

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 23rd 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)

of what is the I-5 corridor. There have been several promising, viable alternatives thrown out by your staff because they said it was not in the I-5 corridor including a supplemental arterial bridge and I have citations in the document that was passed around. I hope it got all the way around, I made 40 copies. If you didn't get it, talk to somebody next to you. This bridge was cast out partly because for the reason that it was not in the I-5 corridor. That is just... A corridor is something more than the pavement on I-5, so check back at those options that were removed from further consideration because you'll see them in a number of places. So again I ask you to stop this process, and to call for a supplemental DEIS to deal with the issues raised, not only by us but by the other local jurisdictions that have already spoken before you move forward. You do not have to meet the August 15 deadline.

Bill Hidden: My great-grandfather supported the first bridge in the 1800s and finally in 1917 it got built. I am a property owner, I live in the area and I will be greatly affected by this process but I want to tell you that I am in support of a replacement bridge and I commend your work. Thank you. I am sending a letter regarding the EIS and how it affects my property and a few minor shortcomings. Hopefully, you will be able to address those and correct them but move ahead. Thank you.

Larry Epstein representing Diversified Marine: 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.

P-0784-001 David Rowe: I live in Battle Ground, Washington. I do not want to pay a \$2 toll to cross the Columbia. I have been working in Gresham and driving 60 miles a day. My gas alone is 2 gallons per day which computes to about 1,000 gallons per year. Today I will be paying almost \$5k per year and with the proposed toll that would add almost another \$1k per year. As a taxpayer and a father, I do not want to give my kids such burden to pay for a \$4 billion bridge. Do not build such an expensive bridge. I believe the light rail connection is important but look at other options other than highway expansion. There are other options other than the 12 lane bridge and that is to expand rail transportation. On June 17, Amtrak finished an 11 mile project. They replaced a rail bridge between Boston and New Haven which crossed the Thames River plus they upgraded 11 miles of track. This whole project cost \$83 million, that's spelled with an M. The Northern Santa Fe Railroad bridge could be upgraded to a 3 track bridge. That inexpensive project could provide a corridor for high-speed trains from Portland to Seattle with 1.5 hour travel time plus it would provide a corridor for commuter trains from Vancouver, Ridgefield, La Center, Battle Ground, Thomas and Washougal. Do not more pollution to our area with more cars.

Beth Cortorolo: I am President of the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber has been engaged in the work of the Task Force since its inception in 2005. After reviewing the findings of the team and other research, our board has voted to support the alternative of the replacement bridge with light rail. We recognize that this will mean a tremendous investment along the vital I-5 corridor. We would of course as we move forward like to see costs to businesses and the public minimized but we also asked the question: what's the cost of doing nothing? We think the answer, in terms of more restrictions on freight mobility and further traffic congestion is simply not acceptable. Thank you very much for your work on the project and for your time today.

P-0784-001

Tolling was evaluated in the DEIS and FEIS, and included in the LPA for two important reasons. First, a toll may be 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 life 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. In 2008, the Washington legislature passed enabling language for tolling on I-5, provided that each facility is later authorized under specific legislation. Once authorized by the legislature, the Washington Transportation Commission has the authority to set the toll rates. In Oregon, and the Oregon Transportation Commission has the authority to toll a facility and to set the toll rates.

P-0784-002

The Columbia River Crossing project is not simply a bridge project. The CRC project includes the replacement of the existing I-5 bridge over the Columbia River, improvements at seven interchanges over five miles of I-5, and the extension of light rail from Portland to Vancouver. The projected cost to construct this large and complex project is presented in Chapter 4 of the FEIS, and it is estimated in year of expenditure dollars to account for inflation. Regarding project funding, 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 the alternative selection process is complete. 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.

P-0784-003

The evaluation of the five alternatives in the DEIS was preceded by an extensive evaluation and screening of a wide array of possible solutions to the CRC project's Purpose and Need statement. Chapter 2 of the DEIS (Section 2.5) explains how the project's Sponsoring Agencies generated ideas and solicited the public, stakeholders, other agencies, and tribes for ideas on how to meet the Purpose and Need. This effort produced a long list of potential solutions, many of which were non-auto oriented options such as various transit modes and techniques for operating the existing highway system more efficiently without any capital investment. These options were evaluated for whether and how they met the project's Purpose and Need, and the findings were reviewed by project sponsors, the public, agencies, and other stakeholders. Alternatives that included only TDM/TSM strategies, or provided only transit improvements, would provide benefits, but could only address a very limited portion of the project's purpose and need. This extensive analysis found that in order for an alternative to meet the six "needs" included in the Purpose and Need (described in Chapter 1 of the DEIS), it had to provide at least some measure of capital improvements to I-5 in the project area. Alternatives that did not include such improvements did not adequately address the seismic vulnerability of the existing I-5 bridges, traffic congestion on I-5, or the existing safety problems caused by sub-standard design of the highway in this corridor. The DEIS evaluated alternatives with more demand management (higher toll) and increased transit service with less investment in highway infrastructure improvements (Alternatives 4 and 5) compared to the toll and transit service levels included in Alternatives 2 and 3. The additional service and higher toll provided only marginal reductions in I-5 vehicle volumes, and they came primarily at the cost of greater traffic diversion to I-205. This analysis found that a more balanced investment in highway

and transit, as represented by Alternatives 2 and 3, performed considerably better on a broad set of criteria.

P-0784-004

Emissions are projected to be substantially lower by 2030 than they are today, and would be the same or lower in most areas with the project than without. The exception is the I-5/Mill Plain Boulevard interchange where CO and NOx would be higher with the project than without, but still well within relevant standards.