



Fred Hansen, Chair and the
Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail Project Steering Committee

Dear Fred:

I am pleased to convey to you the recommendation of the Willamette River Bridge Advisory Committee. The recommendation and supporting information are included in the attached report Willamette River Bridge Selection Process.

For the past 18 months, it has been my privilege to lead a group of stakeholders charged with determining the location and design type for a new Willamette River Bridge. The work began in August of 2007 with the convening of the Willamette River Partnership Committee. That group was charged with developing a recommendation on the location of a new bridge that would carry light rail, streetcars, pedestrians and bicyclists. The Committee presented its recommendations to the Portland City Council and to the Portland Milwaukie Light Rail Steering Committee in June 2008.

With the location settled, we turned our attention to determining the bridge type. A new committee—the Willamette River Bridge Advisory Committee—was formed. It included many members from the Partnership Committee as well as respected members of Portland architectural and engineering community. Our charge was to recommend a bridge type that is right for the context, embodies the Portland aesthetic, and is functional and affordable.

From July 2008 to February 2009 we met seven times. In our first meetings, we developed criteria to apply in the selection process. The criteria addressed key issues such as urban context, aesthetics, greenway impacts, navigational clearances, cost and risk. During the course of our meetings, we narrowed the list of bridge types to two: wave frame and cable-stayed.

Many members of the Committee initially preferred the wave frame because of its aesthetic qualities for this particular location. At the same time, the Committee felt that the cable-stayed would also be a remarkable bridge type. A challenge for the wave frame turned out to be its costs. The consultant team and TriMet staff estimated that the wave frame would cost 30 to 40 percent more than the cable-stayed type. The Committee asked tough questions about the underlying assumptions and requested the consultants and staff to explore every opportunity to bring the wave frame costs in line with the project budget. We are satisfied that the TriMet team thoroughly researched the cost issues.

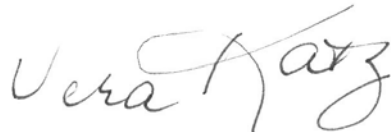
TriMet also explored some design concepts for the cable-stayed type. TriMet presented a cable-stayed-suspension hybrid that was particularly attractive. TriMet's work convinced the Committee that a cable-stayed design would not only be acceptable for this location and budget, but with some additional effort could also be designed to be special.

The Committee's recommendation to the Steering Committee is that a cable-stayed bridge type be advanced into the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Preliminary Engineering. We do so with the following considerations in mind and I ask you to include them in your approval of this bridge type:

- There must be additional design refinement substantially influenced or led by a architect. The purpose of this is to ensure that the project continues to exercise maximum creativity in the refinement of design
- WRBAC should continue to meet on an occasional basis to review design work as the design advances to and through Preliminary Engineering.

The Willamette River Crossing is an exciting and unique opportunity for Portland to demonstrate its commitment to transit, pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and mobility. I look forward to working with the Steering Committee as the design for the bridge progresses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vera Katz". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Vera Katz
Chair
Willamette River Bridge Advisory Committee