



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

BETTER – SAFER – CONNECTED

February 23, 2022

# Senior Agency Staff Group Meeting #17

## Meeting Information

**Project:** Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge

**Subject:** SASG, Meeting #17

**Date:** Wednesday, February 23, 2022

**Time:** 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.

**Location:** WebEx Video Conference Call

**Attendees:**

**SASG Members:**

Tate White, PPR  
Mark Lear, Portland Bureau of Transportation  
Shaneka Owens, FHWA  
Malu Wilkinson, Metro  
Michaela Skiles, Metro  
Sam Hunaidi, ODOT  
Dan Bower, Portland Streetcar  
Brett Horner, Portland Parks, and Recreation  
Morgan Steele, Portland Bureau of Development Services

**Project Team Members:**

Megan Neill, MultCo  
Mike Pullen, MultCo  
Steve Drahota, HDR  
Cassie Davis, CDavis Consulting  
Jeff Heilman, Parametrix  
Shane Phelps, Parametrix  
Bridger Wineman, EnviroIssues  
Lucy Williams, EnviroIssues

**Additional Invites:**

Liz Smith Currie, MultCo  
Emily Miletich, MultCo  
Caitlin Reff, PBOT  
Sharon Daleo, PBOT  
Alex Oreschak, Oregon Metro  
Mike Baker, DEA  
Suzanne Carey, DEA

**Apologies:** Chris Deffebach (WashCo), Mike Bezner (City of Gresham), Mike Morrow (FHWA), Katie Morrison (Sen. Taylor's Office), Greg Theisen (Port of Portland), Chris Fick (MultCo), Jessica Berry (MultCo), Jeston Black (MultCo), Jon Henrichsen (MultCo), Jamie Waltz (MultCo), Brendon Haggerty (MultCo), Emily Cline (FHWA)





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## Summary Notes

### WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Megan Neill, Multnomah County, welcomed the group and reviewed the meeting agenda.

### PROJECT UPDATE

Megan reviewed the project's upcoming milestones. The project is nearing the end of the outreach period on the cost-saving measures to the Preferred Alternative (PA). The project team is preparing to brief the Policy Group on March 3, 2022, and will ask members to endorse the Community Task Force (CTF) recommendation to adopt the proposed cost-saving refinements. They will also be working with the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) to pass a resolution to update the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

### Workplan

Megan noted that the project's environmental phase is starting to wind down with the publication of the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS), targeted in May 2022. Following the publication of the SDEIS, there will be a 45-day comment period. Currently, the project team is planning a series of conversations about proposed mitigation measures with stakeholders. Once mitigation measures are finalized the project will seek approval from the Board of County Commissioners and work with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to incorporate them with the FEIS. The environmental review phase will officially be completed after the Final EIS and Record of Decision is published at the end of 2022. The design phase will begin in the fall of 2022.

Megan paused to ask for questions and comments:

- Malu Wilkerson introduced Michaela Skiles from Metro. Michaela has been managing Metro's NEPA work on Southwest Corridor, which is close to wrapping up. She will be attending meetings instead of Alex Oreschak from Metro moving forward.
  - Cassie Davis, Megan Neill, and other members of the team welcomed Michaela to the SASG team.

### City Council Debrief

Megan and Sharon Daleo briefed SASG members about the project team's briefing to Portland City Council in December. Megan said, in general, there is support from all five city councilors. The meeting also included many public comments about the possible ramp connections between the bridge and the Eastbank Esplanade. The City is currently generating some funding to internally study options for that connection. The County will be coordinating closely with the City if a ramp does get funded.



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## REVIEW COMMUNITY INPUT AND CTF RECOMMENDATION ON PA REFINEMENTS

Mike Pullen, Multnomah County, gave an overview of the recent round of public outreach. Three primary methods of outreach were used: briefings, the online open house/survey, and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) outreach through the Community Engagement Liaison program. Mike reviewed a detailed list of outreach outcomes:

- 45+ Briefings to agencies, individuals, & organizations
- 8 Diverse community discussion groups
- 4,000+ Unique visitors to the online open house and survey
- 1,500+ Survey responses
- 6 Language translations of the online open house and materials
- 21 Social media posts and advertisements
- 3,466 Project e-newsletter recipients
- 10 News releases and e-newsletters (from project & others)
- 11 Media stories

Bridger Wineman, EnviroIssues, presented detailed results for each survey question including quantitative results from several demographic groups including total respondents, people who speak languages other than English, people with income less than \$30,000, and people who use transportation methods other than driving. Bridger also shared qualitative results that included key themes from open-ended survey questions, opinions heard in project briefings, and opinions heard in DEI discussion groups.

