Survey #1 Summary

DATE: June 16, 2008

Summary

Between May 15 and June 15, 2008, over 230 people took the first online survey for the Gibbs Street Pedestrian Bridge project. This was a self-selected, online survey, so the results should not be interpreted as a scientific sample of public opinion, but instead as a snapshot of community input. The results will inform the early development and screening of design concepts.

The opportunity to participate in the survey was advertised at neighborhood and community group meetings, in newsletters distributed by OHSU, Southwest Neighborhoods Inc., the South Waterfront Residents' Association, and on several blogs, email lists and web sites.

Demographics of respondents

The largest portion of respondents lived in the 97239 (north of Vermont Street and south of I-405) ZIP code (33%), followed by those living in 97219 (south of Vermont Street and north of Tryon Creek Park). However, 68% of respondents lived in neighborhoods outside Corbett, Terwilliger, Lair Hill, and South Waterfront and 46% worked in other neighborhoods. Most respondents (45%) were between the ages of 26 and 40 years old, followed by 29% who are between 41 and 55 years old.

Where do you live or work?	Live	Work
Corbett, Terwilliger, or Lair Hill	23% (54)	11% (27)
OHSU	N/A	26% (61)
South Waterfront	9% (20)	9% (22)
I don't work	N/A	7% (17)
I live/work in a different neighborhood	**69% (162)**	**46% (109)**

Bridge Use

Respondents were asked a series of questions to understand how they would use the bridge. They were allowed to choose as many activities and modes as applied. Over half of the respondents expected to use the bridge for recreational bike riding or walking. About a quarter of the respondents, expected to use the bridge to bike or walk on their commute, to make transit connections, and to go shopping. Other uses for the bridge included connecting to OHSU and the Tram, visiting friends, and those who expected to not use it.

How would you use the bridge?	Response
Walking for recreation	**58% (125)**
Walking to reach shopping, retail, or other destinations	36% (76)
Walking as part of my commute	21% (44)
Walking to reach transit	29% (63)
Biking for recreation	**61% (131)**
Biking to reach shopping, retail, or other destinations	37% (80)
Biking as part of my commute	30% (53)
Biking to reach transit	25% (53)

Approximately 69% (156) of the respondents said they would use the bridge on weekends, which corresponds with the previous answer and the high use of the bridge for recreation. Weekday mornings (7and 9 a.m.), afternoons, and evenings (after 6 p.m.) were also likely hours.

Evaluating Options

Respondents were asked what criteria categories they would like to see considered in addition to aesthetics, user experience, safety, cost, and sustainability. Most respondents did not have any additional suggestions for criteria, but had additional ideas.

Aesthetics

- Ensure architectural compatibility with the aerial tram.
- Include natural or vegetative elements.
- Consider the bridge as a gateway to the area. Possibly use it as branding for the City of Portland.

User experience

- Maximize number of access points both for bicyclist and pedestrians, as well as to transit.
- Accommodate all users with appropriate grade and surface choices and include possible protection from the rain.
- Provide enough room for bicyclists and pedestrians, possibly more capacity than the 12 to 15 foot width, and with ground markings and signage to designate where each mode should travel. Also, ramp connections and slopes were mentioned as important.
- Provide wayfinding, especially from the Lair Hill neighborhood.

Safety

- Ensure safety with good lighting (solar powered).
- Consider a visually open design that allows bridge users to see and be seen, unlike some of the tunnels used in the area.
- Ensure safe connections from the neighborhood streets to the bridge, especially along Kelly Avenue.
- Provide pedestrian and bicycle right of way when entering and leaving the bridge to avoid conflicts with vehicle traffic.

Cost

- Build a bridge with a long lifespan that would not have a lot of maintenance.
- Provide adequate pavement that would not need to be smoothed or resurfaced after several years (there was also a concern for steel grated or slippery surfaces).

Sustainability

- Build to future capacity.
- Increase transit options to the South Waterfront neighborhood.
- Consider materials that are low maintenance. Use of vegetation for aesthetic and bioswale/stormwater runoff retention.

