

Public Open House – Bridge Type Selection

DATE: November 28, 2007
TIME: 6:00 TO 9:00 P.M.
LOCATION: Oaks Park Dance Pavilion



The fourth public forum for the Sellwood Bridge project (a public open house) was held on Wednesday, November 28, 2007 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Oaks Park Dance Pavilion. The meeting was structured to encourage community members to visit a variety of informational stations staffed by members of the project team, as well as a short project presentation and Q&A led by Mike Pullen of Multnomah County.

69 people signed in for the meeting, which had been publicized through a mass mailing to 23,000 households in the project vicinity. The open house was also announced through the local media, including newspapers, radio, and interest group websites and blogs.

The purpose of the open house was to obtain public preferences on the range of new bridge types under consideration, review the bridge alternatives being carried forward in the draft EIS, and discuss possible sources of funding. The meeting was staffed by members of the consulting team and staff members with Multnomah County, Portland and ODOT.

Meeting participants were welcomed at a sign-in table by project staff. As community members signed in they were encouraged to attend a project orientation, scheduled to run every hour, as well as to visit the open house stations, view the displays and interact with project staff. The stations included:

- **Bridge Alternatives** - displays featuring the five alternatives being studied in the DEIS as well as options for bicyclists and pedestrians
- **Bridge Types** - displays of the six bridge types for motor vehicles and two additional types for a bike/pedestrian crossing
- **Financing Options** - displays about preliminary plans for funding this project
- **Feedback** - displays to help participants fill out their comment form

Flip charts were located at every station and meeting participants and staff members were encouraged to record comments and questions.

Open House Overview

As with the last three public forums, the open house drew heavily from the Sellwood community. 79% of meeting participants signed in with a 97202 mailing address, so the input received largely reflected a local neighborhood perspective.

Participants appeared to be more interested in the alternatives selected for the draft Environmental Impact Statement than they were about the bridge type selection process. There were some concerns that a four lane (2 for auto/2 for transit) alternative was still on the table and a few people questioned whether that opened the door for a four lane bridge for motor vehicles at some point in the future. There also were concerns about equity in the funding proposals, keeping the bridge open during construction, and how the various elements of each alternative might be hybridized later.

After the comments were compiled, people preferred the **Delta Frame** for the moderately-priced bridge and the **Through Arch** for the higher-priced bridge. The **Suspension** bridge was the favorite type for the dedicated pedestrian crossing. Opinions varied on whether a new structure should be modest and less expensive or whether a more expensive signature bridge would be appropriate.

Orientation Presentation

The project presentation was led by Mike Pullen with Multnomah County Public Affairs. The presentation included a 20 minute PowerPoint slideshow which focused primarily on the bridge alternatives and the new bridge types.

The following general themes were raised during the Q&A sessions:

- Regarding plans to raise local matching funds: County should consider tolls or another mechanism that requires Clackamas County bridge users to pay their fair share. Vehicle registration increase for only Multnomah County tax-payers is unfair.
- When can hybridization of alternatives components happen and will the public be involved?
- Are there differences among bridge types besides cost and aesthetics?
- Which bridge type will be the safest to build and for the public to use? Of the three that can be built in phases, do any have construction advantages or disadvantages?
- Concern that transit use on the 4-lane bridge alternative will change to become 4-lane automobile use in future.
- I don't care what new bridge looks like: low cost is more important.

Observations:

- No comments were made about uniqueness of any proposed bridge types to Portland
- No comments (positive or negative) were made about any bridge type
- Attendees were generally not interested in the bridge type issue, but were more interested in the alternatives, funding, and the schedule/process

Comments at the Stations

Comments shared with project staff members reflected in the following general themes:

- Comments about the process for selection of the preferred alternative. People expected the decision to be made in May when it is actually a long process involving the approval of multiple jurisdictions.
- Concerns about selection of the 2/2 lane cross-section and fears that it could later convert to a 4-lane auto facility.
- Questions about which alternatives shut down traffic for the full length of construction.
- Questions about how 3 or 4 lanes would transition to 2 on Tacoma.
- Concerns that the selection of a bridge type might drive the decision about the alignment.
- A general lack of understanding about how the "hybridizing" of alternatives might work. It is most likely the CTF and the public will be suggesting hybrids and staff will respond to those suggestions.

