



June 26, 2018

Multnomah Board of County Commissioners
501 SE Hawthorne Blvd, Suite 600
Portland, OR 97214-3587

Dear Chair Kafoury and Multnomah County Commissioners,

As the governing body of the Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization (RDPO), we are writing to support your efforts to prepare the Burnside Bridge for a major seismic event.

Burnside Street was designated as a key lifeline corridor between east and west Multnomah County more than 20 years ago. However, the over 90-year-old bridge is not expected to survive a major earthquake. In fact, none of the Downtown Portland bridges are expected to be immediately usable after a Cascadia Subduction Zone or other major earthquake event. The Oregon Department of Transportation has also prioritized the I-205 corridor for seismic resiliency and recovery efforts, making the need for a Downtown Portland crossing even more apparent.

Hundreds of thousands of people from around the metropolitan region and beyond cross Portland's downtown bridges every day. In the absence of an earthquake ready bridge, tens and perhaps over a hundred thousand people will be cut off from their families and loved ones. The lack of a crossing will hinder both post-earthquake emergency response and recovery efforts, as well as work to rebuild our regional economy.

Burnside Street bisects the city and the bridge carries roughly 40,000 vehicles a day, including several bus lines, as well as hundreds of pedestrians and bicyclists. During an earthquake, if the Burnside Bridge fails it would also take sections of Interstates 5 and 84 with it, along with the Union Pacific rail line and the MAX red and blue lines.

At present, Multnomah County imposes a \$19 vehicle registration fee to pay for the new Sellwood Bridge, which was completed two years ago. In 2011, the Legislature gave the County the authority to spend 100 percent of those revenues on the bridge.

Favorable interest rates and consistent registration fees have resulted in Multnomah County collecting more revenue than is needed to pay off the bonds for the Sellwood Bridge. Repurposing this excess revenue will speed up the next stage of the Burnside Bridge replacement efforts. We, therefore, enthusiastically support the ordinance before you that would do just that.

In closing, we'd like to thank Multnomah County for being a core member of the RDPO and for its efforts to address seismic risk that helps increase our region's resilience.

Sincerely,

The Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization Policy Committee

Approved by (11 of 15 members):

Councilor Karylenn Echols, City of Gresham, Oregon (Chair)
Commission Chair Jim Bernard, Clackamas County, Oregon (Vice Chair)
Councilor Kyle Allen, City of Hillsboro
Councilor Cate Arnold and Mayor Denny Doyle, City of Beaverton, Oregon
Mr. Vince Granato (COO), Port of Portland
Councilor Kathryn Harrington, Metro Regional Government
Commissioner Margaret Magruder, Columbia County, Oregon
Mayor Anne McEnerny-Ogle, City of Vancouver, Washington
Commissioner Sharon Meieran, Multnomah County, Oregon
Mr. Harry Saporta, Safety and Security Executive, TriMet
Mayor Ted Wheeler, City of Portland, Oregon