

Monthly email – April 2007

The Columbia River Crossing project reached a major milestone last month with a decision to move forward with the study of two bridge options and two public transit options. The bridge and transit options will be studied in depth in the next phase of the project. This regular update brings you the latest project information.

Highlights in this issue:

- Project to study replacement and supplemental bridge options
- New advisory group discusses urban design elements
- Pedestrians and bicyclists advise project staff
- Be connected and involved

* **Project to study replacement and supplemental bridge options**

In March, the Columbia River Crossing project accepted the Task Force's recommendation to add an additional bridge option to those already being studied to improve mobility and safety and decrease congestion in the five-mile project area.

The new option to be studied would retain the existing Interstate Bridge for northbound freeway traffic and add a new bridge for southbound freeway traffic and high capacity transit. This so-called "Fourth Alternative" joins three others approved by the Task Force in February.

The CRC project team is working to define and refine the details of the alternatives that will advance for further study and analysis. The results of the analysis on the full set of alternatives will be published in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Results of the analyses will be available for public comment in late 2007. A formal public comment period is expected in the spring of 2008 on the selection of one alternative.

Alternatives to be analyzed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement process:

Replacement Bridge with Bus Rapid Transit

The Interstate Bridge would be replaced with a new bridge with five or six lanes in each direction. It will have three "through" lanes in each direction and two or three on/off lanes (in each direction) to allow vehicles to safely enter and exit the highway. The new bridge also would have a lane for bus rapid transit.

Replacement Bridge with Light Rail Transit

The Interstate Bridge would be replaced with a new bridge with five or six lanes in each direction. It will have three "through" lanes in each direction and two or three on/off lanes (in each direction) to allow vehicles to safely enter and exit the highway. The new bridge also would have a lane for light rail transit.

Supplemental Bridge with Bus Rapid Transit

The existing Interstate Bridge would be re-striped into four lanes with wider shoulders for northbound traffic. A new bridge would be built to carry southbound traffic and bus rapid transit.

Supplemental Bridge with Light Rail Transit

The existing Interstate Bridge would be re-striped into four lanes with wider shoulders for northbound traffic. A new bridge would be built to carry southbound traffic and light rail transit.

No Build

A No Build alternative is required for the DEIS and serves as a baseline for comparison with other

alternatives. The existing Interstate Bridge and public transit systems would remain. Only improvements reasonably anticipated for funding and construction in the Metro and southwest Washington regional transportation plans would be considered.

A **Draft Environmental Impact Statement** is a summary of the expected impacts each project alternative is likely to have on the surrounding area. This process is required of all federally funded projects. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is a federal law that regulates the decision-making processes of federally funded projects. The purpose of NEPA is to help ensure that public projects address the needs of the community while avoiding, minimizing or mitigating for negative impacts on human and natural environments.

As part of the DEIS process, the following issues will be addressed in each of the build alternatives. The alternatives will then be rigorously analyzed to determine their ability to solve the congestion, safety and mobility problems defined for I-5.

Issues to be Addressed in the DEIS

- Public transit (route, stations, and park and ride locations)
- Freight improvements for connections and safety
- Efficiencies (such as ramp meters, incident response, ridesharing and telecommuting)
- Bicycle and pedestrian improvements
- Air quality and noise reduction
- Environmental effects
- Cultural and historical resource protection
- High Occupancy Vehicle lanes
- Tolling
- Bridge type, appearance, and alignment

*** New advisory group discusses urban design elements**

The Urban Design Advisory Group (UDAG) has begun meeting to advise the Columbia River Crossing project on design issues related to bridge, transit and highway improvements. Members come from both Oregon and Washington.

UDAG is led by co-chairs Vancouver Mayor Royce Pollard and Portland Commissioner Sam Adams. In a joint letter to the project team, the co-chairs called for the creation of the group saying, "The urban design and bridge architecture aspects of the bridge present tremendous challenges and opportunities for Hayden Island and Downtown Vancouver livability and economic viability".

UDAG will meet again May 11 in Vancouver to discuss the development of design guidelines.

*** Pedestrians and bicyclists advise project staff**

The newly-formed Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee advises the project regarding improvements to pedestrian and bicycle access across the Columbia River and in the CRC project area. The committee has already discussed existing bicycle and pedestrian issues in the CRC project area based on the results of two field reviews conducted by many of the members in fall 2006. The Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee meets monthly.

*** Upcoming CRC public presentations**

April 25, 2007 - 12 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Kiwanis Club, Peninsula Chapter
Elmer's Restaurant, Delta Park
9848 N. Whitaker Rd., Portland

April 26, 2007 - 7 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Andresen / St. John's Neighborhood Association
Clark County Public Works Maintenance Center
4700 NE 78th Street, Vancouver

May 3, 2007 - 7 p.m. - 8 p.m.
North Salmon Creek Neighborhood Association
Three Creeks Library
800 NE Tenney Road, Vancouver

May 9, 2007 - 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.
SR-502 Open House
Battle Ground High School
300 W Main St. Battle Ground

*** Be connected and involved**

The Columbia River Crossing project encourages you to learn about the project:

- **Visit the project Web site** for more information: www.columbiarivercrossing.org
- **Invite a speaker to your next group meeting** by contacting the project at feedback@columbiarivercrossing.org or calling 1-866-396-2726
- **Listen to our podcast** at www.columbiarivercrossing.org
- **Stay on this email list** - and pass it on to your friends! If you were forwarded this email, please subscribe to future email updates by sending an email to feedback@columbiarivercrossing.org.
- **Ask questions!** Email or call us to learn more: 1-866-396-2726 or feedback@columbiarivercrossing.org