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Task Force Meeting Agenda
Wednesday, January 4, 4:00–6:30p.m.

WSDOT SW Region Headquarters
11018 NE 51st Circle, Vancouver, Washington

Time	Topic	Action
4:00 – 4:10	November 30 minutes	Approval
4:10 – 4:55	Project Purpose & Scope	Briefing
4:55 – 5:10	Public Comment	Receive public comment on Evaluation Criteria
5:10–5:25	Report on Public Involvement Comments regarding Vision and Values Statement	Discuss, amend if needed
5:25 – 6:20	Evaluation Criteria	Review small group comments, discuss
6:20 – 6:30	2006 Meeting Schedule and Topics for February Meeting	Review

C-TRAN Route to the Task Force meeting from Portland:

From Downtown Portland (SW Salmon and 6th Avenue) take **C-Tran Bus #105** (I-5 Express) to Downtown Vancouver (7th Street Transit Center) take Bus #32 (Evergreen/Andresen) eastbound to the Vancouver Mall Transit Center. Transfer to Bus #80 (Van Mall/Fisher's) eastbound to 49th and 112th Avenue. WSDOT SW Regional Headquarters is 2 blocks north of this bus stop.

C-TRAN Route to the Task Force meeting from Vancouver:

From Downtown Vancouver (7th Street Transit Center) take Bus #32 (Evergreen/Andresen) eastbound to the Vancouver Mall Transit Center. Transfer to Bus #80 (Van Mall/Fisher's) eastbound to 49th and 112th Avenue. WSDOT SW Regional Headquarters is 2 blocks north of this bus stop.

Note: Please turn off all cell phones during the meeting as they can disrupt the audio and recording equipment. Thank you.

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Project Purpose and Scope

Task Force Meeting

January 4, 2006

Presentation Outline:

- Current project: NEPA EIS to select transportation improvements that address problems in the I-5 bridge influence area
- Builds on prior regional and corridor planning
  - History of regional and corridor studies
  - Multi-modal planning in the I-5 corridor
    - I-5 Trade Corridor Study
    - I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership
- Scope of NEPA DEIS alternatives

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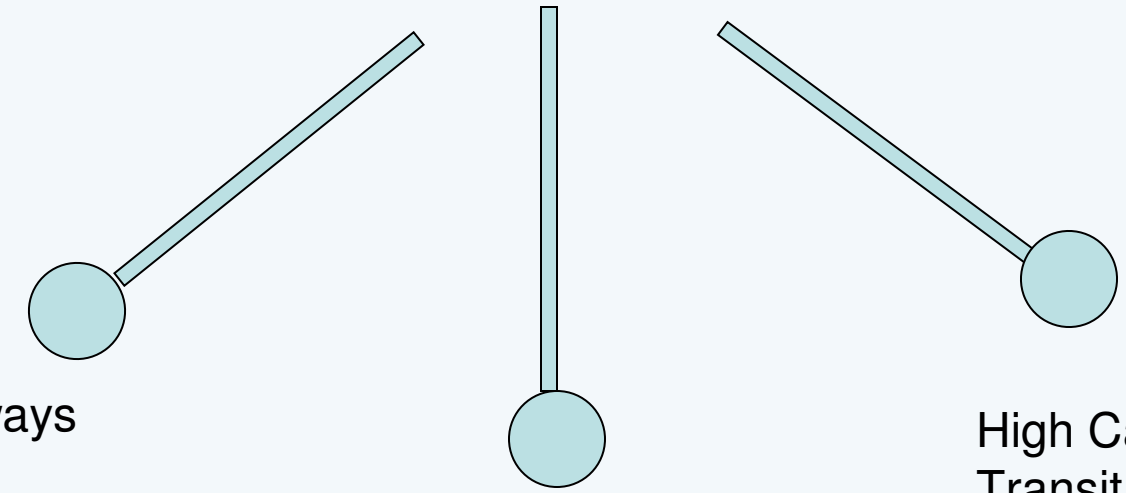
Planning Context

Regional Planning History and Context

- Evolution of the Balanced Transportation System



New Freeways

Improve Existing Freeway Corridor along with HCT

High Capacity Transit (HCT)

