

Road Map Item #: 5.8

Product Name: **COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

PMP Appendix: APPENDIX O

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ABSTRACT: This deliverable describes the extensive community relations strategy employed by the CRC Program to provide consistent, timely, and accurate information to interested parties, facilitate dependable lines of communication with the public, and build broad support for the Program.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Draft Report

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ACRONYMS

CAC	Citizen Advisory Committee
CRC	Columbia River Crossing
ODOT	Oregon Department of Transportation
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation

1. Communications Plan

1.1 Overview

The CRC Program is employing an extensive community relations strategy to provide consistent, timely, and accurate information to interested parties, facilitate dependable lines of communication with the public, and build broad support for the Program. Community relations and engagement activities support pre-construction planning and construction of the Program.

The CRC Program recognizes that this will be a major construction effort and will disrupt the nearby communities, business districts and flow of commuter traffic. The public will experience access closures, noise, dust, and traffic impacts during construction of the CRC project. It will be the goal of the Program to execute an effective communications program that will serve the local community's needs and minimize harmful effects.

The CRC Executive Management Team has assembled an integrated inter-agency communications team to educate and involve the public and stakeholders in Program decisions. The team is composed of C-TRAN, TriMet, and consultant communication and public information staff to provide accurate and consistent messages to a variety of audiences. The CRC Strategic Communications Managers for ODOT and WSDOT direct the communications program and strategic approach. The CRC Communications Manager reports to the CRC Strategic Managers and approves implementation of the Program's public materials, events, workshops, and communications. As the Program moves forward, a communications program will be developed that keeps and prioritizes activities for the individual project delivery packages and associated contractor activities. Prior to the selection of a contractor, detailed communications plans will be developed, through a public process, to inform contractor specifications as it relates to community outreach. The organization of the program may change to include communications staff from ODOT and WSDOT and include more involvement from City of Portland and City of Vancouver staff. The Program will draw on resources and information from other mega-projects to provide examples of best practices and lesson learned. During construction of light rail in downtown Vancouver, the community outreach program employed by TriMet during the Portland Mall Light Rail project will serve as one example for the CRC Program.

The activities outlined below are representative examples of community involvement efforts that have been and will continue to be undertaken on behalf of the CRC Program. The CRC Communications Manager will write an annual communications plan that includes detailed messages and strategies for approval by the CRC Strategic Communications Managers. Records related to outreach activities, contacts made with the public, and comments received are kept in a communications database and in project electronic files.

1.2 Policy-Related Outreach to Decision-Makers and Influences

CRC provides regular briefings to decision-makers to ensure they have appropriate and timely information to support their discussions. Briefings are scheduled at the request of decision-makers or initiated by CRC.

- **Jurisdictional, institutional, and elected official briefings** – CRC provides regular briefings on Program status and schedule to state and local governments. For example, the Program provides periodic updates to the councils or boards of its local project partners, to individual members and committees of the state legislatures, and to the federal congressional delegations of both states.
- **Interest groups, business, and employer organization briefings** – CRC provides regular briefings on Program status and schedule to interested groups, businesses and employer organizations. Specific events arranged for larger interest groups may be organized, such as contractors or downtown Vancouver businesses.

1.3 Outreach to the Region

CRC's public outreach efforts employ a variety of tools, depending on the needs of the audience and whether comment is being sought or information being delivered. Summaries of comments received at each event are written to track the results of the outreach efforts and to help inform ongoing project development. Following are the outreach strategies most often used in the region.

- **Fairs, festivals, and community events** – Staffed information booths are used to provide information at local community events, which are generally held in the summer months. This informal outreach allows the CRC Team to reach thousands of people at locations that are convenient for them.
- **Open houses and workshops** – Public open houses and workshops are held for the general public, advisory group members, and stakeholders before key Program milestones. Open houses are typically held in sets of two across the project area (one in Portland and one in Vancouver). Planning workshops tend to focus on a specific issue and provide area residents with hands-on opportunities to learn about, and make recommendations on construction planning.
- **Social service, civic, and business group updates and briefings** – Small group discussions or individual briefings are used to respond to requests from groups for current Program information.
- **Drop-in events** – Informal meetings are held inside and outside of the Program area, with detailed Program information available for review and discussion with Program staff.
- **Project information** – Current information about the Program is published in newsletters and fact sheets (see Outreach Materials, below), as well as on the Program website. Information available to the public includes a Program overview,

current schedule, advisory group materials, and technical resources. Outreach materials include translated pieces targeted to several known populations within the program area that have limited English proficiency.

- **Constituent contacts** – Public comments and questions received by phone, by email, and in writing are tracked and responded to.
- **Surveys** – Surveys are occasionally used to inform Program or advisory group deliberation on specific topics. Surveys may be administered online, by mail, and/or in person.
- **Social media** – Timely updates on project news are provided via social media outlets, as appropriate.
- **Media** – Timely updates on Program news are provided to news outlets through news releases and through responses to reporter questions. More information is provided in the section “Media Relations,” below.

