during construction, but a corridor will be open for traffic throughout with minimal disruptions for demolition.
- Waterfront Park/Ankeny Plaza – The project team is hoping to minimize impacts to the park and park users as much as possible. The Ankeny Pump Station must maintain operations and access throughout construction. There are many facilities under Waterfront Park that correlate to the pump station.
- Japanese American Memorial Plaza – The UDAWG is considering bridge compatibility with this serene memorial. The memorial is designed to be experienced chronologically and the design team is exploring how it will be incorporated into the new bridge.
- Willamette River – There is a strong desire to reconnect to the river in a more meaningful way. Portland’s identity as a river city and the idea that it is located here because of the river has been mentioned many times.
- Views and activity on the bridge – The river extends underneath I-5 as well as the Burnside Bridge. Access to Eastbank Esplanade from the bridge is currently a set of stairs. There are ongoing discussions about how to design this connection point with the future bridge. The bridge itself is used for more than just vehicles. It has also served as a staging area for protests and public events like the Rose Parade.
- Ship navigation – Mariners have to consider all bridges as a whole when they travel up and down the Willamette and how each bridge’s lift span lines up. The design team will look at where the lift is located in conjunction with the other bridges, the curve in the river, and vertical clearance of the lift span. All of these factors dictate the height and width of the navigational clearance of the movable span.
- In-river pier protection - Protection systems for the bridge piers as river vessels travel past the bridge include “dolphins” or fenders. These structures must be considered within the river hydraulic analysis because anything you put in the river creates an impedance that can impact the water surface elevation.
- East bridgehead – This serves as a gateway to East Portland. Recent developments on the east side and how the area will continue to evolve will be taken into consideration.
- Eastbank Esplanade connection - There is currently an ~50-foot elevation difference between the Esplanade and the bridge surface. This connection opportunity and the various bridge types have an influence on each other.



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- Freeway & Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) crossing – The bridge serves as the only way to get over the railroad and freeway in this area. Considering how the bridge will interact with and allow users to cross over the freeway and railroad corridors safely will be a unique challenge.
- Burnside Skatepark – Preserving this asset is one of the great aspects of this project. A longer steel girder span on the east portion of the bridge, approximately 350 feet long, is going to create some design opportunities around the Skatepark.
- East bridgehead/ Couch St S-curve – This is a complicated intersection that merges back into a single bridge. The various buildings, pedestrian movements, and area residents all must be taken into account for the overall design process.

During and after Steve's presentation, CTF members asked the following questions:

- Frederick (Fred) Cooper, Laurelhurst Neighborhood Emergency Team and Laurelhurst Neighborhood Association, asked if the 106-foot width of the bridge on either approach is the same distance between the adjacent building lines.
  - Steve explained that there is 110 feet between the buildings, but the design team is including a 2-foot gap between the edge of the bridge and the buildings on each side.
- Fred also asked if the pier foundation work has to be limited to the shore sides of the piers to preserve the navigation channel clearance and if this constraint is only relevant to a bascule design.
  - Steve said the design team is studying the placement of the piers just to the east and west of the existing piers because there is a lot of risk associated with constructing the new piers in areas that have existing underground structure. This would also provide more horizontal clearance but could have some hydraulic consequences to the river. More work is currently being done to understand possible impacts on the river level due to the proposed new piers.
- Bill Burgel and Peter Englander asked if the 1-2-month period between the earthquake and having a working movable span had been discussed with river users and emergency responders.
  - Steve responded that yes, there have been discussions with river users, including a river survey from them. He also stated that no one really knows what the functionality of the river will be following the earthquake. Most expect that there will be blockage in the river from debris or a collapsed bridge. Emergency services have speculated that river navigation won't be feasible for up to 6 months following an earthquake. The project team ramped that estimate down to the current working assumption for the NEPA phase and there will be more clarity as the project moves into design. The bridge is being designed to be able to close if the earthquake happens while it's open but maintaining full movable operations immediately after the earthquake is much more difficult.



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- Bill asked if there has been any feedback from Portland Spirit on this issue.
- Steve confirmed Portland Spirit has been consulted. He said the main concern is the other bridges collapsing into the river and creating a blockage.

### INTERESTS ASSESSMENT

Heather explained that tonight's meeting would be the first step in an evaluation process for bridge type selection that is very similar to the process that the CTF went through to identify a recommended PA. Tonight's meeting will include breakout rooms for smaller group discussion on interests and values. The project team will translate the interests and values into criteria topics for the CTF's review. From there, measures will be developed with the working groups and brought back to the CTF to be able to apply the criteria to the range of bridge types. The CTF will weight the criteria which will be used to score the bridge types and help the CTF decide on a recommendation.

Heather also noted that CTF members were sent a document that included criteria that were discussed during the PA selection phase that seemed more applicable to design that they could refer to in the breakout rooms.

The discussion question for the interests assessment was: *What interests and values does our community feel strongly about that must be considered as we evaluate bridge types?*

### Breakout Groups

Allison explained that attendees would automatically be placed into virtual small groups for 20 minutes. She noted that the livestream would not capture the breakout groups but a speaker from each group would capture highlights of the discussion and share when the meeting reconvened.

