

# Bi-State Coordination Committee

Bi-State Coordination Committee is chartered by member agencies to review, discuss and make recommendations about transportation and land use issues of bi-state significance.

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August 24, 2004

Mr. Dale Stedman, Chairman  
Washington State Transportation  
Commission  
PO Box 47308  
Olympia, WA 98504-7308

Mr. Stuart Foster, Chairman  
Oregon Transportation Commission  
355 Capitol St. NE Room 101  
Salem, OR 97301-3871

Dear Chairmen Stedman and Foster:

On August 6 we received the one page document entitled "I-5 Columbia River Crossing Task Force" (the Proposal) dated 8-05-04 (attached). At our meeting on August 10, the Bi-State Coordination Committee met and heard presentations about the Proposal from Mr. Donald Wagner, SW Regional Administrator, WSDOT and Mr. Matthew Garrett, Region 1 Manager, ODOT and that the Proposal would be presented to you at your joint meeting September 2.

The concerns and recommendations listed below are those included in the April 29, 2004 letter (attached) presented at the ODOT and WSDOT Commission's joint May 25, 2004 meeting. The following is a summary of the concerns and recommendations about the Proposal provided in the interest of clarity.

- **Task Force Membership - Bi-State Coordination Committee.** The Proposal lists the proposed membership, including "Public Agencies". The I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership *Strategic Plan*, adopted by both the Oregon Transportation Commission and the Washington State Transportation Commission, states that the "...metropolitan planning organizations in Portland and SW Washington should adopt a Bi-State Coordination Agreement and establish the Bi-State Coordination Committee. Once established, the Bi-State Coordination Committee should proceed with all deliberate speed to: ... Begin discussions and planning for investing more in the I-5 Corridor..." The OTC and Washington State Department of Transportation approved the Bi-State Charter in January, 2004 and the Bi-State Coordination Committee was initiated in May 2004 following Charter approval of other members.

We propose that the membership list be revised to substitute "Bi-State Coordination Committee" for "Public Agencies". It is our recommendation that this mean that all members of the Bi-State Coordination Committee be included and serve on the Task Force.

- **Task Force Charge and Policy Recommendations.** The Proposal states that the Task Force will "...respond to and advise the Joint Project Team on technical data leading to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); provide advice to the Joint Commission Subcommittee...". We also understood from comments made by DOT representatives that the Task Force would not vote on matters or make policy recommendations.

The I-5 Columbia River Crossing Project will require policy discussions and ultimately, tough decisions about such issues as tolling/no tolling/(and I-205 inclusion or not), a new bridge or adding to the existing structure, high capacity transit or light rail and other ~~major policy issues.~~

It is our belief that whether or not this Task Force is charged at the outset with making recommendations on such issues, it inevitably would - or would cease to exist. Therefore, we suggest that the charge to the Task Force be revised to reflect the full range of activities including the formulation of policy that you would expect it to play.

- **Project Scope.** Our understanding is that the I-5 Columbia River Crossing Project is proposed to narrow the focus of this study to a multi-modal bridge. The I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership *Strategic Plan* stated that "*the Bi-State Coordination Committee should proceed with all deliberate speed to: "i. Form the TDM/TSM Forum and begin its work on the I-5 TDM/TSM Corridor Plan..."*"

We recommend that in order to provide a comprehensive and balanced approach, the Project should follow the direction included in the I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership *Strategic Plan* and expand the Project scope to include the TDM/TSM scope of work.

- **MPO Responsibilities/ Task Force Decision Process.** We are still concerned that the role of the MPOs in the project's decision making process has not been resolved. As you know, MPO's were established to ensure that complex multi-jurisdictional transportation projects have adequate intergovernmental coordination and community input prior to incorporation into metropolitan transportation plans. The elected and appointed officials that serve as governing bodies are designed to reflect local community values.

Additionally, Chapter 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations defines MPOs as follows: "*Metropolitan planning organization (MPO) means the forum for cooperative transportation decision making for the metropolitan planning area*".

