

Washington and Oregon working together for
the economy, jobs, and quality communities

Update
August 2001

Task Force Picks Options for Study

How do we solve the problem of growing congestion on I-5? The same way we do any other problem. First, identify what really isn't working and come up with a wide range of solutions. Next, narrow the list down to what we really want to choose from. Then, look at the remaining options in depth. Finally, we weigh the benefits and costs of each option and select the best overall answer.

Beginning in January of 2001, the I-5 Partnership Project, which is led by a 28 member Task Force, began a process to address the problems in the I-5 Corridor. You may have attended a meeting, and already been a part of this dialogue.

What is the Portland/Vancouver I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership?

The Portland/Vancouver I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership (I-5 Partnership) is bringing together residents and businesses in Washington and Oregon to develop a plan addressing the growing use of I-5 between our two states. Together we are crafting a strategy to address the needs of highway, transit, and heavy rail systems that use the I-5 Corridor. The changes will impact both Portland and Vancouver for decades to come.

A 28-member Task Force consisting of elected, business and community leaders was appointed by the governors of Oregon and Washington to develop a strategic plan for the I-5 Corridor between Portland and Vancouver. The Task Force began its work in January 2001. In May and June 2001, they adopted: 1) a problem, vision and values statement, 2) six option packages for further study, and 3) evaluation factors. The Task Force plan to make draft recommendations for the corridor in January 2002 and final recommendations in June 2002.

Together with the Community Forum (a working group made up of over 100 business, community and special interest representatives), and with input from hundreds of Washington and Oregon residents, the Task Force created a long list of possibilities and then proceeded to narrow it down to six "options packages". These options packages include proposals for express bus, light rail, highway and other improvements.

This summer, project staff will take a magnifying glass to the options to assess the benefits, impacts and costs of the packages. In the fall, public meetings will bring together all the communities that have a stake in this decision to offer insight and input. The Task Force will incorporate feedback from the public and the Community Forum and to make their draft recommendations for the corridor in January 2002, and final recommendations in June 2002.

The packages are explained in more detail inside this update. They include:

- Do only the planned improvements
- Add more transit in the corridor and make the freeway 3 lanes in each direction
- Add more transit in the

corridor and add a 4th lane to the freeway in both directions

- Add a new arterial street to connect the ports of Portland and Vancouver to US 30.

What's Next?

Public input is an important part of developing a strategic plan for the I-5 Corridor.

In Early November You Can:

- Look at the conceptual designs and learn about the benefits, impacts and costs of each package.
- Tell the Task Force which options you think would work best for the corridor.

In Early January You Can:

- Give your input on the draft recommendations of the Task Force.

Informal meetings will also be happening this summer to get early input on the conceptual designs for the corridor. You are welcome to attend. Look on our website for meetings in July and August.

Stay Involved!

So far, hundreds of citizens have helped shape the project values and alternatives. See the back page of this update for more information on how you can stay involved.



What's in this Update?

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What Are Option Packages?

These option packages contain several types of transportation improvement strategies. They draw from a wide range of transportation options, including public transportation, freeway widening, creation of new bridges, and various measures for improving traffic flow and reducing trips.

These option packages are the “tools” the Task Force will use to test different ideas for the strategic plan. The Task Force’s final recommendation could draw from one or more of the packages or could recommend a no-build approach — developing only the currently funded projects.

Evaluating the Options:

How Will We Decide?

Over the summer of 2001, project staff and consultants will conduct an assessment of the six option packages based on the evaluation factors approved by the Task Force. In the fall of 2001, the public can expect to see an assessment of the benefits, impacts and costs of each of the packages, as well as designs that show what changes could look like. This information will be presented at Open House meetings and Community Forum meetings. The Task Force will use public and Community Forum input, as well as their own judgment, to make draft recommendations for improvements to the corridor. The Task Force’s draft recommendations are expected to be approved in January 2002 with final adoption in June 2002 after additional analysis and public input has occurred.

