

# the Sellwood BRIDGE

Volume 3, Number 1, Fall 2008

## It's time to choose a Preferred Alternative

Public comment period is November 7 to December 22, 2008

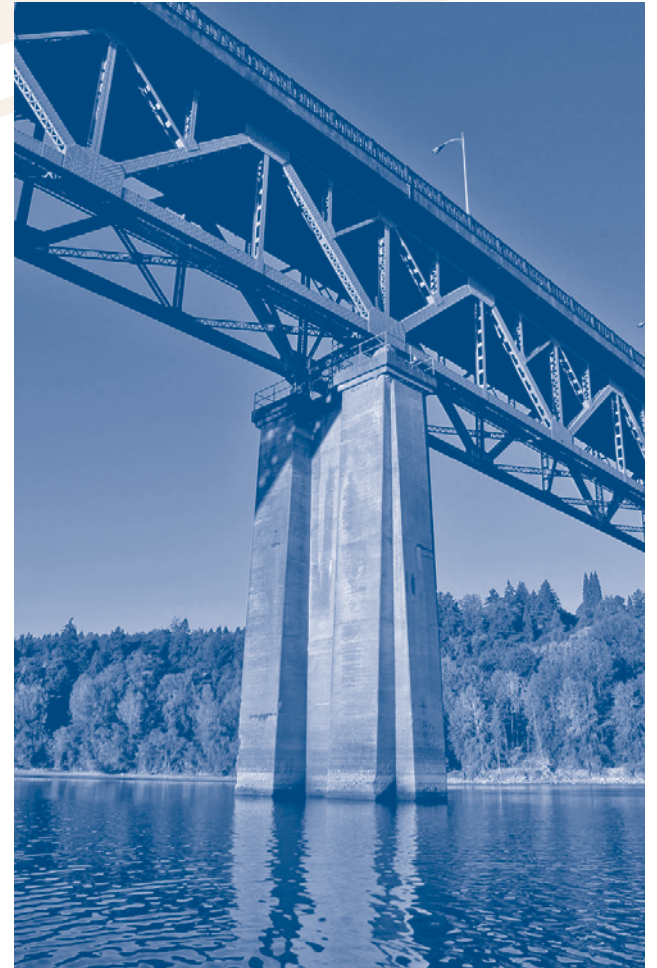
Multnomah County is seeking to rehabilitate or replace the 82-year old Sellwood Bridge, which has reached the end of its useful service life. Following a lengthy process of developing alternatives and narrowing down to a few for further analysis, it's now time for the community to come together to identify a preferred alternative.

A draft Environmental Impact Statement (draft EIS) has been prepared and is ready for public review starting in early November. The document compares the No Build Alternative and five Build Alternatives, which combine various alignments, cross-sections, bridge types, and interchange types. It is possible that the

preferred alternative may be a combination of elements from more than one Build Alternative. The final EIS will explain the preferred alternative, and will answer questions raised during the draft EIS comment period.

The Project Team is looking for public comments on the draft EIS, as well as input on the alternatives – which one, if any, do you favor?

Comments on the draft EIS can be submitted in writing, online, or at the public hearing (*see below*). Input on your preferred alternative can be provided via the online survey. The deadline for comments and survey responses is December 22.



### Where to find the Draft EIS

The Sellwood Bridge project draft EIS is a 450-page document that describes the social and natural environmental impacts of the five Build Alternatives that were identified for further study. There is also a 40-page Executive Summary of the findings. Copies of the documents can be found:

- Online at [www.sellwoodbridge.org](http://www.sellwoodbridge.org)
- At Multnomah County or Clackamas County library branches (reference copies only)

### How to provide comments

#### • Attend a community briefing

Multnomah County will be hosting two community briefings – November 10 at the Multnomah Building and November 13 at Oaks Park (*see back page for details*). The meetings will be identical and will feature back-to-back presentations highlighting findings of the draft EIS, followed by time for questions. The briefings are being held early in the public comment period so you can learn more about the draft EIS and have any questions answered well before the public hearing. Only written comments about the draft EIS will be taken at these meetings. These comments will be responded to in the final EIS. Can't make a briefing? You can watch a video of the presentation at [www.sellwoodbridge.org](http://www.sellwoodbridge.org).

