



City of Portland Landmarks Commission

Design Advice Request

SUMMARY MEMO

Date: September 5, 2024

To: Megan Neill, Multnomah County, Division of Transportation – Bridges
megan.neill@multco.us

From: Tim Heron, Design / Historic Review Team
(503) 823-7726, tim.heron@portlandoregon.gov

Re: EA 24-060617 DA – Earthquake Resilient Burnside Bridge
Design Advice Request Commission Summary Memo – August 19, 2024

Thank you for taking advantage of the opportunity to hold a Design Advice Request regarding your project. I hope you find it informative and valuable as you continue with your project development. Following, is a summary of the comments provided by the Landmarks Commission at the **August 19, 2024 Design Advice Request**. This summary was generated from notes taken at the public meeting and a subsequent review of the public meeting recordings. To review those recordings, please visit: [Efiles - EA 24-060617 DA – Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge \[EQRB\], Type 4 Demolition Review \(24/EF/7664\) \(portlandoregon.gov\)](#).

These Landmarks Commission comments are intended to guide you in further design exploration of your project. These comments may also inform City staff when giving guidance over the course of future related land use reviews. It should be understood that these comments address the project as presented on **August 19, 2024**. As the project design evolves, the comments, too, may evolve or may no longer be pertinent.

Design Advice Requests are not intended to substitute for other Code-required land use or legislative procedures. Please keep in mind that the formal Type 4 land use review process [which includes a land use review application, public notification, and a Final Decision] must be followed once the Design Advice Request meetings are complete if formal approval for specific elements of your project is desired.

Please continue to coordinate with me as you prepare your Type 4 Land Use Review Application.

Encl:
Summary Memo

Cc: Landmarks Commission
Respondents

Commissioners present: *Chair Andrew Smith, Vice Chair Kimberly Moreland, Commissioner Hannah Bronfman, Commissioner “Hugo” Hamblin-Agosto, and Commissioner Peggy Moretti. Commissioner Maya Foty and Commissioner Cleo Davis were absent.*

Executive Summary

The Landmarks Commission agreed that replacing the existing Historic Burnside Bridge with a new seismically resilient bridge crossing the Willamette River that will be immediately usable after a major earthquake was warranted.

The Landmarks Commission agreed with the proposed three-step analysis to address the Type 4 Demolition Approval Criteria:

1. Describe the Project as it relates to demolition evaluation factors (a) through (f).
2. Determine which Comprehensive Plan and Central City Plan goals and related policies apply to this demolition request and how these policies relate to demolition evaluation factors (a) through (f).
3. Explain why, on balance, applicable Comprehensive Plan and Central City Plan goals and policies support the demolition and replacement of the Burnside Bridge.

However, the Landmarks Commission also agreed that additional information about mitigation is necessary before full support could be provided. Specifically:

- More information about the specific Programmatic Agreement mitigation elements, commitments and timing are necessary, and
- Additional mitigation beyond the Programmatic Agreement should be considered that further enhances historic resources within the Skidmore/ Oldtown National Register Historic District.

Summary of Comments. *Following is a general summary of Commission comments per the future Type 4 Land Use Review approval criteria.*

Land Use Type 4 Demolition Review Approval Criteria

Portland Zoning Code section 33.846.080. C. Approval criteria. Proposals to demolish a historic resource will be approved if the review body finds that one of the following approval criteria is met:

1. Demolition of the resource has been evaluated against and, on balance, demolition has been found to be equally or more supportive of relevant goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, and any relevant area plans, than preservation, rehabilitation, or reuse of the resource. The evaluation must consider:
 - a. The resource’s age, condition, historic integrity, historic significance, design or construction rarity, value to the community, and association with historically marginalized individuals or communities;
 - b. The economic consequences for the owner and the community;
 - c. The merits of demolition;
 - d. The merits of development that could replace the demolished resource, either as specifically proposed for the site or as allowed under the existing zoning;
 - e. The merits of preserving the resource, taking into consideration the purposes described in Subsection A; and
 - f. Any proposed mitigation for the demolition.

Historic Value:

a. The resource’s age, condition, historic integrity, historic significance, design or construction rarity, value to the community, and association with historically marginalized individuals or communities;

Comments:

- Commissioners stated that more specific information on historic integrity and sense of place and time must be highlighted.
- Commissioners noted that the homeless population should be considered and engagement with resource centers on the east side during demolition and construction.
- Commissioners encouraged reaching out and engaging with Latino and LGBTQ[IA] communities.
- Commissioners asked to see more documentation and analysis when the formal Land Use Type 4 for Demolition Review submittal is completed.

