

Meeting: Columbia River Crossing Task Force
Meeting Date: April 26, 2006, 4:00–7:00 p.m.
Location: OAME
4134 N. Vancouver Ave., Portland, Oregon

Members Present:

Sam Adams, City of Portland
Charles Becker, City of Gresham
Rich Brown, Bank of America
Rex Burkholder, Metro
Ginger Metcalf for Bob Byrd, Identity Clark County
Lora Gaine, Friends of Clark County
Serena Cruz, Multnomah County
Hal Dengerink, Washington State University
Vancouver (Task Force Co-chair)
Elliot Eki, Oregon/Idaho AAA
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)
Dean Lookingbill, Regional Transportation Council

Ed Lynch, Vancouver National Historic Reserve Trust
Dick Malin, Central Park Neighborhood Association
Betty Sue Morris, C-TRAN
John Ostrowski, C-TRAN
Larry Paulson, Port of Vancouver, USA
Steve Petersen, Portland Business Alliance
Bart Phillips, Columbia River Economic Development Council
Thayer Rorabaugh (for Royce Pollard, City of Vancouver)
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:

Dr. Wayne Branch, Clark College
Brett Hinsley, Columbia Pacific Building Trades
Eric Holmes, City of Battle Ground
Monica Isbell, Portland Business Alliance
Mark McCloud, Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce

Janet Ray, Washington AAA
Bob Russel, Oregon Trucking Association
Karen Schmidt, Washington Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board
Bill Wyatt, Port of Portland

Project Team Members Present:

Ron Anderson	Barbara Hart	David Parisi
Mike Baker	Jay Lyman	Laura Reilly
Rob DeGraff	Linda Mullen	Lynn Rust
Doug Ficco	John Osborne	Kris Strickler
Heather Gundersen	Peter Ovington	Rex Wong

I. Opening Remarks**Action:** No action required.

Co-chair Henry Hewitt called the meeting to order and announced the purpose of tonight's meeting as reviewing components from the Step A Screening Report and recommending those that will move forward for further study. He also reminded attendees of voting protocols.

II. March 22nd Meeting Summary

Action: Approved, with agreement to amend with a comment from member Brad Halverson, who pointed out that on page 14 (middle of page, under comment by Brad Halverson) the two river crossings referred to are RC13 and RC-20.

III. Overview of Open House Results**Action:** Briefing

Linda Mullen of CRC project staff gave an overview of public open houses held April 12 and 13, 2006 at Hudson's Bay High School in Vancouver and the Red Lion Inn in Portland, respectively. There were 205 people total who signed in to the two open houses (103 in Vancouver, 102 in Portland) and 85 who gave written comment, with an additional 30 who gave comment after the events.

Of the proposed river crossing and transit components, 22 agreed with staff recommendations, 14, disagreed, and 21 didn't respond.

Common themes heard at open houses included:

- River crossing
 - Don't build a lift span. Arterial/local crossing is favored. Tunnel remained in play. Consider a stacked/multi-level bridge. A handful thought a third crossing is a good idea right now or eventually.
- Transit
 - Strong support for light rail and transit, for reducing auto dependency. Only two "anti-transit" comments opposing light rail.
- Other components
 - Freight needs to be kept moving. Bike and ped access are important for safety. Concerns about additional lanes and impact on communities.
- Other common themes
 - Community livability / environmental justice
 - Tolling and finances (all but two or three commenter support tolling)

Linda Mullen also summarized other public involvement efforts and noted that presentations are scheduled thus far in May and June to eight of the 10 neighborhood associations in the Bridge Influence Area, with more forthcoming.

Jay Lyman noted that both open houses had more attendees from Vancouver area, perhaps due to a bridge lift.

NOTE: <i>Task force questions and comments are in italics</i> (Staff responses are in parentheses)
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Discussion:

- *Asked if CRC would do a broader, more quantitative survey of comments and opinions on packaged alternatives. Strongly urged that that be done soon to get a stronger sense of opinion on each side of the river. Agreed with Co-chair Hewitt that the right time to do this would be when the alternative packages are presented to the public.*
- *Commented that the open house format was not very effective in reaching larger numbers of people. Offered her organization's resources and ideas in helping make that happen. Said many people feel this process is a "done deal" and therefore they're not going to show up. Urged that the project's messaging be adjusted to address that.*
 - Co-chair Hewitt disagreed that it's a "done deal."
 - (Future outreach will be aimed at reaching members of the public in their "natural habitat.")
- *Asked for a summary of open house attendees' zip codes to get an overview of attendance demographics.*
 - (Will provide that for next meeting or sooner.)
- *Encouraged others to read public comments directly rather than just the comments summary.*
 - (Public comments will be made available on project Web site.)
- *Expressed concerns with the meeting agenda and complained of very short notice of a Monday work session meeting and stated that to notify task force members by email alone is not sufficient. Also stated that for tonight's task force meeting, the decision point being scheduled in the final half-hour is problematic for those who often can't stay the whole time.*
 - (Co-chair Hewitt and Jay Lyman said they would attempt to move more quickly through other items to move the decision item to an earlier spot in the agenda.)

