

# Policy Committee (PC) Meeting Summary

October 25, 2019, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Clackamas County Development Services Building

## Meeting Objective

To decide whether the project is feasible and whether it should move forward for further study.

## 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 (project manager), Ellen Rogalin; Parametrix: Mike Pyszka; JLA Public Involvement: Jeanne Lawson (meeting facilitator), Tracie Heidt

**Guests:** Danielle Smart; Bradley Bond; Cole M.; Robert Rose; Tina Schohick; Ellen Smith; Liz Hartman; Julie Budeau, CAC; John LaMotte, Lake Oswego City Councilor; Mike Budeau; Martha Banyas; Michael Hoeye; William Farley; Fred Sawyer; Johanna Lourisbury; Elain Heiman; Jeff Bailey; Kathleen Gordon; Jane Civiletti; Walter Robinson; Nita Chabala, CAC; Thelma Haggemiller; Kelly Perlewitz; Scott Schraeter; Joe Buck, CAC; Asia Alvarez Zeller; Cindy Ellison; Lorea Alba; David Craig; Bob Sack; Scott MacWilliams; Ron Gronowski; Jeff Gudman, CAC; Heather Koch, North Clackamas Park & Recreation District; Gavin Mahaley; Matthew Wicks; Hans Tschersich; Kirk Mouser; Chris Ommert; Mike Perham, CAC; Steven Lohmann; Seth Davis; Margi Bradley, Metro; Micah Meskel; Caroline Fitchett; Evelyn Jerde; Lauren Fulwiler; Dorene Tschersich; Meryl Haber; Gordon Haber; Morgan Wyenn; Barrett Meeker; Rita and Michael Smith Kingen; Bruce Parker, CAC; Brock Inman; Mary Beth Coffey, CAC; Judith Rossner; Jeff Heiman; David Keifer; Michael Selvaggio; Christy Clark; SR Eymer; Chips Janger; Rachel Dawson; Jack and Sally Hardwick; Miriam Reed; Amy Gillcrist; Tad Reeves; James Jerde; Al Belais; Charles (Skip) Ormsby, CAC; Ann Hadley; Ted Labbe, CAC; Ray Thornhill; David Rowe; Wylie Dulmage; Michael Dewitz; Ed Riddle; Lura Lee; Anatta Blackmarr, CAC; Jean Clinton; Tom Civiletti, CAC; Jan Lindstrom; Sandi Gadow; Sarah Ellison; Bruce Ellison; William Waite; Tom Pauken; C. Stephen White; Lisa Adatto; Mary Ratcliff; Matt Tracy; Josephine Adamski; Andy Mercier; Helen Leek; Kathy Hyzy, Milwaukie City Councilor; Andrew Kershaw; Lisa Nowak

## Welcome, Meeting Purpose and Agenda Review

Commissioner Savas, representing the hosting jurisdiction, welcomed the PC and audience.

Jeanne Lawson reviewed the meeting agenda. Steve Williams summarized the history of the feasibility study and said that today the project team would present the final alternative alignments and early cost estimates.

## Public Involvement and Opinion Poll

Ellen Rogalin, Clackamas County Community Relations Specialist, reviewed the public involvement for the project, including an initial public input questionnaire, two in-person open houses, an online open house, a postcard mailing, three Community Advisory Committee meetings, three Policy Committee meetings and presentations at community meetings, as well as the project website, emails to interested parties and social media.

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## Oak Grove - Lake Oswego Ped/Bike Bridge Feasibility Study

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Jeanne summarized the results of the recent scientific opinion poll that was designed to capture what people saw as the benefits and drawbacks of a bridge. A total of 401 registered voters in Lake Oswego, Oak Grove and Milwaukie were contacted at random by phone, with equal representation from both sides of the river.

- 63% favored the idea of a bridge
  - 71% from Oak Grove/Milwaukie area
  - 55% from Lake Oswego
- 9% were unsure
- 28% were opposed

### Analysis of Bridge Alternatives

Steve shared photographs of existing park bridges in Des Moines, Grants Pass, and the Darlene Hooley bike/ped bridge in Portland; draft plan and elevations of the Terwilliger to Courtney and Foothills to Courtney bridge alternatives; main-span deck section alternatives for the river piers; typical approach span sections with and without the transit element; and elevation comparisons with the Sellwood, Tillikum and St. John's bridges.

