

Policy Group Meeting #3

Meeting Summary

April 26, 2017, 1:30–3:30 p.m.

Multnomah County Building, 501 SE Hawthorne Blvd., Portland

Policy Group Members and Alternates Present

Matt Grumm, *Office of Commissioner Dan Saltzman*

Christina Deffebach, *Alt. for Commissioner Roy Rogers, Washington County*

Roger Gonzalez, *Alt. for Office of Metro Council President*

Rian Windsheimer, *ODOT Region 1*

Tara Sulzen, *Alt. for Congressman Earl Blumenauer, U.S. House of Representatives*

Doug Kelsey, *TriMet*

Grace Stratton, *Alt. for Senator Ron Wyden, U.S. Senate*

Councilor Karylinn Echols, *City of Gresham*

Tom Goldstein, *Federal Highway Administration*

Councilor Cate Arnold, *City of Beaverton*

Chair Deborah Kafoury, *Multnomah County*

Co-Chair Commissioner Jessica Vega

Pederson, *Multnomah County*

Policy Group Members Absent

Kimberly Branam, *Prosper Portland*

Chloe Becker, *Alt. for Representative Barbara Smith Warner, Oregon State Legislature*

Mike Bezner, *Alt. for Commissioner Paul Savas, Clackamas County*

Phylcia Haggerty, *Alt. for Representative Suzanne Bonamici, U.S House of Representatives*

Amanda Kraus, *Alt. for Senator Kathleen Taylor, Oregon State Legislature*

Jagjit Nagra, *Alt. for Senator Jeff Merkley, U.S. Senate*

Staff and Consultants

Ian Cannon, *Multnomah County*

Megan Neill, *Multnomah County*

Mike Pullen, *Multnomah County*

Chris Fick, *Multnomah County*

Jamie Waltz, *Multnomah County*

Kim Peoples, *Multnomah County*

Joanna Valencia, *Multnomah County*

Emily Miletich, *Multnomah County*

Heather Catron, *HDR*

Steve Drahota, *HDR*

Cassie Davis, *HDR*

Jeff Heilman, *Parametrix*

Josh Ahmann, *Parametrix*

Jessica Pickul, *JLA Public Involvement*

Irene Kim, *JLA Public Involvement*

Alice Sherring, *EnviroIssues*

Alex Cousins, *EnviroIssues*

Members of the Public and Guests

Josh Carlson, *Mayer/Reed*

Randy Gragg

Jim Howell

Josh Kulla, *Daily Journal of Commerce*

Bill Meadowcroft, *Portland Rescue Mission*

Mary Stewart, *Customer Services CBAC*

Kyra Straussman, *Prosper Portland*

Allen J. Wheeland

Welcome and Introductions

Multnomah County Commissioners Jessica Vega Pederson and Deborah Kafoury gave opening remarks and thanked the committee for attending the third Policy Group meeting for Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge. Alice Sherring, EnviroIssues, led group introductions and reviewed the meeting agenda.

Project Update

Heather Catron, HDR, reviewed the project team's activities since the last Policy Group meeting. Outreach has included over 40 stakeholder briefings and interviews. The project team held two meetings with the Stakeholder Representative Group and Senior Agency Staff Group committees to discuss the evaluation criteria and evaluation process. Heather also reviewed public outreach activities and the online briefing developed through a platform called StoryMaps. A brief survey asked the public what should be considered during the evaluation and if there is anything that the project team should know moving forward. Based on the responses, many are interested in the timing of the project, multimodal improvements, and design of the bridge. Comments also expressed concerns about costs and impacts to the homeless population near Burnside Bridge.

