



Bridgenews

An informational newsletter for the
 Columbia River Crossing



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Issue 3
 Fall 2006

Bridge, freeway and transit solutions tested

Twelve options for solving congestion and safety problems on I-5 between Vancouver and Portland are being poked and prodded to see how well they improve travel. These preliminary alternatives address public transit, traffic, safety, and freight mobility issues related to the I-5 bridge and freeway.

The preliminary alternatives reflect broad community discussions and regular input from the Columbia River Crossing Task Force. Each alternative features a combination of bridge, public transit, highway, freight, and pedestrian and bicycle improvements, as well as strategies to reduce transportation demand. Public review and input is encouraged on the 12 alternative packages through the end of this year.

The project team is testing the 12 alternatives as a set - not to learn which one is the “best,” but to show the strengths and weaknesses of individual improvements, and identify the most successful combination of elements. The strongest elements will be repackaged to build a proposal for 2-4 final alternatives that will be available for public review and comment beginning in December 2006.

The final set of 2-4 alternatives will be thoroughly studied in 2007 to better understand costs, engineering, design, and environmental and community impacts. The results of this in-depth analysis will be published as a report, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, expected in early 2008. (See pages 3-4 for more on the Packages)

I-5 problems create I-5 opportunities

Anyone who has been caught in traffic on I-5 between Portland and Vancouver knows the region has a transportation problem. The challenges are real and getting worse as the region grows.



- Our daily traffic jam is between 4 and 6 hours and will increase to 13 hours a day by 2020.
 - The amount of truck traffic will double by 2020 and pressures are increasing for reliable freight arrival times.
 - Bus travel times will double by 2020 to about 55 minutes between Vancouver and Portland.
 - On average more than one crash occurs daily – a rate which exceeds that of similar highways in Oregon and Washington.
 - Many collisions can be attributed to eight interchanges in five miles, short on-and off-ramps, and poor sight distance approaching the I-5 bridge.
 - The I-5 bridge is at risk of failure during a significant earthquake.
- (Review, continued on page 2)

REVIEW *(continued from page 1)*

We now have the opportunity to:

- Improve public transportation, which currently gets bogged down in the same traffic as cars and freight;
- Address safety problems at the bridge, freeway interchanges and along I-5;
- Promote ideas to reduce solo driving and help the system operate more efficiently,
- Reduce congestion to allow people and goods to move more freely between Portland and Vancouver, and
- Improve bicycle and pedestrian access and connections.

Did you know?

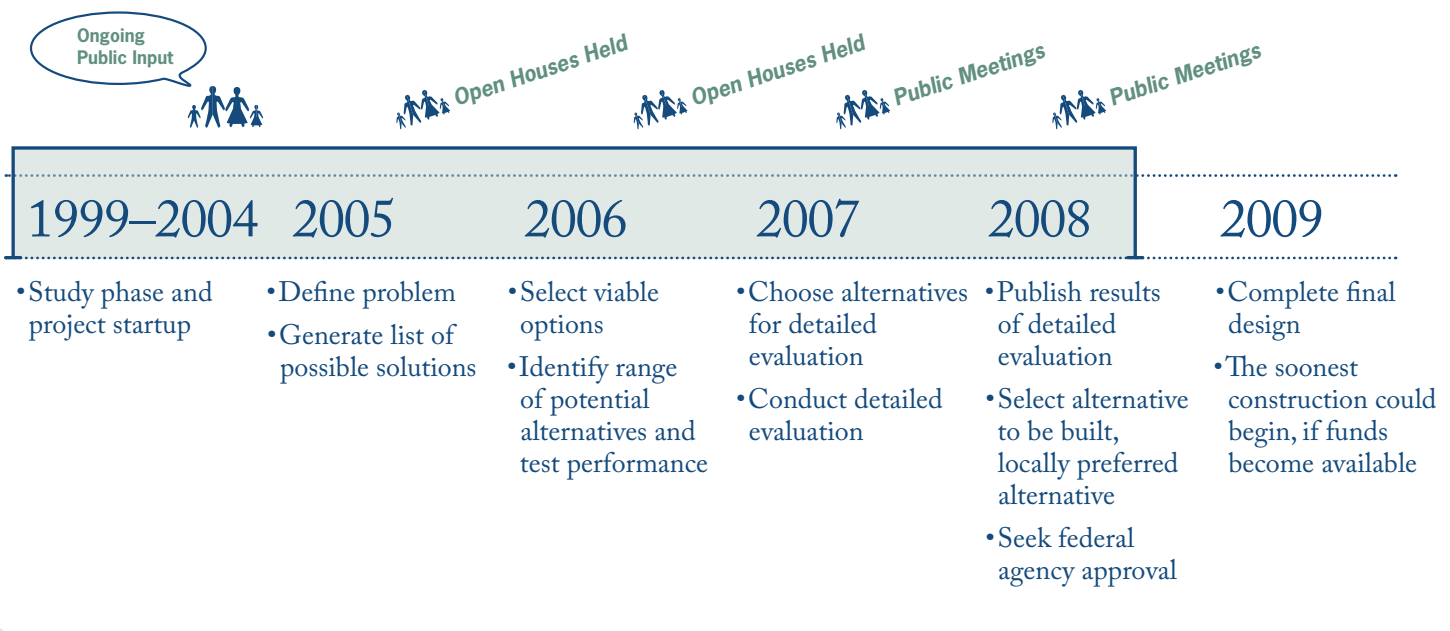
The Oregon-Washington economy depends more on transportation services proportionally than the nation as a whole. This region features a unique intersection of rivers, rails, freeways and airports that powers the flow of goods and services. I-5 congestion has increased shipping and production costs, reduced labor markets and lowered competitiveness of industries in regional, national and global markets. Source: Regional Economic Effects of the I-5 Corridor/Columbia River Crossing Transportation Choke Points, 2003