Economic Consequences & Demolition Merits:

**b. The economic consequences for the owner and the community;
c. The merits of demolition;**

Comments:

- The Landmarks Commission acknowledged that replacing the existing Historic Burnside Bridge with a new seismically resilient bridge at this regional connector crossing the Willamette River in downtown Portland that will be immediately usable after a major earthquake was warranted.
 - Goals and policies identified in the Approval Criteria for a future Type 4 Demolition Review would certainly support a new bridge that could safely support emergency relief efforts, reunite families, connect people to critical services, and serve an instrumental role in a faster, more efficient economic recovery for the region and state after a major earthquake.
- Commissioners noted that discussion about the reduction in columns under the west side of the bridge in the Historic District would open up more space and opportunities for the public to use Waterfront Park below.
- Commissioners also acknowledged the opportunity to add historic aesthetics within the new bridge design would better address these factors as well.

Redevelopment Merits:

d. The merits of development that could replace the demolished resource, either as specifically proposed for the site or as allowed under the existing zoning;

- One Commissioner expressed concern about recommending demolition when there is uncertainty with the replacement. Concerns may be alleviated if some statement of qualities/goals of the new bridge, like the gracefulness, the pedestrian scale, and detailing of the current bridge that will be incorporated into the new bridge.

- Commissioners noted that acknowledgment of the historic integrity of the current bridge should be addressed.
- Commissioners agreed that additional documentation would be needed to see more reassurance of a “game plan” for the elements to be salvaged and reused before the demolition review is approved. Delaying this discussion to the Land Use Type 3 Historic Review will be too late.
- Commissioners noted that since the applicant is planning to have another Design Advice Request and Land Use Type 3 Historic Resource Review for the western portion of the bridge in the Historic District, considering this unique discussion for a large-scale piece of regional infrastructure, it gives more comfort in reviewing this Demolition Review.

Preservation Merits:

e. The merits of preserving the resource, taking into consideration the purposes described in Subsection A; and

Comments:

- The Commission agreed that replacing the existing Historic Burnside Bridge with a new seismically resilient bridge crossing the Willamette River that will be immediately usable after a major earthquake was warranted.
- Commissioners also acknowledged that in order to ensure resiliency of the historic bridge [seismic retrofit], the historic integrity of the Burnside Bridge would likely be ruined. And, not retrofitting the bridge means that it would likely not survive a major seismic event.

Demolition Mitigation:

f. Any proposed mitigation for the demolition.

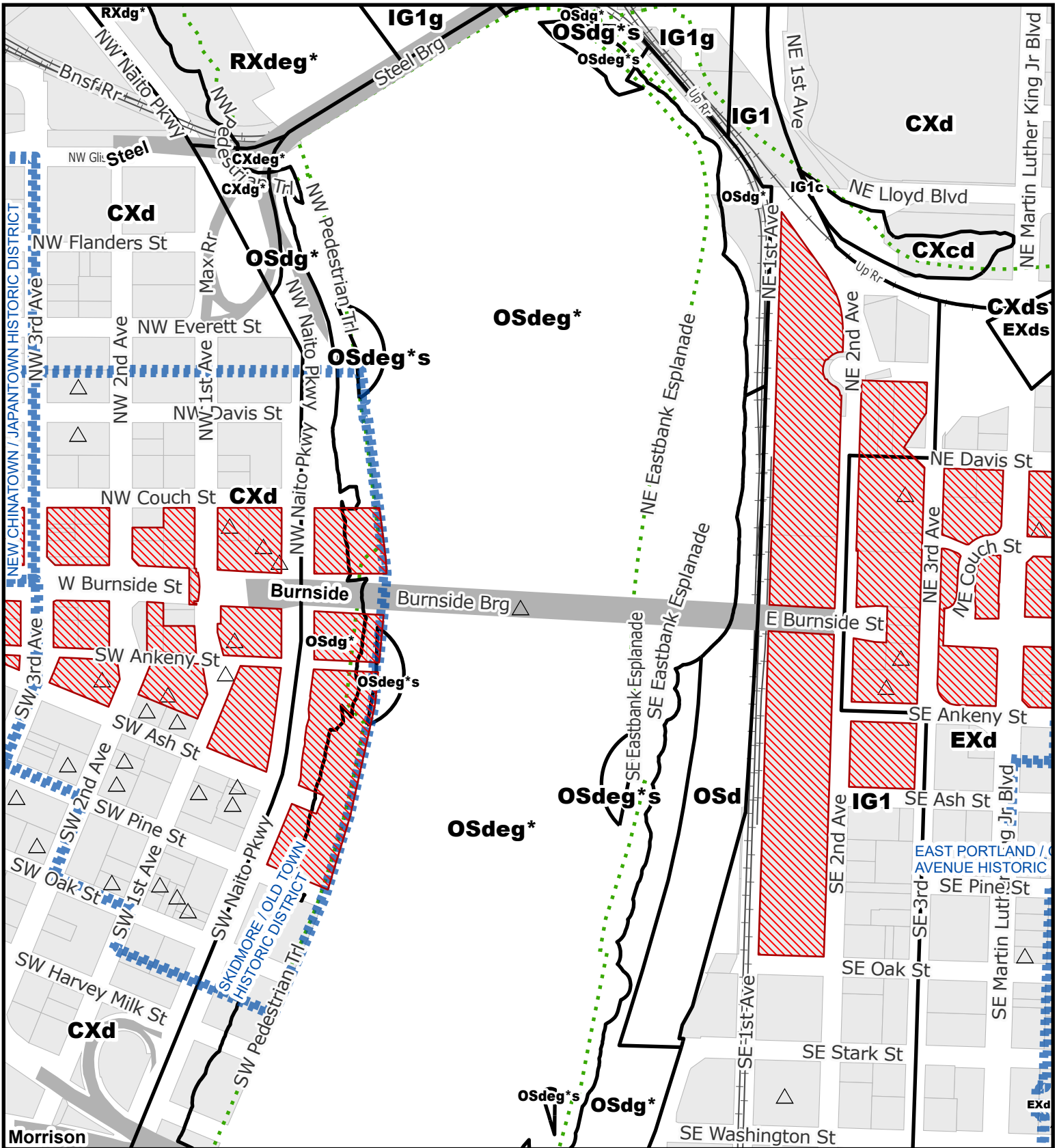
Comments:

