

**From:** [NoEmailProvided@columbiarivercrossing.org](mailto:NoEmailProvided@columbiarivercrossing.org)  
**To:** [Columbia River Crossing](#)  
**CC:**  
**Subject:** Comment from CRC DraftEIS Comments Page  
**Date:** Monday, June 30, 2008 7:34:17 PM  
**Attachments:**

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Home Zip Code: 97217  
 Work Zip Code: 97201-97225

Person:

Lives in the project area  
 Works in the project area  
 Owns a business in the project area  
 Commutes through the project area

Person commutes in the travel area via:

Bicycle  
 Car or Truck  
 Walk  
 Other - Sailboat

**P-0744-001**

1. In Support of the following bridge options:  
 Do Nothing
2. In Support of the following High Capacity Transit options:  
 Bus Rapid Transit between Vancouver and Portland  
 Light Rail between Vancouver and Portland
3. Support of Bus Rapid Transit or Light Rail by location:  
 Lincoln Terminus: Yes  
 Kiggins Bowl Terminus: Yes  
 Mill Plain (MOS) Terminus: Yes  
 Clark College (MOS) Terminus: Yes

Contact Information:  
 First Name: Conrad J.  
 Last Name: Burke  
 Title: Contractor

**P-0744-001**

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.

E-Mail:  
Address: 635 North Blandena  
Portland, OR 97217

Comments:

- P-0744-002** This proposal makes no sense. It is based on fundamentally flawed assumptions from inherently biased interests.
- Trashing the Current Bridges is A Wasteful and Stupid Idea
- Destroying the existing historic, visually pleasing (and perfectly good) bridges to build another hideous concrete mega-beast is just a terrible idea to begin with. Why would anyone other than a bridge-building contractor (or a slimy politician) even consider such a ludicrous proposal? I have crossed the existing spans a hundred times, and never once have I found the traffic to be excessive.
- P-0744-003** 12-Lane Freeways Are Disgusting
- The "preferred" plan to make the new spans 12 lanes wide is completely beguiling. Is the intent to eventually "upgrade" all of I-5 in Portland to 12 lanes for the convenience of suburban single-occupancy commuters? If not, why only this area? I-5 south of the city center is every bit as congested right now as the Columbia bridge. Anyone who has ever visited say, California, can tell you that having 12 lanes of traffic does nothing but produce 12 lanes of gridlock. And having one tiny section of 12-lane freeway will do nothing but move the congestion to the end of the 12-lane section - i.e., moving Vancouver's problem to North Portland.
- P-0744-004** If 12 lanes you must build, why must all of them be dedicated to single-car commuters? If facilitating inter-state commerce is a primary goal of this project, why no dedicated truck lanes? If easing traffic is a goal, why no dedicated HOV lanes? Even Los Angeles doesn't build 12-lane freeways without HOV lanes - are your planners even dumber than theirs?
- P-0744-005** This Proposal Benefits Vancouver and Screws Portland
- Clearly, destroying Portland's historic Columbia River bridge (sorry, it was not built to go to Vancouver) and building a new butt-ugly concrete traffic-jam deliverer to our side of the river will do virtually nothing for the Portlanders who will pay most of the cost.
- P-0744-006** We will get vastly increased traffic throughout the metro area, especially in North and Northeast Portland where Washington drivers are already dreaded due to their refusal to follow any traffic laws or common sense. We will get vastly increased vehicle emissions, contributing to hundreds or thousands of us getting asthma or lung cancer, and dying early. And of course we will get an even-more jam-packed freeway, full to the
- P-0744-009**
- P-0744-010**

**P-0744-002**

The CRC Task Force - composed of 39 leaders from a broad cross section of Washington and Oregon communities – was tasked with advising the CRC project team, including federal sponsors, and providing guidance and recommendations at key decision points over the course of nearly 3 ½ years. Public agencies, businesses, civic organizations, neighborhoods and freight, commuter and environmental groups were all represented on the Task Force. The Task Force voted to develop a supplemental bridge alternative, in an attempt to find an alternative to total bridge replacement that would still meet the project's purpose and need but at lower cost and with greater reliance on managing demand with higher tolls and more transit service. The two most promising supplemental alternatives were considered in the DEIS. Based on the detailed analysis that followed, the Task Force recommended, and all project sponsors agreed, that the replacement bridge with light rail was the locally preferred alternative.

