EARTHQUAKE READY BURNSIDE BRIDGE

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

BETTER – SAFER – CONNECTED June 10, 2021

Senior Agency Staff Group Meeting #15

Meeting information

Project: Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge

Subject: Senior Agency Staff Group Meeting #15

Date: Thursday, June 10, 2021

Time: 10:00 to 12:00 p.m.

Location: WebEx Virtual Meeting

Attendees:

SASG Members:
Brian Monberg, City of Gresham
Malu Wilkinson, Metro
Mike Morrow, FHWA
Sam Hunaidi, ODOT
Dan Bower, Portland Streetcar
Brett Horner, Portland Parks and Recreation
Patrick Sweeney, PBOT
Liz Smith Currie, MultCo

Additional Invites:
Brendon Haggerty, MultCo
Shaneka Owens, FHWA
Alex Oreschak, Metro
Tate White, Portland Parks and Recreation
Mike Baker, DEA
Suzanne Carey, DEA

Project Team Members:
Megan Neill, MultCo
Mike Pullen, MultCo
Heather Catron, HDR
Steve Drahota, HDR
Liz Stoppelmann, HDR
Cassie Davis, CDavis Consulting
Jeff Heilman, Parametrix
Laura Peña, EnviroIssues

Apologies: Mark Lear, Chris Deffebach, Mike Bezner, Steve Witter, Katie Morrison, Greg Theisen, Lucy Williams, Chris Fick, Jessica Berry, Jeston Black, Jon Henrichsen, Emily Miletich, Jamie Waltz, Teresa Boyle, Emily Cline

Summary Notes

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Heather Catron, HDR, and Megan Neill, Multnomah County, welcomed the group and ran through the meeting agenda.

PROJECT UPDATE

Megan shared a project update with the group starting with some funding context. The current project cost is estimated to exceed $800 million. The County has secured local funds up to $300 million through the Vehicle Registration Fee (VRF). The project team is working to bring the project cost down and into a more affordable range. Several cost saving measures are being considered. She also noted that the City of Portland and other local cities agreed to forgo VRF revenue to provide financial support for the project.

Megan said that the project team was pursuing local, regional, and federal funding opportunities. The team is tracking the federal transportation and infrastructure package, working to submit a RAISE planning grant for the design phase this year, and staying active in conversations around a potential future regional transportation bond measure.

In addition to working to bring down the project cost, County leadership has also asked the team to apply a cost cap for the project this year. This will help provide sideboards for the project team and help ensure that the project doesn't grow beyond the agreed upon scope and budget in the future.

Megan shared some guiding principles that the project team is keeping in mind as they consider cost saving measures. She told the group that the project will be moving forward with the recommended Long Span Replacement Alternative identified in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). This alternative was the least cost option. The team will not consider options that have been previously dismissed. The team will also ensure that the purpose and need of the project is met. This includes seismic resiliency, having a downtown bridge ready for emergency response and regional recovery in the event of an earthquake, and helping meet the region's long-term transportation needs over the next 100 years. The team will also continue to apply the county's equity lens and maintain fiscal responsibility.

Patrick Sweeney, PBOT, asked what the cost cap would be.

- The purpose of the cost cap is to evaluate all the scope elements of the project and see if there are ways to bring the cost down. The current goal is to get the project cost down to under $800 million, but an official cap has not yet been decided.
- Heather added that the cost range of the alternatives in the DEIS were between $850 million to $1 billion. As the County and project team have considered funding opportunities, they have

found that it would be challenging to find funding over the $800 million mark which is why the cost saving measures are being considered now.

Liz Smith Currie, Multnomah County, asked how much money will come from the VRF.

- Mike confirmed that the total is expected to be about $300 million.

COST SAVING MEASURES UNDER ANALYSIS

Steve Drahota, HDR, went over the list of cost saving measures under analysis. He noted that the team is working to make sure the project is affordable while still meeting the purpose and need.

He also shared that there were a series of cost saving measures that the County and project team considered and chose **not** to pursue. The Project will not:

- Reduce seismic design criteria, even if it is technically allowed by code.
- Eliminate potential for future Streetcar on the bridge structure.
- Reduce bridge width to three vehicular lanes. The team will only consider a reduction to four vehicular lanes.
- Eliminate capacity for oversized and specialized heavy haul vehicles to safely use the bridge as a lifeline route after an earthquake.
- Reduce bike/ped width to less than 14 feet on each side.
- Remove the crash worthy barrier between vehicular lanes and bike/ped space. The County is committed to increasing safety for all modes of transportation with a physical barrier.

Cost saving measures under consideration include:

WEST APPROACH BRIDGE TYPE

The proposed change is to go with a girder type as opposed to a cable-stayed or tied arch bridge type. A girder type would not require a superstructure above the bridge deck. It would increase the number of supports in Waterfront Park from one to two sets compared to a cable-stayed or tied arch, but have fewer columns than the current bridge. The girder type would come with an estimated savings of $5 - $10 million.

The Joint Historic Landmarks and Design Commissions support this option because it minimizes visual impacts to the historic districts and best meets zoning code and historic guidelines. These groups also supported a cable-stayed option on the east approach and shared a preference for an asymmetrical bridge that highlights the distinct differences in urban fabric on either side.

