



# Stakeholder Interview and Focus Group Summary Report

Oregon City-West Linn Pedestrian-Bicycle Concept Plan

*Oregon City-West Linn*  
June 11, 2021







## Contents

|        |  |    |
|--------|--|----|
| 1      | Introduction .....   | 1  |
| 1.1    | Purpose of Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups.....            | 1  |
| 2      | Summary of Questions and Participant Responses.....                | 1  |
| 2.1    | Key Themes.....  | 1  |
| 2.2    | Stakeholder Interviews.....  | 2  |
| 2.2.1  | Willamette Falls Trust.....  | 2  |
| 2.2.2  | Emergency Service Providers.....                                   | 4  |
| 2.2.3  | Wilsonville School District .....                                  | 5  |
| 2.2.4  | Willamette Heritage Foundation.....                                | 7  |
| 2.2.5  | Clackamas County.....  | 9  |
| 2.2.6  | Portland General Electric (Shoreline Property Owner).....          | 11 |
| 2.2.7  | Belgravia Investments (Shoreline Property Owner).....              | 12 |
| 2.2.8  | Coast Guard .....  | 13 |
| 2.2.9  | Willamette Falls Locks Commission and Army Corps of Engineers..... | 14 |
| 2.2.10 | Downtown Oregon City Association and City of Oregon City.....      | 15 |
| 2.2.11 | Territorial Drive Residents.....                                   | 16 |
| 2.3    | Focus Groups .....   | 17 |
| 2.3.1  | Community and Bicycle/Pedestrian Interests.....                    | 17 |
| 2.3.2  | Youth.....   | 18 |
| 2.3.3  | Spanish Speakers.....  | 20 |
| 2.3.4  | Oregon City Commission Briefings .....                             | 21 |
| 2.3.5  | Transportation Demand Management Group .....                       | 22 |
| 2.3.6  | Seniors .....  | 23 |
| 2.3.7  | Disabled Community Members .....                                   | 23 |
| 2.3.8  | Territorial Drive Residents.....                                   | 23 |

## Tables

|            |                               |    |
|------------|-------------------------------|----|
| Table 2-1. | Stakeholder Interviews.....   | 2  |
| Table 2-2. | Focus Group Participants..... | 17 |



# 1 Introduction

The Oregon Department of Transportation in partnership with Oregon City, West Linn, Clackamas County, and Metro is preparing a concept plan for a pedestrian and bicycle bridge spanning the Willamette River in Oregon City and West Linn. To promote collaboration and gain input from stakeholders in the community, the project team conducted 10 interviews and eight focus groups with a total of 64 participants representing a wide range of stakeholder interests and lived experiences.

## 1.1 Purpose of Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups

The interviews and focus groups gathered stakeholders' perspectives and input on walking, biking and rolling in the project area and feedback on the proposed alignment options for the pedestrian and bicycle bridge. The interviews introduced stakeholders to the project, provided an update for those already familiar and gathered participant feedback. Participants received a project fact sheet and a link to the project website prior to each interview/focus group.

These engagement efforts were done in part to elevate interests identified early in the project through a stakeholder mapping exercise completed with the Project Management Team. The exercise highlighted a need to include voices from traditionally under-represented community members or those dependent on how-stress transportation infrastructure, such as seniors, youth, Sovereign Nations, and people who identify as black, indigenous or as a person of color.

# 2 Summary of Questions and Participant Responses

## 2.1 Key Themes

The following are key themes gathered from the stakeholder interviews and focus groups.

- A new crossing specifically for walking, biking and rolling is generally seen as a **positive community amenity**. Most people do not feel comfortable walking, biking or rolling across the current option, the Arch Bridge.
- **Cultural history** is significant and a key priority.
- The crossing must create a **safe, accessible, welcoming experience for all users**.
- A **safe transportation system** accessing the bridge is a priority.
- Alignment **adjacent to the Arch Bridge**:
  - Pros: Central, "known" location which is good for pedestrians and businesses.

- Cons: May diminish design and experience of existing historic bridge.
- Alignments **south of the Arch Bridge**:
  - Pros: Will support redevelopment and good view of falls.
  - Cons: May not be favored by all Sovereign Nations; may exacerbate the current parking issues in Oregon City.
- Alignments **north of the Arch Bridge**:
  - Pros: Good commuter cycling connection and route.
  - Cons: Not as convenient for pedestrians; considered “out of the way.”

## 2.2 Stakeholder Interviews

Table 2-1 the organization or interest represented, interview participants included and interview date. What follows is a summary of the questions posed to each participant and their responses.

**Table 2-1. Stakeholder Interviews**

| Organization/Interest   | Participant(s)  | Date              |
|---|---|-------------------|
| Willamette Falls Trust  | Andrew Mason, Executive Director  | January 15, 2021  |
| Emergency Service Providers                                   | Nate Thompson, Clackamas County Sheriff<br>Peter Mahuna, Oregon City Police<br>Shaun Davis, Oregon City Police<br>Oddis Rollins, West Linn Police                   | January 21, 2021  |
| Wilsonville School District                                   | Dr. Aaron Downs, Superintendent   | January 15, 2021  |
| Willamette Heritage Foundation                                | Troy Bowers, Co-Chair<br>Nancy Kraushauer, Co-Chair   | January 20, 2021  |
| Clackamas County  | Martine Coblentz, Equity and Inclusion  | February 18, 2021 |
| Portland General Electric                                     | Eric Underwood, Government Affairs  | February 1, 2021  |
| Belgravia Investments   | Neil de Gelder  | February 8, 2021  |
| Coast Guard   | Stephen Fischer<br>Carl Smith   | February 8, 2021  |
| Willamette Falls Locks Commission and Army Corps of Engineers | Joe Bernert, Locks Commission<br>Sandy Carter, Locks Commission<br>Benny Dean, Army Corps of Engineers<br>Nancy Karushauer, Willamette Heritage Foundation Co-Chair | January 26, 2021  |
| Downtown Oregon City Association and City of Oregon City      | Liz Hannum, Downtown Oregon City Association<br>Kelly Reid, City of Oregon City   | March/April       |
| Territorial Drive Residents                                   | One Territorial Drive property owner<br>One Territorial Drive resident  | June 2, 2021      |

