

Online Survey #3 – Alternatives Screening

September 17, 2007

The third survey for the Sellwood Bridge study was posted on the project homepage (www.sellwoodbridge.org) from July 26 to September 9, 2007. The purpose of this survey was to help narrow the range of various bridge concepts---rehabilitation options, bridge alignments, bridge widths, and west end interchange types---into a few complete bridge alternatives for further evaluation in the Draft EIS.

The online survey was promoted through a newsletter mailed to 23,000 area households in July, as well as through the local media, including newspapers, radio, and television news. Additionally, the Multnomah County Bridge Section erected a banner over the bridge to advertise the project, web site and online survey to all bridge users.



By the end of the survey period, there were 3003 completed surveys. This report details the results and analysis of those responses.

Online Survey Frequently Asked Questions

Is this survey statistically valid?

Survey participants choose to take this survey and, as such, could have a higher interest or more at stake in this project than the public at large. Although this is not a statistically valid survey that was created from a random sample of people, the demographic characteristics of the respondents do mirror the general population. This survey captured the opinions of a large number of people in the Portland metro area, both locally in the Sellwood neighborhood as well as region-wide. The surveys are useful in supplementing the public input received at the community open houses.

What if people take the survey over and over?

The survey program has features that control the number of times a person can complete the survey. Any duplicate, identical surveys from the same person are screened out before the survey results are tabulated.

How will the results of this survey be used?

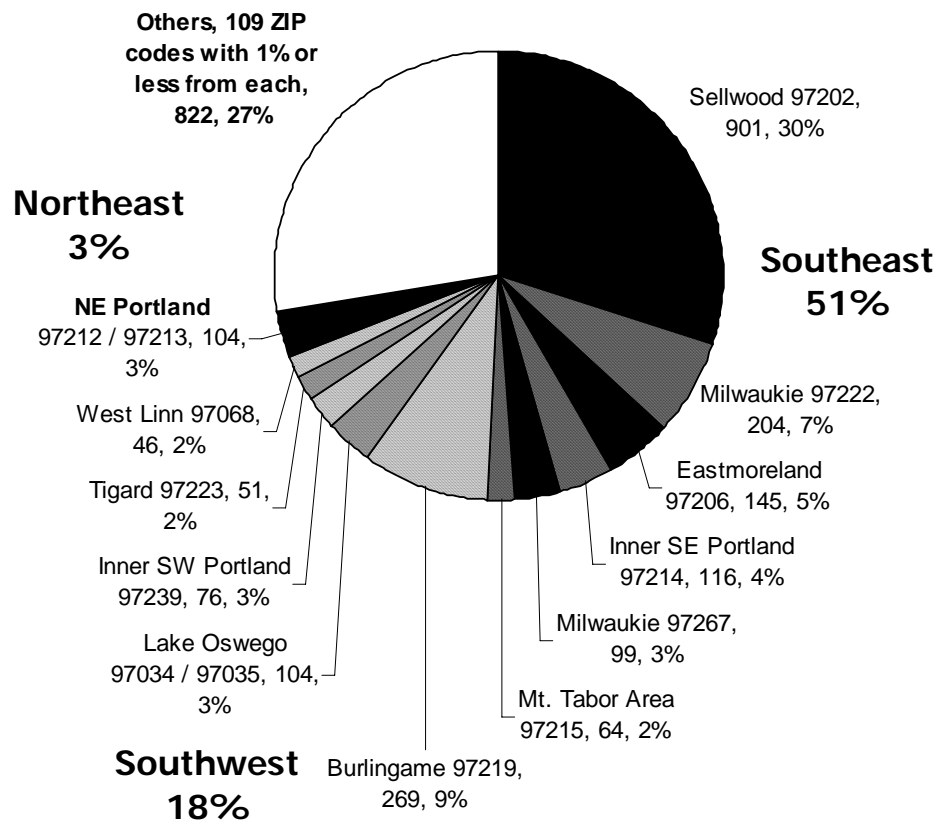
Responses to the survey do not count as “votes.” The information is useful in determining the opinions of a large cross-section of area bridge users about the options under study. This survey merely counts as one of several tools used by the Community Task Force and Policy Advisory Group to aid in project decision making.

Survey Demographics

Questions 1-5 asked for demographic and contact information of the respondents. The information was used to update the project mailing list as well as compare the characteristics of the survey sample data with Census tract information. This was useful in determining whether or not the survey respondents are generally representative of the local neighborhood (ZIP code 97202) as well as the metro population as a whole. The findings indicate that the sample is indeed representative of the age and gender characteristics of the population of the area (see Riley Research Associates 9-17-07 memo).

ZIP Code Distribution of Respondents

Survey responses came from a wide area, representing many zip codes within the Portland region. For a survey such as this, there is some expectation that those who chose to participate may have a deeper vested interest in the future of the bridge, hence a higher proportion of respondents in the 97202 zip code. Close to one-third (29.0%) of those who chose to participate in the survey live in the 97202 zip code area, however, just 7.1% of Portland residents live in that zip code according to the census. An over-representation in this case could indicate that those who will be most affected by the bridge’s future are the people most likely to have the motivation to participate.

