

Hines, Maurice

From: Gerald Fox [gdfox@q.com]
Sent: Thursday, October 20, 2011 10:19 AM
To: Columbia River Crossing
Subject: Comment on FEIS

Categories: Red Category

Greetings,

P-053-001 | I'm really concerned that the present CRC proposal is wrong, and a huge waste of money we don't have.

The project claims it will alleviate congestion, which is difficult to understand. If you ever use the Portland freeway system you will know that there are numerous congestion points regionwide. If the CRC enables more traffic to enter the system, it will aggravate travel for everyone in the region. Congestion, air pollution, greenhouse gases will all soar. The FEIS ignores this, by limiting study to arbitrarily defined "project limits".

P-053-002 | If, on the other hand, the CRC limits traffic (by tolls/congestion pricing) to existing levels or less, to maintain free flow on I-5, then why do we need to spend \$4.0 billion on a new bridge ?

P-053-003 | A supplementary bridge could provide relief to the existing bridge at a fraction of the cost.

I think we should stop the present waste of tax money, and devise a solution that is cost effective, and consistent with the real needs of the 21st century.

Gerald Fox

P-053-001

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 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.

Though there are numerous congested areas in the region, this area has been identified by many agencies as requiring a comprehensive solution.

P-053-002

While tolls and the extension of high capacity transit will reduce the demand for the Interstate river crossing, demand and throughput on the bridge will certainly increase. Alternatives which did not replace the

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Hi,

P-053-004 | I'm a retired transportation engineer, and I've been following the CRC project with a growing sense of dismay and foreboding. Seems it's all about building a big new bridge, regardless of cost, and not about solving the problems identified in the Purpose and Need in a manner appropriate to our region, and the transportation needs of the 21st century.

P-053-005 | We already have 14 freeway lanes across the Columbia River. The CRC project would give us 18 lanes, at a cost of \$4.0 billion. The project never considered an alternative emphasizing Alternative Transportation, which is the main goal of transportation planning everywhere else in the region. The committees selecting alternatives were stacked to support the "Big Bridge" cause, and dissent was ignored or suppressed. Some staff were reportedly threatened !!

P-053-006 | The existing bridge has already had one seismic retrofit, and is in better condition than many other highway bridges. What a waste of public money to tear it down when a supplementary bridge could relieve congestion at far less cost, and far fewer negative consequences.

Gerald Fox

bridge and increase capacity fail to satisfy the adopted Purpose and Need for the project.

Following the selection of the LPA in July of 2008, the CRC Project Sponsors Council (PSC) was developed to provide recommendations to the project on a variety of issues, including the number of add/drop lanes over the river crossing. Over the course of several months, PSC was provided with operational characteristics and potential environmental impacts of 8-, 10-, and 12-lane options. Technical evaluation criteria included, but were not limited to, traffic safety, congestion, traffic diversion onto local streets and I-205, regional vehicle miles travelled, transit ridership, regional economic impact, effects to neighborhoods and protected species and habitats. In addition to the technical information, PSC received input from CRC advisory groups and reviewed public comment submitted to the project and obtained during two public Q&A sessions in January 2009 regarding the number of lanes decision, as well as hearings conducted by Portland City Council and by Metro Council. In August 2010, the PSC voted unanimously to recommend that the replacement bridges be constructed with 10 lanes and full shoulders. For more information regarding the number of lanes decision making process, see Chapter 2 (Section 2.7) of the FEIS.

P-053-003

A supplemental bridge was studied in the EIS. See Chapter 2 of the FEIS, as well as the Record of Decision, for a discussion of why a supplemental bridge is not part of the preferred alternative.

P-053-004

Many ideas involving low investment in highway alternatives were considered during the early evaluation of alternatives. See Chapter 2 of the FEIS. In the DEIS and FEIS, Alternatives 4 and 5 put much more emphasis on high capacity transit and TSM/TDM and much less on highway improvements. These alternatives had only one new auxiliary

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P-053-007

The CRC project makes much of the "Trade Corridor" from Canada to Mexico, on which the CRC is supposedly a barrier and embarrassment. Except that it isn't. Through traffic on I-5 is routed onto I 205 around Portland, because I-5 through Portland has numerous choke points. The CRC is only one of them, and the source of only a small percentage of the daily freeway delays in Portland. If the CRC is built, through traffic will still be routed round I-205, because there will still be no more capacity at all the other choke points, regardless of how many lanes there are on the \$4.0 billion bridge.

I haven't seen this disclosed anywhere.

Gerald Fox

lane in each direction across the river, had double the HCT service levels, and had higher highway tolls. Modeling indicated significantly worse congestion with these alternatives and only slightly better transit ridership. Transit cost effectiveness was much poorer for these alternatives than for the other build alternatives in the DEIS.

P-053-005

Multiple methods have been used to engage the public so as to address the needs of a wide variety of people in the project decision-making process. Public feedback has helped guide the outreach effort. Examples include workshops with facilitated small-group discussions, open houses where participants can talk one-on-one with staff, public hearings, presentations and discussions at community and neighborhood-sponsored meetings (often at the group's request), and advisory group meetings where CRC seeks recommendations from a citizen committee. These events and meetings have taken place at a variety of locations, days of the week, and times of the day to meet the needs of the entire community. For more information on the project's public outreach, please see Appendix B (Public Involvement) of the FEIS.

