



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

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MARCH 1, 2021

Community Task Force (CTF) Meeting #24

Meeting Information

Project: Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge

Subject: CTF, Meeting #24

Date: Monday, March 01, 2021

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
Dennis Corwin, Portland Spirit
Ed Wortman, Community Member
Frederick "Fred" Cooper, Laurelhurst Neighborhood Emergency Team and Laurelhurst Neighborhood Association
Gabe Rahe, Burnside Skatepark
Howie Bierbaum, Portland Saturday Market
Jackie Tate, Community Member
Jane Gordon, University of Oregon
Marie Dodds, AAA of Oregon
Neil Jensen, Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce
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 Neighborhood Associations
Susan Lindsay, Buckman Community Association
Tesia Eisenberg, Mercy Corps
William "Bill" 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
Allison Brown, JLA
Sarah Omlor, EnviroIssues
Patrick Sweeney, PBOT

Apologies: Jennifer Stein





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Summary Notes

This online virtual meeting was held over WebEx and livestreamed to the public via Vbrick. Eight 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, reviewed the agenda and took roll call.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

PROJECT UPDATE

Allison reminded the CTF members that the 45-day comment period to comment on the Draft EIS would be open until March 22, 2021.

Megan Neill, Multnomah County, gave an update on the project's budget. She told the CTF that the County is currently working on the budget for fiscal year 2022 which requires them to look ahead at the costs for the next phase of the project. Since the Metro 2020 transportation ballot measure was not passed in the fall, the project is currently funded solely by Multnomah County. County leadership has asked the project to take a step back from advancing any major project decisions in order to look at the costs of the various options and compare them against what the County can reasonably fundraise. This is also the year that the County was planning to apply for the design phase loan and is considering whether it makes sense to get the full loan prior to fully understanding the landscape of construction funding down the line. Concurrently, the project is also continuing to explore federal funding opportunities, and since the new presidential administration has taken office, there is hope for new funding opportunities for capital projects like the Burnside Bridge project.

In order for the County to remain as fiscally responsible as possible, this could mean that certain design options will not be feasible due to cost. Megan told the CTF that the project team will not ask for their official recommendation on the bridge type range tonight as planned and would instead focus on the evaluation criteria. She assured the group that they would have a better understanding in the near future and would present an update to the CTF when there is more information.

- Jane Gordon, University of Oregon, asked how what the County feels it can afford will fit into decision making.



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- Megan said it could mean reducing the scope of the project while still meeting the project's purpose and need.
- Art Graves, Multnomah County Bike and Pedestrian Citizen Advisory Committee, asked what a reduction in scope would look like.
 - Megan responded that the County is currently studying what the most paired down version of a seismically resilient bridge would look like. This includes considering a reduction in the bridge's width or eliminating design options that are too expensive. The team is also looking into completing the project with a typical Design-Bid-Build method instead of the Construction Management General Contractor (CMGC) method, which could save some money. The project team is actively working to find other possibilities of scope reductions.
- Jane expressed surprise to hear this news and said if ultimately, the County can only afford one bridge, it feels like much of the CTF's work could be pointless.
 - Megan said the County is working to balance the work done to date, public input, and the options that are still on the table with what is affordable. She said that the project has so far operated in an unconstrained landscape where costs have been estimated but not refined. The County is committed to remaining fiscally responsible while designing a bridge that has a likelihood of being funded and constructed. The County does not want to have invested taxpayer funds into a project that ultimately isn't completed.
- Art asked who supersedes whom in design decisions, the CTF or the County?
 - Heather Catron, HDR, provided context on the situation saying that the County has been funding the work to date with the Vehicle Registration Fee but knew all along that this would only provide funding through the design phase and a portion of construction. Since the Metro transportation ballot measure, which included about \$150 million in funding for this project, didn't pass the County must now assess what can be reasonably financed. She assured the group that their decisions to date, like recommending the long span option, was still assumed as the recommended preferred alternative and has driven the bridge type options. At this point, the team is looking at which bridge type options are more expensive than others to get to a bridge that can be funded and constructed while still maintaining the core purpose of seismic resiliency. As far as final decisions, the County has always been the owner of and agency responsible for the project.
 - Mike Pullen, Multnomah County, reiterated that the work done to date was not for nothing. The County is still using the recommendations already made on the Preferred Alternative and noted that there was always going to be some cost restraint.
- Peter Englander, Old Town Community Association, asked how leadership determines what they can afford and what the guardrails are.
 - Megan said she didn't have a specific number to share at this time and that there are many factors to analyze. The County is looking at all potential revenue streams and how competitive the Burnside project will be with other projects. The team is also working with –Multnomah County government affairs staff to apply for funding support at the