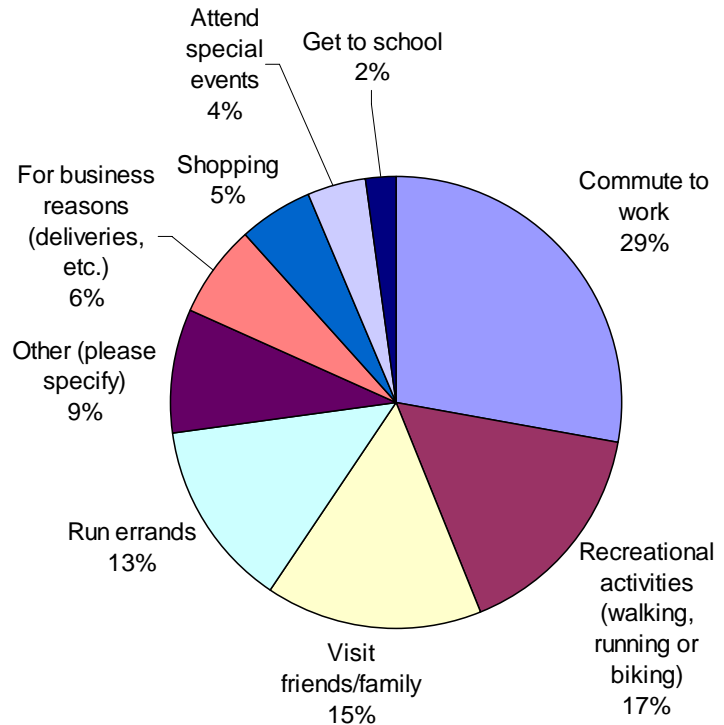


Survey Responses

Question 6: What is the primary reason you use the Sellwood Bridge?

Commuters made up the single largest group of bridge users in the survey (29%), including those residing in 97202 (38%). Respondents across all age categories were about as equally likely to use the bridge to commute to work, with the exception of those 60 years and over (who often use the bridge to visit friends/family and for miscellaneous reasons).

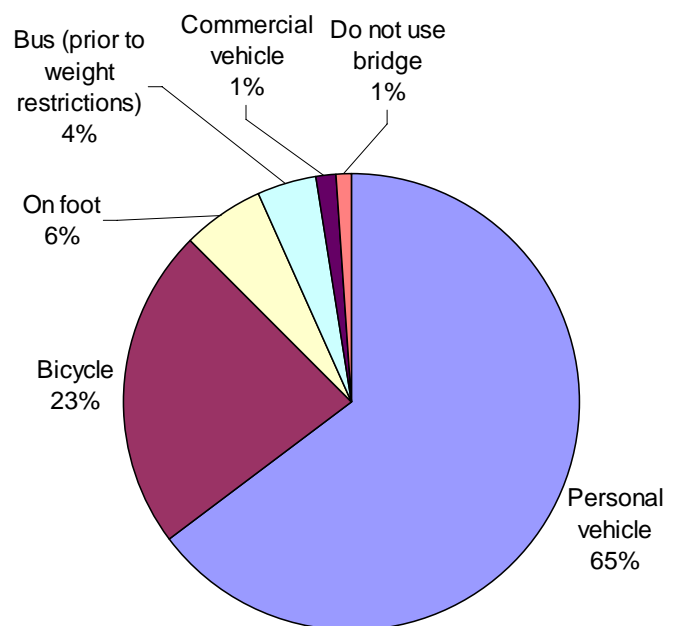
Roughly equal proportions of those driving their own vehicle, biking, and using other methods of transportation primarily used the bridge to commute to work. However, those who said their primary method of transportation across the bridge was a bicycle were more likely to say they used the bridge for recreational activities than for any other reason.



Question 7: How do you usually travel across the Sellwood Bridge?

The main method of transportation across the bridge was a personal vehicle. While a larger number of bicyclists were represented in this survey than in the general population, their preferences appeared comparable to those who primarily drove their own vehicle across the bridge.

Commercial vehicle drivers accounted for 1% of the survey responses to this question. Prior to the weight restrictions that Multnomah County imposed on the Sellwood Bridge, drivers of large trucks and buses accounted for approximately 5% of bridge use, indicating that commercial use of a fully functioning Sellwood Bridge is probably under-represented in this survey.



