



Policy Group Meeting #1

DRAFT Meeting Summary

May 2, 2017
2:00–4:00 p.m.
Multnomah County Building
501 SE Hawthorne Blvd., Portland

Policy Group Members and Alternates Present

Councilor Cate Arnold, *City of Beaverton*
Chloe Becker, *Alt. for Representative Barbara Smith Warner, Oregon State Legislature*
Barbara Cartmill, *Alt. for Commissioner Paul Savas, Clackamas County*
Phil Ditzler, *Federal Highway Administration*
Councilor Karylinn Echols, *City of Gresham*
Matt Grumm, *Alt. for Commissioner Dan Saltzman, City of Portland*
Shelly Haack, *Alt. for Kimberly Branam, Portland Development Commission*
Phylcia Haggerty, *Alt. for Representative Suzanne Bonamici, U.S. House of Representatives*
Chair, Deborah Kafoury, *Multnomah County Commission*

Neil McFarlane, *TriMet*
Jagjit Nagra, *Alt. for Senator Jeff Merkley, U.S. Senate*
Commissioner Roy Rogers, *Washington County*
Stephanie Soden, *Alt. for President Tom Hughes, Metro*
Grace Stratton, *Alt. for Senator Ron Wyden, U.S. Senate*
Tara Sulzen, *Alt. for Congressman Earl Blumenauer, U.S. House of Representatives*
Co-chair, Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson, *Multnomah County*
Rian Windsheimer, *Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), Region 1*

Policy Group Members Absent

Senator Kathleen Taylor, *Oregon State Legislature*

Staff and Consultants

Ian Cannon, *Multnomah County*
Megan Neill, *Multnomah County*
Mike Pullen, *Multnomah County*
Christian Gaston, *Multnomah County*
Chris Fick, *Multnomah County*
Kim Peoples, *Multnomah County*
Joanna Valencia, *Multnomah County*

Heather Catron, *HDR*
Steve Drahota, *HDR*
Jeff Heilman, *Parametrix*
Vaughn Brown, *JLA Public Involvement*
Jessica Pickul, *JLA Public Involvement*
John Todoroff, *JLA Public Involvement*
Bruce Warner, *Warner Group*

Members of the Public and Guests

Christina Deffebach, *Washington County (SASG member)*

Drew Devitis, *Portland Office of Emergency Management*



Malu Wilkinson, Metro (SASG member)
Steve Witter, TriMet (SASG member)

Mauricio Leclerc, PBOT
Frank Scheer

Welcome and Introductions

Deborah Kafoury, Multnomah County Chair, introduced the meeting and welcomed the committee. She informed the committee that the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project is a top priority for the county and emphasized that communication between jurisdictions will be important to the project's success during its long duration.

Jessica Vega Pederson, Multnomah County Commissioner and project Co-Chair, reiterated the importance of this project to the county. She said she will be a liaison between jurisdictions during the project.

Vaughn Brown, JLA Public Involvement, reviewed the meeting agenda and led committee member introductions.

Charter

Vaughn reviewed the committee charter (view meeting materials: multco.us/earthquake-ready-burnside-bridge/project-librarymu), explaining it provides a description of committee roles and expectations. He said one of the purposes of the committee is to ensure the project is compatible with different jurisdictions' plans and policies, with the goal of bringing a regional view to the discussion, as well as to establish partnerships. Committee members accepted the charter by affirmation.

Project Overview

Megan Neill, Multnomah County Project Manager, presented a project overview. She described the risk of a catastrophic Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and how public awareness of this potential disaster has increased in recent years. She said the city's downtown bridges are vulnerable to a major earthquake, and there is a need for a seismically resilient river crossing. In Multnomah County's *2015 Willamette River Bridges Capital Improvement Plan*, the Burnside Bridge was identified as the number one priority for a seismic resiliency project. She explained that the county is focusing on the Burnside Bridge because of its location on the Burnside Street regional lifeline route. Additionally, the other county-owned bridges in central Portland (Broadway, Morrison and Hawthorne) have structural issues that make them especially vulnerable to earthquake damage and more difficult to retrofit for seismic resiliency. Finally, the other bridges are prone to failure caused by the collapse of other non-resilient bridges crossing above them.