#### • Attend the open house/public hearing

An open house and public hearing will be held on December 10 at OMSI (*see back page for details*). The meeting will feature stations of information as well as a formal public hearing where testimony will be heard and recorded by a court reporter. Written and oral comments will be taken and will be responded to in the final EIS.

#### • Submit comments online

Comments on the draft EIS can be submitted through the project website ([www.sellwoodbridge.org](http://www.sellwoodbridge.org)). Comments received during the official comment period (November 7 to December 22) will be responded to in the final EIS.

#### • Take the online survey

An online survey will be available at [www.sellwoodbridge.org](http://www.sellwoodbridge.org) from November 7 to December 22. The survey is an informal poll to gauge community preferences on the alternatives – which, if any, do you favor. Results will be provided to the project's Community Task Force and elected officials to help them in the decision process.

## Build or No Build?

Any analysis of the Build Alternatives must also consider the trade-offs associated with doing nothing (the No Build Alternative). Any of the Build Alternatives would restore bus, truck, and emergency vehicle use of the bridge, improve the bridge's ability to withstand a moderate earthquake, extend the bridge's design life by at least 75 years, provide better operation of the interchange, reduce back-ups on Highway 43 (Macadam Avenue), and significantly improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Under the No Build Alternative, none of these improvements would occur, and in fact, conditions would only worsen over time as the bridge ages further and the region's population grows. However, the No Build Alternative isn't the same as taking no action at all. An estimated \$54 million in repairs and maintenance is needed just to maintain the existing structure as it is for 20 more years.

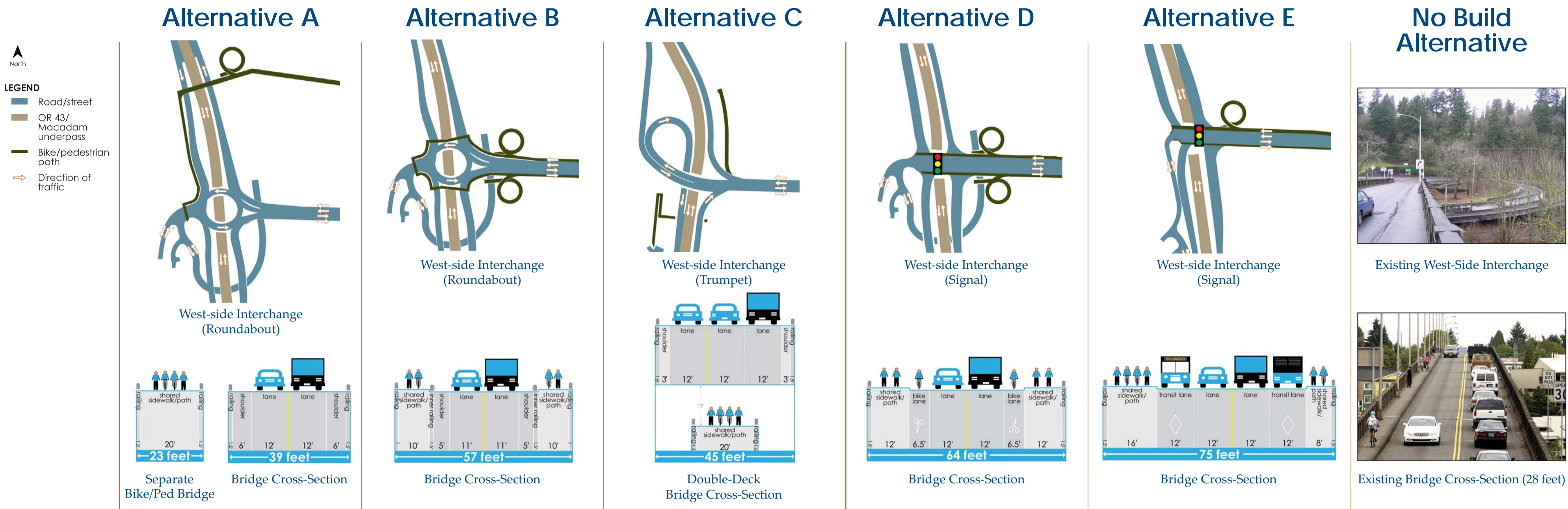
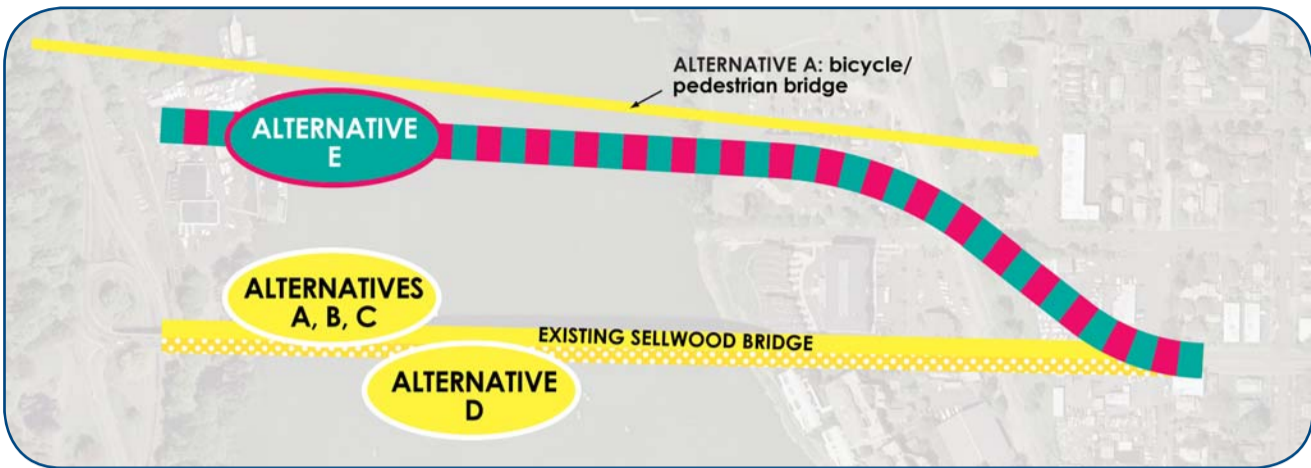