### FULL GROUP REPORT OUTS

#### *Group #1*

The group included Marie Dodds, Ed Wortman, Sharon Wood Wortman, Peter Englander, and Jane Gordon.

Megan Neill, Multnomah County, shared the main points from the group's discussion on values and interests:

- The importance of honing in on the unique aspects to this project compared to other megaprojects, such as social services, existing historic resources, sustainability, etc.
- Making the bridge as accessible as possible for all types of uses.
- Contrast in communities between the quickly developing east side compared to the low-rise and more fragile west side.



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- How this bridge can help regenerate the culture or habitat destruction that has happened over the years. Consider how the project can enhance the community and/or buildings that have suffered from development.
- How the bridge can complement and enhance the city and serve as an asset.
- Documenting or preserving the unique history and character of the current bridge.

### *Group #2*

The group included Amy Rathfelder, Art Graves, Bill Burgel, and Peter Finley Fry.

Heather shared the main points from the group's discussion:

- Having a shared definition of 'iconic'; the bridge could be designed to stand out or designed to blend in with the city to allow for other landmarks to stand out.
- Value of views from the bridge and opportunity to enhance them for bridge users.
- Importance of connectivity for all users, not just vehicle traffic.
- How the bridge fits into Portland's culture and values.
- The bridge as a performance space, like the Rose Parade.
- The idea of three bridges in one versus one cohesive structure.

### *Group #3*

The group included Dennis Corwin, Fred Cooper, Susan Lindsay, Stella Funk Butler, and Tesia Eisenberg.

Mike Pullen, Multnomah County, and Jeff Heilman, Parametrix, shared the main points from the group's discussion:

- Reliability through an earthquake is the most important part.
- Salvaging parts of the bridge or taking inspiration from the historic bridge.
- Navigational clearance for Portland Spirit and other river users to have as few lifts as possible.
- Preference for a symmetrical bridge design.
- Minimizing the structural mass as much as possible above and below the deck.
- Importance of keeping the east-end views open and the superstructure as light as possible.
- Concern that the tradeoff of having a lower clearance under the bridge on the west side is not worth having more open views of the Portland sign if superstructure is minimized in that area.

Allison noted that many CTF members seemed to agree with the importance of having a resilient bridge.

### *Group #4*

The group included Gabe Rahe, Paul Leitman, Howie Bierbaum, and Jackie Tate.





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Steve Drahota and Cassie Davis, HDR, shared the main points from the group's discussion:

- Preference for a structure that is not visually obtrusive.
- The ability to see in all directions from the current bridge is important.
- The bridge's location means it's in a more cluttered area, not a wilderness landscape like the St. John's Bridge, and should therefore be a design consistent with the site context including the other bridges.
- The current bridge can feel unsafe because not many people use it. Prefer a bridge that can promote activity through belvederes, placemaking, gathering spaces below or underneath, etc.
- The bridge should have a smooth deck rather than an open deck like the Hawthorne Bridge that can feel unsafe.
- The idea of the bridge as a "passport" to downtown.
- Integration into the transportation network and existing urban environment.

### NEXT STEPS

Allison and Heather shared the schedule for upcoming CTF meetings and agenda topics.

- November 9: Criteria topics and menu of bridge types
- November 23: Evaluation criteria per topic and menu of bridge types refinement
- December 7: Measures per evaluation criteria and range of feasible bridge types
- December 21: Finalize criteria and measures and range of feasible bridge types

The December 21, 2020 meeting will be a major milestone. The criteria and range of feasible bridge types will be shared with the public and the Policy Group in early 2021.

Heather reminded the group that UDAWG meetings would be happening intermittently between the CTF meetings and the CTF is welcome to join.

- Jane Gordon, University of Oregon, asked if there were any highlights from the first UDAWG meeting.
  - Steve shared that the first few meetings included a discussion similar to what the CTF had just completed about how the bridge should perform and what it should say about the city. Working group members were asked to visit the bridge and share their experiences. Those experiences are being converted into themes that the CTF will be asked to consider. One example is the idea about whether the bridge should be designed to stand out or blend into the city and how that design would feel like as time goes on. At their next meeting, the UDAWG will consider a wide array of different bridge types and ideas.





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- Art Graves, MultCo Bike and Pedestrian Citizen Advisory Committee, wondered whether the UDAWG was thinking about having the bridge blend into the background versus cohesively fitting into the city. He shared that there seemed to be two schools of thought: wanting the structure to resonate as a new, modern bridge or wanting it to seem like it's always been there.

Heather committed to sharing the UDAWG meeting minutes with the CTF.

## ADJOURN

Allison closed out the meeting and reminded everyone that they have a busy two months of meetings but would have a break in January and February.

The next CTF meeting will be November 9, 2020.

## ACTION ITEMS

- **Action 1:** UDAWG meeting minutes to be shared with the CTF.