



City of Portland
Historic Landmarks Commission

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December 28, 2017

Mike Pullen
Multnomah County

Dear Mr. Pullen:

On September 11, 2017, the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission heard a briefing by Megan Neill, Multnomah County engineering manager, on the planning stages of the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge project. Megan presented the project background, current and future phases, and next steps. We are writing this letter to share with you some of the concerns of the Commissioners about the proposed project scope as it is being moved forward and to ask that the Historic Landmarks Commission be kept apprised of the project development and potentially be included in the future NEPA phase, which will include a Section 106 review.

As part of the 2015 Willamette Capitol Improvement Plan, Burnside Street, including the Burnside Bridge, was selected to be the "Lifeline Route" which will serve as a regional transportation route designated to be operational after a major earthquake or other disaster. Various alternatives were looked at for seismic improvements to the Burnside Bridge and it appears that only those alternatives that will substantially modify or totally demolish the bridge are being moved forward for further consideration.

The Burnside Bridge was built in 1926 and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2012. In addition to its Landmark status, it is one of the most visible landmarks on the Portland skyline. Our concerns about the project as presented by Ms. Neill are as follows:

- Alternatives are being moved forward without consideration to adverse impacts to historic fabric.
- Proposed alternatives do not consider impacts to buildings adjacent to the Burnside Bridge; the west side of the bridge terminates in the Skidmore/Old Town Historic District and several contributing resources front on West Burnside.
- Substantial work is being done to the bridge but none of the routes leading up to the bridge are being upgraded.
- Project scope to date has not included identifying the historic elements of the Burnside Bridge that should be retained if at all possible.

We understand the importance of seismic upgrades to our built environment and appreciate the County reaching out to the Historic Landmarks Commission to keep us apprised of the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge project. We hope you take our concerns into account in future planning and include us in the Section 106 process as it is being developed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kirk Ranzetta".

Kirk Ranzetta
Chair of the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission