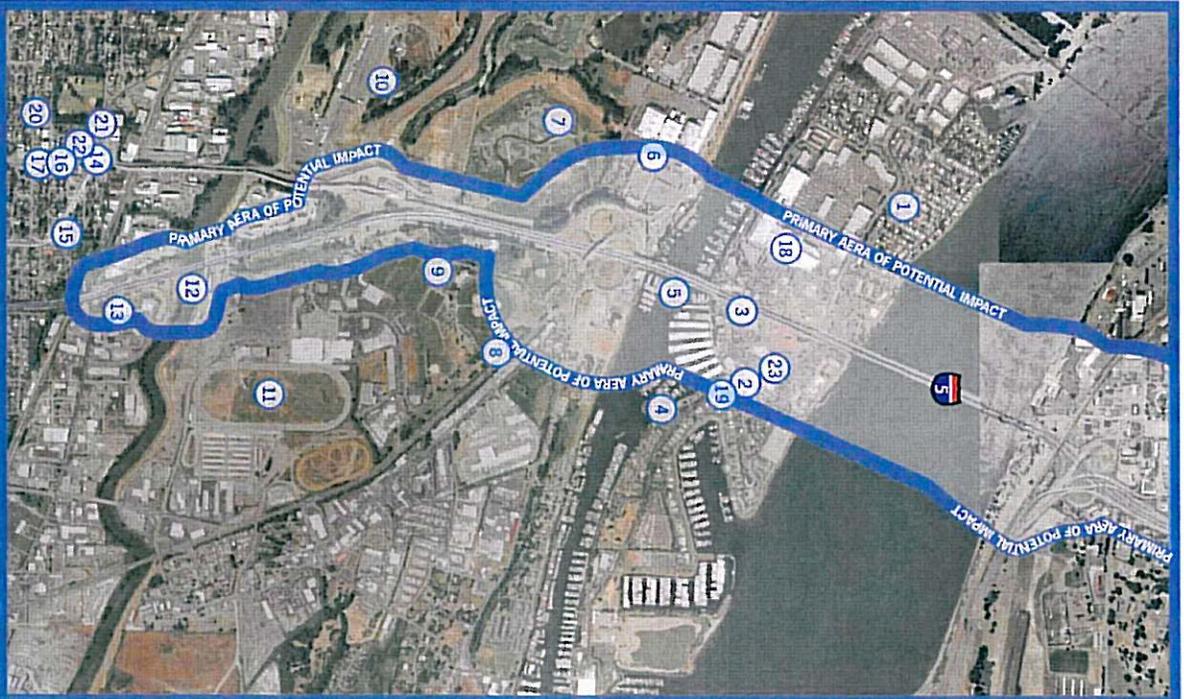


- Proposed Project
- Existing Project
- Waterway
- Highway
- City Boundary
- Other



Oregon Neighborhoods
resource map



Hayden Island West of BNSF rail line

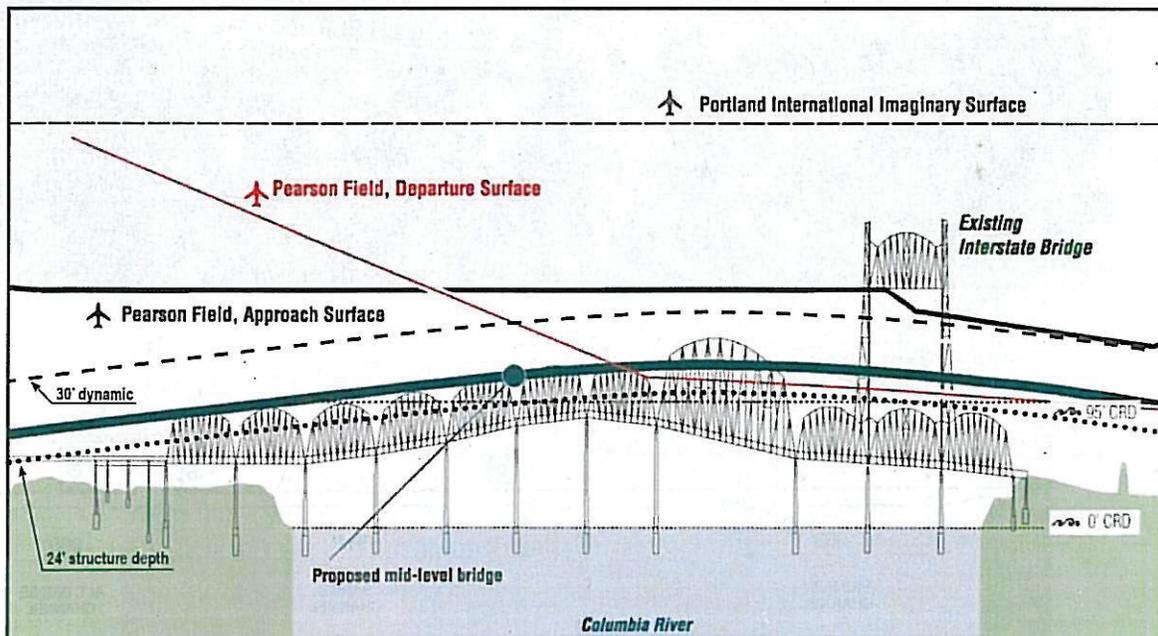
The Third Bridge Now freeway corridor on bare por / publicly own land



Aviation



Navigation and aviation constraints





The above artistic design of Third Bridge I-305 Freeway Corridor Across the Columbia River is looking eastward towards the I-5 bridges and Mt. Hood. * (The BNSF rail Bridge is absent only because of visually confusing as art.)



Third Bridge Now I-305 freeway corridor at the Port of Vancouver.

Freeway Corridor I-305

- Fully multi-modal
- Freeway 8-to-10- lanes
- High-span - bridge
- Non -lift bridges
- Martine not impaired
- Airspace not impaired
- Freight friendly
- Limited motorized vehicles
- Bike and pedestrian



The Freemont Bridge I-405 an 8-lane freeway corridor over the Willamette River.

Question 5: West Arterial Road?

Description												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A new road along the existing railroad corridor and N. Portland Rd. between Mill Plain in Vancouver and US 30 in North Portland provides to access between Portland and Vancouver, particularly for freight between the ports of Vancouver and Portland, and to the Columbia Corridor, and the Northwest industrial area. This improvement is also targeted to reduce truck traffic in the St. Johns and North Portland neighborhoods and provides an alternative access to Hayden Island. 												
Travel Time												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is an increase in transit ridership. The increase is due to additional transit service on the West Arterial and in the I-5 corridor. 												
Transportation Performance												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improves travel times in the I-5 corridor by 6 minutes compared to today. ▪ Substantially reduces delay on truck routes compared to Baseline 2020 and prevents delay on truck routes from growing worse than it is today. ▪ Carries about 9600 vehicles over the Columbia River during the evening peak period. ▪ The West Arterial Road's four-lane bridge over the Columbia River is near capacity during the morning and afternoon peak periods. ▪ <u>Traffic increases on key Vancouver roads</u> compared to Baseline (data from p.m. peak): <table style="margin-left: 20px; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">4th Plain Blvd</td> <td>25% increase in traffic</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mill Plain Blvd.</td> <td>84% increase in traffic</td> </tr> </table> ▪ <u>Traffic decreases on key Portland roads</u> compared to Baseline (data from p.m. peak): <table style="margin-left: 20px; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">Marine Drive</td> <td>27% decrease in traffic</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hayden Island Interchange</td> <td>6% decrease in traffic</td> </tr> <tr> <td>St Johns Bridge</td> <td>54% decrease in traffic</td> </tr> </table> ▪ <u>Traffic increases slightly on US 30</u> in Portland compared to Baseline (data from p.m. peak): <table style="margin-left: 20px; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">US 30</td> <td>6% increase in traffic</td> </tr> </table> 	4th Plain Blvd	25% increase in traffic	Mill Plain Blvd.	84% increase in traffic	Marine Drive	27% decrease in traffic	Hayden Island Interchange	6% decrease in traffic	St Johns Bridge	54% decrease in traffic	US 30	6% increase in traffic
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Transit Ridership												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is an increase in transit ridership. The increase is due to additional transit service on the West Arterial and in the I-5 corridor. 												
Environmental Impacts												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Major environmental impacts on Hayden Island that are difficult to avoid and will need to be mitigated. ▪ Improves the quality of life in the St. Johns neighborhood in Portland due to providing an attractive alternative route for trucks to get to and from industrial areas on the Peninsula. ▪ Because most of the roadway would be built over the railroad and in the railroad cut, there are fewer direct community impacts (e.g. noise, air pollution, and visual) than if the alignment were elsewhere. 												
Displacements												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Least amount of overall displacements compared to I-5 improvements (22 displacements for West Arterial Road vs. 24 for 3 lane and 42 for adding a 4th lane). 												
Other												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requires agreement with the railroad. 												
Cost												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ \$947 M (2001\$). 												

The key components of the process to develop the Strategic Plan were:

- developing a Problem, Vision, and Values Statement
- developing multi-modal Option Packages
- evaluating the Option Packages
- developing recommendations

Table 1 describes the components in more detail.

Problem, Vision and Values Statement. The statement was based on input from the Community Forum and the public and is the foundation of the Strategic Plan.

The I-5 Trade Corridor is the most critical segment of the regional transportation system in the Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area. The corridor provides access to many of the region's most important industrial sites and port facilities and is a link to jobs throughout the Portland/Vancouver region. Due to infrastructure deficiencies, lack of multi-modal options, land-use patterns, and increasing congestion, businesses and individuals experience more frequent and longer delays in the corridor. Without attention, the corridor's problems are likely to increase significantly, further impacting the mobility, accessibility, livability and economic promise of the entire region.

The Strategic Plan should be a multi-faceted, integrated plan of transportation policies, capital expenditures, personal and business actions, and incentives to address the future needs of the I-5 Trade Corridor. When implemented, the Strategic Plan will improve the quality of life by:

- providing travel mobility, safety, reliability, accessibility and choice of transportation modes for users whether public, private, or commercial, and recognizing the varied requirements of local, intra-corridor, and interstate movement
- supporting a sound regional economy by addressing the need to move freight efficiently, reliably, and safely through the corridor
- supporting a healthy and vibrant land use mix of residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, cultural and historical areas
- respecting and protecting natural resources including air quality, wildlife habitat and water resources
- supporting balanced achievement of community, neighborhood, and regional goals for growth management, livability, the environment, and a healthy economy with promise for all
- distributing fairly the associated benefits and impacts for the region and the neighborhoods adjacent to or affected by the corridor

The result will protect our future with an improved and equitable balance of livability, mobility, access, public health, environmental stewardship, economic vitality and environmental justice.