# Comparing the Alternatives\*

The columns in the accompanying table describe each of the five Build Alternatives that were studied in the draft EIS, as well as the No Build Alternative. The rows are organized into two main sections: *Cost & Constructability* and *Community Impacts*. They illustrate some of the distinctions between the alternatives for a select group of key criteria. The draft EIS examines the expected impacts and mitigation for many other criteria – too many to include in this newsletter. This table merely represents some of the top issues that have been raised through the project's public involvement process. More information about the draft EIS findings and the details of the alternatives can be found on the project website.

### What's examined in the Draft EIS?

- Air Quality
- Aquatic Resources
- Archeological Resources
- Bicyclists & Pedestrians
- Economics
- Energy
- Environmental Justice
- Geology
- Hazardous Material
- Historic Resources
- Hydraulics
- Land Use
- Noise
- Parks & Recreation
- Right-of-Way & Relocation
- Social Elements
- Transportation
- Utilities
- Vegetation
- Visual Resources
- Water Quality
- Wetlands
- Wildlife



	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E	No Build Alternative
<b>Bridge Type</b>	Existing bridge rehabilitation and new bike/ped bridge	Rehabilitation	Through-arch	Delta-frame or Deck-arch	Box girder or Through-arch	Existing steel truss
<b>Bridge Closure Period</b>	24 months	24 months (unless temporary detour bridge is built)	42 months	No closure period	No closure period	6 to 8 months
<b>Residential Displacements</b>	1 unit in River Park Condominiums	1 unit in River Park Condominiums	1 unit in River Park Condominiums	4 units in Sellwood Harbor 1 unit in River Park Condominiums	6 units in Grand Place	0 units
<b>Business Displacements</b>	9 businesses in the Sellwood Building, 30 employees total	9 businesses in the Sellwood Building, 30 employees total (10 businesses, with a temporary detour bridge - Riverside Corral - 62 employees total)	10 businesses total, 9 in the Sellwood Building plus Staff Jennings, 46 employees total	9 businesses in the Sellwood Building, 30 employees total	48 businesses total, 9 in the Sellwood Building, 37 in the River Park Center, and 2 in Grand Place, 216 employees total	0 units
<b>Parks &amp; Recreation Impacts</b>	4.3 acres total, impacts 8 park facilities	3.9 acres total, impacts 6 park facilities	4.3 acres total, impacts 6 park facilities	3.9 acres total, impacts 5 park facilities	3.8 acres total, impacts 6 park facilities	Does not apply
<b>Cost to Construct</b>	\$331 - \$337 million (depending on bike/ped bridge type)	\$326 million without detour bridge \$356 million with a detour bridge	\$280 million	\$293 million (Delta-frame bridge) \$311 million (Deck-arch bridge)	\$280 million (Box girder bridge) \$360 million (Through-arch bridge)	\$54 million
<b>Construction Phasing Ability**</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>Flexibility for Future Travel Needs***</b>	No (bridge width restricts future reconfiguration)	No (bridge width restricts future reconfiguration)	Maybe (cross-section allows for future reconfiguration, but bridge type may restrict bridge widening)	Yes (cross-section allows for future reconfiguration)	Yes (cross-section allows for future reconfiguration)	No (bridge width restricts future reconfiguration)