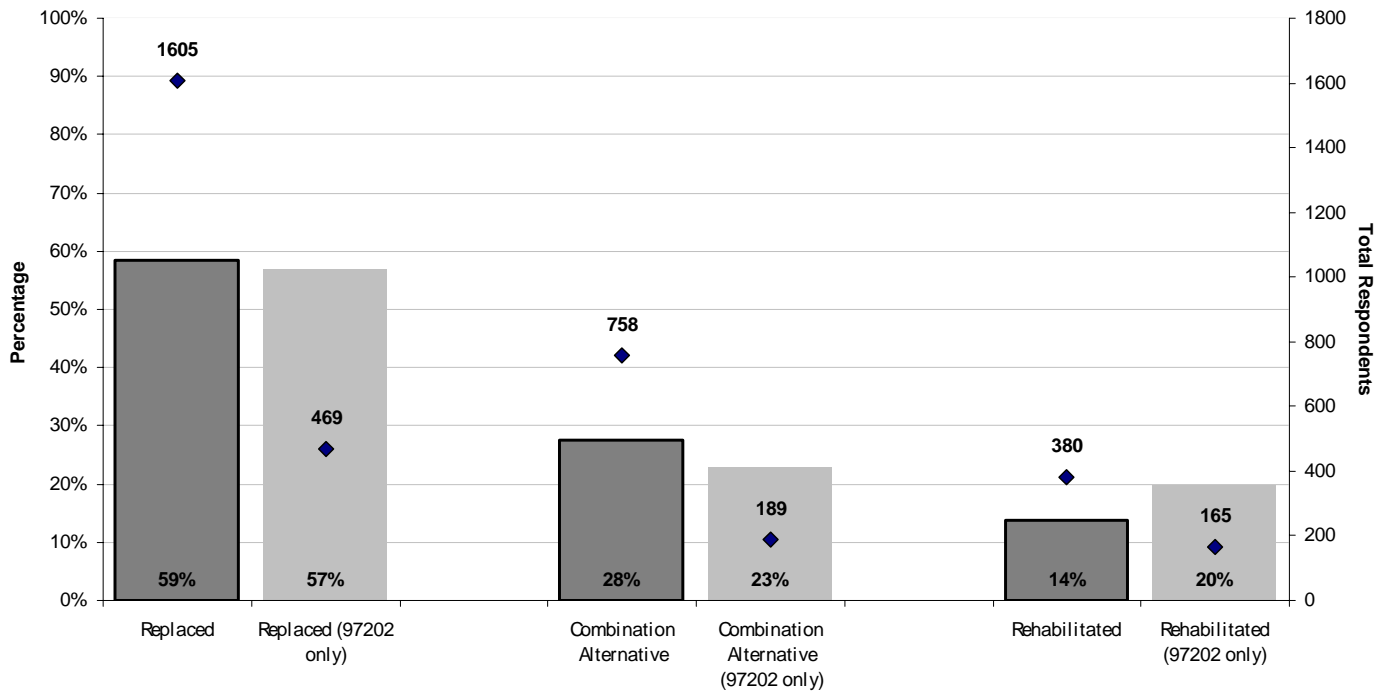
Question 8: Have you already tried the “Build A Bridge” tool before taking this survey?

A companion program to the online survey (*Build A Bridge*) was also available on the project website. The tool allowed participants choose four required elements (rehabilitation and replacement options, interchange, alignment, and cross-section) to form complete bridge alternatives. The combinations of those elements created 124 possible alternatives to choose from. Participants used *Build A Bridge* to learn about potential impacts and how each alternative scored against the others.

Over two thirds of respondents (69%) chose to try out the “*Build A Bridge*” tool prior to answering the survey questions. 31% did not.

Question 9: For your first choice do you prefer that the Sellwood Bridge be rehabilitated, replaced or a combination of the two?

The first choice for all respondents was to replace the Sellwood Bridge. Though replacement was the top preference among all geographies, those in the 97202 zip code were slightly more likely to favor the rehabilitation. Males were a bit more likely than females to prefer replacement. There were no significant differences among those that drove their own vehicle, biked, or used other transportation to cross the bridge.



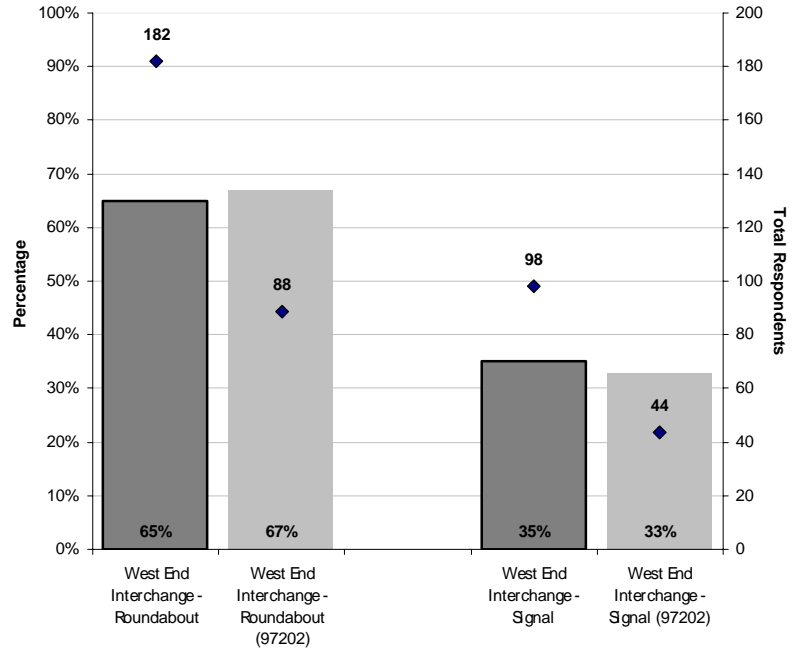
REHABILITATION

Question 10: The rehabilitation uses the Yellow Center alignment. Describe your preferences for a rehabilitation bridge alternative:

