

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING THE) RESOLUTION NO. 09-4032
RECOMMENDATION OF THE POLICY)
ADVISORY GROUP REGARDING THE) Introduced by Councilor Robert Liberty
LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR
THE SELLWOOD BRIDGE PROJECT

WHEREAS, Multnomah County owns and maintains the Sellwood Bridge in the City of Portland which is nearing the end of its service life and in the long-term requires either major rehabilitation or replacement; and

WHEREAS, Multnomah County secured federal funding for the public planning and decision-making process which included development of an Environmental Impact Statement in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act; and

WHEREAS, the Oregon Department of Transportation provided \$1.5 million in matching funds towards the Environmental Impact Statement; and

WHEREAS, in June of 2006, the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners convened a Policy Advisory Group (PAG) made up of elected and appointed representatives of jurisdictions with an interest in the Sellwood Bridge; and

WHEREAS, the current PAG representatives are Ted Wheeler (Chair of the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners), Sam Adams (Mayor of the City of Portland), Robert Liberty (Metro Councilor), Jason Tell (Director of the Oregon Department of Transportation - Region 1), Phillip Ditzler (Director of the Federal Highway Administration - Oregon District), Lynn Peterson (Chair of the Clackamas County Board of County Commissioners), Greg Chaimov (City of Milwaukie Councilor), Fred Hansen (Director, TriMet), and Carolyn Tomei (Member of the Oregon House of Representatives); and

WHEREAS, by Resolution 06-084, the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners appointed a Community Task Force (CTF) of 20 citizens representing different points of view and interests to assist in the decision-making process by selecting and recommending a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) to the PAG; and

WHEREAS the PAG was formed to review the recommendations of the CTF and to make their own recommendations. The recommendation that is approved by the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners will be considered by the Federal Highway Administration which has final authority in the matter of the LPA; and

WHEREAS, the CTF beginning in June 2006, analyzed the problems of the Sellwood Bridge project and the potential impacts of all proposed solutions, and on January 19, 2009, reached a consensus on a recommendation for the LPA; and

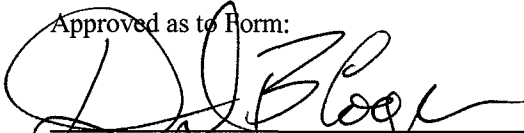
WHEREAS, the PAG met periodically between June 2006 and February 2009, and voted at five milestones to approve intermediate recommendations that led directly to the development of a LPA; and

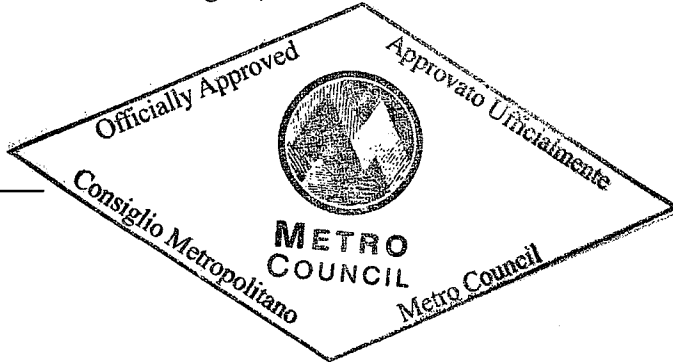
WHEREAS, the PAG considered the recommendations of the CTF and on February 6, 2009, formed its own recommendation on a LPA with conditions; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Metro Council hereby approves the Policy Advisory Group LPA Decision (Exhibit A) with conditions adopted on February 6, 2009, and directs its staff to continue its participation with Multnomah County and other jurisdictions with respect to the LPA and the completion of a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 19th day of March, 2009


David Bragdon, Council President

Approved as to Form:

Daniel B. Cooper, Metro Attorney





Policy Advisory Group LPA Decision

At their meeting on Friday, February 6, 2009, the Policy Advisory Group voted unanimously to endorse the following Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the Sellwood Bridge Project with conditions:

1. Approval of bridge replacement rather than rehabilitation of the existing bridge;
2. Approval of alignment "D" (existing bridge alignment, widened to the south);
3. Approval of a pedestrian actuated signal at the SE Tacoma Street/SE 6th Avenue intersection at the east end of the bridge;
4. Approval of a grade-separated and signalized interchange at the intersection with Oregon 43 (Macadam Avenue) on the west end of the bridge;
5. Approval of a bridge cross-section of 64 feet or less at its narrowest point.

