

MEETING: Columbia River Crossing Task Force
MEETING DATE: February 1, 2006, 4–6:30 p.m.
LOCATION: OAME - 4134 North Vancouver, Portland, Oregon

Members Present:

Rich Brown, Bank of America
Rex Burkholder, Metro
Bob Byrd, Identity Clark County
Lora Caine, Friends of Clark County
Serena Cruz, Multnomah County
Hal Dengerink, Washington State University
Vancouver (Task Force Co-chair)
Dave Frei, Arnada Neighborhood Association
Jill Fuglister, Coalition for a Livable Future
Jerry Grossnickle, Columbia River Tugboat
Association
Brad Halverson, Overlook Neighborhood
Association
Fred Hansen, TriMet
Henry Hewitt, Stoel Rives (Task Force Co-chair)
John Hoefs for Lynne Griffith, C-TRAN
Monica Isbell, Portland Business Alliance
Susie Lahsene for Bill Wyatt, Port of Portland

Dean Lookingbill, Regional Transportation
Council
Ed Lynch, Vancouver National Historic Reserve
Trust
Dick Malin, Central Park Neighborhood
Association
Steve Petersen, Portland Business Alliance
Bob Russel, Oregon Trucking Association
Jonathan Schlueter, Westside Economic
Alliance
Steve Stuart, Clark County
Jeri Sundvall-Williams, Environmental Justice
Action Group
Walter Valenta, Bridgeton Neighborhood
Association
Scot Walstra, Greater Vancouver Chamber of
Commerce
Tom Zelenka, Oregon Freight Advisory
Committee

Absent Members:

Sam Adams, City of Portland
Charles Becker, City of Gresham
Dr. Wayne Branch, Clark College
Elliot Eki, Oregon/Idaho AAA
Lynne Griffith, C-TRAN
Brett Hinsley, Columbia Pacific Building Trades
Eric Holmes, City of Battle Ground
Mark McCloud, Greater Vancouver Chamber of
Commerce
Larry Paulson, Port of Vancouver, USA

Bart Phillips, Columbia River Economic
Development Council
Royce Pollard, City of Vancouver
Janet Ray, Washington AAA
Art Schaff, Washington State Trucking
Association
Karen Schmidt, Washington Freight Mobility
Strategic Investment Board
Bill Wyatt, Port of Portland

Project Team Members Present:

Ron Anderson
Mike Baker
Katy Brooks
Rob DeGraff

Doug Ficco
Jay Lyman
David Parisi
Kris Strickler

Opening Remarks

Co-chair Henry Hewitt announced that the next Columbia River Crossing (CRC) Task Force meeting will be held on March 22, 2006, from 4–8:00 p.m.; dinner will be provided. Task Force members will discuss component screening results in detail and the public outreach plan.

- **Action** - No action required.

Meeting Minutes

- **Action** – The January 4, 2006, meeting minutes were adopted with no discussion.

Public Comments

Comment received from six citizens: Lenny Anderson, Paul Edgar, Travis Huennekens, Tom Mielke, Sharon Nasset, and Michael Powell. Written comments are included in Appendix A. Summaries of verbal comments follow.

- Paul Edgar provided Task Force members with a possible Preliminary Evaluation/Screening Criteria list. He stated that the rail bridge should be replaced with a west side bypass and combination bridge.
- Tom Mielke, former Washington State Representative, stated that he does not want Task Force members to make the same mistakes other states have made when they start looking at replacing the I-5 bridge. He emphasized the need to look at all solutions, including the western corridor and I-205. He also stated that the rail bridge should be replaced with a swing bridge.
- Michael Powell, owner of Powell's Books, stated that his company moves a lot of books and freight by truck. Traffic congestion results in increased costs for his business. Congestion also discourages businesses from opening in North Portland. He emphasized that traffic is a current problem and needs to be solved soon.
- Sharon Nasset noticed that 11 percent of traffic traveling to Washington County gets off Interstate 5 in North Portland. The truck traffic causes health issues. She stated that, while trips to Swan Island make up 22 percent of traffic traveling across the I-5 bridge, that traffic is not part of the maps. She suggested that this traffic be put back on I-5. She asked why so much money is being spent on the Task Force per month. She also stated that the project should include expanded areas in the 2040 plan.
- Travis Huennekens expressed his concern regarding the west side bypass not being a part of the study. He cited a recent article in which Doug Ficco stated there would be no money for a west side bypass and requested that the article be entered as part of the record.

