



**From:** [NoEmailProvided@columbiarivercrossing.org](mailto:NoEmailProvided@columbiarivercrossing.org)  
**To:** [Columbia River Crossing](#)  
**CC:**  
**Subject:** Comment from CRC DraftEIS Comments Page  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 27, 2008 2:36:48 PM  
**Attachments:**

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Home Zip Code: 97201  
 Work Zip Code:

Person:  
 Lives in the project area  
 Works in the project area

Person commutes in the travel area via:  
 Car or Truck

- P-0457-001**
1. In Support of the following bridge options:  
 Do Nothing
  2. In Support of the following High Capacity Transit options:  
 Light Rail between Vancouver and Portland
  3. Support of Bus Rapid Transit or Light Rail by location:  
 Lincoln Terminus: No Opinion  
 Kiggins Bowl Terminus: No Opinion  
 Mill Plain (MOS) Terminus: No Opinion  
 Clark College (MOS) Terminus: No Opinion

Contact Information:

First Name:  
 Last Name:  
 Title:  
 E-Mail:  
 Address:  
 ,

Comments:

- P-0457-002** Adding more traffic lanes for commuters amounts to a gigantic taxpayer subsidy for

### **P-0457-001**

Preferences for specific alternatives or options, as expressed in comments received before and after the issuance of the DEIS, were shared with local sponsor agencies to inform decision making. Following the close of the 60-day DEIS public comment period in July 2008, the CRC project's six local sponsor agencies selected a replacement I-5 bridge with light rail to Clark College as the project's Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). These sponsor agencies, which include the Portland City Council, Vancouver City Council, TriMet Board, C-TRAN Board, Metro Council, RTC Board, considered the DEIS analysis, public comment, and a recommendation from the CRC Task Force when voting on the LPA.

With the LPA, new bridges will replace the existing Interstate Bridges to carry I-5 traffic, light rail, pedestrians and bicyclists across the Columbia River. Light rail will extend from the Expo Center MAX Station in Portland to a station and park and ride at Clark College in Vancouver. Pedestrians and bicyclists would travel along a wider and safer path than exists today.

For a more detailed description of highway, transit, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements associated with the LPA, see Chapter 2 of the FEIS.

### **P-0457-002**

As described in Chapter 3 (Section 3.4) of the DEIS and FEIS, and in the Indirect Effects Technical Report, highway capacity improvements and access improvements can induce development in suburban and rural areas that were not previously served, or were greatly underserved, by highway access. The DEIS outlines a comprehensive analysis of the potential induced growth effects that could be expected from the CRC project. A review of national research on induced growth indicates that there are six factors that tend to be associated with highway projects that

- P-0457-002** sprawl and therefore for land speculators, low efficiency development, global warming and all the other well documented ills caused by this welfare for developers. According to the press reports I've seen, the vast majority of the traffic over the bridge isn't commercial but rather commuters, many of whom got a break by buying cheap McMansions (whose prices don't reflect their true environmental costs) far away from where they work. They expect the rest of us to subsidize their anti-social, anti-environment choices by paying for their climate-changing driving infrastructure. Meanwhile, those of us who pay more in order to live closer to where we work and reduce our impact on the planet get penalized by paying higher taxes to fund the anti-environmental infrastructure that makes their cheap mortgages possible. And in the end, as has been shown every time such capacity has been expanded, it'll all just fill up again, with no net gain in return for the huge taxpayer rip off.
- The only way to stop sprawl is to make those who benefit from it pay the true cost -- either by sitting in traffic for hours or paying user fees. As people recognize the true costs of their decisions about where to live, that would discourage bad sprawl development and encourage good close in development.
- P-0457-003** We should save that limited money (this single project will consume most of the available funds for 20 years) and instead of subsidizing sprawl, use it to build and repair infrastructure that's higher in efficiency and lower in costs to the environment and the taxpayers -- light rail, bike paths, fixing potholes and building sidewalks in Portland.
- P-0457-004** According to opponents of a new bridge, the current bridge is structurally sound and could be made entirely safe with upgrades paid for by tolling it now. At a much, much lower cost, we could fix the ramps, put in a light rail and bike/ped connection (either added to or substituting for a current traffic lane or two), and force single-occupant vehicle drivers to carpool or take light rail. Then let Clark County pay to improve transit connections from the light rail station to Clark County neighborhoods. That, along with soaring gas prices, will reduce congestion substantially, obviating the need for an expensive new bridge that promotes the very kind of development and transportation that's killing the planet. If Clark County commuters don't like public transportation, fine -- but don't expect the rest of us to subsidize their anti environmental lifestyle with this massive boondoggle.
- P-0457-007**
- P-0457-008**

induce sprawl. These are discussed in the Indirect Effects Technical Report. Based on the CRC project team's comparison of those national research findings to CRC's travel demand modeling, Metro's 2001 land use / transportation modeling, and a review of Clark County, City of Vancouver, City of Portland and Metro land use planning and growth management regulations, the DEIS and the FEIS conclude that the likelihood of substantial induced sprawl from the CRC project is very low. In fact, the CRC project, because of its location in an already urbanized area, the inclusion of new tolls that manage demand, the inclusion of new light rail, and the active regulation of growth management in the region, the CRC project will likely reinforce the region's goals of concentrating development in regional centers, reinforcing existing corridors, and promoting transit and pedestrian friendly development and development patterns.