federal level. She noted that the County has a lot of experience raising funds for capital projects, but there is a lot of new information at this time and the team hopes to have more information to share in the coming weeks.

- Susan Lindsay, Buckman Community Association, said she was glad to hear that the County is concerned with cost. She noted having served on advisory groups for several projects that have been wonderful to plan but have never been built. She agreed that the CTF's work always needed to be done as part of the environmental approval process. She was happy to be talking about the realities of cost as she hopes to see the bridge be built.
 - Bill Burgel, Portland Freight Advisory Committee, agreed with Susan that it's important to be realistic about cost. He asked if it was too late to include the temporary bridge in the cost analysis to emphasize the savings of dismissing it.
 - Megan agreed that the temporary bridge was indeed much more expensive. She appreciated the decision to take it off the table early because that kept even the high estimates out of the billion-dollar range.
- Gabe Rahe, Burnside Skatepark, asked what percentage of the project the County is paying for versus federal funding.
 - Megan answered that the County is currently funding 100% of the project to date since federal funding is yet to be secured.
- Peter Englander asked when the budget needs to be finalized based on the project's timeline.
 - Megan said there isn't a finalized budget yet but in the next few weeks the County will present a 'cost cap' to provide a boundary for the team to work within. She added that having a cap will make for good conversation and creative problem solving for the project team. This cost cap will be a commitment to the community to not go over a certain amount. (Multnomah County plans to identify a cost cap for the project by the end of this year.)
- Peter Englander said it sounded like the Metro measure put more constraints on the project since this was being mentioned tonight.

Working Groups

URBAN DESIGN & AESTHETICS

Allison said the Urban Design & Aesthetics Working group (UDAWG) will continue to meet to discuss design choices related to bridge type selection in order to inform the CTF. Their next meeting will be in March or April, subject to how the cost discussions play out. (The next UDAWG meeting has been scheduled for June 2nd.)

BRIDGE & SEISMIC

Steve Drahota, HDR, said the Bridge and Seismic group had a great meeting last week which was a question-and-answer session that lasted about three hours. He added that the working group is made



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up of industry experts, from FHWA, ODOT, the City among others. The group covered many technical questions around the criteria and the geotechnical approach for foundations.

- Peter Englander asked what FHWA stands for.
 - Liz Stoppelmann, HDR, answered Federal Highway Administration.
- Bill asked if the project team was aware of the budget news when the UDAWG meeting happened, or if that even makes a difference for the group.
 - Steve said they had a sense that it might be coming, but it didn't make much of a difference as it doesn't really change the bridge design criteria, and because the team is at the beginning of the cost analysis process. Eventually, the group may need to assist with reducing costs through technical issues.

CONSTRUCTABILITY

Steve said the constructability group has an upcoming meeting series, subject to how the cost discussions play out, to discuss the various construction methods for each potential bridge type and how these methods might affect users.

HISTORIC/CULTURAL RESOURCES

Jeff Heilman, Parametrix, said the consulting parties have not met since the last CTF meeting, but will meet again on March 30th to discuss potential mitigation for the bridge and how different bridge types could impact views from the Old Town/Skidmore Historic District.