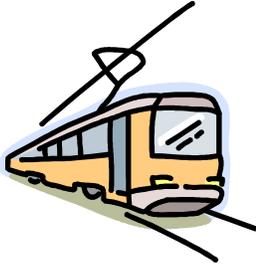
Option Packages. Development of the Option Packages was based on input from the public and on the Problem, Vision and Values Statement. Five multi-modal Option Packages were selected for further analysis:

- Express Bus / 3 Lanes
- Light Rail / 4 Lanes
- Light Rail / 3 Lanes
- West Arterial Road
- Express Bus / 4 Lanes

Final Recommendations at a Glance

Transit:

- Provide a phased light rail loop in Clark County in the vicinity of the I-5, SR500/4th Plain and I-205 Corridors.
- Provide peak-hour, premium express bus service in the I-5 and I-205 Corridors to markets not well served by light rail.
- Increase transit service in the Corridor over the next 20 years called for in regional transportation plans.



Interstate 5:

- The I-5 freeway between the Fremont Bridge in Portland and the I-205 interchange in Vancouver will be a maximum of 3 through lanes in each direction. This includes widening I-5 to 3 lanes between Delta Park and Lombard, and 99th St. to I-205 in Vancouver.
- Designate one of the 3 through lanes for use as a high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane during the peak period, in the peak direction.
- Add a new supplemental or replacement bridge across the Columbia River with up to 2 auxiliary and/or arterial lanes in each direction, and 2 light rail tracks.
- Improve interchanges between SR 500 and Columbia Blvd to address safety and capacity problems -- including making Columbia Blvd into a full interchange.
- In adding river crossing capacity and making interchange improvements every effort should be made to: 1) avoid displacements and encroachments, 2) minimize the highway footprint and 3) minimize the use of the freeway for local trips.



Additional Rail Capacity:

- Pursue the rail infrastructure improvements required to accommodate anticipated 20 year freight rail growth in the I-5 Corridor and frequent, efficient intercity passenger rail service.
- Establish a public/private Bi-State rail forum to advise regional decision makers about prioritizing, scheduling and funding of needed rail improvements.
- The rail forum and regional decision-makers should encourage funding for:
 - Additional inter-city passenger rail service in the Pacific Northwest High Speed Rail Corridor
 - High Speed Rail service in the Corridor; and
 - The replacement of the existing "swing span" with a "lift span" located closer to the center of the river channel



Land Use:

- Adopt and implement a Bi-State Coordination Accord to protect existing and new capacity and support economic development.
- Jurisdictions in the Corridor will develop and agree on a plan to manage land development to avoid adversely impacting I-5 or the Region's growth management plans.





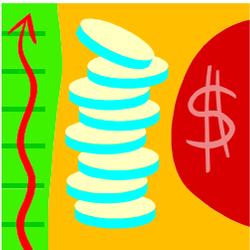
Transportation Demand and System Management:

- Commit to a comprehensive use of TDM/TSM strategies -- alternative modes, work-based strategies, policies and regulatory strategies, pricing and TSM strategies -- and pursue additional funding for transit and TDM/TSM strategies.
- Prepare an "I-5 TDM/TSM Corridor Plan" with guidance from the proposed "Bi-State Coordination Committee"
- Fund and implement additional TDM/TSM strategies now to encourage more efficient use of the transportation system.



Environmental Justice

- Establish a Community Enhancement Fund for use in the impacted areas in the I-5 Corridor in Oregon and Washington
- Map low-income and minority communities in the corridor.
- Take list of potential impacts identified by representatives of environmental justice communities into the EIS for the Bridge and Bridge Influence Area as a starting point for more analysis.
- Work with affected communities to explore ways to offset impacts and/or bring benefits to the community.
- Develop a public outreach plan for EIS process that includes special outreach to low-income and minority communities.
- Form and coordinate two working groups for the EIS -- one for public involvement and one for environmental justice.



Finance

- OR, WA and the Portland/Vancouver region should develop a financing plan for transit and highway capital projects
- Tri-Met and C-Tran need to increase revenues for a significant expansion of transit service, starting within the next five years.
- Establish regional transit financing commitments that will allow for:
 - an aggressive bi-state TDM program and
 - an expansion of transit service to support the light rail loop.
- Seek funding to widen I-5 to 3 lanes: Delta Park to Lombard after environmental and design work is completed.

Next Steps/Implementation

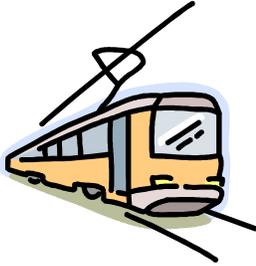


- Fall 2002: SW Washington Regional Transportation Council and Metro review and amend the Regional Transportation Plans to incorporate recommended I-5 corridor improvements.
- Delta Park to Lombard: widen I-5 to 3 lanes
 - Summer 2002-2004: Conduct environmental assessment and design work
 - Post 2004: Construction of Delta Park to Lombard
- 2003 – 2009: Environmental Impact Study on Bridge Influence Area (new supplemental or replacement bridge, interchange improvements between SR 500 and Columbia Blvd., including light rail between Expo Center and downtown Vancouver)
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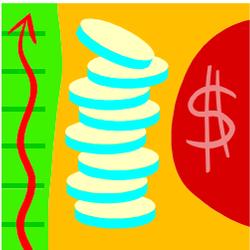
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Action Requested

Our Community had projects removed from an Environmental Impact Statement of the Columbia River Crossing on March 22, 2006 4 months into the EIS study. The staff removed RC-14 and 70 components. A Vancouver Port Commissioner invited to speak by the vendor, made faults and totally inaccurate statements about the outcome of the I-5 Partnership EIS study. He personally believed it to be the wrong direction to allowing the EIS to **STUDY** more bridges. Even though capacity across the Columbia River with a supplemental or replacement bridge if necessary was the recommendation from the I-5 Partnership EIS. It recommended a supplemental bridge adjacent to the BNSF rail bridge for further study too. The Co-Chairs of the CRC Citizen Advisory Task Force is on video not following the National Environmental Policy Act requirement. The alternatives brought in during NEPA Scoping must be Thoroughly studied benefits and impacts through construction and operations.

We are requesting that The Honorable Sean Duffy US Secretary of Transportation immediately contact the Bridge Replacement Project, Project Signatory Agencies. Informing them that you are requiring a full, independent, and equal study of the alternatives removed. That the current Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement must immediately widen to include the alternatives, an independent seismic evaluation, and full independent bridge inspection. The Project Sponsor Council must included Portland City Council members for local control. Meet regularly and have oversight.

In April 2013 concerns raised by two Forensic Accountant had a coalition of Washington State Senators calling for a formal investigation of the Columbia River Crossing Environmental Impact Statement. An audit including contracts, spending records and process. The EIS was estimated at \$50-million and ended up at over \$200-million with several missing receipts. An audit has not taken place and the final cost of the Columbia River Crossing is still unknown. The current vendor for the Bridge Replacement Project a Supplemental EIS for the Columbia River Crossing also was the vendor who did the original Columbia River Crossing EIS.

The Formal Request of The Honorable Sean Duffy

That the current Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement Bridge Replacement Project must immediately widen to include the following

1. Alternatives and components removed from the Columbia River Crossing EIS must immediately be studied in an EIS that is independent, equal, and complete.
2. An independent professional bridge seismic evaluation of the bridges' stating different levels of retro-fitting and cost.
3. Full independent bridge inspection showing the bridges need to be replace right now for safety reasons.
4. The Project Sponsor Council must included Portland City Council members for local control, meet regularly, and be a true oversight committee

5. A formal investigation of the Columbia River Crossing Environmental Impact Statement. An audit including contracts, spending records and process. The EIS was estimated at \$50-million and ended up at over \$200-million with several missing receipts.
6. Both Oregon and Washington have project requirements of at least three bids on public projects. They are required to take the lowest bid. Was the winning bid \$50-million for the EIS honest or too low?

The SEIS Process is still open and modeling a project with the current programming takes only a few weeks. The alternatives and components qualified and the vendor had no right to remove alternatives from the competition. The community is waiting for the study results of our recommendations to solve the transportation problems that have plague us for decades.

Thank you for your attention concerning this very important matter. Have a lovely day.

A Little Background On Our Current Transportation Issue

We are in A Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) that started in 2019 as a Supplemental to the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The current SEIS has been stalled for several years. The inability to receive community support, and having funding issues plagued the process. The CRC FEIS was unable to get support or funding state, federal, or local and died in 2013.

The problems started in 2006 with the vendor "staff" and how they ran the CRC EIS Process. Signatory Agencies sent representatives mostly elected officials to create the CRC Project Sponsor Council (PSC). This was the only oversight committee for the CRC EIS. The PSC and staff disagreed on several major issues creating an extremely unpleasant working environment.

Then the CRC Project Sponsor Council unable to affect the CRC EIS Process Boycotted their own committee meetings because:

The Purpose and Needs Statement, Problem Definition, Evaluation Criteria did not protect the community as the previous I-5 Portland Vancouver Transportation and Trade Partnership EIS documents had.

The removal of alternatives and components from the EIS without a Thorough National Environmental Policy Act EIS Study showing benefits and impact through construction and operations as required in the formal EIS Process. The CRC staff at a Governors' a citizen advisory committee meeting had the CRC Citizen Advisory Taskforce Chair and Co-chair they would be removed from the CRC EIS Process.

The refusal to put alternatives and components back into the formal EIS even after receiving letters from Federal officials, of both the States of Washington and Oregon who sat on Signatory Agency committees or on advisory steering committees to the CRC EIS. Oregon Legislators even attached a Budget Note to ODOT requiring more alternatives to be studied.

The complaints that the information provided by staff were inaccurate, misinformed, and misleading. Staff continually came to meetings without specific data and information requested for by the committee members.

The staff refused to have a complete, independent, and full inspection of the I-5 Columbia River Crossing bridges. The 2005 inspection gave more than 60 years left and there are restrictions on the bridges.

The staff refused to have a complete, independent, and full seismic inspection of the I-5 Columbia River Crossing bridges showing different level of retrofitting and cost.

The CRC Project Sponsor Council "Boycotted" they're own Project Council Meetings refused to meet with CRC staff. They wanted independent analyses of all data, alternatives put in the EIS, more citizen involvement, and proof that the bridges valued at about 1.5 billion needed to be immediately replaced prior to construction other bridges. Does the condition of bridges require immediate replacement before other bridges can be constructed?

The Outcome

Staff, ODOT, WADOT, and FHWA continued during the boycott which is why the alternative is "THE Staff Recommendation. The only CRC Project Sponsor Council Oversight Committee up by the CRC Signatory Agencies never met again.

