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Introduction

At the request of Vancouver’s Downtown Association, Columbia River Crossing staff presented a project update and shared information on project designs and construction planning for downtown at the Oct. 11, 2012 membership meeting. Nancy Boyd, Washington Project Director and Kris Strickler, Oregon Project Director spoke about the importance of downtown businesses, project goals, recent progress, current project status (securing funding and permits), costs and funding, and construction (packages, business impacts, upcoming pre-construction work and access). Matt Ransom, City of Vancouver Project Development and Policy Manager, shared the City’s perspective on the project. Some VDA members’ questions were addressed during the presentation and CRC staff shared information in one-on-one conversations about light rail alignments and design in downtown Vancouver.

This document summarizes and responds to all of the questions submitted by VDA members prior to and at the event. Please note that some questions have been consolidated to eliminate duplication. Appendix A lists original questions and corresponding consolidated questions.

Parking

1. How will parking spaces be affected in downtown Vancouver? How will this affect area retail, restaurants and residents?

A total of 132 parking spaces would be removed from 7th Street and on Washington and Broadway between 5th and 17th streets. An additional 36 spaces would be removed from 17th Street. CRC has committed in the Record of Decision to acquire the City of Vancouver lot south of Smith Tower on 5th Street to serve Smith Tower residents. Fifty new parking stalls would be constructed near the SR 14 loop. In other areas, coordination between C-TRAN and the City would occur to develop shared parking agreements that would allow some use of the new park and ride facilities by non-transit riders. Project

staff continues to evaluate options to address parking losses consistent with commitments in the Record of Decision and City of Vancouver policy.

The CRC project is committed to identify, provide and/or advertise temporary parking locations to replace displaced parking during construction. This may include relocating loading zones, property access, bus stops, and other specially designated parking and access points before construction begins. Project staff will coordinate directly with businesses to identify access needs before construction begins.

2. How will on and off street parking rules be enforced to limit parking spot “poaching” by light rail users?

On-street parking is limited in duration, which should discourage light rail commuters from parking in spaces intended for local businesses. Parking rules will be enforced through standard parking enforcement resulting in ticketing and/or towing of the violator. A parking management plan will be developed by C-TRAN and the City of Vancouver. The plan will consider and address park and ride access and use rules, control and hours of operation, peak hour commuter thresholds, shared-uses of park and ride facilities, existing City of Vancouver parking rates and parking enforcement responsibilities.

Transit

3. Who will be responsible for security along the light rail line? Who will deliver the services and who will pay for them?

In Vancouver, C-TRAN will be responsible for light rail security. Service may be provided by C-TRAN’s current security contractor, the City of Vancouver Police, or a combination of both. A Security Management Plan will identify the most effective option. For the new Oregon light rail extension between Expo Center and the state line, TriMet will be responsible for light rail security.

4. When will there be detailed drawings that show the proposed light rail transit and associated improvements?

[Graphics are available](#) that show typical alignments and widths of vehicle, transit and bike lanes, sidewalks and crosswalks, and station and parking locations. Detailed plans and architectural drawings will be available as the project progresses. Public input will be sought on design refinements. Questions about light rail transit in Vancouver should be directed to Audri Bomar, C-TRAN at 360-816-8885 or bomara@columbiarivercrossing.org for more information.

5. Will the proposed light rail lines be at grade or grade separated? Please explain the difference.

“At grade” light rail operates at street level, while “grade separated” rail is elevated or subterranean. When light rail touches down at 5th Street in Vancouver it will follow the grade of existing streets. See typical cross section graphics on the [CRC project website](#).

6. How will the changes in parking, drive lane widths and turning movements on Broadway and Washington affect vehicle travel on these streets?

Vehicle lane widths will meet current City of Vancouver design standards of 12 feet. Most turn movements will remain the same as they are now; however, drivers turning left across the light rail transit tracks will have signalized left turns at designated locations. All intersections will be signalized to avoid conflicts between cars, bicyclists, pedestrians, and light rail trains.

Wider sidewalks, new street furnishings, lighting, and updated landscaping will create a cohesive feel for the downtown retail core after light rail transit construction.

7. Will there be shared roadway (cars and rail lines) as in Portland? Or will the lines be isolated from cars and divide the street as on Interstate Avenue?

Lanes with high capacity transit rails will be used exclusively by light rail or bus rapid transit. All streets with high capacity transit will also include travel lanes for vehicles and buses. See the typical roadway cross sections for 17th Street and for Washington Street linked to in Question 4.