He explained how the 10 alignments that the project team had initially presented to the PC had been narrowed down to two landing sites in Oak Grove (Upper Courtney Avenue and Bluff Road) and two in Lake Oswego (Foothills Park and one that would land on Terwilliger Boulevard and Upper Tryon Cove Park).

The top public preference was the Foothills Park to Upper Courtney Avenue alignment, the second was Foothills Park to Bluff Road, and the third was Terwilliger Blvd to Upper Courtney Avenue.

Steve presented total cost estimates for the bridge types, including the options that included transit (see presentation slide). Prices ranged from \$30.3 million to \$63.8 million depending on the main-span structure and approach span types. He also compared the annual cost to maintain a bridge with concrete construction vs steel construction for the three alignment options over 75 years. The average annual maintenance cost would be \$110,000 to \$220,000, depending on the main-span structure and approach span types. He also outlined the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements, which would be studied in a future phase to consider impacts on the human and natural environment.

### Discussion

Councilor Lewis: I'm prepared to report to Metro that transit should not be included in the study.

The PC members unanimously agreed to not consider transit for the bridge.

Mayor Gamba: The aesthetics of the bridge are important.

Commissioner Savas read a statement from the Board of County Commissioners, which said that the BCC did not support a transit option; was not prepared to discuss further feasibility until the project team narrowed the alignment options to one instead of three; and asked for more public outreach.

Mike Pyszka: The next phase of the study, if it takes place, would be a federal process that would require that there be at least two bridge alternatives, in addition to a "no build" option.

Councilor Manz: The project team has not presented to my city council yet and I am not ready to make a decision.

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## Oak Grove - Lake Oswego Ped/Bike Bridge Feasibility Study

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The group discussed taking more time (perhaps 60-90 days) before making any decisions to extend the study and allow time for more outreach, especially with Lake Oswego.

### Public Comment

Miriam Reed – There wasn't a single public hearing. This meeting today is at a time when working people cannot come. Studies show the key reason that people don't use transit more is that buses don't come frequently enough. Spend money to expand light rail instead.

Bob Rose – I am from Lake Oswego and I support the bridge and generally support a bike solution. I commuted by bike to the Sellwood Bridge for 10 years and it was dangerous. ODOT needs to do something about Highway 43.

Hans Tschersich – I am an 80-year-old active bicyclist and use the Trolley Trail often. I am in favor of the bridge.

Danielle Smartt – The transit option is not safe. The survey is flawed because participants didn't really have a chance to state their preference. I want to know more about the property taxes, wildlife, neighbor impacts and air quality.

Bruce Parker – I live in Canby and am on the County Ped/Bike Committee. There is a 9-mile break between crossings over the Willamette. Connectivity is important. The age statistics show that the younger you are, the more support you have for the bridge. This is a long-range study, and this bridge would serve generations to come, not my generation.

Fred Sawyer – Talk to the railroad so we can connect Stampher Road to E Avenue in Lake Oswego, cross the highway at E Avenue and close Stampher at Hwy 43. The Tryon-to-Terwilliger connections need to be better, too.

Bradley Bondy – It would be short-sighted and irresponsible to not study the possibility of transit. It is not costing the County any more to study transit. We are not committing to build it.

Nita Chabala – I live on the west side of Stampher. It is an interesting concept but imagine if your house looked onto the bridge to see homeless people and litter. Safety is important and Stampher is an unsafe road, not a destination, and dangerous to walk to. Spend the money to improve Stampher. There is nowhere to ride a bike on Hwy 43. There is already a lot of traffic in Lake Oswego. This is not a good idea at all.

Kelly Kelowitz – Lake Oswego is opposed to spending money without clear direction on what we are looking for and what people want. The access sites are not well thought out, especially on the west side. There is a lot of congestion on the west side. This should not be a bridge that benefits only a minority of people.

Ted Labbe – There has been good public process, and there should be more. There is big regional significance of this project. Transit is not opportune right now, so we should drop it. With this, off-street active transportation in Lake Oswego could take the Orange Line to get into town. We are in a climate crisis, so it's important to invest in trails. Move ahead with the study.

