



## *Frequently Asked Questions: Canby Ferry Alternatives Feasibility Analysis August 2018*

There is a lot of interest in the County's Canby Ferry Alternatives Feasibility Analysis. We also have lots of questions – in many cases the same questions we have heard from the public, which is why we're doing this feasibility study. While we can't give you all the facts now – because we don't have them yet – we can share answers to some of the questions we've been hearing.

### **CANBY FERRY**

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

**Response:** Roads don't "make money," but they are specifically funded. The County pays for the 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 for the fare. Most of the cost is paid for with money that could be used to repair roads. The county spends \$457,000 per year to operate the ferry, above and beyond revenue received from passengers.

**Question:** *Why not reduce the cost of operating the Canby Ferry by having just one operator or raising the fees? How can Marion County afford to operate ferries with a lower fee?*

**Response:** There are safety and security issues with having one operator because the operators deal with cash. We raised the fees to \$5, but the average cost per vehicle to use the ferry is \$13.18. We would have to charge significantly more than we do now to break even – and that would reduce ridership. This is not a study of how to reduce the cost of Ferry operations, but we are reviewing ways to do so. We are talking with Marion County to get information about how their ferry operations compare to ours. We are certainly open to consider opportunities to reduce costs.

**Question:** *Why don't you find someone else to run the Ferry, like a non-profit agency or Tourism?*

**Response:** This option has been looked at several times over the years and we have found no other organizations interested and/or able to viably take on Ferry operations.

### **BRIDGE**

**Question:** *Why would a bridge over the Willamette cost \$40-70 million? The Sellwood cost \$330 million?*

**Response:** We are working on a cost estimate as part of this study. At the same time, there are significant differences between the Sellwood Bridge project and a two-lane bridge over the Willamette River that the county might consider. The Sellwood Bridge project was different and considerably more extensive than a Clackamas County bridge would be. For example:

- The Sellwood Bridge is more than twice the size of the bridge being analyzed for this project;
- 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;
- The Sellwood Bridge project included demolition of the previous Sellwood bridge, and
- The Sellwood Bridge project included major landslide stabilization.

**Question:** *If there is 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.

## TRAFFIC and SAFETY

**Question:** *Why consider building a bridge that would result in overcrowded and unsafe roads leading up to the bridge, and in Canby, Stafford and other neighboring areas?*

**Response:** We are also concerned about possible impacts on roads adjacent to a bridge and in neighboring communities, and we are doing this study to find out what the traffic would be under different scenarios. Our traffic analysis is considering factors that impact traffic volumes, including

- Travel time on nearby roads
- Current and projected traffic patterns in the neighboring communities
- Potential traffic volumes on a bridge, both with and without a toll

**Question:** *Doesn't the Ferry provide an escape 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 and has a very small capacity. 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 bridge in the area that is up to seismic standards is the Sellwood Bridge.)

## GENERAL

**Question:** *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 six options. We will share this data with the public and the Board of County Commissioners in late 2018.

**Question:** *If you need to save the \$457,000 per year that the ferry costs and it doesn't carry many passengers anyway, why are you considering building a new bridge?*

**Response:** Right now the Canby Ferry does provide the only way to cross the Willamette River between Oregon City and Wilsonville. It's about 4 miles from the Canby Ferry south to the Boones Ferry Bridge in Wilsonville and about 8 miles north to the Oregon City Arch Bridge. While the purpose of this study is to identify the financial and traffic impacts of options for crossing the Willamette at the Ferry location, there could also be a number of benefits of a bridge in the area, not the least of which would be to maintain a major link between Canby and the rest of the Portland metropolitan area. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 American Community Survey, 65% of employed Canby residents are employed outside of Canby in the Portland area.

**Question:** *Why replace a Ferry – which costs \$457,000 per year – with a \$40-70 million bridge?*

**Response:** The \$457,000 per year loss comes from the County's Road Fund, which pays for road maintenance, so the loss directly removes resources that could be used to maintain roads. If the County were to build a bridge, it would likely be paid for with revenue bonds that would be completely paid back over a number of years with revenue that could be raised by a bridge toll.

**Question:** *Why aren't there public hearings so the public can express concerns and ask questions?*

**Response:** Our first public meeting, in June, was designed to inform people about the study and gather input on what we should consider. We did not share data then because we didn't yet have it. Later this year, once we have projected traffic impact and financial feasibility data, we will have another public meeting to present the data and hear public feedback. We will provide the data to the County Commissioners and they will decide what, if any, action to take next.

**For more information:** Go to <https://www.clackamas.us/transportation/cfalternatives.html> or contact Project Manager Stephen Williams, [swilliams@clackamas.us](mailto:swilliams@clackamas.us) or 503-742-4696.