

19: Lake Oswego to Milwaukie Crossing

Crossing the river is again a barrier for cyclists, here between Lake Oswego and Milwaukie/Gladstone. A possible solution is to convert an existing railroad bridge into a bicycle/pedestrian river crossing.

SITUATION

- Connects Lake Oswego to Milwaukie
- Spans Willamette River
- Freight rail bridge
- Planning study approved that includes analysis of bridge as a river crossing

The only bridge that crosses the Willamette between Sellwood to the north and Oregon City to the south is an old railroad bridge that is still used today for freight services. The bridge is at the northern end of Lake Oswego and connects to Milwaukie. The structure itself is sound and has historic appeal.

When approaching the bridge from Lake Oswego, the trackbed gradually slopes upward along an embankment created for it. The Milwaukie side of the bridge is on a similar embankment. The bridge provides clearance for boats passing underneath and keeps the bridge free from potential river flooding.

PROBLEMS

- Bridge is privately owned and used for rail
- Bridge not suitable for bikers
- Access and connectivity issues

The bridge has numerous barriers to providing access for bicyclists. The bridge is privately owned and is used by the Portland and Western Railroad. Even though this bridge only sees a few trains per day, working with private railroad companies generally makes a project like this difficult.

The bridge is narrow and currently unsuitable for simultaneous train and bike traffic. The trackbed is not suitable for bicycle wheels and the existing walkway is narrow.

The embankments leading up to the bridge are steeply sloped and composed of rocks. The bridge deck is composed of the rail ties and a narrow walkway pieced together with metal grating that would challenge even the most expert cyclist.



SOLUTIONS

- Separated biking facilities
- Tie into other trails
- Safety features
- Planning in progress



The Milwaukie to Lake Oswego bicycle and pedestrian trail study will analyze possible solutions to crossing this bridge. One solution would be to cantilever a pathway off the side of the bridge, at grade with the current surface, similar to the Steel Bridge in Portland. This would allow simultaneous train and bike/pedestrian operation and access to other connecting trails.

This trail would connect two communities that lack a direct and reasonable alternative with an enjoyable recreation and transportation route. Additionally, this path would connect to two proposed trails: the trolley trail from Milwaukie to Gladstone, and a proposed trail between downtown Portland and Lake Oswego.

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