



Bicycle and Pedestrian Citizen Advisory Committee

MULTNOMAH COUNTY OREGON

**Land Use and Transportation Program
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Chair Linn and the Board of Multnomah County Commissioners:

This letter urges the Board of Multnomah County Commissioners to include bicycle and pedestrian improvements in any project that addresses the Sellwood Bridge's structural deficiencies. We understand that the Board is considering project solutions that range from short-term rehabilitation to a complete replacement of the bridge.

Replacement of the bridge offers the greatest opportunity to address the needs of all transportation modes, including bicyclists and pedestrians that use this critical Willamette River crossing point. However, even a low-cost rehabilitation project presents an opportunity for a safer and more effective bicycle and pedestrian facility. For example, a lightweight cantilevered pathway attached to the current bridge offers a significant improvement over the current sidewalk, which does not meet American with Disability Act standards, and with sections just over three feet wide, presents a safety hazard for all users.

Considerable planning and investments have been made to support bicycle and pedestrian travel along the Willamette River. The Springwater Corridor, Willamette Greenway, Springwater on the Willamette, Milwaukie to Portland Trail, and potential connections between Lake Oswego and downtown Portland all rely on a bicycle and pedestrian accessible Sellwood Bridge. Currently, the bridge represents a significant barrier for alternative modes of transportation and a hazard to all cyclists and pedestrians. In an area-wide survey conducted by the Bicycling Transportation Alliance ("Blueprint for Better Bicycling, 40 Way to Get There"), the Sellwood Bridge was rated as the region's most pressing need for bicycling improvements. Because the bridge has three- to four-foot wide sidewalks and no bike lanes, bicyclists are forced to find alternative routes or simply not bike. The Hawthorne Bridge, over four miles to the north, offers the closest accessible point across the river, too far a distance to ask cyclists or pedestrians to travel for a safe crossing.

Bridges are one of the key components for completing the area's bicycle and pedestrian network. As evidenced by the dramatic increase in bicycle counts across the Hawthorne Bridge since the county vastly improved its bicycle and pedestrian facilities, citizens are hungry for safe and accessible routes for walking and biking. Regardless of whether the Commission chooses to rehabilitate or replace, the Sellwood Bridge's dangerously inadequate bicycling and pedestrian facilities should be addressed immediately.

Please keep this committee informed of the Board's plans for the Sellwood Bridge.

Thank you,

MCBPAC