** The CRC staff states it is unclear why the official oversight committee chose to "self-disband"
** Washington State's Attorney General made the documents from the CRC PSC Null-Void for violating both Oregon, Washington, and federal Open Meeting Laws and Sunshine laws.
** The document Purpose and Need, Problem Definition, Evaluation Criteria the lead documents both the CRC EIS and the current SEIS to the CRC the Bridge Replacement Project (BRP) NO formally Adopted lead documents. A Freedom Of Information Act (FIOA) to the Oregon Transportation Commission in the Spring of 2024 states they were unable to find hearing records the citizens could address the government's Signatory Agencies with their concerns about the documents or when the lead documents were actually Adopted. No records of formal Agency committees could be found.

** The CRC Project Sponsor Council said they were bullied, lied to, disrespected, and their requests for information were ignored.

**As for the how things are going this time with the current SEIS and the oversight committee Well there is NO fights with the Signatory Agencies oversight committee because there is NO committee. That's right all the committees associated with the current SEIS on the BRP are steering and advisory committees including the one's with elected officials who sit on Signatory Agency committees.

***That is why the official lead documents for the current SEIS near is NO formally Adopted Purpose and Needs Statement, Problem Definition, and Environmental Criteria,

Money

Oregon and Washington both require at least three bids on large public works and are required with the lowest bidder. The CRC vendor stated the EIS at \$50-million. Spending over \$200-million on the EIS study, without stakeholder support, and mostly without an oversight committee's approval. What did the other two bids look like?

We spent \$1-million dollars on an Independent Review Panel of the CRC EIS Process. They recommended everyone associated with the process be replaced including the departments of transportation, and to start a new process with citizen involvement. What happened? It was the same vendor, and several of the transportation employees, and they boost about

A Washington State Senate coalition of leaders calling for formal, independent investigation of CRC contracts, spending records on April 12, 2013. The final amount that was spent is unknown. The CRC EIS was \$50-million and ended up over \$220-million with millions in missing receipts. The Washington State Senators' request for a full audit of the CRC process and funding has not been granted.

***That is why the official lead documents for the current SEIS near is NO formally Adopted Purpose and Needs Statement, Problem Definition, and Environmental Criteria, No committee to hold hearings.

***Totally focused on tolls they have not looked at other funding sources.

We are asking that the Supplemental EIS widening to include alternatives that do not have the same problems that have stalled the current project.

Arch Miller

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdnbv6Rtgg>

This video is former Vancouver Port Commissioner Arch Miller telling the CRC Task Force citizen advisory committee to remove and not study the Third Bridge Corridor (RC-14) brought in during NEPA Scoping violating the NEPA EIS. The fact that an elected official would brazenly stand up and tell the Official Governors' CRC Task Force and community that "HE" Thinks and What "HE" wants and what "HE" believes. That we MUST do as we are told! Totally scrap having a fair and honest process or a comparable alternative. The Port of Vancouver Commissioner's statements about the I-5 Partnership recommendation were false

Removal of alternatives and components community supported in the EIS by staff and co-chairs citizen advisory task force

Several elected officials from Oregon and Washington give a news conference.

<http://couv.com/crc-light-rail-project/smarter-bridge-news-event>

This video is not meant to imply that speakers are members of the concerned citizen Smarter Bridge Committee. After the Record Of Decision on the CRC none of the elected officials or bodies were willing to provide any funding and the ROD died

Paul Edgar

From: Paul Edgar [pauloedgar@qwest.net]
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2006 9:53 AM
To: Henry Hewitt; Harold A. Dengerink, Ph.D.; Rob DeGraff
Cc: Rep. Deb Wallace; Rex Burkholder; Sam Adams; Marc Boldt
Subject: I am going to speak to this at tomorrows CRC Task Force Meeting (Please print this and have it in the packets for the members)

Paul,

Thank you for your efforts to bring a regional perspective and a sense of accountability to the congestion problems in the Portland area. I agree with nearly everything you are trying to accomplish and I appreciate your efforts to "keep the pressure" on the leaders of the Region. In my opinion, we are on the same side...and we want the same things for Portland / Vancouver. If we differ at all, it's in the matters of scope and timing. Let me explain:

Scope: I think our goal should be, not to fix one corridor between Portland and Vancouver, but to fix them all. I don't want to just widen I-205, or build a new Columbia River Crossing at I-5 or to build a new third bridge connecting the Ports and better serving the western communities...I want all three, and, looking to the twenty year future, the metropolitan area will need all three. So what we are trying to do is to pursue a strategy that will give us the best chance of getting all three.

Timing: The question is...How to do this, and in what order??? Should we try for the easier (and less expensive) widening of I-205 first? Maybe, but if so, that might reduce the perceived need for an improved I-5 corridor? Should we try for the third bridge first to improve the connection between the Ports with a new "freight" corridor? Maybe, but that might be seen as a substitute for widening I-205 and for improving the I-5 corridor.

So, what we seem to be settling on is trying to get the most difficult project (the I-5 corridor) underway first. If we can get that project started (and funded) and prove to the public and the legislature our ability to make a positive difference at the I-5 crossing...then, it is not such a great leap to build public support for the other two, and ...there is no question that both other projects can still stand on their own as necessary and cost effective. The fear is, if we do I-205 or the third bridge between the Ports first, than these projects will be used by some as an excuse to not support the I-5 improvements and we will further delay the replacement of these critical bridges.

I hope that you can accept (or at least not object to) this strategy. In fact, my real hope is that you will use your considerable influence to support and help us find a way to build all three of these needed projects.

Thank you again for your active support of improved transportation in the Portland / Vancouver area.

David O. Cox
Division Administrator
FHWA - Oregon Division
503-399-5749



Oregon

Theodore R. Kufengost, Governor

Parks and Recreation Department
State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer St. NE, Suite C
Salem, OR 97301-1266
(503) 986-0707
FAX (503) 986-0793
www.hcd.state.or.us



March 6, 2007

Hal Dengerink
Henry Hewitt
Columbia River Crossing Task Force
700 Washington Street, Suite 300
Vancouver, WA 98660

Dear Co-Chairs Dengerink and Hewitt:

I am writing to express our concerns about the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) staff recommendations considered by the CRC Task Force on February 27, 2007.

The recommendations do not appear to adequately address the cultural resource review process. The northbound bridge is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The southbound bridge appears to be eligible for National Register designation. Yet there are no alternatives in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that explore the re-use of either bridge for future use.

I believe that the CRC project and staff would be well served by including alternatives for both bridges in the DEIS. If a legitimate exploration of re-use options does not take place, and the reasons against re-using the bridges are not justified, then the entire project could be exposed to criticism and procedural challenges in the future. Various engineering and transportation studies have no doubt examined options for both bridges. I recommend including the results of those studies and the accompanying rationale for their viability in the DEIS.

We would welcome any discussions from the CRC staff regarding this issue. Our comments are offered with the intent of ensuring CRC's compliance with the cultural resource regulations as well as the spirit of preservation of these historic bridges, if possible. We look forward to a continued dialogue on this issue, and to assisting with an improved crossing over the Columbia River.

Sincerely,

Tim Wood
State Historic Preservation Officer

Video links

GeorgeBentonAsk.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7f174enogME>

Joint Oregon and Washington Senators' hearing on the CRC Process, staff makes false statement

Project Sponsor Signatory Agency Portland Metro February 22, 2007

Metro Councilor Brain Newman comments after over 2 hours of citizens talking about poor treatment by CRC project members and problems with the process.

www.PortlandDocs.com/CRC/Newman-070222-2.wmv

Jerri Williams Environmental Justice Representative CRC Task Force testimony

www.PortlandDocs.com/CRC/JerriWilliams-070222.wmv

Portland Business Alliance representative

www.PortlandDocs.com/CRC/Newman-070222-1.wmv

Elected Officials who public stated concerns during the Columbia River Crossing process

Elected officials during the CRC that made public comments that the CRC project had provided false, inaccurate, missing, misleading, false data, conflicting data, and/or information. This list does not include current elected officials who had made the statements then for comfort because they are currently involved in the process and working with staff. This is a broad list of elected officials in several levels of oversight, in both states, and both parties.

US Rep. Jamie Herrera Beutler, Mayors of Vancouver Pollard, Leavitt, Vancouver Council Members Bill Turlay, Jeanne Stewart, Pat Campbell, Portland Mayor Sam Adams, Clark County Commissioners Betty Sue Morris, Steve Stuart, Marc Bolt, Tom Mielke, David Madore, Multnomah County Commissioner Serena Cruz, WA Senators Pam Roach, Bob Morton, Jim Honeyford, Bob McCaslin, Don Benton, WA Rep Bruce Chandler, Vancouver Port Commissioner Jerry Oliver, Oregon Senators Gary George, Larry George, Oregon Representatives Dennis Richardson, Mitch Greenlick, Jim Thompson, Metro President David Bragdon, Councilors Robert Liberty, Bob Stacy

There are several formal letters from elected officials and agencies that state a list of concerns including what might be illegitimate activities concerning CRC EIS Process. I have only include a very few letters from members of Signatory Agencies with oversight responsibilities as Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) designated by the US Congress.

	General Fund	Lottery Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Nonlimited Other Funds	Nonlimited Federal Funds	Total Funds	Positions	Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)
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Package 502 Columbia River Crossing Investment

Package Description This package is provided for the purpose of approving a budget note relating to the Columbia River Crossing project.

LFO Recommendation Approve the budget note.

Budget Notes The Columbia River Crossing (CRC) bridge project is a major initiative to address congestion problems on I-5 between Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, Washington that requires support by not only the Governors of both states but the Legislatures as well. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) budget includes resources to continue work on solutions that advances the CRC to completion of the required Environmental Impact Statement.

ODOT is directed to provide reports to the Senate and House Transportation Committees on the progress made on the CRC project whenever these committees or their interim equivalents meet. Such ODOT reports shall include updated information on cost estimates, proposed alternatives, right-of-way procurement schedule, financing plans for the CRC project including initial and updated information regarding projected traffic volumes, fuel/gas rate assumptions, toll rates, cost of toll collections, as well as potential impacts on other Oregon transportation funding, needs and priorities.

ODOT is directed to secure and provide an independent investment grade analysis of the project with oversight of the consultant provided by the State Treasurer.

Finally, ODOT shall provide a clear and concise feasibility study, and develop a phased master plan for the CRC that allows for legislative oversight and approval at key decision points and report to the Legislature by February 2012, with the first iteration of CRC reports.