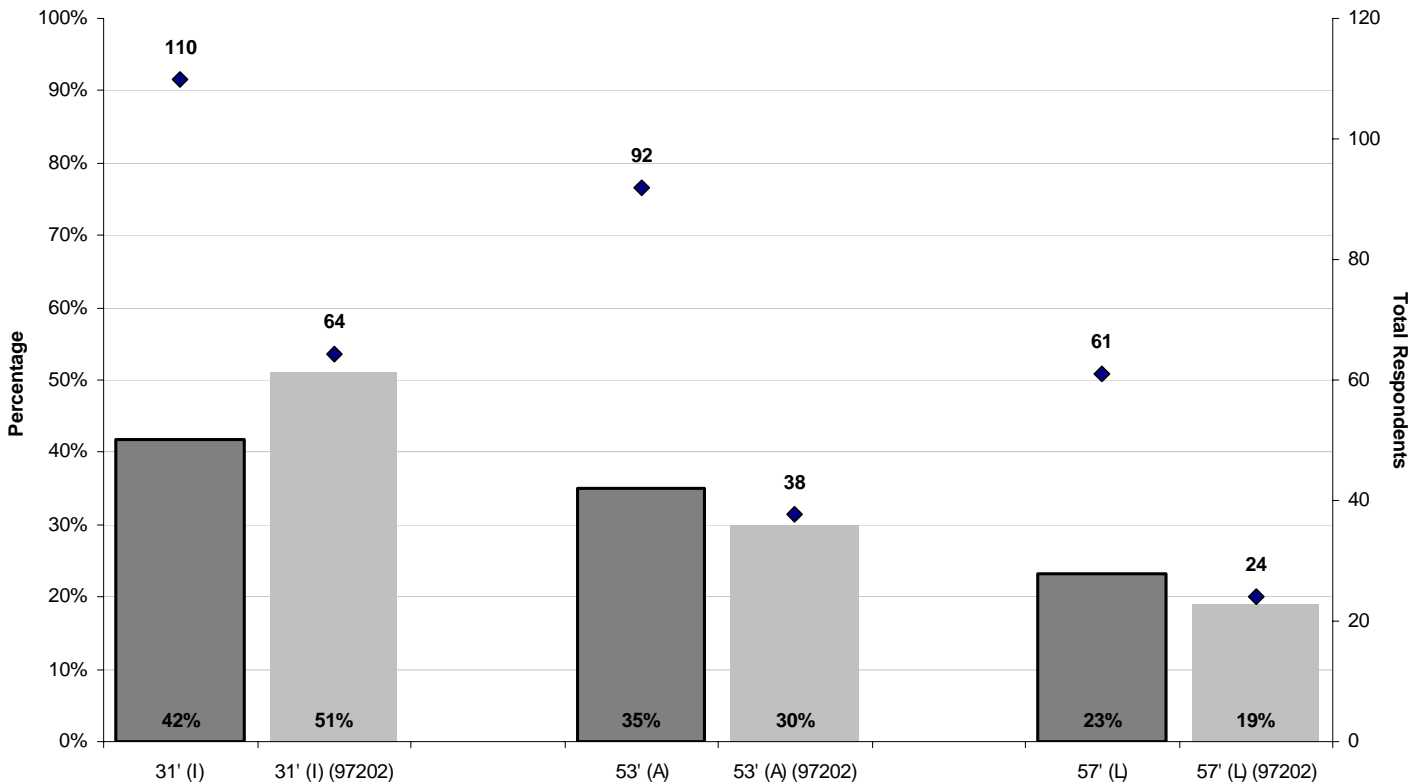
Which do you prefer for a West End Interchange?

The rehabilitation option was the least favorite alignment alternative, garnering support from only 14% of survey respondents.

Based on open-ended comments from Survey #2, many people preferred free-flowing ramps to traffic signals, feeling that signals slow down traffic too much. It is possible that the roundabout was viewed similarly here – that it accommodates traffic better than a signal.



Which Cross Section do you prefer?



Question 11: Do you think there should be a temporary detour bridge if the Sellwood Bridge is rehabilitated?

77% of respondents choosing rehabilitation said “No, close the bridge to traffic during construction.” 23% of respondents choosing rehabilitation opted to include a temporary detour bridge. The open ended responses indicated that many viewed the cost as too expensive and unnecessary.

Question 12: Should a rehabilitated Sellwood Bridge include a Phase II seismic upgrade?

51.5% of respondents choosing rehabilitation said “Yes, include a Phase II seismic upgrade.” 48.5% of respondents choosing rehabilitation elected not to include the seismic upgrade. The open ended responses indicated that safety was a higher priority than cost for many. Additionally, those who drove their own vehicles across the bridge were more likely to prefer a seismic upgrade than bicyclists.

Question 13: Why do you prefer the rehabilitation alternative you have chosen?

261 people provided an open-ended response to this question. The majority of those reasons are reflected in the following themes:

- Fewest negative impacts to the community, bridge neighbors, historic church
- Narrow cross section will limit traffic congestion
- Limits impacts to Sellwood Riverfront Park
- Maintains status quo and fits the community better
- Preserves a local historic landmark
- Retains the character of Sellwood (people also cited that they liked the old bridge, and wanted to retain position/feel created by the bridge)