- **Question: Has the project team used any outreach strategies that reached new audience groups?** *We've had good responses from the animation video that was released early in the project. The online briefing through StoryMaps had over 2,000 views. It was promoted using social media, and also shared by agencies and stakeholder committee members.*

Project Milestones

Heather Catron provided an overview of the project timeline. The feasibility study is expected to conclude in the fall of 2018. An environmental review process will follow the feasibility study. Once the environmental review has been completed, final design and construction will follow. The County has identified funding for the environmental review. The project team plans to start environmental review as part of the feasibility study. Multnomah County is working with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to issue a notice of intent which is tentatively scheduled for May. The summer outreach activities planned for the feasibility study will coincide with the public outreach and commenting period required for the environmental review process. Stakeholder committees will be asked to continue their involvement in the environmental phase. FHWA is the lead agency in the environmental review process, and will have final approval of the purpose and need statement and the range of alternatives.

Jeff Heilman, Parametrix, provided an overview of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process. Public outreach will be included with every step in the next phase of evaluation. Scoping is the first step in a NEPA review. It involves soliciting input from the public and other stakeholders on the potential alternatives and issues to be considered in an

environmental impact statement, on the purpose and need statement for the project, and other information to help determine the scope of the environmental document and process. The purpose and need is the baseline for comparing alternatives in NEPA. Any alternative that cannot adequately meet the purpose and need is deemed not reasonable and will not move forward in the process.

The next step after scoping is to prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which involves collecting information on existing conditions, impacts, potential mitigation, and tradeoffs among the alternatives. The Draft EIS may also identify a preferred alternative and will be presented to the public for feedback during a formal comment period. The Final EIS will integrate public comments and will refine the Draft EIS as part of advancing the analysis and responding to public input. The final step in the NEPA process will be a Record of Decision (ROD), which is where the lead agencies document their formal decision on which alternative to carry forward for permitting, design and construction, as well as identify mitigation commitments and make findings regarding other regulatory compliance. Following the ROD would be a process to select a specific bridge type, conduct final design, permitting and construction.

The NEPA process can take two to four years. At the end of the Scoping phase, the team will have a better idea of what the schedule will look like.

Options Evaluation

Heather Catron recapped the screening process. The project began with five option groups. These groups were evaluated through two screening processes: pass/fail and against the screening criteria. The screening process resulted in 26 remaining options that fall within the enhanced seismic retrofit or replacement categories:

Replacement: This category includes four different replacement options, including a tunnel 100 feet below the water's surface, a 64-foot-high moveable bridge, a 97-foot-high fixed bridge, and a 120-foot-high fixed bridge.

Enhanced Seismic Retrofit: The enhanced seismic retrofit is a combination of retrofitting and replacing the footings on the east portion of the bridge. Replacing a portion of the bridge would allow traffic on I-5 to be maintained. This includes a widened option, which creates a rectangular bridge, and an un-widened option similar to what exists today.

The remaining options have been further evaluated under six criteria: seismic resiliency, non-motorized transportation, connectivity, equity, built environment, and financial stewardship.

Steve provided a recap of the Enhanced Seismic Retrofit and Replacement options that were evaluated. During the meeting, options were presented using a GIS tool that illustrated where they would land on either side of the river.

Alice Sherring asked the group for any clarifying questions. Committee questions and comments included:

- **Question: What's the benefit of a 120-foot high bridge?** *We are still unclear of what the navigational clearance will be, because we haven't done the navigation study yet. We want to keep options on the table that consider navigational impacts. The Tilikum Bridge is 78.5 feet high, but because of where this bridge is located and what may be needed after a seismic event, we wanted to keep a higher option on the table.*
- **Question: Have you consulted with the Port of Portland on the demands of the river in terms of sizes of ships, frequency and port development?** *We have only had initial conversations at this point. Because there are so many facets involved in finding the right bridge elevation, we chose a high and low elevation threshold to evaluate, but more analysis and consultation such as this, will come in the next phases.*

Jeff summarized how the evaluation criteria were applied to the remaining options. The evaluation resulted in nine options that rose to the top. Those options include enhanced retrofit (widening and non-widening options) and several replacement options (existing alignment low movable bridge, existing alignment high fixed bridge, two low movable bridge wishbone options, two mode separated low movable bridge options and a stacked low movable bridge option).

Jeff reviewed the scoring results trends. The worst performing options were the 120-foot-high fixed bridges and the tunnel due to significant impacts to the existing built environment (i.e. historic character, affordable housing, and social services). These options also disrupt the existing street network and connectivity.