In October, 2008, the project convened a panel of national experts to review the travel demand model methodology and conclusions, including a land use evaluation. The panel unanimously concluded that CRC's methods and the conclusions were valid and reasonable. Specifically, the panel noted that CRC would "have a low impact to induce growth...because the project is located in a mature urban area," and that it would "contribute to a better jobs housing balance in Clark County...a positive outcome of the project". These results are summarized in the "Columbia River Crossing Travel Demand Model Review Report" (November 25, 2008).

In 2010, Metro ran the MetroScope model (an integrated land use and transportation model) to forecast growth associated with transportation improvements of a 12-lane river crossing and light rail to Clark College. Even with a 12-lane river crossing, the model showed only minimal changes in employment location and housing demand compared to the No-Build Alternative.

For a more detailed discussion regarding potential indirect land use changes as a result of the CRC project, including the likely land use changes associated with the introduction of light rail, please see Chapter 3 (Section 3.4) of the FEIS.

**P-0457-003**

See discussion of induced demand, above. Regarding priorities, as the only continuous north-south Interstate on the West Coast connecting the Canadian and Mexican borders, I-5 is vital to the local, regional, and national economy. The I-5 crossing also provides the primary transportation link between Vancouver and Portland, and the only direct connection between the downtown areas of these cities. As described in the DEIS, serious problems face this important crossing, including growing congestion, impaired freight movement, limited public transit options, high auto accident rates, substandard bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and vulnerability to failure in an earthquake. The fact that other important issues face our communities does not diminish the importance of addressing the problems plaguing the I-5 crossing.

CRC assumes funds allocated to other projects would remain dedicated to those projects, and anticipates needing to find new funds to finance the project. Funding for the project will come from a variety of sources including federal grants that would not be available to other transportation projects in the region, State of Oregon, State of Washington, regional and local sources. In addition, it is assumed that the replacement bridge will be tolled. Please refer to Chapter 4 of the FEIS for a description of the current plans for funding construction and operation of the LPA.

**P-0457-004**

The I-5 bridges, like many older bridges in the region and nation, are not seismically sound and were never designed to survive a significant earthquake. In 1995, ODOT commissioned a study to look specifically at

the lift spans of the I-5 bridges, which are considered the most vulnerable sections of the bridges. Vulnerabilities were found in the bearings, piles, piers, and lift span tower truss members. Both the northbound and southbound bridges have been identified as functionally obsolete bridges. This classification means they no longer meet the geometric and/or load capacity criteria of the Interstate system. The fact that there are other bridges in the region that are seismically unsound does not diminish the importance of protecting the I-5 crossing from failure in the event of a significant earthquake.

**P-0457-005**

Modeling has indicated that tolling I-5 without making the improvements that are part of the CRC project would not meet the project's Purpose and Need. This does not mean that some form of tolling prior to constructing CRC couldn't be implemented. The ultimate decision on any tolling options will be made by both the Washington and Oregon Transportation Commissions.

**P-0457-006**

The evaluation of the five alternatives in the DEIS was preceded by an extensive evaluation and screening of a wide array of possible solutions to the CRC project's Purpose and Need statement. Chapter 2 of the DEIS (Section 2.5) explains how the project's Sponsoring Agencies generated ideas and solicited the public, stakeholders, other agencies, and tribes for ideas on how to meet the Purpose and Need. This effort produced a long list of potential solutions, many of which were non-auto oriented options such as various transit modes and techniques for operating the existing highway system more efficiently without any capital investment. These options were evaluated for whether and how they met the project's Purpose and Need, and the findings were reviewed by project sponsors, the public, agencies, and other stakeholders. Alternatives that included only TDM/TSM strategies, or provided only transit improvements, would provide benefits, but could

only address a very limited portion of the project's purpose and need. This extensive analysis found that in order for an alternative to meet the six "needs" included in the Purpose and Need (described in Chapter 1 of the DEIS), it had to provide at least some measure of capital improvements to I-5 in the project area. Alternatives that did not include such improvements did not adequately address the seismic vulnerability of the existing I-5 bridges, traffic congestion on I-5, or the existing safety problems caused by sub-standard design of the highway in this corridor. The DEIS evaluated alternatives with more demand management (higher toll) and increased transit service with less investment in highway infrastructure improvements (Alternatives 4 and 5) compared to the toll and transit service levels included in Alternatives 2 and 3. The additional service and higher toll provided only marginal reductions in I-5 vehicle volumes, and they came primarily at the cost of greater traffic diversion to I-205. This analysis found that a more balanced investment in highway and transit, as represented by Alternatives 2 and 3, performed considerably better on a broad set of criteria.

**P-0457-007**

Significant increases in oil prices can have both short term and long term effects on travel behavior. In the short term, the options for responding to rising gas prices are more limited, and include driving less and/or changing from driving to walking, biking or transit for at least some trips. During recent increases in gasoline prices transit use increased and off-peak highway travel decreased. Peak period highway travel changed little.

Over the long term, there are more options for adjusting to changes in gasoline prices, besides changing driving behavior. Technological advances and legislative mandates can increase fuel efficiency standards in the long term. In turn, as older vehicles wear out, more consumers can replace them with more fuel efficient vehicles. Automobile manufacturers are developing and will continue to develop

new vehicle and engine technologies that require much less, or even no, petroleum-based fuels. This trend is already happening as evidenced by the growing popularity of gasoline-electric hybrid and small electric vehicles.

**P-0457-008**

See discussion of land use and traffic congestion, above.