Federal regulations further state: "2) *Project located in multiple MPOs. - If a project is located within the boundaries of more than 1 metropolitan planning organization, the metropolitan planning organizations shall coordinate plans regarding the project.* "

Federal regulations also define the MPO plans as: "*Metropolitan transportation plan means the official intermodal transportation plan that is developed and adopted through the metropolitan transportation planning process for the metropolitan planning area.*"

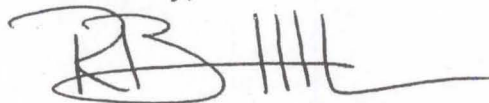
The formation of a I-5 Columbia River Task Force does not lessen the need for the MPOs to carry out their statutory responsibilities. Each MPO will need to consider changes to its transportation plan as a result of this Project and to coordinate their decisions with the other MPO. A Project decision-making process that provides for consultation and coordination between the MPOs and the Task Force and that includes the Bi-State Coordination Committee would facilitate actions that lead to project funding and implementation. The decision-making process should also allow for participation by the MPOs in policy deliberations early in the process and for MPO and Bi-State Coordination Committee review and recommendations for joint Transportation Commission consideration. In this way, MPO approval of transportation plan revisions related to the Project can be considered with much less time needed for the MPOs to absorb proposed transportation plan amendments.

In summary, we recommend:

- Modify the membership of the I-5 Columbia River Crossing Task Force, deleting "public agencies" and replacing it with "Bi-State Coordination Committee".
- Revise the I-5 Columbia River Crossing Task Force charge to include the responsibility to make recommendations on policy matters and expand the scope to be consistent with the Strategic Plan.
- Develop a decision-making process that explicitly provides for participation by MPOs and the Bi-State Coordination Committee.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations.

Sincerely,



Rex Burkholder, Chair



Craig A. Pridemore, Vice-Chair

cc: Douglas MacDonald, Bruce Warner, Matthew Garrett, Donald Wagner, Bi-State Coordination Committee Members

**DRAFT 8-05-04**  
**I-5 COLUMBIA RIVER CROSSING TASK FORCE**

**CHARTER**

The Interstate 5 Columbia River Crossing Project is one of a finite list of transportation projects that have Pacific Northwest region-wide significance. The Interstate 5 Columbia River Crossing Task Force's role will be to provide input into the Columbia River Crossing Project. Within the context created by the I-5 Strategic Plan the Task Force will: respond to and advise the Joint Project Team on technical data leading to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); provide advice to the Joint Commission Subcommittee throughout the EIS until the issuance of the Record of Decision; and represent and report back to their representative organizations.

**COMPOSITION**

The composition of the I-5 Partnership was used as a foundation for the formation of this Task Force. Due to the Northwest region-wide significance of the Columbia River crossing, the Task Force membership will also include statewide representation from Oregon and Washington.

*Selection Process -*

The Joint Commission Subcommittee will appoint a co-chair from each state. They will seek assistance from public agencies, community and business groups in the appointment of other members.

*Membership (from each state)-*

- Co-Chairs
- Public Agencies
- Trucking Industry
- Neighborhoods
- Businesses
- Community Organizations
- Statewide Organizations
- Environmental Organizations

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

- The Columbia River Crossing Task Force will provide input and response to the Joint Commission Subcommittee on work products and information generated by the EIS process.
- The task force co-chairs will report input to the Joint Commission Subcommittee.
- Each Task Force member is responsible for representing and communicating with their organization.

**STAFFING & OPERATIONS**

- The Columbia River Crossing Task Force will be staffed by the DOT Joint Project Team.
- The co-chairs will be responsible for developing methods by which the task force will make decisions and conduct meetings.

**DURATION**

- The Task Force will be developed in fall 2004, with the kickoff meeting tentatively scheduled in late fall 2004.
- The Task Force will then meet quarterly.
- The EIS is a multi-year process. Therefore some turnover is to be expected. Duration of tenure should provide consistency of representation for major milestones.

# Bi-State Coordination Committee

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April 29, 2004

Aubrey Davis, Chairman  
Washington State Transportation  
Commission  
PO Box 47308  
Olympia, WA 98504-7308

Stuart Foster, Chairman  
Oregon Transportation Commission  
355 Capitol St. NE Room 101  
Salem, OR 97301-3871

Dear Chairmen Davis and Foster:

On behalf of the Bi-State Coordination Committee (BCC), we would like to convey our recommendations for you and your Commissions' consideration concerning the role of the BCC in the *I-5 Columbia River Crossing Project*. The purpose of this letter and its attachments is to describe a proposed role for the BCC, provide you with a brief history of the I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership Project and illustrate how the BCC has been involved with this issue from the very beginning.