### 2.2.1 Willamette Falls Trust

*Interviewee: Andrew Mason, Executive Director*

*Key takeaway: Engaging all five Sovereign Nations is important.*

**Is the project I described consistent with your expectations?**

- Yes.

**Is there another alignment you believe is better than the ones shown or another that should be assessed?**

- No, the ones shown are good.

**Of the potential alignments shown, which two do you believe are the most promising and why?**

- The alignment nearest the S-curve on OR 99 will best support the Legacy project. (The Willamette Falls Trust board may not support any bridge option).
- The alignment nearest the Arch Bridge is in a location that people are used to crossing the river and might provide the path of least resistance.
- All alignment options will support bicyclists and pedestrians in Oregon City.

**What areas within the study area do you believe would not make good locations for a crossing? Why not?**

- Board members who were appointed by the tribal councils (other than Grand Ronde) may not support a new bridge. All five Sovereign Nations should be engaged.

**How should your/community priorities be used to evaluate the different potential bridge alignments?**

- The project may encounter differing viewpoints from the Sovereign Nations.
- Important to incorporate the perspectives of all five tribes but may not hear from tribes other than the Grand Ronde until later in the process.
- Look at alignment locations that facilitate connections for people walking and biking and that supports development on both sides of the river.

**Do you see pros or cons to having a new pedestrian/bicycle crossing within the study area? If so, please describe.**

- Personally can see the benefits to the community, but the board may not.

**What is your relationship, if any, with the City (Oregon City/West Linn), Clackamas County, Metro, and ODOT?**

- We work closely with Oregon City staff and the Commission.

**How do you want to be engaged in these efforts? Who else should we be talking to?**

- Andrew will keep the project team informed around the perspectives of the trust's board members as the project progresses.
- Brian Moore will have important information to share from a public agency perspective.

## 2.2.2 Emergency Service Providers

*Interviewees: Nate Thompson, Clackamas County Sheriff; Peter Mahuna, Oregon City Police; Shaun Davis, Oregon City Police; Oddis Rollins, West Linn Police*

*Key takeaway: Consider all aspects of safety.*

### **Is the project I described consistent with your expectations?**

- Yes.

### **What are the most important issues you believe the project should address?**

- In-water construction, new structures built in the river and safety for boaters are the biggest concerns from a marine patrol perspective.

### **Is there another alignment you believe is better than the ones shown or another that should be assessed?**

- No.

### **Of the potential alignments shown, which two do you believe are the most promising and why?**

- West Linn
  - Option 4a: Mill Street to Main Street is the easiest option for pedestrians.
  - Option 6 is second choice.
  - Option 7 is third choice.
- Oregon City
  - There is a lot of bike traffic coming down Singer Hill that should be considered.
  - Streets carry a lot of traffic and congestion and bike/peds crossing will be unsafe south of the Arch Bridge.
- Clackamas County
  - Option 6 is a good location. Be aware that there is a lot of erosion occurring in this area.
  - Overall, 4b is OK, but 6 and 7 are preferred.

### **What areas within the study area do you believe would not make good locations for a crossing? Why not?**

- West Linn
  - South of the Arch Bridge is not ideal for pedestrians.
  - Coming from Willamette Drive at 9th and 10<sup>th</sup>; there is not a lot of room as you get closer to the mill.
  - The farther you get from the Arch Bridge towards the falls is more isolated and creates safety concerns, as it is a harder area to patrol.
- Group
  - The viaduct on OR 99E will present a challenge.

- Using the Arch Bridge as a bicycle/pedestrian only bridge will inundate other streets with traffic if another vehicle bridge is not built.
- I-205 tolling is a big concern as it will create traffic backups on local streets. People will get off at Stafford Road, diverting through Oregon City.

**Do you see pros or cons to having a new pedestrian/bicycle crossing within the study area? If so, please describe.**

- An exclusive bicycle/pedestrian crossing will increase safety for those walking and biking
- A new bridge will also promote biking among those who aren't currently comfortable biking on Arch Bridge.

**Are there racial-, age-, or gender-based issues in your community that limit freedom of mobility?**

- Sunset neighborhood in West Linn is economically diverse.
- Talk to the high schools in both cities.
- Public transit is limited in West Linn which can create transportation barriers.

**How do you want to be engaged in these efforts? Who else should we be talking to?**

- For a river perspective:
  - Benny Dean, Army Corps
  - Coast Guard
  - State Marine Board
- All neighborhood associations
- Clackamas Fire
- TVF&R – Allen Kennedy

### 2.2.3 Wilsonville School District

*Interviewee: Dr Aaron Downs, Superintendent*

*Key takeaway: Need safe access to the new bridge for all users, especially students.*

**Is the project I described consistent with your expectations?**

- Yes.

