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December 2, 2020

Urban Design and Aesthetics Working Group (UDAWG) – Meeting #6 Notes

Project:	Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge (EQRB)
Subject:	Urban Design and Aesthetics Working Group
Date:	Wednesday, December 2, 2020
Time:	1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
Location:	WebEx (see email for link)

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Randy Gragg, Executive Director, Portland Parks Foundation
Bill Will, Public Works Artist
Paddy Tillett, ZGF
Chris Herring, Artistic Director, Portland Winter Lights Festival
~~Megan Crosby, Urban Development + Partners~~
~~Ian Williams, Deadstock Coffee~~
~~Priscilla Macy, Oregon Outdoor Coalition~~
~~Izzy Armenta, Oregon Walks~~
Dave Todd, Portland Rose Festival
Brian Kimura, Japanese American Museum of Oregon

AGENCY GROUP MEMBERS

Patrick Sweeney, PBOT
~~Teresa Boyle, PBOT~~
Lora Lillard, BPS
~~Rachel Hoy, BPS~~
Hillary Adam, BDS
Tate White, PPR
Justin Douglas, Prosper Portland
Bob Hastings, TriMet
Magnus Bernhardt, ODOT

PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS

Megan Neill, Multnomah County
Mike Pullen, Multnomah County
JD Deschamps, Multnomah County
Suzanne Carey, DEA
Heather Catron, HDR
Steve Drahota, HDR
Cassie Davis, HDR
Michael Fitzpatrick, HDR
Katy Segura, HDR
Jeff Heilman, Parametrix
Allison Brown, JLA
Carol Mayer-Reed, Mayer/Reed
Jeramie Shane, Mayer/Reed
Josh Carlson, Mayer/Reed
Anne Monnier, KPFF

COMMUNITY TASK FORCE OBSERVERS

Bill Burgel, Ed Wortman, Susan Lindsay



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Purpose:

The purpose of the UDAWG is to serve as a technical resource body to the CTF for urban design and aesthetics by:

- *Providing informed insights and opinions on the visual features for each type selection option*
- *Recommending measures to enhance aesthetic opportunities or mitigate potential visual impacts*
- *Representing urban design and aesthetic interests*
- *Reflecting the character of Portland by suggesting place-making opportunities*

Outcomes:

The outcomes for the UDAWG group are to:

- *Inform a set of feasible bridge type options for the CTF's consideration*
- *Inform a project-specific Visual Performance Standard for use during the Type Selection and Final Design phases*
- *Recommend visual and aesthetic evaluation criteria for consideration by the CTF*

Notes:

WELCOME, INTROS, PRE-MEETING INFO, AND GENERAL COMMENTS

- Introductions
- Pre-meeting information
- Purpose and Outcomes
- Meeting Objectives
 - Next Meeting: Info to CTF
 - Bridge Type Input
 - Type Selection Evaluation Criteria Recommendations
- Project Update
 - Community Task Force (CTF) Meetings
 - Future: Dec 7th (Discussion of Type Selection Evaluation Topics and Criteria)
 - Future: Dec 22nd (Recommendations for: Range of Bridge Types and Type Selection Evaluation Topics and Criteria)
 - Working / Focus Groups
 - West-side connections options (ongoing)
 - Eastbank Esplanade connection options (ongoing)



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GENERAL COMMENTS

- Carol Mayer-Reed: Sometimes it feel like we are cutting short on really rich discussions, so we have talked about adding an hour or two to Meeting #7 and/or add another 2-hour meeting in late January. After all of this hard work, we feel like we could use some extra time together to make sure it is where we want it to be.
- Steve Drahota: As we go through this meeting, that is something to keep in mind and ponder as we discuss, and we will circle back to this at the end of today's meeting.
 - Bob Hastings (via chat): Works for me on 12/16 for an additional hour. And yes, for another meeting in January.
 - Lora Lillard (via chat): I'm game for the extra time too.
 - Hillary Adam (via chat): Extra time is a good idea - and meeting in January.
 - Paddy Tillett (via chat): Important to maintain momentum, so I support the January meeting too. Longer Dec meeting OK too.
 - Magnus Bernhardt (via chat): Extra time is a good idea. Works for me. I like where Steve is going with additional meeting time. Last 4 hour meeting went by quickly.
 - Randy Gragg (via chat): I'm in.
 - Chris Herring (via chat): I like the extra time for the next meeting. I'm ok with 4 hours
 - Brian Kimura (via chat): Yes, good with more time.
 - Dave Todd (via chat): More time next meeting plus additional meeting are good ideas. I am on board with both.
 - Bill Will (via chat): More time + another meeting is a good idea. Go for 4 (hours).