Cars and trucks move north on I-5 across the Columbia River. This project will improve travel efficiency for both commuters and freight haulers.

We will implement solutions
to help reduce
congestion and
enhance travel reliability.

Project schedule



12 Preliminary Alternative Packages

Ten of the 12 preliminary alternative packages feature major construction improvements. Each of these will include more transit options; better bicycle and pedestrian access and connections to north Portland, Hayden Island and downtown Vancouver; traffic reduction efforts; and improvements to highway safety. It is unlikely that any package being tested now will remain the same for study in 2007. The best performing elements of these 12 alternative packages will be recombined to build a proposed set of 2-4 final alternatives by late 2006. A summary version of the preliminary alternatives is presented here:



Baseline

These two packages feature continued use of the existing I-5 bridge spans with limited or no new construction investments. Efforts to slow the growth of rush-hour freeway trips and improve existing bus service are included in Alternative 2.

New bridge for arterial and public transit use (Alternative 3)

- A new bridge would be built to the west of the existing Interstate Bridge. The new structure would carry light rail, improved bike and pedestrian lanes and arterial traffic.
- The existing Hayden Island interchange would be removed and a new arterial bridge would be constructed across the North Portland Harbor for access between Hayden Island and the freeway.
- Freight bypass on-ramp lanes would be added in some locations.

LEGEND

-  Existing I-5 bridge
-  Existing bridge removed
-  New bridge
-  Arterial lanes
-  Managed lanes/freight lane
-  Transit alignment
-  Safety and capacity improvements
-  Potential park and ride
-  Existing/potential transit station
-  Reconfigured interchange



Supplemental Bridge for Arterial Traffic with Light Rail

New I-5 bridge, retain existing spans for non-freeway use (Alternatives 4–7)

These alternatives keep the existing bridge spans for other transportation uses and build a new I-5 bridge for interstate traffic.

- A new (“supplemental”) I-5 bridge would be built west of the existing bridges.
- The existing bridge spans could carry transit, arterial traffic and improved bike and pedestrian lanes. Transit options include light rail, bus rapid transit and express buses.
- Improvements to freeway interchanges would be made at Marine Drive, SR 14, Mill Plain, 4th Plain, SR 500 and 39th.
- The existing Hayden Island interchange possibly could be removed and a new arterial bridge built across the North Portland Harbor for access between Hayden Island and the freeway.
- Some lanes on I-5 between 134th and Delta Park would be designated for carpool, bus and/or freight use.
- Freight bypass on-ramp lanes would be added in some alternatives.



Supplemental Bridge for I-5; Bus Rapid Transit on Existing Bridge

Replacement bridge for all uses with either bus rapid transit, light rail, or express bus service (Alternatives 8–12)

These alternatives remove the existing bridge spans and replace them with a new I-5 bridge for interstate traffic.

- A new I-5 bridge would be constructed west or east of the existing alignment with transit, general purpose (all vehicles), managed (carpool) and bike/pedestrian lanes.
- Interchanges would be improved at Marine Drive, Hayden Island, SR 14, Mill Plain, 4th Plain, SR 500 and 39th.
- Lanes would be added on I-5 between 134th and Delta Park for carpool, bus and/or freight use in some alternatives.
- Freight bypass and/or direct access on-ramp lanes would be added in some alternatives.



Above: West Replacement Bridge for I-5 with Light Rail and Express Bus



Right: East Replacement Bridge for I-5 with Express Bus

Public's involvement and input key to project success

Efforts to involve the community in the decision-making process are central elements of the Columbia River Crossing project. Since March we've met with dozens of groups and talked directly with more than 2,000 people about their ideas to improve the river crossing, public transit, congestion and safety on I-5.