- **Question: Why do the 120-foot-high bridges score so low in the long-term maintenance category versus the 97-foot options?** *The 120-foot options are longer, therefore would include more bridge to maintain.*

The tunnel option presents a connectivity issue with the existing street network because it would be two miles long. In addition, though the tunnel itself is very reliable during an earthquake, emergency vehicles will have a difficult time accessing it with only two access points at either end. Additionally, of all the options, the tunnel option would displace the most businesses and employees due to the size and impact of the portals.

The twin multi-modal options were also eliminated. These options provide a separate bridge for eastbound and westbound traffic and could either connect to SE Couch or SE Ankeny. The potential advantages to these options are much less than the impacts. The impacts to the historic district are very significant in terms of views, safety, and light.

- **Question: Are these alignments possible based on all the development happening on the eastern Burnside bridgehead? Can it fit?** *Yes. That has been considered.*

The double wishbone options were eliminated. These present similar issues to the twin multi-modal options because they could have significant impacts to the historic district. Also, other options would provide the same benefits with less impact.

The 97-foot-high wishbone options were eliminated. Other 97-foot-high bridge options perform substantially better. The team suggested that the low moveable wishbone options move forward instead.

Of the four mode-separated options (options with a separate bike/pedestrian bridge), the low movable mode-separated options would provide greater convenience and safety for cyclists and pedestrians with less impact. The 97-foot-high mode-separated options would require a five-story bike and pedestrian spiral ramp on one or both ends of the bridge (requiring considerably more climbing and resulting in a more than half-block-square footprint), whereas the low mode-separated option could have a standard ramp structure requiring less climbing and lower impact.

- **Question: Did you ask if bicyclists would use the spiral ramp?** *At the stakeholder committee meeting, The Street Trust representative commented that mode separated may not provide enough benefit to warrant carrying forward.*
- **Question: For the enhanced seismic retrofit options, why did the no-widening option score higher than the widened option when it appears they scored the same in all the categories?** *The widened option had a slightly lower maintenance score.*
- **Question: Is there a way to cantilever the ramps on the separate bike and pedestrian bridge so the landing is underneath the bridge, creating less footprint and impact to the park?** *We explored ways to minimize the footprint on the ground for the spiral landings, but there are other reasons for why the height of the spiral landings is not favorable. Ramps need to be at a maximum five-percent grade, so a 97-foot-high bridge would require a very large ramp even without spiral landings. We will be coordinating with Portland Parks and Recreation to get their input on potential impacts.*

Steve provided an overview of findings under the financial stewardship criteria. Project costs include NEPA, design, right-of-way (ROW) acquisition and construction phases. Project costs are also escalated to the year of construction. The project team also looked at the cost impact of maintaining traffic flow at Burnside Street during construction. Maintaining traffic flow during construction would require a temporary bridge, which would be an estimated \$200 million cost.

Steve provided an overview of the cost analysis for all the bridge options. Overall, the more bridge that needs to get constructed, the more expensive it will be to maintain over a 100-year period. Two assumptions were made to determine the estimated preliminary cost for each

option. The first assumption considers detouring traffic away from the site during construction. The second assumption considers building a temporary bridge facility during construction to allow vehicles to cross the river at Burnside. The lowest cost option is the non-widened enhanced retrofit. The low moveable and 97-foot-high bridge options generally have the second lowest cost range. The cost analysis found that some replacement bridge options are cheaper than the widened, enhanced retrofit option. The third lowest cost option range includes the twin alignment and double wishbone. The fourth lowest cost range is the 120-foot-high bridge options, and the tunnel options are the most expensive.