IV. Public Comment

Comment received from 11 citizens: Chris Smith, Paul Edgar, David Rowe, Paula Levin, Sam Brooks, Jim Howell, Sharon Nasset, Scott Bricker, Ray Whitford, and Jim Karlock. Written comments are included in Appendix A. Summaries of verbal comments follow.

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- **Chris Smith**, who publishes the Portland Transport blog (www.portlandtransport.com) urged members to consider another screening criterion in their decision making, asking which alternative would best position the region to face rising fuel prices and greenhouse gases. He urged the Task Force to consider alternatives that include these concerns.
 - **Paul Edgar** spoke against the idea of tolling and said he was at the Vancouver open house on April 12 handing out literature opposing tolling. He complained that staff prematurely and unilaterally pronounced many alternatives as non-viable, which was presumptuous. The open houses unfairly guided people with respect to alternatives, he said. Co-chair Hewitt disagreed that the process was unfair or led by an agenda, and CRC staffer Jay Lyman said the alternatives were presented simply as staff recommendations so they could be brought back to the task force for input.
 - **David Rowe**, retired from TriMet after 30 years and resident of Battle Ground, distributed 20 copies of a handout outlining his recommendations. He stated that the Amtrak Cascades train route has the nation's highest ridership, that the I-5 corridor is an ideal light rail corridor, and that extending rail across the Columbia River is the most cost-effective solution.
 - **Bob Johnson**, who signed up to comment, was no longer present when his name was called.
 - **Paula Levin**, a student in Portland State University's Master of Public Health program and a professional in the environmental field, visited the project Web site to "Tell us what you think". She asserted that opportunities for public involvement shouldn't be limited to those with Internet access. She said it's also important to keep the Web site maintained and updated. She said the project's "vision and values" document needs to be more broadly disseminated, and that more focus is needed on air pollution, noise pollution, and bike safety. She objected to the words "avoid and minimize" in project documents, which, she said, aren't sufficient goals with regard to natural resources and human health.
 - **Sam Brooks**, a small business owner and president and chair of the board of Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs, welcomed all to OAME's building and asked that all be cognizant of people who create jobs and wealth, in order to keep the communities on both sides of the river healthy.
 - **Jim Howell** of the Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates (AORTA) informed the audience that the price of oil has gone up \$6/barrel since the task force's last meeting. He referred to AORTA's critique of the CRC Step A Screening Report and said he would like to see it distributed to Task Force members after he submitted it April 11. He disagreed with the proposal to drop commuter rail, and said it's not true that a new alignment is needed to do commuter rail. It doesn't seem fair, he said, to throw out the scenario for commuter rail when you have about 20 scenarios for highways. He said AORTA thinks this has been a wave of removing all the good ideas and proposing simply more highway capacity.
 - **Sharon Nasset** approached the microphone and, before speaking, Co-chair Hewitt acknowledged her email and said staff is working on addressing her questions. She referred to March 22, 2006 task force meeting minutes (pg 7, RC-14) and urged that a

baseline of minimum changes to the I-5 bridge be established so that when the screening process is happening, components that would not otherwise include those baseline elements would not be thrown out because they lacked those elements. She said it was inappropriate for the project to have 30-some screening questions and reduce those to six questions, of which only two are directly related to the project area. She agreed with Jeri Sundvall-Williams that most people think this process is a “done deal” and that project staff should be more open.

- **Scott Bricker**, policy director of the Bicycle Transportation Alliance, said the BTA generally supports multimodal transportation solutions. He said the BTA’s “Blueprint for Better Bicycling” identifies the Columbia River crossing as a key priority.
- **Ray Whitford** said staff should think of this project 50 years from now. He was confused by staff’s emphasis on I-5 as a key corridor from Canada to Mexico only to see staff disqualify several options because they don’t directly affect the Bridge Influence Area. He asked whether staff is interested in the crossing corridor or something else that isn’t being vocalized. For instance, TR-7, question 3 (freight) as “not applicable.” He didn’t understand why “n/a” and two fails are there. He urged the task force and project staff to look at it globally and locally.
- **Jeri Sundvall-Williams**, task force member, chimed in that this task force is not the decision-making body and that they’re not voting on anything. She continued by saying that this has been the most frustrating process she’s been involved with, that the process has not been a good one. She said she doesn’t feel her constituency has had the same level of respect or influence in this process as in previous ones, such as the I-5 Partnership.
- **Co-chair Hewitt**, referring back to comment by Ray Whitford, said he doesn’t want anyone to infer that this task force is eliminating the idea of high-speed rail from Vancouver BC to Eugene or to Mexico, but simply that it isn’t part of the “20-mile problem” being addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement.
- **Dave Frei**, task force member, asked that any attachments from the public be sent to him.
- **Jim Karlock** distributed a handout and stated that light rail wouldn’t increase capacity enough (only 7 percent) to reduce the congestion problem. Spending 37 times the money on light rail versus bus isn’t a good value, he said. He insisted a true transit advocate would support a better bus system rather than light rail, because it costs too much and does too little. He said oil price increases are cyclical and will go away. He said TriMet delivers passenger miles at about the same rate as small cars. He urged the encouragement of small cars rather than transit ridership.