**What are the most important issues you believe the project should address?**

- The area where West A meets Sunset is very dangerous and experiences heavy traffic. Creating a bridge for people walking and biking can increase use of the area by students. The project needs to address the current safety issues.

- Many drivers are not paying attention or looking out for kids crossing streets. There is an awkward stop in the area between stop signs that no one stops at and is extremely dangerous.
- Think about the multiple ways kids will access a new bridge coming from the high school. Create safe paths and access.
- Police have said that the building on Sunset that is used for AA meetings and housing told students to “be cautious”. Very active space, residents outside smoking. Kids likely to have to walk in this area to get to a new bridge.
- Parking is a huge issue for the school. Parking will be reduced when the Broadway overcrossing is removed as part of the I-205 Improvements Project. Currently it is used for parking.
- Don’t foresee this crossing being used much by seniors. Unclear where the destinations would be.

**Is there another alignment you believe is better than the ones shown or another that should be assessed?**

- No, these are good.

**Of the potential alignments shown, which two do you believe are the most promising and why?**

- First choice is 4a and 4b; like the central location. Second choice (for same reason) is 3a and 3b.

**What areas within the study area do you believe would not make good locations for a crossing? Why not?**

- Options 6 and 7 feel too far out and may not be used.

**How should your/community priorities be used to evaluate the different potential bridge alignments?**

- The community will want to keep the location close to the Arch Bridge. Need to keep property impacts low, good connectivity and accessibility.

**Do you see pros or cons to having a new pedestrian/bicycle crossing within the study area? If so, please describe.**

- There are 2,500 kids at West Linn High School and many teachers/staff live in Oregon City. A central alignment will be highly used. There is no safe bike crossing now.

**Do the people you know in the area feel comfortable biking or walking to get around? If not, can you share specific safety concerns for people walking or biking?**

- Most people don’t currently feel safe crossing the Arch Bridge on a bike or walking.
- Again, the area where West A meets Sunset is very dangerous. Creating a crossing will likely increase student use of this area and safety should be increased for their access.

**How is power or influence distributed around your community?**

- There isn't a lot of demographic diversity, but there is socioeconomic diversity.
- There is a new DEI-focused group in West Linn – the West Linn Alliance for Inclusive Community.

**Are there barriers to transportation access for groups served by your organization? If so, what are they?**

- Terrain in the area is quite hilly and can create barriers. Transit says busses cannot access certain areas. This limits the opportunity for students and staff to try different forms of transportation.
- Not having access to transit is a barrier. In contrast, many students and staff (and the public in general) use the free transit in Wilsonville. There is a public transit stigma in West Linn.

**Are there racial-, age-, or gender-based issues in your community that limit freedom of mobility?**

- Not aware of any other than the lack of transit serving West Linn.

**How do you want to be engaged in these efforts? Who else should we be talking to?**

- West Linn Alliance for Inclusive Community.
- Transportation Director (Wilsonville School District) Pat McGough.
- High school students from Oregon City and West Linn.

## 2.2.4 Willamette Heritage Foundation

*Interviewees: Troy Bowers and Nancy Karushauer, Co-Chairs*

*Key takeaway: Conduct a process respectful of historic and cultural interests.*

**Is the project I described consistent with your expectations?**

- Yes.

**What are the most important issues you believe the project should address?**

- Process must be respectful of the historic interests while integrating the new development.
- Topography/grade between cities; landing areas; environmental issues; historic properties; and property owner issues are all challenges.

**What do you believe others will see as the most important issues?**

- Future planning considerations
  - The Old Mill site
  - Old City Hall
  - Willamette Falls historic area

- West Linn Inn
- A new bridge needs to work in concert with redevelopment instead of precluding it.
- The viaduct in Oregon City.
- Providing safe access at OR 43 and across I-205
- The West Linn TSP or Bike/Ped Plan includes a connection to the mill area. If traveling west to Tualatin, Willamette Drive is a beautiful route but there are no bike facilities. Traveling north is a bigger issue.

**Of the potential alignments shown, which two do you believe are the most promising and why?**

- No preference yet – want to hear more about previous study and geometric considerations.
- Upriver from Arch Bridge or tight to Arch Bridge make most sense.
- The landing area for 2a and 2b will function well in Oregon City and West Linn.
- 1a is a nice option with the tie-in to Moore’s Island.

**What areas within the study area do you believe would not make good locations for a crossing? Why not?**

- Options further downstream don’t support view shed.
- Landing on Oregon City side is very tight fit and bringing the bridge down will take a lot of space.

**How should your/community priorities be used to evaluate the different potential bridge alignments?**

- Need to be respectful of historic lands and architecture of the Arch Bridge.
- Safety and accessibility.

**Do you see pros or cons to having a new pedestrian/bicycle crossing within the study area? If so, please describe.**

- The pros are huge, and the cons can be worked through.
- Pros: Connections, access to future tours, more comfortable crossing for bikes/peds, improved livability, supports other bike/ped improvements in the area (OR 43 and waterfront improvement in Oregon City).
- Cons: Security/safety issues if crossing close to the PGE power station. West Linn paper mill site is still a working business which may also have concerns, the public may not want public funds spent on a bicycle/pedestrian bridge.

**Do the people you know in the area feel comfortable biking or walking to get around? If not, can you share specific safety concerns for people walking or biking?**

- The experience on the Arch Bridge is not comfortable – lots of traffic, narrow sidewalks, sharrows rather than bike lanes.

