

**January 31, 2024**

## **Letter of Understanding**

### **Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge (EQRB)**

This Letter of Understanding (“Letter”) is intended to document mutual understandings between the City of Portland (“City”) and Multnomah County (“County”) regarding past, current and future efforts related to the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge (EQRB) project (“Project”). The City and County partners are collectively referred to herein as “the Parties”.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this Letter is to demonstrate that the Parties completed a joint work plan effort from May to December 2023, culminating in Project direction for final design and the County satisfactorily addressing City conditions as established in City [Resolution No. 37582](#) dated July 20, 2022.

*The purpose of the joint work plan was for the Parties to jointly determine the cost, environmental, and timeline impacts and trade-offs of any or no changes to the existing connection between the EQRB Bridge replacement and the Eastbank Esplanade; as well as determine lane and pedestrian and bicycle space allocation; and to better inform decision makers as they determine the feasibility and political implications for those potential options and select an option to advance<sup>1</sup>.*

This Letter is meant to demonstrate the Parties’ strong and continued commitment to this vital Project. The Project will provide a lifeline crossing of the Willamette River that would remain fully operational and accessible for vehicles and other modes of transportation immediately following a major Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ) earthquake. This Letter is also meant to demonstrate the Parties’ strong and continued commitment to our shared Climate Action Plan (June 2015) and policies to elevate walking, biking, and transit as essential to meeting climate goals, which is appropriately related to the Project.

This Letter is not a binding contractual agreement. It is meant to provide the factual and historical background of the work plan process and to express the Parties’ mutual understandings regarding preference for final design and ongoing project partnership. At all times subject to applicable federal, state, or local jurisdictions’ authority, laws, processes, including but not limited to required land use and NEPA regulations and processes.

#### **Understandings**

City and County staff coordinated in a series of joint Senior Leadership meetings and technical work sessions to produce a joint recommendation regarding the bridge’s space allocation and to determine the potential cost, and any environmental and schedule impacts related to the proposed ADA accessible ramp connection. Two reports were prepared to summarize the findings: County-City Work Plan: Bridge Cross Section Study, dated [insert report date] (Cross Section Study), and County-City Work Plan: Eastbank Esplanade Ramp Connection Study, dated October 2023 (Ramp Connection Study). The purpose of these studies was to inform decision makers about the trade-offs associated with specific

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<sup>1</sup> Purpose statement from *City-County Work Plan: Eastbank Esplanade Ramp Connection Study*. October 2023.

Attachments: EQRB: County-City Work Plan: Bridge Cross Section Study

EQRB: County-City Work Plan: Eastbank Esplanade Ramp Connection Study

design options related to space allocation and a ramp connection. The full final reports are attached to this Letter for reference.

This Letter further demonstrates the Parties' understanding regarding study outcomes and next steps:

1. The Cross Section Study documents technical considerations for a range of possible bridge cross-section options and evaluates each as it relates to policy consistency, safety, comfort, maintenance, and inspection. The outcome of the study revealed the highest performing option that will be carried forward into final design. The agreed upon cross-section allocates 17' to walking, biking, and rolling on each side of the bridge. This outcome aligns with Council Condition 1 and satisfies the City's cross-section condition.
2. The Ramp Connection Study documents City and County staff evaluation and tradeoffs for a range of connections between the EQRB replacement bridge and the Eastbank Esplanade, and identifies potential environmental, cost, and timeline impacts to the Project. The Senior Leadership group identified two significant risks associated with constructing an Esplanade ramp connection: (1) the ramp design options were prohibitively expensive and presented a significant risk to Project design, construction, and completion and (2) the ramps posed significant environmental impacts to the Willamette River shoreline and shallow water habitat. The risks and potential impacts associated with constructing a ramp to the Eastbank Esplanade were determined to be too great to overcome at this time. The Parties agree with this determination and expect continued collaboration through final design and construction to identify other measures to enhance network connectivity for people walking, rolling and biking. This outcome satisfies Council Condition 2.

The Parties hereby acknowledge that the intentions contained herein are their true intentions.

**CITY OF PORTLAND**


Signed  \_\_\_\_\_

Name Mingus Mapps

Title Commissioner in Charge of Transportation

Date 2/12/2024

**MULTNOMAH COUNTY**

Signed  \_\_\_\_\_

Name Jessica Vega Pederson

Title Multnomah County Chair

Date 2/1/24

Attachments: EQRB: County-City Work Plan: Bridge Cross Section Study  
EQRB: County-City Work Plan: Eastbank Esplanade Ramp Connection Study