



**From:** [hhsafety@comcast.net](mailto:hhsafety@comcast.net)  
**To:** [Columbia River Crossing](#)  
**CC:**  
**Subject:** Comment from CRC DraftEIS Comments Page  
**Date:** Friday, June 20, 2008 2:07:15 PM  
**Attachments:**

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Home Zip Code: 98685  
 Work Zip Code: various

Person:

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

Person commutes in the travel area via:

Bicycle  
 Car or Truck

**P-1146-001**

1. In Support of the following bridge options:  
 Replacement Bridge
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: No Opinion  
 Kiggins Bowl Terminus: No Opinion  
 Mill Plain (MOS) Terminus: Yes  
 Clark College (MOS) Terminus: No Opinion

Contact Information:

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**P-1146-001**

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.

## Comments:

- P-1146-002** | The cost of the preferred option amounts about \$2000 for each person who lives in the Portland and Vancouver Area. A much cheaper alternative would be to use the existing piers with a new steel structure that would be high enough in the the middle to allow the barges and tall boats to go through. A new rail bridge could be built to replace the existing rail bridge and be wide enough to support light rail tracks. By building the new railroad bridge the boats would be aligned with the center of the current existing bridge which would significant reduce the amount of lifts that would be required while the new car bridges are built. This would eliminate the need all of the supplemental on and off ramps. Most of the car bridge steel work could be done on the ground and then barged over for installation. This could significantly decrease the construction period. The bridges should be limited to 4 lanes in each direction which would elminate the need for widening the approaches and allow for smoother on and off ramps on the two sides of the brige which is where most of the congestion is occuring from.
- P-1146-003** |
- P-1146-004** | Light rail should be put to a vote of the people that are going to us it and should be supported by fares and a general tax increase. The new rail bridge should be built wide enough regardless of the vote so if the vote fails now, future expansion would be easier.
- P-1146-005** |
- P-1146-006** | The car bridge should be support through electronic tolling and license plate billing. All cars registered in the Vancouver/Portland area should be sent transponders for the bridge. A modest \$1.00 per way toll could raise a significant amount of money if it was collected now and also collected on the Glenn Jackson bridge as the people crossing that bridge will also benefit from a less congested I-5 bridge that people would be inclined to use rather than avoid.
- P-1146-007** | In the future extending light rail down Mill Plain could result in a significant redevelopment of this blighted area and allow light rail to circle around to PDX in the future

**P-1146-002**

The Columbia River Crossing project includes the replacement of the existing I-5 bridge over the Columbia River, improvements at seven interchanges over 5 miles of I-5, and the extension of light rail from Portland to Vancouver. The projected cost to construct this large and complex project are presented in Chapter 4 of the FEIS, and are estimated in year of expenditure dollars to account for inflation. Multiple sources will help fund construction of the project – the federal government, State of Oregon, State of Washington, and tolling the I-5 Bridge.

**P-1146-003**

Thank you for considering solutions and for sharing them with us. Unfortunately, the seismic deficiencies of the existing bridges are more a matter of the piers than the structure. So, replacing the decks and using the same piers would fail to meet the purpose and need for the project, which includes decreasing seismic vulnerability.

**P-1146-004**

As described in Chapter 4 of the DEIS, the operations and maintenance (O&M) costs associated with light rail would be funded through a sales and use tax increase. For C-TRAN's share of the operations and maintenance funding, it plans on having a public vote. As indicated in Chapter 4, it is assumed that the capital cost for constructing light rail will be funded through federal sources. For more information on how transit capital costs and O&M costs could be financed, please see Chapter 4 of the FEIS.

**P-1146-005**

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, which is expected no earlier than fall 2010.

**P-1146-006**

Details and policies for the tolling system will be decided by the transportation commissions and legislatures of both states. However, the project has proposed and assumed that an electronic tolling system will be used. Electronic tolling collection (ETC) is a cashless toll collection system using the latest electronic technology. ETC promotes free-flowing traffic by eliminating the need for toll booths and allowing all vehicles to pay a toll without stopping.

ETC systems in use today allow drivers to purchase an inexpensive, credit card sized transponder that is placed on the inside windshield of their car. When driving through the toll collection point, radio equipment above the road scans the transponder and deducts the toll from the user's account. User accounts could be linked to a credit or debit card, or they could be prepaid.

Infrequent travelers without a transponder would be charged via a video camera that can quickly scan and photograph license plates. A bill for the cost of the toll and a processing fee can be sent to the registered vehicle owner.

All personal information necessary to use the ETC system would be maintained by the State DOT, as is now being done with WSDOT's Good To Go! Program that is collecting tolls for facilities such as the Tacoma Narrows bridge. The use of this information, like all personal information provided to the state, will follow state privacy guidelines.

Tolling was evaluated in the DEIS, and included in the LPA for two important reasons. First, a toll is necessary to pay for the construction of this project, as discussed in Chapter 4 of the FEIS. Second, a toll provides a valuable travel demand management tool that encourages travelers to take alternative modes (including light rail provided by this project), travel at off-peak periods, or reduce their auto trips. This demand management reduces congestion and extends the effective service of the facility. When the existing I-5 northbound bridge was built in 1917, it was paid for with a toll. The southbound I-5 bridge, built in 1958, was also funded partially by tolls.

The authority to toll the I-5 crossing is set by federal and state laws. Federal statutes permit a toll-free bridge on an interstate highway to be converted to a tolled facility following the reconstruction or replacement of the bridge, and the CRC project would meet these conditions. Prior to tolling I-5, Washington and Oregon departments of transportation (WSDOT and ODOT) would have to enter into a toll agreement with the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). State legislation from 2008 in Washington permits WSDOT to toll I-5 provided that the tolling of the facility is first authorized by the Washington legislature. Once authorized by the legislature, the Washington Transportation Commission has the authority to set the toll rates. In Oregon, the Oregon Transportation Commission has the authority to toll a facility and to set the toll rates. It is anticipated that prior to tolling I-5, ODOT and WSDOT would enter into a bi-state tolling agreement to establish a cooperative process for imposing tolls, set toll rates, and guide the use of toll revenues.

**P-1146-007**

The CRC Project is focused on providing a high-capacity transit option through downtown Vancouver to Clark College. RTC has completed a High-Capacity Transit System Study which recommends specific high-capacity transit improvements, including light rail, bus rapid transit and bus service improvements that will best serve Clark County residents in

the mid-term (by 2030) and long-term (beyond 2030). To view their Final HCT System Study, visit RTC's website at [www.rtc.wa.gov](http://www.rtc.wa.gov). Though these recommendations are designed to connect with CRC transit improvements, they are not part of the CRC project.