


From: [Bomar, Audri](#)
To: feedback@columbiarivercrossing.org
CC:
Subject: FW: CRC Draft EIS 
Date: Tuesday, July 01, 2008 4:27:16 PM
Attachments: [CRC Task Force Letter.doc](#)
[Freight Roster 6-30-08.doc](#)

From: Gundersen, Heather
Sent: Tuesday, July 01, 2008 4:15 PM
To: Bomar, Audri; Strickler, Kris
Cc: Parisi, Dave
Subject: FW: CRC Draft EIS

*Thanks,
Heather
p. 360.816.2199*

From: Hillier, Robert [mailto:Robert.Hillier@pdxtrans.org]
Sent: Monday, June 30, 2008 5:16 PM
To: Gundersen, Heather
Cc: Gillam, John
Subject: CRC Draft EIS

Heather,
Please find attached comments from the Portland Freight Committee (and attached committee roster) on the CRC Draft EIS to be entered into the public record. I will also send you hard copies of the letter. Please contact me if you have any questions. Thanks

Robert Hillier
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<<CRC Task Force Letter.doc>> <<Freight Roster 6-30-08.doc>>

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June 30, 2008

CRC Task Force Co-Chairs Hewitt and Dengerick
Columbia River Crossing
700 Washington Street
Vancouver, WA 98660

Dear CRC Task Force Co-Chairs Hewitt and Dengerick:

L-014-001

The Portland Freight Committee (PFC) appreciates the opportunity to provide the following comments regarding the Columbia River Crossing Draft EIS. The PFC is advisory to Portland City Council and its membership includes 30 private sector representatives of freight service providers, shippers, trade associations and businesses directly related to multi-modal freight activities. Our roster is attached.

The PFC views the CRC as the most important transportation project presently under consideration in this region. Interstate 5 is the only continuous north/south interstate highway on the West Coast, linking the United States, Canada and Mexico. The June 24, 2008 vote by the CRC Task Force to recommend the replacement bridge with light rail transit as the locally preferred alternative in the Draft EIS further demonstrates that these alternatives would provide the most benefit to the region. The replacement bridge provides more congestion relief, better safety, river navigation improvements, less seismic vulnerability, and less impact on water quality than the supplemental river crossing. The light rail transit alternative provides better travel times, greater reliability, more direct access to key transit markets, and attracts more transit riders than the bus rapid transit (BRT) alternative.

L-014-002

Safety is extremely important to the members of the Portland Freight Committee. The stretch of I-5 within the project area, including the existing bridges and interchanges, has crash rates nearly 2 ½ times higher than statewide averages for comparable facilities. Not only is the high crash rate unacceptable from the standpoint of bodily injury and property damage but it contributes greatly to the congestion problem. Another safety issue is that the existing bridges do not meet seismic standards and there is not a cost effective way to upgrade them. The loss of either bridge due to an earthquake would have catastrophic consequences for the entire West Coast.

L-014-003

In economic terms, I-5 is a critical piece of real estate for Oregon and Washington. All freight flow – international, national, West Coast, and regional - is dependent on the daily function of the I-5 freeway. The bridge influence area is particularly important because it provides the main freight access to the Rivergate/Columbia Corridor Industrial Districts, which include the Port of Portland's intermodal marine terminals, and its international airport in North Portland, and the Port of Vancouver in Washington. In the Rivergate/Columbia Corridor alone, 47,000 jobs were

L-014-004

L-014-001

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 freight 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.

L-014-002

As described in Chapter 3 (Section 3.1) of the DEIS, ODOT's Safety Priority Index System (SPIS) ranked two locations within the CRC project area, the Hayden Island Interchange and the North Portland Harbor Bridge, within the top 5% of the highest scored sites or, high crash locations, in the state for 2004 to 2006. Within Washington, five locations along I-5 in the project area have been categorized by WSDOT as high accident locations, as reported in the DEIS.

L-014-004 | reported in the manufacturing, distribution and service sectors in 2004. There are no other major highways that provide ready access to this vital economic area.

L-014-005 | Currently, about 70 percent of the regional freight tonnage moves by truck. Scheduling predictability is critical to meet the demands of freight customers. The increasing hours of congestion around the Columbia River bridges make it increasingly difficult to meet scheduling requirements. Most of the truck trips moving through the bridge area either originate or terminate in the bridge influence area. Continuing three through traffic lanes in each direction, as recommended by the CRC Task Force, along with the additional auxiliary lanes and redesigned interchanges will more efficiently and safely move traffic on and off of I-5 and provide the additional capacity necessary to reduce traffic congestion. In addition, the provision of light rail transit, coupled with a variable rate tolling strategy and improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities, will reduce automobile trips and further reduce traffic congestion along the I-5 corridor.

L-014-006 | Many citizens, including members of the Portland Freight Committee, have expressed concerns about the projected cost of a new bridge. It is important to point out that the bridge span itself is estimated to be less than 1/3 of the total project cost. The new interchanges, light rail transit service and improved facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians all add significantly to the cost. The old bridge has lasted over 90 years. A new bridge will likely last for 100 years or more. To postpone the project for any length of time will only increase the costs. From the perspective of the Portland Freight Committee, an investment in the replacement bridge is an investment in the region's future.

L-014-007 | The Portland Freight Committee supports the CRC Task Force Resolution that recommends a replacement bridge with light rail transit as the locally preferred alternative.

Sincerely,

Corky Collier
PFC Chairman



Gary Eichman
PFC Vice Chairman



Cc: Director Susan D. Keil,
City of Portland – Office of Transportation

Heather Gundersen,
CRC Environmental Manager

Improving safety and mobility of cars and freight using the bridge and highway is a part of the CRC project's purpose and need. As described in Chapter 3 (Section 3.1) of the DEIS and FEIS, the replacement bridge and highway alignment, which was chosen as part of the LPA, includes a range of safety and design improvements. Some of those improvements include:

- A new bridge structure high enough for marine traffic, which eliminates the need for a lift span
- The addition of safety shoulders for stalled vehicles and incident responders
- Improved sight lines so drivers can see over the crest of the bridge, reducing the potential for rear-end collisions during congested periods
- Longer on-ramps and off-ramps to make it easier for drivers to merge onto traffic, and improve connections between interchanges
- Reducing congestion over the bridge compared to No-Build, by improving traffic operations, providing light rail and charging a toll to cross the river.

Additional potential safety measures, such as eliminating interchanges or reducing posted speeds, were considered during earlier phases of the CRC project but were dropped from further consideration because they did not meet the accessibility goals of the project, did not meet highway design standards, and/or were not supported by the local jurisdictions.

L-014-003

Thank you for taking the time to submit your comments on the I-5 CRC DEIS.

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L-014-004

Thank you for taking the time to submit your comments on the I-5 CRC DEIS.

L-014-005

Thank you for taking the time to submit your comments on the I-5 CRC DEIS.

L-014-006

Thank you for taking the time to submit your comments on the I-5 CRC DEIS.

L-014-007

Thank you for your comment. 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.

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