Note: The full text of public comments is available in the meeting transcript, available upon request by contacting the project office at 360-737-2726.

V. Component Packaging / Background Information

Action: Briefing and discussion.

Jay Lyman began background presentations and Q&A discussion on component packaging. He explained that Step B is not on the table for discussion tonight, responding to concerns that more time was needed to focus on Step A.

In referring to a memorandum from staffers Doug Ficco and John Osborn to task force members (dated April 19, 2006 titled "Initial Examples of Alternative Packages") Lyman outlined three alternative packages (table on page 3).

He went on to mention safety, explaining that most accidents happen during periods of highest congestion.

- *Expressed concern that the table on page 3 could be perceived not simply as examples of future scenarios but as foregone conclusions.*
 - (Stressed that the examples in the table on page 3 are illustrative as part of Step A process rather than answers.)
- *Asked if restriping of lanes on I-5 south of Delta Park would occur to make room for a high-occupancy vehicle lane. Said an HOV lane only works if it runs south, as well.*
 - (This will be addressed in the future.)
- *Asked if a supplemental bridge could be an arterial*
 - (Yes.)

~~ Dinner break for 15 minutes. ~~

VI. Component Selection for Further Study

Action: Discussion / action

Co-chair Hewitt reopened the meeting by explaining that tonight's goal is for the task force to decide on the *river crossing* (RC) and *transit* (T) components to advance and become part of multimodal packages.

Mike Baker, CRC staffer, led a presentation of these components. He said the Step A process is a narrowing tool to develop eventual alternatives. He outlined the Step A pass/fail questions:

Does the component:

- Q1: increase vehicular capacity or decrease vehicular demand within the Bridge Influence Area (BIA)?
- Q2: improve transit performance within the BIA?
- Q3: improve freight mobility within the BIA?
- Q4: improve safety and decrease vulnerability to incidents within the BIA?
- Q5: improve bicycle and pedestrian mobility within the BIA?
- Q6: reduce seismic risk of the I-5 Columbia River Crossing?

Source: I-5 CRC Problem Definition

River Crossing

Staff is recommending to advance RC-23, a new multimodal arterial crossing

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- *Asked if Jim Howell's proposal (RC-22) could fit in RC-23*
 - (Yes.)
 - *Asked for some description of safety issues in RC-23*
 - (There are construction-oriented ways to address it. But that question is further along in process than we are.)
 - *Asked if indeed there are elements of RC-22 that could be integrated into RC-23.*
 - (Yes.)
 - *Expressed surprise that RC-23 is labeled "pass" (in pass/fail) because of navigation safety concerns with any bridge between the existing I-5 bridge and the rail bridge.*
 - (Need to push the question a bit further before the answer can be found.)

ACTION: Consensus vote on RC-23

Co-chair Hewitt called for a consensus vote on the River Crossing 23 proposal. Members use the "5-4-3-2-1 finger" scale of approval (called a consensus vote).

5. Five fingers: complete approval.
4. Four fingers: approval with some reservation or need for clarification.
3. Three fingers: undecided with need for further information and/or discussion.
2. Two fingers: disapproval with need for further discussion.
1. One finger: complete disapproval.

- Two members showed one finger but did not wish to comment.

Mike Baker went on to describe the following components and how they fared when run through screening questions:

- **RC-14** New Corridor Crossing Near BNSF Rail Crossing
- **RC-15** New Corridor Crossing plus Widen Existing I-5 Bridges
- **RC-19** Arterial Crossing Without I-5 Improvements
- **RC-21** 33rd Ave Crossing
- **RC-22** Non-Freeway Multi-modal Columbia River Crossing
- **RC-23** Arterial Crossing with I-5 Improvements (already covered)
This was the only option that didn't get at least one failing score and is therefore recommended to advance further.

Questions and comments

Consensus voting process was clarified, including the fact that the two task force members who voted "one finger" did not wish to comment on why.

- *Commented that we're still waiting for real data on relative congestion, i.e. how many hours per day of congestion during peak hours.*

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- (Slides covering that are in handout summary of Powerpoint slides.)
 - *Asked why seismic upgrade of I-5 bridge is not a baseline assumption rather than a screening question that can force an RC component to fail. Question six should be eliminated to make seismic concerns a baseline assumption.*
 - *Asked if there is a process to recommend future study for some of the alternatives we're dropping.*
 - (Yes, we can and should consider that when we're done.)
 - *Asked if this is "one strike and you're out", i.e if one fail score is enough to be disqualified.*
 - (Yes. And all components have an aggressive TDM/TSM element built into them.)
 - **Paul Edgar**, member of public, commented on arterial crossing.
 - **Sharon Nasset**, member of public, spoke in favor of a third crossing connecting the ports of Portland and Vancouver.
 - **Larry Paulson**, task force member, said there is no real freight traffic *between* the ports of Portland and Vancouver and feasibility is not there.
 - *Asked for clarification that RC-19 and RC-23 are identical with improvements to the bridge.*
 - (Yes. And RC-23 is "a more expensive version" of RC-19.)

