



PORTLAND-MILWAUKIE
LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

Willamette River Bridge Advisory Committee

December 1, 2009

Fred Hansen, Chair and
Members of the Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail Project Steering Committee
TriMet
4012 SE 17th Avenue
Portland, OR 97202

Dear Fred and Steering Committee Members:

Since recommending a bridge type for the Willamette River crossing in May 2009, the Willamette River Bridge Advisory Committee (WRBAC) has met on two more occasions to learn about and consider the evolving bridge design. The WRBAC has always supported a bridge design that is simple, graceful and elegant, while remaining true to Portland's unique sensibilities, and we believe the project's architectural and engineering team is carrying these principles forward.

The committee has reviewed design concepts for:

- The two 180-foot bridge towers, including their shape, relation to and passage through the bridge deck, and the tower piers in the river
- Two 14-foot wide shared pedestrian and bike paths, one each side of the bridge, as well as the belvederes along these paths at each tower and at mid-span
- Aesthetic lighting of the bridge structure
- Integrated artwork
- Landside integration of the bridge

The WRBAC agrees with the dimensions and direction of these design concepts and recommends them to the project Steering Committee.

Since our first meeting over one year ago, we have been aware that navigational clearances were a central design consideration. The design team has made numerous presentations to us regarding this issue including details about river users, historic river levels and permitting considerations. We have been impressed with how thoroughly this issue has been researched. In August 2009, project staff made a final presentation to the committee regarding the

appropriate vertical clearance for the bridge. Project engineers recommend a vertical clearance of 77.36 feet that balances the reasonable existing and future navigational needs of river users with future bridge users and the interests of property owners on each end of the bridge. The WRBAC concurs with staff recommendation.

Additionally, the WRBAC recommends project staff continue its work in developing simple and elegant designs for the following:

- Railings
- The bikeway/pedestrian path materials and appearance
- Separation components on the bridge path
- Lighting for the transitway
- Signage
- Aesthetic lighting
- Water features integrated into the bridge's design. If carried forward, any water features should be practical and functional year around

These design details are important, especially for bicyclists and pedestrians. We want to make sure that the evolution of design for these items reflects the commitment to quality that we have seen in the larger bridge elements. The general direction is good and the Committee looks forward to receiving additional information in a future meeting.

In closing, the WRBAC supports the project's aspirations for continued design excellence and plans to meet again to review progress and continue the discussion regarding design of Portland's newest bridge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vera Katz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vera Katz, WRBAC Chair