LFO Recommended



Washington State Senate

109B Irv Newhouse Building
P.O. Box 40417
Olympia, WA 98504-0417

Senator Don Benton
17th Legislative District

Olympia Ph: (360) 786-7632
District Ph: (360) 576-6059
E-mail: benton.don@leg.wa.gov

February 11, 2009

**Dear Governors' Christine Gregoire and Ted Kulongoski, Sponsor Agencies;
Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council and CTRAN,**

Attached please find correspondence from Congressman Earl Blumenauer to the Director of the Oregon Department of Transportation, dated January 7, 2009

We would like to thank Congressman Earl Blumenauer for his leadership on the Columbia River Crossing project's need to follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements, that all alternatives are thoroughly studied. A thorough study of all options to include data is a necessary requirement in the NEPA process. This valuable step in the NEPA process brings the best options to the forefront and creates cooperation between the sponsoring agencies, stakeholders, and taxpayers, and the ability to receive Federal funding for the project:

We are asking that the CRC project immediately commence a Supplemental EIS to fully study the "port-to-port connector" option RC-14.

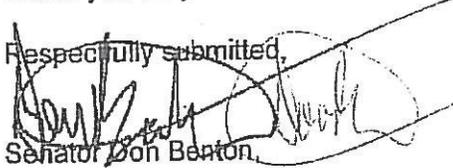
The foci of the Columbia River Crossing are the economy, safety, and the environment. A thorough NEPA process will create comparable data that will answer questions of cost, land use, environmental justice, mobility, congestion relief, regional freight, the distribution of benefits, and impacts.

In summary, adherence to the National Environmental Policy Act is essential for promoting consensus among various stakeholders and for demonstrating transparency. The I-5 international highway system's importance is internationally known. An open and transparent process is needed to build stakeholders consensus that will propel and help develop this project to completion. A project as important and enormous as the Columbia River Crossing must have transparency and must provide credible comparable data on the "port to port connector."

We the undersigned, as elected officials, and with our constituents' best interests at the forefront of our actions, urge Southwest Regional Transportation Council, CTRAN and the Governors of Oregon and Washington, to direct CRC Project to proceed with a full Supplemental EIS on the "port to port connector" RC-14, starting in March 2009.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this very urgent matter.

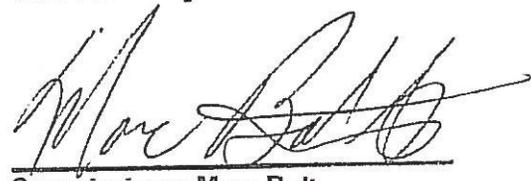
Respectfully submitted,


Senator Don Benton
17th District
Member of the
Senator's Joint CRC Oversight Committee

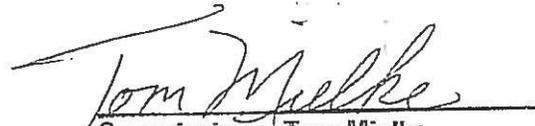

Senator Pam Roach
WA State Senator 31st District

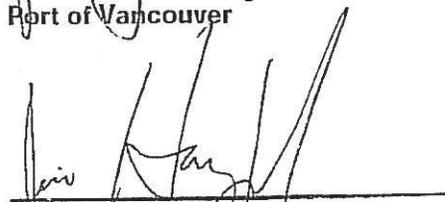

Councilor Pat Campbell
Vancouver City Councilmen #6

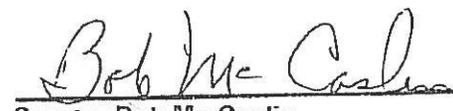

Senator Bob Morton
WA State Senator 7th District
Environment, Water & Energy Committee


Commissioner Marc Bolt
Clark County Commissioner
SW WA Regional Transportation Council


Commissioner Jerry Oliver
Port of Vancouver


Commissioner Tom Mielke
Clark County Commissioner
SW WA Regional Transportation Council
CTRAN Board Member

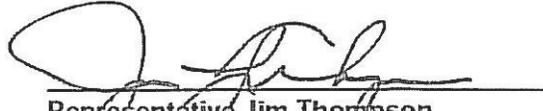

Senator Jim Honeyford
WA State Senator 15th District
Environment, Water & Energy Committee
Ways and Means Committee


Senator Bob Mc Caslin
WA State Senator 4th District
Economic Development Trade and Innovation

In support of Senator Benton's letter to Governors Christine Gregoire and Ted Kulongoski, Sponsor Agencies; Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council and CTRAN.



Senator Larry George
OR State Senator 13th District
Senator's Joint CRC Oversight Committee
Business and Transportation Committee



Representative Jim Thompson
OR Representative District 23
Ways and Means Subcommittee Natural Resources



BOARD OF CLARK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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CLARK COUNTY
WASHINGTON

Aug. 29, 2012

Washington Columbia River Crossing Oversight Committee
Oregon Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Columbia River Crossing
c/o Patrick Brennan, Committee Services Office
900 Court Street NE, Room 453 Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Columbia River Crossing (CRC) Third Bridge Analysis

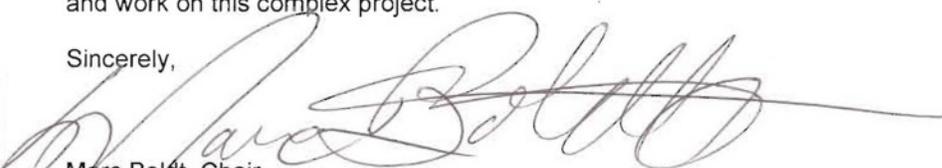
In a letter dated July 23, 2010 (attached), the Board of Clark County Commissioners, collectively and as members of the SW Washington Regional Transportation Council (a CRC Project Sponsor Agency), responded to a citizen request regarding the purported study of an option from Third Bridge Now. At the time, we clarified that an industrial arterial (RC-14 in the CRC DEIS) and a new freeway corridor (RC-16 in the CRC DEIS) were studied, but neither included the specific freeway and connection components represented by the Third Bridge Now alternative.

It is our understanding that a map belonging to Third Bridge Now was shown at the March 16, 2012 Oregon Joint Legislative Oversight Committee hearing. CRC staff reportedly stated that the map had been studied. If that statement was made, it was incorrect, as elucidated above.

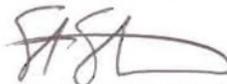
The citizen who informed us of this misrepresentation, Ms. Sharon Nasset from Third Bridge Now, has spent a great deal of time and effort developing an alternative that her group believes deserves further study. While we understand the NEPA process does not require full study of every potential alternative, we think it's appropriate to correctly identify what alternatives have, and have not, been fully evaluated in the DEIS.

We hope this letter helps to clarify the issue raised by Ms. Nasset. Thank you for your attention and work on this complex project.

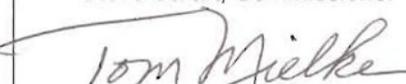
Sincerely,



Marc Boldt, Chair



Steve Stuart, Commissioner



Tom Mielke, Commissioner



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CLARK COUNTY
WASHINGTON

July 23, 2010

The Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC)
c/o Ms. Molly Coston, Chair
1300 Franklin Street, 4th Floor
Clark County Public Service Center
Vancouver, Washington 98666-1366

RE: Columbia River Crossing (CRC) Environmental Impact Study / Third Bridge Analysis

Dear Chair Coston and Council Members:

This correspondence is in follow up to a repeated request to RTC by concerned citizens about the lack of a "third bridge option" being studied and included in CRC's Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS). The specific area these citizens are interested in includes a new 6-lane freeway connecting I-5 at Mill Plain, west to the Port of Vancouver, south to Hayden Island, Marine Dr., and connecting with HWY-30 near Newberry Hill.

The CRC project references in a March 22, 2006, document, RC-14. RC-14 was used to create a possible transportation alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Study. RC-14 modeled a multilane, multimodal bi-state industrial arterial or corridor starting near I-5 and Mill Plain, crossing next to the BNSF rail bridge and connecting south to Marine Drive. Traffic analysis of the RC-14 alternative showed that it did not sufficiently relieve traffic congestion to any significant degree on the I-5/Columbia River Bridge and therefore was not advanced into the next round of alternatives. In sum, this alternative provided for a new industrial corridor, but did not provide for a major freeway that would adequately address freeway congestion.

A new freeway corridor alternative was also studied. It was identified as RC-16 (New Western Highway). This alternative functioned as a new freeway bypass to I-5, but did not directly connect to I-5 via Mill Plain. The proposed corridor started near Ridgefield and went around the ports.

Given the specific concern, as stated above, the answer is no. A "third bridge option" as a new freeway starting at I-5 and Mill Plain was not fully vetted.

Sincerely,

Steve Stuart, Chair

Tom Mielke

Marc Boldt

cc: Ms. Sharon Nasset
Ms. Tamara McLane

1300 Franklin Street • P.O. Box 5000 • Vancouver, WA 98666-5000 • tel: [360] 397-2232 • fax: [360] 397-6058 • www.clark.wa.gov



SHS



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CLARK COUNTY
WASHINGTON

Aug. 29, 2012

Washington Columbia River Crossing Oversight Committee
Oregon Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Columbia River Crossing
c/o Patrick Brennan, Committee Services Office
900 Court Street NE, Room 453 Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Columbia River Crossing (CRC) Third Bridge Analysis

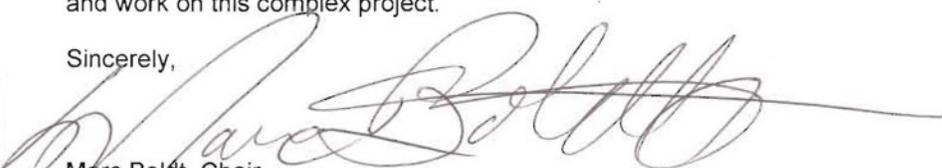
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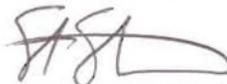
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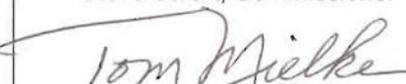
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We hope this letter helps to clarify the issue raised by Ms. Nasset. Thank you for your attention and work on this complex project.

Sincerely,


Marc Boldt, Chair


Steve Stuart, Commissioner


Tom Mielke, Commissioner



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CLARK COUNTY
WASHINGTON

1300 Franklin Street • P.O. Box 5000 • Vancouver, WA 98666-5000 • tel: [360] 397-2232 • fax: [360] 397-6058 • www.clark.wa.gov

July 23, 2010

The Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC)
c/o Ms. Molly Coston, Chair
1300 Franklin Street, 4th Floor
Clark County Public Service Center
Vancouver, Washington 98666-1366

RE: Columbia River Crossing (CRC) Environmental Impact Study / Third Bridge Analysis

Dear Chair Coston and Council Members:

This correspondence is in follow up to a repeated request to RTC by concerned citizens about the lack of a "third bridge option" being studied and included in CRC's Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS). The specific area these citizens are interested in includes a new 6-lane freeway connecting I-5 at Mill Plain, west to the Port of Vancouver, south to Hayden Island, Marine Dr., and connecting with HWY-30 near Newberry Hill.