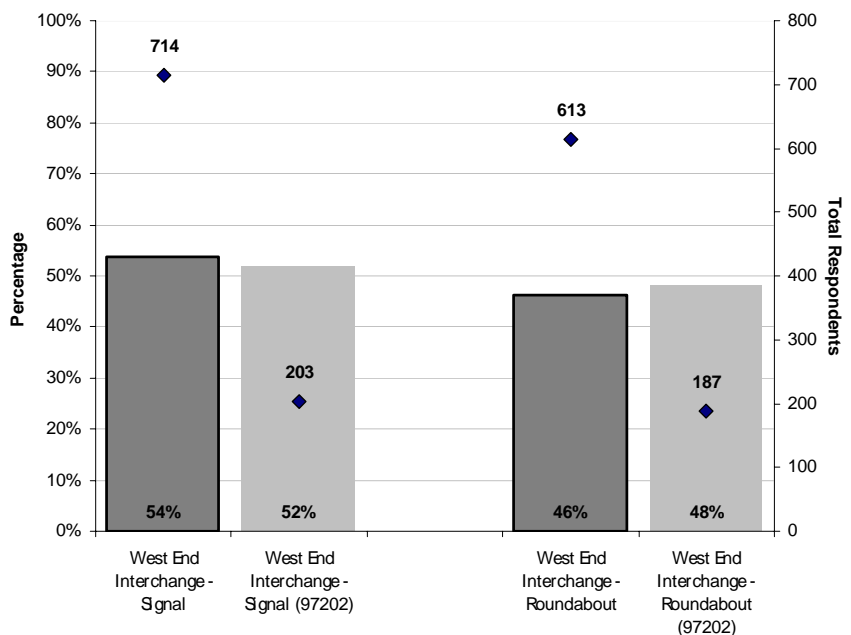
REPLACEMENT

Question 14: Describe your preferences for a bridge replacement alternative:

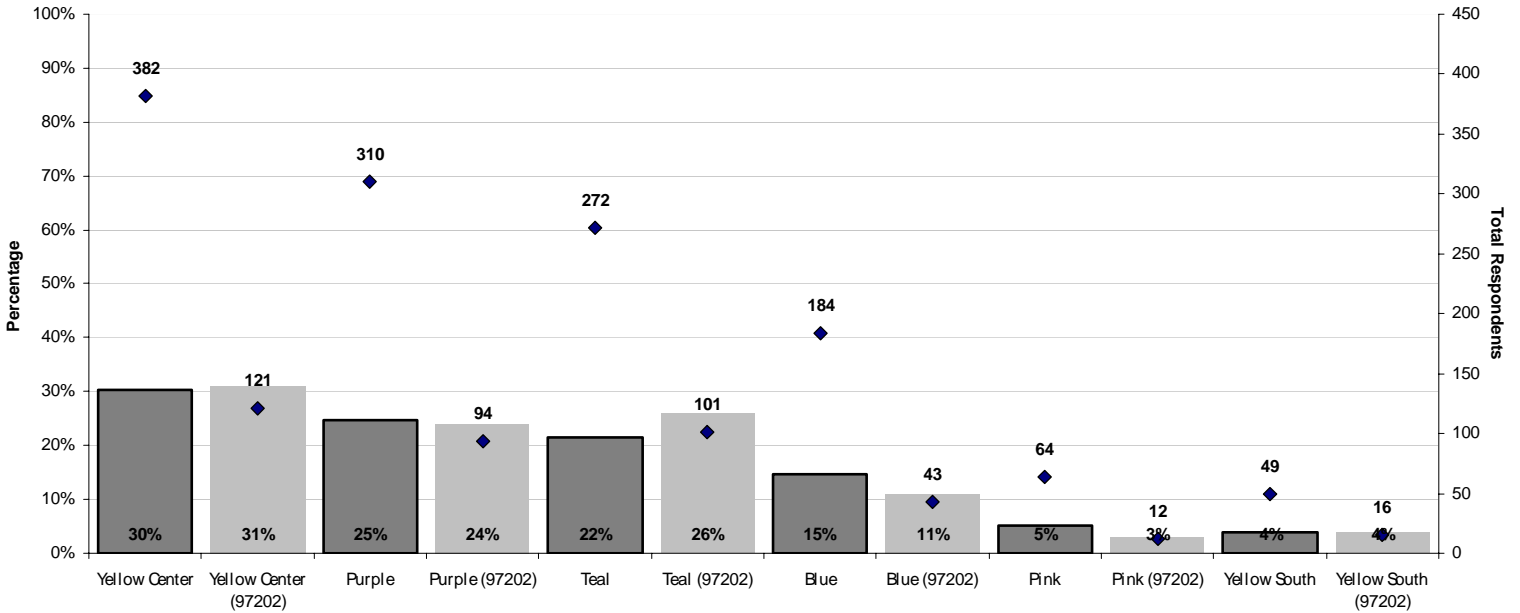
Which do you prefer for a West End Interchange?

The replacement option was the most popular alignment alternative, receiving support from 59% of survey respondents, including 57% support from respondents in the 97202 zip code.

Drivers were more likely to be divided about a signal at the west end, while bicyclists were more likely to strongly favor the signal.

