



City of Portland, Oregon
Bureau of Development Services
Land Use Services
FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION

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Briefing

DISCUSSION MEMO

Date: February 10, 2022
To: Historic Landmarks Commission
From: Hillary Adam, Design / Historic Review Team
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Re: Earl Blumenauer Bridge – Belgian Block Deployment
Briefing Memo – February 14, 2022

On February 14, 2022, representatives from the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) and the Bureau of Transportation (PBOT), will present updated information related to the deployment of Belgian Blocks from the City's inventory of blocks to the landings of the Earl Blumenauer Bridge along NE 7th Avenue.

The Commission last heard information related to this item on November 18, 2019. At that time, the majority of the Commission supported deployment of approximately 8,000 Belgian blocks to this location, but requested more details on the proposed design of the landings prior to officially approving their deployment at this location.

In order for Belgian Blocks to be deployed, the 1973 Ordinance (#139670) requires that the Historic Landmarks Commission find that two criteria are met:

- 1. Cobblestones should be reused primarily in districts or areas of the City where they were originally used. Historic Districts and Historic Landmarks where cobblestones were originally used as paving material should receive first priority.*
- 2. That as a general policy, cobblestones be used for large paving areas, primarily in public pedestrian spaces where the special character of cobblestone texture would be meaningful. The use of cobblestones as small decorative elements in unrelated or isolated projects should be discouraged, as these uses are usually insignificant or inappropriate.*

At the November 2019 Briefing, the Commission felt comfortable that perhaps while not located exactly where cobblestones were known to be deployed previously, deployment of the blocks at the bridge heads continues their connection to transportation elements in the city. It was also noted that large areas of blocks is appropriate though not within pedestrian and bicycle through-zones as this could create a slip or trip hazard.

With the revised plans, the Commission may now vote on the proposed deployment of the Belgian Blocks at this location. Staff's summary memo will serve as a record for this decision.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns.