



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

BETTER – SAFER – CONNECTED

JUNE 15, 2020

CTF Meeting #16

Meeting information

Project: Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge

Subject: CTF, Meeting #16

Date: Monday, June 15, 2020

Time: 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Location: WebEx Meeting and livestream

Attendees:

CTF Members:

Art Graves, Multnomah County Bike and Pedestrian Citizen Advisory Committee
Cameron Hunt, Portland Spirit
Dan Lenzen, Old Town Community Association
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
Paul Leitman, Oregon Walks
Jennifer Stein, Central City Concern
Robert McDonald, American Medical Response
Marie Dodds, AAA of Oregon
Kiley Wilson, Portland Business Alliance
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
Timothy Desper, Portland Rescue Mission
William Burgel, Portland Freight Committee

Project Team Members:

Megan Neill, Multnomah County
Ian Cannon, Multnomah County
Mike Pullen, Multnomah County
Heather Catron, HDR
Cassie Davis, HDR
Steve Drahota, HDR
Liz Stoppelmann, HDR
Jeff Heilman, Parametrix
Allison Brown, JLA
Laura Peña, EnviroIssues
Sarah Omlor, EnviroIssues

Apologies: Neil Jensen, Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce



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Summary Notes

This online virtual meeting was held over WebEx and livestreamed to the public via Vbrick. It is estimated that over 20 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.

In advance of the meeting, the public was invited to submit comments to the Community Task Force (CTF). Comments received in advance of the meeting were shared with the CTF and acknowledged in the meeting during the public comment period.

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.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Allison shared a written comment submitted prior to the meeting. She reminded the group that it was also emailed to them before the meeting. The public comment was provided by City Club Earthquake Advisory Committee and expressed concern that a no-build alternative was being considered. They hoped that the no-build alternative would not be selected and that an earthquake resilient bridge will be built as soon as possible.

PUBLIC PROCESS OVERVIEW

Heather Catron, HDR, began by reviewing the work that the CTF has done leading up to the recommendation of a Preferred Alternative. She reiterated the purpose of the project to make the Burnside Bridge seismically sound. She reminded the committee that there will be a round of public outreach over the summer and the results will be presented to the CTF in September. After that, the CTF will have time to refine their recommendation before it is forwarded to the Policy Group in October. The draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is scheduled to be published in January.

Heather showed the overarching project timeline and oriented the group to where they currently were within the Environmental Review phase. She told the committee that the project is required to secure federal permits within 90 days after the completion of the Environmental Review Phase. She noted that the CTF will be asked to provide a recommendation on bridge type selection next year.

RECOMMENDATION ON PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Heather noted that since the last CTF meeting, Cassie Davis, HDR, had spoken with most of the CTF members about what they needed to feel comfortable making a recommendation on the Preferred



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Alternative. Most are ready to make a recommendations. Some CTF members wanted more information about the process and some had more questions for the project team. She reminded the group that a list of their questions and answers were sent to them before the meeting. She hoped that the group felt comfortable making a recommendation tonight.

Allison explained how committee members would be voting in the virtual format. She explained they would continue to use the thumbs up, down, or in the middle method outlined in their charter. Thumbs up meaning support, thumbs down meaning against, and thumbs to the side meaning support but with reservations. She said she would call on each committee member individually to verbally share their vote and make further comments for the record.

CTF Discussion

Allison said the project team would be available to answer any final questions that come up, but the focus of the meeting would be for the committee to discuss the recommendations amongst themselves. After the committee has had time to discuss, a member will put forth a motion for everyone to vote on. Allison reminded the committee that their charter says they should aim for consensus but only a majority is necessary to pass a recommendation. She hoped that everyone would consider the best interests of the community as a whole, balanced with the project purpose of building a seismically sound Burnside Bridge.

The PowerPoint presentation was turned off and Allison asked the committee to turn on their computer cameras for easier discussion.

RECOMMEND TRAFFIC OPTION DURING CONSTRUCTION

Allison began the discussion by asking everyone to state their preference for the traffic options, noting that this would not be their final vote. Their initial preferences were as follows:

- Bill Burgel: Full closure.
- Art Graves: What are the general time and cost savings for the full closure?
 - Steve Drahota, HDR: The full closure saves \$90 million and 1.5-2 years of construction time, depending on the alternative.
 - Art: And what's the benefit from the temporary bridge?
 - Steve: The temporary bridge would allow 1 lane of traffic in each direction, with facilities for bicyclists, and pedestrians on both sides to cross the river at that location. Compared to not having a temporary bridge, the temporary bridge would reduce travel time by 2-4 minutes for vehicles and by 5 minutes for buses. Time savings for cyclists and pedestrians are greater.
 - Art: Based on that response, I am in support of a full closure.
- Fred Cooper: I'm concerned about traffic delays and increasing commuting times for all other bridges. A full bridge closure would mean 9-minute traffic delays which could lead to a public nightmare. I could go either way.



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- Cameron Hunt: Full Closure. I hear what Fred is saying about community backlash, but I think there could also be backlash about the additional time and money. I, personally, would rather have a 9-minute delay for a shorter length of time, than a 5-minute delay for longer.
- Gabe Rahe: No temporary bridge, full closure.
- Dan Lenzen: No temporary bridge, full closure.
- Jackie Tate: Full closure. The cost and time added to construction are too much and the benefit is minimal. Plus, the environmental impact would be huge.
- Jennifer Stein: I'm in the middle. I spoke with the Chief Housing and Strategies Officer [at Central City Concern] and as an organization, we would prefer a temporary bridge. We're concerned about traffic through Old Town because we have multiple clinic and housing sites up and down Burnside. We're concerned about the safety of our residents and clients.
- Kiley Wilson: I agree with Jennifer, I'm in the middle.
- Paul Leitman: I'm in support of the full closure. The benefits provided don't outweigh the cost and time added to construction. Extending construction by two years will also extend traffic impacts and there would be phases of full closures even with the temporary bridge.
- Marie Dodds: I'm in support of the full closure and no temporary bridge because of the additional construction time, cost, and environmental impacts. Obviously, representing AAA, I'm concerned about traffic, but I believe the additional construction time is more of a detriment.
- Peter Finley Fry: Full closure.
- Sharon Wood Wortman: Full closure. There are lots of other downtown bridges- we should focus on getting Burnside built instead of a temporary bridge.
- Ed Wortman: Full closure.
- Stella Funk Butler: Full closure.
- Susan Lindsay: Full closure. The Buckman Community Association voted on this a long time ago. We do not support the temporary bridge for reasons already stated.
- Timothy Desper: I'm in the middle. I want to honor the committee's work and support what most are leaning towards, but I want to highlight the houseless community. A full closure will be hard for them, and all pedestrians so I hope we can be creative about mitigation.
- Robert: McDonald: Full closure.
- Tesia Eisenberg: Full closure for the reasons stated. But I am glad for everyone who brought up concerns about the houseless populations.
- Howie Bierbaum: Full closure for the reasons stated: time, cost, and environmental impact.

After the committee shared their initial thoughts Allison opened up the committee for discussion. Questions and comments were as follows:

- Cameron: Can you repeat how much construction time the temporary bridge adds?
 - Steve: Two years for any replacement alternative, and a year and a half for the retrofit.
- Paul: Oregon Walks is curious about the possibility of a bike and pedestrian ferry. I don't think that's been discussed before. Is that feasible to talk about later on in the process?



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- Steve: Subject to where the ferry would pick up and drop off, it is feasible. However, it would likely be very difficult to get designed, mobilized, and permitted. At this point, it is not a part of the project.
 - Cameron: I want to echo what Steve said as a maritime representative. I currently don't know of any boats that could facilitate that. It would take a lot of permits as well because there is currently no dock on the west side of the Burnside Bridge. It would be a long process to make happen.
 - Mike Pullen, Multnomah County: If there is no detour bridge, we do plan to explore TriMet passes for social service clients who are impacted by the bridge closure.
- Fred: I want to clarify my earlier statement. I attended the transportation working group meetings, requested the technical report to review and I looked at all of the numbers very carefully. I believe a very thorough transportation plan needs to be a part of the project to mitigate the gridlock that this project will cause during a full closure.
 - Jennifer: I agree with Fred. The current traffic is already bad, especially in Old Town and along the Broadway corridor during the afternoon rush hour. Any thoughts on traffic easement in that area will be appreciated.
- Art: What are the overall numbers for how many bikes and pedestrians would be displaced compared to neighboring bridges?
 - Steve: For the Burnside Bridge, the numbers are generally in the middle to lower range compared to other bridges in the area. I believe bike crossings are around 2,500.
 - Mike: I think the Burnside is the fourth most popular bike bridge, after Hawthorne, Steel and Broadway. Tilikum is also popular.
 - Steve: The average daily pedestrian use is 1,050 as of May 15, 2019.
- Bill: Let's remember the purpose of why we're here. Building a seismically sound bridge is already years away until complete, so something like a ferry would be good to have sooner rather than later. It would serve the purpose of having an earthquake safe river crossing as well as help with traffic mitigation.
 - Cameron: The Portland Spirit is already a part of the City's emergency plan. If something were to happen, we would ferry people across the river. The location of the Burnside Bridge would require a dock on the west side, and the time that it would take to get people on and off the boat for daily use might be more than detouring to another bridge. However, a ferry might be better for ADA accessibility.
 - Jeff: This is a good thing to look into more. Our early review of what would happen in the event of an earthquake showed that there would be landslides, downed trees, and many logs in the river. I'm concerned that the water may not be navigable for days or weeks following an earthquake.
- Jackie: I appreciate those concerned with houseless people and car traffic. I'm personally concerned with ADA accessibility. I walk across the bridge on my way to work and when the number of lanes changed it became very unsafe. That alone created safety issues for pedestrians up and down Burnside. I think it's a hard decision to close it completely, but in terms of safety, it's the better decision.