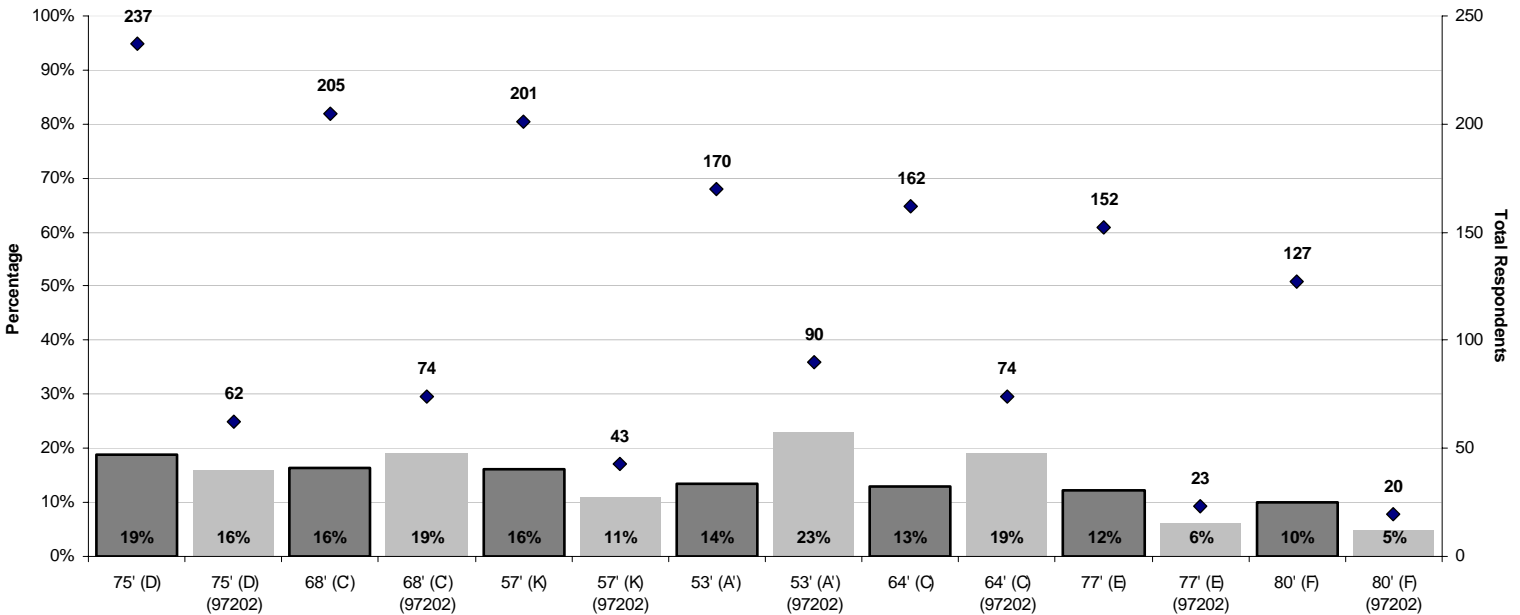


Which Alignment do you prefer?



*Note: A number of open-ended comments indicated that some people had a hard time understanding the distinction between the Yellow Center and Yellow South alternatives, which could be the reason for Yellow South's low ranking.

Which Cross Section do you prefer?



Preferences for cross section were more evenly distributed. Option D (75') received the highest support at 19%, followed by Option C' (68') and Option K (57') at 16% each respectively. The 53' Option A' received the strongest support from survey respondents in 97202 at 23%.

Question 15: Why do you prefer the replacement alternative you have chosen?

1,068 people provided an open-ended response to this question. The majority of those reasons are reflected in the following themes:

Alignment

- Retains community character (yellow center, yellow south)
- Minimizes impacts to residences and businesses (yellow center, yellow south, purple, teal)
- Minimizes environmental impacts and impacts to riverside park/oaks bottom (yellow center, yellow south, purple)

Cross-section

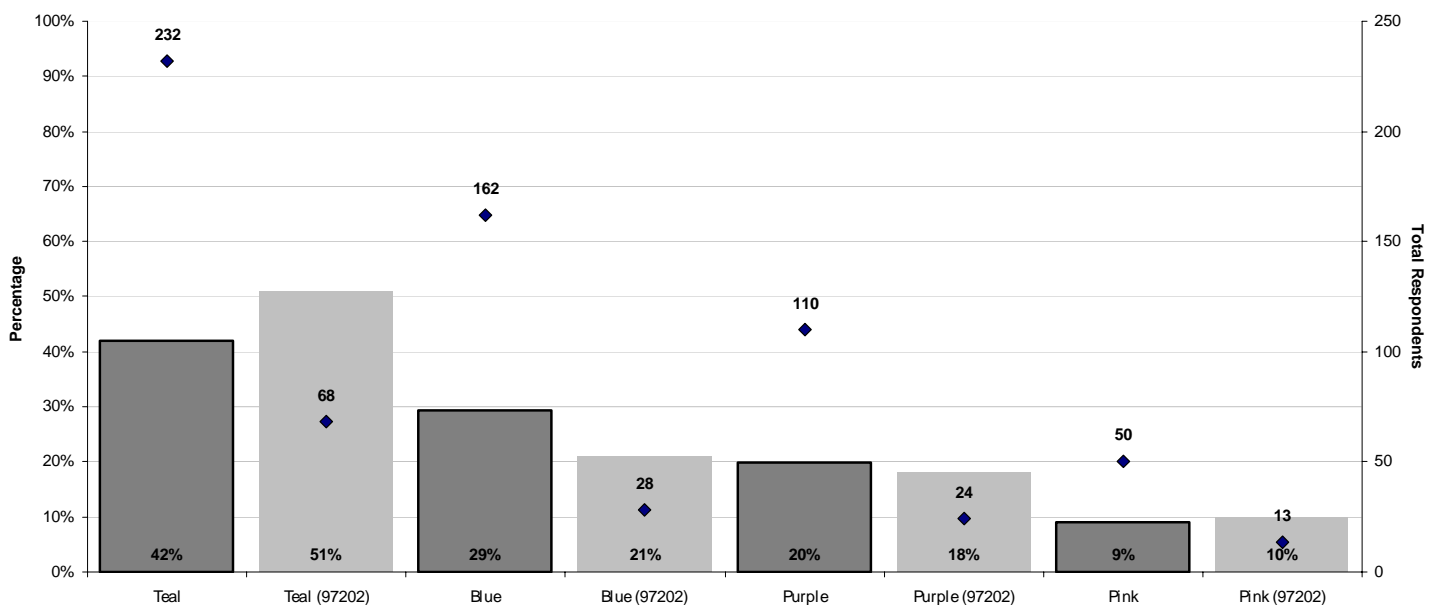
- Bike and pedestrian safety—separates bikes and pedestrians from car traffic
- Improves regional connections for bikes and transit (cross sections with transit lanes and wider pedestrian sidewalks and bike lanes)
- Provides for future/existing capacity and traffic flow (wider cross sections with 3 and 4 lanes)
- Minimizes impacts to residences and businesses (narrower cross sections)
- Encourages alternative transportation and transit (cross sections with wider pedestrian sidewalks and bike lanes)
- Access for emergency vehicles (wider cross sections with 3 and 4 lanes)
- Prefer having bicyclists/pedestrians separated from traffic under the bridge (double-decker option K), however, some concerns for safety.