**P-0744-003**

The proposed new add/drop lanes (i.e., lanes that connect two or more interchanges) are used to alleviate safety issues associated with the closely spaced interchanges in the project area and are not designed to increase capacity generally on I-5. 68 to 75% of I-5 traffic enters and/or exits I-5 within the CRC project area, and these add/drop lanes provide space for this traffic to do so without disrupting cars and trucks traveling to destinations further north and south of the project area. The project does not propose to add lanes north or south of the project limits.

The DEIS evaluation found that the project, with a toll and light rail, would actually reduce the total daily volume of traffic using the I-5 and I-205 river crossings by approximately 3%. The FEIS analysis of the project has been updated to include an evaluation of how the CRC project would affect Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) (see Chapter 3, Section 3.1). Rather than inducing sprawl, the CRC project will likely

- P-0744-010** | brim with single-occupancy commuters from the Vancouver area. I cannot even fathom why anyone who lives in Oregon would consider supporting this plan for one minute.
- P-0744-011** | This Project Undermines Oregon's Land-Use Laws
- What is the purpose of preserving farm and forestland in Oregon if the same development can occur across the river, free from Oregon taxation? That is exactly what this project will enable, and very likely is intended to enable by its Washington backers. Northwest forest and farmland is Northwest forest and farmland, regardless of which side of the Columbia it is exists on. As the citizens of Oregon recently affirmed by over 60% (M49), this is land that must be saved from sprawl. Yet Vancouver, Washougal, Camas, etc, are experiencing massive, sprawl-style growth precisely because their outlying areas are not subject to the same land-use restrictions that are in force in Oregon. The only problem, of course, is that there are no jobs in these Mcsuburbs, so the people who live there must somehow get across the Columbia - an increasingly daunting task. Hence this proposal, and our next point:
- P-0744-012** | The Assumption that the I-5 Bridge Will Get Three-Times More Congested Is Flat-Out Wrong, and You Know It
- This project, and any public support it enjoys, is based entirely on the premise that "I-5 will be congested 20 hours a day in 2020". Catchy, but completely ridiculous.
- For one, anyone who commutes on a regular basis through different parts of Portland could have told your master planners, I-5 south of Portland is far, far worse right now than north of the city. The only, repeat ONLY time it is backed up north of the I-405 is when it is jam-packed full of cars with Washington plates containing 1 person. This, essentially, is noted in the study: Clark county commuters are the reason I-5 backs up north of Portland. So the existing "problem" could be solved easily and cheaply.
- The assumption that traffic on the portion of I-5 in question will grow exponentially over the next 20 years is clearly wrong: once the single-occupancy commuters coming over from Washington have to wait more than 3 hours to get to and leave Portland each day, NO ONE WILL MOVE TO CLARK COUNTY. Its that simple. You would have to be insane to believe that Clark County will continue to grow at its current rate if part of living there is sitting in gridlock traffic more than 6 hours per day. I challenge anyone to stand up in public and make that argument.
- P-0744-013** | On top of that, gas prices show no sign of ever going down, or even slowing their march toward \$10 a gallon. How bright will we feel with a 12-lane, \$4.2 billion bridge with only 4-lanes worth of traffic?

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 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. The model showed only minimal changes in employment location and housing demand compared to the No-Build. For more information see FEIS Chapter 3, Section 3.4.

**P-0744-004**

High occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes work when they are part of a network, and could potentially be a useful tool in the CRC area if employed as part of a regional plan. The 5-mile CRC project by itself is too short in length to provide the true benefits of HOV lanes, but should the region adopt and develop a HOV system, lanes within the bridge influence area could potentially be designated as part of the network.

