



## Stakeholder Representative Group Meeting #1

### DRAFT Meeting Summary

April 17, 2017  
6:00–8:00 p.m.  
Multnomah County Building  
501 SE Hawthorne Blvd., Portland

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#### SRG Members Present

Chris Dorin, *Neighborhood Emergency Teams*  
Mark Ginsberg, *The Street Trust*  
Arthur Graves, *Multnomah County Bike/Ped Advisory Committee*  
Talia Jacobsen, *Multnomah County Bike/Ped Advisory Committee*  
Dan Lenzen, *Old Town/Chinatown Community Association*

Susan Lindsay, *Buckman Community Association*  
Juliana Lukasik, *Central Eastside Industrial Council*  
Josh Mehrer, *University of Oregon Student*  
Kathy Pape, *Central City Concern*  
Travis Williams, *Willamette Riverkeeper*  
Sharon Wood Wortman, *Author of Bridge Stories*

#### SRG Members Absent

Marie Dodds, *American Automotive Association*  
Lisa Gugino, *Saturday Market*

Jana Jarvis, *Oregon Trucking Association*  
Elias Parise, *Burnside Skatepark*  
Dan Yates, *Portland Spirit*

#### Staff and Consultants

Ian Cannon, *Multnomah County*  
Megan Neill, *Multnomah County*  
Mike Pullen, *Multnomah County*  
Christian Gaston, *Multnomah County*  
Chris Fick, *Multnomah County*  
Karyne Kieta, *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*

#### Member of the Public

Ron Swaren

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## Welcome and Introductions

Vaughn Brown, JLA Public Involvement, opened the meeting by welcoming committee members and staff to the first Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Stakeholder Representative Group (SRG) meeting. The committee members, County and consultant staff introduced themselves and committee members briefly stated why they are interested in the project.



Vaughn reviewed the meeting agenda and described the upcoming steps of the project and process.

## Charter

Vaughn reviewed the Stakeholder Representative Group charter and procedural guidelines for the committee. (*View the SRG Charter and other meeting materials: [multco.us/earthquake-ready-burnside-bridge/project-library](http://multco.us/earthquake-ready-burnside-bridge/project-library)*)

There will be four committee meetings over the next year and a half.

Committee members were asked to nominate an alternate and inform the committee if they are unable to attend a meeting.

It is important for the conversation to be balanced, and strive to reach consensus.

Since it is expected that there will be a need for communication between committee members in between meetings, Vaughn asked if there were any objections to sharing member contact information with members of the committee. There were no objections.

A committee member asked about voting procedure or quorum rules. Vaughn responded that the SRG will not be asked to do any formal decision making, instead there will be a goal to reach agreement on project-related recommendations.

The committee assented to the charter.

## Project Overview

Megan Neill, Multnomah County, thanked committee members for participating in the SRG and presented the project overview. (*Meeting materials are available in the website project library.*)

Some of the points of clarification or explanation during Megan's presentation included:

- In response to a slide about the timeline, which includes a "Design/Right-of-Way" phase, a committee member asked if there was consideration of expanding the right-of-way. Megan replied that preferences around Right-of-Way impacts will be captured in the evaluation criteria phase of the screening process.
- There are currently projects to repair and maintain the bridge, which are separate from the feasibility study, and necessary to keep the bridge safe and operational for another 15 to 20 years.
- A committee member asked what success looks like for this phase of the project. Megan responded that the goal is to explore every possible solution to bring the bridge up to necessary seismic standards for a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake, develop screening criteria for eliminating options, identify values, and ultimately narrow the options to a smaller set of feasible alternatives.

Heather Catron, HDR, continued the presentation, and described what a feasibility study is and what is involved in the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process. The feasibility study

will take a wide range of ideas and screen them into a narrower set of alternatives that will go through the NEPA study. The process will likely be required to produce an environmental impact statement.

Heather then reviewed the project timeline and the other project committees (Policy Group, Senior Agency Staff Group, and Seismic Resiliency Committee).