COMBINATION

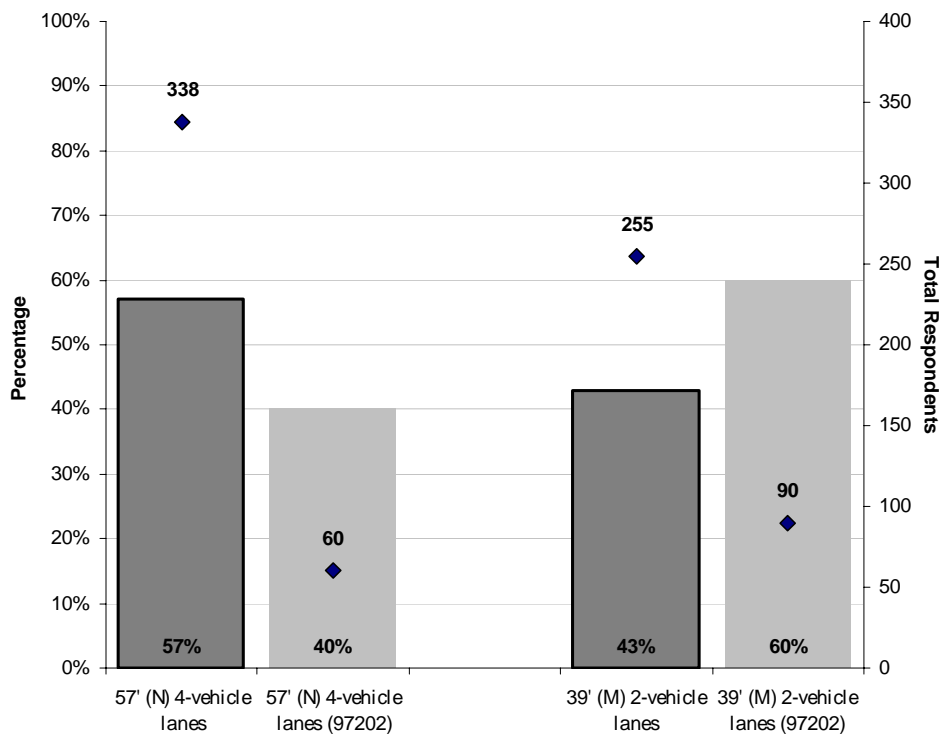
Question 16: Describe your preferences for a combination bridge alternative:

The combination bridge option was the second most popular alignment alternative, with 28% support.

Which Alignment do you prefer?



Which Cross Section do you prefer for the new bridge alignment?



Question 17: Why do you prefer the combination bridge alternative you have chosen?

448 people provided an open-ended response to this question. The majority of those reasons are reflected in the following themes:

- Encourages alternative transportation and separates modes of travel
- Recycles materials and preserves historic structure
- Reduces traffic impacts to Sellwood neighborhood (local perspective)
- Wider bridge allows for more flexibility in the future (regional perspective)
- 3 or 4 lanes would reduce congestion on the bridge now (regional perspective)

Question 18: Do you have a second bridge alternative you would like to suggest?

Respondents were given the opportunity to choose a second bridge alternative, and about one-third (36%) did. That the majority only had a first preference speaks to the strength of their opinions. Replacement was the most common first and second choice, with many people choosing it twice, while those who opted for either rehabilitation or a combination alternative were more likely to stick with one of those options. In fact, second choice preferences for rehabilitation, replacement and combination alternative were nearly identical, percentage wise, to the first choice responses.

Replacement

Preferences for the west end interchange, alignment, and the cross section tended to remain similar whether replacement was the respondent's first or second choice. While respondents slightly preferred the Purple alignment for a second choice, the difference was marginal.

