

MEETING: Columbia River Crossing (CRC) Project Sponsors Council

DATE: December 10, 2010, 10:00 am – 12:30 pm

LOCATION: Washington Department of Transportation, Southwest Region Headquarters
 11018 NE 51st Circle
 Vancouver, WA 98682

PROJECT SPONSORS COUNCIL ATTENDEES:

Hewitt, Henry	Co-Chair, Oregon
Horenstein, Steve	Co-Chair, Washington
Adams, Sam	Mayor, City of Portland
Burkholder, Rex	Council Member, Metro
Garrett, Matthew	Director, Oregon Department of Transportation
Hammond, Paula	Secretary of Transportation, Washington State
Harris, Jeanne	City Councilor, City of Vancouver
Leavitt, Tim	Board Member, C-TRAN
McFarlane, Neil	General Manager, TriMet
Stuart, Steve	Chair, SW Washington Regional Transportation Council Board

OTHER STAFF AND PRESENTERS:

Warne, Tom | Chair, CRC Expert Bridge Review Panel

Note: Meeting materials and handouts referred to in this summary can be accessed online at:
<http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/ProjectPartners/PSCMeetingMaterials.aspx>

Welcome

Co-Chair Steve Horenstein welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Project Sponsors Council (PSC). Co-Chair Horenstein reviewed the purpose of the meeting: to discuss and approve the Integrated Project Sponsors Council Staff (IPS) work plan, the status of conditions attached to resolutions supporting the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), to receive an update on the work of the Bridge Expert Review Panel and to discuss the current project schedule.

PSC members had no comments on the August 9 meeting summary, which is considered approved.

Review IPS Work Plan

Co-Chairs Steve Horenstein and Henry Hewitt summarized a new IPS work plan for PSC review and discussion. The latest work plan incorporates ongoing work resulting from the previous IPS work plan, additional recommendations made by PSC to the governors this summer and the response to the Independent Review Panel recommendations.

The work plan is divided into full group topics, as well as those that are anticipated to require further research and discussion through subgroups.

Subgroup topics include the following:

- *Project phasing.* The work group will consider the options to phase the project based on potential funding scenarios.

- *Governance.* The purpose of this group is to discuss governance and management of the project before, during and after construction.
- *Bridge review:* IPS may convene a third subgroup to discuss findings of the Bridge Expert Review panel, if needed.

Full group discussion topics include:

- Advisory groups
- Bridge panel
- LPA resolution conditions
- Project schedule
- Environmental justice
- Final EIS concepts and mitigation
- Transportation demand management
- Performance measures

Discussion

RTC Board Chair Steve Stuart requested that the phasing subgroup address phasing associated with constructability and construction sequence as well as financing. He commented that a breakdown of project elements and specific funding sources, including anticipated timing of funding, will be needed as phasing discussions get underway to illustrate what we are asking from each level of government. WSDOT Secretary Paula Hammond responded that the departments of transportation have always talked about CRC as a shared responsibility and will need to think carefully about how important the delivery of the project is to both states.

Portland Mayor Sam Adams requested a staff response to the Plaid Pantry memo. CRC Co-Director Richard Brandman responded that the project is preparing a written response to the Oregon State Legislature and will share this response with PSC members.

Council Member Rex Burkholder commented that Metro has done some work around environmental justice issues. This and other work at the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality may overlap with CRC's focus. Co-Chair Hewitt asked that any of this information be made available to IPS members to add to their discussions.

Advisory group approach

CRC has revised its advisory group approach as part of its response to recommendations to reinvigorate the project's public involvement efforts. PSC members were presented with a memorandum from IPS. Advisory groups will be reconvened in January 2011, as schedules permit.