- The bicycle and pedestrian improvements in downtown Oregon City make it more comfortable to bike and walk in that area.

**How is power or influence distributed around your community?**

- Political power is with the Oregon City Commission and West Linn City Council.
- Historic Review Board.
- Chamber of Commerce.
- Neighborhood associations.
- Grande Ronde and other tribal interests.
- TriMet plays big role in transit access. Oregon City has the bigger transit benefit.

**Are there racial-, age-, or gender-based issues in your community that limit freedom of mobility?**

- In West Linn, there is a rehab facility close to the OR 43 interchange and Arch Bridge. Residents likely access the courthouse in downtown Oregon City. There is talk about moving the courthouse up the hill, which may make access (especially if no car) more difficult.

**What is your relationship, if any, with the City (Oregon City/West Linn), Clackamas County, Metro, and ODOT?**

- The foundation has a good relationship with the City. It is seen as a West Linn organization; one member is from Oregon City.

**How do you want to be engaged in these efforts? Who else should we be talking to?**

- Eric Underwood, PGE Government Affairs.
- Willamette Locks Commission (Joe Bernert and Sandy Carter).
- Alice Norris (local influencer and former mayor of Oregon City).
- Jody Carson (foundation founder and past West Linn City Councilor).

**Is there anything else you would like to share with the team?**

- Engage the tribes.
- Be very respectful and aware of area history.
- The PGE plant is an important power source.

## 2.2.5 Clackamas County

*Interviewee: Martine Coblenz, Equity and Inclusion*

*Key takeaways: New bridge should be safe, welcoming and accessible to whole community.*

**Is the project I described consistent with your expectations?**

- Yes.

**What are the most important issues you believe the project should address?**

- Right of way impacts and displacements.
- Gentrification caused by the new community amenity.
- Connect with seniors and people with disabilities to discuss safety on the bridge and surrounding areas. If you are leading people somewhere on foot or bike, connections on each side need to be safe.

**Is there another alignment you believe is better than the ones shown or another that should be assessed?**

- No.

**Of the potential alignments shown, which two do you believe are the most promising and why?**

- Don't have opinion on any specific alignment, but it generally needs to be safe and low impact.

**How should your/community priorities be used to evaluate the different potential bridge alignments?**

- Safety.
- Creating a connection near where people want to travel.
- Low impacts.
- Serves seniors and people with disabilities.
- Lead with race. We know more people of color are hit by cars, etc. Design for safety.
- Use multilingual signage to create awareness and a welcoming environment.
- Connections with tribes is important.

**Do you see pros or cons to having a new pedestrian/bicycle crossing within the study area? If so, please describe.**

- Connecting two communities and connecting with regional trails is positive.
- Cons would include the project resulting in displacements, lack of safety, etc.

**Do the people you know in the area feel comfortable biking or walking to get around? If not, can you share specific safety concerns for people walking or biking?**

- The existing Arch Bridge is not an ideal crossing.

**Are there racial-, age-, or gender-based issues in your community that limit freedom of mobility?**

- We need to bring focus to people of color, seniors, people with disabilities, and awareness of gender safety.

**What are some ways that local (city/county) and state (e.g., ODOT) agencies can improve their relationship with you and the community members you serve?**

- Talk to as many people as you can including a wide representation for each "group"; there is more than one perspective and talking to one senior or one person with a disability is not going to get the team an accurate picture.

**How do you want to be engaged in these efforts? Who else should we be talking to?**

- Patricia Kepler (disability perspective) pkepler@gmail.com.
- Bandana Shrestha (older adult perspective) bshrestha@aarp.org.

## 2.2.6 Portland General Electric (Shoreline Property Owner)

*Interviewee: Eric Underwood, Government Affairs*

*Key takeaway: Consider safety issues with the landing area for alignment options south of the Arch bridge.*

**Is the project I described consistent with your expectations?**

- Yes.

**Do any of the potential alignment have impacts that are of concern to your property?**

- Concerns with the landing area for alignment options 1-3. Safety hazard around easement if vehicles accessing OR 43 in addition to the paper mill; it's the only ingress and egress.
- There will be safety and liability issues conducting the tours that the heritage groups want at the Sullivan plant and Old Mill area. Open to a virtual tour or very limited access/supervised tours. Liability concern due to their FERC license.

**How should your/community priorities be used to evaluate the different potential bridge alignments?**

- People in West Linn will not want views of the falls blocked. Parking may be an issue.
- Need a connection to existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities and trails.

**Do you see pros or cons to having a new pedestrian/bicycle crossing within the study area? If so, please describe.**

- Pro: The crossing will help bolster redevelopment.
- Con: It may make a difficult parking situation even harder in downtown Oregon City. The Riverwalk will impact parking. Discuss this issue with the Legacy Project group. If people want to drive and park at the new bridge to use it, it will add to an already challenging situation.

**Is there anything else you would like to share with the team?**

- Getting a National Heritage designation would be a huge tourist boost.

## 2.2.7 Belgravia Investments (Shoreline Property Owner)

*Interviewee: Neil de Gelder*

*Key takeaway: Consider future development on West Linn side of the river when selecting a preferred alignment.*

### **Is the project I described consistent with your expectations?**

- Yes.

### **What are the most important issues you believe the project should address?**

- The landing points on the West Linn side are important to determine how much utility the bridge will have.

### **What do you believe others will see as the most important issues?**

- These alignments are more "informative" from the Oregon City side than the West Linn side. It is easier to see how they interact with what is there versus what is to come.

