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NEWS RELEASE

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Policy leaders to choose Sellwood Bridge plan

The Policy Advisory Group for the Sellwood Bridge Project will meet on Friday, February 6 at 3:00 pm in the boardroom of the Multnomah Building at 501 SE Hawthorne Blvd. to choose a locally preferred alternative. The decision is a major step in a planning project that began in 2006. The meeting is open to the public and will include time for public comment.

The Policy Advisory Group includes elected leaders from jurisdictions with an interest in the Sellwood Bridge as well as appointed leaders of transportation agencies involved in the project. Multnomah County Chair Ted Wheeler serves as chair of the Policy Group.

The meeting agenda will include a presentation of the alternative recommended by the project's Community Task Force. The task force recommended that a new bridge be constructed on the existing alignment and widened to the south. The citizen panel also recommended a signalized interchange at the west end where the bridge intersects with Highway 43 and a signal for bicyclists and pedestrians at the east end where the bridge ties in with SE Tacoma St. and SE Sixth Ave. The task force did not recommend whether the minimum width of the bridge should be 64 feet or 76 feet.

The locally preferred alternative recommended by the Policy Group will need to be approved by the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners, the Portland City Council, Metro's Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation, and the Metro Council. After these local jurisdictions vote in February and March, staff will refine the proposed design and prepare a Final Environmental Impact Statement that the Federal Highway Administration will need to review and approve before federal funds can be used for design and right of way acquisition. Federal approval is expected in 2010. If funding can be secured, construction could begin in 2012.

Multnomah County maintains the Sellwood Bridge, five other Willamette River bridges, and more than 300 miles of roads. For more information, visit www.sellwoodbridge.org.

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