

Sellwood Bridge design could impact nearby homes and businesses

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

The Sellwood Bridge Task Force will recommend one of six proposals regarding the aging bridge in January, probably at a meeting beginning at 5:30 p.m. January 5 at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry. If the citizen group cannot decide during that planned three hour session, a "backup" meeting is scheduled for January 19, according to County spokesperson Mike Pullen.

The citizen group will be asked to choose between five "build" alternatives – two calling for renovation of the existing 1926 span and the rest for a new bridge – and a "no build" option. This last would shore up the worst safety problems to allow the bridge to be used by all vehicles for the next 20 years.

All five of the "build" options would require some displacement of private property, especially on the east side of the river. In recent decades structures have been built so close to the span that virtually any building activity would affect them.

All five of the "build" alternatives would displace the Sellwood Building, containing nine businesses, and Alternatives A through D would take out one unit in the River Park Condominiums. Alternative B could also affect the Riverside Corral.

Alternative D would take out four units in Sellwood Harbor. Alternative E, which would veer north as it proceeds across the river and which has the longest span, would avoid some impacts in the immediate vicinity of the existing route but created even greater disruption elsewhere; it would take out six residential units and two businesses in Grand Place and another 37 businesses at River Park Center.

All five would involve some impact to park facilities, ranging from the removal of 3.8 acres for Alternative E to 4.3 for Alternative A or C.

On the west side, the greatest impact would come from Alternative C. At the east end it would have an interchange typical of freeways (referred to colloquially as a "trumpet" because of its shape) more designed to facilitate high-speed, high-volume movement than provide easy access.

Alternative C would require the removal of the Staff-Jennings Moorage. It would also make access between Riverview Cemetery and its funeral home so difficult that, according to Pullen, cemetery owners say they would likely feel compelled to move the property.

Alternatives A and B would use a "roundabout" configuration, while D and E would utilize a traffic signal to control traffic flow on the west end. The No-Build alternative



would cost \$54 million.

Of the other five, the cost would range from \$280 million for Alternative C to up to \$360 for Alternative E.

The cost is dependent to some extent on the architectural style used. For all but Alternative E, there is an option to build in phases.

OHSU plans first building for new 19-acre South Waterfront campus

By Lee Perlman
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While construction is some ways off, the Oregon Health and Sciences University is already making plans for the first building to occupy its proposed South Waterfront campus.

OHSU's Mark A. Williams made the revelation last month in a briefing for the Portland Planning Commission on plans for the proposed 19-acre campus, on land donated by the Schnitzer family.

To be called the City Sciences Collaborative Center, it would be a joint project with Portland State University, Oregon State University and others. "Even in a tight budget year this has made it into the governor's budget," Williams said.

"This is a chance to jump-start this district," Williams said while cautioning that the OHSU center would still need legislative approval when there will be heavy demand on state funds.

In the rest of the briefing Williams made the same points he has in previous briefings about the proposed campus. By design there will be nothing that requires zone changes, height limit modifications or other discretionary reviews, he said.

There will be underground parking, which in turn will necessitate additional fill on the land, he said. There will be a strong emphasis on environmentally friendly practices and techniques, he said. He noted that the university's Center for Health and Healing has a remarkably high 50 percent mode split (50 percent of those coming do so by means other than private cars), "and that's without any bus service."

TriMet plans to re-route southbound Line 35 buses from Southwest Macadam to Moody Avenue, through the district. They have made no independent plans for the greenway area adjacent to the Willamette River, he said, because the land is currently owned by the Zidel Corporation.

OHSU hopes to acquire the property some day, but in the meantime "We wouldn't want to be in the position of designing someone else's property."

Williams said OHSU wants to incorporate a mixture of uses, including housing, to make the campus a "vibrant, 24-hour" place. Design Commission member Gwen Millius asked if the center would include "workforce housing" that would allow those who worked or studied at OHSU to live near it.

Williams said he envisioned "a mixture" of housing types, including student housing, housing for visiting faculty, and market rate as well as more affordable units.

Asked about financing for the project or a timeline Williams said, "This will have a multi-decade build-out." More facetiously he told the Commission, "All I need is a couple billion bucks and we can start moving dirt around."


South Waterfront Greenway

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Reed testified that she had used a similar treatment to the one proposed on an east bank project, "and it's held up really well. It's difficult to see the wall now because it's been overtaken by vegetation."

Lindley asked if Marine Fisheries has a consistent policy about such developments, or if they are decided on a case by case basis. "It's evolving," Middaugh replied. "The feds haven't worked on a big river environment like this before. We actually took them down to the site and said, 'What do you want us to do here?'"

Planner Chris Caruso speculated that in terms of protecting the river and its fish, Marine Fisheries may be defeating its own purpose. "One of the reasons it's easy to ignore the problems of the river is that it's so hard to get to it," she said. Middaugh retorted, "It's not the fish habitat that's preventing access to the river, it's industrial development."



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