ACTION: Consensus vote to Eliminate All Arterial Components Except RC-23.

Members made recommendations using the "5-4-3-2-1 finger" scale of approval

5 fingers = prepared to accept recommendation to eliminate other arterial components. All gave 5 fingers except the following:

Discussion:

- *Wants to be more comfortable with dropping RC-22. Am comfortable with moving ahead as long as some of the "good" elements of RC-22 are available to be incorporated into future packages*
 - (RC-23 is more generic, gives us a chance to look at things more broadly from a design perspective.)
- *Wants to see question 6 "taken care of" before getting rid of components. Not comfortable moving forward because he is waiting for a legitimate process to discuss another corridor entirely. Arch Miller and others are doing that, but wants*

to make sure that CRC isn't our one bite of the apple for talking about needs of the corridor.

- *Commented that "this process really sucks." We're not communicating well with each other or the community. "It still feels steamroller to me." Asked for more information on peak oil, project budget, and environmental justice training. Said staff wants to discuss EJ after decisions are made. Says she is going to continue to vote 1 finger until we get the process in the order we need. "The people with the privilege of education are the ones making the decisions."*
- *Commented that she's still nervous about the large number of alternatives consisting of a large new freeway bridge. Would like to hear from CRC staff at next meeting how environmental justice training will happen and modeling on energy prices in future. She said an August meeting on EJ is unacceptable, since people are on vacation. Is it possible to hear from staff on that at next meeting?*
 - Henry Hewitt: (Yes, that sounds reasonable. We need those in place before we begin analyzing packages.)
- *Likes RC-23. Asked if a single F (fail) going to be enough to make a component fail?*
 - (Just for now. In future it will get much more quantitative. We first have to test these against the NEPA process purpose and need.)
- *Cautioned the group about dropping questions, such as number six, because they reflect factors of need, benefit, and cost.*
- *Asked why RC-1, RC-2, RC-7, and RC-8, the moveable bridge options, are still in play.*
 - (Until more is known about impacts on the land on either side of the river, it's premature to get rid of them.)

ACTION: VOTE to drop RCs 14, 15, 19, 21, 22 from further consideration:

21 in favor, 2 opposed

So RC-23 is in for further evaluation. RC-20 has not been discussed yet.

Highway components

RC-16, 17, 18 presentation and scoring and discussion

All three components are recommended by staff for failure for reasons given by Mike Baker.

- *Asked for Dean Lookingbill, RTC, to explain process for envisioning new corridors in Clark County.*
- *Underscored that the task force's charge is to address the Bridge Influence Area.*

Facilitator Barbara Hart reminded task force member alternates they're not allowed to vote.

ACTION: Consensus vote to accept recommendation to eliminate other arterial components.

Members made recommendations using the “5-4-3-2-1 finger” scale of approval
5 fingers = prepared to accept recommendation to eliminate other arterial components.
All gave 5 fingers except the following:

Discussion:

- *Commented that the CRC project might suck up all the money from any potential new corridor crossing.*
- *Asked for official support of task force for a parallel process exploring a new corridor crossing.*
 - **(Co-chair Hewitt** asked Steve Stuart and Dean Lookingbill to bring a proposal to next meeting for a vote.)
- *Commented that it's important that a new corridor crossing discussion quit happening here at the task force.*

ACTION: VOTE to eliminate RCs 16, 17, 18

All 22 members present in favor.
None opposed.

Co-chair Hewitt said that the remaining River Crossing and Transit Crossing components will be covered at the next Task Force meeting with him chairing that portion.

Next Meeting Date / Location:

Wednesday, May 17, 2006, 4:00–6:30 p.m.
WSDOT SW Region Headquarters, Room 102
11018 NE 51st Circle
Vancouver, Washington

Tentative Agenda

Discussion of environmental justice, continued discussion and selection of remaining river crossing and transit components, and issues and approaches to packaging components.

5-24-06

Appendices to Task Force Meeting Summary

Handouts from Public Commenters

The Interstate Bridge
was built in 1917
with Railroad Tracks
for Transit and Freight service



Trolley Wire for Electric Trains

Three rails for running narrow gage Trolley Cars and standard gage for Interurban Streetcars and freight trains

Submitted by David L. Rowe
8817 NE 275th St
Battle Ground, Washington 98604
360-687-9178
E-mail: dlrowe3162@aol.com

My name is David L. Rowe, I live in Battle Ground.