Note: The full text of public comments is available in the meeting transcript posted on the project Web site.¹

Evaluation Framework

Mike Baker introduced the Evaluation Criteria, which included input from the January 4, 2006, Task Force meeting and additional feedback. Henry noted that the Evaluation Criteria are the factors by which alternatives will be measured.

Note: Task Force questions and comments are in *italics*, staff responses are in (parentheses), and passed amendments are in **bold**.

¹ www.columbiarivercrossing.org

Criterion 1: Community Livability and Human Resources

- Why is “enhance” not first in criterion 1.6 like it is in criterion 1.7?
 - (The Washington State Historic Preservation Office maintains that archaeological resources cannot be enhanced or improved.)
- Development opportunities resulting from the project may not be consistent with comprehensive and neighborhood plans and zoning as noted in criterion 1.8.
- Asked if criterion 1.8’s purpose is to address wider issues. Regional plans should be added to the references to local and neighborhood plans.
 - (Criterion 9.1 may duplicate that language.)
- Suggested that language in criterion 1.8 needs to be consistent with goals and aspirations.
- Expressed the need to account for all regional plans.
- Criterion 1.6 dealing with historic, prehistoric, and cultural resources should be revised to include the word “enhance”.
 - (Suggested Task Force members reconsider and compromise on the language of criterion 1.6.)
- **1.6 Avoid or minimize adverse impacts, or where practicable, preserve historic and prehistoric resources.**
- **1.8 Support development/redevelopment opportunities consistent with local comprehensive and regional plans.**
- **1.10 Avoid or minimize adverse impacts, or where practicable, enhance cultural resources.**

Criterion 2: Mobility, Reliability, Accessibility, Congestion Reduction, and Efficiency

- Asked if these measures will address the reliability of transportation.
 - (Yes, reliability will be addressed in the performance measures.)
- No changes.

Criterion 3: Modal Choice

- No changes.

Criterion 4: Safety

- *Requested clarification of the meaning of “safety” in criterion 4.3.*
 - (Staff will measure the degree to which a new crossing improves or impairs safety.)
- *Prefers “enhance safety” for criterion 4.3 rather than “maintain.”*
 - (An alternative that “enhances” safety will score higher.)
- *Asked why “enhance” and “maintain” are not used in other measures addressing bike and pedestrian safety and freight.*
 - (Staff will present their approach to scoring at a later meeting.)
- No changes.

Criterion 5: Regional Economy, Freight Mobility

- *Expressed concern over access to port facilities and requested language that parallels criterion 5.5.*
- **5.6 Enhance or maintain access to port, freight, and industrial facilities.**

Criterion 6: Stewardship of Natural Resources

- *Requested that staff explain changes to criterion 6.6.*
 - (The criterion lacked clarity. “Transportation system” gives the criterion more freedom and flexibility.)
- *Asked if there will be an energy study on different modes of transportation that addresses the relative efficiency of each.*
 - (All modes, except marine, will be studied. Studies will focus on fossil fuels and efficiency.)
- No changes.

Criterion 7: Distribution of Benefits and Impacts

- *Requested that Task Force members consider using less negative language such as “avoid” and “minimize” when addressing human impacts.*
- *If an alternative exhibits a high degree of adverse impacts, it will receive a low grade.*
- *Suggested environmental justice training for Task Force members.*
- *Agreed with training because it is an opportunity for the Environmental Justice Working Group to get involved.*
- *Requested staff present an environmental justice training plan at the next meeting.*
 - (For March 22 meeting, staff to provide a plan for environmental justice training for the Task Force, and a schedule for when that would occur, prior to the evaluation of alternatives later this year.)
- **7.1 Avoid or minimize disproportionate adverse impacts on, and where practicable, improve conditions for low income and minority populations.**

Criterion 8: Cost Effectiveness and Financial Resources

- *Energy consumption needs to be addressed in this criterion.*
- *Requested that criterion 8.1 mirror 6.6.*
- *Asked how cost effectiveness is determined.*
 - (Cost effectiveness is determined by the actual cost and cost per user.)
- *Asked how Task Force members will evaluate the cost of alternatives.*
- (Responded that members review the costs against the evaluation criteria.)
- *Asked if there will be a feasibility analysis.*
 - (8.2 addresses feasibility analysis.)
- *Inquired as to whether the evaluation criteria address Federal Transit Administration questions regarding criteria language.*
 - (Yes, comments have made the criteria clearer. Staff is working with federal agencies.)

