

EQRB BRIEFING FOR BPCAC

December 9, 2020

Notes by Mike Pullen

Here are my Mike Pullen's notes from the EQRB briefing for the Multnomah County Bicycle-Pedestrian Citizen Advisory Committee on Dec. 9.

Background: The briefing focused on our study of bike/ped/ADA connections between the new bridge and the East Bank Esplanade and Skidmore MAX station area. We last briefed this group about the preferred alternative recommendation in Spring/Summer 2020. About 10 committee members attended, including CTF member Art Graves. Committee member Clint Culpepper is also on PBOT's Bike Advisory Committee and was the most familiar with the options. Mike did the briefing intro and Steve presented information on the options. Megan attended to hear the discussion.

- **CAC Questions/Comments:**

- **Switchback ramps:**

- Make sure long cargo bikes and delivery bikes can safely navigate the hairpin turns. In Portland, some switchbacks can't accommodate long bikes (Hollywood MAX station). The switchbacks from Steel Bridge to Eastbank Esplanade have the minimum turning radius needed (Clint).
- Are corkscrew ramps possible between bridge and Esplanade? (Armando). Yes, but their wider footprint has more impact on natural resources and the Esplanade.
- Consider tucking the ramps under the bridge, to reduce their footprint (Art). Reply: We are looking at that (Steve). (Note: No one expressed safety concern about ramps hidden under bridge.)
- CEPTED should not drive the location of the ramps: they should be located where they are the most useful (Art).

- **Westside Bike/Ped/ADA Link:**

- It seems reasonable to use existing sidewalks from northwest sidewalk to Skidmore MAX (rather than build ramps on northwest side of bridge).

- **Stairs:**

- Include center gutter in stairs so more bicyclists can carry bike upstairs and avoid elevator.

- **Elevators:**

- Several said they prefer elevators because they provide "universal access" (all modes).
- They work well in low-traffic areas like the bike/ped bridges over the Brooklyn Rail Yard in SE Portland (Clint). May be a challenge at Burnside due to higher volume of users and waits for elevator.
- They have worked well on New York City's elevated High Line pedestrian path. (Armando)

- Concerned that pedestrians may be squeezed out by bicycle users (Susan). She was relieved somewhat when we explained there would be stairs too.
 - Is an elevator on westside being considered? No.
 - How reliable would the elevators be? (Art) County cleans and maintains movable structures now, so these would be added to our work. We believe they could be reliably maintained.
- **Mid-Bridge Bike/Ped Traffic Signal:**
 - Bad option, it will delay motor vehicle traffic and increases safety risk. (Several agreed)
 - Concern about 2-way bikes on south side if no signal to reach north side.
- **Two-Way Bike Lanes on South Side:**
 - Did we consider? (Clint) Yes, but we would likely need to remove a traffic lane near bridge heads, where bridge is narrower due to buildings.
 - SE Ankeny is a popular bike route, so a two-way bike path on south side could tie into that route. (Clint)
- **Other:**
 - Do we have estimates of bicycle and pedestrian numbers that would use the links? Reply: Current trips from bridge to Esplanade are relatively low but we expect they would increase with new bridge and link. We need to study the future usage more.
 - Did you study a separate bike/ped bridge over I-5 to reach the Esplanade? No, that is outside our bridge replacement scope.
 - If the street connections to the bridgeheads are good, it will reduce the number of trips between bridge and Esplanade, which will reduce congestion on elevators (Andrew). I use street connections to get to bridge now, which are good westbound.