

**Parametrix**

ENGINEERING • PLANNING • ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Project Name:** CRC **Project No.:** 2733012004  
**Location:** Clark County **Meeting Date:** June 24, 2008 **Time:**  
**Minutes by:** Katie Clements  
**Attendees:** **Company:**

**Subject: CRC Task Force Public Meeting: Hearing Testimony**

---

**Henry Hewitt:** I'm Henry Hewitt, one of the co-chairs of the Columbia River Crossing Task Force and Hal, the other co-chair, agreed early on that we would alternate who was going to chair which meetings and we would alternate meetings between Oregon and Washington but as it's turned out, the last several meetings have been in Washington. He told me it was my turn to chair the meeting so here I am. I'd like to welcome everybody and we do know that there's some problem on the I-5 highway on the Oregon side that's causing traffic delays and that people will probably be late in arriving, particularly those people coming from that direction. The reason for getting started is that at about 4:15 Gov. Gregoire is gonna call in and has a few words that she'd like to give with respect to the project and where we are and I think we at least want to be attentive for that for those of us that are here. In the meantime we'll get started with some of the formalities. Please turn off your cell phones. I've turned mine off and it tends to cause disruption with the technology if we leave the cell phones on. As always, our meeting tonight will be broadcast on CVTV and in Portland on the community media. You can watch the Task Force meetings on the internet through the link to the project (LINK). We have materials that have been distributed and we have a lot of paper tonight. Hopefully everyone either has a copy or can share with somebody who does. By way of background, we began this process in I think the February timeframe of 2006. I was asked to be co-chair and was told it would be a year and a half or two years of meetings, once a quarter. Well here we are more than 3 years later and my notes tell me this is the 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting, so that's more frequently than quarterly and longer than 2 years. Tonight we will hear a project update, get public input received on the DEIS, there will be time for public comments

We have people signed up and once again I would ask that you to be as brief as you can be and in any event we'll cut you off or have you close down at about 3 minutes so that we can get all the people that we have signed up in the allotted time and excuse me if I mispronounce names. The first person we have is Steve Citron.

**Steve Citron:** Thank you. My name is Steve Citron and I am a Vancouver resident. I am a PhD Engineer and a fellow of the Society of Automotive Engineers. I am concerned and my comments reflect an interest in congestion over the new bridge compared to the No Build option. So, very simply, one of the statements from CRC is that



## Meeting Minutes (continued)

Mara Gross: After providing public testimony, this commenter specifically stated that their testimony was intended for the Task Force only, and requested that their comments not be considered to be formal comments on the Draft EIS.

**Terry Parker:** My name is Terry Parker, PO Box 13503, Portland. A myth seems to exist in the minds of many of the critics of this project who seem to suggest that the majority of commuters from Clark County are only going to downtown Portland. This myth then propagates another myth that basically suggests that no increases in motor vehicle capacity are needed and that extending Max into Vancouver, building more subsidized bicycle infrastructure, and variable tolls to motorists will solve the congestion problem. This is a combination of backward thinking that is truly a myth. Such a proposal only does economic harm and further separates the two sides of the river when the project should bring them together. Any alternative transport infrastructure constructed must be share with the bridge as that increases roadway capacity. Under no circumstances should a separate bridge structure be constructed for just the chosen transit option, bicycle or ped options with or without a bridge structure. Singling out motorists only for tolling is socialistic profiling based on choice of vehicle and therefore discriminatory. With the skyrocketing costs of fuel, no outdated dictatorial and subsidized incentives are needed to promote alternative forms of transport. A real bridge in a reality check world necessitates a cost-sharing financing plan. Therefore, if tolling is implemented for any kind of mode of transport, then the users of all vehicles must be required to pay a toll or a user fee. Transit passengers must be obligated to pay any proportionate local share with a surcharge on transit fares. And instead of just providing lip service, pedestrians and bicyclists must also pay their own way with a bridge toll to cover any money spent on providing their infrastructure. The CRC needs to come clean, stop hiding the price tag for bicycle infrastructure and provide the public with authentic numbers of the projected bicycle crossing so this toll can be calculated. Moreover, the underlying problem with this project is that it has become governed by special interest and politically motivated so-called science with socialistic controls that involves planning for a surge in population while dismissing the reality check needs of overall transport infrastructure. Practical science says that the world is overpopulated by humans therefore any regional planning efforts should begin by finding ways to reduce population growth instead of constraining roadways that does harm to the local economy and interstate commerce. And finally, in May, I provide the CRC with 6 pages of testimony in which I noted that none of the 5 alternatives currently on the table meet reality check objectives that should be part of this process. My suggestion is a detailed compromise that adds new and combined infrastructure only where it is essential and reuses the regional assets that are already in place. This compromise basically suggest a new freeway bridge for all I-5 through traffic and reusing the existing historical bridges for slower local and interchange traffic, bicycles and pedestrians and possibly transit. All I can say at this point is that if you haven't read it thoroughly along with the other testimony submitted by the public then you are not doing the job you have been appointed to do and should not be voting on any recommendation tonight. (He holds up diagrams from his previously sent letter too)