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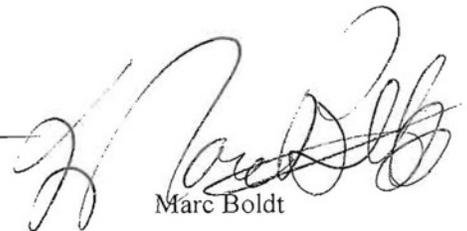
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Given the specific concern, as stated above, the answer is no. A "third bridge option" as a new freeway starting at I-5 and Mill Plain was not fully vetted.

Sincerely,


Steve Stuart, Chair


Tom Mielke


Marc Boldt

cc: Ms. Sharon Nasset
Ms. Tamara McLane

BOARD OF CLARK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Betty Sue Morris • Marc Boldt • Steve Stuart



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CLARK COUNTY
WASHINGTON

December 18, 2006

Mr. Douglas B. MacDonald
 Secretary of Transportation
 Washington State Department of Transportation
 Post Office Box 47300
 Olympia, WA 98504-7300

Dear Secretary MacDonald:

We write to share our concerns regarding the National Environmental Policy Act as it relates to the Columbia River Crossing project. The Board of Clark County Commissioners believes that the NEPA process is substantially flawed and any recent action taken by the Columbia River Task Force is arguably illegitimate.

On the evening of Wednesday, November 29th, the Columbia River Task Force met in regular session. During the proceedings, the Chairman, Hal Dengerick, deviated from the agenda by accepting a motion from Rex Burkholder Burkholder "to accept the project team's recommendations... and forward the report to the public for comment." The motion was seconded, voted on, and passed.

The Board of Clark County Commissioners takes objection to this deviation. The agreed upon and predetermined process would have allowed each member of the Task Force to go back to their respective bodies and present the staff alternatives. The motion as passed denied Clark County this opportunity.

Unfortunately for the residents of Clark County and the customers of C-Tran, Commissioner Stuart and Commissioner Morris had to depart the meeting early to attend the Clark County Planning Commission hearing on the Comprehension Growth Management Plan. Since there was no prior notification, each Commissioner was unaware of the vote and therefore, had not appointed an alternate to vote on their behalf.

The Board believes that a decision of this magnitude should have followed the agreed upon process. We should have had plenty of advance notice and a printed copy of the text. We believe this vote undermined the integrity of the NEPA process, for there needs to be a higher degree of consensus, and not a vote that was passed marginally or for the case of a few.

On a night in which Governor Gregoire addressed the Task Force as a whole and urged our region to not be competitors but partners in the CRC project, we find it inappropriate what transpired. Over 400,000 residents live in Clark County, and as the duly elected Board, we find it unacceptable to be left out of this process. Therefore, we seek a fair and objective analysis as well as a reasonable opportunity to comment on the project. There needs to be a frank and honest discussion about the staff recommended alternatives, and Clark County needs to be involved.

Sincerely,

Marc Boldt
 Chair

Betty Sue Morris
 Commissioner

Steve Stuart
 Commissioner



1300 Franklin Street, Floor 4
P.O. Box 1366
Vancouver, WA 98666-1366

360-397-6067
360-397-6132 fax
<http://www.rtc.wa.gov/>

November ¹⁵ 22, 2010

Ms. Sharon Nasset
1113 N. Baldwin Street
Portland, OR 97217

Member Jurisdictions

- Clark County
- Skamania County
- Klickitat County
- City of Vancouver
- City of Camas
- City of Washougal
- City of Battle Ground
- City of Ridgefield
- City of La Center
- Town of Yacolt
- City of Stevenson
- City of North Bonneville
- City of White Salmon
- City of Bingen
- City of Goldendale
- C-TRAN
- Washington DOT
- Port of Vancouver
- Port of Camas-Washougal
- Port of Ridgefield
- Port of Skamania County
- Port of Klickitat
- Metro
- Oregon DOT
- 15th Legislative District
- 17th Legislative District
- 18th Legislative District
- 49th Legislative District

Dear Ms. Nasset:

This letter is in follow up to your request about a "third bridge option" being studied and included in CRC's Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS). Your specific area of interest is about a project described as a new 6-lane freeway connecting I-5 at Mill Plain, west to the Port of Vancouver, south to Hayden Island, Marine Drive, and connecting with highway 30 near Newberry Hill.

The CRC project references in a March 22, 2006 document, RC-14. RC-14 was a possible transportation alternative in the DEIS. RC-14 modeled a multilane, multimodal bi-state industrial corridor starting near I-5 and Mill Plain crossing next to the current BNSF rail bridge and connecting south to Marine Drive. Traffic analysis of the RC-14 alternative showed that it did not sufficiently relieve traffic congestion to any significant degree on the I-5 Columbian River Bridge and therefore not advanced into the next round of alternatives. In sum, this alternative provided for a new industrial corridor, but did not provide for a major freeway that would adequately address I-5 traffic congestion.

A new freeway corridor alternative corridor was also studied. It was identified as RC-16, a New Western Highway. This alternative functioned as a new freeway bypass to I-5 but did not provide direct freeway access to I-5 via Mill Plain.

It is also worth noting that in 2008 RTC completed a Transportation Corridor Visioning Study (<http://www.rtc.wa.gov/reports/vision/VisioningCorridors.pdf>) that studied new freeway corridors throughout Clark County per a new 50-year growth scenario and given those corridors how a corridor to the east and west might be connected across the Columbia River.

Given your specific concern as stated above, no a "third bridge option" as a new freeway starting at I-5 and Mill Plain was not fully vetted.

Sincerely,

RTC Chair, Washougal Councilperson Molly Coston

cc: RTC Board of Directors

58477/JH/dj

October 28, 2010

Sharon Nasset
1113 N. Baldwin St.
Portland, OR 97217

P.O. Box 2529
Vancouver, WA
98668-2529
phone 360.696.4494
fax 360.696.1602
c-van 360.695.8918
www.c-tran.com

Dear Sharon:

At the October 12, 2010 C-TRAN Board of Directors meeting you requested a letter from C-TRAN stating that the 3rd bridge corridor was not studied, considered, or vetted. You made a similar request of C-TRAN in December of last year. I am attaching a copy of C-TRAN's December 21, 2009 response to you which included a copy of a letter to Congressman Earl Blumenauer. The letter to the Congressman came from CRC project Director Richard Brandman and discussed your 3rd bridge corridor concept and the CRC project's "Port to Port Connection" crossing option RC-14.

While I cannot speak for the CRC project, my own view is that although RC-14 did not examine an I-5 freeway spur stretching along Mill Plain as the principal northern feeder to the Port to Port western connection, the conclusions reached in the analysis of RC-14 still apply. The 3rd bridge option does not have the potential to significantly improve public transit on I-5, improve safety and vulnerability to incidents on I-5, improve substandard bike and pedestrian facilities, and reduce seismic vulnerability.

As always, I am available to discuss this further should you wish.

Sincerely,

C-TRAN



Jeff Hamm
Executive Director/CEO

Attachment

1. Letter Dated December 21, 2009

c: C-TRAN Board of Directors



55718/JH/dj

December 21, 2009

Sharon Nasset
1113 N. Baldwin St.
Portland, OR 97217

P.O. Box 2529
Vancouver, WA
98668-2529
phone 360.696.4494
fax 360.696.1602
c-van 360.695.8918
www.c-tran.com

Dear Ms. Nasset:

At the December 8, 2009 C-TRAN Board of Directors meeting, you raised the question of whether the CRC project had ever studied a river crossing option that routed I-5 or a 6 lane freeway west to the Port of Vancouver then across the Columbia River to connect with Highway 30 in Oregon.

We have researched the matter with CRC staff and concluded that such an option was considered early on in the scoping process. One of 70 CRC options, the RC-14 Port to Port Connection was subsequently eliminated from consideration because it did not meet all six elements of the project's purpose and need.

Attached is a copy of a letter from CRC ODOT Project Director Richard Brandman to Congressman Earl Blumenauer in January of this year that goes into more detail of that analysis.

As always Sharon, if you have more questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

C-TRAN

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Hamm', written over the printed name.

Jeff Hamm
Executive Director/CEO

c: C-TRAN Board of Directors
Richard Brandman
Don Wagner

1.1 Southbound Travel

Table 3-1 shows the estimated 4-hour AM peak person trips between the 15 geographic districts it would use the I-5 bridge in 2030. This table includes all trips by SOVs, HOVs, and transit. Figure 3-1 shows the trip information in Table 3-1 graphically. Total travel over the I-5 bridge in AM peak period is 38,210 person trips.

Table 3-1. Origins/Destinations of 2030 No-Build AM Person Trips Using I-5 Bridge

30 Person Trips I-5 Select Link - AM PEAK

From	To	Rivergale	Delta Park	Hayden Island	North Portland	Portland Central City	Northeast Portland	Multnomah/Clackamas Co.	Washington County	East Clark County	Fort Vancouver	SR 500	Outer Clark County	Salmon Creek	West Vancouver	Downtown Vancouver	Total
Rivergale		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	166	46	62	103	102	23	75	577
Delta Park		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	133	37	57	80	95	20	61	482
Hayden Island		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	166	58	74	105	127	30	104	664
North Portland		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	664	204	267	388	363	103	353	2,373
Portland Central City		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	439	158	237	285	434	91	305	1,929
Northeast Portland		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	52	105	78	40	133	45	153	606
Multnomah/Clackamas Co.		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	42	86	66	33	125	42	139	594
Washington County		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	615	246	285	322	460	136	434	2,498
Total		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,278	940	1,126	1,336	1,169	489	1,626	9,662
East Clark County										0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6,477
Fort Vancouver										0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,030
SR 500										0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,593
Outer Clark County										0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6,239
Salmon Creek										0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9,883
West Vancouver										0	0	0	0	0	0	0	985
Downtown Vancouver										0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,760
Total										2,532	1,780	1,598	6,956	8,617	740	946	28,548

January 19, 2010

Governor Christine Gregoire
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Governor Kulongoski
160 State Capitol
900 Court Street
Salem, Oregon 97301-4047

Dear Governors Gregoire and Kulongoski;

The four of us and the local governments we represent support construction of an improved Interstate 5 crossing of the Columbia River along with related improvements in the Bridge Influence Area. It is in this light that we write this letter. As soon as scheduling will allow, we look forward to meeting with you to further discuss our ideas and how we can jointly move CRC project construction forward.