KEY VIEWS AND VISUAL ELEMENTS

- Images shown were extracted from the Visual Technical Report.
 - West Approach Images
 - River Crossing Images
 - East Approach

DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS

- Carol Mayer-Reed: As I'm looking at these images, I'm realizing that the supports in the river are going to be outside of where they are placed now, so the movable span is much bigger than we have now – is that correct?
 - Steve Drahota: Yes, the delta pier concept places the pier to the west or east of the existing pier; the result of this would be a longer movable span. There is a different option coming to the floor that places a potential pier to the north or south of the existing pier; creating the same opening length that exists today. We are in the process of exploring that particular concept, so it hasn't been shared yet.
 - Carol Mayer-Reed: Thank you for bringing that up; we're going to have different proportions for the bank to pier span and that's just dawning on me.



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- Patrick Sweeney (via chat): Thank you Carol - this is an important perspective.

DRAFT TYPE SELECTION EVALUATION CRITERIA (HOMEWORK REVIEW)

Definitions

- What are topics and criteria (interests and values) under development (now)? : Principles or standards by which something may be judged or decided.
- What are measures (information needs) TBD (future)? : Metrics to quantify or qualitatively assess the performance or value of something relative to a given standard or principle.

Guiding Principles

- Under Development (Now)
 - Help differentiate alternatives
 - Reflect input received to-date
 - Help inform the evaluation of options and identification of a preferred bridge basic type and form
- TBD (Future)
 - Measurable at the level of design and information that will be available in this step

TOPIC 1: URBAN CONTEXT AND EXPERIENCE (A, B, C)

- Carol Mayer-Reed: Everyone can appreciate how difficult it can be to take a document like this Type Selection Evaluation Criteria and get consensus on it. If you see something that's popping up that spurs you, it doesn't mean we won't accommodate it, but I want to make sure we focus on the ideas behind them and get through all of this.

DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS: A. ON-BRIDGE EXPERIENCE

A. On-bridge Experience: How well does the bridge option provide public benefits from its deck surface, including:

- Views from the bridge deck toward the cityscape, including downtown and the Eastside, distant landscapes and natural environment, adjacent up-and down-river bridges, and other key viewpoints.
 - Bridge type that provides opportunities for programming and public events (such as the Rose Festival Parade) and civic gatherings.
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- Patrick Sweeney: As far as the on-bridge experience, I noted that some parts were considered “primary” or “secondary” design features, but I think they should all be considered equal.
- Carol Mayer-Reed: I saw that and thought it was a good comment, but I should note that “secondary” elements are going to be considered as part of the overall composition of the bridge type. I had the same questions for the project team. For instance, a railing isn’t going to determine a bridge type, but it is an important element. In this particular exercise, we are trying to get to the largest decision of all which is the bridge type.
- Bob Hastings (via chat): Suggest organizing the sub-criteria in hierarchy: near, mid-range, distant views. And where you are on the bridge. And what mode is being used for the views.
- Bob Hastings: I want to suggest that there is a formal way to organize this criteria. This acknowledges Steve’s statement that these criteria are somewhat subjective, but perhaps at least organize the subjectivity. Where on the bridge are you? What part of the bridge are you seeing? Each of those will have different ways they play out.
- Brian Kimura: [Read his homework response regarding the on-bridge experience]. Maybe there should be a criteria that keeps nature in mind. The on-deck experience could be an extension of Waterfront Park. Is there a way to reframe that focus and say it’s both about being in nature **and** viewing nature? If nature is incorporated into this bridge it can provide some mitigation to reduce the urban island effect. Plants and vegetation can help reduce and muffle the sound and create shade and improve the overall experience. Portlanders like to get out into nature, but could this bridge be a possibility to put you *in* nature.
- Carol Mayer-Reed: That’s really interesting and may be more of a “secondary” item after we sort out the bridge type; I really like that notion.
- Bob Hastings (via chat): Suggest giving some examples of how a bridge type leads to specific kinds of program spaces. E.G.- Cable Stayed vs Tied-Arch...belvederes vs. outboard walkways.
- Bob Hastings (via chat): A lesson learned on Tilikum Crossing was how much natural forces ‘shape’ the structural forms- wind, water, seismic, sunlight...the river’s movement around the in-water piers.

DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS: B. URBAN SETTING

B. Urban Setting: How well does the bridge option’s scale and form authentically fit with the scale and character of surrounding neighborhoods, buildings, parks and districts, including the:

- *Westside Old Town/Chinatown and Downtown neighborhoods*
- *West bridgehead buildings and infrastructure shapes, scale, textures, and color*
- *Eastside Kerns and Buckman neighborhoods and Central Eastside Industrial District*
- *East bridgehead buildings and infrastructure shapes, scale, textures, and colors*



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- Randy Gragg: I have a lot of problems with the phrase “authentically fit” because to me it suggests subservience. I think that precludes a lot of possibilities with the bridge. As an edit, I put in “complement” or “dynamically contrast”.
 - Bill Will (via chat): I strongly agree with Randy on this point.
 - Chris Herring (via chat): I also agree with Randy.
- Paddy Tillett (via chat): This criterion is too general to be useful. The majority of the buildings belong to the same era on the west side, the arches, doorways, etc. On the east side, there is diversity in the architecture, what that tells me is that there needs to be a greater discipline on the west side than there is on the east side.
- Lora Lillard: I do not like the words “fit” or “compatible” because it takes us out of thinking outside the box. I like “respond to”. Not “fitting”, but being strong in its own right; a beacon of resilience.
 - Tate White (via chat): I enthusiastically agree with Lora's comments.
- Patrick Sweeney: I concur about the comments about “authentically fit” and Lora’s comments about “respond to”. In the bulleted list, it’s missing the Eastbank Esplanade.
- Carol Mayer-Reed: Several people mentioned that, I don’t know what happen – I missed it!
- (Randy Gragg via chat) I also question whether Buckman and Kerns are in the visual field, to or from.
- Carol Mayer-Reed: These are great comments everyone.

DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS: C. PUBLIC USE AND CONTEXT

C. Public Use and Context: How well does the bridge option fit within park and river environments under and adjacent to the bridge, including:

- *Ability to improve safety by minimizing columns, and creating adequate sightlines and clearances beneath the bridge structure*
 - *Ability to further activate and enhance the under-bridge space within Waterfront Park for community events and other programmed activities*
 - *Flexible open space and opportunity for an “urban roof” that provides public benefit*
 - *Integration with the Japanese American Memorial Plaza, Ankeny Plaza, Bill Naito Legacy Fountain, and Better Naito Forever, and Vera Katz Eastbank Esplanade*
 - *Compatibility with the varied Willamette River uses, water-surface variability, and reflectiveness on the river surface*
 - *Compatibility with the Burnside Skate Park and local streetscape on the East side*
 - *Attractive under-bridge design consideration, including lighting, materials, and detailing*
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- Lora Lillard: This was the second category and this feels more like an adjacent context that is important to the overall setting.
- Patrick Sweeney: I also moved it up and re-characterized it as an “off-bridge experience” instead of an “on-bridge experience”. There is a total bridge experience when you are not on it, and that is most of the time.
- Randy Gragg (via chat): I have a problem with "integration."
- Randy Gragg: I think of these things as discrete entities. I suggest “to not diminish the integrity of the Japanese American Historical Plaza and the Ankeny Plaza.” I wanted to interrogate that a little more.
- Bob Hastings: Urban Context and Experience and the organization of it starts to speak to what we want the principle to be. I don’t have the answer to that, but it’s helping me organize. We’re trying to evaluate how this is being organized by our values of how we see the urban context and experience of the bridge. It’s a good process.
 - Steve Drahota: In terms of organization (A/B/C), it was meant to be:
 - A. View from the bridge
 - B. What is next to the bridge
 - C. What was directly below the bridge.
 - It was set up similar to the concept of concentric circles: on bridge, adjacent on the bridge, and under the bridge and beyond. Of course, it can be swapped around, but that was the organizational intent.
 - Michael Fitzpatrick: One thing that keeps coming up is the idea of a Chuck Close painting and the scalability, asymmetry, and up-closeness of it. How your experience changes based on the location of where you are, speed, etc.
- Paddy Tillett (via chat): Why should the bridge be designed to be compatible with the skate park? Delete this bullet item. These bullet points are supposed to help us come to a decision which won’t be shaped by the skate park. Let’s get rid of the stuff that has little to no relevance to that. I’m for economy in decision here.
- Lora Lillard (via chat): I also don't agree with the use of the word "compatibility" in this list. Similar to "fit in".
- Magnus Bernhardt (via chat): "Fit" might be better replaced with "respond" to the park.
- Hillary Adam: The first bullet suggests that it places an inherent value on specific columns, but I don’t think they are in and of themselves a terrible thing. I think what those bullets are getting at is to minimize the impact to public spaces. In B, compatibility is a very specific thing as it relates to historic districts and resources – avoiding that word is probably a good idea in general.
- Dave Todd: This is the first area where I threw in a comment. Looking ahead at measurability, each of these bullets seems like a criterion that people are asked to make a decision on. It is asking us to make a single assessment of 3 different dimensions, 2 of which are more fuzzily defined. It is 2.5 dimensions where you’re asking people to provide 1 assessment for. The other thing is having multiple questions that is asking for 1 response.