Technical Updates

BIKE/PEDESTRIAN/ADA CONNECTIONS

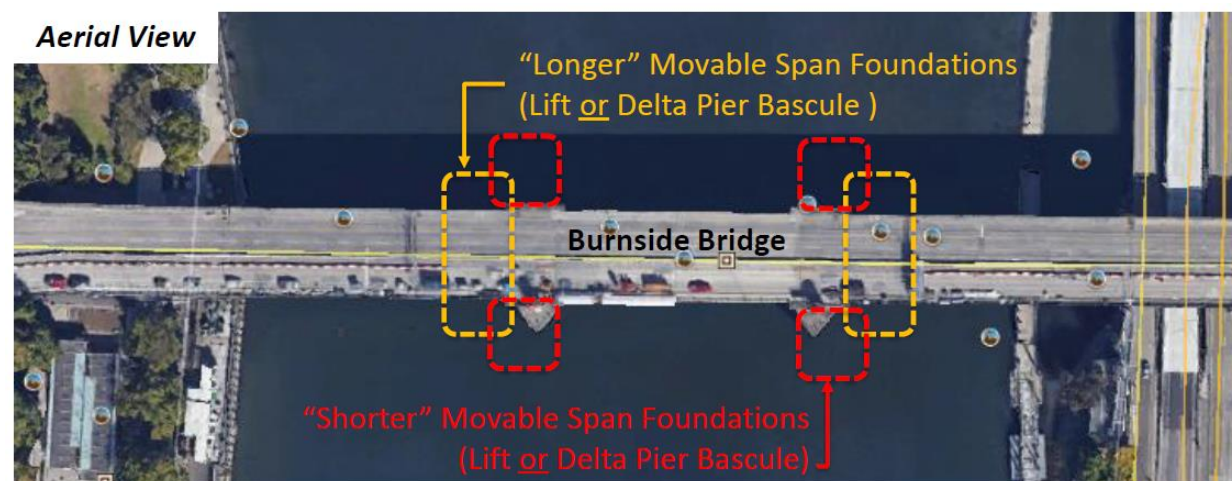
Steve told the group that the design team is currently studying a series of options for ADA access to 1st Avenue and the Max station on the west side, and to the Eastbank Esplanade on the east side. They have met with the following organizations to learn their preferences on the matter:

- Disability Rights Oregon
- MultCo Disability Advisory Council
- MultCo Aging Services Advisory Council
- MultCo Bike/Ped Citizen Advisory Committee
- MultCo REACH/Achieve Program
- Portland Bike Advisory Committee
- Portland Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Portland Freight Advisory Committee
- Mercy Corps
- Social Services Working Group (including Portland Rescue Mission)
- Nightstrike (social service program)
- Oregon Walks
- City of Portland

The team received feedback about how to make elevators and ramps more accessible by considering aspects such as length and slope, as well as avoiding conflicts with other travel modes as much as possible.

LONG AND SHORT MOVABLE SPAN COMPARISON

Steve explained that the design team has analyzed short and long versions for each movable span option, which could have a direct effect on the cost of the bridge. He said the existing movable span is about 325 feet long. The long option is to place the new foundations for the movable span to the east and west of the existing foundations. The short option is to split the foundations on each side into two and place them on either side of the existing foundations to the north and south (shown below). This would allow the movable span to be shorter while still working around the existing piers. Depending on the lift or bascule options, the shorter movable span would be about 135 feet shorter than the longer movable span length.



The shorter option is in line with the UDAWG’s input to reduce the pier size as much as possible in order to reduce the in-water footprint and have fewer impacts on river hydraulics. It also positions the piers as far away from the riverbanks as possible which helps with aesthetics and scale. Steve also noted that keeping the piers in-line with the current piers as opposed to moving them to the outside allows for more space for smaller vessels to travel around on the side channels, closer to the riverbanks.