Existing advisory groups that will continue to meet include:

- Portland Working Group
- Urban Design Advisory Group.
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee
- Freight Working Group

A new Vancouver Advisory Committee would be formed to address a number of issues on the Vancouver side of the project that are not currently represented in an active advisory group. Staff from the City of Vancouver, C-TRAN and RTC met and concluded that the Vancouver Transit Advisory Committee should

continue to focus on its specific charge and that a new advisory group should be formed to discuss a broader set of Vancouver-related issues such as the Vancouver waterfront, highway interchanges, the freeway cap, etc.

Outreach to stakeholders, including environmental justice communities and large employers/commuters, were determined to need additional discussion amongst IPS members to determine a specific engagement approach.

Discussion

Board Chair Stuart suggested that Vancouver City Council be involved in suggesting members for this new Vancouver committee. Council Member Jeanne Harris agreed and mentioned that the council has had discussions on CRC advisory groups. Co-Chair Horenstein said he will follow-up with Mayor Leavitt, Thayer Rorabaugh (City of Vancouver), Jeff Hamm (C-TRAN) and Dean Lookingbill (RTC) to discuss group membership.

Board Chair Stuart requested that the CRC environmental justice approach consider both Washington and Oregon communities.

Director Matt Garrett commented that it is important these advisory groups are connected to PSC and IPS. Co-Chair Hewitt responded that the proposed approach would improve connectivity of the groups, include a CRC staff person assigned to each group and would be a regular topic of discussion at IPS.

Status of Locally Preferred Alternative Resolutions Conditions

Co-Director Richard Bradman provided an update on the status of conditions to resolutions passed by local agency boards/councils supporting the CRC Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), as summarized in a memorandum from IPS to PSC. CRC staff identified over 130 conditions within the supporting resolutions and found that they generally related to seven to eight primary items.

A matrix was created to track responses to each government's conditions and CRC staff have worked closely with IPS representatives and other agency staff to document their current status. The status of responses to conditions falls into one of three categories: those items that are settled, those items that are on-track but more design work needs to be accomplished, and those items where there is a potential conflict or the item has not been addressed. As this current effort to document condition status is completed, the matrix will be color-coded to correspond with these status categories.

At this point, almost all of the conditions have been found to be settled or on-track. Or example items relating to the interchange designs at Hayden Island and Marine Drive and the number of lanes on the bridge have largely been settled. The design of transit stations are not complete, but on-track. To the extent any items are not settled, these will be highlighted for PSC at a future meeting.

Discussion

Mayor Sam Adams complimented staff for compiling these issues and cooperating with local agencies.

Board Chair Stuart asked that CRC present the LPA conditions responses to each board/council of the project sponsors as the list of conditions is finalized and prior to the release of the Final EIS.

Bridge Expert Review Panel

Director Matt Garrett provided background on the Bridge Expert Review Panel. The panel was convened by the departments of transportation following their acceptance of the CRC Independent Review Panel's (IRP) recommendations, which were viewed as a "roadmap" to completing the Final EIS. Several of the IRP recommendations raised significant issues related to bridge design.

The DOTs assembled an expert panel, chaired by Tom Warne, the IRP Chair. The panel is asked to evaluate the open web box girder bridge type under consideration for the Columbia River Crossing project, as well as the environmental, regulatory and physical constraints pertinent to the crossing, and other bridge types and alignments that could work if the constraints were reduced or removed.

Constraints and technical screening process

Frank Green, CRC Structures Engineering Manager and Rob Turton, Senior Vice President and National Technical Director for Bridges at HDR Engineering, Inc. provided further background on the project's identified constraints and technical screening process for bridge design. Turton is the lead consultant designer for the CRC project.

The current bridge design considered vertical and horizontal constraints related to aviation, river navigation, and cultural and environmental resources:

- *Aviation constraints.* The existing bridges are three miles from Portland International Airport (PDX) and a half mile upstream from Pearson Airfield. Both have imaginary approach and departure surfaces that constrain how high a structure could be before it interfered with flight operations.
- *River navigation constraints.* Three primary channels are used by river traffic and align with a swing span opening at the United Pacific Railroad swing span crossing. CRC has coordinated with the US Coast Guard and determined that approximately 95 feet of clearance (from ordinary high water) would accommodate passage of 98 percent of river traffic each year and allow a design that eliminated a bridge lift.
- *Cultural and environmental constraints.* There are a number of land-based cultural and environmental resources adjacent to the bridge landings, including the Fort Vancouver National Historic Reserve. The project evaluated potential impacts associated with both downstream and upstream land impacts. In-water environmental resources include 17 listed species that could be impacted by the number of piers in the water.

