

Portland Bicycle Advisory Committee

Working to Make Bicycling a Part of Daily Life in Portland

1120 SW 5th Avenue, Room 800
Portland OR 97204



June 15, 2009

Mayor Sam Adams
Commissioner Dan Salzman
Commissioner Randy Leonard
Commissioner Amanda Fritz
Commissioner Nick Fish
1221 SW 4th Avenue
Portland, OR 97204

To the Portland City Council,

The Portland Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) expresses its support for the expanded bridge width on the proposed Willamette River Bridge to be constructed as part of the Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail line. It is our understanding that the latest plans for the bridge include a combined 14' per side for bicycle and pedestrian facilities – which represents an increase from previous designs. This is an important transportation project for our city and our region and it is one that has strong implications for bicyclists.

In December 2008, the BAC reviewed TriMet's then-current plans for the Willamette River Bridge, and was disappointed to learn that the combined width to be devoted to bicycle and pedestrian facilities was 12' per side. We expressed our disappointment to TriMet both verbally at our December '08 meeting and in a letter dated 15 January 2009. Over the last several months, as it has refined its overall bridge design, TriMet has revisited the issue of the bike/ped facilities, and has determined that those facilities can be expanded to 14' per side at a "manageable premium" of approximately \$3.25m. (We understand that, beyond the 14' width, the cost of the improvements would cause necessary reengineering and a "significant" increase in cost.) While the BAC ultimately would prefer and recommend wider bike/ped facilities to accommodate the ever-growing number of cyclists and pedestrians on the city's Willamette River crossings, we understand both the engineering and financial constraints of this particular project.

We are thankful to TriMet for reexamining the Willamette River Bridge design and finding an additional 2' per side for bikes and pedestrians. And we are grateful for TriMet's continued support of, and work on behalf of cyclists as the planning and design of the Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail project continues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Arnold". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Matthew Arnold, Chair

cc: Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail Project Steering Committee
cc: Sean Batty, TriMet