Evaluation factors were approved by the Task Force using public input gathered in April and May from the public and Community Forum. Evaluation factors fall into seven categories:

- Maintain or Improve Transportation Performance
- Support Trade and Freight Movement and the Regional Economy
- Maintain or Enhance Quality of Life
- Avoid and Minimize Impacts to the Environment
- Support Regional Land Use Plans
- Distribute Benefits, Costs, and Impacts Equitably
- Evaluate Costs

For information about how each category will be measured visit our web page at www.I-5partnership.com.

The Task Force will also incorporate land use and rail capacity information into the strategic plan. For more information about the projects’ rail capacity analysis and land use assessment see articles on page 4.

Option	Overview
 Baseline (No bridge)	The existing transportation system, plus: • Improvements included in adopted transportation plans for Clark County and the Portland metropolitan area. • No new bridge <i>This option package will be included in all other packages and will be the baseline against which all others are compared.</i>
 Express Bus/3 Lanes	Baseline improvements, plus: • Express Bus connecting Clark County and Light rail at the Expo Center in Portland. • New bridge.
 Express Bus/Add a 4th Lane	Baseline improvements, plus: • Express bus between Clark County and downtown Portland. • Addition of a fourth lane in each direction on I-5 for high occupancy vehicles, express lanes, and freight use. • New I-5 bridge.
 Light Rail/3 Lanes	Baseline improvements, plus: • Light rail connecting Portland and Clark County. • New bridge.
 Light Rail/Add a 4th Lane	Baseline improvements, plus: • Light rail connecting Portland and Clark County. • Fourth lane in each direction. • New I-5 bridge.
 New Arterial Road	Baseline improvements, plus: • New arterial road along the existing railroad corridor between US 30 in Portland and Mill Plain Blvd. in Vancouver. • New arterial bridges.

Special Analysis Areas

There are two areas within the I-5 Corridor that require special consideration. These segments of I-5 are referred to as Special Analysis Areas. One segment is **between Lombard Street in North Portland and State Route 500 in Vancouver and includes the Columbia River crossing**. The other segment is the **Rose Quarter Area** where I-5 and I-84 come together. This summer a range of improvement options for the Special Analysis Areas will be analyzed. Improvement options to these areas include:

- Rose Quarter**
- Improve freeway entrance/exit ramp design
 - Widen freeway—provide a third lane where two now exist
 - Improve major regional roads in this segment of the corridor

- Lombard to State Route 500**
- Improve freeway entrance/exit ramp design (such as Marine Drive, Columbia Blvd., and downtown Vancouver)
 - Widen freeway—provide a third lane where two now exist (Delta Park area)
 - Add a new I-5 Columbia River crossing—there are a range of river crossing designs to choose from

Transit Improvements and Measures to Reduce Traffic

- Light rail transit connecting Rose Quarter to Expo Center.
- Express bus service connecting Clark County park-and-ride lots to the Portland International Raceway LRT station.
- Express bus will use existing lanes across the Columbia River.
- Increased transit service in the I-5 Corridor.

- In Portland:**
- Increased funding for carpool and vanpool programs.
 - Increased funding for employer outreach encouraging flex hours and telecommuting.
 - Expanded employer sponsored transit passes to reduce transit fares for commuters.
 - Increased mixed use development to reduce vehicle trips.
 - Increased parking pricing and parking management.

Road Improvements

- **In Vancouver:** Widen freeway to three lanes in each direction in Vancouver from 134th St. to Main St. In the morning rush hour, the southbound lane will be used for high occupancy vehicles (HOV).
- **In Portland:** Widen Marine Drive to 5 lanes from Terminal 6 to Portland Road, Provide a new 4 lane bridge to West Hayden Island from Marine Drive, Improve Columbia/Killingsworth intersection and connection to I-205, Build a bridge over railroad tracks in the Rivergate Industrial Area
- Freeway system management, including ramp metering, freeway reader boards, and other measures to maintain traffic flow.
- Potential freight and other improvements in the **Special Analysis Areas** at the Rose Quarter and in the Lombard St. in N. Portland to SR 500 in Vancouver (see box above).