8. Will 6th and 7th streets remain east/west cross streets at Washington and Broadway?

Under current design and recommended bridge height, 7th Street will be one-way westbound and 6th Street will be two-way.

Bridge

9. How will the bridge height impact the landings? Has the city or CRC studied the domino effect it might have on other parts of the project; i.e. where the ramps would land, the impact on the I-5 lid and the landing of the light rail?

After substantial technical analysis of the impacts of an Interstate 5 bridge height between 100 and 125 feet, in five-foot increments, the Columbia River Crossing project has found that a bridge with a 115-116 foot vertical clearance reduces the number of vessels potentially impacted while minimizing additional landside impacts in Vancouver, such as bridge and light rail landings, local traffic circulation and the I-5 lid. The technical analysis was prepared as part of the permit application to the U.S. Coast Guard, which must approve the bridge height.

10. Is there a guarantee that the new bridge will not collapse or be damaged if there was an earthquake?

The replacement CRC bridges will be built to current seismic standards. Foundations supporting the bridge piers will extend to the underlying partially cemented cobbles and gravel known as the Troutdale Formation. The replacement bridge will be designed so that it remains functional with minor repairs after a seismic event that has a probability of occurring once in 500 years. Additionally, the bridge will be designed so that it will not collapse when subjected to an event that has a probability of occurring once in 2,500 years. The intent of this design is to prevent loss of life in the event of an earthquake.

In contrast, the current Interstate Bridge structures were built in 1917 and 1958. Wooden pilings supporting the piers extend into the river bed approximately 70 feet, but not to the Troutdale

Formation, which is approximately 200 feet below the surface. There is a risk of structural failure of the bridges in the case of an earthquake, which could cause the upper 80 feet of river soils to liquefy.

Construction

11. When will we feel the first effects of construction and where will they be?

If construction funding is secured during the upcoming legislative sessions, utility relocations could begin in late 2013. I-5 bridge construction and reconstruction of the Highway 14 interchange could begin in late 2014 with site clearing and construction staging near the Highway 14 interchange. Construction of light rail transit in downtown Vancouver could begin in 2015-2016.

12. Where will the staging areas be?

Staging of equipment and materials would occur in many areas along the project corridor throughout construction, generally within existing or newly purchased right-of-way or on nearby vacant parcels. Major staging areas identified in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) include Port of Vancouver, Red Lion at the Quay hotel site in Vancouver and Thunderbird Hotel site on Hayden Island. However, the construction contractor may, with appropriate approvals and permits, use other suitable sites that provide for heavy machinery and material storage, have waterfront access for barges and have roadway or rail access for transportation of materials by truck or train.

13. What freeway entrances and exits will be closed and for how long during construction? What are the alternate routes to downtown? How will you help people to find downtown?

Access to and from I-5 and downtown will be maintained throughout construction. Some ramps may be closed for lengthy periods of time and require detours. For example, the Final EIS states that SR 14 westbound to City Center (C Street) may be closed for up to five years while the SR 14 interchange is reconstructed. During this time, traffic would be detoured via Columbia Way or the Mill Plain Boulevard interchange. The contractor will be directed to maintain access and may receive a financial incentive to expedite completion of the reconstruction. Detours will be clearly marked. Advance notice and detour signs will be provided to ensure customers, suppliers and employees can still access downtown and individual businesses.

14. Why does light rail construction begin one year later than the start of bridge construction?

The longest duration construction activity is the bridge work in the Columbia River. Light rail takes less time to construct and cannot become operational until the southbound bridge construction is complete. The start of light rail construction timing is scheduled to coincide with when southbound bridge construction has reached a point where work on light rail can begin.

15. How can you make any construction plans when you haven't finalized the height of the bridge?

The selection of the current mid-height bridge occurred after a comprehensive public process that sought to balance many transportation, community and environmental concerns. Low bridges with a lift span and high bridges were removed from further consideration because of the negative impacts to the communities and/or the transportation system. The process to apply for a general bridge permit from the U.S. Coast Guard begins after a federal record of decision, which occurred for CRC in December 2011. A decision on a final bridge height requires thoughtful deliberation of multiple considerations related to safety (highway, air), navigation, highway/transit efficiency, land uses, and cost. A recommendation of a bridge vertical clearance of 115-116 feet was made by WSDOT and ODOT, after consideration of navigation impacts, economic impacts, landside impacts, costs and other technical data. A permit application will be submitted in early 2013, with a goal of obtaining a bridge permit in mid to late 2013. Design continues on the project in areas unaffected by bridge height. Bridge construction is scheduled to occur in late 2014, provided funding is secured.