### **Earthquake Animation Video**

The committee viewed a draft animation video that shows the predicted effects of a Cascadia Subduction Zone level earthquake on the existing Burnside Bridge. Comments from committee members about the video included:

- It creates a sense of urgency to get the project completed.
- Why is the bridge always shown from the south? Staff responded that the southern elevation shows the distinctive drawbridge operator booths.
- The narration didn't talk about the intensity of the earthquake on the Richter scale. Staff responded that the video represents the expected shaking that would occur with a large-scale Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake.
- It would be informative to add a time element to the animation.
- Suggestion to add information about emergency preparedness resources.
- Suggestion for better realism with rendering the people on the west side of the bridge.
- Suggestion for more explanation about liquefaction, since this is not a well-understood concept.
- The lifeline will be compromised by collapsed buildings on Burnside blocking the street.
- The video is scary. It is unnecessary to scare people in order to convince them to make a bridge replacement a priority. Heather responded that the goal is to raise awareness among people who aren't necessarily as well informed as committee members.
- Suggestion to add explanation about why Burnside is designated a priority lifeline instead of the Sellwood or Tilikum bridges.
- The Neighborhood Emergency Teams expect that all the bridges will be closed after an earthquake.
- The video does not need to show the bridge blocking river traffic because the other bridges also will collapse and block the river.

## **Stakeholder Interests**

Steve Drahota, HDR, introduced the discussion of key interests by showing how the Burnside Bridge can be thought of as consisting of three discrete pieces: the west approach, the river crossing, and the east approach. It is buttressed by buildings on both sides, and surrounded by lots of activity. The U.S. Coast Guard has right-of-way priority for cargo vessels on the river over auto traffic.

A committee member asked how far the bridge extends and what is considered as a part of this study. Steve responded that the team will be considering the full length of the bridge alternative being considered, including its approaches. In its current form, this extends from SW/NW 2<sup>nd</sup>

Avenue on the west side to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard on the east side. This length will vary depending on the alternative in question.

Steve asked the SRG what their project interests are. Committee members' responses included:

- A new replacement bridge should be able to serve the city for another 90 years, including if there is an earthquake. There will be a lot of multimodal (bicycle and pedestrian) traffic on the bridge in the aftermath of an earthquake.
- Unreinforced masonry buildings on the west side are a concern because those buildings have a higher likelihood of collapsing in an earthquake.
- We should look at priorities regarding who will be allowed to use the bridge after an earthquake.
- Can the bridge be repaired with a combination of retrofitting and new construction? Yes. Steve responded that a hybrid approach is one approach the team is considering.
- The Burnside Skatepark is significant to a lot of people.
- Cars may swerve into pedestrians on the sidewalk during an earthquake. Consider providing protective barricades for pedestrians and cyclists.
- We will need access for heavy trucks because they will be essential for the cleanup and rebuilding efforts after an earthquake. Steve responded that this is part of the criteria.
- The bridge will have to accommodate vehicles of many different sizes.
- If the bridge must be replaced, we have the opportunity to make something special.
- How can we accommodate the historic nature of the bridge? Steve clarified that there has not yet been a decision about whether to retrofit or replace (or something else).
- Suggestion that the County should plan for a short-term crossing solution, like a pontoon bridge.
- The Tilikum Crossing's approaches are not built to be seismically resilient in an earthquake. Make the Burnside Bridge available for emergency vehicles and seek solutions to make the Tilikum available for pedestrians and bicyclists. Plan in coordination with TriMet.
- A committee member asked if planning efforts will include a consideration of a major earthquake happening before a new bridge opens.
- Suggestion to plan for a cheap bridge in case the earthquake happens before a new one is built (considering that it will be unlikely that a second major earthquake will occur within a few decades after the first one).

## Alternatives Development

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

The committee was given a printed handout of the Bridge Concepts List (*Meeting materials are available in the website project library.*) Steve presented what different alternatives might look like.

A committee member asked if there is a commercial river user on the committee. Dan Yates, owner of Portland Spirit River Cruises, is a member of the committee but not present at this meeting. It was suggested that the Port of Portland would be a good member for the SRG committee.

Committee members asked about how rules pertaining to right-of-way for river users will constrain options, and if cost will be considered. Staff responded that these will be considered later in the planning process.

A committee member expressed concern that the group is not inclusive – all members are white. Heather explained that the recruitment process included reaching out to organizations that represent communities of color, but they declined to participate on the committee. The project team will convene a focus group to discuss equity issues pertaining to the project. The Burnside Bridge is also in close proximity to several homeless community resources. It is important to the County to have a representative from the homeless and low-income communities on the SRG, which Central City Concern is serving.

## Screening Process

Steve presented the main steps of the screening process:

- **Pass/fail.** Eliminate concepts based on major constraints while preserving and maintaining essential facilities such as TriMet service, major roadway facilities (like Naito Parkway and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard), combined sewer overflow pipes, ODOT highways, Union Pacific railways, and river navigation.
- **Problem statement screening.** Evaluate concepts based on how well they respond to the main drivers of the project as defined in the problem statement: seismic resiliency and emergency response (good, fair, pass/fail); followed by multi-modal needs, emergency plans, and long-term functionality (good, fair, poor).
- **Comprehensive evaluation.** Evaluate the remaining concepts with consideration of social, environmental, and other issues.