Rob Turton explained the project's two-phase technical, architectural and bridge type screening process. A workshop was held in October 2008 with bridge experts from six agencies and six consulting firms. The first phase of the screening was a pass/fail test related to aviation and navigation constraints as well as technical suitability. The second phase screening was completed against a range of performance attributes. Participants looked at bridge types in two- and three-structure configurations. The Phase I screening advanced 10 bridge types, six in a three-structure configuration and four in a two-structure configuration that were evaluated in the Phase II screening, where each were evaluated against six performance and two cost attributes. The open web box design was the runner-up in the two bridge category.

A bridge type study was then performed that included preliminary engineering for the 10 bridge types evaluated in the Phase II technical screening to in order to develop construction estimates. Recommendations for two- and three-bridge scenarios were made, with the concrete segmental box girder type recommended for the three-bridge configuration and the open web box girder type recommended for the two-bridge configuration.

The two-bridge open web box type was focused on following concerns raised about using a closed box for shared transit and bicycle/pedestrian facilities and recommendations for the open-web design and two-bridge configurations were advanced by project advisory groups. The project currently plans to

include the open-web design in the Final environmental Impact Statement, but will also include the concrete segmental box and suspended frame types, as well.

Discussion

Mayor Leavitt asked if Pearson Airfield has a significant impact on the design and elevation of the bridge structure. CRC Co-Director Don Wagner responded that any structure CRC proposes will be in direct alignment with Pearson Air Field flight patterns. The existing structures influence Pearson's operational standards for departures, with aircraft instructed to fly south after takeoff. This is related to the bridge structure, but is primarily driven by the landing pattern for Portland International Airport, which is over the Columbia River. The project is looking to stay under any current takeoff surface of Pearson Airfield. FAA provides statutory standards for both Pearson and PDX and any change would need to come from them. FAA has indicated they are willing to review any changes we propose, but would not necessarily approve them.

Board Chair Stuart asked how tall the bridge would be at the landing and how the project could lower the bridge profile to minimize impacts downtown Vancouver. Mayor Leavitt also asked why a bridge couldn't be designed that has a landing similar in elevation to the current bridge. Co-Director Wagner responded that the Bridge Expert Review Panel will speak to this constraint, but initially there has been a desire to remove the bridge lift on I-5. Lowering the bridge profile would require a lift. The highway currently goes under the railroad berm and the design will either need to go under or over, so the bottom of the bridge is a controlling factor. Secretary Hammond added that there may be issues with ramp braids associated with a lower profile that would be a concern in Vancouver.

Co-Director Wagner commented on figure that 98 percent of river traffic could pass under a 95-foot river clearance. While it is true that many of remaining vessels that would not be able to pass could break down their equipment, these restrictions are very costly to these operations. Board Chair Stuart asked for a specific figure of the number of times per year vessels would be required to break down equipment to pass under the currently-proposed bridge.

Council Member Harris asked if the cable stayed bridge type determination of a "fail" for aviation constraints had accounted for operational adjustments at Pearson or Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) statutes. Co-Director Wagner responded that at the time the work was done the project was interested in what could be done within existing FAA constraints. The bridge panel will be looking further at what would happen if constraints were modified. Director Garrett asked if FAA was approached about these constraints. Co-Director Wagner responded that all decisions within the Draft EIS were reviewed by FAA.