Rehabilitation

Those who selected rehabilitation as a second choice were a bit more likely to prefer a signal and the 57' (L) cross section, while preferences for a detour bridge and seismic upgrade remained the same.

Combination alternative

While Teal remained the first choice for alignment with the second option, it wasn't quite as popular, with many people also choosing the purple and blue alignments. The largest difference was for the cross section. While the respondents who chose the combination alternative as a first choice opted for the 57' (N) cross-section, as a second choice the majority chose the 38' (M) cross section.

Last Question: Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

963 people provided an open-ended response to this question. The majority of those responses are reflected in the following themes:

- Neighborhood perspective: Keep the Sellwood Bridge two lanes, limit impacts to the neighborhood, honor the Tacoma Street plan, cut down on commuter through-traffic, desire for Clackamas County to build their own bridge to the south
- Regional perspective: Consider regional needs, build with the future in mind, increase capacity on the bridge for future population growth, don't re-create the problem with the bridge we are facing now (bridge was built too narrow to begin with), recognition that this is a regional issue affecting more than just the neighborhood
- Concerns about safety (Minnesota bridge collapse) and the need to do something sooner, rather than later
- Desire to make the Sellwood Bridge friendlier for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Desire to separate bikes from cars, and pedestrians from bikes
- Compliments about the open public process and the project web tools

Appendix A

Riley Research Associates
Sellwood Bridge Survey #3 – Demographic Findings

September 18, 2007

TO: Sellwood Bridge Community Task Force & Project Team

FROM: Michael J. Riley, Crystal Bolyard
RILEY RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

RE: SELLWOOD BRIDGE SURVEY # 3
DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

Overview

After reviewing the results of the demographic characteristics of the survey sample, we'd like to offer our analysis on the demographic comparisons, and some of the main takeaways from the report.

Demographic Comparison: Sample vs. Census

We compared the characteristics of the survey respondents with the 2000 Census for the City of Portland. Generally, we found the survey demographics to be very comparable to the census results in the following areas:

Age

No age group was over- or under-represented by more than 10% (see table). Respondents 30-39 and 50-59 were slightly over-represented. Although those 18-29 and those 70+ were under-represented by about 10% each, they are the groups that typically tend to be under-represented in surveys. Additionally, they may be the groups that have less vested interest either in frequently using the Sellwood Bridge or in the surrounding neighborhood.

Gender

Typically, the distribution of males and females is about 50/50. While the survey gives a slight edge to male respondents (54.3%), the difference is marginal. Additionally, within the 97202 zip code, there is a nearly even distribution of males and females.

Zip code

For a survey such as this, there is some expectation that those who chose to participate may have a deeper vested interest in the future of the bridge, hence a higher proportion of respondents in the 97202 zip code. Roughly one-third (30.0%) of those who chose to participate in the survey lived in the 97202 zip code area, however, just 7.1% of Portland residents live in that zip code according to the census. An over-representation in this case could indicate that those who will be most affected by the bridge's future are the people most likely to have the motivation to participate.

Demographic Chart

Age: Only those who were 18 and over were taken into consideration for both the census and the survey data when calculating the percentage.

Gender: Only those who answered the question on the survey were taken into consideration when calculating the percentage.

	% of Portland Census	% of Survey	Difference Survey vs. Census
AGE			
Total population	529,121	3,003	
Total population 18+	417,667	2,987	
18-29	25.0%	15.4%	-9.6%
30-39	21.8%	27.7%	5.9%
40-49	20.5%	22.0%	1.5%
50-59	14.1%	22.9%	8.8%
60-69	7.4%	10.5%	3.1%
70+	11.3%	2.3%	-9.0%
GENDER			
Total population	529,121	3,003	
Of those answering (Survey)		2,919	
Male	49.4%	54.3%	4.9%
Female	50.6%	45.7%	-4.9%
GEOGRAPHIC			
Total population in 97202	37,411	901	
Population within 97202	7.1%	30.0%	22.9%
Population within other zip codes	92.9%	70.0%	-22.9%

Zip code

Generally, there were differences in the respondents who lived in the 97202 zip code and those who did not. Those in 97202 were slightly more likely to be over 40 years of age, more likely to use the bridge to commute to work or to run errands, and were more likely to favor a smaller cross section whether they preferred the bridge to be rehabilitated, replaced, or a combination alternative. While there was a fairly even distribution of males and females in 97202, those who responded outside of that zip code were more likely to be male.

However, despite these differences, roughly the same proportion of those inside the zip code and those outside of it preferred the bridge to be replaced as their first choice.

Conclusions

The characteristics of this sample are similar in age and gender composition to the general population of the area. Aside from the large number of bicycle users, the survey is otherwise similar in demographic characteristics of residents. There is a higher likelihood of the accuracy and usefulness of the findings because the characteristics are comparable in composition.

Recognizing that those who participated in the survey are often those who are the most actively engaged in the future of the bridge provides a good starting point in assessing preferences and opinions among those communities. This can be evidenced by the nearly one-third of respondents who live within the zip code most affected by the future of the bridge.

The data collected here should not be characterized as a scientific sample. However, the data provides useful insight into those who participated, and cautious conclusions can be drawn about community preferences and the usefulness of the sample in representing the greater preferences of the City of Portland.