The CRC project team has looked at HOV lanes and freight lanes, which are typically located on the inside freeway lane next to the barrier, as part of its technical analysis. Because about 70 percent of the vehicles enter and/or exit I-5 within the 5-mile study area, access to and from a HOV lane or freight lane could create traffic operational problems by increasing lane changes (for example, HOVs entering the freeway and needing to merge all the way to the inside lane). The results of this analysis are described in more detail in Section 3.1 of the DEIS.

**P-0744-005**

As indicated in Chapter 3 (Section 3.8) of the DEIS, the 1917 (northbound) I-5 bridge structure is listed on the NRHP. The 1958 (southbound) bridge, as a bridge on the National Interstate System, was determined not to be significant at a national level and is not considered eligible for the NRHP. However, the two bridges together are an

- P-0744-014** This Project Will Kill Polar Bears, and Poor People
- As noted in the EIS, the preferred alternative will result in MORE CARBON EMISSIONS than any of the other options. That is a violation of Oregon law, and a violation of the conscience of anyone who cares about the vast and very real effects of climate change.
- P-0744-015** Vancouverites Won't Use Light Rail if they Could Drive More Cheaply and Easily
- Who the hell would? People move to Vancouver, and Clark County generally, to SAVE MONEY. The only way light rail to that area makes sense is if its made to be the best option for getting to Portland - a 12-lane freeway to Vancouver invites a whole lot of empty light-rail trains, just wasting more electricity.
- P-0744-016** The Simple, No-Brainer Solution: Toll Single Occupancy Vehicles on the I-5 Bridge
- There is no better way to solve the "problems" this proposal would address. Its very easy to understand, even for highway planners:
1. Single-occupancy vehicle drivers are causing the traffic on the I-5 bridge to back up in the morning, solely because of their selfishness.
  2. Impose a stiff toll on SOVs on the bridge, and their numbers will drop dramatically.
  3. Problem solved.
- P-0744-017** 4. Bonuses: Less emissions through the metro. Less wear and tear on Portland's roads. Less traffic in the metro area. More bicycle-friendly streets in Portland, leading to still less traffic. \$4.2 billion less wasted on a completely unnecessary bridge project that only benefits 1/10 of the people who would pay for it. A clear bridge for interstate commerce. Money for light-rail and repairs to the existing bridges.
- P-0744-018**

important element of the historic fabric both for the region and for downtown Vancouver.

Because the 1917 bridge is listed on the NRHP, it is afforded special protection under section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act. This law prohibits the USDOT from funding any project that would have an adverse impact on significant historic resources, unless it can be demonstrated that there are no prudent and feasible alternatives that would avoid that impact.

The Supplemental River Crossing, which maintained the existing bridges with seismic retrofits and was analyzed as a component of two of the five alternatives studied, was determined feasible, but not prudent. It would not satisfactorily meet the project need. In addition, the alterations necessary to make the existing bridges safe, reliable, and fully multi-modal, as described in Chapter 4 of the DEIS and FEIS, would undermine the historic integrity of the bridges. The Sponsoring Agencies therefore decided to remove and replace the existing bridges.

Proposed mitigations for the adverse effects of the NRHP-listed I-5 bridge can be found in Chapter 3 (Section 3.8) of the FEIS.

#### **P-0744-006**

Please refer to Chapter 4 of the FEIS for a description of the current plans for funding construction and operation of the LPA. This discussion provides an updated assessment of likely funding sources for this project, though it is not common practice to receive funding commitments prior to completion of the alternative selection process. As described in the FEIS, project funding is expected to come from a variety of local, state, and federal sources, with federal funding and tolls providing substantial revenue for the construction. As Oregon and Washington businesses and residents will benefit from the project's multi-modal improvements, both states have been identified as

contributors to the project. As jurisdictions on both sides of the river seek to encourage non-auto travel, tolls are not anticipated for bikes, pedestrians, and transit users. Lastly, CRC assumes funds allocated to other projects and purposes would remain dedicated to those projects and purposes.