Some concerns were also voiced regarding the community of Lair Hill and the South Waterfront and the issue of parking.

When asked to select the most important criteria, 37% selected safety and 30% said user experience. When rating the importance of all the criteria, safety was listed as very important (72%) as was user experience (57%). Aesthetics and sustainability were considered very important to important and cost was considered important to somewhat important. Other criteria that were suggested included integration with the existing neighborhood, long range transportation plans, and functionality.

How important do you think the following criteria categories should be in determining which bridge concept moves forward?

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Not sure/ don't know
Aesthetics	30% (66)	**45% (97)**	18% (39)	7% (15)	1% (1)
User Experience	**57% (122)**	30% (64)	11% (24)	3% (6)	0
Safety	**72% (156)**	22% (48)	6% (12)	0	0
Cost	22% (47)	**37% (81)**	33% (71)	7% (14)	2% (4)
Sustainability	**37% (81)**	36% (77)	20% (44)	7% (15)	0

Bridge Design

East side connection

Respondents were asked what ideas they had for connecting the east end of the pedestrian bridge and SW Moody Street for bicyclists, pedestrians, and people with disabilities given the approximately 80 foot difference between the end of the bridge and SW Moody Street. Respondents suggested:

- **Curved ramps**, some suggested including flat, landing areas with benches (the Morrison Bridge ramps were provided as examples).
- A **sloping bridge.**
- An **elevator** that is large enough for more than one bike, possibly made of glass. Others mentioned that elevators can break down so other options that are ADA accessible should be provided (the walkways near the Alaska Hwy in Seattle were mentioned).

- **Long and gradual sloping ramps**, could be slightly curved and one respondent suggested including some assistance for wheelchairs to travel up the ramp (the city of Berkley, CA, the ramps on either side of the Hawthorne Bridge, and the connection at the north end of the East Bank Esplanade were provided as examples).
- **Stairs** were recommended only if used in combination with another option such as an elevator or ramp and also have bike troughs installed.
- **Switchback ramps** or a series of zigzag ramps.
- An **outdoor escalator** with wide steps for bikes and wheelchairs.
- **Bike only ramps**, with stairs and an elevator for other uses. Bike Lifts (as used in Europe) consisting of a continuously moving set of hooks for the bike tire.
- A **combination** of these options used together (NE 42nd and Halsey transit station was an example).
- A **concrete Helix** with stairs, to compliment OHSU and existing architecture.

Amenities on the bridge

- Areas for quiet **viewpoints** on the bridge, including sound barriers and benches
- **Signage**, including a reader board announcing streetcar arrivals, reminders to give audible warning when passing bikes and pedestrians, pedestrian right-of-way, share the path between modes, and provide directions of destinations on the east and west of the bridge
- **Signals** and button triggers to cross streets at either end of the bridge
- Bike **parking**
- **Wide** design to accommodate bikes and pedestrians, possibly with a separate, designated bike lane.
- A bridge and ramps that allow bicyclists to **ride across** the bridge; turns in ramps are gradual enough for bikers to remain riding.
- Grade **separated** bike and pedestrian areas
- Public **restrooms**, **garbage** cans, and drinking **fountains**
- Non-skid **surfaces**, hand **rails**, and adequate **drainage** to prevent puddles
- **Vegetated** drainage areas with art incorporated
- Adequate **lighting** (some suggested ways to avoid light pollution and use sustainable methods – solar power, LED bulbs) and **emergency phones**/blue flashing indicators for safety
- **Protection** from rain and wind

Concerns about bridge design

- Overall visual **design**, since it is in a highly visible location.
- **Safety**, including traffic on Kelly Avenue and the Ross Island Bridge, potential use by criminals, for bikes and pedestrians, and for traffic on I-5.
- **Homeless** people using covered spots in the area, including the tunnel near the Ross Island Bridge.
- **Earthquake** safety, concern about use of bridge during high winds, and noise from I-5.
- Creating a **useful** bridge that connects to locations and destinations that are frequently used, such as the Ross Island Bridge.