The technical team found that this option would also reduce construction cost and time because a shorter movable span weighs less and could allow part of the new bridge to be constructed before closing the existing bridge to traffic. This could cut down on traffic detours by a full year.

The technical team’s recommendation is to advance only the short movable span option because it is better for river hydraulics, channel vessel usage, aesthetic scale, reduces costs by \$20-50 million, and



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could reduce construction detours by a year. The trade-offs are that the superstructures of the tied arch or cable-stayed options would be a little taller to compensate for longer approach spans and there would be longer underwater foundations in the river parallel to the navigation channel.

- Mike pointed out that the short movable span is a great example of the project team looking for ways to reduce cost without sacrificing the project's purpose.
- Fred Cooper, Laurelhurst Neighborhood Emergency Team and Laurelhurst Neighborhood Association, asked if either option had an impact on deck thickness.
 - Steve said that the scenarios the team looked at and presented did not substantially change the deck thickness.
- Fred asked if the Old Town Historic District height limitations were still an issue for the bridge towers.
 - Steve said the bridge towers are still above the height limit. Information provided by the City indicated that structures within the public right of way are not constrained by the 75-foot height limit, but they will be asking about this and getting feedback at a Design Advice Request (DAR) meeting held jointly with the Design and Historic Landmarks commissions.
- Ed Wortman, community member, asked if the increased costs of taller span supports is offset by the shorter movable span, making it cheaper overall, or if the cost savings were specific to the movable span alone.
 - Steve explained that the cost per square foot for the approaches is about 3-5 times less than the cost per square foot of the movable span because the movable span is twice as heavy as the approaches due to the counterweight. By shrinking the movable span, the overall load is lighter regardless of the taller superstructures.
- Jane expressed surprise for how much cheaper the short span would be.
- Peter Finley Fry, Central Eastside Industrial Council, asked if the shorter movable span meant the navigation channel for ships was smaller.
 - Mike and Steve said the navigation channel width for the shorter movable span option would still be as wide as the current clearance.
- Neil Jensen, Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce, asked if the County might eventually need a wider navigational clearance in the future.
 - Steve said this is doubtful because other bridges along the river have similar size openings and the short option satisfies the Coast Guard's criteria. He also noted that the short option has the added benefit of opening up the side channels as well.
- Susan asked if the increased tower height from the short movable span refers to the lift span towers or the cable stayed towers.
 - Steve said the lift tower heights wouldn't change; only the cable stayed towers, tied arch, or truss structures would increase by about 20 feet.
 - Susan recapped that the lift span is generally cheaper than a bascule, and the tied arch is cheaper than a cable stayed option. She asked if that would be the cheapest bridge combination.



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- Steve responded he couldn't definitively say yet, but this information will be presented to the CTF soon.

COMMUNITY INPUT ON RANGE OF BRIDGE TYPES AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Cassie Davis, HDR, shared the outcomes of the recent online open house, the interactive 360-degree video, and other outreach efforts to gather feedback on the range of bridge types and evaluation criteria. She began by sharing pictures of some bridge option drawings sent in by a 5-year-old local resident named Desmond. The team applauded Desmond's designs.

Cassie said the survey had just recently closed and shared the following outcomes:

60+	Briefings to agencies, individuals, and organizations
25	DEI organizations reached
11,950	Unique visitors to the online open house and survey
1,900+	Survey responses
6	In-language translations of the online open house and materials
285k	Social media impressions
3,183	E-newsletter recipients
119	Text message recipients
12	News releases and e-newsletters

Initial findings included:

- 76% of respondents preferred a symmetrical bridge.
- 75% of respondents preferred increased height under the bridge for the west approach span. A minority supported the girder option.
- 64% of respondents said look, feel and experience were more important to them than cost.
- 71% of respondents preferred the bascule option for the movable span.
- Support was almost tied between the tied arch (36%) and cable stayed options (37%), and only about 3-5% of respondents preferred the truss.
- Participants chose *Bike & Pedestrian Connectivity* and *Bridge Overall Look and Feel* as the most important evaluation criteria.
- 96% of people said the evaluation criteria made sense.