We remain committed to a Columbia River Crossing project. An appropriately designed, financed, and managed transportation infrastructure improvement will benefit both our region and our states. We share a project vision that will reduce vehicle accidents, replace aging infrastructure, enhance marine navigation, expand the availability and accessibility of high capacity transit, improve bicycle and pedestrian access and safety, and improve reliability for the freight movement that is so critical to our region's economy.

The CRC project stands at a critical juncture. We recognize that significant study and assessment work has occurred, yet there remain outstanding issues of concern. Notwithstanding our stated support for a CRC project, we believe that cost, physical and environmental elements of the project as currently proposed impose unacceptable impacts on our communities.

These impacts, in combination with the project's high cost and financial risks and questions about whether important objectives will be achieved, make support for the project difficult.

To ensure development of a viable Columbia River Crossing, we respectfully request a stronger voice for our local governments in decisions about the project. We seek to join with you in an unprecedented states/local partnership to get this project firmly on the path to success. To do so, we propose the following shared work elements:

- **Complete the development of performance targets for the project, and use those targets to model and evaluate LPA refinements and other design options.**
- **Develop a clear and accountable performance-based management plan for the operation of the constructed project.**
- **Create a project financing plan that protects local taxpayers and road users.** We continue to have concerns about the opportunity costs imposed on our respective communities by a project with a price tag of this magnitude. We need to better understand the likely range of investment by all partners to ensure the project's costs are fair, provide high benefit-to-cost, and do not cannibalize funding for other priority projects in the coming decades.

- **Provide project funds for the local governments represented on the Project Sponsors Council to hire and supervise independent experts to verify critical project assumptions and help evaluate the performance of proposed refinements.** A project of this magnitude warrants independent evaluation by experts with experience in state-of-the-art forecasting and analytical methods including: (1) traffic volume growth, mode split, population and employment growth; (2) the effects of change in induced travel demand as an output or result of the design and operations choices; (3) the land use, transportation and economic consequences of major design options and tolling schemes under consideration; (4) evaluation of forecasts in the context of the adopted performance measures for the project; and (5) consideration of project improvements in the context of a larger regional and interstate system (i.e., taking into account potential impacts on I-5 upstream and downstream of the project, I-205, and parallel arterials.)
- **Commit to meeting the needs of the Hayden Island Community.** Recent refinements to the LPA have resulted in significant negative impacts to the businesses and residents of Hayden Island. The project must support island businesses and neighborhood livability, and advance the objectives of the Hayden Island Plan.

We are aware that Washington's Puget Sound region has successfully moved large transportation projects forward in a similar vein to that which we are proposing here – where local elected leaders and WSDOT are mutual partners in state-sponsored projects, and project decisions are made transparently. We believe local involvement in those instances has led to better projects, and we believe that applying the same model here would lead to a lower cost, higher performing CRC project.

We seek to work collaboratively with CRC project staff, and to bring the results of this work to our colleagues on the Project Sponsors Council and to the departments of transportation for consideration.

We recognize that this project is unusually complex and has a broad variety of stakeholders. Our suggestions for how to restructure the delivery of this project are intended to acknowledge that complexity and utilize it as a strength. The result: higher public trust and confidence, and a better, implementable Columbia River Crossing project.

Sincerely,



Sam Adams
Mayor, City of Portland



Tim Leavitt
Mayor, City of Vancouver



David Bragdon
President, Metro Council



Steve Stuart
Clark County Commissioner, Chair

David Bragdon Statement Before C.R.C. Review Panel

May 19, 2010

The Metro Council, along with JPACT, is the MPO for the Oregon portion of the region. We also perform sub-contract work for other agencies, including TriMet and ODOT, pertaining to EIS preparation, modeling and forecasting. We are also democratically elected to represent the people of the Oregon side of the region – the people who pay the taxes and fees, rely on the freight, depend on the jobs, live in the neighborhoods, receive the paychecks and breathe the air which this project would affect for the coming decades.

In all these roles – MPO, sub-contractor to the highway divisions, representative of people - we have been intimately involved in the CRC, just as we have been involved in other major transportation projects of the past decades. We take our professional and political responsibilities seriously, do not reach conclusions without extensive study, and we have a track record of successful regional inter-agency collaboration, including completion of projects which successfully engage multiple cities, special districts, and a myriad of state and federal agencies.

My personal involvement dates to 2007 when the LPA proposal drafts first came to our Council. I was subsequently appointed to the project sponsors' council, and like other local officials I have spent countless hours endeavoring to shape this project in a positive direction, and develop a proposal which our region can afford and embrace.

I started this process with two basic principles, both of which *once* made me a supporter of the conditional Locally Preferred Alternative legislation which I marshaled through our Council in July 2008. Those principles are:

My first assumption was that the north-south corridor in our region is very important, and in need of improvements: portions of the system are congested at some periods during weekdays, freight is not granted the priority that its economic importance would warrant, transit service is limited, bicycle and pedestrian access is nearly impractical, some of the structural elements are old and worn, the draw span creates challenges to navigation and unreliability for vehicles, and the interchanges discourage optimal urban development. The status quo on Interstate 5 should not be acceptable – we need to act to address these significant disadvantages. No rational participant in this process would dispute that statement, though they may define the problem(s) in varying ways, or with differing areas of emphasis. (Which may be part of our problem today – imprecision in problem statements.)

My second hypothesis was that solutions in a complex corridor such as this one would of necessity be innovative and multi-faceted, and could *only* be the result of collaboration and teamwork among a multitude of agencies and interests. Successful mega-projects elsewhere, whatever their other merits or demerits, ranging from Boston's Big Dig to Denver's international airport, *only* come to fruition when the coalition in support of them consistently expands – and those coalitions *only* expand when issues are addressed in a meaningful, inclusive, and problem-solving manner, and a variety of disciplines and creative solutions are brought to bear. By contrast, proposed mega-projects tend to stall, as this one has, and fail, when they are imposed from above, are sold simply on the basis of platitudes not based in fact or financial rigor, or are the product of one agency's or one professional discipline's toolbox to the exclusion of all the other tools in the transportation toolbox.

After my nearly three years of involvement – again, three years which started with me as a vote in favor of the conditional LPA – my reluctant conclusion is that the current CRC proposal by the state highway divisions dramatically fails both of those basic tests: it has not been proven to be a cost-effective solution to the many challenges in this corridor, and it has not been planned and developed in an innovative or inclusive manner. As a result of the state highway divisions resisting any scrutiny or suggestions which did not fit their pre-determined approach, confidence in the project, including my own, has been eroding at a time when a successful project would need to be gaining credibility.

That credibility can only be restored by substantive changes in the product and its direction, *not*, I stress, *not* by more public relations efforts, which simply try to persuade the community that the current product is not so bad. “Not so bad” is hardly sufficient compared to the great upside potential opportunity that a new crossing could present for our region, so the fix needs to be a technical, engineering, design, planning, financial fix – not another sales job. We need Plan B, not more unending promotion and defense of a Plan A which has failed to pan out.

Moreover, we need an expedited process to get us to Plan B quickly, through a collaborative governance model which makes the highway divisions participants in the process, a role for they are qualified, rather than being the manager of the process itself, a role they have shown they are not qualified for. That's not a moral judgment or criticism; it's just a matter of miscasting - one of the institutional causes of the current stalemate is that the state highway divisions are simultaneously a contestant *and* a judge in the proceedings.

The support will be there for a good product. What's missing is not the support – what's missing is that good product. The support was there not so long ago, and local officials have repeatedly and constructively pointed the way for that support to be revived through re-direction of the project. It *can* be done, but only through the type of interagency collaboration which characterizes successful megaprojects in urban areas in the 21st century. In this case, the

two state highway divisions' unilateral control and limited mission has not only unnecessarily squandered the unprecedented degree of cooperation which exists at the local level, but has jeopardized our bi-state region's chances to capitalize on what should be a great opportunity.

This metropolitan region has a remarkable – indeed, unprecedented - degree of local collaboration. In 2008, governing boards of local governments on both sides of the river joined hands and cast votes on a conditional Locally Preferred Alternative containing elements which prior to 2008 had been matters of dispute rather than agreement, an accomplishment which we should celebrate: we affirmed our common commitment to a replacement bridge in the existing I-5 alignment (rather than in some other alignment, or rather than a tunnel, etc. etc.), we affirmed that light rail transit was an integral part of a solution, we recognized that tolls were an ingredient for paying for and managing this new asset which we all wanted to enjoy. Amid the controversy today, it is worth pausing and remembering that as recently as 2008, that level of agreement among partner agencies was achieved.

Those diverse boards all conditionally approved the Locally Preferred Alternative in a spirit of good faith, with mutual assurances that we would continue to work together to address the many unresolved issues inherent in as complex a project as this. (As I said in my second principle, as we were in the vanguard of supporters for a project, we knew the coalition needed to continue to expand, which can only be done by addressing valid concerns.) Recognizing that different communities and different agencies have differing perspectives, or value different aspects of the project with varying degrees of emphasis, we nonetheless all resolved to continue working toward “yes.”

The unresolved issues were all clearly stated in local resolutions and other communications, and done so in a constructive manner designed to reach solutions rather than stymie progress. You can read those communications quite plainly in the record from 2008 and before and since: Some interests were concerned about the impact of tolls on certain segments of the community, either economically or geographically. Other interests wanted to be shown more precisely how improvements would benefit trucking and commerce, beyond repetition of the unproven assertion that “more road capacity” automatically equates to “greater freight mobility,” in the absence of design or pricing features which actually grant preference to freight. Other interests offered to help validate that a project would meet the two states' greenhouse gas emissions laws. Other groups asked for assurances that interchange design would improve their business districts, as had been promised. And everybody involved asked for a realistic finance plan, based on foreseeable fiscal capacity to pay, relative to other priorities.

For the Metro Council's part, in addition to some of the issues I have just mentioned, I might highlight four major overriding concerns which were incorporated in our resolution of support –

let me reiterate, this was a resolution *of support*, with conditions, in July 2008 - four major concerns which have been raised repeatedly in communications from our technical staff or elected officials in one form or another dating from October 29, 2006 through February 24, 2010, copies of which I will give you:

- Concerns about how the size, operations and management of this segment of the interstate would impact other parts of the transportation system, including other segments of I-5, the parallel I-205, and north-south arterials in the City of Portland. We have an adopted Regional Transportation Plan for our region which indicates which portions of the surface highway and street system are mature and are financially, physically and environmentally unlikely to expand, so it was important that the CRC fit that system rather than cause indirect disruption to it.
- Proper application of 21st century forecasting and modeling techniques, particularly on the issue of how increased physical capacity would affect induced demand for single occupancy auto trips (not incidentally, the factor which is the biggest obstacle to freight mobility as well as the largest contributor to greenhouse gas generation) and ensure that the project will support the local jurisdictions' adopted land use aspirations on both sides of the river. Oregon and Washington have very similar land use systems and planning practices, so it makes sense that a new transportation project be shown to support those goals in each state. (In fact, that's the law in both states.)
- Interchanges which fit the context and aspirations of our neighborhoods and business districts.
- And, of course, a finance plan which would reveal what our citizens – whether they pay federal taxes, state taxes, a regional tax, and/or tolls – would pay for this project, and how their paying for this project would affect their ability (in effect, their Congressional and legislative delegations' capacity) to also pay for the other major transportation capital projects we want and need.