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TOPIC 2: VISUAL AND AESTHETICS (A, B, C)

DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS: A. VISUAL COHERENCE

A. Visual Coherence: How well does the bridge option's composition provide the perception of visual balance, unity, and flow from key viewpoints, including: Willamette River, Waterfront Park, Eastbank Esplanade, I-5 / I-84 users, Bridgehead buildings, high-rise buildings, and surrounding bridges?

- Carol Mayer-Reed: If we have a bridge that is made up of 3 parts, and there's 1 movable span and 2 fixed spans – all different shapes and sizes – how can cohesion be created? Or do they all get to express themselves in different ways? Do we need to talk about coherence? Is that important?
- Chris Herring: It feels like 2 bridges; the center to the west and the east side from the freeway back. On the east side, there are no real interesting views on that side except for buildings. It's a giant industrial space. Since they've rebuilt all the roads that goes onto it, it doesn't feel like a space you can enjoy walking onto. Now you have all these things in the way and as time goes on, that will continue. As it goes from the center to the west, it turns into something that is more reflective.
- Carol Mayer-Reed: So maybe there is more design risk in that – people may want to see something more plain on the west side and something louder and/or more colorful on the east side?
- Chris Herring: Yes, definitely. I don't see full symmetry across the river as important. It seems like we're starting something new and we can take it anywhere we want.
- Lora Lillard (via chat): "Symmetry" was deleted from this bullet - thank you.
- Randy Gragg: I was surprised it was there at all, so I'm glad to see it removed.
- Paddy Tillett (via chat): "Balance, unity and flow" anticipates three different parts. It does not imply uniformity or symmetry.
- Bob Hastings (via chat): I feel like an asymmetrical composition can still have a composite "wholeness".
- Randy Gragg: It sounds like we are in general agreement about this.

DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS: B. BRIDGE FORM AND STYLE

B. Bridge Form and Style: How well does the bridge option:

- *Express the Portland values and aspirations for inclusiveness, resiliency, accessibility, creativity, optimism, vitality, sustainability, and freedom of expression*
- *Become an identifiable landmark and destination within the city*
- *Balance the overall composition, qualities of openness and transparency (i.e., minimizing the massings) while conveying a sense of seismic stability and reliability*



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- *Respect the past and context while presenting a “forward-thinking” design aesthetic that sets the tone for future urban development and growth throughout its 100-year design life*
- *Reflect proportions and scale that feel balanced among the various structural portions*
- *Honor Portland’s moniker as a “City of Bridges” and its unique location as the center of the City quadrants*
- *Reflect Portland’s transportation values in bicycle and pedestrian safety and accessibility*

- Patrick Sweeney: I think this bullet point reads fine without “forward thinking”; I think it’s too suggestive. Otherwise it reads fine. I also don’t think “massing” is necessary - it is leading, - otherwise that bullet point is fine without it.
- Steve Drahota: The exact words aside, the intent is going to be my question. The ever-present question for a bridge is: Should the bridge be modern, or should it be something that is more historic in nature and represents a style of the past. On behalf of the CTF, they need a response to that question from this group. If the response from this group is that it could be either – that’s fine – but is there a push in one direction or the other? It’s one of the hardest questions to answer for any bridge site. The CTF is looking for that input.
 - Paddy Tillet (via chat): Definitely not historicist. Bridge to the future. State of the art technology.
 - Randy Gragg (via chat): Agreed.
 - Chris Herring (via chat): I agree with Paddy.
 - Bill Will (via chat): I want a contemporary design approach.
- Hillary Adam: I don’t think that the Historical Landmark Commission would be looking for anything that is historicist, but I can’t envision them being jazzed about a super futuristic style. Something that bridges those two gaps in a balanced and unified way is going to be tough. The Historical Landmark Commission can only review the portion that is in their district and the Design Commission can only comment on what is in their district.
- Allison Brown: Does anyone think differently?
 - Tate White: I don’t necessarily think differently, but I want to say “good job, Steve” because it’s good that we are talking about this sooner than later. I would look to Hilary for her advice on this process. We need to consider those aspects and then be able to push the boundaries outside of that.
 - Hillary Adam: I think I’ll have a better understanding, personally, after Monday when the Project Team gives an update to the Historical Landmarks Commission on the preferred alternative and a preview of the bridge selection type and encourage them to identify their values and what they want to see moving forward. Of course, anyone can sign up and watch that briefing.