Cassie noted that a more detailed summary of the survey results was emailed to the CTF in the meeting packet.

- Bill asked if the team felt they received a good representation of the public in the survey respondents' demographics.
 - Cassie said there was a good range of respondents across demographics. She noted the important role of the Community Engagement Liaison Program in helping the project

bring more diverse voices to the table. She added that the liaison groups generally cite cost and seismic resiliency as the most important factors.

- Bill asked if the liaison groups were surprised by the recommendation to not build a temporary bridge.
- Cassie and Mike said no. There was not strong support for the temporary bridge due to cost and because there are adjacent bridges so close by.

Allison asked if there were any bridge types the group would like to remove from further consideration at this point. She noted that a decision didn't need to be made tonight.

- Susan made a motion to remove the truss.
 - Peter Finley Fry agreed with Susan but asked if the truss is a cost-effective option.
 - Steve explained that it's actually a relatively expensive option because it takes a long time to fabricate and erect. It is also more expensive to maintain because of rusting and requires periodic repainting.
 - Tesia Eisenberg, Mercy Corps, said she was also in favor to remove it.
 - Dennis Corwin, Portland Spirit, agreed that the added cost made it an easier decision to eliminate.
 - Stella Funk Butler, Coalition of Gresham Neighborhood Associations, agreed.
 - Mike said the only advantage for the truss is the more historic style and it's the lowest superstructure height, however it obscures views the most from the bridge.
- Neil said that if they were to eliminate an option, the girder might have more shortcomings than the truss.
 - Steve noted the girder is actually the cheapest option on the west approach.
 - Neil asked about maintenance issues stemming from having a lot of steel under the structure.
 - Steve agreed that there were maintenance challenges, but it largely depends on how the steel is coated. The truss is more challenging because of the sheer number of connection points between different pieces of steel compared to the girder. These connections are each an opportunity for rust to build up.
- Ed asked if there was a significant cost benefit to eliminating an option now to reduce the work of the engineering staff.
 - Steve said that it would save time and effort for the project team. It is always helpful when an option can be eliminated so the team can focus their energy on the remaining options. He noted that there is not much of a case to be made for the truss, especially considering the conversations around cost.
- Jane suggested that it might be helpful to keep the truss option just as a cost comparison to the other options.
 - Steve said the budget approach is to establish a cap and see which options come in under that cap. The team is not comparing bridge types against each other so it's not necessary to keep the truss in play for that reason.



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- Mike asked if Steve foresaw any new information about the truss option being discovered in the next few weeks that could make it a better option.
 - Steve answered no, he didn't think that would happen.
 - Jane recalled that they kept the truss option in the running in case there was strong community support for it, but now that the survey data shows that this isn't the case, there isn't much reason to keep it.
 - Susan agreed with Jane and said it seems safe to say we have the support of the public to eliminate the truss. She added that the cost of maintenance is a major issue.
- Tesia requested an informal vote to see where everyone stands on eliminating the truss.

Allison agreed and asked everyone to turn on their cameras and use the thumbs up, down or to the side for an informal temperature check on where everyone stands. Two CTF members gave sideways thumbs, one member gave a thumbs down, and the rest of the group gave a thumbs up for eliminating the truss.