I think you would agree that these basic questions, like many others incorporated in the local governments' conditional support of the LPA, are not just reasonable, but are basic and necessary. And I would add that the conditions - while legally binding and therefore perhaps call the validity of the LPA into question since the conditions have not yet been fulfilled - were not stated so much as questions or demands but rather as invitations – as invitations for the state agencies to work with us as partners. “Here are things we can do to make this the best project possible,” we were trying to say. When I cast my vote for the conditional LPA, I was not just casting my vote for the physical elements described in that document, I was also casting my vote to work with all the various agencies in good faith to resolve the remaining unresolved issues.

I do not regret that vote, because as I stated in my first principle, the status quo in this corridor needs action and the basic elements of the LPA, I am persuaded, are sound. But, to be quite candid, as I look at that vote, I have come to conclude that my faith in the process was naïve and misplaced, and that avenues toward the mutual problem-solving implicit in our conditional approval of the LPA have been closed, replaced with one-way streets: one way streets along which the highway divisions unilaterally define the problem (auto congestion at certain times of day) and then define the solution (more physical capacity) using a very limited range of tools from a small toolbox, without regard to economic cost or environmental externalities or impacts outside the narrowly defined problem area.

I and many others in our region are eager to be supporters of a project. We have demonstrated through our hours and hours of commitment and carefully crafted proposed work that we are more than ready to be team players. I will leave you copies of communications, with which I am proud to be professionally associated, as I believe they represent the cutting edge of transportation planning issues in urban America today and could lay out the path toward a CRC of which we can all be proud. Those documents are:

- An October 19, 2006 letter from our Council to the CRC task force, highlighting the same issues we are still raising today – many of which have not been addressed by the highway divisions despite the passage of more than three years.
- The Metro Council's July 17th, 2008 conditional approval of the LPA – again, this was an *approval* - which lists suggestions and requests such as a *truly* independent evaluation of the induced demand issue and 21st century forecasting and modeling techniques – major conditions which the highway divisions have still not fulfilled even though the approval of the LPA was contingent on them.
- The Metro Council's February 5th, 2009 resolution, again expressing support for a project and advocating for performance measures and demand management techniques to be fully incorporated in the design and post-construction phases – a suggestion which the highway divisions appear to have ignored until recently.
- A "Road to Construction" policy statement of December 3, 2009 by Portland Mayor Sam Adams and myself, suggesting that fiscal capacity and performance measures be used in the refinement process – which the highway divisions had not done despite prior indications that they might.
- The January 19, 2010 letter to the two Governors from the four elected officials on the Project Sponsors' Council, again suggesting better performance measures and fiscal assessment as well as a *truly independent* look at assumptions – to which the Governors subsequently replied that they would essentially stay the course and not permit a truly independent review.

- The February 24, 2010 scope of work proposed after unprecedented collaboration among the professional staffs of the local jurisdictions, again in a demonstration of unity which should be considered an asset for a good project. Additionally, at local expense, our agency as well as other jurisdictions have engaged staff and consulting time on various other elements of the project including the proposed interchanges which many of our citizens understandably see as damaging to their communities and businesses. I believe Portland's representative will speak next about the work they have commissioned by the URS firm, which we feel is useful and essential work, but it makes no sense different jurisdictions are having to commission this work in a fragmented way - but they are doing so due to a lack of faith in the state highway divisions' process. It is unclear whether and how this local work would be assimilated into the work of the state highway divisions, if at all. Even after all these years and expenditure of public dollars, the inner workings of the project are opaque even to those of us supposedly most intimately involved.

We feel these documents represent best practices for the era in transportation planning, design and engineering. But my experience of the past several years is that rather than being met on the ground of policy, finance, engineering or design, the promoters of the current CRC proposal choose to engage primarily in the arena of spin and slogans. Rather than addressing issues by hiring an engineer or architect they tend to hire another lobbyist. But spin and slogans are unlikely to generate the broad political and financial support a project like this needs.

Where does that leave you? As a result, you, with all due respect, have been placed in a bind by your clients. You have been billed as an expert panel, which unquestionably you are. But the Governors and the highway divisions have also billed you as independent, which, again with all due respect, you would need to prove yourself to be. You have been hired by the highway divisions, given a very narrow scope of work by the highway divisions, and are being supervised and given information by the highway divisions. And so it is with no disrespect to you that many of us in the community believe it likely you are expected to rubber stamp what the highway divisions want you to tell them. It was clear from the Governors' letter that you are not allowed to consider the possibilities of an inclusive Plan B - which this situation desperately needs - and are instead confined to implementing their Plan A.

I hope that you can find a way to do the right thing for Vancouver and Portland, within the confines of your contract with your clients in Salem and Olympia. But like I say, I think you're in a bind.

Whoever it is, if not you, unless somebody intervenes and helps get us all on the path to a workable Plan B, the impartial body deciding the fate of Plan A may not be you, but very well may be a federal judge - and federal judges don't make good transportation planners and they

don't work very quickly. But that is the path, to a federal court room, that this project and its current EIS is on now.

Meantime, we will keep trying to do our job here, on behalf of the people we represent and the economic and environmental needs of our citizens and future generations. In the coming weeks, our Council will discuss whether or not to officially suspend our 2008 conditional approval of the LPA, in light of the highway divisions' non-compliance with its conditions. We will also have to evaluate whether our agency would be willing to sign an EIS if in our view it does not meet the standards for evaluation of alternatives that the law demands. Our Council will also have to weigh an amendment to our Regional Transportation Plan with regard to number of lanes, which would be required to enable a project to go forward, as well as a unique feature of Oregon transportation planning law called a Land Use Final Order, which the Metro Council also must vote on before a project can proceed.

I would prefer that we be able to do our job, and vote on those decision points, in an atmosphere of collaboration and mutual problem-solving with the state governments. That has not been the atmosphere over the past three years. Only by working together can we all achieve the potential that a good Columbia River Crossing project could achieve for all of us.

David Bragdon May 5, 2021
Issue CRC

<https://cityobservatory.org/hard-earned-lessons-dont-repeat-the-mistakes-of-the-failed-crc/>

Hard earned lessons: Don't repeat the mistakes of the failed CRC
By David Bragdon
10.5.2021

The Oregon and Washington highway departments are at it again, reviving the same half-truths and propaganda that doomed their first Columbia River Crossing fiasco a decade ago

Instead of fixing the real problems in the corridor, they'll make the problems worse

A warning from one of Portland's past leaders about the deceptive high pressure sales tactics used to sell a bloated freeway boondoggle

Editor's Note: David Bragdon was the President of the Metro Council, Portland's regional government, from 2003 to 2010. He led the agency at the time the Columbia River Crossing was developed and was part of the local Project Sponsors Council. Since 2013, Bragdon has been Executive Director of TransitCenter, a New York based foundation that works with leading transportation advocates and agencies in major cities across the nation.

Legend has it that the Columbia River Crossing project died in 2013 only because a handful of right-wing politicians in Washington State killed it. This inaccurate re-writing of history was spun retrospectively by the project's formidable public relations machine to obscure the real reason their project failed: the incompetence and mendacity of the project leadership at the Oregon and Washington State Highway Departments, ODOT and WSDOT, who made a series of errors that doomed the project long before those Washington State legislators administered the last rites. The first gentle pull on the plug occurred in 2010, when a "blue ribbon panel" of highway and bridge experts in engineering, finance, planning and design – handpicked by ODOT and WSDOT, with the assumption they'd be told what they wanted to hear with a great big rubber stamp of support – issued a damning report: the peers from agencies and firms from around the country found that ODOT/WSDOT had selected an untested bridge type, had conjured a finance and tolling plan that did not add up, had ignored or misled other agencies like the Coast Guard, and had made countless errors, large and small. Among those fatal mistakes, the two state agencies had poisoned their relationships with local agencies and the community with a pattern of half-truths, untruths, and broken promises. It was this pattern of deceit that weakened the CRC proposal to the point that the right-wingers in Olympia could ultimately provide the death blow.

I know. I was an up-close witness to ODOT/WSDOT management's bad faith for several years. Leadership at ODOT frequently told me things that were not true, bluffed about things they did not know, made all sorts of misleading claims, and routinely broke promises. They continually substituted PR and lobbying gambits in place of sound engineering, planning and financial acumen, treating absolutely everything as merely a challenge of spin rather than matters of dollars or physical reality.

That history is important, because if you're not honest about the patterns of the past, you are doomed to repeat them. Unfortunately, I understand that's exactly what's going on with the rebranded CRC: the same agencies, and even some of the same personalities who failed so spectacularly less than a decade ago – wasting nearly \$200 million and building absolutely nothing – have inexplicably been rewarded for their failure by being given license to try the very same task, using the very same techniques of bamboozlement. It's the definition of insanity. I ask the community members and elected leaders of the Portland-Vancouver area in 2021 to take it from me, who learned it the hard way 2007-10: do not fall for ODOT management's chronic misrepresentations, or its outdated technical methods rooted in the 1950s. You are being misled in the short-term, and your constituents' descendants will be stuck with a terrible project and debt for decades. The I-5 / I-205 corridor between Oregon and Washington State has serious challenges – too much congestion at peak hours and peak directions, old and out-moded infrastructure, poor air quality in adjacent communities – but the two State Highway Departments' approach won't fix any of those problems and will make some, like traffic and emissions, worse than today.

I can take you through ODOT's old playbook, and you can tell me whether they are running it again now:

The bum's rush

I understand ODOT management has revived one of its favorite old falsehoods by claiming they are facing an "imminent federal deadline," and that if local leaders don't knuckle under to ODOT's plan-and soon-the region will lose millions or tens of millions of dollars forever. Creating fictional "federal deadlines" and other federal processes as an excuse for false urgency is a familiar ODOT tactic. From 2007 through 2013, ODOT staff frequently but vaguely claimed that quick action was needed on certain approval steps, and there "there is no more time to consider x or y" because of "impending federal deadlines." When asked to cite specifically what deadlines they meant, ODOT officials would refuse to answer or parry with generalities. When Congressional staff would inquire with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or other federal agencies about what deadlines ODOT could possibly be referring to, nobody could say. ODOT public relations staff had made it up.

