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COLUMBIA RIVER CROSSING DRAFT EIS
PUBLIC HEARING

WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 2008

RED LION HOTEL
VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON



00108

1 it's one lane and 405 matches and becomes
 2 the two lanes.
 3 So I see the problem is a -- really
 4 not rooted in the congestion in Washington
 5 State, but really it's a problem -- and I
 6 think everybody who travels it knows that
 7 very well. Until Portland gets its act
 8 together and solves this, I don't think
 9 the bridge is going to solve the problem.
 10 HAL DENGERINK: Thank you. Jim.
 11 JIM ANDRESEN: My name is Jim
 12 Andresen. I live in 3400 Kauffman.
 13 I have a couple comments. I'm not
 14 sure if we are gaining any lanes or what.
 15 The pictures out there look like we are
 16 gaining one lane if we use the old bridge.
 17 If they put new ones in, they said only
 18 three each direction, yet the picture here
 19 on Page 21 shows six lanes on each one.
 20 I'm a little confused on that.
 21 I think keeping the old bridge would
 22 be throwing good money to bad no matter
 23 how many dollars you spent on it. If you
 24 had to replace it in 20 years, it would
 25 cost more to replace it in 20 years than

P-1035-001

P-1035-002

P-1035-001

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. These 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.

The proposed new lanes are add/drop lanes (i.e., lanes that connect two or more interchanges), which are used to alleviate safety issues associated with the closely spaced interchanges in the project area, and accommodate the 68 to 75% of traffic that enters and/or exits I-5 within two miles of the Columbia River.

P-1035-002

As documented in the Panel Assessment of Interstate Bridges Seismic Vulnerabilities Technical Report (2006), it was determined necessary for any CRC project alternatives that reused the existing I-5 bridges to also seismically retrofit those bridges. The DEIS analyzed a Supplemental River Crossing as a component of two out of the five alternatives studied.

00109
P-1035-002 | 1 the whole project is going to cost today.
P-1035-003 | 2 The tolls -- nobody said a thing
3 about the tolls that they are going to
4 charge. I read in the paper not ago that
P-1035-004 | 5 when they put the toll on they are going
6 to leave it on indefinitely. After the
7 bridge is paid for, they are going to use
8 it for paying for other projects around
9 the state.
10 What that is is not toll, it is a tax
11 and they should call it a tax. It's going
12 to be a tax on the few that use the bridge
13 for the projects of the masses. It should
14 be the other way around. If we are going
15 to pay for projects all of over the state
16 with the money we earn off of this bridge,
17 that's silly. As soon as the bridge is
18 paid for, the tolls should drop and the
19 money should not be siphoned off for
20 anything else while the bridge is being
21 paid for. It's just that simple. Plus
P-1035-005 | 22 they ought to put a toll on the 205 bridge,
23 so it gets paid off quicker.
24 I am in favor of the light rail.
P-1035-006 | 25 It's damn expensive. It's probably the

A Supplemental River Crossing, which would retain and seismically retrofit the existing bridges for northbound traffic and add one new bridge to the west for southbound traffic, was not chosen as a part of the Locally Preferred Alternative by the local sponsor agencies. This decision was informed by the DEIS, which found, among other things, that 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. In addition, the Supplemental crossing could worsen marine navigation by retaining the existing piers, and adding a new set of structures in the water with the new bridge. The US Coast Guard informed the project in a letter dated January 26, 2006, that “retention of one of the existing bridges for travel off Interstate 5 would at best maintain the same degree of difficulty to vessels, especially downbound tows. For that reason I would also not recommend such a plan...”

Though the Supplemental River Crossing would improve the seismic safety of the existing bridges, these findings indicate that it did not meet the project's Purpose and Need as effectively as the Replacement River Crossing.

P-1035-003

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

00110
P-1035-006 | 1 most expensive alternative, but it's the
 2 only alternative that gets the traffic --
 3 the commuter traffic off of the freeways.
 4 It's got its own separate place to go and
 5 it's not part of the congestion. It's
 6 part of the solution, not part of the
 7 problem. If you use buses, you will have
 8 to deal with the rest of traffic.
 9 HAL DENERINK: Thank you. Okay.
 10 WALT KEENEY: My name is Walt
 11 Keeney. My main business address is 521
 12 521 North First Avenue, Arcadia,
 13 California. My Vancouver address is 2901
 14 Northwest Old River Road in Vancouver.
 15 The reason I bring up California --
 16 this goes to the light rail and everything
 17 I have been hearing tonight -- Number one,
 18 people say 7000 to 8000 people a day
 19 riding light rail from Vancouver across
 20 the river. Believe me, that will make an
 21 impact in traffic. 7000 or 8000 cars a
 22 day off the bridge is a lot of cars.
 23 About two years ago we had a transit
 24 strike in L.A. There is a Metro line,
 25 rail line that runs from Pasadena all the

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-1035-004

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-1035-005

Tolling I-205 is not part of this project, but could be implemented separately. With few exceptions, federal statutes do not permit tolling of an existing interstate highway without associated improvements. FHWA does have pilot programs that allow state departments of transportation to apply for approval to toll a facility.

00115

1 CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER
2
3 STATE OF WASHINGTON)
4 County of Clark)
5
6 I, Cathy S. Taylor, a notary public
7 for the State of Washington do hereby
8 certify that I transcribed to the best of
9 my ability said proceedings written by me
10 in machine shorthand and thereafter
11 reduced to typewriting; and that the
12 foregoing transcript constitutes a full,
13 true and accurate record of said
14 proceedings and of the whole thereof.
15
16
17
18
19 Witness my hand and notarial seal
20 this 16th day of June, 2008.
21
22 _____
23 Cathy S. Taylor, RPR, CSR
24 Notary Public for the State of Washington
25 My Commission expires April 15, 2009

P-1035-006

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.