Comment Forms Summary

Comment forms were made available to all workshop participants. The comment forms were essentially the same as the interactive survey posted to the project website, asking participants to provide their preferences for bridge types overall (moderately-priced and higher-priced), as well as for each alternative, and for the bicycle/pedestrian bridge options.

Fifty-three (53) comment forms were turned in to project staff following the meeting. The results are as follows (*numbers indicate the number of votes for each*):

1. **Overall Preferences Among Bridge Types** - Assuming that there are no limitations to what could eventually be built, please choose one moderate design and one higher-priced design for a replacement Sellwood Bridge.

Moderately-Priced:

Delta Frame - 38
Box Girder - 7

Higher-Priced:

Through Arch - 18
Deck Arch - 16

Cable-Stayed – 8
Extradosed – 3

2. **Bridge Type Preferences for Alternative A (Bike/Pedestrian Crossing)** - With Alternative A, the rehabilitated bridge for motor vehicles would be the same type as it is now (steel truss bridge). A separate bridge for bicyclists/pedestrians would be constructed to the north of the existing bridge. There are eight potential bridge types for the dedicated bicycle and pedestrian crossing – the six replacement bridge types, plus two additional options (Stress-Ribbon and Suspension). Which of these eight options do you prefer for a separate Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge?

Suspension – 16
Delta Frame – 7
Stress Ribbon – 5
Box Girder – 5
Cable-Stayed – 4
Through Arch – 2
Deck Arch – 1
Extradosed – 0

3. **Bridge Type Preferences for Alternative C: 3-Lane Double-deck Replacement** - Only the Through Arch and Cable Stayed bridge types can support a double deck. Which of these two higher-priced options do you prefer for this alternative?

Through Arch – 32
Cable-Stayed – 9

4. **Bridge Type Preferences for Alternative D: 2-Lane Replacement** - The Deck Arch is the only higher-priced bridge option for Alternative D. There are two moderately-priced options. Which of these two moderately-priced bridge types do you prefer for this alternative?

Delta Frame – 37
Box Girder – 7

5. **Bridge Type Preferences for Alternative E: 2- Plus 2-Lane Replacement** - Any of the six bridge types are possibilities for Alternative E. Please choose one moderately-priced type and one higher-priced type.

Moderately-Priced:

Delta Frame – 35
Box Girder – 7

Higher-Priced:

Through Arch - 20

Deck Arch - 12

Cable-Stayed - 7

Extradosed - 3

Open Ended Responses

Do you have anything else to tell us about the proposed bridge types for a replacement Sellwood Bridge?