- **8.1 Ensure transportation system construction cost effectiveness.**
- **8.3 Ensure transportation system maintenance and operation cost effectiveness.**
- **8.4 Minimize the cost of construction.**

Criterion 9: Bi-State Cooperation

- Title changed to “Growth Management/Land Use.”

Criterion 10: Constructability

- *Suggested deleting criterion 10.3 because the project will address bottlenecks.*
- *Intent of criterion 10.3 was not to preclude future expansion and provide flexibility.*
- *Suggested “enhance” instead of “expansion.”*
- *Concerned with vehicle capacity—if we create capacity we will increase demand.*
- *Intention of criterion 10.3 was to ensure capacity for light rail in the future.*
- **10.3 Provide flexibility to accommodate future transportation system improvements.**
- **Action** - The Evaluation Framework was adopted with amendments.

Component Presentation

Consultant Team Project Manager Jay Lyman presented the transportation component list. His presentation is available on the project Web site.² The component list consists of the full range of ideas generated to address identified needs of the CRC project. The creation of the component list is the first step in the screening process. Components originated from recommendations in the 2002 I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership Final Strategic Plan. Components also originated from suggestions from the public and agencies during the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping process for this project. Jay’s presentation served as an introduction to the screening process which will be discussed in detail at the March 22, 2006, Task Force meeting. Co-chair Hal Dengerink asked Task Force members if there was anything Jay did not list in his presentation.

- *Asked if rapid transit is ideal for the short distances in the bridge influence area.*
 - (Rapid transit would look like an Express Bus. An example would be a bus traveling non-stop to riders’ ultimate destinations.)
- *Asked if there is a preferred height for a fixed bridge.*
 - (A low-elevation bridge would have a consistent elevation across the river. Ninety percent of marine traffic could pass under, 10 percent could not. A mid-elevation bridge would allow all marine traffic to pass under. A high-elevation bridge would be as high as the Glenn Jackson Bridge, which is substantially higher than any boats that currently use the river.)
- *Asked when the U.S. Coast Guard would give staff a height for the fixed bridge.*
 - (The U.S. Coast Guard will give staff a height range in spring 2006. They will provide staff with a specific height right before the record of decision. Staff is meeting with river users that need a high clearance to discuss a fixed bridge.)
- *Supported a river crossing option that would benefit components by moving the rail bridge opening south. Moving the opening would eliminate the majority of the lifts. Not looking at this alternative would be unrealistic.*

² www.columbiarivercrossing.org

- (Cost of moving the rail bridge is costly at \$42 million. If an alternative does not maintain marine safety it will not be considered.)
- *Asked if staff is aware of Federal Aviation Administration's requirements.*
 - (Pearson Airport's requirements for take off and landing are critical for this project. Elevation will be discussed at the March 22, 2006, Task Force meeting.)
- *Concerned that none of the options address freight movement by rail and the rail bridge.*
- **Add freight rail to the component list.**
- *Asked how long members have to add to the component list. Also asked how staff is going to the public with the component list to receive more ideas.*
 - (Since the project is a NEPA EIS, ideas must be acknowledged throughout the process. After the March 22, 2006, Task Force meeting, staff will attend neighborhood meetings. Staff will hold community meetings in May 2006.)

Next Meeting Date/Location

Wednesday, March 22, 2006, 4:00–8:00 p.m.
WSDOT SW Region Headquarters, Room 102
11018 NE 51st Circle
Vancouver, Washington

Tentative Agenda

Discussion of component screening results, alternatives and packages, and public outreach plan.