1.4 Outreach in the Program Area

In addition to the tools described above to reach out to audiences in the region, CRC also uses a more personal approach for audiences within the Program area. These outreach efforts also are tracked with meeting summaries and a database.

- **Property owners, business owners and managers, and residents** – Periodic one-on-one contact is made with property or business owners, managers, and residents along the transit and highway alignment by phone, by email, and in-person to share information and solicit comments. Owners of properties along the bridge/transit/highway alignment with potential impacts have been offered one-on-one meetings with staff since the Program began. As the project moves to construction, one on one communication with affected property owners will occur in coordination with Right of Way activities and Real Estate staff. During construction, programs designed to mitigate and ease the effects of construction will involve working closely with businesses in construction zones.
- **Neighborhood and community outreach** – The Program will maintain and build relationships with residents in neighborhoods in Portland and Vancouver that are directly affected by the Program, as well as with social service and advocacy organizations that serve populations within the program area. Neighborhoods within the Program area include: in Portland, Hayden Island, Bridgeton, East Columbia and Kenton neighborhoods; and in Vancouver, Esther Short, Arnada, Hudson’s Bay, Shumway, Lincoln, and Rosemere/Rose Village neighborhoods. The CRC Team continues to expand its information sharing and coordination efforts with Clark County and City of Portland neighborhoods and community and social service coalitions to ensure that program emails and print materials receive wider distribution in the metropolitan region.

- **Environmental justice communities** – Outreach to environmental justice populations within the Program area and to related organizations is conducted in order to provide information and receive input on program plans, potential impacts, and mitigation measures, as necessary.
- **Door to door outreach** – Door to door outreach is conducted within the project area to notify the local community and also to collect comments and questions. As the Program moves into construction, this method of outreach will be utilized often to communicate construction information. Door to door outreach is helpful in connecting the local businesses and property owners directly to a person from the Program and facilitates the exchange of information quickly and effectively.

1.5 Advisory Groups

The Program has used advisory groups throughout the project development process. In late 2011, most of the existing topic-based advisory groups were concluded.

A Bi-State Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) will be formed to provide input on corridor and local improvements as the Program advances from preliminary planning to refining designs and planning for construction. The timing for this committee could be tied to a project milestone. Additional committees may be formed as the need is determined.

The Urban Design Advisory Group, formed in 2006, meets on an as-needed basis and previously provided input on design guidelines for the Program. The Vancouver Transit Advisory Committee, formed in 2010 also meets on an as-needed basis and previously provided input on station location and park and ride design.

Previous advisory groups were active in earlier phases of project development. They included:

- Task Force, 2005–2008
- Marine Drive Stakeholder Group, 2009
- Community and Environmental Justice Group, 2006–2009
- Vancouver Working Group, 2009
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee, 2007–2011
- Freight Working Group, 2006–2011
- Portland Working Group, 2009–2011

1.6 Outreach Materials

The materials listed below are representative examples of the various information tools that are utilized on the Program. The form and content of outreach materials vary according to the application and the target audience, including translated materials for the predominant non-English languages spoken within the program area (Spanish, Russian, and Vietnamese).

Materials are distributed at outreach events, informational briefings, by email, over the Internet and by mail, depending on the needs of the audience and the type of information to be delivered.

- Monthly email updates distributed to a list of more than 5,000 addresses
- Website
- Twitter feed
- Fact sheets (including translated materials)
- Presentation materials (including PowerPoint presentations, display boards, maps, slides, or static displays)
- Newsletters or postcards
- Advertising (including display ads, web banner ads, postcards, posters, and fliers)
- Public comment forms

1.7 Media Relations

Communications with media is led by the CRC Strategic Communications Managers, who may appoint media spokespeople for the Program. Coordination with WSDOT, ODOT, TriMet, and C-TRAN communications managers and other project sponsors occurs on a regular and ongoing basis. Communications with media include:

- **Reporter briefings and materials** – Members of the media receive briefings at key milestones. When needed, press kits are developed to include program descriptions, graphics, timelines, and key decision dates. The press kits serve as a tool for the accurate and updated transmittal of new Program information and details.
- **Press releases** – Press releases coincide with significant Program events and milestones, including public meetings, findings, and decisions.
- **Editorial board briefings** – Editorial board meetings are used with a variety of publications within Clark and Multnomah counties to inform the editorial boards and their reporters about the Program and its progress. Editorial board briefings are conducted by executive level staff.
- **Minority and small press** – Minority and neighborhood-based media are kept informed about the Program through the distribution of press materials, reporter and editorial briefings, and monthly email updates. Press releases are translated as needed.
- **Op-Eds or letters to the editor** – Op-eds or letters to the editor are used to deliver accurate information directly to readers to reinforce Program direction and factual information.