**P-0744-007**

The project would change some circulation patterns on local streets, but in general, by reducing congestion on I-5, and improving travel time reliability on the highway, traffic will be less likely to divert onto local streets. Therefore the project is expected to reduce cut-through traffic on neighborhood streets and potentially increase livability in neighborhoods adjacent to the I-5 improvements of CRC. This, and other effects on local streets, are described in Chapter 3 (Section 3.1) of the DEIS and FEIS. CRC is not intended to fix bottlenecks on I-5 south of the project area, such as the I-5/I-405 split. However, CRC would not exacerbate congestion at these locations because it would not increase the traffic volume traveling through this portion of the corridor. As discussed in the DEIS and FEIS (Section 3.1), this project would not increase daily traffic levels due to the toll moderating demand and the introduction of light rail increasing transit mode share. For additional information on impacts to Neighborhoods and Environmental Justice communities, please see Chapter 3 (Section 3.5) of the FEIS.

**P-0744-008**

The air quality analysis indicates that emissions will be substantially lower by 2030, with or without the project, than they are today.

**P-0744-009**

The air quality analysis in the FEIS Chapter 3 (section 3.10) indicates that air emissions from I-5 will be substantially lower in the future than they are today, and that the project will further reduce regional emissions

compared to the No-Build Alternative. Localized emissions will be higher in some areas, but still well within national ambient air standards.

**P-0744-010**

Please see response to comment P-0744-007.

**P-0744-011**

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 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-0744-012**

By 2030, the region's population is expected to increase by one million people. This increase will result in more people needing to travel between home, work, school, recreation, etc. In 2005, 135,000 vehicles crossed the Columbia River on the Interstate Bridge, which led to 4-6 hours of congestion each weekday. By 2030, 184,000 are predicted to cross the river, which would lead to 15 hours of daily congestion if no action is taken.

Congestion occurs when vehicle demand is greater than a transportation system's capacity. It results in slower speeds and increased travel times. CRC defines congestion as vehicles traveling less than 30 mph. The Columbia River Crossing project uses information gathered from Metro's

nationally-recognized travel demand models to determine the project's effect on congestion. These models predict trip frequency, types or modes of transportation, destination, and time of day. Transportation planners use these models to analyze the effects of such factors as increased population and employment, transportation improvements, and new developments on the transportation system.

Based on the Metro model's past ability to predict transportation effects, the CRC project is confident in the data received from Metro and uses it to determine what impact the project will have on congestion. The improvements proposed by the project to the highway and seven interchanges will help better accommodate increased future vehicle traffic. New auxiliary lanes and longer on/off ramps will allow safer and more efficient merging and weaving to enter or exit the freeway. Narrow lanes and shoulders will be widened to current standards. Shoulders will be added where they are currently missing. All of these changes will improve the flow of traffic in the bottleneck area of the Interstate Bridge.

**P-0744-013**

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-0744-014**

As discussed in Chapter 3 (Section 3.19) of the FEIS, the LPA would result in lower GHG emissions than the No-Build Alternative.

**P-0744-015**

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-0744-016**

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-0744-017**

As Chapter 3 (Sections 3.10 and 3.11) of the DEIS described, and as Chapter 3 (Sections 3.10 and 3.11) of the FEIS further elaborated, noise and air emission levels will improve for communities and most households along I-5. Air quality will be improved in large part by measures unassociated with the CRC project, such as regulated improvements in vehicle fuel emissions and in cleaner gasoline and diesel. Highway noise mitigation proposed for the CRC project would result in fewer noise impacts in the future with the project than there are today. There will be some locations where noise impacts cannot be mitigated. It is also true that with the introduction of light rail, better bicycle facilities, and a toll, the Average Daily Trips over the bridge will be reduced from the levels expected under the No-Build Alternative. The livability of residents along I-5 will also be improved as a result of greater personal mobility, an improved transit network, an improved network for walking and biking, less traffic cutting through neighborhoods, and the subsequent job creation that is expected to occur as a result of this major investment.

**P-0744-018**

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.