### **Of the potential alignments shown, which two do you believe are the most promising and why?**

- 1a and 1c are preferable and most realistic alignments.
- 1a lands on the island tip and can go either direction. Open to a bridge support on the island tip under certain circumstances. There are elevations and slopes to consider.
- Option 2 nearest the falls are well suited for what will eventually be developed. This area won't always be empty. Unsure if the island will change; depends on the paper mill.

### **What areas within the study area do you believe would not make good locations for a crossing? Why not?**

- 7b is challenging. It is a long bridge and ends up at the roundabout. How will people walking and biking be integrated in a user friendly way?
- 4a is extremely long and the elevation change will be challenging. Where do the ramps go on the Oregon City side?
- For most falls-oriented landing areas the elevations will be challenging. Regarding the bridge height clearance in locks area, unsure how you will transition from the first landing.

### **Do any of the potential alignments have impacts that are of concern to your property?**

- Not convinced the West Linn OR 43 roundabout (not the roundabout that is part of the I-205 project) will best serve the area. It will gut a lot of development potential for the site. It will not provide the highest and best use from the bridge to PGE's property/tip of the island.
- The options nearer the falls have landing points that can be refined and integrated into what Belgravia has planned on site.

**How should your/community priorities be used to evaluate the different potential bridge alignments?**

- The PAC members cannot currently see what we see on entire West Linn side of the river regarding redevelopment when they are asked about the alignment options. It is important to consider what will be there. Belgravia is in final stages of preparing a refined schematic to provide ODOT.

**Do you see pros or cons to having a new pedestrian/bicycle crossing within the study area? If so, please describe.**

- Depending on how the landings are sited, the new bridge can be very useful, useful or irrelevant.
- 7a borders on irrelevant because of how far away it is and separated by significant road infrastructure.
- The timing of all the planning and project efforts in the area could synch up, including OR 43 work, the bridge, the Belgravia development.

**Is there anything else you would like to share with the team?**

- Belgravia's architect team will reach out to this project team to talk about their redevelopment plan.

## 2.2.8 Coast Guard

*Interviewees: Stephen Fischer and Carl Smith*

*Key takeaway: Assume the clearances of the Arch Bridge will need to be maintained.*

**Is the project I described consistent with your expectations?**

- Yes.

**What are the most important issues you believe the project should address?**

- The Coast Guard wants to maintain existing navigational clearances, in the interest of preserving the navigability of the waterway. This usually means that a new bridge must not reduce clearances of the existing bridge that is being replaced.
- There can be exceptions. For instance, if there are existing bridges either upstream or downstream of the project bridge that have less vertical and horizontal clearances, they become the "controlling structures" on the waterway. In this case, the Coast Guard may allow the project bridge to have less clearances, but not less than the controlling structure on the waterway. How far upstream and downstream that a controlling structure is considered involves analysis of existing uses of the waterway. This is a key subject of a NIR.

- Recommendation that the project assumes the clearances of the existing bridge will need to be maintained. Any change to this will require an NIR and approval of the Coast Guard.
- If the project continues to a “build” decision, the team will need to become familiar with the Coast Guard Bridge Permit Application Guide (PBAG), available at the link below.
  - [https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Portals/9/DCO%20Documents/5pw/Office%20of%20Bridge%20Programs/BPAG%20COMDTPUB%20P16591%203D%20Sequential%20Clearance%20Final\(July2016\).pdf](https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Portals/9/DCO%20Documents/5pw/Office%20of%20Bridge%20Programs/BPAG%20COMDTPUB%20P16591%203D%20Sequential%20Clearance%20Final(July2016).pdf)

## 2.2.9 Willamette Falls Locks Commission and Army Corps of Engineers

*Interviewees: Joe Bernert, Willamette Falls Locks Commission; Sandy Carter, Willamette Falls Locks Commission; Benny Dean, Army Corps of Engineers; Nancy Kraushauer, Willamette Heritage Foundation*

*Key takeaway: Historic and cultural preservation are priorities.*

### **Is the project I described consistent with your expectations?**

- Yes.

### **What is the background of the locks?**

- The locks were built in 1860s, open in 1973, and put on the historic register in 1973. Army Corps operated them from 1950 until 2011, when they were closed for safety reasons. The locks were funded from the natural resource economy; commercial traffic (“commercial tonnage”). 4-lift canal and locks. Working on getting ownership changed to the Willamette Falls Locks Authority, a new entity.
- A bill was created in last legislative session, but the walk out occurred when they were only one vote short. It will be introduced again in this legislative session, but due to COVID, funding has evaporated, and a favorable vote is less certain.
- As soon as the state identifies/approves a new owner, the Corps will transfer ownership. The locks need seismic upgrades and operational equipment to open the gate. Currently the Corps has scheduled repairs to the upper two sections and along the PGE powerhouse to take place over the next 2-3 years.

### **What are the most important issues you believe the project should address?**

- Historic/cultural preservation.
- Coast Guard height requirements.

### **Of the potential alignments shown, which two do you believe are the most promising and why?**

- Some real estate easements may need approvals on the upstream west side. Don't see any holdings on the downstream side or next to the Arch Bridge.
- Downstream options are preferred.

- Shorter alignment next to the Arch Bridge is less conspicuous. Any design needs to be extremely simple and not take away from the historical Arch Bridge architecture.
- 2b.

