

## James Beard Public Market developers propose new Morrison Bridge ramps

Tony Hernandez | The Oregonian/OregonLive By Tony Hernandez | The Oregonian/OregonLive on March 12, 2015 at 5:00 PM, updated March 12, 2015 at 5:19 PM

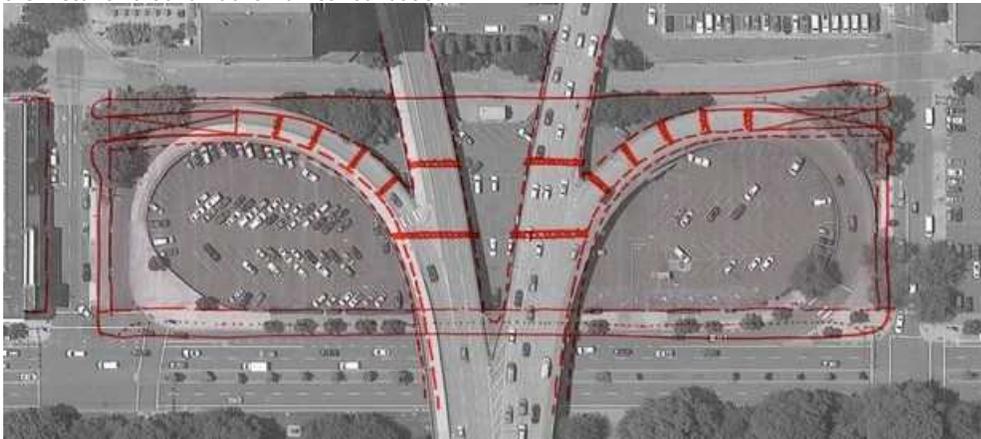
Multnomah County commissioners got a surprise Thursday: A new public market could dramatically change the west end of the Morrison Bridge.

The developers of the James Beard Public Market told commissioners the market's design could require changes in the bridge's signature traffic ramps on the west side of the Willamette River. An estimated 50,000 motorists a day use the bridge.

Their report came as unexpected news to commissioners, who responded they would have preferred a briefing in private before public discussions. Developers and the market's foundation are required to provide periodic public updates to the county, as part of an agreement.

Chairwoman Deborah Kafoury said private briefings would help commissioners process information before public meetings and added, "You can have more of a conversation as opposed to people being somewhat surprised."

County engineers and facilities staff were briefed about the changes for Thursday's meeting, said Ron Paul, executive director of the Historic Portland Public Market Foundation.



*A conceptual view of the west end of the Morrison Bridge shows suggested changes to the circular ramps. The changes were discussed by developers of the James Beard Public Market during a March 12, 2015 meeting of the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners. The drawing shows proposed entries and exits to the bridge along Southwest Morrison Street (on the left) and Stark Street (on the right) instead of the existing ramps of Naito Parkway.*

In June 2012, the county approved the \$10.4 million sale of four blocks at the bridge's west end to Melvin Mark Development Co., and the real estate deal is expected to close this December. The company proposes to build a public market and an office building.

Dan Petrusich, Melvin Mark president, said the suggestion to modify the circular entry and exit ramps off Southwest Naito Parkway came from a December meeting to get public input. Residents suggested bridge ramps should direct traffic onto Morrison and Stark streets instead of Naito Parkway, Petrusich said.

As it stands now, the public market would be built inside the circular ramps to the north and south of bridge. However, Petrusich told commissioners, that design leaves pedestrians with no crosswalks across Naito Parkway to access the inner areas of the block.

The Oregonian/OregonLive wrote about suggested changes to the ramps in December.

"The project draws attention to the need to correct a really dangerous pedestrian situation," Petrusich said after the meeting. The circular ramps are among the final remnants of an old freeway along the waterfront.

The potential changes to traffic patterns could raise questions from Commissioner Judy Shiprack's constituents.

"A lot of my constituents -- while they have aspirations to go everywhere on their bicycles and walk -- drive cars," Commissioner Judy Shiprack said. "So the impact on roadways is important to them."

Petrusich, Paul and Sublet (*sic*) said they plan to hold meetings in the coming months with other groups, such as the Central Eastside Industrial Council, to update the public on the project.

The market project is expected to rely on a combination of public and private money.



Petrusich told The Oregonian (*sic*) in December the project could cost \$30 million, but that could change as more detailed design work is completed.

"In June, we should have the concept design from our architectural team and that will provide the path to a cost estimate for the market," Paul said after the meeting.

According to the county presentation, private donations and pledges have surpassed more than \$5 million in 2015. That's more than three times the fundraising effort from the prior two years, Paul said. Paul declined to give more specific totals from all business and individual donations.

During his presentation, Paul said the project has \$300,000 in operating funds and added the remainder of commitments and multimillion pledges come from "reputable and trusted" donors.

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