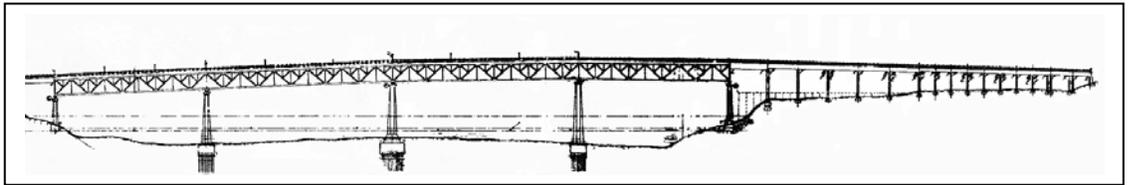




MULTNOMAH
COUNTY

Fact Sheet



Sellwood Bridge Project

The Sellwood Bridge is a two-lane structure built in 1925. Multnomah County owns and maintains the fixed-span bridge, which links SE Tacoma St. with Highway 43. The bridge is important for these reasons:

- Provides only crossing for a 12-mile stretch of Willamette River between Portland and Oregon City.
- Busiest two-lane bridge in the state. Average daily traffic is approximately 30,000 vehicles a day.
- Connects Highways 99E and 224 with Highway 43.

Condition of Existing Bridge

From both a traffic and an engineering perspective, the Sellwood Bridge has reached the end of its useful life. Many parts of the structure are in an advanced state of deterioration. Key deficiencies include:

- Maximum bridge loads were reduced to 10 tons in 2004, forcing about 1400 trucks and buses to use an alternate river crossing each day.
- Western approach is settling and sliding, leaving structure vulnerable to earthquakes.
- Cracking in bridge deck, columns and beams. Large cracks discovered in concrete approach spans in 2003 were reinforced with steel plates. 2004 inspection discovered additional cracks at east end of bridge.
- Narrow traffic lanes with no center median or shoulders.
- Tight ramps at west end cannot accommodate large vehicles.
- Only one narrow sidewalk.
- Traffic is at capacity during peak hours.
- Structural sufficiency rating is 2 out of a possible score of 100. Bridges rated below 50 are generally recommended for replacement.

Multnomah County's Capital Improvement Plan calls for replacement of the structure. Due to the high cost of replacing the structure, the County will also explore the possibility of rehabilitating the existing bridge.

Bridge Users

Due to the lack of other river crossings in the southern metro region, the Sellwood has served a diverse group of users.

- Many bridge users are commuters who live in Clackamas County.
- 83% of bridge trips begin or end outside Portland.
- Prior to the reduction of weight limits in June 2004, the bridge was an important secondary freight route, especially for local deliveries. Weight limits prevent many companies from using the bridge, forcing out-of-direction travel that adds to congestion on other routes and increases costs to businesses and consumers.

Bridge Rehabilitation or Replacement

Rehabilitation or replacement of the Sellwood Bridge would eliminate barriers to the movement of freight and improve safety and traffic flow for all bridge users. Replacement of the bridge was a recommendation of the South Willamette River Crossing Study completed in 1999 by Metro, the regional government with transportation planning authority. The study, which included significant public involvement, recommended a new two-lane bridge of high aesthetic quality at the same location. The study also called for improved facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Several issues will need to be considered as the project moves forward. Issues include:

- Replace or rehabilitate the bridge
- Two lanes, four lanes, or some combination
- Upgrade bicycle and pedestrian facilities to current standards
- Coordination with SE Tacoma Street plan
- Alignment of new bridge: north, south or same location
- Intersection or interchange at Highway 43
- Right of way impacts
- How to fund
- Bridge type and cost
- Construction closure: short, long or none

The preliminary estimate for a replacement bridge is \$90 million. Cost factors include the length and height required for a span at this site. Because of the high cost, Multnomah County will also explore the possibility of rehabilitating the existing bridge. The County seeks \$4 million to begin environmental and preliminary engineering work. The County will work cooperatively with local cities, Clackamas and Washington counties, and with the state and federal governments to complete this important regional transportation project.

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Visit Multnomah County's bridges website at www.co.multnomah.or.us/bridge.