Neill described the complex activities and transportation facilities underneath and over the Burnside Bridge: on the west side this includes TriMet's MAX light rail, Saturday Market, Naito



Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge

Better. Safer. Connected.



Parkway, and Tom McCall Waterfront Park; on the east side, the Eastbank Esplanade, I-5 freeway, and Union Pacific railroad; river traffic on the water; Burnside Skatepark, and the thousands of automobiles, bikes and pedestrians, and multiple TriMet bus routes that cross the bridge every day.

Neill explained the importance of Burnside Street's designation as a regional lifeline route; it is critical to provide a street and river crossing that will be useable as an evacuation and emergency transportation route after a major disaster.

The goal of the feasibility study is to recommend alternatives for creating a resilient river crossing. The study is expected to be complete by fall 2018. After that, a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) study will evaluate the alternatives, followed by design and construction. Funding is currently being sought for the NEPA phase.

Heather Catron, HDR, presented the overall process and timeline for the feasibility study.

A committee member asked why the NEPA portion is expected to take up to four years. Catron replied this estimate is based on experience with similar projects.

Catron said the feasibility study will review a broad range of options, which will be narrowed into a smaller set of feasible alternatives that will be further evaluated in the NEPA study. She noted that, in addition to the Policy Group, the project's other committees include: the Stakeholder Representative Group, made up of a wide range of community stakeholders and interests; the Senior Agency Staff Group, representing relevant agencies and elected officials; and the Seismic Resiliency Committee, made up of technical experts. She said the feasibility study is currently finishing up the project initiation phase and moving into preliminary alternatives development phase.

The committee viewed a draft animation video that shows the predicted effects of a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake on the existing Burnside Bridge. Catron shared feedback received about the video and asked the committee for reactions. Feedback included:

- Add context about what is expected to happen to the other Portland bridges in an earthquake.
- Clarify that the Burnside Bridge will not be the only bridge that will collapse and block river traffic.
- Compare the effects of a Cascadia Subduction Zone level earthquake in Portland to other places in the world that have experienced similar scale earthquakes. *Catron responded that the project team is developing other videos, one of which does discuss earthquake experiences of places like Chile and Japan.*
- Reach out to Carmen Merlo of Portland Bureau of Emergency Management for research and resources.
- Involve the Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization, which is developing early warning systems.

- A member asked if the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute is involved in the project. *Steve Drahota, HDR, responded that the project will reach out to industry experts later, after the alternatives have been narrowed down and the Seismic Resiliency Committee has completed its work.*
- One member asked if the project team is considering the potential of earthquakes originating from Portland-area faults. *Drahota responded yes. These crustal faults are being considered as part of the seismic analysis process.*

The group discussed regional transportation priorities. A committee member expressed concern; the project must be thought of in regional terms, considering many other bridges in the Portland-metro area and surrounding counties are expected to fail. The project team will need to make the case that this is a project of regional significance to convince Washington County and other jurisdictions to support funding. Catron responded that Burnside's lifeline corridor designation reflects the street's regional significance. Other committee members added that there will need to be a regional effort to reinforce Burnside Street as a lifeline route, and the project needs to be a part of a regional transportation funding package. Chair Kafoury responded that the project planning process will continue even if funding sources for future phases of the project are unknown.

A committee member said that Metro's Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation has failed to define a regional transportation system, and there needs to be more consideration of the importance of regional infrastructure for everybody in the region. Co-Chair Vega Pederson said one of the Policy Group's goals is to have a regional conversation about this project.

Catron concluded the project overview portion of the presentation by reviewing the surrounding buildings and transportation infrastructure that are adjacent to or underneath the bridge.