Board Chair Stuart announced that he received a letter from Gramor, the developer of the former Boise Cascade site adjacent to downtown Vancouver. He distributed copies of the letter to PSC members, wherein they state that the bridge will be a benefit but that they are concerned about the profile of the bridge and impacts to the viewshed of their development. Gramor has also expressed interest in participating in the new Vancouver Advisory Committee.

Bridge Expert Review Panel approach

Tom Warne, Chair of the Bridge Expert Review Panel, provided an update on their work to-date. Chair Warne acknowledged that a lot of good work had been done by the project up to this point. The expert panel is composed of distinguished bridge engineers from around the United States and the world. The panel has three primary objectives:

1. Given the constraints imposed on the project evaluate possible bridge types that would meet these constraints
2. If the constraints are modified, are there other bridge types that should be considered

3. Given the outcomes of 1 and 2 evaluate cost, risk, constructability, and aesthetics for potential bridge types

By mid-December the panel will have narrowed its list of recommendations. In January the panel will meet again to review the recommendations.

As chair of the panel, Warne stated four goals for the recommendations:

- Technically sound –constructible
- Meets environmental commitments
- Cost effective
- Achieves aesthetic goals

The panel is considering a number of project constraints in its recommendations, including the following:

- Air space
- Navigational clearance
- Navigation channel location
- Minimized footprint for funding and environmental purposes
- Horizontal alignment
- Staged construction
- Vancouver Historic Preserve, including Old Apple Tree Park
- More in-water impact
- Large increase in shadow impact
- BNSF Railroad on north side
- Traffic in closed box
- Light rail transit

CRC has overlapping constraints, so there is a challenge to find a solution that will meet all of the criteria. The bridge panel is also hoping their recommendation also brings greater certainty in terms of project costs.

Discussion

Board Chair Stuart commented that downtown revitalization on the west side of the bridge landing is a significant issue for Vancouver. An aesthetically “clean” look that integrates to the natural environment and preserves views of Mt. Hood looking east is important. Chair Warne assured PSC members that they have received a lot of input from the community and are aware of these issues.

Council Member Harris asked if all bridge types were available to the panel. Chair Warne responded that no constraints in terms of type were placed on their review.

Mayor Leavitt asked if the panel was reviewing potential alternatives for the structure of the spans and whether separate structure types could be used for each span and whether bicycle and pedestrian traffic needed to be separated from transit. Chair Warne responded that two different structures are possible, but may be aesthetically challenging to execute. The panel is reviewing alternative means of handling bicycle, pedestrian and transit traffic.

Mayor Leavitt mentioned comments he has heard about separation of transit and vehicle traffic and that placing them next to one another allows drivers to see the alternative form of transport. Chair Warne responded that transit placement will vary by bridge type.

TriMet General Manager Neil McFarlane asked about the list of constraints and if some were more amenable to be modified. Chair Warne responded that there may be opportunities with the horizontal

alignment and staged construction phasing that would not impact existing structures. The panel is being very careful about the historic preserve.

General Manager McFarlane asked about the potential impact on environmental processes and project timeline. Chair Warne responded that the panel is looking to have as little impact as possible on these processes with its recommendations so the project can move forward.

Project schedule

Co-Director Don Wagner provided an update on the project schedule:

- The Bridge Expert Review Panel will give its recommendations in early 2011.
- CRC will submit its Final EIS in 2011, but specific timing will depend on the results of the bridge panel review.
- Property acquisition could begin in 2011.
- Final Design is anticipated in 2012.
- Construction could begin as early as 2013. Discussions on construction phasing and funding will influence this portion of the schedule. Construction is anticipated to be complete by 2019.

Discussion

Secretary Hammond commented that CRC is working on different funding scenarios and a financial strategy as both states move towards legislative session. Funding for this project is secured through the end of the fiscal year in June 2011. The project will ask PSC members to stay engaged as the project works with legislatures on funding and financial planning next year. CRC will provide updates as they become available.

Next meeting

Friday, February 18, 2010 | 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Oregon Department of Transportation, Region 1
123 NW Flanders St.
Portland, OR 97209