Business Mitigation

16. How will businesses that are affected be compensated for lost revenue during construction?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that agencies conduct a comprehensive analysis of effects, disclose these findings and consider avoidance, minimization and mitigation for adverse impacts. The Final EIS discusses these effects related to the natural and built environment, community and economy in a comprehensive manner. It also describes actions to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts. The project's record of decision, issued by Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration on December 7, 2011, makes commitments to mitigate impacts, including measures to address loss of easy access to some businesses during construction. Current law prohibits the states of Washington and Oregon to compensate for business loss. However, programs will be implemented to help businesses during construction, such as:

- Business planning assistance
- Marketing and retail consulting
- Promotions to generate patronage in construction areas

Mitigation measures will be developed in greater detail in a business access mitigation plan, which will be prepared in coordination with affected businesses, the City of Vancouver, and C-TRAN or the construction contractor. The Record of Decision, Appendix A, Mitigation Commitments, can be found [online](#); pages A-9 and A-10 describe the mitigation measures for impacts to businesses during construction.

17. Of projects that have already been done in other cities, which ones do you see as setting a good example for us?

WSDOT, City of Vancouver and C-TRAN are exploring various construction mitigation methods used in similar light rail projects across the country. Projects in Portland, Phoenix, Seattle, Houston, Salt Lake City, and Denver all provide a variety of construction mitigation examples that may be considered for this project. In order to bring proven strategies to the table we will look at both successful methods and

lessons learned on those and other projects, which will help define the approach for downtown Vancouver. Vancouver is a unique community and the input from businesses and property owners along the alignment will influence which methods are chosen for the CRC project.

18. What will the contractor be held to as a minimum for notifying when things are going to change for routing/deliveries/customer access for a business?

Contractors will be required to maintain access and coordinate access changes with property owners. Notification requirements may vary depending on the activity. Notification standards will be set in each contract.

19. What will be the priority in the contract to find a contractor whose employees understand that it is important for them to frequent the businesses that they are working near during the day? Their patronage will be important.

CRC committed in the record of decision to identify local businesses to provide services during construction as part of the mitigation for potential reductions in patronage during construction. This information will be made available to the hundreds of people working on these projects in downtown Vancouver.

20. Close to VDA's heart....What will the impact of this project be on VDA's project, Turtle Place?

Turtle Place is currently located on C-TRAN property. The Final EIS for the CRC project identifies the property as a full acquisition. It could potentially be used as a surface parking lot if agreed to by C-TRAN and the City of Vancouver to help mitigate for some loss of parking caused by light rail.

21. Many people were worried about beloved downtown brands and events. What will be done to make sure that our Farmers Market, major events, and our convention business doesn't suffer during construction?

Access requirements or work restrictions for major events will be included in the construction contracts. Contractors will be required to maintain access to businesses and properties. Requirements for advance notice and temporary signage will help ensure travelers can find their way to downtown businesses and events.

22. Once tolling is in place there will be more costs passed on to restaurants and other businesses dependent on deliveries from Oregon. This fact along with the loss in traffic and customers will most likely put a number of businesses out of business. What should we plan for when this happens?

CRC will provide congestion relief, a more reliable trip and a new transit option, all of which will decrease travel time and in turn could decrease the cost of traveling across the I-5 bridge to Vancouver. A toll rate has not been determined yet. The rate setting process for the CRC project will be developed as part of a bi-state agreement between the Washington and Oregon transportation commissions. The transportation commissions will involve the public in the toll rate setting process.

Currently, the Washington Transportation Commission considers a number of factors when establishing toll rates including maintaining travel time, speed, reliability, and generating enough revenue to cover bond obligations. In order to generate enough revenue, rates cannot be set so high that drivers chose to not pay the toll, which will reduce the available revenue. The range of one-way toll rates studied for the financial analysis in the Final EIS was between \$1 and \$3 (2006 dollars, see Exhibit 4.3-3 from the FEIS). This range in 2020 dollars (post construction) would be \$1.41 to \$4.24.

23. Is there a comprehensive list of direct and indirect effects from construction that businesses and property owners can study in order to prepare for the downtime during construction?

Impacts from the locally preferred alternative and mitigation or compensation commitments for each are summarized in Appendix A of the record of decision. Mitigation is listed in two categories: long-term (those associated with project operation) and short-term (those associated with project construction). Appendix A is available [online](#), by contacting CRC by telephone at 866-396-2726, or by email at feedback@columbiarivercrossing.org.