**P-0783-002** **Abbie Peterson:** I can't be disingenuous. I can't thank you for a job not well done. Yes, you have put in time but many of you have been paid for that time and paid very well. For those of you who volunteered, thank you for that but I wish you would've listened to the scientific research a little bit better but you didn't and I'm not sure why. I can't figure that out and I hope sometime I'll have a chance to talk to you so you can tell me why you looked at all of the data and still chose such a poor, poor option. I'd like to talk a bit about some of the data and some of the poor options and some of the situations that I saw while going through some of this process. Danielle talked about some of the forums she held and according to the NEPA process you were to have meaningful dialogue. At the forum I attended I saw CRC people in clue shirts and I got to talk to one person and explain some of things that were of concern to me. One CRC person heard my concerns, nobody else heard my concerns except for the gentleman who was nice enough to sit and listen to me because he was surprised at the things I brought up. Nobody else was able to hear about that—somebody who already had an idea about what they wanted to do. That was not meaningful

## P-0783-001

Extensive technical and public review and input has been included in all phases of the CRC project, from developing a purpose and need statement, screening a wide variety of alternatives, and developing a Draft and Final EIS. This process met the requirements and intent of NEPA law and has resulted in a DEIS and FEIS that are complete and sound.

Regarding public involvement, CRC has had a goal of engaging the public in a meaningful and productive way. Multiple methods have been used to meet this goal so as to address the needs of a wide variety of publics and the project decision-making process. Examples include workshops with facilitated small-group discussions, open houses where participants can talk one-on-one with staff, public hearings, presentations and discussion at community and neighborhood-sponsored meetings, and advisory group meetings where CRC seeks recommendations from a citizen committee.

Regarding the supplemental bridge alternative, the CRC 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.

Meeting Minutes (continued)

**P-0783-001** dialogue. That was one-sided dialogue. Then at that same forum there was this gorgeous display, slick, beautifully done, very expensive, and it gave me two options. It reminded me a lot of what my Mom did when I was little which was, "Do you want to here tonight or do you want to go there?" and what that's called is manipulation. There should have been many options at that point during the forums instead of just two. And, it was very obvious what we should do: one was a big beautiful replacement bridge only slightly more expensive than a supplemental bridge which still has a lift. And so people were empowered because they were able to have choice. That was an extremely transparent manipulation. Then I went to another forum, and I was able to write on a card my concerns and then this very sweet lady got up and she told what my concerns were. That's not what I call meaningful dialogue. There was no way for to have any interaction. That's not what I call meaningful dialogue—that's embarrassing. I have brought up several times the Orange County Grand Jury findings which nobody seems to want to look at and I'm not sure why. I gave them to the city council and I haven't heard one comment back which was disappointing to me. What happened in 1999 which is exactly what's happening now, except lucky for Orange County, they had a grand jury that they could go to and say "We're really concerned because we don't think that what's happening is in the best interest of our community and we feel like we are being railroaded." And so the grand jury went ahead as a disinterested third party, they looked at what was happening with light rail. What they found out, what I've said at every meeting, was that it does not decrease pollution, it does not decrease congestion, it's a huge expense to people, and it is inflexible. Am I against mass transit, no way but am I against light rail in this instance, most definitely yes. But you are still proposing that. And I look at all of you and I can tell you've already made your decision and I can't figure out why. It doesn't make sense to me. I don't see any research that backs up the decision for this. According to the grand jury, there were some things they wanted to recommend: one is that they have a disinterested third party from academia that will look at this and make decisions just based on the research. I would like for you to do that as well.

