

Sellwood Bridge Project is Exceeding Diversity Goals

Minority hires exceed goal, but women lag in workforce

By Helen Silvis Of The Skanner News

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Multnomah County Commissioner Deborah Kafoury took a tour of the Sellwood Bridge construction project. Behind Kafoury are (from left): Chris Warner, Chief of Staff for Comm. Loretta Smith; Matt Ryan, county attorney; Ken Elliott, county attorney; and Ian Cannon

The Sellwood Bridge Project is exceeding its minority hiring goal, project managers say. Minority contractors make up 23 percent of the firms hired to work on the bridge, while the goal for minority participation was 20 percent.

Ian Cannon, for Multnomah County and Michael Baker, for the project consultants David Evans and Associates, reported the contracting diversity numbers to Multnomah County Commissioners, at their regular board meeting, Thursday, Sept. 6.

Of the \$35.3 million spent so far, \$8.1 million is going to minority contracting firms, Baker said, and 48 of the 64 subcontractors hired are classified as, "Disadvantaged, Minority, Women or Emerging Small Businesses."

And when it comes to the workers hired for the job, the figures are slightly higher.

"Our workforce is 25 percent minority which exceeds our target of 20 percent," Baker said.

The project has had less success so far, in recruiting women workers. The target is 14 percent, but only 6 percent of hires are women.



“We’ve asked subcontractors to make sure they are targeting women, moving forwards,” Baker said. “We’re meeting with noncompliant subcontractors weekly instead of monthly to discuss what they are doing. I’m taking it seriously.”

Project managers also reported that progress on construction is proceeding as planned.