A few of CRC's commitments to downtown Vancouver businesses, as documented in the record of decision, include:

- Supporting the City of Vancouver in implementing programs to help businesses during construction, such as: business planning assistance, marketing and retail consulting, and promotions to generate patronage in construction areas
- Access to and from I-5 and downtown and access to businesses will be maintained throughout construction
- Advance notice and detour signs will be provided to ensure customers, suppliers and employees can still access individual businesses
- Project staff will coordinate directly with businesses to identify access needs before construction begins
- Temporary signage will be provided to identify the location of access points to businesses during construction
- Notice of detours, temporary lane and parking closures and other disruptions will be provided in advance
- Coordinating the schedule, pace and order of construction to complete work efficiently and cost effectively and minimize impacts on business

24. According to some most projects do not come in on time and usually cost more than originally budgeted for. Knowing these issues can happen with the CRC project, are there plans for mitigating downtown businesses if there are extended delays and extra costs?

The cost range for the CRC project is developed through a risk-based analysis that takes into account potential risks that could extend the schedule and takes into account other variables that affect cost, such as inflation, cost of labor and materials and the availability of funding. Each of the risks identified through this process are actively managed to avoid cost overruns and schedule delays. Potential changes in cost or schedule are unlikely to affect mitigation commitments made in the record of decision.

Cost/Funding

25. What will be the cost of removal of the current I-5 bridge? Is it factored into the budget for the new bridge? Who will pay for that project?

Current project cost estimates are available by location. The demolition is included in the overall project cost. A detailed cost estimate for the demolition and removal of the I-5 bridges will be available when cost estimates are further refined. It will be paid for using the same sources of funds identified in the project's finance plan.

26. How will cost over runs be managed?

Projects are managed to be completed within budget, and WSDOT has a strong record of accomplishing an on-time and on-budget delivery record. Every effort is made to identify and account for potential overrun risks in project cost estimates. Cost estimates are reviewed and validated through the Cost Estimation Validation Process (CEVP). This process is designed to anticipate and incorporate potential risks (added costs) and opportunities (cost savings) into the projected costs—thus identifying early on those items that could increase project costs or lead to scheduling delays.

27. At the Oversight Committee meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 9 there was some doubt about whether \$400 million in federal highway funds would be available. Could you address the risk of not receiving that funding and who will pay for it if not funded by the federal government?

The CRC project is seeking construction funding from three major sources: the federal government, the states of Washington and Oregon and tolling the I-5 bridge. Targeted federal funding includes \$850 million from the Federal Transit Administration (New Starts) and \$400 million from the Federal Highway Administration. In earlier phases of project development, \$400 million was anticipated from Federal Highway Administration funds as a project earmark. However the recent Surface Transportation Authorization bill (MAP 21), does not include project earmark funds. Both Oregon and Washington are encouraging their federal delegations to fund the Projects of Regional and National Significance, for which CRC would be very competitive.

Environmental Review and Locally Preferred Alternative

28. Can you explain 'direct' and 'indirect' effects in this context?

The CRC project has treated construction-related impacts as temporary direct effects. Direct effects are defined as "those effects that are caused by a project action and that occur at the same time and place (as the action)." "Effects" includes ecological, aesthetic, historic, cultural, economic, social or health impacts. Effects may also include those resulting from actions which may have both beneficial and detrimental effects. Direct effects can be further broken into "long-term" and "temporary" effects. Long-term direct effects are those related to permanent changes resulting from project actions, such as the displacement of residents or businesses to accommodate the project's footprint. Temporary direct effects describe project-related impacts that are not permanent, such as disruptions to residents or businesses from project construction. The project's NEPA analysis includes extensive discussion of both the long-term and temporary direct effects of the CRC project.

29. Indirect effects are defined as those effects that are caused by an action and occur later in time or farther removed in distance, but that are reasonably foreseeable effects of the action. Indirect effects may include growth-inducing effects or induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems. Does the estimated \$3.2 billion project cost estimate include the indirect and direct effects that are not required to be mitigated or compensated under the Uniform Act?

Per the federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (Uniform Act), the project will compensate for direct and temporary impacts related to property acquisition and loss of access. An estimate of these costs were included in the project's cost estimate Individual property acquisition costs will be established through an independent appraisal process to ensure the owner receives the fair market value of the property. This process is governed by the federal Uniform Act. To date, the project has not conducted specific property valuations, which are necessary to determine the individual property acquisition cost. Business losses are not compensable in the states of Washington or Oregon.