I retired from Tri-Met after thirty years of observing how public transportation benefits the taxpayers of Oregon.

I am here today to give you facts on why rail service should be included in the Columbia River Crossing solution.

The Amtrak Cascades ranks among the top Amtrak rail lines in the United States. This Railroad runs from Eugene, Oregon to Vancouver, British Columbia, following the I-5 Corridor. In 2005 the passenger count increased 5.6 percent to 636,892 passengers.

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) reports 9.7 billion transit trips were made in the United States during the year 2005. This was a 100 million ride increase over 2004 public transit usage. Light Rail picked up the largest increase in passengers. (MAX rider ship is approaching 100,000 rides per day)

Minneapolis Light Rail increased by 168% in 2005.

Houston Light Rail trips increased 38%

Salt Lake Light Rail increased 13 %

APTA also reported Commuter Rail trips increased significantly in 2005.

San Carlos, California Commuter Rail trips increased by 12.5%

Indiana saw an increase of 7.3%

(Tri-Met is building a Commuter Rail Line to be completed in two years.)

*Referring to the Columbia River Crossing Draft
Component Step A Screening Report
dated March 22, 2006*

On page 3-2 figure 3-1:

The Oregon origins and Washington destinations shows where potential Interstate Bridge usage would occur in 2020. It is quite evident most are in close proximity of the Interstate 5 corridor. Light Rail is most effective when there is a concentration of potential riders as portrayed in this diagram.

Today the Light Rail Yellow line along Interstate 5 picks up 12,000 rides daily. If the Yellow line were extended to Clark County it could pick up 12,000 rides during each rush hour by the year 2020.

Planning and building Rail options are the best and less costly solutions in solving congestion in I-5 corridor. This includes a Light Rail bridge at the Interstate Bridge location. Adding a 22 foot wide Light Rail double track supported between the north and south lanes of the I-205 Bridge. Upgrading the present heavy rail to enhance Amtrak passenger service and future Commuter Rail service is important too. In addition to improvements for rail passenger service, the rail freight infrastructure must be improved at the Columbia River crossing. Rail freight efficiency has improved dramatically in the last 20 years. It is estimated a freight train can move one ton of goods 400 miles with one gallon of diesel. A truck can move one ton of goods only 60 miles with one gallon of diesel. Due to the rising price of fuel Rail traffic use will increase.

**Rail improvements are the most effective options for the
Columbia River Crossing.**

Cost of Light rail to Vancouver

(All calculated results below are from data on www.transit.dot.gov)

Compared to Express Bus-Short: \$302,000 per increased rider

Compared to Express Bus-Long: \$495,000 per increased rider

It would literally be cheaper to buy a Pearl district condo for each of those light rail riders that would not ride the bus.

Effect of Light Rail on Traffic Congestion

The proposed light rail system is forecasted to increase the capacity across the Columbia by only 7%.

Are new riders attracted to transit by Light Rail?

Compared to Express Bus-Short, rail gives a 31% increase in ridership for \$1.2 billion.

Compared to Express Bus-Long, rail gives an 18% increase in ridership for \$1.19 billion.

(Spending 37 times the money increases transit ridership by only 18%.)

Questions that should have been asked:

1. How much must we spend on a deluxe bus system to match the ridership of light rail?
2. How many riders would we get if we spent \$1.2 billion on a really good bus system?
3. For a given amount of money, which option will give the highest transit use?
4. How accurate are the projections? (The tram is now 700% over its original estimate.)

Portland is a national leader in light rail construction.

Portland was also the nation's leader in increased traffic congestion.

These two facts *are not un-related*. It is time to admit that light rail is a failed experiment that didn't deliver on its promise to reduce congestion.

Light Rail:

Costs too much, does too little.

Cost of Light rail to Vancouver

The Portland/Vancouver I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership was formed by the governors of Oregon & Washington to make recommendations about the congestion problem on I-5 between the Rose Quarter and SR-500. They forecasted the costs and riderships of two bus options and light rail for a loop going up I-5, over to I-205 and down I-205 to Gateway.

(all data is for the evening rush hour and is from the I-5 partnership -- see bottom of next page):

Express Bus-Short

3 lane/LRT loop	cost: \$1,222 million	for 13,000 riders
3 lane/Express Bus-Short	cost: <u>\$14 million</u>	for <u>9,000 riders</u>
Increase due to rail	cost: \$1,208 million	for 4,000 more riders (subtracting the two)

Cost per increased rider: $\$1,208,000,000 \div 4000 = \mathbf{\$302,000}$ per increased rider

Express Bus-Long

3 lane/LRT loop	cost: \$1,222 million	for 13,000 riders
3 lane/Express Bus-Long	cost: <u>\$32 million</u>	for <u>10,600 riders</u>
Increase due to rail	cost: \$1,190 million	for 2,400 more riders (subtracting the two)

Cost per increased rider: $\$1,190,000,000 \div 2400 = \mathbf{\$495,000}$ per increased rider

It would literally be cheaper to buy a Pearl district condo for each of those riders that would not ride the bus. (Of course it would hard to identify those individuals)

Effect of Light Rail on Traffic Congestion

The proposed light rail system is forecasted to carry only 2400-4000 passengers that would not have otherwise taken the bus, thus its real effect is to remove those 2400-4000 people from the road.