- One Commissioner noted that the Programmatic Agreement appeared to contain general and high-level mitigation proposals. The Commissioner was concerned with the level of documentation and would need additional assurances these mitigating elements can be completed and would provide the appropriate and necessary public benefit.
 - One recommendation included reusing the towers as wayfinding kiosks in Waterfront Park.
- One Commissioner noted, in accepting that the bridge will be demolished, that the Programmatic Agreement mostly consists of basic documentation which is not commensurate mitigation for a significant historic resource to be lost. How do we balance that loss within with context the character of the historic district?
 - One suggestion was that there are a lot of resources in the Old Town/ Skidmore Historic District that are Unreinforced Masonry buildings [URMs] that have not seen reinvestment for a long time.
 - One idea for additional mitigation: In the same spirit as 1% for Art, some percentage of the project budget could go into a grant fund that building owners in Old Town/Skidmore can tap to perform seismic studies on their buildings. Such a program could be the much-needed catalyst for a renaissance in the National Landmark district.
 - Additional Commissioners concurred, a fund for seismic studies in the Historic District is creative mitigation and meets the intent of the approval criteria.

- One Commissioner noted a commitment to incorporating historical aesthetics into the design of the bridge.
- One Commissioner noted that a large piece of the Historic District is being removed by the demolition of the existing Historic Bridge, so encouraging a large degree of focus on the external very visible elements of the new bridge will be critical.
- Commissioners agreed that an additional meeting [future focus Briefing with the HLC] would be ideal to talk more about mitigation measures as it deserves more thoughtful input.

Exhibit List

- A. Applicant's Submittals
 - 1. Original Submittal
- B. Zoning Map [attached]
- C. Drawings
 - 1. Application PPT Presentation 08-19-2024
- D. Notification
 - 1. Mailing list
 - 2. Mailed notice
 - 3. Posting instructions sent to applicant
 - 4. Posting notice as sent to applicant
 - 5. Applicant's statement certifying posting
- E. Service Bureau Comments
 - 1. Portland Bureau of Transportation
 - 2. Bureau of Environmental Services
- F. Public Testimony [none]
- G. Other
 - 1. Application form
 - 2. Staff memo to the Landmarks Commission with attachments
- H. Landmarks Commission Meeting 8/19/24
 - 1. Staff Presentation
 - 2. Testimony Sheet



For Zoning Code in Effect Post October 1, 2022

ZONING

THIS SITE LIES WITHIN THE:
 CENTRAL CITY PLAN DISTRICT
 CENTRAL EASTSIDE, DOWNTOWN &
 OLD TOWN / CHINATOWN SUBDISTRICTS
 MULTIPLE HISTORIC DISTRICTS

- Site
- Historic District
- Historic Landmark
- Recreational Trails

File No.	EA 24 - 060617 DA
1/4 Section	3030,3031,3029
Scale	1 inch = 400 feet
State ID	1N1E34DC 100
Exhibit	B Jul 15, 2024



Historic Landmarks Commission Design Advice Request

Department of Community Services
Transportation Division

August 19, 2024