### CTF Recommendation

Mike reviewed the Community Task Force's (CTF) recommendation of the proposed cost-saving refinements. There was unanimous support for the bascule movable span and westside girder approach. For the third proposed refinement to reduce bridge width, four CTF members voted "support", nine members voted "I can live with it", and three members voted "Do not support".

Overall, CTF members did not want to slow down the project or prevent it from advancing. However, members expressed their desire and preference for the wider bridge should funding be available, citing the following reasons:

- Maintaining a fifth lane to minimize traffic impacts
- Having more space for bike/ped facilities
- Having more space for emergency response needs following the earthquake



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## REVIEW POLICY GROUP MEETING AGENDA

Megan shared the mix of agencies and elected leaders that are represented on the Policy Group. She reviewed the planned agenda for the upcoming meeting which included the protocol for public comment, review of refinements, community input, CTF recommendation/testimony, and next steps.

### Managing Cost

Megan discussed the County's intention to manage project costs and ensure fiscal discipline. The project team will establish a planning level not-to-exceed budget to control project spending. This approach will help ensure fiscal discipline and stewardship of tax dollars. The overall budget for the project is \$895 million. This budget will be shared with the PG and BCC in March.

Megan paused to ask for questions and comments:

- Malu was interested in knowing what response or concerns the project team received about the disproportionate impact of the cost-saving refinements on vehicles. She mentioned that Commissioner Nolan may have concerns with how much drivers are contributing to funding the project through vehicle registration fees.
- Malu asked if anyone had spoken with TriMet staff about the bridge narrowing. Steve answered that the project team was working on a briefing and will also discuss accommodating bus station space with TriMet.

### Funding Status

Megan shared an update on the County's search for project funding. There are currently four national funding opportunities as a part of the federal infrastructure bill that the project team will be focusing on in 2022:

- **\$12.5B Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) competitive grants for nationally significant bridges and other bridges** - Grant funding program assisting state, local, federal, and tribal entities in rehabilitating or replacing bridges, including culverts.
- **\$8.78B Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Program** - State formula and grant funding supporting resilient transportation systems. This includes funding for evacuation routes, coastal resilience, making existing infrastructure more resilient, etc.
- **\$15B Megaprojects Grant Program** - Dedicated funding to support large, multimodal, multijurisdictional projects that are critical to our economy, but too large or complex for existing funding programs.
- **\$15B Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)** - Grant funding program supporting surface transportation projects of local and/or regional significance.

Megan paused to ask for questions and comments:





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- Mark Lear, PBOT, commented that some of those mega-funding opportunities are good and that it would serve the project to get a strategy in place soon to not get left behind.
- Tate White, Portland Parks and Recreation, asked how many votes from the PG and the BCC are needed to approve the refinements and if all of the cost-saving refinements will be packaged together into one vote. She also asked if the PC and BCC would also be voting on the cost cap.
  - Megan replied that the refinements would be voted on as a package.
  - Cassie added that members would have an opportunity to include comments or caveats with their votes.
  - Mike said neither the PG nor the BCC will vote on the cost cap. It is a cost management tool for the project team.

## NEXT STEPS

Megan thanked SASG meeting attendees for their comments and reviewed the timeline for the decision process, and environmental review:

- **March 3, 2022 Policy Group Meeting** – Share community and CTF feedback and seek Policy Group’s approval before 3/17 MultCo. BCC votes on Revised PA Adoption
- **March to July** – Mitigation discussions
- **May/June** – Publication of SDEIS and public comment period
- **July CTF Meeting** –Review SDEIS feedback and mitigation strategies. Preparing for Final Design and committee recruitment. Celebrate the conclusion of CTF Environmental Phase work.
- **July SASG Meeting** –Review SDEIS feedback and mitigation strategies. Prepare for Final Design and share committee work plan.
- **Nov/Dec** –Final EIS and Record of Decision

## ACTION ITEMS

- None