

COMMISSIONER BRIEFING NP Greenway – Columbia Boulevard (

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ORDINANCE TITLE: N/A

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this briefing is to provide background and new information around funding and design for the NP Greenway/Columbia Boulevard Crossing Project.

BACKGROUND:

In 2014, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) awarded ~\$1.58M in federal Multimodal Transportation Enhance Program (MTEP) grant funds to Metro to design, engineer, and construct portions of the North Portland Greenway Trail from Chimney Park to the existing Metro owned St. John’s Prairie site. Metro has also committed \$1.9M in funds from their 2006 Natural Areas Bond to support the project.

The Project, the Willamette Greenway Trail: Columbia Boulevard Bicycle Pedestrian Crossing (“CBB,” “the Project”), is part of the 40-Mile Loop, a Regional Trail identified by Metro Council. The Project consists of:

- Multiuse trail bridge or street crossing over N. Columbia Boulevard.
- Trail approaches to the bridge or street crossing.
- Connection to an existing trail in Chimney Park.
- Redesign and resolution of parking and circulation at the Chimney Park maintenance, building and dog park entrance. (directed by pending conditional use decision).
- Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) at-grade crossing.
- Right of way dedication and street construction.

From 2014 to 2023, Metro has coordinated Project design efforts with ODOT and has sought PP&R review and comment. In 2018, Metro and PP&R discussed having the Project move to a PP&R-led project. These conversations caused PP&R to pursue additional funding sources including a \$2.9M Regional Flexible Funding Allocation grant from Metro and \$674,699 in System



Development Charge (SDCs) funds. PP&R has preliminary approvals for the Project from Metro and plans to apply for \$3M in Local Share dollars from Metro’s 2019 Parks and Nature Bond to support this Project.

Overall, the chart below summarizes the funding to date with **Total Available Budget of \$9.5M for a bridge crossing over Columbia Blvd.:**

Source	P#	Funding	Spent	Available
Local Share (Metro Parks & Nature Bond)	P01001	\$3,000,000	\$0	\$3,000,000
Metro RFFA	P01012	\$2,934,002	\$0	\$2,934,002
SDCs	PI0461	\$674,699	\$0	\$674,699
FHWA/ODOT (MTEP)	N/A	\$1,580,000	\$500,000	\$1,080,000
Metro/ODOT (Metro Natural Areas Bond)	N/A	\$1,900,000	\$64,000	\$1,836,000
				\$9,524,701

The Project is now at 30% design stage under Metro and ODOT’s guidance. The terms of existing IGAs between PPR/Metro and Metro/ODOT establish that Metro and PP&R share financial responsibility for the project.

Currently, PP&R, Metro, and ODOT are working to negotiate a new Three-Party IGA to define project responsibilities moving forward. PP&R has been working directly with Metro for several months on the details of the IGA. Recent revisions reflect Metro’s interest in a full transition of project and cost responsibility to PP&R. To this end, they have removed language from the draft IGA about PPR/Metro being co-committed to funding cost overruns, placing all responsibility with PP&R.

In parallel to the Three-Party IGA negotiation, ODOT has been working to extend their contract with KPFF Engineering, the project designer. The revised pricing from the consultant has come back much higher than expected, adding almost a million dollars (\$938,129) to the Project costs. KPFF’s current contract with ODOT expires 11/1/2023. To extend the project contract, ODOT will need to amend the fee and extend the time via a Project Change Request (PCR).

ISSUES/CONCERNS:

- The Project, based on our current cost projections, is facing an immediate shortfall of \$938,129 to cover design fees (KPFF and ODOT) as outlined in the ODOT PCR.
- The construction costs presented in KPFF’s 30% design set do not reflect the full project costs as it does not include PBOT ROW requirements nor Conditional Use requirements for parking upgrades that would be required at Chimney Park.
- **PP&R projected Total Project Costs of Bridge Crossing = \$11.5M to \$15.5M.**



- Given the above, PP&R anticipates a \$2M-\$6M funding shortfall for the project with no currently identified funding sources to bridge the gap.
 - Metro has suggested PP&R could fund it with a larger portion of the \$31.8M Local Share allocation, however an allocation of this size would not be in keeping with PP&R communications with the public during the Local Share community engagement process.

Options for next steps are below.

1. Redesign working with KPFF and PBOT for at grade crossing. Recommended.

This option would redesign and construct the crossing of Columbia Boulevard as a signalized at-grade crosswalk rather than as a bridge using the current \$9.5M available budget. The current available funding is not sufficient to proceed with completion of the construction design documents and the construction of the Project.