### Screening Criteria Feedback Form

Heather explained the screening criteria form handout, which is intended to gather feedback from the committee about how they prioritize criteria such as seismic resiliency or long-term functionality. Committee members shared their questions and critiques on the form:

- The form appears to be stacked against the multi-modal needs category. As is, it forces multi-modal needs to be pushed down to the least important topic because nobody is going to vote against seismic resiliency or emergency response. Jeff Heilman, Parametrix, responded that the form is about weighting criteria, not eliminating them.

- One of the criteria topics on the form, “long-term functionality,” is a fuzzy category that does not fit with the others. The category’s definition should include multimodal transportation options, instead of how they are currently presented as mutually exclusive topics.
- Suggest replacing the words “passenger vehicles” with “motor vehicles” in the definition of multimodal screening criterion.
- How much does weighting matter at this level of analysis? Staff responded that it depends on the raw scores and weights, and that we will report both weighted and unweighted results so that the effect of weighting will be transparent.
- There is need for clarification of what the duration of the “post-earthquake” time period means. Staff responded that agencies have different answers to this, depending on how local or regional their focus is.

Vaughn recapped the conversation about the screening criteria feedback form and suggested that the project team should rethink how to ask the questions about criteria ranking.

A committee member suggested that an expedited construction timeline should be one of the main criteria, considering that an earthquake could happen at any moment.

## Next Steps

Heather walked the committee through the upcoming project activities, including upcoming committee meetings, briefing opportunities, and technical meetings with agencies.

The next Stakeholders Representative Group committee meeting will be in July.

The committee was asked to provide any additional feedback they may have within two weeks of this meeting.

## Public Comment

The meeting went over time and the public comment portion of the meeting did not occur. Ron Swaren attended the meeting with the intent to comment. On April 18, 2017 Ron submitted the following statement to the committee via email:

For Meeting #1, I had signed up and prepared for contributing public comment to this meeting as follows: I have experience in seismic upgrade construction dating to circa 1990 and have followed news of seismic conditions of our area and advances in seismic retrofit technology for buildings and bridges. Seismic reinforcement methods will only improve over time as there are now many countries producing innovation. Construction materials will also improve. One member of the committee stated that any new bridges should be for 90 years. I would have said that we should double that expectancy. Secondly, all reports regarding earth movement in the Pacific Northwest indicates that there is less potential for large movements in the Willamette Valley as opposed to Southern Oregon Coastal areas, and Siskiyou mountains. The North Puget Sound area and Vancouver Island also indicate more potential for large earth movements. Third, the Burnside Bridge should not be considered the chief

"lifeline" route across the Willamette should an unlikely event occur here. This is acknowledged to be a complicated project no matter what the course is. Yet Multnomah County maintains and owns other downtown Portland bridges that can function for the same purpose. These may need far less upgrading.

A video was presented which suggests worst case scenarios. And the notion that the Burnside Bridge was elemental and unique in its function to sustain east west travel was reinforced. This notion seemed to provoke hysteria that without major investment in the Burnside Bridge families would not be able to reconnect after an earthquake. However, other bridges have received some upgrading already, and further work could pose less financial challenge, thus essential connections would be maintained.

Lastly, construction materials are rapidly improving with more durability and lighter weight. It would make little sense to seismically upgrade the Burnside Bridge and retain the present mass of the roadway and supporting trusses. The more mass a structure has the more risk it carries for seismic damage, due to high inertia forces. To reduce this risk entails either a lighter structure or an area with less inertial forces.

Given the low probable risk of a major earthquake located proximately to Portland why should we invest much in the Burnside Bridge. Other bridges can maintain the lifeline function with far less investment.

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## SRG Meeting #1 Action Items

The following tasks are to be completed by project staff prior to the next SRG meeting:

- Collect and distribute contact information among committee members.
- Respond to SRG comments on the animation video.

There were several action items relating to the criteria that should be updated prior to sharing the information with the general public:

- Rethink and revise the criteria weighting question on the screening criteria feedback form.
- Update text in criteria definitions: change "passenger vehicles" to "motor vehicles".
- Add definition of "seismic" in the table of screening criteria on page 35 of the presentation.
- For the sake of audiences who might be less familiar with the subject, change or clarify the terms used in the description of the screening criteria to be more descriptive.