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Allison asked if the committee was ready to vote and called for someone to put forth a recommendation. The official vote is as follows:

- Susan: I move that we do not build a temporary bridge and go with a full closure.
- Art: Support
- Bill: Support
- Cameron: Support, for reasons stated earlier.
- Dan: Support, channeling Old Town's land use committee in affirmative.
- Fred: Support, with a provision that there is serious traffic delay mitigation plan for vehicles, bikes, and pedestrians.
- Gabe: Support, agree with Fred and hope to look into a bike and pedestrian ferry.
- Howie: Support
- Jackie: Support
- Jennifer: Against, with the interests of Central City Concern and pedestrians in mind.
- Kiley: Support
- Paul: Support
- Marie: Support
- Peter: Support. And I want to say that I'm a frequent user of the bridge with my home and office off Burnside on each side of the river. I feel for pedestrians and want to do anything we can to increase access for them.
- Sharon: Support
- Ed: Support
- Stella: Support
- Susan: Support
- Timothy: In the middle
- Robert: Support
- Tesia: Support

The recommended traffic option during construction is a full bridge closure with 18 votes in support, 1 middle vote, and 1 opposed.

RECOMMEND BRIDGE ALTERNATIVE

Allison asked everyone to state their preference on the recommended bridge alternative thus far, noting that this would not be their final vote. Their initial preferences were as follows:

- Tesia: Long span because it comes out on top in almost every category.
- Robert: Long span.
- Tim: Long span.
- Stella: Long span.



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- Cameron: Long span seems to be the best option. It's the cheapest, shortest construction time, and on top in almost every category. And most importantly, by far, it's the most seismically resilient which is the whole point of the project.
- Bill: Long span. I was pleased to see examples of a long span tied arch with a bascule lift. My only concern is aesthetically. With either a cable stayed or tied arch on either side of the lift, the size should be balanced out.
- Dan: Personally, I tend to lean towards the long span but the Old Town Community Association is leaning towards the short span.
- Fred: Long span was my favorite since the beginning. My first concern is always seismic resiliency. Minimizing impacts to east side businesses is also important and this bridge can span over Pacific Coast Fruit Company's property and the Skatepark. Project cost is also a big factor.
- Gabe: I'm definitely in favor of the long span for the ability to avoid the geotechnical hazard zone, and all of the other reasons it scored highest. I want to thank the staff for all of the visuals to show us what this bridge might look like from different angles.
- Jackie: Long span. Avoiding the geotechnical hazard zone is a big factor.
- Jennifer: Long span.
- Howie: Long span, with some reservations about aesthetics.
- Kiley: Long span.
- Paul: Long span. It's the best alternative because it has the fewest impacts and the lowest cost. I like all the replacement options for the increased space for multimodal transportation, but the long span also has increased space under the bridge.
- Marie: Long span, for all the reasons stated.
- Peter: Long span is what needs to be built because of the liquefiable soils and fewer pillars. That being said, I have reservations about the aesthetics. When I cross the bridge whether driving, walking, or biking, what strikes me is the simplicity of the bridge and that it allows me to see the city. The consequence of the long span is that it requires a superstructure. I think it will be an issue through the historic landmark review and the demolition review. But I am confident with the engineer's abilities and the materials available that they can take these concerns into account while designing the superstructure.
- Susan: I like the seismic resiliency of the long span but I'm concerned about aesthetics. Seeing the recent protests crossing the bridge, I was struck by the tremendous openness of the bridge and the melding of the east and west side. One of the best things about the inner east side, which has long been considered the "step child" of Portland, is the views we have of downtown. I don't want to see that connection obstructed, but I will support the long span and hope to remain involved throughout design of the superstructure.
- Ed: It's taken me a while to decide. I'm leaning towards the long span but concerned about the aesthetics. My background is in bridge construction, so I know building over the railroad and freeway is really challenging. There aren't many other examples of that in the world. I'm concerned about what the cost of a bridge could actually end up being with all of the risk factors. I've gotten input from the project team about these concerns and am more confident