- **Question: Does the cost of the tunnel include property acquisitions?** *Yes. It should be noted that all of the options would require property acquisitions.*
- **Comment: We had extensive conversations with the community about the Martin Luther King Boulevard viaduct, and there was a strong preference for maintaining traffic flow during construction, which drove the cost up significantly. After the project was complete, we went back to the community to evaluate the approach, and community members said it was a bad decision and agreed that we should have closed the streets during construction which would have helped complete the project faster with less costs. It's worth taking time to understand the costs of maintaining mobility during construction.**
- **Question: Is there a way to evaluate the cost of disruption caused by construction of a temporary bridge versus closing the bridge to traffic?** *The NEPA phase will analyze the cost of indirect impacts.*
- **Question: Could a temporary bridge withstand a seismic event?** *Temporary bridges are typically not designed to withstand a seismic event.*

Heather provided a brief overview of the nine options that could move forward in the NEPA phase. The project team wants to hear feedback from the policy group about these options. In addition, the project team will be soliciting feedback from the public over the next several months. Heather asked the committee if they had any questions or comments.

- **Question: Where would the widening take place?** *The widening option would straighten the hourglass shape that exists today, which would mean a wider center, not landings.*
- **Question: Do the lower-height bridge options need to be designed to withstand and be operable after a seismic event?** *They would be designed to withstand a seismic event and to be operable within a week or two after a seismic event.*
Follow up Question: But would it have the energy required for bridge to be operable after a seismic event? *The bridge would have a manual operating system*

to make sure it's immediately operable; and it will have the conventional operating system for the longer term.

- **Question: What is the resiliency of a moveable bridge over time?** *For the enhanced seismic retrofit options, all of the moving parts would be replaced. There would be increased maintenance costs over time to ensure that resiliency of the bridge is maintained.*
- **Question: Considering the 2040 plan, did the team think about including high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on the bridge?** *At this stage, the project team has not explored what the use of the overall width should be. We are considering streetcar as part of the design criteria and have made assumptions lane, bike path and sidewalk widths to develop cost estimates, but the discussion about specific lane allocations will require a more in-depth conversation that's not appropriate for the feasibility study phase. This will be discussed during the environmental review phase.*
- **Comment: Rail transit will likely not be operable immediately after an earthquake. Buses will be a more reliable form of transit during an emergency.**
- **Question: Why are all 26 options going out to the public?** *In the interest of full transparency, we want to show all the options we are considering. We want the public to have opportunity to provide feedback on the full range of options. We have already received feedback on these options from the Stakeholder Committee Meeting, and will continue to receive feedback to narrow down the options that could move forward for the NEPA phase.*

Next Steps

Alice provided an overview of summer outreach activities over the next few months. In addition, some Policy Group members provided some final thoughts.

- **Question: In thinking about costs, are we considering tolling as an option?** *The County has not talked about tolling yet. We will have a more detailed discussion about funding during the environmental review phase, but everything is on the table at this point.*
- **Comment: The cost of operating the bridge is an important consideration for Multnomah County. Information about the long-term costs of operating and maintaining a 90-year old bridge and the potential savings from replacing the bridge could be an important message to provide the public. The cost implications of operating and maintaining the current structure may have gotten lost with more emphasis on the need for seismic resiliency.**

- **Comment: Another important message is the cost of not doing any seismic improvements after a seismic event.**
- **Comment: If the bridge is reconstructed and built wider, there is opportunity to make more space for bike and pedestrian facilities or other desired amenities.**
- **Comment: It's hard for emergency responders to get access through the existing bridge because of congestion and other reasons. Having a wider bridge could allow for a bus lane that can be converted into an HOV lane or something that could make it easier for emergency responders to get through.**
- **Comment: The City of Portland is currently developing the Unreinforced Masonry project, and we've seen some pushback from the public about the Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake. We've received comments that the earthquake won't be that bad in Portland and the issues are being overblown. Having multiple reasons for why upgrading the bridge makes sense will be beneficial to how you communicate about the project.**

Public Comment

One member of the public provided input during the public comment period:

Comment: Do not build this bridge. The project team is assuming all other bridges will not function after an earthquake. Think flexibly about what can be done after an earthquake, rather than spending half a billion dollars on a bridge for something that may or may not happen. In addition, TriMet should think about a tunnel. Light rail on the Steel Bridge is at capacity.

Closing Remarks

Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson closed the meeting by thanking the Policy Group for their comments and for participating in the project.