

Subject: Burnside Bridge Earthquake ready Alternatives and my argument for saving the current structure

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Aysha Ghazoul. I have been a Bridge operator with Multnomah County for over two years but I have been a citizen of Portland for over 25 years. While I have many opinions on how things could be improved in Portland, I don't always voice them. However in regards to the Burnside Bridge and helping it become earthquake ready, I have a very strong opinion, all be it, one of thousands.

First of all, let me explain simply on a personal level, why this bridge means so much to me. I have always had a very deep connection with the Burnside Bridge, more so than any other bridge. She has always felt like the true "grande dame" of the city. She is elegant with her hundreds of curvy columns, she stands tall with her stunning deco style towers and walkways, and she in no way infringes on the rest of the city. She is the subtlest of bridges, no overhead distractions, no crude highway exits, no rail tracks, just a span that compliments the city in every way.

The Burnside is the heart of the city. It is what splits north from south, it is what provides the most direct central path from the heart of old town to the center of the east side hub. And yet in the last few years, where we once could see the beautiful white Eastside Exchange building, now all we see is development and enormous towering buildings. This for me is where the visual aspect comes in. We cannot change or even stop development at either end of our bridges, but what we do have control over is how our bridges will change and visually stand out over the river.

I looked at the drawings that showed the potential design of the new Burnside Bridge and I was surprised that it was drawn as a vertical Lift Bridge as opposed to it's current bascule design. While I very much appreciate both designs, we already have two vertical lifts "bridging" each end of the river, the Steel Bridge and the Hawthorne. These bridges while beautiful, take up a lot of visual space and block views. Unlike the Morrison and the Burnside which are both bascule and from a distance are merely a horizontal line across the horizon.

There is a certain balance in having the two bascule bridges in-between the others and it allows one to truly see a wide area of the city without the views being disrupted. I would very much encourage not building yet another vertical bridge lift which I think will truly change the city scape dramatically.

Another huge concern of mine is the look of the bridge. Even if it ended up being a bascule bridge, what makes the Burnside so beautiful is it's very deco style architecture. Of course times and styles have changed but I would hope we would end up with something equally if not more beautiful.

I have asked many people their opinions on which of the downtown bridges is the ugliest, and by a long shot, the Morrison consistently comes as the number one choice. The Morrison is a perfect example of a bridge that represents a very specific period in architecture. It's a Brutalist style...very grey, very minimalist and for me personally, not particularly attractive in this example. But at the time that was what was popular and for now and years to come, that bridge is not going anywhere. This is another reason why I feel it is so important to put tremendous thought into the design of the Burnside Bridge because it would be a real shame to remove something so beautiful and replace it with something just average.

In the end, I am someone who values and appreciates historical architecture, and I feel very strongly about renovating old buildings and structures when they are historically significant. For me the Burnside Bridge is truly the heart and beauty of downtown and I will continue to express my personal opinion for as long as we are allowed to.

Thank you for time and for taking my thoughts into consideration.

Aysha Ghazoul

Lead Bridge Operator