P-053-006

The supplemental river crossing would not substantially improve congestion over No-Build, would maintain some substandard and unsafe design features, and would not be substantially cheaper to construct than a replacement river crossing, as originally believed. See the discussion of seismic safety issues of the existing bridges in the following reports available through CRC: Columbia River Crossing, Panel Assessment of the Interstate Bridges Seismic Vulnerabilities, December 2006; DGES Inc., ODOT - Interstate 5 Bridges over Columbia River Seismic Evaluation of Lift Span Unit, December 1994; DGES Inc., ODOT - Interstate 5 Bridges over Columbia River Seismic Retrofit of Truss Span Pier Foundations Conceptual Design and

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P-053-008

The CRC project claims it will cut congestion, which will reach 15 hours a day if we don't build the Big Bridge.. Which is odd, because there is nowhere for any more peak hour traffic to go. According to Metro, Light Rail is supposed to carry 37% of peak hour trips across the bridge by 2030. And I-5 will presumably carry pretty much what it carries today, at least beyond Columbia Boulevard.

So why not just build a supplementary bridge to relieve I-5, to carry local traffic, transit, and bikes at far less cost, and with far less environmental damage?

Gerald Fox

Estimate, February 1995; DGES Inc., ODOT - Interstate 5 Bridges over Columbia River Seismic Retrofit of Truss Span Bearings Conceptual Design and Estimate, March 1995.

P-053-007

The Vancouver-Portland region is a trade hub, acting as a gateway and distribution center for domestic and international markets. The region has become a trade hub, in large part, because of its direct access to the freeway system, navigable rivers, rail lines, and international air shipping. The region's continued competitiveness as a trade hub is dependent on the ability to efficiently move freight on and between these transportation facilities. Though I-205 is a convenient, cost-effective route for some freight trips, it cannot replace the role of I-5 as a freight route. For many freight trips, I-205 would be out of direction, adding to travel time and shipping costs. In addition, trucks will travel on I-5 because it is shorter and faster than I-205. In 2005, the I-5 Interstate Bridge carried approximately 3,240 more trucks per day or 42 percent more than the I-205 Glenn Jackson Bridge. Trucks try to avoid congestion and travel during uncongested periods, and because the travel distance on I-5 from junction to junction is only 19.3 miles compared to 25.5 miles on I-205, trucks will travel on I-5. Increased shipping costs can have a significant impact on the overall costs of doing business in our region, making us less competitive and threatening our status as a trade hub.

P-053-008

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 each weekday, which led to 4-6 hours of congestion. By 2030, 184,000 vehicles are predicted to cross the river each weekday, which would lead to 15 hours of daily congestion if no action is taken.

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From: Gerald Fox [gdfox@q.com]
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P-053-009

The CRC is said to reduce air pollution, greenhouses gases, and congestion, compared to the **No Build** alternative.

Unfortunately for the region and the local taxpayers, the Project manipulated the process to avoid studying an alternative based on Alternative Transportation. For instance of the 5 alternatives studied in exhaustive detail, two were simply using bus transit instead of rail for the purpose of distracting study participants, and claiming that surely 5 alternatives were enough. Of course an Alternative Transportation alternative would have accomplished the project "Purpose and Need" with less impacts, and a fraction of the cost, undermining the DOTs desire to build a really big bridge!

Time to stop this nonsense, and fix the disastrous proposals now before us.

Gerald Fox

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.

Issues related to a supplemental bridge are addressed above.

P-053-009

See response to the comment above regarding the problems with the proposals that relied mostly or solely on alternative transportation to address the multiple transportation needs in the project area.

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From: Gerald Fox [gdfox@q.com]
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P-053-010 | The CRC is supposed to generate thousands of much-needed jobs. Originally 20,000 jobs were claimed, but when that was challenged, the number became 2,000. And that doesn't count the hundreds of jobs lost because the project will destroy numerous businesses in Vancouver and Hayden Island. And that assumes the project will actually survive legal challenges, lack of money, and eventually the ballot box, and get built.

P-053-011 | Many well informed critics have advocated an alternative based on Alternative Transportation principles. This will of course generate many jobs, as well as reduce the jobs lost through business destruction. And because such an approach will include several components, such as an improved railroad bridge, and a supplementary street bridge, it will likely come to construction sooner.

And because the Alternative Transportation alternative will cost less, it won't suck up all the available discretionary funds (and the jobs they could generate) elsewhere in the states of Oregon and Washington.

Let's get past this inappropriate project, and get on with something that will relieve congestion, and actually get built.

Gerald Fox

P-053-010

It is fairly standard to express projected employment from capital investments in terms of "job years". The early CRC estimate that it would generate about 20,000 jobs (job years) has not changed. What has changed is that the estimate has been broken down into the number of estimated full time employees per year (jobs per year) rather than the total number of job years for the full duration of project construction.

P-053-011

See responses above regarding alternative transportation proposals.