EACH OF THE FOLLOWING OPTION PACKAGES INCLUDES THE BASELINE OPTION PACKAGE

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Express bus in high occupancy vehicle lane (HOV) between 134th in Clark County and light rail station at the Expo Center in Portland.• Options for possible extensions of express bus service include, express bus between:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parkrose light rail station in Portland and 134th St. on I-205• I-5 and I-205 on SR 500. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Columbia River bridge for express buses. Bridge could also be used for high occupancy vehicles (HOV), freight or local traffic between Vancouver and Portland. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Express bus service between Clark County and downtown Portland.• Options for possible extensions of express bus include express bus between:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parkrose light rail station in Portland and 134th St. on I-205• I-5 and I-205 on SR 500 in Clark County. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Widen freeway to four lanes in each direction. The fourth lane could be:<ul style="list-style-type: none">A reversible express lane, orA (HOV) lane, orA HOV lane that could accommodate freight traffic.• Build new I-5 Columbia River crossing. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phased extension of light rail transit into Clark County including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Extending Interstate MAX to downtown Vancouver areaExtending Airport MAX along I-205 from the Parkrose station to just north of the Vancouver Mall regional center, andAn east/west connection within a corridor in the vicinity of SR 500/Fourth Plain Blvd. between Downtown Vancouver and Vancouver Mall regional center.• Future extension of the light rail system could include areas north on I-5 and I-205 to 134th St. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build a new I-5 Columbia River crossing for light rail and vehicle traffic. (This option package will also be studied with a light rail only bridge). |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phased extension of light rail transit into Clark County including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Extending Interstate MAX to downtown Vancouver areaExtending Airport MAX along I-205 between the Parkrose station and just north of the Vancouver Mall regional center, andAn east/west connection within a corridor in the vicinity of SR 500/Fourth Plain Blvd. between Downtown Vancouver and Vancouver Mall regional center.• Future extension of the LRT system could include areas north on I-5 and I-205 to 134th St. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Widen freeway to four lanes in each direction. The fourth lane could be:<ul style="list-style-type: none">A reversible express lane, orA high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane in each direction during peak commute periods, orA HOV lane that could accommodate freight traffic.• Build new I-5 Columbia River crossing. |

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| <p>None in addition to baseline option.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build an arterial street that links US 30 in Portland to Mill Plain Blvd. in Vancouver.• Construct new bridges over the Willamette and Columbia rivers. |
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You Can Make a Difference

Public involvement is critical to the development of a good strategic plan for the I-5 Corridor. Many activities are planned to inform and involve citizens in shaping the strategic plan. The Task Force encourages members of the public with an interest in the corridor to provide input. Here are some suggestions for how to get involved in this project:

- **Public Gatherings:** The Task Force will host several rounds of public meetings and open houses. **Next open houses scheduled from 4:00-9:00 p.m. on November 7th in Portland and on November 8th in Vancouver.**
- **Project Updates:** You can sign up for mailings and e-mail updates on the project.
- **Community Briefings:** Ask for a community briefing for your group.
- **Website:** Visit the website at www.I-5partnership.com for project updates and public input opportunities.
- **Committee Meetings:** All Task Force and Community Forum meetings are open to the public.
- **Contact Us:** For more information about the project, contact Kevia Jeffrey:
in Portland: I-5 Partnership, PO Box 14631, Portland, OR 97293-0631, Telephone: (503) 235-5881
in Vancouver: I-5 Partnership, PO Box 1709, Vancouver, WA 98668-1709, Telephone: (360) 993-0025
or
email: kjeffrey@ilainvolve.com
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Target Schedule for Public Input Opportunities			
		Public Input Opportunities	Task Force Decision Points
Assessment of Issues & Options	Feb. 01	●	
	April 01	●	
	May 01	●	★
Design & Evaluation of Options	Nov. 01	●	
	Jan. 02	●	★
Draft Recommendation			
Development & Adoption of Corridor Strategy	May 02	●	
	Jun. 02		★

Understanding The Needs Of The Freight And Passenger Rail System

The Rail Capacity Assessment Committee was formed by the I-5 Partnership Task Force. Freight and passenger rail is an important part of the transportation system in the Portland/Vancouver I-5 Corridor. The railroad tracks are owned by private railroad companies and are primarily used to move freight through the corridor. Amtrak service is provided on the private tracks through agreements with the railroads. The Rail Capacity Assessment Committee will bring the private railroads together with Amtrak, state and local government to evaluate the following questions:

- What are the future forecasts for freight and passenger rail traffic in the I-5 Corridor?
- How much capacity can be gained from making operational changes such as new signals, coordinated train dispatching and new sidings?
- Are major capacity increases needed to accommodate projected freight rail and passenger rail demand?
- How might potential improvements be funded?