**What areas within the study area do you believe would not make good locations for a crossing? Why not?**

- Not in favor of the lower option that crosses the locks.
- Concerned that 4a will disrupt the downtown core of Oregon City.
- There are chimney swifts in some downtown buildings that may be impacted if buildings impacted or removed.

**How do you want to be engaged in these efforts? Who else should we be talking to?**

- Engage cultural preservation and historic experts.
- Benny Dean (Coast Guard) let the team know that there is a “nationwide” stormwater treatment permit process and a statewide permit process.

## 2.2.10 Downtown Oregon City Association and City of Oregon City

*Interviewees: Liz Hannum, Downtown Oregon City Association; Kelly Reid, City of Oregon City*

*Key takeaway: Partnership between ODOT and the City could be improved; alignment 4a best supports business.*

**Which alignment would be best for businesses and why?**

- Alignment 4a would be the best alignment for business. People already understand this route and would increase both recreational trips and promote mode shift.

**Which alignment would lower the TDM impact on downtown Oregon City?**

- Alignments like 6 or 7 would promote more mode shifts to non-single occupancy vehicle travel. This is important because traffic is very intense right now. Any alignment that lowers the number of cars in that space will be a benefit to businesses. Businesses are worried about how the increase in traffic in the area might negatively impact people wanting to go downtown.

**Which alignment would be best for economic development?**

- Alignment 1c would be the best for economic development pending funding and approval for the current development projects, such as a new food cart and programming potential if an alignment like 7b.
- Alignment 7b could be less safe for people crossing over McLoughlin. Also, a more low-impact crossing would exist at alignment 1c or alignments on the other side of Main Street. There was a fear that alignments like 6 or 7 might be utilized less due to the fact there is currently no existing development on the West Linn side.

### **How has the project been for the community?**

- The process felt top down. They felt like they didn't have a chance to work with ODOT directly to understand the actual needs of the community. It was really hard for the community when ODOT released the initial press release of this project showing the Arch Bridge becoming a ped/bike only bridge. This scared people and made them really upset without adequate conversation. Many of the folks in the community have also voiced that a car bridge and pedestrian crossing bridge should be considered.

### **What are some ways to improve this process?**

- Folks in this community, specifically businesses, feel that a pedestrian crossing bridge in the area represents a low priority need. Something they suggested to improve the process is to have the public engagement lead the selection of projects in a site area. Businesses in the site area have a lot of other needs that could improve pedestrian and bike access and that those projects are more supported. It would have been great for ODOT to bring a public relations team or marketing team to help better educate the public about the project and ensure that the project is well liked by the public.
- Downtown Oregon City Association and City of Oregon City staff have had to field questions about the project before public information was readily available. This is a major impact on city staff time. ODOT should consider working more directly with these agency partners to ensure information is articulated to the public and it does not create impacts on local agencies.
- It would be good to invite other transit agencies like TriMet to the table.

## **2.2.11 Territorial Drive Residents**

*Interviewees: Residents at 5095 and 5083 Territorial Drive.*

*Key takeaway: Property owners not currently supportive of a downstream alignment.*

Territorial Drive residents were invited to participate in a focus group to discuss the project on May 26, 2021 but no one attended. Members of the project team and West Linn Councilor Mary Baumgardner visited Territorial Drive to follow up with property owners and residents to ensure that they were aware of the project and had the opportunity to share their input.

The team met with two residents.

- The first resident (5095 Territorial Drive) shared that he and two others (the owner/resident at 5083 Territorial Drive and one out of the area) jointly owned the remaining residences and some additional property along Territorial Drive. The owners have plans to improve these properties and are very concerned about the impacts a bridge would have on the area, particularly to privacy and the overall character.
- Another resident (5007 Territorial Drive) was supportive of the project, particularly the downstream corridor because of its proximity to the Oregon City Transit Center.



Both residents were provided a packet of project information and encouraged to take the project survey and stay involved as the project progresses.

## 2.3 Focus Groups

Table 2-2 outlines the interest area of each focus group, the number of participants, and the date of each meeting. The project provided stipends to compensate youth, seniors and Spanish-speaker focus group attendees for their participation. Stipends were offered to the disabled community member focus group invitees, but none participated.

Most people were sent email invitations to participate in the focus groups. The Territorial Drive residents were invited to a focus group via door hangers left at their residents on May 18 and a reminder on May 26, 2021.

What follows are the questions posed to the participants and a summary of their responses.

**Table 2-2. Focus Group Participants**

| Focus Group  | Number of Participants    | Date  |
|--|---------------------------|---|
| Community and Bicycle/Pedestrian Interests               | 8                         | March 1, 2021   |
| Youth  | 10                        | March 18, 2021  |
| Spanish Speakers   | 6                         | April 8, 2021   |
| Oregon City Commission                                   | 4 Commissioners and staff | January 6, 2021<br>February 9, 2021<br>March 17, 2021 |
| Oregon City Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Group | 4<br>15                   | February 4, 2021<br>April 19, 2021                    |
| Seniors  | 3                         | May 21, 2021  |
| Disabled Community Members                               | 0 (5 invited)             | May 21, 2021  |
| Territorial Drive Residents                              | 0 (5 invited)             | May 26, 2021  |

### 2.3.1 Community and Bicycle/Pedestrian Interests

**Do you believe that a new bridge for people walking, biking and rolling would benefit the community?**

- All agreed that a new bridge would benefit the community.

**Do you currently walk/bike/roll across the Arch Bridge (OR 43)?**

- Some participants cross the bridge for commuting/transportation, but acknowledged it isn't a comfortable or safe option for many.