As described in the attached Background, the BCC and its predecessor have, since 1999, been closely involved with the issue of how best to address transportation and land use issues in the I-5 corridor. While we are confident that issues like design and accessibility impacts on downtown Vancouver, or riverine navigability and optimal grades for truck freight, or achieving a reasonable auto and high capacity transit mode balance can be addressed, we believe that such issues must have substantial local review. We also believe that a set of coordinated bi-state recommendations will help with the project decisions that you and your commissions will make.

Accordingly, after substantial discussion at several meetings, the BCC has reached a consensus in the recommendation of a role for the Bi-State Coordination Committee with regard to the *I-5 Columbia River Crossing Project*. We submit for your consideration the attached flow chart entitled the *Columbia River Crossing Project: Planning/EIS Scoping Phase Communication and Decision Making Process* and the following statement of the Bi-State Committee's role.

- The BCC's key role would be to forward policy recommendations to the Joint Transportation Commission Working Committee. For example, these would include transit mode, highway sizing and range of alternatives for environmental impact analysis. The analysis process to make these policy decisions would include such considerations as economic development opportunities, land use considerations, environmental justice and other environmental factors.

- The BCC's role throughout the project is to review the findings of the project development process and to concur with the analysis related to the purpose and need statement and range of alternatives for the EIS.
- The BCC's "bottom line" action to be taken in the first phase of the project would be to advise and recommend alternatives for environmental impact analysis.
- We are hopeful that this approach proves successful and can become a model for future Bi-State Coordination Committee involvement in subsequent policy decisions concerning the I-5 Columbia River Crossing Project.

The attached chart identifies a progression across the levels of project development that occur with a project of this complexity. Working from the bottom of the chart up these include the following: 1) technical project analysis coordinated across agency staff and consultants; 2) initial project alternatives development and technical evaluation; 3) regional project policy and alternatives decisions, and 4) state project policy and financing decisions. The boxes in the chart represent the responsible multiple jurisdictional entities that work together to communicate and make the various levels of recommendations. While the Bi-State Coordinating Committee is staged at the center of the regional decision making process it is also advisory to RTC and JPACT as the MPOs and to the Oregon/Washington Joint Transportation Commission Working Commission, or the Transportation Commissions, as determined by the Commissions.

In our discussion the Bi-State Committee recognized that more work was needed to define the citizen as well as industry involvement and communication component of the Project. In addition, there was concern voiced that representatives of those outside the bi-state area, perhaps those reflecting state-wide perspectives, might be appropriate to invite to join us in our review and discussion of Project issues.

The Committee also understands that as the Washington and Oregon Transportation Commissions further define their roles and the role of the Washington/Oregon Joint Transportation Commission Working Commission that this chart may need to be refined to reflect your decisions.

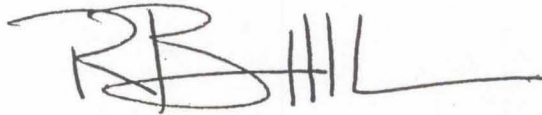
In summary the Bi-State Coordination Committee has concluded:

1. that there ought to be a single forum that makes recommendations on behalf of the region, broadly defined, to the two states;
2. the Bi-State Coordination Committee is a beginning or a substantial set of steps toward a single forum, but not necessarily yet complete;

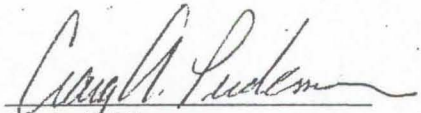
3. the Bi-State Coordination Committee is very interested in working with you and your Commissions to complete a single forum body, urging that the Bi-State Coordination Committee comprises the logical core.

We appreciated the opportunity to offer you this consensus statement of a proposed role for the Bi-State Coordination Committee in the development of the I-5 Columbia River Crossing Project. We look forward to the opportunity to discuss this further with you and to participate in the May 25, 2004 Joint Transportation Commission Working Committee.

Sincerely,



Rex Burkholder  
Metro Councilor and  
Chair, Bi-State Coordination Committee



Craig Fridemore  
Clark County Commissioner and  
Vice Chair

Attachments:

- Background Concerning the Bi-State Coordination Committee's Recommendation for a Role in the I-5 Columbia River Crossing Project
- Bi-State Coordination Committee Charter
- Columbia River Crossing Project: Planning/EIS Scoping Phase Communication and Decision Making Process

cc: Bi-State Coordination Committee Members