\*It is possible that the preferred alternative could be a combination of these elements (cross-section, alignment, and interchange type) \*\*See back page \*\*\* Can the bridge be widened if there is a need to do so in the future?

# What if there is not enough money to build the project?

Given the difficulty of funding large transportation projects, many of you have expressed concern about how the Sellwood Bridge will be financed. Ultimately, decisions by Congress, the state legislature, regional officials, and local voters will decide how the project is funded. Construction phasing could also impact how the Sellwood Bridge is funded. If it is not possible to build the project at one time, Multnomah County has developed scenarios for phasing construction that would allow the project to be built in parts. These ideas would work for both rehabilitation and replacement options.

The first step toward construction will be purchasing right-of-way. The first phase of construction would control the landslide on the west-side of the project area, reconstruct the bridge approaches on both sides, improve the bicycle/

pedestrian facilities on the existing bridge by relocating the light poles, and strengthening the existing bridge to allow buses, trucks, and emergency vehicles to use it again. The second phase would repair or replace the river crossing and the third phase would replace the existing west-side interchange. These phases can be combined if funds are available.

Phasing in this way adds to the total cost and time of constructing the bridge because of additional inflation from stretching the project construction out over a longer period, inefficiencies in engineering and setup for construction, and the cost of building minor elements of the project that will be torn out in later phases. Phasing also lengthens construction time and traffic impacts. But, phasing does present a path forward to provide project benefits if only partial funding is available in the near term.

## NEXT STEPS: 2009 - 2010

- Multnomah County Commission, Clackamas County Commission, Portland City Council, and Metro Council/JPACT identify locally preferred alternative at public hearings
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approval of locally preferred alternative
- Agency agreements on mitigation and conservation measures
- Conformance with land use, transportation, and other regulations
- Final EIS and FHWA Record of Decision
- Project finance plan
- Purchase right-of-way



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## Which alternative do you prefer?

New online survey November 7 - December 22  
[www.sellwoodbridge.org](http://www.sellwoodbridge.org)

## Open House & Public Hearing December 10 at OMSI

A public Open House and formal Public Hearing will be held on Wednesday, December 10, 2008, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI), 1945 SE Water Avenue in Portland. The Public Hearing will take place from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. The Open House begins at 6:00 p.m. and will run at the same time as the hearing. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), oral testimony will be taken at the Public Hearing. Written and oral comments will be taken at the Open House. All comments will become a part of the official project record and will be responded to in the final EIS.

"Public input is an important part of our decision-making process," said Multnomah County Commissioner Maria Rojo de Steffey, chair of the project's Policy Advisory Group. "I invite you to share your opinions with us at the open house/public hearing and through the online survey."

Reasonable accommodations can be made for people with disabilities. Please call (503) 988-6804 at least one week before the meeting.

¿Habla usted español? La información en esta publicación se puede traducir para usted. Para solicitar los servicios de traducción por favor llámé al (503) 988-6804.

## Community Briefings:

Come learn more about the draft EIS and the alternatives at the start of the public comment period. Four briefings are planned over two evenings (all meetings will be identical). Only written comments about the draft EIS can be taken at these meetings.

**November 10 at the Multnomah Building**  
6:00 to 7:00 p.m. and 7:15 to 8:15 p.m.  
Boardroom  
501 SE Hawthorne Blvd., Portland

**November 13 at Oaks Park**  
6:00 to 7:00 p.m. and 7:15 to 8:15 p.m.  
Dance Pavilion  
7100 SE Oaks Park Way, Portland

Can't make a briefing? You can watch a video of the presentation at [www.sellwoodbridge.org](http://www.sellwoodbridge.org)