**Of the alternatives shown, which do you believe would best serve the community?**

- A couple participants like the alternative by the Arch Bridge due to its short-reach, central location and connectivity.
- One participant doesn't like option 4a near the Arch Bridge because people walking and biking should be as far from vehicle traffic as possible.

- Any option would be great and an attribute.
- 1c and 2b provide great views of the falls. These options would be good for tourism and would utilize existing elevations. People would ride through town which has a lot of benefits.
- For bicycle commuting/speed, 7b and 6 are better options. Fewer pedestrian and car conflicts.
- Option 6 is direct and would tie into the future roundabout and people can go north, west, or into West Linn. Participants also noted that being on the north side of the Arch Bridge preserves views for people traveling on that bridge, and that it drops into downtown Oregon City.
- 7b drops into a very busy intersection.
- Consider how a new crossing can be connected to the Trolley Trail. Can 6 or 7b use the existing river walk which is currently underutilized and hard to find?
- Consider allowing low-speed electric vehicles on the bridge, similar to the Tilikum. This is a multi-modal opportunity where fast biking is not the only goal.
- Consider historic architecture for the bridge; suspension bridge discussed.
- Practically, options closest to existing Arch Bridge may be best or option 6.

## 2.3.2 Youth

### **Who walks, bikes or rolls across the Arch Bridge?**

- Participants stated that biking felt too dangerous, but three stated that they do walk along the bridge using the existing sidewalks.
- Overall, there was a sentiment that walking along the bridge is unsafe for pedestrians and bicyclists.

### **Would you use a new bridge made for people walking and biking?**

- Participants agreed that they would use this bridge and that it would get a lot of use from community members, particularly students travelling between Oregon City and West Linn.
  - However, some participants from West Linn noted that there is not adequate bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure on the West Linn side of the river which may impede use of the potential bridge.

### **Of the five potential alignments, which would you use the most?**

- Alignment 2b (south of the Arch Bridge)
  - This alignment would be great, especially if the area surrounding the bridge on each side of the river is further developed.
  - People riding along the bridge with this alignment would benefit from the pretty view of the Willamette Falls, which might also increase the number of people walking, biking and rolling across the bridge.
- Alignment 4 (adjacent to the Arch Bridge)
  - This alignment is accessible for high school students, such as those going to Oregon City for lunch.

- It is already a familiar alignment for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Alignment 6 or 7 (north of the Arch Bridge)
  - These alignments connect to streets on either side of the river that are lower traffic which may be safer for people using the bridge because they will encounter fewer cars.
  - The existing sidewalks and bike pathways near these alignments are newer and connect to the renovated waterfront pathway.
  - These alignments are the most convenient for accessing West Linn.

**Do you have concerns over any of the alignments shown?**

- Alignments 1 and 2b (south of the Arch Bridge)
  - Participants shared that the existing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure on the Oregon City side of the river is old and narrow when compared to the infrastructure near alignments 6 or 7 north of the Arch Bridge.
  - Alignment 1 has fairly low clearance which might cause issues for boats using the river.
- Alignment 4 (adjacent to the Arch Bridge)
  - Building the bridge next to the Arch Bridge might impede any future plans to widen the Arch Bridge.
  - Community members might get upset with a new bridge adjacent to the Arch Bridge because of its historical and iconic nature.
  - Walking, biking and rolling next to the Arch Bridge would not be pleasant due to the high car volume on the bridge. They contribute to air and noise pollution, which could be difficult for people using the bridge who are hard of hearing.
  - The vehicle traffic entering and exiting the Arch Bridge may cause safety issues for people using the pedestrian-bicycle bridge, especially if vehicle traffic increases due to future I-205 tolling.
  - The West Linn entrance to the Arch Bridge is underdeveloped and congested with current traffic levels; a pedestrian/bike bridge might worsen those conditions.
- General
  - The West Linn community might be confused as to why this bridge is being considered because of the lack of transportation infrastructure on the West Linn side of the river.

**What gets people outside?**

- Oregon City: Downtown and Main Street with stores, bars, and restaurants.

**Are there ways/places that the project team could engage with community members in the project area?**

- A community bike ride around the potential alignments could be helpful for showcasing the project.
- The Oregon City Farmers Market and West Linn Farmers Market.
- Trick-or-Treating in Downtown Oregon City on Halloween.
- People protesting near the Arch Bridge.
- Old Time Fair in West Linn.

- The project team could share project information with Oregon City HS and West Linn HS to include it in their school newsletters.
- Once built, the bridge could be used by schools and local organizations to host fundraiser runs like 5ks.

**Participant question: Is it possible to widen the existing Arch Bridge? Would doing so be more cost effective?**

- Project Team Response: The Arch Bridge is registered as a historic resource, so altering it would compromise the nature of the historic architecture. There are also structural difficulties with supporting additional lanes or sidewalks. A previous maintenance project was expensive so widening the bridge would not be cost effective.

### 2.3.3 Spanish Speakers

The focus group was conducted in Spanish.

**Do you think a new bridge specifically for people who walk, bike and roll would benefit the community?**

- All participants indicated a new bridge would benefit the community.

Comments:

- It will benefit all people who walk and bike, to avoid accidents.
- It is safe because the current bridge it is small and there is no lanes for walking or biking. It will benefit for the people who live there and the business.

**Of the possible alignment locations, which do you think would provide the best user experience?**

- Alignments 6 and 7b received the most votes, followed by 2b, 1c and 4a.

