



Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

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MEMORANDUM

Date: May 30, 2019
To: Members of the Portland Design Commission
From: Mark Raggett and Lora Lillard, BPS Urban Design Studio
Regarding: EA 19-151675 DA: Earl Blumenauer Bridge and the Green Loop

At the May 23, 2019 DAR for the Earl Blumenauer pedestrian/bicycle bridge across the Interstate 84 Freeway, commissioners asked questions about how the bridge – through its design, landings and numerous connections were considered as potentially the first major piece of the Green Loop. Because the questions came up toward the end of the discussion period, we wanted to help clarify how the project is incorporating the design concept – and perhaps setting a design precedent for future implementation of the loop.

The Green Loop is embedded within multiple districts of the Central City and envisioned as “one concept with many forms.” The character of the loop’s alignment changes – for example, the context of the Earl Blumenauer Bridge across the I-84 Freeway is distinctly different than that of the South Park Blocks. How a given project responds to the loop will be driven by the project’s local context and specific programming demands. BPS staff worked actively with the PBOT team to help develop the bridge and landing designs – helping shape a new linear park that will enable pausing as much as movement. The experience of being on the loop should feel different than being on a typical Central City street. Specifically, this bridge project proposes to:

- **Plant a series of evergreen trees** at both the north and south landing areas. Evergreen/coniferous (or even larger-spreading canopy) trees are found in both natural and park settings throughout Portland though not prevalent within recently developed portions of the Central City. Large evergreen trees are iconic of the region and have emerged as a potential identifier of the Green Loop’s public spaces and route as it moves around the Central City.
- **Create a singular, distinctive and larger artwork** at the southern bridge landing in Central Eastside. Public art is a key component of the Green Loop, and early design concepts for artworks at the bridge landings were previously shown as smaller, off-the-shelf light fixtures. The project now plans to work with RACC to solicit an artist for a new work.
- **Provide stopping and gathering places for people** at both landing areas. The Green Loop will create more space and seating areas for people to pause, reflect, gather and interact. While accommodating walkers, rollers, scooters and bicyclists, both areas offer opportunities to rest and take in the changing urban landscapes on both sides of the freeway, in two distinctly different districts.
- **Reserve space for special paving materials**, potentially the historic cobblestones. Like the evergreen trees, specialized paving materials, textures and colors will be an identifier of the Green Loop. BPS staff are working with the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission, BDS and other city partners to explore options for re-deployment of the city-owned collection of historic cobblestones along the alignment.
- **Develop the first new public view of the Central City.** The Earl Blumenauer Bridge will feature the Central City’s first new viewpoint since public viewpoints were reassessed as part of the Central City 2035 Plan. The Green Loop links multiple cultural attractions, destinations and focal points – multiple public views contributing to the series of events. The bridge viewpoint will be designed to create more space for stopping, viewing and capturing images, as well as incorporating a new marker and viewing “window” through the protective wire mesh.



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