- Provide **options** for travel mode and direction of travel once off the bridge (connections to transit).
- Creating a bridge **wide enough** for bikes and pedestrians to avoid conflicts and to allow bikes to ride across the bridge.
- Older community and OHSU patients might use the bridge, so consider different levels of **disabilities**.
- **Avoid** chain link fence/cage feeling.
- Make sure that it is easy to **maintain** and keep clean.
- Locate **under the tram**, so that if emergency evacuation from the tram is required, it would be down to the bridge.
- Constructed in a **timely manner** and within budget.

Ideas about bridge design

- Clean sweeping or **flowing deck** bridge with rain/sun shelters and seating, include colors and materials from nearby structures (stainless steal, green, concrete).
- Sleek **minimalist** design to blend with the tram tower, modern suspension bridge
- Above-deck truss or an arch design for the historic character of the neighborhood, as opposed to box-beam or concrete ribbon designs.
- **Artistic** designs added to the sides of the bridge that can be seen through from the bridge.
- **Eco-friendly** or "green" design; use it to generate wind or hydroelectric power
- Recognize both the **past and future** in the design, blend in with the landscape and neighborhood.
- Involve the **artists from the neighborhood** to help with designing signage, art pieces, light fixtures, etc. Can also include signs about the history of the neighborhood
- Create community lingering and **meeting points** at the ends of the bridge
- Incorporate **hub-and-spoke design** to represent Portland as a bike city
- **Commemorate** the person Gibbs Street is named after
- A **plain** bridge, nothing fancy
- Use of **lighting** for safety and design/night time illumination
- Use long rows of native **plants** down the center to divide traffic flow and soften the bridge environment
- **Roses** in the design, either in the design or planted along the structure
- A **non-linear bridge** would be pleasing and slow down riders
- **Space-frame architecture** enclosing the walkway, mirrored glass, or use mesh side panels as benches and as the side of the bridge
- **Metal structures/sculptures** that start near the river as fish and end near the hill as humans

Appealing pedestrian bridges

- The arched suspension bridge on the **Springwater Corridor Trail** (Three Bridges) – plenty of room and attractive
- Trail bridges in **Tryon Creek State Park**
- Bridge over **I-205** near Sandy Boulevard (MAX station) with the fish design on the side

- The **Sunset Transit station** bridge over Hwy 26 -- inviting and interesting to look at from a distance
- **Eastbank Esplanade**
- **Hooker** Street and **Failing** Street bridges – useful and have an open design for good visibility
- Pedestrian bridge over **Barbur** Boulevard
- Bridge at the **Hollywood Transit center** – comfortable
- **SE 9th Avenue** and Powell Boulevard
- Bridge over **Amtrak** line in the Pearl district
- **Eugene's** pedestrian bridge across the Willamette River to Alton Baker Park —nice sweeping design
- **Brooklyn** Bridge in New York – pleasant because the bike/pedestrian traffic is separated and it is a beautiful piece of architecture
- Pedestrian bridge across the **Thames** in London connects to the Tate Museum
- The **Maya Lin and John Paul Jones landbridge** over State Route 14

Uncomfortable pedestrian bridges

Many people described uncomfortable bridges as being too narrow. These included the Sellwood Bridge, Ross Island Bridge, overpasses of I-84 in east Portland, the Bryant Street Bridge, the Lombard Street Bridge and the Failing Street Bridge. Other uncomfortable bridges in Portland included:

- **Barbur Boulevard** bridge at the transit station —always littered with a lot of broken glass and needs better lighting
- The bridge over **rail tracks** in the Pearl District -- don't like the elevators
- NE **Going** Street bridge – tight spiral ramp is hard to navigate and dangerous.
- **Morrison** Bridge underpasses – secluded and unsafe
- **Tunnel** near Ross Island Bridge – creepy and attracts unpleasant activities
- Overpass at **Sylvan**