

COUNCIL MEETING STAFF REPORT

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 23-5306, FOR THE PURPOSE OF
ENDORING THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR THE EARTHQUAKE READY
BURNSIDE BRIDGE PROJECT

Date: December 30, 2022
Department: Planning, Development &
Research
Meeting Date: March 16, 2023

Prepared by: Alex Oreschak
Presenter(s) (if applicable): Alex
Oreschak, Metro and Megan Neill and
Taylor Steenblock, Multnomah County
Length: 30 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

Multnomah County and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) published a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge (EQRB) Project on April 29th, 2022, followed by a 45-day public comment period. FHWA anticipates publishing a Final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD) for the EQRB Project in 2023. In order to publish a Record of Decision, FHWA generally requires that a project be able to demonstrate fiscal constraint by identifying all phases of the project anticipated during the lifetime of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) in the financially constrained project list. Currently, the planning, project development, design, and right of way phases of the project are identified in the 2018 RTP's financially constrained project list. The construction phase of the project is currently in the 2018 RTP's unconstrained project list.

Additionally, on May 5, 2022, Metro Council adopted Resolution No. 22-5255, For the Purpose of Approving a Work Plan and Public Engagement Plan for the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan Update. Metro is no longer accepting formal amendments to the 2018 RTP while the 2023 RTP is being developed.

Alongside the adoption of a Preferred Alternative by JPACT and Metro Council, Multnomah County anticipates submitting the construction phase of the project as part of the 2023 RTP call for projects, to be considered in development of the 2023 RTP financially constrained project list. Inclusion of the construction phase in the 2023 RTP financially constrained project list would satisfy federal requirements that must be met for FHWA to issue a Record of Decision for the project.

On January 6, 2023, Metro's Transportation Policy Alternatives Committee (TPAC) recommended that JPACT recommend adoption of Resolution No. 23-5306, For the Purpose of Endorsing the Preferred Alternative for the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project. On February 16, 2023, Metro's Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) recommended that Metro Council adopt Resolution No. 23-5306, For the Purpose

of Endorsing the Preferred Alternative for the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project as amended.

ACTION REQUESTED

Adopt Resolution No. 23-5306, For the Purpose of Endorsing the Preferred Alternative for the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

Adoption of this resolution will allow the project to advance design work, for Multnomah County to submit the construction phase of the project in the 2023 RTP update's call for projects, and for the construction phase of the project to be considered for inclusion in development of the 2023 RTP financially constrained project list.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

Does the Council support the Preferred Alternative for Multnomah County's Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project?

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Adopt Resolution No. 23-5306, For the Purpose of Endorsing the Preferred Alternative for the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Legal Antecedents

Federal

- National Environmental Policy Act

State

- Statewide Planning Goals
- State Transportation Planning Rule
- Oregon Transportation Plan
- Oregon Highway Plan
- Oregon Public Transportation Plan
- Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Local

- Resolution No. 22-5255, For the Purpose of Approving a Work Plan and Public Engagement Plan for the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan Update

Local Jurisdictions

- The City of Portland adopted Resolution No. 37582, to accept the Locally Preferred Alternative for the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge design as defined in the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement and direct further actions

BACKGROUND

The primary purpose of the EQRB Project is to create a seismically resilient Burnside Street lifeline crossing of the Willamette River that would remain fully operational and accessible for vehicles and other modes of transportation immediately following a major Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ) earthquake.

The adopted 2018 RTP's financially constrained project list includes Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the EQRB Project, which reflect planning and project development activities, including planning required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, project design and right-of-way acquisition. Additionally, the adopted 2018 RTP's strategic project list, which identifies additional priority projects the region would pursue if more funding becomes available, includes the EQRB Project's Phase 3, reflecting the construction phase of the project.

Over 100 options were studied during the EQRB Project's Feasibility Study Phase (2016-2018), including tunnels, ferries, a fixed bridge, and other bridge alignments. From that study, four bridge alternatives were recommended for further study in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Replacement Long Span alternative was recommended by the Community Task Force and Policy Group in late fall 2020. Responses from an online public survey showed 88% support for the recommendation. On February 5th, 2021, the County published a Draft Environmental Impact Statement that included the recommended Preferred Alternative followed by a 45-day public comment period.

Following publication of the Draft EIS, the County asked the project team to identify ways to bring the overall cost of the project down, while maintaining the core purpose and need of the project, in order to help ensure a new bridge is funded and built. Any significant changes to the project as a result would be documented in Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement and published for public review and comment. Over the course of the summer of 2021, the project team worked to identify a range of cost saving measures and presented them to the Community Task Force in October 2021. The range of cost saving measures included the selection of a conventional girder style structure type for the west approach span over Tom McCall Waterfront Park, a bascule style structure type for the movable span in the river, and the narrowing of the overall bridge width resulting in the reduction of one vehicular lane of traffic. The Community Task Force then provided a preliminary approval of the range of cost saving measures, subject to hearing feedback from the public on the changes being proposed.

After reviewing the results from the public outreach campaign conducted in late fall of 2021, the Community Task Force voted by majority on January 24th, 2022 to recommend that the cost saving measures be adopted as part of an updated recommended Preferred Alternative. On March 3rd, 2022 the Policy Group of the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project approved the recommendation put forth by the Community Task Force. The Board of County Commissioners approved the refined recommended Preferred Alternative on

March 17th, 2022. Subsequently, the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement was published on April 29th, 2022, followed by a 45-day public comment period.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Resolution No. 23-5306, For the Purpose of Endorsing the Preferred Alternative for the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project

- Is legislation required for Council action? Yes No
- If yes, is draft legislation attached? Yes No