● Benefits

- The Columbia Blvd. At-grade Crossing Project is possible within the current allocated \$9.5M budget.
- Another piece of the 40-mile regional trail can be completed.
- PBOT supports the at-grade crossing as operations and maintenance would decrease significantly.
- PBOT is willing to work with PP&R to deliver the Project.
- ODOT has signaled support of the at-grade crossing.
- Project meets goals of NP Greenway Plan by providing an upgraded crossing for bikes and pedestrian.
- Keeps Project moving forward within budget.

● Risks

- Metro/ODOT relationship strain as they have worked only on the bridge crossing to date.
- Potential for Metro and/or ODOT to pull their funding.
 - FHWA/ODOT funds may be reduced or eliminated if new approach is not aligned with funding goals.
- Design consultant KPFF may leave the Project, requiring additional time to secure new consultant contract.
- Additional community engagement would be required.
- The Port freight community may push back due to impacts to traffic flow in this industrial area.
- The general public could be disappointed at not getting a bridge.

2. Sign PCR and IGA & proceed with project as is. Not recommended.

This option would have PP&R sign the agreement for additional funds for KPFF Engineering Firm to complete the project design and provide construction oversight. It



would also have PP&R sign the revised Three-Party IGA that places all project cost responsibility on PP&R.

- Benefits

- Finishes the design drawings for the promised bridge.
- With additional SDC funding, could add a missing trails link in the overall NP Greenway.

- Risks

- If PP&R accepts project responsibility, then the Bureau is responsible for any Project costs or overages of \$2M to \$6M.
- If the Bridge Project cannot be completed once designed, PP&R must pay ODOT back for all federal funding spent to date (~\$500k)
 - Currently that risk is 50/50 with Metro.
- Prioritizing this Project over the many other SDC Project priorities including the North Portland Aquatic Center and many others in East Portland to fill Level of Service gaps represents a risk to the Bureau and City.
- The additional costs of this Project – if paid for by Metro Local Share dollars - could represent approximately one-third of the total Local Share dollars.
 - This would require significant restructuring of the program
 - This would *not* be consistent with Local Share messaging to date with the community
 - This would *not* allow other Metro Local Share “take care of what we have” projects to move forward.

3. **No Build/ Table Project.** Not recommended.

This option would table the Project at this phase.

It would also require parallel community engagement efforts through various agencies to communicate to the public as to why the trail connection is not being constructed. In this scenario, the 30% design package would be shelved and the ongoing PPR conditional use application work would halt. Should funding and priorities align in the future this project could be restarted.

- Benefits

- Tabling the Project would allow the project partners to definitively close the conversation on cost risk and commitments.
- This option limits the funding impact to other work PP&R is committed to, including other projects on the Local Share project list.

- Risks

- City would need to commit up to \$250K to cover ODOT reimbursement costs for federal dollars already spent.
- Metro staff have unofficially communicated to interest groups that the bridge scope is at risk and the Regional Trails advocates will be unhappy to

not have this section of the regional trail system completed in any form or fashion.

- There will be significant Metro/ODOT relationship strain.

POLICY QUESTIONS/CONSIDERATIONS:

This Project has been developed in partnership with Metro and ODOT, deciding to pivot from a bridge to an at grade crossing is the decision at hand.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

Community engagement work around this project began in 2019 and included stakeholder interviews, an on-site open house meeting, and collaboration with multiple community organizations. Further details and a history of community engagement for the bridge is represented on the project website, <https://www.portland.gov/parks/construction/bridge-over-columbia-boulevard>. In the fall of 2021, PP&R began community outreach to support decisions around the Local Share funding allocation. Staff reached out to Portlanders through an online survey and focus group-style conversations with communities of color and others that have not benefited equitably from past public investments. This input helped us prioritize what to fund now with Local Share dollars to meet the stated community’s needs, and what to save for future funding. At present ODOT and their consultant are contracted to manage community engagement through the remainder of design and construction.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Commissioner’s decision which of the three option is most advantageous.

ATTACHMENTS

Vicinity Map



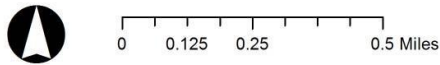


St Johns Prairie Trail & Chimney Park Bridge over Columbia Boulevard

PROJECT 1
Chimney Park Trail & Bridge over Columbia Boulevard

- - - - - Proposed trail
- Proposed bridge over Columbia Blvd.

- - - - - Existing regional trail
- | | | | | Railroad
- ▭ Metro
- ▭ Port of Portland
- ▭ BES
- ▭ Portland Parks



LINKS: <https://www.portland.gov/parks/construction/bridge-over-columbia-boulevard>.