BRIDGE CROSS SECTION

Reducing the width of the bridge reduces material costs and will benefit foundational aspects of construction that are based on the weight of the bridge. Steve shared some visual comparisons of the existing cross section, the DEIS cross section, and the refined cross section under analysis on slide 15 of the presentation. The refined cross section reduces vehicular lanes from five lanes to four taking the roadway width from 61 feet to 50 feet. The bike/ped widths reduce from 20 feet to 14 feet on each side. Steve added that a 14-foot bike/ped area matches the current conditions on the Tilikum Bridge. A narrower bridge could save $140 - $165 million.

The project team is also considering the various space allocations between bike/ped and vehicle space as well as several lane configurations for a narrower bridge. Three examples are shown on slide 16. One option is to have two roadway lanes in the east and westbound directions. Another option is to have one westbound lane and three eastbound lanes. This option would be similar to the conditions during the recent maintenance project. A third option is to have one westbound lane, two eastbound lanes, and one reversible lane. The challenge of a reversible lane is how to make it operationally safe. All three options would reserve one of the eastbound lanes as bus-only. The Multimodal and Traffic working groups will be going into much more detail around these conversations and considerations over the summer. A supplemental DEIS will include the results of the detailed traffic analyses around the various lane configuration options.

SKATEPARK COLUMN RELOCATION

If a tied arch bridge type were chosen for the eastside approach, the project team is considering the savings associated with relocating the support columns closer to the Skatepark. This option would not apply for a cable-stayed bridge type.

Relocating the support columns further east, away from the railroad tracks would require less geotechnical mitigation of the soil and result in financial savings. The best place to relocate the columns would be in the area of the Skatepark. This could result in a savings of $15 - $20 million.

The project team is considering several options to try and avoid making a portion of the Skatepark unusable, however, the options come with various other tradeoffs. A few examples are shown on slides 17-20. Steve noted that there are physical constraints in that area, such as proximity to the Yard building and additional right of way acquisitions. To completely avoid the Skatepark, the support columns could be placed just west of the Skatepark, however that would reduce the roadway width of 2nd Avenue and could have implications for freight and motor vehicles. The team is still considering the various impacts and may find some additional options.

PROPERTY IMPACT/RIGHT OF WAY

For the future Streetcar to be able to navigate the Couch Street s-curve and stay within a single lane, a small piece of land will need to be acquired from the Sideyard. Steve mentioned that this would not be an issue if this portion of the road were a single lane instead of two. Eliminating this right of way

acquisition as part of the project could save $5 - $10 million. The County would remain committed to making the bridge structure itself Streetcar-ready but would not acquire the land to keep the Streetcar within a single lane in this area.

EAST AND WEST CONNECTIONS

The County will fund the least-cost, ADA-compliant option for connections from the bridge to the Skidmore Max Station and the Eastbank Esplanade. The project team is considering construction costs as well as maintenance and long-term operations costs for the various options. Connections may be a combination of stairs, elevators, using the existing street networks, or other options. Whichever facilities are constructed will be ADA-compliant.

Steve noted that the total estimated cost savings of $150-210M are still preliminary. More work will be done on these estimates over the course of the next several months and will ultimately be verified by an independent cost estimate review process from a contractor perspective.

Malu Wilkinson, Metro, appreciated the need to consider these cost saving measures. She was glad that the team was not considering removing the eastbound bus-only lane in any of the lane configuration options. She noted the importance of ADA-compliant connections as well as the right of way acquisition for the Streetcar. These measures could have relatively small cost savings with outsized future implications. Metro supports the current DEIS cross section but understands that tradeoffs will be necessary.

Patrick asked what the clearance over 2nd Avenue was on slide 13.

- Steve said that it significantly exceeds the 18’ minimum vertical clearance criteria but will double check the exact measurements.

Patrick also noted that changing the Couch Street s-curve to be a single traffic lane instead of two may not require right of way acquisition, but it would have other implications to the street network further east in that area.

- Steve agreed and said he would consider that detail in future conversations.

Patrick suggested adding a note to the cost saving measures summary slide that makes it clear that the option to relocate columns closer to the Skatepark only applies to the tied-arch option. He recognized that the potential change to columns in this area presents challenges for both the project team and PBOT.

- Steve agreed and said he would update the summary slide.

WORKPLAN, TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS

Megan explained that evaluating the cost reductions will require some changes to the project schedule. The Final EIS and Record of Decision will move from this fall out to next summer. This means that the

design phase will start in mid-2022 and construction is more likely to begin in 2025 rather than 2024. She noted that this change in schedule will also give the project team more time to fundraise and that if funds are secured earlier, construction may start earlier too.

Patrick asked if this meant that completion of construction would move into 2030.

- Steve said that it was possible, but it would depend on the delivery model and the contractor.

Megan added that the team will plan to publish a Supplemental EIS around February 2022. The cost estimate review and cost cap decision will happen this fall. The team will communicate updates and recommendations to the public in late fall and early winter before moving into an official public comment period when the Supplemental EIS is published. The bridge type selection process will continue in 2022 concurrent with the Metro RTP process. The Final EIS and ROD are expected in August 2022.

Targeted working group meetings will continue through 2021. Agencies are welcome to join any of these working group meetings.

Heather added that the information presented to the group would be shared with the Community Task Force the following Monday, June 14th.

ADJOURN

Megan and Heather thanked attendees for their attendance and adjourned the meeting.

SUMMARY OF ALL ACTION ITEMS:

- **Action 1:** Project team to add a note to the cost saving measures summary slide that the option to relocate columns closer to the Skatepark only applies to the tied arch option.