Using input received from public events and Task Force meetings, the project team reduced the number of ideas being considered and then combined them into preliminary alternative packages for testing. This fall, we will continue to reach out to neighborhood, community and business associations in Portland, Hayden Island, Vancouver and Clark County to ensure people can learn about the project and share their opinions and ideas with us.

One of the project's public involvement and outreach efforts will be to closely connect with neighborhoods in the project area. The Community and Environmental Justice Group (CEJG) was formed in August to ensure communities affected by the project have meaningful opportunities to learn about and provide input to the project.

CEJG members represent neighborhoods closest to the project, low income residents, African Americans, Latinos, Vietnamese and Russian-speaking communities. The members meet monthly and will identify issues and concerns



A group of Vancouver area neighborhood and business leaders share ideas during a preliminary design workshop held in August.

with project plans and designs; provide project staff with input and feedback on efforts to engage the public; and make recommendations related to noise, air quality and highway improvement designs to help the project avoid, minimize and/or mitigate for potential community impacts. 

To schedule a speaker, host an I-5 Bridge Chat, or provide your opinion on the project, please e-mail the project at feedback@columbiarivercrossing.org or call 360-737-2726 or 503-256-2726.

We need to reduce congestion to allow people and goods to move between Portland and Vancouver and strengthen the economy.

Out and about

A sampling of where we've been this Spring and Summer

Alternative Transportation Groups

Columbia Bi-State Bicycle Ride
Lloyd District Transportation Management Association
Portland Pedestrian Advisory Committee
Swan Island Transportation Management Association

Business

Columbia Corridor Association
Portland Business Alliance
Identity Clark County
Heart District Business Association
North/Northeast Business Association
Hazel Dell/Salmon Creek Business Association

Farmer's Markets

Alberta Farmer's Market
Vancouver Farmer's Market

Festivals

Arbor Lodge Community Fair
Battle Ground Harvest Days
Esther Short Park
Noon Concert Series
Good in the 'Hood
Hawaiian Festival
Juneteenth Celebration
Rose Festival
Taste of Vancouver
Uptown Village Street Festival
Vietnamese New Year Celebration

Government/Schools

C-TRAN
Multnomah County Commission
Metro
Portland Community College
Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council
Vancouver City Council
Vancouver Planning Commission

Neighborhoods

Arnada
Bridgeton
Carter Park
Esther Short
Hayden Island
Hough
Hudson's Bay
Humboldt
Kenton
Meadow Homes
Neighborhood Association
Council of Clark County
North Portland
Neighborhood Chairs
Overlook
Rosemere
Rose Village
Shumway

Open Houses/ Public Forums

Columbia River Crossing
Open Houses
Hayden Island Forum
I-205 Open House
PROPER Community Forum

Other

African American Alliance
Community Unity Breakfast
Camas Rotary
Kiwanis, Cascade Park
Lions, Vancouver
Say Hey, Northwest!
Waterfront Organizations of Oregon

You're an expert. Talk with us.

Have an idea, an opinion or a need for information? Let us know. We want to hear from you.

In late 2005 and early 2006, we held two rounds of public open houses and received many thoughtful comments and ideas. These contributions were analyzed and presented to the Task Force and project sponsors for consideration and have helped shape the preliminary alternative packages now being tested. Community ideas and comments are welcomed on the alternatives packages through the end of the year.

There are several ways you can stay informed and give input:

Sign up for project updates Receive a monthly e-mail update and periodic newsletters about CRC progress. Add your name to our mailing list by sending an e-mail to feedback@columbiarivercrossing.org, or use the online form.


Visit our website Find project reports, materials, schedules, and helpful links at



Local residents join a walking tour of the I-5 Bridge to give input on improving pedestrian access and connections.

www.ColumbiaRiverCrossing.org. You may also submit your comments or questions using the online form.

Send us your ideas or questions by US Postal mail, e-mail, or fax.

Request a speaker Invite us to attend your next meeting or event. 

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information:

Individuals requiring reasonable accommodations may request written material in alternative formats by calling:

Columbia River Crossing Project Office
360-737-2726 or
503-256-2726

For individual needs in Oregon:

Oregon Department of Transportation
503-986-3700

For individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing:

Washington State TTY
1-800-833-6388

Oregon State TTY
1-800-735-2900

Title VI: The project ensures full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by prohibiting discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin or sex in the provision of benefits and services resulting from its federally assisted programs and activities. For questions regarding the Title VI Program, you may contact WSDOT's Title VI Coordinator at 360-705-7098.





Sponsored by the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Washington State Department of Transportation.

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