

P-0705-001

Light rail has been endorsed by every local Sponsoring Agency (Vancouver City Council, C-TRAN, RTC, Portland City Council, TriMet, and Metro), whose boards are comprised of the elected leadership of the region.

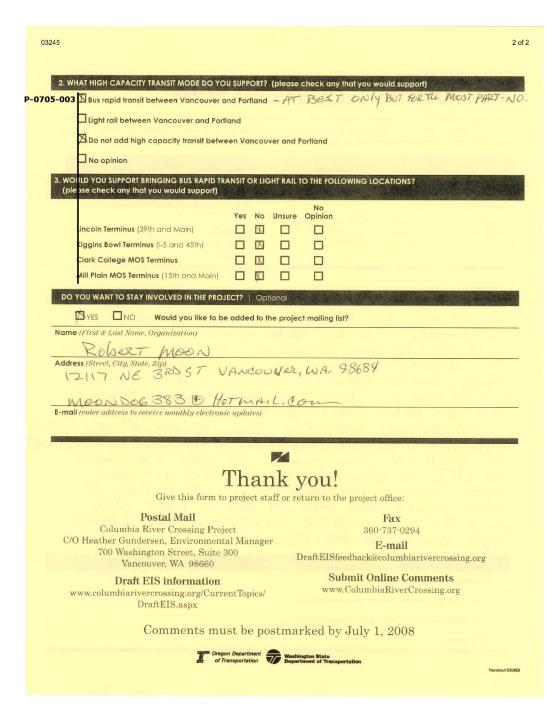
Annual light rail passenger trips crossing the I-5 bridge in 2030 are projected to be 6.1 million, with daily ridership around 18,700. The travel time for the morning commute by light rail between downtown Vancouver and Pioneer Square in downtown Portland will be approximately 34 minutes. Light rail would travel on a dedicated right-of-way, with more reliable travel times than auto drivers dealing with unpredictable road conditions, traffic congestion, and parking challenges.

The CRC project planning for light rail incorporates and supports the principles of the Vancouver's City Center Vision Plan. Downtown Vancouver has seen recent growth in higher density mixed use projects from three to 12 stories in height. In addition, another 4,000 downtown condominiums are proposed or pending as part of new developments. The core of Vancouver has, along with many of the larger corridors such as Fourth Plain Blvd, medium to high density residential development and an urban mix of uses. Transit demand in these areas is quite high, and ridership will increase with the introduction of light rail.

Long-term operation and maintenance of the new light rail line will be funded through C-TRAN and TriMet. For its share of the operations and maintenance funding, C-TRAN plans on having a public vote.

P-0705-002

As described in Chapter 1 of the DEIS, the project's Purpose and Need reflects "previous planning studies, solicitation of public input, and coordination with stakeholder groups." This outreach, and prior planning studies, identified improving transit service along the I-5 corridor as an



important element of this project. This need is included in the project's Purpose and Need. As such, any alternative (except No-Build) evaluated in the DEIS must address this need to improve transit service.

Regarding light rail, there has been significant support for light rail during throughout public process. Numerous recent surveys have shown strong support for light rail in Vancouver. These include the Public Opinion Poll, and Focus Groups of October 2006 (facilitated by Davis, Hibbits, & Midghall Opinion Research Firm), and a phone survey conducted by Intercept Research Corp in 2007, and reported in the Columbian on August of the same year. In the 2006 poll, 50% of Clark County residents preferred extending light rail into Vancouver to other transit expansion options or doing nothing, while the 2007 survey found that nearly two out of three Vancouver residents supported extending light rail. Furthermore, light rail has been endorsed by every Sponsoring Agency, whose Boards are comprised of the elected leadership of the area.

Though outer parts of Clark County lack urban densities and mixes of uses, the same can be said for outer portions of Multnomah and Washington Counties. The core of Vancouver has, along with many of the larger corridors such as Fourth Plain Blvd, medium to high density residential development and an urban mix of uses. Transit demand in these areas is quite high, and ridership will increase with the introduction of light rail. Downtown Vancouver has seen recent growth in higher density mixed use projects from three to 12 stories in height. In addition, another 4,000 downtown condominiums are proposed or pending as part of new developments.

P-0705-003

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.