

**P-0748-001**

Thank you for taking the time to submit your comments on the I-5 CRC DEIS.

From: [DOUGLAS GREENE](#)
To: [Columbia River Crossing](#)
CC:
Subject: Input Re I-5 Bridge discussion at Vancouver City Council-6/30/08
Date: Monday, June 30, 2008 9:12:48 PM
Attachments: [I-5 BRIDGE My name is Douglas Greene.doc](#)

P-0748-001 CRC Task Force

Attached please find a 4 page synopsis of my thoughts and recommendations re this highly controversial project re the costs and particularly the light rail as it pertains to residents of Clark County. Please pass the 2nd paragraph at bottom of page 2 to someone in WDOT and ODOT as this REALLY works.

Douglas Greene. 360/699-6194.

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I-5 THOUGHTS**6/30/08****P-0748-002**

My name is Douglas Greene. I've have lived in Vancouver for 18 years and have also lived in Portland for 15 years.

The I-5 bridge has never been referred to as a Bridge Of The Gods, but more aptly referred to as the bridge of the "god-dammed"

Going back to 1958, when the 2nd span was built, it was "damned" by the river pilots as it was still a drawbridge and it was "damned" by people driving cars over the bridge as they were delayed by bridge openings.

Years of discussions and options have been discussed to remedy the problem and it was only 3 years ago (47 years after the 2nd span was completed) that 39 people came together creating the CRC task force

P-0748-003

What has been presented, after 3 years of study and \$50 million, are proposals that will have a hard time satisfying the 8 Federal and State agencies that will have to sign off on a plan. There are the state legislatures in WA and OR, Congress, the Fed Highway Trust Fund, ODT, WDOT and the taxpayers of Clark County who may have to foot 1/3 of the bill.

Frankly, the cost of this project cannot nor will not be supported by the aforementioned government agencies, fed/state/local nor even with tolls which I am personally against.

The latest figures call for an expenditure of some \$4.0-\$4.2 BILLION----Let me say that again: over \$4 BILLION DOLLARS for a bridge project.

P-0748-004

But wait! This is not about just building a bridge, it about a massive road construction project with super-interchanges, light rail and a host of pork barrel road improvements that puts the Alaska "bridge to nowhere" to shame.

Let's explore the nature of this project. I-5 is an international, interstate highway connecting Canada, WA, OR, CA and Mexico where goods and employees use the highway to maintain the economy of the Great Northwest. I want to say that again: This is an International, Interstate Highway.

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P-0748-002

Thank you for taking the time to submit your comments on the I-5 CRC DEIS.

P-0748-003

The Columbia River Crossing project is not simply a bridge project. The CRC project includes the replacement of the existing I-5 bridge over the Columbia River, improvements at seven interchanges over five miles of I-5, and the extension of light rail from Portland to Vancouver. The projected cost to construct this large and complex project is presented in Chapter 4 of the FEIS, and it is estimated in year of expenditure dollars to account for inflation.

Regarding tolling, it was evaluated in the DEIS and included in the LPA for two important reasons. First, a toll may be necessary to pay for the construction of this project, as discussed in Chapter 4 of the FEIS. Second, a toll provides a valuable travel demand management tool that encourages travelers to take alternative modes (including light rail provided by this project), travel at off-peak periods, or reduce their auto trips. This demand management reduces congestion and extends the effective service of the facility.

Please refer to Chapter 4 of the FEIS for a description of the current plans for funding construction and operation of the LPA. This discussion provides an updated assessment of likely funding sources for this project, though it is not common practice to receive funding commitments prior to the completion of the alternative selection process. As described in the FEIS, project funding is expected to come from a variety of local, state, and federal sources, with federal funding and tolls providing substantial revenue for the construction.

P-0748-004

The elements of the project mentioned in your comment are designed to

P-0748-005

The bridge has been a bottleneck to interstate traffic for over 30 years. The I-205 bridge was supposed to alleviate some of the strain on the I-5 bridge with its 8 lane bridge and, supposedly, designed to carry the light rail system to the East side of Vancouver where open land and expansion was predicted. While that expansion did occur, despite the lack of the light rail being installed, and now that bridge is nearing capacity.

As interstate and NAFTA commerce continues to grow, more pressure will be put on the I-5 crossing. Continued growth North of Vancouver into Woodland, Ridgefield and LaCenter will put more pressure on the I-5 corridor. Let us not forget the Indian Casino that is planned for I-5 at La Center that will draw huge crowds from Portland.

We do need another bridge and perhaps 2 more bridges if we wanted to plan for the future. We probably need a new 3 digit interstate loop connecting WA and OR but that's a discussion for another day.

P-0748-006

So let's concentrate on the I-5 corridor and what could or should be done, NOW, not after 3 more years of study.