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- Tate White: I would encourage the Project Team to ask the Historical Landmark Commission that explicitly. I think they'll have interesting feedback on how to do that.
- Randy Gragg: I'm not following; we're building a new bridge, the old bridge will be gone. I understand the contextual issues and the compatibility argument, but I didn't follow you on that Tate.
- Tate: The current bridge is a nationally registered landmark. Through the historical preservation process, it is important to understand what people value about the existing bridge. You can have something new while still valuing that. We could always discuss it more offline.
- Allison Brown: The tension between these two ideas has been very present at the CTF as well. It's probably a good idea to put a mental note there and think about it more or have more conversations offline.

DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS: C. BRIDGE ASPIRATIONS

C. Bridge Aspirations: How well does the bridge option enable opportunities for:

- *Memorable, distinctive lighting for nighttime viewing*
 - *Creation of a gateway and enhanced sense of arrival to and from each side of the river*
 - *Technologies that represent the era in which the bridge is designed, including the potential for exposing the movable bridge mechanisms*
 - *Tactile, human/pedestrian-scale features within its public spaces, including overlooks*
 - *Adapting to future bridge use or under-bridge use changes*
 - *A range of complementary design elements (e.g., Operator's House, Multi-use path Connections, Streetcar features, overlooks, etc.) to be selected during the Final Design phase*
-
- Justin Douglas: Parking lots are designed for the worst case scenario; for that one day a year where they are at max capacity. I think this bridge should be thought of in the same way. This could be the only place that people will be able to get across the river in the event of the Cascadia Subduction Zone Earthquake. It should be seen as a beacon and place of safety in one of the City's darkest hours. Perhaps it could happen with lighting.
 - Steve Drahota: Everything you said is the core of the technical work that the bridge team is performing. Having worked with FEMA after the Northridge Earthquake, bridges serve as a lifeline to home. Until one experiences an event like we're expecting, it's difficult to understand how important providing seismic resiliency and a reliable pathway home really is.. Capturing



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that is important – the good news is that every option includes that inherently. We will look for a way to feed that in a way that makes sense in the next version.

- Chris Herring (via chat): Thanks, Justin. I completely agree.
- Randy Gragg (via chat): It will be one of the, if not the only, bridge standing for a long time until others are built.
- Bill Will (via chat): RE: Justin, someday Portland will have to consider how people will cross the bridge during a crisis. We might think about how the structure works for this.
- Bill Burgel (via chat): Everyone will flood to the Burnside Bridge after a seismic event by the very fact it has been rebuilt with handling damaging seismicity as its driving function.
- Susan Lindsay (via chat): Isn't the bridge only for fire/life/safety right after the quake?
 - Steve Drahota (via chat): It is being designed for all users immediately after the earthquake.

NEXT STEPS FOR CRITERIA

- Paddy Tillett (via chat): Something missing from the criteria is integration of pedestrian access with the bridge design.
- Steve Drahota: This discussion will get absorbed into a new version of the criteria document. If there are items where there is a strong sense that, as an individual, it doesn't sit well with you, then we want to create that narrative. The CTF wants to hear about all these things the UDAWG is working through, not just the final results. This document is your words put into a criteria format. We will give you time to vote on whether you support the new version or not.
- Allison Brown: Come ready to the next meeting with a yes or no, and things to note. There will be space for that in the next meeting.

BRIDGE OPTIONS COMPOSITION AND BASIC FORM (SNEAK PEEK)

- "Overall Composition" Graphics
- "Waterfront Park View" Graphics

NEXT STEPS

- UDAWG Mtg #7: Total Bridge Composition
- Open Dialogue / Questions

ADJOURN