

## 5: Morrison Bridge

The Morrison Bridge connects SE Portland and the Esplanade to downtown Portland. Bicyclists cannot safely cross the bridge and must detour to bridges either north or south.

### SITUATION

- Connects inner SE and downtown Portland
- Carries local and freeway on and off ramp auto traffic
- Awkward bicycle connections to the River
- Hawthorne Bridge bike facilities nearing capacity

The Morrison Bridge is a major automobile access point to the central city, with connections to Highway 99E, I-5, I-84, and Naito Parkway. Three travel lanes head each direction carrying vehicles between SE Portland, the freeways and downtown's commercial center. There is similar demand among pedestrians and bicyclists for direct access to downtown, particularly as the Central Eastside continues to develop residential and commercial spaces.



### PROBLEMS

- High-speed and high-volume auto traffic
- Narrow sidewalks
- Poor accessibility

The Morrison Bridge is the only downtown Portland bridge without bike facilities. Bicyclists are prohibited from riding on the bridge roadway from the west side. The eastern end of the bridge is not officially off-limits to cyclists, but the absence of a shoulder and a maze of high-speed freeway ramps make it a hazardous if not terrifying way to access downtown.

A sidewalk leading up the auto ramp from Naito Parkway to the south side of the bridge is the only legal way for bikers to use the bridge from the west side. The sidewalk is only five feet wide – barely wide enough for pedestrians to walk side-by-side, much less be passed comfortably by bicyclists. Intruding sidewalk fixtures and the fast-moving traffic just beyond the curb conspire to make it an even less comfortable trip for walkers and bikers alike.

This sidewalk's descent on the east side of the bridge ends with either a spiral ramp to the Eastbank Esplanade or a steep route ending amidst a freeway off-ramp on SE Water Ave. While navigable for confident cyclists and pedestrians who know the route, it's intimidating or uncomfortable for everyone else.

## SOLUTIONS

- Reconstructed bridge
- Wider sidewalk
- Better bicyclist and pedestrian access from downtown



A Morrison Bridge redesign project has received funding through local and regional sources, but to the dismay of cyclists, the project was delayed for a number of years. The city and county have stated that the project will be completed in 2009.

The plan for the Morrison Bridge improvements includes a 15 feet wide multiuse pathway on the southern side of the bridge. This pathway would be intended for and pedestrians to go in two directions. (If this route is popular one path might become congested.) The plan also describes a new additional access point at SW 2<sup>nd</sup> and Alder.

Bicyclists leaving downtown would enter a bike lane at SW Alder that would lead up to the bridge, and cars turning onto the bridge would yield to the bike lane (similar to the current arrangement on the eastbound Hawthorne Bridge). Bicyclists and pedestrians would then merge into the single bridge pathway, descending on the east side either onto the Esplanade or SE Water Street. The SW Water St. access would be improved too.

## WHO TO CONTACT

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