Helen Leek – I am from Lake Oswego and am opposed to this. There has been very little awareness about this project. I take issue with the Foothills Park landing site—putting a monstrosity in the middle of a beautiful park. The west side is more impacted than the east. Spend the money on bike paths on Hwy 43 instead. This is an unnecessary overreach by Metro.

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Mike Muscal – I represent the Portland Audubon Society. We would like you to move forward. This can help reduce emissions, connect communities to nature, and build out the trails system. We would like to be part of the process and help reduce impacts going forward. The future is transit and active transportation.

Charles “Skip” Ormsby – Because the social engineering impacts are not yet known, I am against this. We should consider other river reaches between Portland and Newberg. Bikes on the Willamette shoreline are not good. Rehabilitate bike paths between Lewis and Clark College and Lake Oswego. ADA grades over 5% are bad.

Tina Schohick – I am from Oak Grove and am surprised at all the opposition. People in my neighborhood like the idea of using the bridge to walk to Lake Oswego to eat in restaurants and walk in parks. I strongly endorse continuing.

Ted Reeves – I am from Oak Grove and used to live in Lake Oswego. It is very hard to commute to the city from Lake Oswego. I support the bridge very much. It would be good for me personally and good for the community.

Mike Perham – I represent the Lake Oswego Sustainability Committee. This project would advance active transportation through an Oak Grove connection. I often go to Tigard because it is easy to get there. I would like to go to Oak Grove, but I rarely bother because it takes so long to get there. This is sustainable for the area and I am strongly in support.

David Keifer – I live on River Road, am a regular biker, runner and walker, and use the Trolley Trail a lot. I am strongly in favor of the project. How are the different designs earthquake-ready?

Jeff Bailey – I live on Courtney Avenue, two blocks from the Fair Oaks landing. I don't like that Courtney would have 1,500 more people a day riding down the middle of the street. The street is not improved. How much more money will be included for roadway improvements? What about the other side of Courtney? Consider Courtney improvements from the river to Fair Oaks as part of the project.

Lisa Nowak – Even after people cross the bridge, they will have to go another 4-5 miles to the Park Avenue MAX Station. For those going to Portland, it doesn't make sense to ride to Oak Grove first. We have bike paths and people admit they don't use them the way they should because of crime, homeless and trash. Take some of this money and create a dedicated force to patrol the bike paths so the police don't have to.

Judith Rossner – I work in the Lake Oswego Parks and Recreation Department. Foothills Park is often rented out for memorial services, parties, etc. The bridge will reduce the revenue we get from park rentals, which support our community events. Why rent the park if construction is an interference? Parking is a problem; there are only 17 parking spots plus two ADA spots.

Marybeth Coffey – This process has been hushed and rushed. Now we are down to three connections and the Oswego Pointe Village residents don't like it. People come to use Foothills Park and park wherever they want. This is not NIMBY; it's safety.

Brock Inman – I am from Oak Grove and oppose this because of the daily impacts it would have. This is counter to Metro's bond measures to protect water quality. The information-gathering process was flawed and didn't give people a choice. Metro wants to balance buses, light rail and traffic gridlock, but didn't mention a bike/ped bridge. I am burdened by Lake Oswego dock boat traffic every summer.

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Sarah Ellison – I live in Lake Oswego and want to see the bridge move forward. It's a crucial link with the regional trails system. Our whole family will use it regularly. It's a real opportunity for active transportation. There are not a lot of good trails going out of Lake Oswego. It would be great to see a bridge that can handle emergency vehicles in case of a natural disaster.

Wylie – A bridge must be built, not just for bikes and peds, but for people who want a walkable Portland, less congestion and better air quality. It will give stakeholders better lives. It is hard to bike through Riverview Cemetery, and very hard to ride down Highway 43.

Matt – I live in Oak Grove. Shouldn't this study be more comprehensive? I like the ped bridge idea but fear the lack of information. Having more information would combat the fear factor. Do the second phase of the study so we have more information to make a better decision.

Lisa Adatto – I'm from the Lake Oswego Sustainability Network and have a petition with signatures from 600 plus people in favor of the bridge. I love biking and have spent hundreds of hours on the Trolley Trail, but unfortunately have to drive across the river from Lake Oswego and put my bike on the car. When you bike a lot, you get excited about hills. When will the bridge be a priority? It's time to invest in biking in Lake Oswego.