The Policy Advisory Group further directs their staff and the Multnomah County staff to refine the LPA design in accordance with the following conditions:

- Strive to reduce total project cost;
- Consider project phases as constrained by funding availability; recognizing that the established purpose of the project is "To rehabilitate or replace the Sellwood Bridge within its existing east-west corridor to provide a structurally safe bridge and connections that accommodate multi-modal mobility needs;"
- Explore options for reducing the cost of the west side interchange without making traffic conditions worse than the no-build alternative in the DEIS;
- Design the bridge as narrow as possible while maintaining two vehicular travel lanes, bike lane/shoulders, and sidewalks;
- Produce a design consistent with the adopted *Tacoma Main Street Plan*;
- Design the bridge to accommodate streetcar use;
- Minimize impacts to affected property owners;
- Strive to use sustainable construction materials and practices.

DRAFT STAFF REPORT

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 09-4032, FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE POLICY ADVISORY GROUP REGARDING THE LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR THE SELLWOOD BRIDGE PROJECT

Date: February 19, 2009

Prepared by: Tim Collins
503-797-1762

BACKGROUND

After more than 80 years, the Sellwood Bridge has reached the end of its useful service life. The bridge was constructed in 1925 to replace the Spokane Street Ferry, which shuttled passengers across the Willamette River between Sellwood and southwest Portland. The bridge, approximately 1,900 feet in length, is extremely narrow – two lanes, no shoulders or median, and one sidewalk that must accommodate light poles, pedestrians, and bicyclist. The bridge crosses the Willamette River on SE Tacoma Street on the east end and intersects with Oregon Highway 43 on the west end.

The west end of the bridge was constructed on fill material and is located in a geologically unstable area. The hillside above the bridge is slowly sliding toward the Willamette River, exerting pressure on the west end of the bridge. In the late 1950s, the hillside slid several feet toward the bridge. As a result, a 3-foot segment of the bridge deck had to be removed and foundations were reinforced. The west-side interchange with Oregon Highway 43 was completely rebuilt in 1980. Since then, ground movement has caused the west-side approach girders to crack.

Multnomah County is the owner of the bridge, and continues to take steps to prolong the safe use of the bridge until a long-term solution is identified. In June 2003, cracks in both the east and west concrete approaches were discovered and restrained with external steel clamps. The weight limit for vehicles traveling across the bridge was reduced from 32 tons to 10 tons. This limit caused the diversion of 94 daily TriMet bus trips (a loaded bus weighs about 19 tons). The weight restriction is still in effect. In 2005, an engineering study recommended short-term safety improvements for the bridge; cracks in the girders and columns were injected with epoxy in 2008.

The Sellwood Bridge project is listed as Project 1012 on the 2004 RTP financially constrained project list for the RTP program years 2004 to 2009.

The purpose of the Sellwood Bridge project is to rehabilitate or replace the bridge to make it structurally safe. Additionally, the project would improve connections, operations and safety for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians. The bridge carries more than 30,000 vehicles per day, making it Oregon's busiest two-lane bridge. Congested conditions and slow travel speeds occur because the travel demand served by the bridge exceeds the available capacity for several hours each day, primarily the morning and evening peak hours. Multnomah County has been working with ODOT, Clackamas County, the City of Portland, and Metro to find a solution for the bridge. The following four main issues identify the need for this project:

- Inadequate structural integrity to safely accommodate various vehicle types (including transit vehicles, trucks, and emergency vehicles) and to withstand moderate seismic events

- Substandard and unsafe roadway design
- Substandard pedestrian and bicycle facilities across the river
- Existing and future travel demands between origins and destinations served by the Sellwood Bridge exceed available capacity

ANALYSIS/INFORMATION

1. **Known Opposition** - Persons living in the condominiums that will be directly impacted by the alignment of the recommended Locally Preferred Alternative.
2. **Legal Antecedents** – In May 1999, Metro made recommendations (resolution #) for the *South Willamette River Crossing Study*, which included the Sellwood Bridge. One of the study’s recommendations was to preserve the existing Sellwood Bridge, or replace it as a two-lane bridge with better service for bicyclist and pedestrians.
3. **Anticipated Effects** – Adoption of the Locally Preferred Alternative will allow the project to move forward to develop a Final Environmental Impact Statement which will determine the bridge type and size as part of the NEPA process.
4. **Budget Impacts** - None known.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

That the Metro Council approves the Policy Advisory Group LPA Decision (Exhibit A) with conditions adopted on February 6, 2009, and directs its staff to continue its participation with Multnomah County and other jurisdictions with respect to the LPA and the completion of a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).