Using the higher number of riders: Since the study period was a four hour evening rush period, those 4000 people are 1000 people per hour. At an average car loading of 1.2 people, that is 833 cars per hour removed from the road. The capacity of a freeway lane is about 2000 cars per hour, so the effect is to add 42% of one lane of freeway capacity (or 25% of one freeway lane if you use the 2500 riders forecast).

Considering that the current capacity is 6 lanes (the forecast was for I-5 and I-205 river crossings combined), the added 42% of one lane is an **increase in capacity of 7% to the current 6 lanes in the study area** (or 4% if you use the 2500 number). ----- **For \$1.2 Billion.**

(Over)

Are new riders attracted to transit by Light Rail?

Another way to look at the projected data is how much does constructing light rail increase transit rider ship?

(Repeating the charts)

3 lane/LRT loop cost: \$1,222 million for 13,000 riders

3 lane/Express Bus-Short cost: \$14 million for 9,000 riders

Increase due to rail cost: \$1,208 million for 4,000 more riders (subtracting the two)

Increased ridership: $4,000 \div 13,000 = 0.31$ - **A 31% increase in ridership** for spending an additional \$1.2 billion

Express Bus-Long

3 lane/LRT loop cost: \$1,222 million for 13,000 riders

3 lane/Express Bus-Long cost: \$32 million for 10,600 riders

Increase due to rail cost: \$1,190 million for 2,400 more riders (subtracting the two)

Increased ridership: $2,400 \div 13,000 = 0.18$ - **An 18% increase in ridership** for spending an additional \$1.19 billion. This is spending 37 times the money for an additional 18% transit rider ship.

Notice that as the bus system got better, it captured even more of the light rail riders. A spending increase of 229% got 15% (9,000 to 10,600) more riders. Would another 229% spending increase get another 15% ridership increase? If so, the bus would be carrying around 12,484. This is only 515 riders less than rail, or only 4% less than rail, for a cost of only \$74 million compared to \$1.2 BILLION.

Here is the question that should have been asked:

How much must we spend on a deluxe bus system to match the ridership of light rail?

Look at dedicated bus ways AND buses on HOV lanes.

Date source: <http://www.i-5partnership.com/reports/q3.html> (Attached).

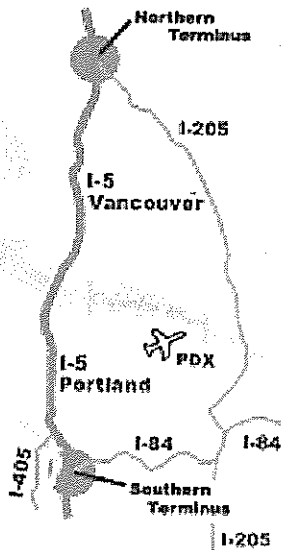
Rider Ship is from the "Travel Time" section (circled in red).

Costs are from the 'Cost' section (circled in red).

According ODOT, the cost estimate was made by consultant Parsons Brinkerhoff in cooperation with Tri-Met and the ridership projections were by Metro and David Evans.

Also see the video: Evaluation of Rail Transit Projects with Tom Rubin (19 meg file) at <http://www.saveportland.com/>

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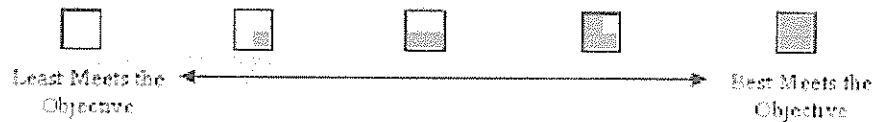


**Do we need additional transit service?
 What type of transit service?**

Express Bus - Short	Express Bus - Long	Light Rail Loop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express bus system in Clark County • Express bus on I-5 in HOV lane from 134th in Clark County to Expo Transit Center • New bridge to carry HOV lane across the Columbia River • Includes expanded park and ride and more feeder bus service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express bus system in Clark County • Express bus on I-5 in HOV lane from 134th in Clark County to downtown Portland • A fourth lane in each direction from 134th to the Fremont Bridge would operate as an HOV lane during peak periods • Includes expanded park and ride and more feeder bus service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light rail system in Clark County • New bridge to carry light rail • Includes expanded park and ride and more feeder bus service

Summary of Findings
 (See [Details of Summary Findings](#) below)

Rating Scale



Measure	Baseline 2020	Express Bus - Short	Express Bus - Long	Light Rail Loop
Reduce transit travel times Downtown Portland to downtown Vancouver in p.m. peak period	 41 min.	 35 min.	 26 min.	 25 min.
Increase ridership Number of people crossing the Columbia River using transit in the p.m. peak period	 6,500 riders	 9,000 riders	 10,600 riders	 13,100 riders