- The flow of traffic on the west end of the bridge has to flow unobstructed. It seems that would eliminate the traffic delays and accidents caused by the mix of traffic arriving from different directions during the evening rush. How will funding for this impact a river crossing for light rail?
- Please consider earthquake viability.
- Would it be possible to do movable lanes with some sort of barrier that can be moved so more traffic can be accommodated in rush hour?
- Is there any way of distributing traffic off Tacoma before 17th?
- Though cost and safety are of concern to me, as a small business owner and a resident who lives on the west side but works on the east, it is of primary importance that the option chosen allows for car traffic to continue unabated during construction. I would be forced to close and move my business, perhaps permanently, if I had to cut off my customers on the west side.
- Like it or not, there is going to be more demand for through traffic than the Sellwood neighborhood desires. If the neighborhood thinks they can choke traffic on their whim, then the neighborhood should pay for all of it. Don't expect the region to buy the neighborhood a new bridge.
- I live in Sellwood and work in Multnomah Village. I need bridge access so the ½ bridge is a good idea. Put it in basically the same place to save businesses and homes to the north. Do NOT like the bike/ped deck underneath. I would feel unsafe as possible crime would occur with no witnesses from drivers. The homeless would move in and use it as a new home.
- No more than 45 foot bridge
- Keep the bridge alignment away from the best looking office building in the area (Teal option is poor). Don't design a bridge that can handle 4 lanes of traffic for "future" needs. Keep Tacoma 2 lanes. Try to keep the bridge partially open during construction; 3 year closure would hurt Oaks Park.
- Make it four lanes of traffic. Get rid of the old bridge!
- No double-deckers! Double-deckers are a great place for crime!
- No roundabouts!
- I prefer the roundabout East-end (A & B) and the underpass West-end option (C). No stoplights!
- I prefer Alternative B and the underpass option on the West end.
- We should not be picking bridge types until we know cross section and alignment. We need to wait for the EIS. Keep options open for a two deck bridge.
- It is very important to choose a bridge that can be built in halves so there is always a way to get across. However, building a temporary bridge is ludicrous.
- Urge consideration of duplicating the existing Sellwood Bridge on southward 2 lane new bridge and then rehabilitating existing bridge. Maintain route and maintain profile and symmetry. Match aesthetics and clearances (horizontal and vertical).
- Strongly favor existing route
- Strongly favor keeping old bridge in service while adjacent new bridge is built to the south; or building a north and a south split bridge of one lane each

- Keep Staff Jennings
- Please don't remove Staff Jennings. They are an integral part of our operation.
- If a bridge alternative costs more just because it is aesthetically more pleasing, this is a poor use of public funds. We no longer have the luxury to build something "prettier" for more money with no more function. I don't care what the bridge looks like the only reasonable alternative is E, a four lane bridge. Anything less is ludicrous. It took us 25 minutes to get to this open house from 1 MILE AWAY on the west side because we had to cross the bridge.
- You are not solving the accessibility problem. No one on the west side will patronize Sellwood restaurants because crossing the bridge is too difficult. Fix Tacoma, develop Spokane St. as another arterial, BUILD A BRIDGE IN LAKE OSWEGO, but for God's sake, DO SOMETHING!!!!
- I'd like each type to be considered (evaluated in part) for how it will look at night, i.e. with lights to show its architecture features.
- The separate ped/bike bridge is a great idea.
- Would excluding heavy duty trucks and busses extend the life of new bridge to 50 – 70 years? Maximum weight limit = 20 tons deck arch would be alternative to Delta frame (preferred). Remain two lanes plus bike/ped lane on each side.
- It appears that the presented box girder simulation incorporates a slight arch that is pleasant to look at. A square box girder would not get my vote if that was presented as a separate option.
- I **love** the idea of having a separate bridge for bikes and peds. Thank you!
- I don't like the idea of a high price bridge on the new alignment because it looks like it would add noise and disrupt the trails, city park/pool and Sellwood park area. Stay with a simple bridge as in option D, or rehab.
- Please use the Teal location as it obviously would have the least negative impact on the most residents.
- Suspension Ped bridge looks great. I would prefer a yellow alignment rehab or new bridge that will be best for alternative modes of transportation. Also keep side streets north of bridge quiet for bikes and walkers.
- Unlike in downtown, the appearance is not as critical as functionality, given the tight quarters and difficult issues with old connector streets.
- Rehab existing bridge if we can't have the cable stayed. It is to be a 100 year bridge; it is for the future, it should be the best.
- I think if we're spending this huge amount of money we should get a signature and beautiful bridge. In my opinion that means more curves and arches. The Delta Frame can have more curves to it right?
- Tacoma Street needs to be widened to carry more motor vehicle capacity. All neighborhoods must share in throughput arterials, east and west, north and south.
- 30,000 motor vehicles cross the Sellwood Bridge every weekday. Yet less than one half of the deck space is allocated for motor
- I am opposed to the 75' width bridge. It will allow too much traffic now and in the future which conflicts with the Sellwood neighborhood plan. Tacoma is to remain a 2 lane street with outer turn lane and a four lane bridge would create increased congestion and traffic problems. The design which seems to best meet the neighborhood plans is Alternative C.
- Alternative C only makes sense if 2 lanes west in the morning and 2 lanes east at night, pick an alternative that lets current bridge operate while building new bridge.

