

City of Portland Historic Landmarks and Design Commissions Briefing Cover Memo

Project: Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge NEPA

Date: Monday, January 11, 2021

To: Megan Neill, Multnomah County – Project Manager

From: Heather Catron, HDR – Project Manager

The primary purpose of the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge (EQRB) Project is to create a seismically resilient Burnside Street lifeline crossing of the Willamette River that would remain fully operational and accessible for emergency responders, cars, trucks, buses, bikes and pedestrians immediately following the next Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ) earthquake.

None of the old bridges in downtown Portland were designed to withstand this type of seismic event. A seismically resilient Burnside Bridge will support the region's ability to provide rapid and reliable emergency response, rescue, and evacuation after a major CSZ earthquake, as well as enable post-earthquake economic and community recovery. In addition to ensuring that the crossing is seismically resilient, the purpose is also to provide a long-term, low-maintenance safe crossing for all users for the next 100 years.

The EQRB project team last provided briefings to the Historic Landmarks and Design Commissions in December 2020 on the project's recommended preferred alternative and bridge Type Selection phase.

The purpose of the January 25, 2021 joint Historic Landmarks and Design Commission briefing is to answer questions raised in December about the Enhanced Seismic Retrofit Alternative and to provide a preview of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that is schedule for publication in late January 2021 (presentation attached).

The Enhanced Seismic Retrofit is one of the alternatives studied in the DEIS. This alternative would require some parts of the bridge to be retrofitted and some of the bridge to be replaced. Under this alternative, the bridge width would be the same as existing, which narrows over the water. Some of the reasons this alternative was not recommended as the preferred alternative include:

- Technically feasible, but very challenging to make seismically resilient
- Draft finding of adverse effect
- Greatest project lifecycle cost
- Demolishes Burnside Skatepark
- Largest impact to Waterfront Park
- No improvements for bike, ped, ADA, or emergency response users

The DEIS is planned for publication in late January 2021 and will have a 45-day public and agency comment period. The project team is also offering an in-person hearing by-appointment, and comments can be submitted by voicemail, email, comment form and snail mail. The DEIS will include:

- DEIS Summary
- DEIS Purpose and Need, Alternatives, Impacts and Mitigation
- DEIS Attachments
- All Technical Reports
 - Acquisitions and Relocations
 - Air Quality
 - Climate Change*
 - Economics
 - Environmental Justice
 - Equity*
 - Floodplain and River Hydraulics
 - Geology
 - Hazardous Materials
 - Health Impact Assessment*
 - Historic and Archaeological Resources
 - Land Use
 - Noise and Vibration
 - Parks and Recreation
 - Public Services
 - Right of Way
 - River Navigation
 - Social and Neighborhood Resources
 - Transportation
 - Utilities
 - Vegetation, Wildlife, and Aquatic Resources
 - Visual and Aesthetic Resources
 - Water Quality
 - Wetlands and Waters
 - Section 4(f) Evaluation
 - * *Additional technical reports developed, not part of FHWA requirement*
- 1-page summaries of each Env. Tech Report
- Other background documents (eg, Feasibility Study)

Notifications will go out when the DEIS is published with a link to the online open house website. The online Open House website has an imbedded online comment form where comments can be submitted and an attachment function allowing for letter submissions. Comments can also be submitted by email to: burnside-eis@multco.us.