For the time being, on the North side of the river, there are 3 lanes going South and 3 going North, the same is true on the South side of the river except in Delta Park where the lanes drop to 2 commonly known as the "Delta Squeeze". Do the math: 3 lanes going North and 3 lanes going South (when Delta is unfrozen). The chances of either WA or OR being in a position of increasing those lanes by 1-2 is unreasonable due to the encroaching and proximity of commercial and residential buildings. Double decking the interstate thru Vancouver and Portland is equally impossible.

So where is the need for a 12 lane bridge? We will now have two more bottlenecks getting off the 12 lane bridge on either side of this new bridge. Okay, I acknowledge the need for "auxiliary lanes" to more easily serve the ON-OFF ramps and perhaps an emergency lane, BUT 12 lanes! I'm not sure 10 lanes are required as proposed by the Vancouver, BIA consultant. I read this report on-line this morning and have to agree with many of the consultant's ideas, except tolling.

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meet the projects Purpose and Need. The project purpose is to improve Interstate 5 corridor mobility by addressing present and future travel demand and mobility needs in the Columbia River crossing Bridge Influence Area (BIA). The BIA extends from approximately Columbia Boulevard in the south to SR 500 in the north. Relative to the No-Build Alternative, the proposed action is intended to achieve the following objectives: a) improve travel safety and traffic operations on the Interstate 5 crossing's bridges and associated interchanges; b) improve connectivity, reliability, travel times and operations of public transportation modal alternatives in the BIA; c) improve highway freight mobility and address interstate travel and commerce needs in the BIA; and d) improve the Interstate 5 river crossing's structural integrity. See Chapter 1 of the DEIS for more discussion on the development of the project Purpose and Need. On-going analysis has demonstrated that the Purpose and Need is best met by a multimodal alternative that improves highway, transit, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and adds tolling to the highway river crossing.

P-0748-005

Many different options for addressing the project's Purpose and Need were evaluated in a screening process prior to the development and evaluation of the alternatives in the DEIS. Options eliminated through the screening process included a new corridor crossing over the Columbia River (in addition to I-5 and I-205), an arterial crossing between Hayden Island and downtown Vancouver, a tunnel under the Columbia River, and various modes of transit other than light rail and bus rapid transit. Section 2.5 of the DEIS explains why a third corridor, arterial crossing of the Columbia River, and several transit modes evaluated in screening were dropped from further consideration because they did not meet the Purpose and Need. For a general description of the screening process see Chapter 2 (Section 2.7) of the FEIS. It should be noted that every proposal received from the public was considered, and many of the

- P-0748-006** | A 12 lane bridge is to cost \$1.2 BILLION so a 10 lane bridge should cost less, perhaps, \$1.0 Billion. That bridge alone would immediately address the highway traffic problem for years to come as there is little chance that I-5 will ever be expanded beyond 3 lanes in each direction.
- P-0748-007** | Now, where is the other \$3.0 BILLION being spent? First of all, \$1.1 BILLION is earmarked for the expansion of light rail to WA. Although this has been voted down by 65%-75% in votes in Clark County, on several occasions, here it is again. If we decided not to build it over the I-205 bridge, why do we think it should cross the I-5 bridge, especially when WA growth is East of Vancouver city? The new I-5 bridge should be reinforced to accommodate light rail in the future but only when government treasuries are more solvent.
- P-0748-008** | The DEIS (draft environment impact statement) proposes spending another \$1.5 BILLION on auxiliary lanes from 39th Street to Interstate Ave. in OR, with 5 new interchanges. Remember, the original need was to build a BRIDGE over the Columbia River that would not be a drawbridge, be earthquake resistant and to satisfy the needs of vehicular traffic—3 lanes North and 3 lanes South, and at the same time allow commercial river traffic proceed without those bridge openings.
- P-0748-009** | I lost track of the other \$200Million: Must be in the bureaucratic rounding.
- P-0748-010** | What we should do, RIGHT NOW, is to add flashing signs to the top girders on the bridge, going both ways, simply stating: MAINTAIN YOUR SPEED ON THE BRIDGE. I've seen this work in Eastern cities. This simple embellishment will surprise everyone as to how it will speed up traffic. If you study the traffic patterns going North, after the slow traffic reaches the "bump" on the bridge, traffic speeds up and there are actual gaps in the traffic going into WA. The same is true going into OR but the Delta freeze slows things again.
- P-0748-011** | What next you say!
- The US entered WWII on December 7, 1941 and the war ended in the summer of 1945. As a country, we enlisted and moved 2 million troops to Europe. We built hundreds of thousands of planes, tanks, ships, armored vehicles in that time. We built new bridges across many of the rivers in Europe, some new, some as replacements. We fed and housed millions of troops. All in less than 4 years.

proposals that were dropped from further consideration included elements that helped shape the alternatives in the DEIS.