Do you have anything else to tell us about tonight's Open House?

- Thank you for all coming to Sellwood versus us coming downtown.
- Alternative "C" is the best long term, but is a short term problem
- Nice people, very informative
- The new slide in the presentation were visually helpful
- Thanks!
- Nicely run operation.

- The user should pay; the biggest peak hour user is Clackamas County. Why shouldn't they pay? Don't be afraid of tolls if that yields the best results.
- Well run.
- Good information. Thanks!
- As far as funding goes, it should be Metro or Tri-County since majority of bridge users don't even live in Multnomah County.
- Good
- Nice job picking Oaks Park. They have been very good to us for almost 20 years of operation.
- Very good meeting.
- Funding: By vehicle registration and weight fees for auto and trucks licensed in Multnomah and Clackamas County or increase in fuel taxes for construction work in progress. Best designs: Delta Frame (economical) or another possible plan: Build 4 lane bridge in Lake Oswego area.
- People were very helpful and very knowledgeable. Great open house.
- At the risk of offending anyone, there are so many routes and options offered, but no simple "numbers" or other criteria to base my decision on. A cable bridge seems too expensive in the long run; and may be the worst choice.
- There is no rough estimate of "higher cost". Give us some numbers.
- Helpful. Very interested in bike safety and security on a bridge so I question having a totally separate bridge for bikes/peds.
- 30,000 motor vehicles cross the Sellwood Bridge every weekday. Yet, less than one half of the deck space is allocated for motor vehicle use on any of the replacement options. Therefore if any of these options becomes the preferred alternative, motorists paid taxes must not be used to pay for any more than one-half of the local match money costs. Bicyclists and transit users must be directly taxed to pay the other half. The question also needs to be asked: what is the projected number of daily bicycle crossings?-and based on approximately one third of the total cost for a replacement structure, and what is the cost per bicycle using the crossing? Given the extreme amount of deck space allocated to bicycle transport, using anything less than a one-third cost for any of the entire replacement structures to calculate the cost per bicycle crossing would be a distorted public deception. The public has a right to know the true and hidden costs of providing bicycles this type of infrastructure. With the proposals that have been advanced forward, it is very obvious the Citizen Advisory Committee was not a cross section of the public and was unfairly loaded up with bicyclists and transit advocates making it a stacked deck participation looking for a free ride from motorists, who were under represented on the committee. Furthermore if option E is selected, all four lanes need to be used for motor vehicle traffic. Instead of continuing to have traffic backing up on Westside roads, any new bridge must accommodate the immense need for evening eastbound rush hour congestion storage capacity due to the artificial barriers and obstructions that have been added to Tacoma Street.
- I'm not concerned with the alignment of the new bridge; I'm in favor of the pink.
- My preference for the alignment is the "E" Pink/Teal option. My preference for the width of the bridge is 2 lanes.
- Have we considered a huge ferry, like Seattle, or perhaps a "Channel" like design?
- I am not sure why the public needs to be involved in bridge type selection. It does not seem like a good use of our time, this might help explain the poor turnout. Alignment and bridge size are the most concern to the public.
- Well presented
- We have to have a constant flow of traffic throughout construction, extremely important for business.
- We would like to have constant flow of traffic throughout construction
- Thank you, alternative A or C preferred
- Very good presentation, pictures, explanations-well planned and organized.