Promote transportation choice Percent increase in people using transit from downtown Vancouver to all destinations in p.m. peak				
Flexibility of service Ability to re-route service to meet changing travel demands				
Serves a variety of transit markets All day service, 7 days a week, available for multiple trip purposes				
Encourages compact communities Improved transit service and predictability of service remaining in corridor				
Minimizes environmental impacts Impacts to natural resources such as fish, wildlife, plants, wetlands	 Moderate	 Moderate	 Moderate	to mod/major
Minimizes displacements Number of residential and other displacements given conceptual design	 12 (Rose Quarter)	 +1 <u>See 3 lane</u>	 +1 <u>See 3 lane</u>	 +79 with current alignment (w/o bridge)
Cost (2001 dollars)	NA	 +\$14 M plus \$668 M hwy upgrades	 +\$31 M plus \$1,477 M hwy upgrades	 +\$1,222 M

Summary Details

Express Bus - Short	Express Bus - Long	Light Rail Loop
Travel Time		
Provides greater speed and reliability over Baseline 2020 transit operations in the corridor.	Provides better speed and reliability compared to short express bus.	Provides the best speed and reliability of the transit options because LRT is in its own right-of-way.
Improves time to travel on transit between downtown Portland and downtown Vancouver in the evening peak period:	Significantly improves time to travel on transit between downtown Portland and downtown Vancouver in the evening peak period:	Significantly improves time to travel on transit between downtown Portland and downtown Vancouver in the evening peak period:
<i>Baseline = 41 min. Express Bus - Short = 36 min.</i>	<i>Baseline = 41 min. Express Bus - Long = 15 min.</i>	<i>Baseline = 41 min. Light rail loop = 16 min.</i>

Does not maintain transit travel times in the I-5 corridor:	Maintains transit travel times in the I-5 corridor:	Maintains transit travel times in the I-5 corridor:
Transit travel times with express bus short will be approximately 9 minutes longer than they are today.	Transit travel times with express bus long will be approximately the same as they are today	Transit travel times with light rail will be approximately the same as they are today
Least change in transit travel time between Portland and Vancouver	High transit travel time savings - is equal to the LRT Loop option.	High travel time savings - equal to Express Bus - Long.
Increases transit ridership over baseline. Number of people using transit during the evening peak period:	Increases transit ridership over baseline. Number of people using transit during the evening peak period:	Increases transit ridership over baseline. Number of people using transit during the evening peak period:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline 2020 = 6500 riders • Express Bus - Short = 900 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline 2020 = 6500 riders • Express Bus - Long = 10,600 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline 2020 = 6500 riders • Light Rail Loop = 12,600
This option, however, has the lowest ridership attraction compared to other transit options:	This option has the second highest ridership attraction compared to other transit options:	This option has the highest ridership attraction compared to other transit options:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express Bus - Short = 9000 riders • Express Bus - Long = 10,600 riders • Light rail loop = 13,000 riders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express Bus - Short = 9000 riders • Express Bus - Long = 10,600 riders • Light rail loop = 13,000 riders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express Bus - Short = 9000 riders • Express Bus - Long = 10,600 riders • Light rail loop = 13,000 riders
Does little to promote transportation choice. For instance,	Like Express Bus - Short does little to promote transportation choice. For instance,	Does the most to promote transportation choice. For instance,
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transit ridership in downtown Vancouver increases by 8% for express bus-short option compared to 40-50% with LRT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transit ridership in downtown Vancouver increases by 10% for express bus-long option compared to 40-50% with LRT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transit ridership in downtown Vancouver increases by 40-50% for LRT compared to 8-10% with Express Bus.

Express Bus - Short	Express Bus - Long	Light Rail Loop
Environmental Impacts		

<p>Moderate environmental impacts that are difficult to avoid and will need to be mitigated.</p> <p>Least impacts of construction on the natural environment and land use impact of any transit option.</p>	<p>Moderate environmental impacts that are difficult to avoid and will need to be mitigated.</p>	<p>Moderate environmental impacts. Refinement of various alignment options design could reduce or avoid many of these impacts.</p>
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Express Bus - Short	Express Bus - Long	Light Rail Loop
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Displacements		
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<p>One displacement directly from express bus due to the fact that it operates on the highway in already established right-of-way.</p>	<p>One displacement directly from express bus due to the fact that it operates on the highway in already established right-of-way.</p>	<p>Highest number of displacements of the transit options (79)</p> <p>The number of displacements may be reduced with alternative routes or alignments of light rail.</p> <p>The high number of displacements is due to the fact that light rail has its own new right of way.</p>
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Express Bus - Short	Express Bus - Long	Light Rail Loop
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Cost		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$14 million (\$2001) • Least cost of any transit option. • Express bus is the least cost transit option due to the fact that it operates on the highway in an already established right-of-way (see 3 vs. 4 Lane). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$32 million (\$2001) • Express bus is a lower cost transit option due to the fact that it operates on the highway in an already established right-of-way (see 3 vs. 4 Lane). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1,222 million (\$2001) • Highest cost of the transit options. • High cost is due to the fact that it operates on its own right-of-way and with a track system.
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Express Bus - Short	Express Bus - Long	Light Rail Loop
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Other		
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<p>Compared to light rail transit (LRT), buses have the following advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buses can be flexibly routed to serve different origins and destinations, and to address particular traffic congestion problems • Buses can effectively serve 	<p>Compared to LRT, buses have the following advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buses can be flexibly routed to serve different origins and destinations, and to address particular traffic congestion problems. • Buses can more effectively serve 	<p>Compared to express bus, LRT has the following advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the most to promote transportation choice (transit ridership in downtown Vancouver increases by 40-50% with LRT, compared to 8-10% for express bus options). • Serves a range of trip purposes throughout
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outlying population centers such as Battle Ground and Ridgefield

