

Project Summary

This is a highway and transit project co-developed by Washington and Oregon to improve travel efficiency and safety for people and goods between Vancouver and Portland. The project includes a five-mile stretch of I-5 between SR 500 in Vancouver and Columbia Boulevard in Portland.

[We must solve the problems on I-5 between Portland and Vancouver](#)

- The I-5 bridge is a bottleneck for people and our economy
- Existing transit service gets bogged down in highway congestion
- Interchange location and design slows traffic and hinders safety

[The Columbia River Crossing Project continues the work of the I-5 Strategic Plan](#) to eliminate the bottlenecks that jam traffic on I-5

- Widen I-5 in the Salmon Creek area - to be completed Fall 2006
- Add a lane at Delta Park - construction to begin in 2008
- Add capacity at the I-5 bridge and improve nearby interchanges - project development underway now

What's the problem?

This segment of I-5 suffers between four and six hours of congestion a day. If no improvements are made, congestion will increase to 13 hours a day by 2020.

The existing transit service is buses, which get stuck in the congestion also. If nothing is done, bus travel times will more than double by 2020. Freight congestion will increase from six to 14 hours per day.

Not only is the Interstate Bridge a bottleneck, the highway leading to it has several safety problems that cause higher than average accident rates for similar highways in Washington and Oregon.

There is a direct correlation between the current non-standard designs and collisions in this section of I-5. In Washington, merging and weaving problems lead to side-swipe accidents. Short on and off ramps in Oregon contribute to accidents. Poor sight distance approaching the bridge leads to rear-end accidents. Whenever there is a bridge lift, the likelihood of accidents increases three to four times. The bridge itself doesn't meet current standards for bicycle and pedestrian use, nor does it meet seismic standards.

What are we doing to solve these problems?

To date, 23 ideas for improving or replacing the Interstate Bridge have been considered and put through a first-round evaluation process. Staff is recommending that 9 of these ideas be considered for additional study.

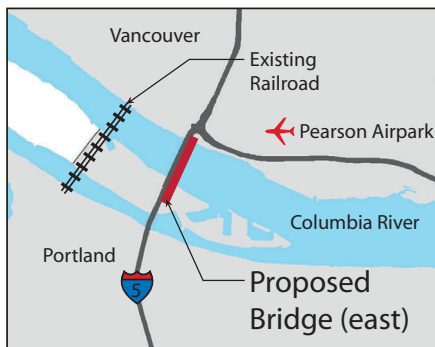
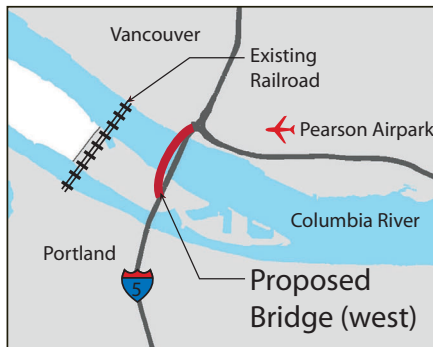
Fourteen ideas for improving transit have been evaluated, and staff is recommending that six continue through the evaluation process.

What are the ideas? Which are advancing?

Replacement Bridges

There are four ideas to replace the existing bridge with a new bridge. The ideas include:

- Two are low-level bridges with 65 feet of clearance and which would open for marine traffic. One would be constructed east and one west of the existing bridge.
- Two mid-level bridges with about 110 feet of clearance. One would be constructed to the east and one to the west of the existing bridge.

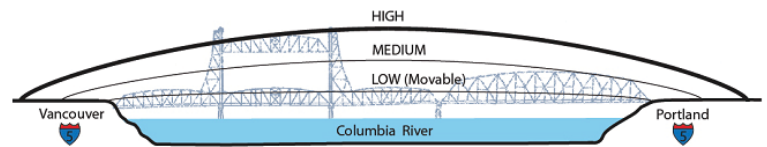


Supplemental Bridges

Five ideas would leave the existing bridge in place and add another crossing structure.

- A low-level bridge with 65 feet of clearance that opens to marine traffic and constructed either east or west of the existing structure;

- A mid-level bridge with about 110 feet of clearance constructed west of the existing structure;
- A tunnel under I-5 that surfaces near Mill Plain Boulevard in Vancouver and between Marine Drive and Victory Boulevard in Portland; and
- A new bridge constructed near the existing I-5 bridge for arterial use to connect downtown Vancouver to Hayden Island. In addition, I-5 would be improved.



Public Transit Improvements

The six ideas recommended to advance include:

- Express buses traveling in regular lanes
- Express buses operating in lanes that give preference to transit
- Bus rapid transit "lite," which operates in managed and/or general purpose lanes
- Bus rapid transit "full," which operates in dedicated lanes, separate from traffic
- Light rail transit
- Street car

What happens next?

April 26: The Task Force will consider public input and accept or modify the recommendations.

May through December:

Staff will package transit and river crossing ideas with options to improve safety, freight, bicycle and pedestrian elements for review and narrowing into the Draft EIS.

Contact: feedback@columbiarivercrossing.org



Washington State
Department of Transportation

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