



Canby Ferry Alternatives Feasibility Analysis

Frequently Asked Questions:

September 25, 2018

The Canby Ferry, operated by the County's Transportation Maintenance Division, crosses the Willamette River during daylight hours from north of Canby to east of Wilsonville. However, it has limitations:

- It is not able to run when the river level gets above 70 feet and during inclement weather;
- It can only carry six cars at a time;
- It costs motorists \$5 per vehicle for a one-way trip, and
- It costs the county more money to operate (\$400,000 to \$500,000) than it receives in revenue.

Since the Ferry both limits the number of people who can cross the Willamette River and uses money that could otherwise be spent on road maintenance, the County is evaluating the long-term financial and traffic impacts of six possible future alternatives for crossing the river at the same location.

Why are you doing this study now?

Response: When the ferry reaches the end of its useful life in 15-20 years, it will need to be replaced if the county plans to continue ferry service. A new ferry would cost at least \$2 to \$3 million dollars. If the county wanted to build a bridge to maintain and enhance crossing of the Willamette River in this area, it would take 6 - 10 years to complete after a decision was made to proceed. Although the end of the current ferry is many years away, the point at which a decision must be made about any possible alternatives is soon approaching.

If the county chooses to continue to have a crossing of the Willamette River once the current ferry is no longer usable, what alternatives are there?

Response: At this time, we are looking at three alternatives, which are not necessarily exclusive:

Continue Ferry Service with New Ferry

- Serves an average of 200 vehicles/day
- Maintains connection to 100 years of history and part of the identity of Canby area
- Subsidy from road funds will be increasingly costly

Bridge

- Provides a quicker route between Canby and the Portland area than exists now, which would benefit area businesses and residents. The traffic study shows it would decrease commute time by about 20 minutes/day for the 65% of employed Canby residents who work in the Portland area.
- The total cost for a bridge (including environmental and design studies, right-of-way, construction and improvements on connecting streets) is estimated at \$50 - \$55 million.
- Without a toll, traffic across the bridge would exceed 16,000 trips/day in 2027.

Toll Bridge

- A toll bridge would provide the same benefits listed above for a bridge.
- Toll equipment could add approximately \$1 million to the cost of the bridge.
- With an average toll of between \$1.50 and \$3 per car or light truck:
 - The amount of traffic crossing the bridge would depend on the toll.
 - Toll revenue would be expected to be at least \$3 million per year, which would cover all costs including construction, bond payments, operation of the toll system, and operating and maintenance expenses.

Who would benefit from a new bridge?

Response: Traffic study results show that more than 90% of trips across a new bridge would begin or end in the immediate Canby area. Depending on destination, those trips would likely be 5 to 10 minutes faster than using I-5 or I-205 for the same trip.

Wouldn't lots of people divert off I-5 and I-205 if a new bridge were built over the Willamette River?

Response: Traffic studies show that getting off I-5 or I-205 to cross a bridge at this location would be 10 - 20 minutes slower, even when I-5 and I-205 are highly congested.

Why wouldn't a bridge over the Willamette cost more than \$50 - \$55 million? The Sellwood Bridge cost \$330 million?

Response: There are significant differences between the Sellwood Bridge project and a two-lane bridge over the Willamette River. The Sellwood Bridge project was considerably more extensive than a Clackamas County bridge would be. For example:

- The Sellwood Bridge is more than twice the size of the bridge the county is analyzing;
- The Sellwood Bridge project included construction of an expensive interchange at OR43 on the west side as well as improvements to Tacoma Street on the east side;
- The Sellwood project included construction and demolition of a temporary detour bridge and demolition of the previous Sellwood bridge, and
- The Sellwood Bridge project included major landslide stabilization.

If there were a new bridge, would it be built at the exact location of the Canby Ferry?

Response: Not necessarily. To estimate costs and impacts for this analysis, we are tentatively siting the bridge at the Canby Ferry location. If we were to move forward with a bridge, there would be much more study to find the best bridge location in the area.

Why should the Ferry make money? Roads don't make money.

Response: Roads don't "make money," but local governments receive specific funding for roads. The County pays for maintenance of its 1,400-mile road system through its share of state gas tax, state vehicle registration fees and state weight-mile taxes on heavy trucks. There is no funding for the ferry, except the fare. Most of the cost is paid for with money that could be used to repair roads. The county spends \$400,000 – \$500,000 per year to operate the ferry, above and beyond revenue received from passengers.

Doesn't the Ferry provide an emergency response route in case of a major earthquake?

Response: The Ferry would be of little to no use in case of a major earthquake. It runs on electricity, which would likely not be available if there were a quake. Also, the ferry has a very small capacity and limited benefit for emergency response. In addition, a major earthquake would be likely to impact the river channel and/or banks. If a bridge were built in same area, we would build it to meet today's seismic standards so it likely would be available to help people cross the river. (The only other Willamette River bridges in the area that are up to the latest seismic standards are the Sellwood Bridge and Tillicum Crossing.)

Has the county already decided to get rid of the Canby Ferry and build a bridge?

Response: No. The study will provide data about costs, financial feasibility and traffic impacts of the six options. We will have this data to share with the public and the Board of County Commissioners in winter 2018-19.

For more information: Go to <https://www.clackamas.us/transportation/cfalternatives.html> or contact Project Manager Stephen Williams at swilliams@clackamas.us or 503-742-4696.