that the design team will come up with a satisfactory solution. Another factor is the need to avoid the poor soils on the East side. Steve is confident that through jet grouting, the short span will be possible but it's expensive. But there will still be risks in the event of an earthquake and it sounds like the long span is the most reliable and best option to avoid as much risk as we can. I've been concerned about the poor soils on the east side for years since I learned that ODOT abandoned the idea of making I-5 seismically resilient because of it.

- Sharon: Long span, with some reservations about proportions on the east and west, and what happens in the middle.
- Art: The long span definitely has a lot of benefits. I appreciate the team creating all of the long span images for us. I spent a lot of time looking at examples of long span bridges. I'm still struggling with the aesthetic, because I can't find examples of a long span bridge in a city center like this would be. The Burnside Bridge is connecting neighborhoods, not regions like we typically see with these bridges. The tradeoff for less structure below is more structure above but I'm not convinced that the extra space below is necessary, other than to save the Skatepark, which I'm entirely for. I'm afraid this extra space will just be empty spaces in the park. I'm concerned about the arches on the top as well and how they will impact the White Stag sign. I appreciate what the team said about it being a "dynamic view" but that just means you'll have to look for it. Otherwise, the long span is ahead in every category. I'm hoping the design team can get really creative about the superstructure and explore what forms it can take.
 - Peter: I really like what Art said about connecting neighborhoods, not regions. I never thought about it like that. I was a part of the Central City in Motion plan years ago and back then downtown and the east side were really different places. That's changed and I want to put forth the concept of connecting neighborhoods.
 - Bill: I agree with Art as well, he's really articulated my concerns. I think this design is going to be really complicated because it's essentially three different bridges, the east span, west span, and the lift. And it's all competing with the buildings. I hope it can be done elegantly.
 - Cameron: I spent some time this weekend looking at bridges online and I saw an example of a "one-sided" bridge span; the Samuel Beckett bridge. I also want to point out that a large part of the current bridge's appeal is the towers. I wonder if it's possible to save them and incorporate them either into the new bridge or in the surrounding area somehow.

Allison asked if the committee was ready to vote and called for someone to put forth a recommendation. The official vote is as follows:

- Robert: I propose the Replacement: Long Span as the Preferred Alternative.
- Art: In the middle, with concerns about aesthetics.
- Bill: Support
- Cameron: Support
- Dan: In the middle



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- Fred: Support
- Gabe: Support
- Howie: Support, with concerns about aesthetics.
- Jackie: Support
- Kiley: Support, with concerns.
- Paul: Support
- Marie: Support
- Peter: Support, on the condition that the bridge be designed to act as a connection between neighborhoods. It should act as a stage like we're seeing it used now with the demonstrations.
- Sharon: Support
- Ed: Support
- Stella: Support
- Tim: Support
- Tesia: Support
- Robert: Support
- Susan: Support, with strong concerns about aesthetics. I second what Art and Peter have said. I support for the cost, but do not like the aesthetics.

The recommended bridge alternative is the Replacement: Long span with 17 votes in support, 2 votes in the middle, and multiple conditions of design aesthetic concerns.

- Peter: Should one of us write a statement expressing our aesthetic conditions?
 - Allison: Let's wait to review the meeting notes to see if the official record accurately expresses your concerns.

NEXT STEPS

Type Selection Phase

Heather congratulated the group for coming to this recommendation and all of the work that led up to it. She reviewed the next steps in the process for the CTF. The committee will not meet again until September. At that point they will review comments from the public on their recommendation and make a final recommendation for the Policy Group's approval. They will also begin the process of bridge type selection in the fall.

Upcoming Meetings and Outreach

Allison reminded the committee the next meeting would not be until September.

Closing Remarks

Allison thanked everyone for their time and wished them a good evening.





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- Cameron: Thanks to the staff for all of the work behind the scenes. I enjoyed the process.