- Jane asked if any of the three who didn't give a thumbs up could share their reasoning.
 - Paul Leitman, Oregon Walks, shared that he didn't feel too strongly one way or the other so he's happy to go along with the rest of the group.
 - Ed shared similar feelings; he said he didn't want to eliminate something too early but wasn't a strong proponent for the truss.
 - Art shared that he didn't think it was the time to eliminate any option yet and that the truss provides contrast for the other options. He didn't think it would gain traction but does offer valuable talking points.
- Peter Englander felt that the truss should be eliminated.
- Sharon Wood Wortman, community member, mentioned how beautiful the new truss bridge on NW Flanders is. She asked why the truss bridge needed to be eliminated now.
 - Ed replied that it's costing money, time, and effort to continue studying it and it is distracting for the public. He asked why we would keep it in the options if it's not actually viable.
 - Steve noted that the new Flanders truss bridge is a very short span bridge which means it doesn't require top chords, giving it a very open feel. This is not an option for the Burnside crossing because it is much longer.
- Bill asked if the long-term maintenance costs have already been compared for each option.
 - Steve said that there has been some consideration around long-term maintenance and there will be much more in the next few months.
- Neil and Jane asked about the cost savings for the staff's time if the truss was eliminated now.
 - Mike said this is hard to quantify but there is some savings of time, and therefore money. However, it wouldn't be enough to close the construction cost gap.
- Susan noted that the main issue should be breaking the tie between the cable stayed versus the tied arch from the results of the public outreach. She noted that removing the truss option now

would allow for more time and energy to focus on the other options that have much more support.

- Jane agreed that this would be a better use of time.
- Paul asked what Heather and Steve’s opinions were on eliminating the truss at this point.
 - Steve said that he would support whatever the CTF decided, but he projected that the truss would not score well against the criteria and it would be very unlikely to meet the fiscal cap from the County.
- Bill asked the County about the process of getting maintenance budgets approved once a bridge is built.
 - Mike said that repainting the current truss bridges, like the Broadway Bridge, costs about \$40-50 million every 25-30 years.
 - Bill asked if the project team would want to keep the truss option to be able to use those comparisons.
 - Mike said he didn’t see much of a downside to keeping the option for now, and maybe some new information would surface about it.
 - Megan provided a counterpoint to Mike saying it was great to have different options during the environmental review phase but at this time, she would prefer to focus the dollars on the options that are going to have the most overall value to the region. The current data could still be used even after eliminating the truss.
- Art said he saw value in the discussion the group had just had. He said he’d be comfortable noting that this was an option that was dismissed in future materials. He didn’t have a problem with removing it at this time.
- Sharon added that she was fine with whatever the group decided.

Allison summarized that there was a strong majority in favor of eliminating the truss, with just a few members expressing some hesitation. She recommended eliminating the truss option at this time with the expectation that the reasons for dismissal would be documented for use in future materials. No CTF members objected.

FINALIZE EVALUATION CRITERIA

Allison reminded the group that they were at the point of finalizing the evaluation criteria measures before moving on to weighting.

Steve reminded the CTF that they received two versions of the evaluation criteria document in their meeting packet, a marked-up version showing the changes from last meeting’s feedback and a clean version.

Allison asked for final comments from the group before officially confirming the criteria and measures. She noted that since the CTF would be waiting for budget information over the next few weeks, they could still submit edits to the criteria via email if needed. All CTF members gave a thumbs up to the evaluation criteria and measures.



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NEXT STEPS

Allison and Heather shared the upcoming meetings and next steps with the group. The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for March 22nd but would be cancelled given the new cost analysis work. The next CTF meeting would likely be in April or May when the project team is able to share more information about cost guidelines from the County. The bridge type recommendation is likely to pick back up later in the year, possibly around August, followed by a round of public outreach in September.

Allison asked for any final thoughts.

- Neil mentioned that there were recently three earthquakes off of the Oregon coast up to a magnitude five on the Richter scale. He said that although this wasn't "the big one" it is a good reminder of the importance of this work.
- Fred asked if the Constructability Working Group has a meeting happening before the next CTF meeting.
 - Steve said yes, it will likely be sometime in late March. The invite will be sent out in the next few days, subject to the discussion about costs.

ADJOURN

Allison thanked everyone for their time and adjourned the meeting.