Tom Pauken – I live on the corner of Fair Oaks and Courtney. I would see the bridge from my driveway, 30 feet from the front door, over my head between my house and my neighbor's house. On the face of it, it is a good idea, but if Lake Oswego bicyclists want to bike out of Lake Oswego, they can spend money on a trail system on the west side.

Ben Mckinnle – I am a Street Trust board member. I bike into work two or three days a week and have been hit by cars three times on State Street. My sister lives in Milwaukie and having the connectivity of a bridge would be great. This is a good opportunity for elected officials to make a difference and solve long-term traffic problems later. It would also create a disaster pathway in case of earthquake.

Will Farley – I live off Oak Grove Boulevard. With a bridge, my bike commute time would go from 53 to 24 minutes and my commute distance from 10 to 2.4 miles. I like the connectivity for communities on either side of the river. The project team has done a good job creating multiple options and narrowing them to a few options to study. More details will come out in future. Let's move forward, and look at the pros and cons. Maybe we won't include transit at this time but can add a bus line in future.

Morgan Wyenn – I live in Oak Grove and we love going biking as a family.

Barrett Wyenn – Bike sales in the area are up 65% and electric bikes are growing 73% year after year. Biking is becoming more viable and bikes are better than cars and better for the environment. Let's look to the future.

*[Note: 19 completed comment cards and seven written statements were also submitted.]*

### Discussion and Recommendations

Commissioner Manz: Lake Oswego hasn't received enough information about the project yet. I like the idea of a bridge but cannot speak on behalf of the council. I'm concerned about the rushed timeline and don't like that the scope suddenly shifted to consider transit.

Mayor Gamba: Our task is simply to decide whether the project is feasible and whether we should move forward with the Environmental Review and Permitting phase, which would answer a lot of questions. The project is clearly feasible and all of the public's concerns will be tended to

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and studied during the next phase. The bridge would significantly increase the walking and biking radius for Lake Oswego residents. Future discussions about the project need to be informed by factual data; otherwise, discussions are based on dreams or fears.

Commissioner Savas: A 60-90 day extension period would be wise so Lake Oswego can have time to consider the project and there can be more public outreach. The plan is a lot more expensive than it was in the Transportation System Plan. I understand that moving forward with just one alternative is not an option, so I withdraw that request. I never thought Courtney Avenue would be one of the landing sites. The bridge should be beneficial to the local communities it serves. The bridge would be for pedestrians as well as bicyclists. A ferry could also be a feasible alternative; perhaps it could be included in the study.

Councilor Lewis: There aren't adequate east/west connections in Clackamas County. I would like to study all options for a bridge to meet people's needs. The Metro funds being used for the study are available exclusively for planning and cannot be used for fixing roads. My priority is to build a bridge, but there needs to be more communication.

Mayor Gamba: Examining a ferry alternative, which is not feasible or part of the scope, would muddy the conversation.

Mike Pyszka: The next phase, including the environmental (NEPA) process, would determine the purpose and need. It would involve Clackamas County, Metro and Lake Oswego, and study all reasonable and prudent alternatives. If the intent is to pause to answer questions, the reality is that the answers to those questions will not be known until after the environmental study process is complete.

### Outcomes

**The committee members unanimously agreed on the following next steps:**

- No longer consider a transit option for the bridge;
- Continue the project for the next 90 days, with additional public outreach to partner jurisdictions, especially Lake Oswego, and a public meeting in early-mid January;
- Hold another Policy Committee meeting no later than Jan. 25, 2020, to report back to the Policy Committee and to give the Policy Committee another opportunity to determine whether to move the project forward into the second phase of the analysis. (It is understood that this second phase would again be funded by Metro and would take 12-18 months.); and
- Send information about the study to Metro by Thursday, Oct. 31, so the project can remain in possible consideration for Metro's T2020 transportation investment measure, tentatively planned for November 2020. (It is understood that if a decision is made for the project not to move forward, it would be withdrawn from the Metro process.)

### Next Steps

Steve said he is scheduled to provide a status report and next steps at the November 5 Lake Oswego City Council meeting.

### Adjourn

Commissioner Savas thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 2 p.m.