Results from the rail capacity assessment will be available in the fall of 2001. The Task Force will use this information in developing recommendations for the rail system in the I-5 Corridor.

Problem, Vision and Values Statement

Introduction

The I-5 Partnership brings together Washington and Oregon citizens and leaders to respond to concerns about growing congestion on I-5. Governors Gary Locke and John Kitzhaber have appointed a bi-state Task Force of community, business and elected representatives to develop a strategic plan for the I-5 Corridor between I-84 in Oregon and I-205 in Washington. The strategic plan will address the needs of the highway, transit, and heavy rail systems in the I-5 Corridor and is anticipated to recommend a combination of actions for the corridor including transportation and land use policy changes, incentives, and physical improvements.

To ensure comprehensive response to the needs of the community, the Task Force will actively engage the public. To this end, a “Community Forum” with representatives of a wide range of neighborhood, business, civic, and environmental interests has been assembled. The I-5 Partnership process has been designed to be inclusive, thoughtful, and supportive of neighborhood, local, regional and state interests. The principles of environmental justice will be followed in developing the strategic plan and making recommendations for the corridor.

Problem Statement

The Interstate 5 Corridor is the most critical segment of the regional transportation system in the Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area. The corridor provides access to many of the region’s most important industrial sites and port facilities, and is a link to jobs throughout the Portland/Vancouver region. Due to infrastructure deficiencies, lack of multi-modal options, land use patterns, and increasing congestion, businesses and individuals experience more frequent and longer delays in the corridor. Without attention, the corridor’s problems are likely to increase significantly, further impacting the mobility, accessibility, livability and economic promise of the entire region. Action is needed now to develop a plan and implement appropriate solutions.

Vision and Values for the Corridor

The goal of the I-5 Partnership Task Force is to create a multi-faceted, integrated plan of transportation policies, capital expenditures, personal and business actions, and incentives to address the future needs of the I-5 Corridor

- The plan will improve our quality of life:
- Providing travel mobility, safety, reliability, accessibility and choice of transportation modes for users whether public, private, or commercial and recognizing the varied requirements of local, intra-corridor, and interstate movement;
 - Supporting a sound regional economy by addressing the need to move freight efficiently, reliably, and safely through the corridor;
 - Supporting a healthy and vibrant land use mix of residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, cultural and historical areas;
 - Respecting and protecting natural resources including air quality, wildlife habitat and water resources;
 - Supporting balanced achievement of community, neighborhood, and regional goals for growth management, livability, the environment, and a healthy economy with promise for all; and
 - Distributing fairly the associated benefits and impacts for the region and the neighborhoods adjacent to or affected by the corridor.

The result will protect our future with an improved and equitable balance of: livability, mobility, access, public health, environmental stewardship, economic vitality and environmental justice.

—Adopted May 22, 2001

Land Use: An Important Part of the Picture

The Regional Land Use Assessment Committee was formed to advise the I-5 Partnership Task Force about how changes in the I-5 Corridor may impact the way the Portland/Vancouver region grows. We know that transportation investments have an impact on growth, and Oregon and Washington policy-makers want to ensure that potential changes in the I-5 Corridor support our growth management goals.

The Regional Land Use Assessment Committee is charged with evaluating three questions:

- What is likely to happen to population and employment growth if we add more capacity in the I-5 Corridor?
- What is likely to happen to population and employment growth if there is no more capacity?
- Are there policy changes in Oregon and Washington that may reduce the need for improvements in the I-5 Corridor, protect public investments in the corridor, and support growth management goals?

Results from the land use assessment will be available in the fall of 2001, for use by the Task Force and the public in evaluating options for the I-5 Corridor.