
Oak Grove - Lake Oswego Ped/Bike Bridge Feasibility Study

Policy Committee (PC) Meeting #1 Summary

June 7, 2019
6 PM – 8 PM
Lake Oswego City Hall

Meeting purposes:

- Review context for bridge landing locations
- Provide direction on project evaluation criteria
- Discuss formation of governance agreement

Attendees

PC Members: Mark Gamba, Mayor of Milwaukie; Christine Lewis, Metro Councilor; Jackie Manz, Lake Oswego City Councilor; Paul Savas, Clackamas County Commissioner

Project Staff: Clackamas County: Steve Williams, Ellen Rogalin; City of Lake Oswego: Mike Ward; Parametrix: Mike Pyszka; JLA Public Involvement: Jeanne Lawson (facilitator), Kristen Kibler, Tracie Heidt

PC Member Staff: Tracy Moreland, with Commissioner Savas; Ramona Perrault, with Christine Lewis

Guests: Iris Walling; Mike Bliziotis; Jeff Gudman, CAC; John Charles; Thelma Haggemiller; Skip Ormsby, CAC; Casey Snoeberger

Welcome and Opening

Councilor Jackie Manz welcomed everyone to Lake Oswego City Hall. Jeanne Lawson asked the PC members to introduce themselves and share their hopes for this feasibility project.

- Councilor Manz would like the group to make this project happen. Its implementation depends on a number of factors, but it is a Metro Tier 2 project and therefore elevated in importance.
- Mayor Gamba as an avid cyclist understands how important the bridge is to opening up east/west connectivity.
- Councilor Lewis said that by the time Metro refers the funding measure in 2020, we can have a plan in place and perhaps move this project into the funding measure. There is community buy-in on both sides of the river. It would be an attraction for recreational users and a major bonus for bike commuters.
- Commissioner Savas recalls policy-makers discussing the bridge idea decades ago and likes the possibility of a bridge reducing traffic congestion in the region. It's a great opportunity to connect the communities on each side of the river. The Trolley Trail is the most used trail in Clackamas County and the bridge would allow a great extension of it.

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Agenda Review

Jeanne noted that this meeting is intended to lay the foundation for the decisions the PC will make in the feasibility study.

Mayor Gamba: Will we talk about right of way approaches on both sides of the river? Mike Pyszka: We are only taking a high-level look right now.

Public Comments

- John Charles, Cascade Policy Institute: Earlier today we released a paper about the Sellwood Bridge reconstruction -- "Promises Unfulfilled." We have the scope of work and consultants for this feasibility study project so that in analyzing different sites we should locate a site for a traffic bridge that is superior to the Sellwood Bridge, which failed because it has not alleviated traffic congestion. Metro sponsored a study about 25 years ago to examine 20 potential bridge crossings, but they all were rejected. Congestion on both sides of the river is bad and the cut-through traffic is a problem. He handed out a paper documenting the problem. Metro should launch a better study for a larger bridge site and the information from this feasibility study could serve a future task force for a traffic bridge site as well.
- Thelma Haggemiller: I wasn't allowed to speak at the CAC meeting last week. It is short-sighted to plan a bridge designed for bikes and peds but not cars. There will be a lot of growth within the next 20 years, and this bridge will not accommodate future widening or retrofitting to allow vehicles. The bridge will need to accommodate emergency vehicles cars if there is a natural disaster. [Mayor Gamba said that when Milwaukie was designing a bike path parallel to 99E, they were required to design a path to accommodate emergency vehicles, so this bridge would most likely have to accommodate emergency vehicles, too.]

Study Purpose and Overview (Steve Williams)

When Clackamas County updated its Transportation System Plan in 2012, this was the highest interest project in the entire county. The County has been looking for ways to move this project forward for several years and appreciates Metro's offering of transportation funds for the study. We are looking at what a bridge could mean and do for Lake Oswego, Oak Grove and the greater region. It makes sense to conduct a feasibility study first, rather than a design study, to ask the basic question of whether the bridge could be built at a reasonable cost, and if there is enough public support to move it forward. This is a unique project because all the other bridges in the region are owned and maintained by just one jurisdiction.

PC Role and Charter (Jeanne Lawson)

The draft protocols in the charter are to not have alternates and that the group strives to make decisions by consensus. The draft outlines a process for decision-making if they can't initially achieve consensus. The group agreed with the suggested protocols.