- Buses can readily be placed on new routes
- Compared to light rail, express bus serves a more limited transportation market. Express bus, as evaluated, is point-to-point service that serves the commuter market and runs Monday - Friday in the a.m. and p.m. peak periods only.

outlying population centers such as Battle Ground and Ridgefield

- Buses can readily be placed on new routes.
- Compared to light rail, express bus serves a more limited transportation market. Express bus, as evaluated, is point-to-point service that serves the commuter market and runs Monday - Friday in the a.m. and p.m. peak periods only

the day, seven days a week.

- Light rail can provide service to multiple points along the line and be a catalyst for community redevelopment.
- Reinforces the Vancouver and Portland Central Cities and Regional Centers such as Vancouver Mall and Gateway.
- Across all measures, I-5 performs better when paired with Light Rail Transit than with Express Bus Transit because Light Rail attracts more riders.
- Completing the LRT system is consistent with regional and local goals.
- A low span Columbia River bridge with its occasional bridge lifts would compromise light rail operating reliability.

For more information see:

Graphs:

[Transit](#)

Data Table ([Microsoft Word format](#) | [Adobe Acrobat format](#))

Maps:

[Express Bus - Short/3 Lanes](#)

[Express Bus - Long/4 Lanes](#)

[Light Rail Loop/3 lanes](#)

[Light Rail Loop/4 lanes](#)

[Costs of Option Packages Studied](#)

[Environmental Findings](#)



Will Peak Oil Bring Down Modern Society?

To believe that society will be brought to its knees by running out of oil you have to believe:

That, after 100 years of false alarms, we really *will run out* of oil.

AND

That, contrary to widely accepted economic laws, higher prices will not reduce demand,.

AND

That, contrary to widely accepted economic laws, higher prices will not bring additional supplies.

AND

That the experts are wrong about the amount of shale oil.

AND

That the experts are wrong about the amount of tar sands oil.

AND

That we cannot use hydrogen because we will run out of uranium to run the nuclear power plants necessary to make hydrogen.

AND

That we cannot make gas from our huge reserves of coal like the Germans did to run their war machine in 1943.

AND

That, after harnessing steam power, electric power and the atom. Placing a man on the moon and exploring other planets. Creating the telegraph, telephone, radio, television and computers. Conquering plagues, famine, polio, smallpox and dozens of other diseases and decoding the genetic code. After centuries of solving every kind of problem imaginable, mankind will suddenly lose his ability to solve problems.

---- Gimme me a break ----

COLUMBIA RIVER CROSSING PROJECT

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April 26, 2006

Degree: Environmental studies, Regional and City Planning

Congress has just passed a law, stating that gasoline can not longer be used by people for commuting to and from their work place, if the driving distance is 6 miles or more in each direction.

If such a law were passed, it would require a "change of life style". Could such an event happen, you bet. Shall we follow our old style of thinking and wait until it happens; no, the time to starting plan for this life changing event is now, before such a law is passed. The solution is not to build more roads and more freeway lanes (traffic expands to fill all available freeway); it's to stop or reduce the need for people to commuting to and from the work place. This would require people to work at home or in offices closer to their homes and connect these locations with their existing work places; through the use of modern communication methods. The UK and Japan are way ahead of us in solving these problems; so it does not require reinventing the wheel. We need to reduce or stop the waste of work and free time hours caused by commuting. Use the available gasoline for recreational purposes and not for commuting would be one of the benefits.

The bridge needs to be replaced to resolve public safety issues and to provide for the unimpaired movement of commercial and private vehicles. But it plays only a small part in the problem of moving people or reducing traffic congestion. Going from three lanes to two lanes and back to three lanes on the freeways in it's self causes traffic congestion; along with changing speed limits. Replacing the bridge and adding or realigning lanes will improve the congestion in that area; but it will only move the congestion problem north and south of the bridge project.

Implementing such a plan will not be easy. But we must take the first step.