Comments:

- It is a beautiful view and it will be nice to have access for people who walk and bike so they can stop and enjoy it.
- Businesses will benefit from this project.

**Of the possible alignment locations, which do you think would provide the best connection (providing access to most of the places people want to go) for people who walk, bike, and roll?**

- 7b and 2b received the most votes, followed by 6, 4a and 1c.

Comments:

- I do not drive but I vote for the 7b because when you show the video and explain it to us I like that one.
- Better connection for everyone.

**Of the possible alignment locations, which do you think would not be good choices with respect to user experience and/or connectivity for people who walk, bike, and roll?**

- The majority of participants selected 1c.
- The remaining alignments all received one vote.

Comments:

- For me are all good options because all the bridges benefit the people.
- I can vote for the rest of them but not the 1c.

**How do you get around your community today?**

- Driving, walking, biking and transit.

**Do you currently walk, bike or roll across the Arch Bridge (OR 43)?**

- One of six participants currently use the Arch Bridge to walk, bike or roll.

**How would you characterize your bicycling ability?**

Comments:

- I do not feel safe in a street where there is a lot of traffic, not everyone follows the speed limit, I'd feel safer on a bridge for biking only.
- It is less dangerous with a bridge for biking only.

**Would you use a new dedicated bridge for walking, biking and biking in this area?**

All participants responded that they would use a new bridge for both walking and biking.

**If "Yes", what would you use it for?**

- Most would use it to commute to work.
- Visiting Willamette Falls.

## 2.3.4 Oregon City Commission Briefings

### 2.3.4.1 January 6, 2021 Briefing

The Oregon City Commission briefing was held on January 6, 2021 with the purpose in presenting the overall project and preliminary alignments to the Commission. The briefing presenting an overview of the project purpose and need, ongoing transportation improvements in the area, and project goals and objectives.

### 2.3.4.2 February 9, 2021 Briefing

The Oregon City Commission briefing was held on February 9, 2021 with the purpose in updating the Commission on the development of the potential alignments to address the

project need. The briefing provided an overview on the constraints, challenges, and limitations associated with the idea of cantilevering off the existing I-205 Abernethy Bridge.

The project team presented the initial findings of screening evaluation, resulting in a list of top 5 alignments to be advanced into the detailed evaluation criteria process. The Commission provided feedback on the potential alignments and expressed a concern about the need for a new bridge dedicated to walking and biking.

#### 2.3.4.3 March 17, 2021 Briefing

The Oregon City Commission briefing was held on March 17, 2021 with the purpose in updating the Commission on the interplay between pedestrian-bicycle crossing project and the ongoing projects in the area including the I-205 tolling project, I-205 widening, and the OR43. The briefing also revisited the need for the project and confirmed that the Historic Arch Bridge would remain open to traffic and ODOT were ensure maintenance activities would repaint the bike sharrows on the bridge.

### 2.3.5 Transportation Demand Management Group

#### 2.3.5.1 February 4, 2021 Focus Group

The first Oregon City Transportation Demand Management (TDM) focus group was conducted on February 4, 2021 with a particular focus on the pedestrian and bicycle level of traffic stress (LTS) analysis conducted by the project team as part of *TM#4: Active Transportation Analysis*.

During the time of the first TDM focus, Oregon City planning staff was conducting a BLTS analysis for the downtown area. The project team and Oregon City staff discussed the similarities and differences between the methodologies used to conduct the BLTS analysis. Oregon City staff also provided the project team with walking and biking counts at the Main Street/7<sup>th</sup> Street (Historic Arch Bridge) intersection which were later used by the project team to further calibrate the travel demand model developed for the project.

#### 2.3.5.2 April 19, 2021 Focus Group

The second Oregon City TDM focus group was conducted on April 19, 2021 and provided a general overview of the project to-date, including an emphasis on the alignments with the highest evaluation scoring results – Alignment 1c and 7b.

The discussion focused on the need to provide enhancements to OR99E McLoughlin Boulevard under the scenario of Alignment 7b as the preferred alternative. The intersection of OR99E/10<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>/Main were both noted as challenging intersections.

The Oregon City bridgehead for alignment 7b may become less of a barrier with Oregon City's future plan for extending the shared-use path between 10<sup>th</sup> Street and the Willamette Falls Project site. Overall, the TDM group supported Alignment 1c and Alignment 7b.

### 2.3.6 Seniors

Three seniors attended the focus group on May 21, 2021. The participants shared the following key thoughts:

- Converting the Arch Bridge to a pedestrian-bicycle bridge and then constructing a new vehicle bridge would be ideal.
- ODOT does not seem to be taking a comprehensive look at the regional transportation system, particularly at the potential impacts of I-205 tolling on surface streets and lower-capacity ODOT facilities, like the Arch Bridge.
- The **downstream corridor would be best for cyclists** in terms of connectivity, if the bridge connects safely to the future roundabouts.
- The **downstream corridor would be best for transit access** in Oregon City and West Linn.
- ODOT should consider adding a pedestrian-bicycle facility on the bridge.
- It is important to consider parking on either side of the bridge landings.

### 2.3.7 Disabled Community Members

The project team hosted a focus group with disabled community members on May 21, 2021. Five participants were invited, but none attended the meeting.

### 2.3.8 Territorial Drive Residents

The project team hosted a focus group with people who live on Territorial Drive in West Linn on May 26, 2021. Five participants were invited, but none attended the meeting. The project team followed up with residents on June 2, outlined in Section 2.2.11.