The PC is to decide on:

- Preferred landing points
- Preferred connections
- Bridge concepts
- Governance

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The governance question is the most important point on which to achieve consensus. The goal is to reach a decision that can be durable to all the partner organizations. The question of funding, ownership and maintenance among their jurisdictions is key.

Commissioner Savas asked Mayor Gamba if Milwaukie, without jurisdiction in the project area, would consider helping defray the cost and/or managing the bridge. Mayor Gamba said he would have to ask his city council, but he thinks there would be council interest.

Context for Locating a Bridge (Mike Pyszka)

Connecting regional trails is a Metro priority, and this bridge could connect to the Trolley Trail, Willamette River Trail and the conceptual Bridgeport-to-Milwaukie Trail.

The bridge would fill an important gap on the Willamette River, as the nearest crossings from the proposed project site are the Sellwood Bridge, four downstream miles, and the Oregon City Arch Bridge five miles upstream.

The Railroad Bridge is not an option because Union Pacific, which owns it, is not interested in expanding the bridge. Furthermore, creating access to that bridge on the Oak Grove side would be difficult and dangerous.

A bike/ped bridge is less expensive to build, has fewer impacts and a much smaller footprint than a bridge built for cars or transit.

Discussion

Commissioner Savas: Is it possible to accommodate emergency vehicles? [Mike: We are studying the landing and technical design criteria and through these will look at the load required for emergency vehicles. So far, the assumption has been that there is not a great need because there are full emergency services on both sides of the river in the vicinity of the bridge.]

Councilor Manz: Could you scale the design to consider accommodating a smaller or mid-sized emergency vehicle rather than a large ladder truck? [Mike: We can look at both scenarios. We would need to factor in a 20,000-pound design load as well as structure depths and heights.]

Councilor Lewis: Can you define what the financial and right of way requirements would be for such a design so we can have that information available to evaluate options? [Mike: Yes, that can be factored in.]

Mayor Gamba: What is the required ship clearance? [Mike: The U.S. Coast Guard is working with us and the current assumption is 75 feet based on clearance for the adjacent railroad bridge and the I-205 bridge upstream.]

Environmental Scoping Process (Mike Pyszka)

This study will set the stage for an environmental assessment to be done during the next phase if the project moves forward. During this phase, the team will hold a scoping workshop and produce a NEPA scoping and permitting report. If the funding is local (Metro T2020 or other non-Federal), then the U.S. Coast Guard would be the lead agency. If the funds are Federal, then the US Army Corps of Engineers would be the lead agency. Either way, work performed

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for the feasibility study can be applied to future phases. This phase will look at environmental impacts from a broad level, not in detail.

Public Involvement Process (Kristen Kibler)

Three hundred online surveys had been completed so far. Community outreach will be conducted over the summer in parks and at farmers' markets.

Councilor Manz: Should we give local partners the survey information to distribute to our constituents? [Kristen: The CAC members are distributing the survey and it was recently posted in the *Hello LO* and *Milwaukie Pilot* newsletters. Ellen Rogalin added that the survey will close on June 15 so the County will give it a final promotional push on social media.]

Commissioner Savas: I would like a public comment period available at all of the project events. [Kristen: We will make sure there are opportunities. All the public meetings and events are interactive in some way. At the CAC meeting, the group is so large that the project team wanted to make sure all of their voices were heard; therefore, public comment was focused on the Policy Committee and other outreach. The CAC meetings will provide the public an opportunity to give some feedback at the meeting.]

Discussion

Question: Is there limited landing space on the Lake Oswego side due to the railroad tracks?

Answer/Discussion: Tryon Creek Cove Park has an at-grade crossing at Highway 43. From the Tryon Cove Concept Plan there are two options for a pedestrian crossing at Highway 43: a new signal at the intersection of Terwilliger and 43 or a tunnel underneath the intersection. As part of this study, an alignment will be considered for crossing over the railroad tracks and 43. The required clearance is 25 feet from the tracks. A landing at Foothills Park is also an option.

Councilor Manz: Foothills Park makes sense as a landing point, but it would be nicer to connect to Tryon Creek Cove Park.

