We made it! New Sellwood Bridge opens Tuesday, March 1

The new Sellwood Bridge is scheduled to open to traffic on Tuesday, March 1 by 6 a.m.

“I am so excited,” said Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury. “I share the anticipation of all the bridge neighbors as this major project nears completion.”

The county’s biggest transportation project in decades has faced many challenges, including:

- Securing funds
- Designing around an active landslide
- Building a bridge very close to homes and businesses
- Keeping the bridge and Highway 43 open to traffic during construction

Bridge users, neighbors and all Multnomah County residents deserve a pat on the back for their patience during construction and their support for the long-awaited project. Together, “we made it!”

We hope many of you will join us at the bridge opening celebration on Saturday, February 27 from noon to 4 pm (see story on back).

As the story inside this newsletter explains, a lot of construction still remains after the new bridge opens to traffic. Construction is scheduled to be complete by Thanksgiving 2016. When it is, Portland will have its first Willamette River bridge open to private vehicles that is designed to withstand a Cascadia Zone subduction earthquake.

Multnomah County is the lead agency for the Sellwood Bridge project. Partner agencies include the Portland Bureau of Transportation, the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration.

New bridge will include benches designed and built by local students

The new Sellwood Bridge may be the first bridge in the country to feature a permanent element designed and built by high school students.

The bridge will have four viewing platforms over the river – called belvederes – where bicyclists and pedestrians can pause to enjoy views from the bridge.

Each belvedere will have a semi-circular bench made of juniper wood and steel designed and fabricated by local high school students. The students attend the ACE Academy (ACE = Architecture, Construction and Engineering), a public charter school drawing students from five districts. ACE worked with Centennial High School’s metal fabrication program. ACE is in Northeast Portland and Centennial is in Gresham.

Students in the two programs worked with staff from the design and engineering firm T.Y. Lin International and Multnomah County on the bench design. The benches are a key element of the project’s school outreach program, which is led by Lois D. Cohen Associates, a community engagement firm and sub-consultant to T.Y. Lin.

The schools program worked with 12 local schools during the project’s design and construction phases. Two thousand students in grades 2 through 12 learned about the project in classrooms, shop classes, and in field trips to the bridge. The program used the bridge project to provide lessons about civic engagement, as well as the planning, design and construction of a major transportation project. Students were exposed to a range of new careers.

The benches will be installed this spring. A prototype will be on view in one of the belvederes at the February 27 opening celebration.

Congratulations to these students who worked on the benches: Rebecca Fast, Taylor Lehman, Jesse Martinez, Nate Porter, Kody Thompson, and Ethan Wells from ACE Academy. Centennial High School students are Jose Calderon, Braden Dukart, Aryan Niroumand, Kaleb Paschall, Seth Townsend, and Franky Villa.
While the March 1 opening of the new Sellwood Bridge to traffic marks a major milestone, a lot more construction work is scheduled this year. Much of the remaining work could not be performed until the new bridge opens.

Here’s a look at remaining work before the project is completed around Thanksgiving 2016. Schedules are subject to change:

### Work remaining after March 1 bridge opening

#### Taylors Ferry at Highway 43 Turnaround

The turnaround for bridge traffic to access Highway 43 south will be removed in August after the left turn from the bridge to Highway 43 south opens.

#### Macadam Bay/Freeman Motors Driveway

The new driveway is open but an archaeological find has delayed completion of some elements. Work is expected to be completed in March/April.

#### Highways 43 Final Paving

- Scheduled for August.

#### Willamette River

- **Removal of Detour Bridge Truss**
  - The concrete features of the 90-year old Sellwood Bridge truss spans (deck, sidewalks and railings) will be removed in March and April. The steel truss will be disassembled and removed in May and June.

#### North Half of East Approach

- **Removal of Detour Bridge Piers**
  - The piers and protective fenders will be removed from mid-June to late August. The river piers can only be removed during the in-water work period this summer.

#### South Sidewalk of New Bridge

- **Removal of Work Bridges**
  - The timber decks will be removed this spring. Pile removal will happen during the in-water work period starting in July.

#### Stratum Public Art Project

The various components making up the new public art for the Sellwood neighborhood are coming together. The footings are poured. The pavers are in. The sculpture fabrication is underway at Art & Design Works in Cornelius. Expect a celebration this Spring of Mikyoung Kim’s Stratum, a public art project funded with City of Portland Percent for Art dollars.

Twenty-three 14-ft tall stainless steel sculptures inspired by the area’s geology will grace both sides of SE Tacoma St. between the bridge and SE 6th Ave., defining the street edge and acting as a gateway environment both into the Sellwood neighborhood and onto the new Sellwood Bridge.

Color gradations on each of the sculpture’s surfaces will be skillfully applied by Art & Design Works. The richly patinated surfaces are inspired by the geology and natural phenomena of the Willamette River Valley. The end result will be a graduated blending of colors that convey warmth and naturalism.

Kim, an award-winning international landscape architect and artist, and Bryan Chou, her artistic partner in the project, have completed projects from civic gardens and municipal playgrounds to large scale parks and institutional master plans. She was selected by a panel of local artists, community representatives and project team members in May 2012. See more of her work at myk-d.com.

Learn more at www.sellwoodbridge.org
Community celebration
Saturday, February 27, noon to 4 pm
After years of construction, the Sellwood Bridge Project has reached a major milestone - and you are invited to a celebration!
On Tuesday, March 1, 2016 at 6 am, the new bridge will open to traffic so that contractors can begin to remove the detour (old) bridge. The old bridge will close to all modes of traffic (motor vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians) on Thursday, February 25 at 7 pm for four days while the contractor sets up the new bridge for traffic.
The community is invited to a celebration on the new bridge on Saturday, February 27. The new bridge opens for the free, family-friendly event at noon. An opening ceremony and ribbon cutting will start the celebration around 1 pm, followed by the “Through the Decades” parade. Food carts, retail and non-profit booths will be located on the bridge for the party. There will be entertainment on the main stage and along the bridge, and a few surprises. The first to arrive will receive a Sellwood Bridge lapel pin to commemorate the day. Due to limited parking, Sellwood neighbors are encouraged to walk or bike to the event. Bicycle parking will be provided at the east end of the bridge. Dress warm and bring an umbrella!
The bridge opening celebration is generously sponsored by the four companies that have been most involved with designing, managing, and building the project: CH2M, Inc., David Evans and Associates, Inc., the Slayden-Sundt Joint Venture, and T.Y. Lin International.
Special thanks to members of SMILE (the Sellwood Moreland Improvement League) and the Sellwood Westmoreland Business Alliance for their support for the celebration.

Old Bridge celebration: Thursday, February 25, 7:30-8:30 pm
On Thursday night February 25, fans of the old Sellwood Bridge will have one last chance to say goodbye. The old bridge will permanently close to traffic that day at 7 pm. From 7:30 – 8:30 pm, residents can walk across the 90-year old bridge one last time to say goodbye. Bring your flashlights, electric candles, and phone lights for this candlelight event. Participants should assemble on Grand Avenue off of Spokane street (near the bridge’s north sidewalk) no earlier than 7 pm. The procession starts at 7:30 pm. We’ll have time to walk from east to west and back again. The bridge will need to be cleared by 8:30 pm so that work to set up the new bridge for traffic can begin.
While the traffic shift to the new bridge is a significant milestone, bridge and interchange work will continue through November of 2016 (see inside for details on remaining work).

Sellwood Bridge Opening Event
Saturday, February 27, Noon to 4 pm
Read more inside or at www.sellwoodbridge.org