In short, ODOT leadership's claims that "federal deadlines" are urgently impending are usually fabrications, created by ODOT PR staff (who dominate the agency) to force other parties like local governments to go along with whatever ODOT staff is proposing without scrutiny. (Ironically, ODOT itself rarely meets any real deadlines, and has a

terrible track record of doing anything on time. Yet ODOT management insists that everybody else adhere to deadlines that don't exist.)

One specific example: in the summer of 2010, ODOT public relations specialist Travis Brouwer solemnly intoned that Congress was on the verge of passing a reauthorization bill, and that it was essential that certain approval steps be taken for the CRC for it to be included in this (supposedly) impending bill. Actually, as all Congressional staff knew, and as Brouwer and State Highway Department Director Matt Garrett also must have known, it was an election year and there was little likelihood of a bill passing in that time frame. (Brouwer and Garrett, like much of ODOT management, are better versed in politicking than engineering, being former Congressional staff experienced in lobbying and propaganda. Like much of CRC's senior team, they had little or no understanding of modern engineering, planning or finance, beyond a 1956-era grasp.)

Some of the other ODOT falsehoods which were debunked during CRC v.1, and which you can be on the lookout for again were:

We can't consider less costly alternatives. When asked about projected costs, ODOT staff claimed that federal law or regulation prevented them from considering cost and budget when developing their plan. There could be no value engineering, they said, vaguely handwaving at "federal regulations." ODOT staff made this statement partly as an evasion so they couldn't provide a realistic tolling and revenue plan, claiming they were "not allowed" to take realistic revenue availability or costs into account (the way transit projects must, by the way). When US Representative Peter DeFazio, who knows a thing or two about federal transportation law, scoffed at the claim, senior ODOT staff were privately dismissive of him. But ODOT's claim sounded absurd, and indeed it was: through independent channels we learned that Obama Administration FHWA Director Victor Mendez publicly stated the opposite of ODOT's statement, and declared that in practice FHWA was encouraging state governments to become more cost-conscious at all stages of project development, not barring them from doing so. In short, ODOT claimed the federal government prevented them from realistic budgeting, while in fact the top highway official in the nation countered that he strongly encouraged it. (This is one of those lies that cleverly twists a kernel of truth: agencies are barred from excluding options from consideration based solely on cost, but that doesn't mean they can't use cost as a criterion in choosing their ultimate action).

We can't change anything in our plan without violating federal rules. ODOT also claimed that design parameters such as ramps, grades, turning radii etc. could not be changed because doing so would require FHWA to approve waivers, which ODOT said FHWA was highly unlikely to do. They were adamant that an enormous interchange had to be inflicted on Hayden Island, eroding property values and discouraging redevelopment, because federal regulations required it. This excuse was debunked by ODOT/WSDOT's own hand-picked "blue ribbon" panel, when Chair Tom Warne (a veteran Utah state highway official) observed that FHWA can be expected to routinely approve hundreds of waivers like that on a project of this size. The problem was that ODOT staff, who have not successfully built anything more complicated than a simple overpass for the past

thirty years, did not have the training or sophistication to deal with complex engineering challenges, and just didn't have the skills to be bothered. In the absence of technical knowledge, ODOT leadership defaults to the one skill they do possess, word-spinning. (To be fair, WSDOT has superior technical skills to ODOT, though most of its talent is deployed in the Puget Sound region, not Southwest Washington.)

This is special money that can only be used for this project. Another ODOT staff whopper was the repeated claim that federal money for the CRC was somehow special, could not be used for other projects, and therefore lavish spending on CRC would not deprive other priorities of funding. This claim was exposed as untrue when the project was cancelled, and the money was quickly reprogrammed to other highway projects. (Keep in mind, this claim that billions must – must! – be spent on overbuilding I-5 comes from an agency that can't seem to find a few nickels to fund passenger trains between Portland or Eugene, or paint crosswalks or install signals to prevent pedestrians from being killed on 82nd Avenue.)

OK, we'll go along with what you want (Not really: fingers crossed). When under more intense pressure, ODOT management will grudgingly make vague promises to "consider" things, which over and over it proved it had no intent to do. (Or, as in the case of I-5 Rose Quarter, create an advisory committee that it completely controls – or else.) ODOT leadership routinely used its control of the technical process to renege on its commitments. For example, to win support from the Metro Council, Mr Garrett pledged to commission an independent review of the project staff's highly questionable estimates about greenhouse gas emissions. (This same Mr Garrett had a bad habit of recycling untruths: he was later caught providing falsified GHG estimates to a legislative panel, with the fantastical notion that more traffic leads to less GHG.) Within weeks of the Metro Council accepting his pledge and voting to endorse the project, ODOT leadership reneged on the promise of an independent review, with Garrett privately telling a Metro official, "we just need to greenwash" this project. (Current ODOT management used a similar technique recently, by bringing in an expert panel ostensibly to audit traffic forecasts for their monstrous I-5 Rose Quarter proposal, but then forbidding the panel from considering induced demand, the primary factor at issue. It's like saying, "OK, OK, OK, we'll bring in independent experts to evaluate our claim that pigs can fly" but then directing the experts to ignore the existence of gravity.)

In another fingers-crossed promise, under pressure from the community due to the very real probability of induced demand and an understandable community desire that Hayden Island not be further obliterated beyond the existing highway blight, ODOT leadership pretended to reduce the size of the Columbia River Crossing from a proposed 12 lanes to 10 lanes. It cleverly changed all the project's promotional materials to describe the road as a 10 lane facility. But it actually made no changes to the physical width of the roadway and structures it planned to build. What it cheekily did do was to delete from the project's Final Environmental Impact Statement every single reference to the actual width of the massive bridges it was proposing to build. A public records request forced WSDOT to divulge plans showing that the supposed ten-lane bridge they had agreed to build was 180

feet wide—exactly the same width as it had been when ODOT described it as carrying 12 lanes.

ODOT and WSDOT’s manipulative tactics became more and more apparent as local officials compared notes with each other in the first decade of the century. State officials probably banked on local leaders from the two sides of the river never talking to each other, but the more we did talk, the more we realized how we were being played off against each other by the self-styled amateur Svengalis in Olympia and Salem. ODOT would whisper to Oregonians, “don’t worry, the tolls are going to pay for it all, and light rail is a must,” while at the very same moment WSDOT would whisper to Washingtonians, “aw, don’t worry, the tolls are going to be low, and we’re going to get rid of this light rail component, just go along for now.” (WSDOT was far more savvy than their ODOT cousins too, by larding up the project with interchanges far to the north that functionally had very little utility for true interstate traffic but were designed for intra-Clark County short trips. WSDOT winked at their constituents and confided, “We got those rubes down in Salem to fall for Oregon paying for 50 percent of our sprawling suburban interchanges!”)

The revived CRC, aka “Interstate Bridge Replacement,” is more of the same

In the past year, WSDOT and ODOT have been attempting to breathe new life into the corpse of the expired Columbia River Crossing project. They’ve started by rebranding it as the “Interstate Bridge Replacement.” The revived “IBR” project may have changed its name, but hasn’t changed its bad faith efforts to peddle this multi-billion dollar project as if it were the only possible solution to the very real challenges in this corridor. When faced with a challenge, ODOT simply rebrands, without really changing anything. It’s the same old soup in a new bowl, brewed by cynical chefs who, cigarettes dangling from their lips, also cook the books on traffic forecasts, budgets and GHG modeling.

The new name itself is a distortion. It implies that they’re merely “replacing” the existing bridge, when in fact that’s no more than 20 percent of this giant boondoggle, which is in reality a 5 mile long, \$5 billion 12 lane freeway that just happens to cross a river. The reality looks like this:

Animated GIF courtesy of Bike Portland.

This illustration shows not the new bridge, but the planned widening of I-5 south of the bridge on Hayden Island. This is no “replacement.” It is as Congressman Peter DeFazio – whose cautions ODOT routinely ignored during the first chapter of this saga, despite the power and knowledge he has – aptly described it “ a gold-plated project,” with most of the project’s cost being driven by highway department plans to widen long stretches of freeway on either side of the bridge itself.

As City Observatory noted, the revived CRC project kicked off with an enormous lie and yet another fictitious deadline. Project Manager Gregg Johnson told Oregon and

Washington Legislators that they'd have to repay the Federal Highway Administration \$140 million if they didn't move ahead with the project by 2024. That, of course, isn't true, if Oregon and Washington choose a "no-build" alternative, FHWA regulations say there's zero repayment liability.

The Columbia River Crossing failed because state highway officials were simply dishonest every step of the way in their efforts to sell this project. Their coverup was essential to them, because as agencies whose main activity is rural, single-purpose highways, they lacked the skills to plan and build a complex, urban, multimodal project in a community that rightfully demands authentic engagement. In the face of that need, they obscured real likely costs, either bungled or intentionally exaggerated tolling forecasts, refused to release accurate renderings, and invariably substituted branding, bullying and propaganda for problem-solving.

I'm saddened to see that almost a decade later the Governors of Oregon and Washington have unleashed the same agencies again to use the same techniques and simply continue this stupefying track record of incompetence and dishonesty. Those of us who were leading the region 10-15 years ago learned a difficult and expensive lesson about the perils of trusting ODOT and WSDOT management and their methods. We can only hope that today's leaders profit from our experience and not repeat our mistake of trusting the phony sales pitches used to push this project, which is the wrong solution to a set of very real problems.

While the two state highway departments are fixated on their 1950s style non-solution, the I-5 corridor is beset by major challenges: high demand in certain directions at certain hours, freight being delayed by an abundance of single-occupancy cars, one structure that is now over a hundred years old, inadequate transit and biking and walking options, and a legacy of harm inflicted on North Portland, Hayden Island and downtown Vancouver. Those are very real challenges which can be addressed only with truth, creativity, first-class planning and engineering and design, credibility with the public, and post-1950s concepts like demand management. The two State Highway Departments have already proven they have none of those attributes. Their proposal will not solve the real problems and will actually exacerbate them, and their methods and lack of credibility will lead to more wasted years and wasted money. Rather than being trusted and empowered, ODOT and WSDOT should be removed from their role as project managers - which they've amply proved they're not qualified for - and replaced with an interagency team rooted in the region that can get this important job done.

ODOT and WSDOT take one truth, and then extrapolate many untruths from it. 'We need to do something to fix the problems in this corridor,' is true, but 'Therefore we need to do the most expensive, stupid something' is not true.