30. Why has a supplemental EIS not been brought forward when the original bridge design has changed and when the revenue stream projections were off?

A supplemental Draft EIS was not required because the impacts of the composite deck truss fit within the parameters of impacts evaluated in the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS did not evaluate a single bridge type. It evaluated a range of impacts defined by vertical and horizontal parameters and general pier arrangements.

At Governor Kitzhaber's request, the Oregon State Treasurer conducted an independent review of the CRC's financing plan and released a report in July 2011. CRC incorporated the treasurer's recommendation in the Final EIS and took the following actions:

1. Used conservative traffic numbers in tolling assumptions, to account for the economic recession
2. Included conservative bonding assumptions that do not rely on an escalating toll rate
3. Incorporated federal TIFIA loans in all funding scenarios
4. Incorporated pre-completion tolling into finance plan

Please refer to [Chapter 4 of the Final EIS](#) for a description of the current plans for funding construction and operation of the locally preferred alternative. Work to conduct an updated traffic and revenue analysis in preparation to sell toll bonds for construction began in fall 2012.

Appendix A

Matrix of Consolidated and Original Questions

Consolidated questions	Corresponding original questions
1. How will parking spaces be affected in downtown Vancouver? How will this affect area retail, restaurants and residents?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will the effect of loss of street parking have on retail, restaurants and residents? • How many curbside parking spaces will be lost throughout downtown as a whole?
2. How will on and off street parking rules be enforced to limit parking spot “poaching” by light rail users?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the new park and ride structure(s), how will parking 'poaching' (drivers parking there without riding transit or carpooling) be discouraged? • Will on-street parking still be metered? If not, how will parking 'poaching' by park and ride customers be discouraged so that on-street parking remains available for downtown businesses? • How will parking rules be enforced both on and off street?
4. When will there be detailed drawings that show the proposed light rail transit and associated improvements?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When will there be detailed drawings and maps available that show the impacts to downtown? We are particularly interested in raised platforms, overhead lines, crosswalk locations and parking/delivery zones • Will there be shared roadway (cars and rail lines) as in Portland? Or will the lines be isolated from cars and divide the street as on Interstate Avenue?
6. How will the changes in parking, drive lane widths and turning movements on Broadway and Washington affect vehicle traffic on these streets?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the city of Vancouver and CRC considered the following analysis by Steve Burdick? “There are 13 blocks on the Broadway leg. At least 11 of the blocks will not have an LRT station on them, yet the functionality of all of Broadway will be compromised because automobile use is prohibited on LRT tracks. Parking drive lane widths and turning movements will all be restricted. As a result Broadway will look and feel different and drivers will be discouraged from using it, especially if bus service also crowds out the constrained capacity. These impacts create a distinct economic disadvantage to the businesses especially retail businesses on Broadway.” This applies to Washington Street too. (Steve Burdick) Vancouver Working Group Final Report page 63 http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/MeetingMaterials/VancouverWG/VWG_Final_Report.pdf
13. What freeway entrances and exits will be closed and for how long during construction? What are the alternate routes to downtown? How will you help people to find downtown?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With 6th Street closed/Mill Plain under construction....4th Plain will become the exit to get people into our downtown. What will be done to help people find downtown? • What freeway entrances and exits will be closed and for how long during construction? • How long will Hwy 14 be closed to downtown during construction? • What will alternative routes into downtown be? Is anybody worried about their capacity to handle the new load/numbers?
16. How will businesses that are affected be compensated for lost revenue during construction?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What community funds are being established to help mitigate the loss of revenue to businesses and property owners as a result of 6 ½ years of construction? Seattle and Portland had various mitigation funds in place to assist during construction of their rail projects. Is that an expectation downtown Vancouver should have?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Did the City of Vancouver require the CRC to study indirect effects and provide financial aid to affected businesses in downtown? Is the M3663 Attachment A page 10 and 11 under the heading of 'Construction Disruption' still on the table?• Under the present law is the government permitted or obligated to financially compensate businesses, building owners, and residents for direct and indirect effects?• People and businesses are refusing to sign long-term lease agreements because of fear of what the bridge project will do to the area. It is affecting my income now, will impact property values and my ability to conduct business in the future. Are these impacts considered when mitigation is discussed?• Has there been a study or is there an estimate for how long each business in the downtown area can survive during the 6.5 year construction period?
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