P-0748-006

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) completed Phase I construction of the I-5 Delta Park widening project in fall 2010. Phase I of the project involved widening I-5 and lengthening the entrance and exit ramps at Victory Boulevard and Columbia Boulevard. Phase II involves improving local streets and will begin when funding is secured. Phase I of the Delta Park project widened the current 2-lane segment of southbound I-5 to 3 lanes. There are currently no immediate plans to widen I-5 south of Delta Park. Neither the CRC project nor the Delta Park projects are intended to address the southbound traffic congestion that currently exists near the I-5/I-405 split. However, traffic analyses show the congestion at the split will not be worsened because of the Columbia River Crossing project. The main reason is that fewer cars are expected to cross the river with a project in 2030 than without a project. This is due to the provision of improved transit service and tolling.

Beyond the CRC and Delta Park projects, the I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership Final Strategic Plan recommended a comprehensive list of modal actions relating to: additional transit capacity and service; additional rail capacity; land use and land use accord; transportation demand/system management; environmental justice; additional elements and strategies (such as new river crossings); and financing. RTC and Metro are tasked with initiating recommendations as part of their regional transportation planning role. Examples of current efforts include RTC's evaluation of future high-capacity transit in Clark County, and evaluation of needs for future river crossings. Regional planners have investigated solutions to existing bottlenecks at the I-5 connections with I-405 and I-84. ODOT is responsible for conducting ongoing studies to identify other congestion problems on I-5 in Oregon that may need to be addressed in the future.

- P-0748-011** | We have spent 3 years planning 1 bridge. We have 3 plans we can't fathom where we are going to get the \$4.0 BILLION to start this project so perhaps we will linger for a few more years before we can decide what to build and, where to get the money etc. In the meantime, steel, cement, asphalt and labor will have increased 25%-50% pushing the cost of the project into the stratosphere.
- P-0748-012** | Why not build an 8-10 lane bridge NOW at a cost of \$1.0 BILLION, (the cost of the new Tacoma Narrows bridge was less than \$1.0 BILLION but is longer than the Columbia River crossing)? We see that Minneapolis was able to replace their 12 lane bridge that collapsed two years ago for way less than \$1.0 billion.
- P-0748-013** | I'm sure if there was a George Patton or O.O. Howard in charge we'd get this bridge built in way less than 18 months.
- P-0748-014** | As to the future, we will need a new interstate highway loop around Vancouver, another bridge and an expansion of the I-5 interstate system south of Portland.
- P-0748-015** | Now is the time to get moving on this project. With the commercial and residential industries in a sever decline, we have the skilled labor to build this bridge. With the auto and commercial construction industries in a slump we would have ready access to steel. The same goes for the concrete, rebar and asphalt required for the bridge.
- P-0748-016** | We need the intestinal fortitude to get out of the study mode and consider issuing some 30 year bonds to pay for the bridge and to look to many ways to collect revenues from the Federal, State and Local governments. Perhaps we should start collecting sales taxes on internet sales as a starter.
- P-0748-017** |
- P-0748-018** | The road to success has many tempting parking places. Our parking lot is overflowing. Why go into something to test the waters, go in and make a splash.

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P-0748-007

Light rail has been endorsed by every local Sponsoring Agency (Vancouver City Council, C-TRAN, RTC, Portland City Council, TriMet, and Metro), whose boards are comprised of the elected leadership of the region.

Annual light rail passenger trips crossing the I-5 bridge in 2030 are projected to be 6.1 million, with daily ridership around 18,700. The travel time for the morning commute by light rail between downtown Vancouver and Pioneer Square in downtown Portland will be approximately 34 minutes. Light rail would travel on a dedicated right-of-way, with more reliable travel times than auto drivers dealing with unpredictable road conditions, traffic congestion, and parking challenges.

The CRC project planning for light rail incorporates and supports the principles of the Vancouver's City Center Vision Plan. Downtown Vancouver has seen recent growth in higher density mixed use projects from three to 12 stories in height. In addition, another 4,000 downtown condominiums are proposed or pending as part of new developments. The core of Vancouver has, along with many of the larger corridors such as Fourth Plain Blvd, medium to high density residential development and an urban mix of uses. Transit demand in these areas is quite high, and ridership will increase with the introduction of light rail.

Long-term operation and maintenance of the new light rail line will be funded through C-TRAN and TriMet. For its share of the operations and maintenance funding, C-TRAN plans on having a public vote.

