



The Burnside Bridge over the Willamette River was one of four downtown spans that were listed last week on the National Register of Historic Places.

Four bridges named to national register

Four historic bridges in Portland, a city often affectionately referred to as Bridgetown because of its bridges, have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The four represent an impressive range of bridge technology used nationally during the 20th century.

"Listing four of Portland's bridges in the National Register of Historic Places recognizes just how important these structures are for their engineering and for their role in the city's rich history," said Robert Hadlow, a senior historian for the Oregon Department of Transportation. "Bridges have connected Portlanders on both sides of the river since the 1880s and helped make Portland the vibrant city that it is today."

The bridges -- Broadway, Burnside, Hawthorne and

Morrison -- are located on a 1.5 mile stretch of the Willamette River. All are owned and maintained by Multnomah County.

The Hawthorne Bridge of 1910 was strikingly large for its time and built for horse and street-car systems. The vertical-lift truss bridge was converted by the 1950s to serve automobile and bus traffic. The City of Portland reported earlier this month that more than a half million bike trips were logged on it from August-October of this year.

When the Burnside Bridge was opened in 1926, it featured four lanes for motor vehicles and two to serve the trolley system. It is the first drawbridge to rely upon a concrete deck, estimated to weigh 5,000 tons, for its movable span.

The Broadway Bridge was opened in 1913. Also a drawbridge system, its timber decking was replaced in 1948 with steel grating. Originally painted with red lead paint, it was repainted black in 1949. Its color changed again in 1963 under a new scheme devised to add color and diversity to Portland's many bridges.

The newest bridge, Morrison, opened in 1958 at the location of two previous bridges. Its design incorporates of new technical details in the pier design and a post-World War II aesthetic that distinguishes it from earlier bascule designs.

The Portland bridges were nominated because of the significant political, economic, commercial and social forces that governed their design, location, and construction over six decades; and their national engineering signi