**Jim Howell:** I'd like to hands of everyone who came here by public transportation (No hands). I didn't either but the first time I spoke to this group I believe oil hadn't reached \$50 a barrel an here we are so there's been quite a change in the world since this process started. I'd like to, if you'll indulge an old man, pretend that we're in the year 2030 having a reunion (I won't be here) of this momentous last meeting of your group and think where would it be. This sprawling complex would've long been torn down replaced with a couple 20 story high rises. This parking lot would've been replaced by a bicycle-friendly neighborhood with condos, apts, and local shops right next to a park. 112<sup>th</sup> will have trolleys going by every 5-10 minutes, SR 14 will have light rail, but let me go on down the river to this site. And I agree there's going to be a replacement bridge there which is going to be a heavy railroad bridge. The one that's there built in 1907 is antiquated and only has 2 tracks and the rail system were going to need and could obviously never accommodate what we're going to need in 2030 if you're going to have say 50 roundtrips to Seattle per day and your going to need at least 4-6 tracks for commuter rail, probably a double-deck bridge. What will change is probably what Congress will do in the next session: a wholesale restructuring of the nation's transportation policies and investment strategies. Freeways are no longer going to be #1. The federal government may cut their share down to 20% for old-fashioned freeways with railroad getting 80%. This might happen because of the oil situation and you've got to recognize that. There will also probably be a local bridge serving Hayden Island with light rail and bicycle, maybe even 2-3 bridges connecting to Portland from Hayden Island which won't have anymore big box retail but will be a nice neighborhood and probably won't even be connected to this freeway which will have less than 100k cars per day because of \$15 per gallon gas prices. So as you're talking at this reunion you'll be joking about how you used to complain about gas being almost \$5.

**P-0783-002**

Following the close of the 60-day DEIS public comment period in July 2008, the CRC project's six local sponsor agencies selected light rail to Clark College as the project's preferred transit mode. These sponsor agencies, which include the Vancouver City Council, Portland City Council, C-TRAN Board, TriMet Board, RTC Board and Metro Council considered the DEIS analysis, public comment, and a recommendation from the CRC Task Force (a broad group of stakeholders representative of the range of interests affected by the project - see the DEIS Public Involvement Appendix for more information regarding the CRC Task Force) before voting on the LPA.

As illustrated in the DEIS, and summarized in Exhibit 29 (page S-33) of the Executive Summary, light rail would better serve transit riders than bus rapid transit (BRT) within the CRC project area. Light rail would carry more passengers across the river during the PM peak, result in more people choosing to take transit, faster travel times through the project area, fewer potential noise impacts, and lower costs per incremental rider than BRT. Additionally, light rail is more likely to attract desirable development on Hayden Island and in downtown Vancouver, which is consistent with local land use plans.

As described Chapter 3 (Section 3.1) of the DEIS, the operations and maintenance (O&M) costs associated with light rail would be less than those associated with bus rapid transit, largely because light rail operates on electricity while bus rapid transit is dependent on the volatile fuel market. LRT costs approximately \$3.50, or 31%, less than BRT, per incremental rider when comparing both capital and operating costs.

Long-term operation and maintenance of the new light rail line will be funded through C-TRAN and TriMet. For C-TRAN's share of the operations and maintenance funding, it plans on having a public vote. For more information on how O&M costs will be shared between TriMet

and C-TRAN, and how C-TRAN may finance these additional costs, please see Chapter 4 of the FEIS.

**P-0783-003**

Please see response to comment P-0783-002.

Additionally, 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.

Finally, the CRC Task Force, a broad group of stakeholders representative of the range of interests effected by the project (see Appendix B of this FEIS for more information regarding the CRC Task Force) recommended that light rail be selected as the preferred transit mode.

Based on the technical merits and support for light rail discussed above, empowering an outside party to review and make decisions on the CRC project's transit component would not improve the project.