P-0748-008

Following the selection of the LPA in July of 2008, the CRC Project Sponsors Council (PSC) was developed to provide recommendations to the project on a variety of issues, including the number of add/drop lanes over the river crossing. Over the course of several months, PSC was

provided with operational characteristics and potential environmental impacts of 8-, 10-, and 12-lane options. These technical evaluation criteria included, but were not limited to, traffic safety, congestion, traffic diversion onto local streets and I-205, regional vehicle miles travelled, transit ridership, regional economic impact, effects to neighborhoods, and protected species and habitats. In addition to the technical information, PSC received input from CRC advisory groups and reviewed public comment submitted to the project and obtained during two public Q&A sessions in January 2009 regarding the number of lanes decision, as well as hearings conducted by Portland City Council and by Metro Council. In August 2010, the PSC voted unanimously to recommend that the replacement bridges be constructed with 10 lanes and full shoulders. For more information regarding the number of lanes decision making process, see Chapter 2 (Section 2.7) of the FEIS.

The proposed new lanes are add/drop lanes (i.e., lanes that connect two or more interchanges), which are used to alleviate safety issues associated with the closely spaced interchanges in the project area, and accommodate the 68 to 75% of traffic that enters and/or exits I-5 within two miles of the Columbia River.

P-0748-009

The Columbia River Crossing project includes the replacement of the existing I-5 bridge over the Columbia River, improvements at seven interchanges over 5 miles of I-5, and the extension of light rail from Portland to Vancouver. The projected cost to construct this large and complex project are presented in Chapter 4 of the FEIS, and are estimated in year of expenditure dollars to account for inflation. Multiple sources will help fund construction of the project – the federal government, State of Oregon, State of Washington, and tolling the I-5 Bridge.

P-0748-010

Thank you for the suggestion. The LPA will include certain improvements which are considered to be part of an intelligent transportation system (ITS). ITS improvements often include reader boards instructing drivers about traffic conditions, accidents, and suggested speeds.

P-0748-011

It is important that a project, such as CRC, provide ample opportunity for input from a diverse constituency of stakeholders and jurisdictions, and that it follow a process that complies with all federal, state and local legal requirements. The project sponsors intent is to progress at a deliberate pace to ensure that we meet public interests, meet the transportation needs, address the quality of local communities and the environment, and be financially and fiscally responsible. Following publication of the FEIS, there will be a record of decision. If that decision is to move forward with one of the build alternatives, then the sponsors will progress into final engineering, finance plan implementation, and then construction.

P-0748-012

In 2006, the project had developed a schematic design which did not allow for a precise cost estimate. Best available information was used at each project stage. Later in project development, the project team was able to develop more detailed cost estimating and conduct advanced risk analysis. Since 2002, WSDOT has been developing a process of determining cost and schedule estimates, the Cost Estimate Validation Process® (CEVP®), to help deliver major projects. Compared to conventional cost estimating, CEVP® is a risk-based estimating process, iterative in nature, and represents a “snapshot in time” for that project under the conditions known at that time. CEVP® is the expression of project cost and schedule as a range rather than as a single number. Providing cost information as a range accounts for risk factors that might otherwise cause costs to balloon over time. The cost information is given

for the year of expenditure and addresses even “unknown” issues that may arise. CEVP® is a construction cost estimate tool and does not estimate long-term operations and maintenance costs. WSDOT now mandates all projects over \$25 million use the process. Chapter 4 of the DEIS, and the Cost Risk Assessment included as an appendix to the DEIS, include information about how costs were estimated for the DEIS. See Chapter 4 of the FEIS for more discussion on how project costs were estimated in the CEVP® that was conducted following publication of the DEIS.

P-0748-013

Please see response to comment P-0748-011.

P-0748-014

Beyond the CRC project, the I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership Final Strategic Plan recommended a comprehensive list of modal actions relating to: additional transit capacity and service; additional rail capacity; land use and land use accord; transportation demand/system management; environmental justice; additional elements and strategies (such as new river crossings); and financing. RTC and Metro are tasked with initiating recommendations as part of their regional transportation planning role. Examples of current efforts include RTC’s evaluation of future high-capacity transit in Clark County and evaluation of needs for future river crossings.

P-0748-015

Please see response to comment P-0748-011.

P-0748-016

For discussion of project schedule, please see response to comment P-0748-011. Regarding financing, please refer to Chapter 4 of the FEIS for a description of the current plans for funding construction and

operation of the LPA. This discussion provides an updated assessment of likely funding sources for this project.

P-0748-017

Please refer to Chapter 4 of the FEIS for a description of the current plans for funding construction and operation of the LPA. This discussion provides an updated assessment of likely funding sources for this project, though it is not common practice to receive funding commitments prior to completion of the alternative selection process. As described in the FEIS, project funding is expected to come from a variety of local, state, and federal sources, with federal funding and tolls providing substantial revenue for the construction. As Oregon and Washington businesses and residents will benefit from the project's multi-modal improvements, both states have been identified as contributors to the project. As jurisdictions on both sides of the river seek to encourage non-auto travel, tolls are not anticipated for bikes, pedestrians, and transit users. Lastly, CRC assumes funds allocated to other projects and purposes would remain dedicated to those projects and purposes.

P-0748-018

Please see response to comment P-0748-011.