Mike: The southern-most connection on the east side would be on Oak Grove Boulevard and the connection point on the west side would be Roehr Park. The CAC feedback was that the community would like an iconic bridge that they could be proud of. On the east side, the public property options are Rivervilla Park or Courtney Avenue.

Commissioner Savas: I recommend that each of us go for a walk on the side of the river that is least familiar to us to get a real sense of the possible landings.

Evaluation Criteria and Community Values (Jeanne Lawson)

The community values came from the CAC and the technical criteria came from the TAC and agency staff. At the CAC meeting, there was a larger representation from the east side and the team will keep this in mind as they refine the values. The CAC brainstormed individually and working in small groups, and then shared their groups' priorities with the large group. They ended by noting their individual priorities.

Connectivity and Safety

- Commissioner Savas: Are ADA requirements well covered? [Mike: ADA requirements tie into several criteria.] Commissioner Savas: There is a high population of senior

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citizens on both sides of the river near the proposed landing sites. Consider an inclusive design and an appropriate slope.

- Mayor Gamba: It is prudent to take the future Cascadia earthquake into account. It wouldn't be wise to build a spiral landing because that can't accommodate emergency vehicles if needed. [Mike: The landing size affects the design significantly.]
- Commissioner Savas: The public would more readily support the bridge project with a public safety component. [Mike: The AASHTO design loads for pedestrian bridges are 90 pounds per square foot for pedestrians and a 20,000-pound vehicle load. This would be an ambulance or small first responder vehicle. To accommodate a full-size fire truck or emergency vehicle would require a standard vehicle bridge.]

Environmental Impacts

- Avoid adverse impacts to listed species – fish and birds.
- Avoid both long-term and construction impacts.
- Light pollution is a concern.
- Look at pier spacing in the river to minimize impacts to sensitive species.

Existing Development and Neighborhoods

- Avoid displacement of businesses and residents.
- Concern was expressed about the privacy of the residents below the bridge landings. Some people might not like the idea at first, but if we build a beautiful, iconic bridge they may accept it later, like the tram.
- Consider how parking will work. If the bridge is iconic and draws large crowds, people will drive to it. Connections in residential neighborhoods would have limited or no parking to accommodate this type of use.

Cost and Economic

- Business owners would like businesses to benefit.
- Privacy and safety screening on the bridge is important to some, but others don't want to compromise the view from the bridge. It is important to consider design trade-offs with operational costs.
- Sea planes would still be able to fly and land in the river.

Land use planning

- Consider not only the location of the bridge, but the trails connections as well.
- We want neighborhoods that work for everyone.

Governance Agreement

The governance agreement is probably the most important element before the group in terms of the success of the project. Steve said Mike Bezner, Clackamas County Assistant Director of Transportation, will convene a small group of executive leaders from the partner agencies to discuss the governance agreement and then report back to the Policy Committee.

Committee members were asked to share issues they would like the executive team to consider. The guiding questions are who would own the bridge, pay for it and maintain it?

Commissioner Savas: The parks departments of the agencies may take the lead.

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Councilor Manz: Intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) can be difficult to manage and the upfront cost of ongoing maintenance is a big question.

Mayor Gamba: None of the three jurisdictions have any experience owning and maintaining bridges like this one and therefore it seems beyond the scope of a parks department or district. Because splitting ownership is difficult, one entity should own the bridge and the other partners could help support it. This would mean consortium funding and an ongoing IGA for maintenance.

Commissioner Savas: It's wise to study other successful models. Steve: There are several bike/ped bridges on the Willamette River with different owners on each side, and we will speak to those agencies about how they have managed ownership issues.

Public Comment

Skip Ormsby, CAC member from Lake Oswego: Current connections across the Willamette River are not good. Millennium Plaza in Lake Oswego might be a good landing point because of the adequate railroad clearance. The four top factors to consider when designing the bridge are vessel clearance on the river, Highway 43 crossing to Terwilliger, the railroad tracks and seaplane flight approaches.

Casey Snoeberger, Oak Grove: Thanks for covering the issues well. Parking is important to consider. Special events on or near the bridge could cause parking issues. Sometimes motorized vehicles drive on the Trolley Trail illegally, and they might do so on the bridge as well, so liability should be considered. Consider fishing options off the bridge.

Next Steps

The Policy Committee will meet again in August on the west side of the river.