Alternatives Development

Drahota explained that a wide variety of potential solutions are being considered at this point in the process. These ideas are grouped into the following categories:

- **Preserve:** keep the existing bridge and possibly build something next to it;
- **Seismic retrofit:** minor or major retrofit;
- **Replacement:** examples include a low movable bridge, high fixed bridge, or tunnel;
- **Hybrid:** combine retrofit and replacement;
- **Enhance another bridge:** use a different crossing to connect to Burnside Street.

He discussed alternative types that would fit into these groups and showed examples of what they could look like. The team will be looking at alternatives that differ by type of bridge, height, alignment, and other factors.

In response to a question about the potential height of the new bridge, Drahota responded that the team is considering what the anticipated usage would be after an earthquake; it may be

necessary to design the bridge to accommodate large ships that would clear debris. Both lower, movable bridges and high, fixed bridges are being considered. For the high, fixed bridges, a range of vertical clearances are being considered. The range extends from a height of 78 feet (similar to the Tilikum Bridge) to 150 feet (similar to the Fremont Bridge). The design criteria will establish the assumed vertical clearance in the coming months. A high, fixed bridge vertical clearance of 120 feet, residing in the middle of the range, would result in landings that are further from the river than the current bridge's landings near 2nd Avenue on the west side and near Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard on the east side.

A committee member asked whether cost is a factor in the alternatives analysis. Drahota responded that the cost of alternatives will be isolated from the current discussion; however, cost will be considered at the end of the alternatives development phase.

A committee member suggested the criteria should include the consideration of how some buildings adjacent to the bridge landings are already seismically retrofitted or newly constructed, posing less risk of collapse. Drahota responded that this, along with other considerations such as right-of-way, will be included in the alternatives screening process.

A committee member asked what a potential tunnel alternative would mean for active transportation. Drahota responded that a tunnel could be a challenge for active transportation and furthermore, it would be a challenge to build around the existing City of Portland's "big pipe" sewer lines. This alternative, however, will be considered further as part of the screening/alternatives analysis process.

Screening Process

Catron gave an overview of the alternatives screening process. Drahota then expanded on the pass/fail step of the screening process, stating each alternative must pass a set of baseline criteria or will not be considered. To pass, an alternative must preserve TriMet functions, City of Portland roadways and combined sewer overflow, ODOT highway facilities, Union Pacific railroad, and river navigation.

Jeff Heilman, Parametrix, reviewed the next step in screening alternatives – problem statement screening. Alternatives will be evaluated based on how well they support the core project drivers, which are seismic resiliency, emergency response, multi-modal needs, emergency plans, and long-term function.

The comprehensive evaluation step will follow, during which alternatives will be evaluated based on a larger set of criteria that includes social impacts, land use considerations, right-of-way impacts, and others.





Brown reviewed ways members of the public provided input to date, including interviews with community groups, businesses and other Multnomah County departments. The project team has also held several project briefings with stakeholder groups, including neighbors of the bridge.

Brown said the project team held the first committee meetings with the Senior Agency Staff Group and the Stakeholder Representative Group. The Senior Agency Staff Group had several questions and comments about the evaluation process, including clearances, costs, and construction methods. The Stakeholder Representative Group provided ideas about alternatives and feedback on the committee and process.

Brown said the project team will be launching several project-related videos and a public survey, as well as providing additional briefings to community groups, agencies and elected officials over the next two months.

Public Comment

Drew DeVitis, Portland Bureau of Emergency Management, thanked the committee for elevating this conversation's importance and requested a project briefing for his organization.

Closing Remarks

Brown outlined the project's next steps, which include screening alternative groupings, agency technical meetings, developing draft evaluation criteria, and further stakeholder briefings. He said the next Policy Group meeting will be in August 2017. The committee was requested to provide feedback about tonight's meeting within two weeks to Catron and Neill.

A committee member suggested including the Japanese American Historical Plaza and the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center as project stakeholders.

Co-Chair Vega Pederson reinforced the project's regional importance and thanked the members of the committee for their participation. The meeting was adjourned.