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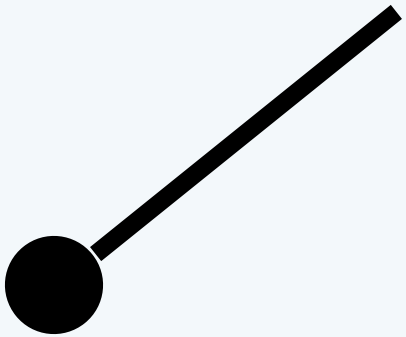
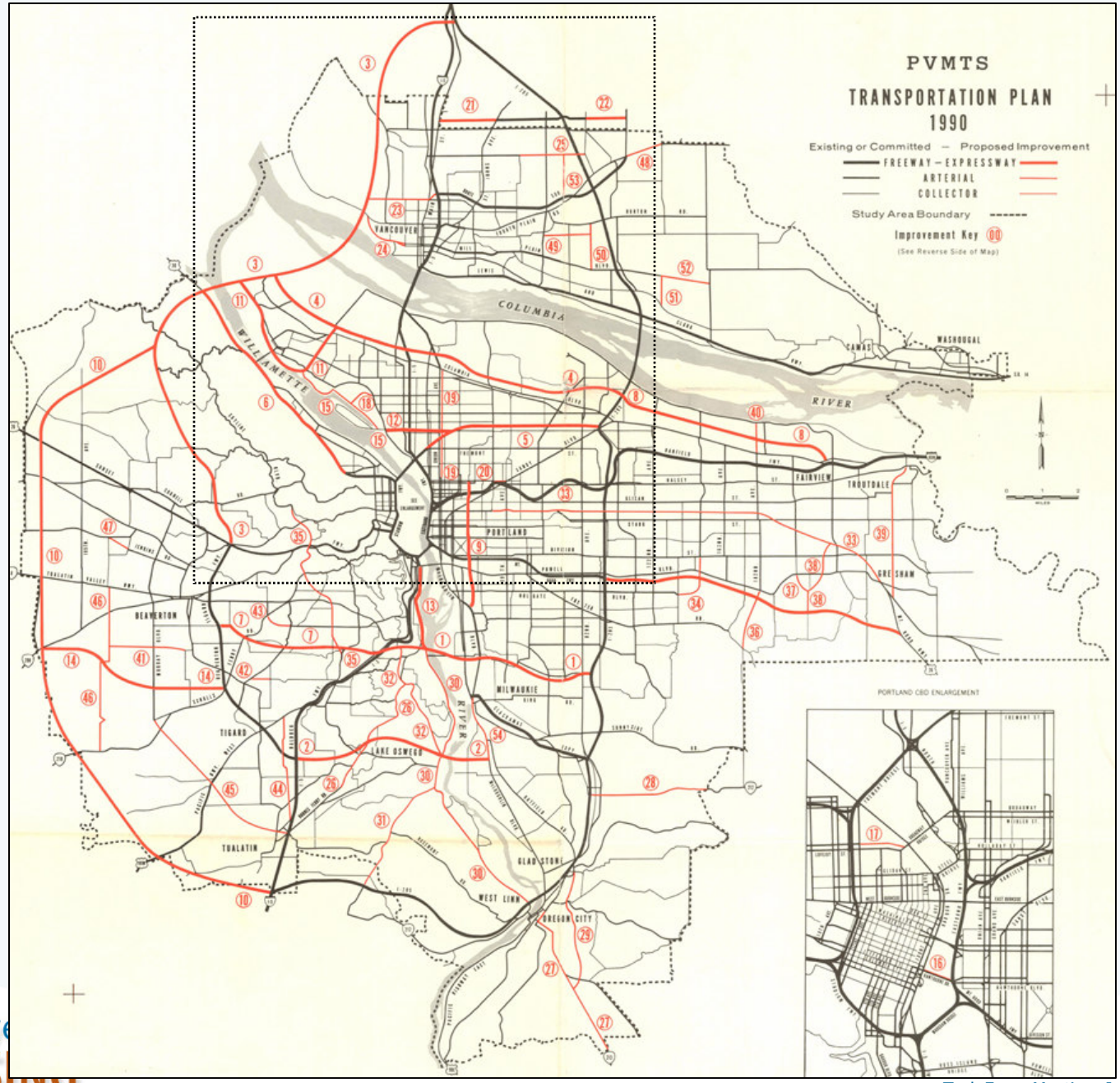
Regional Planning History and Context

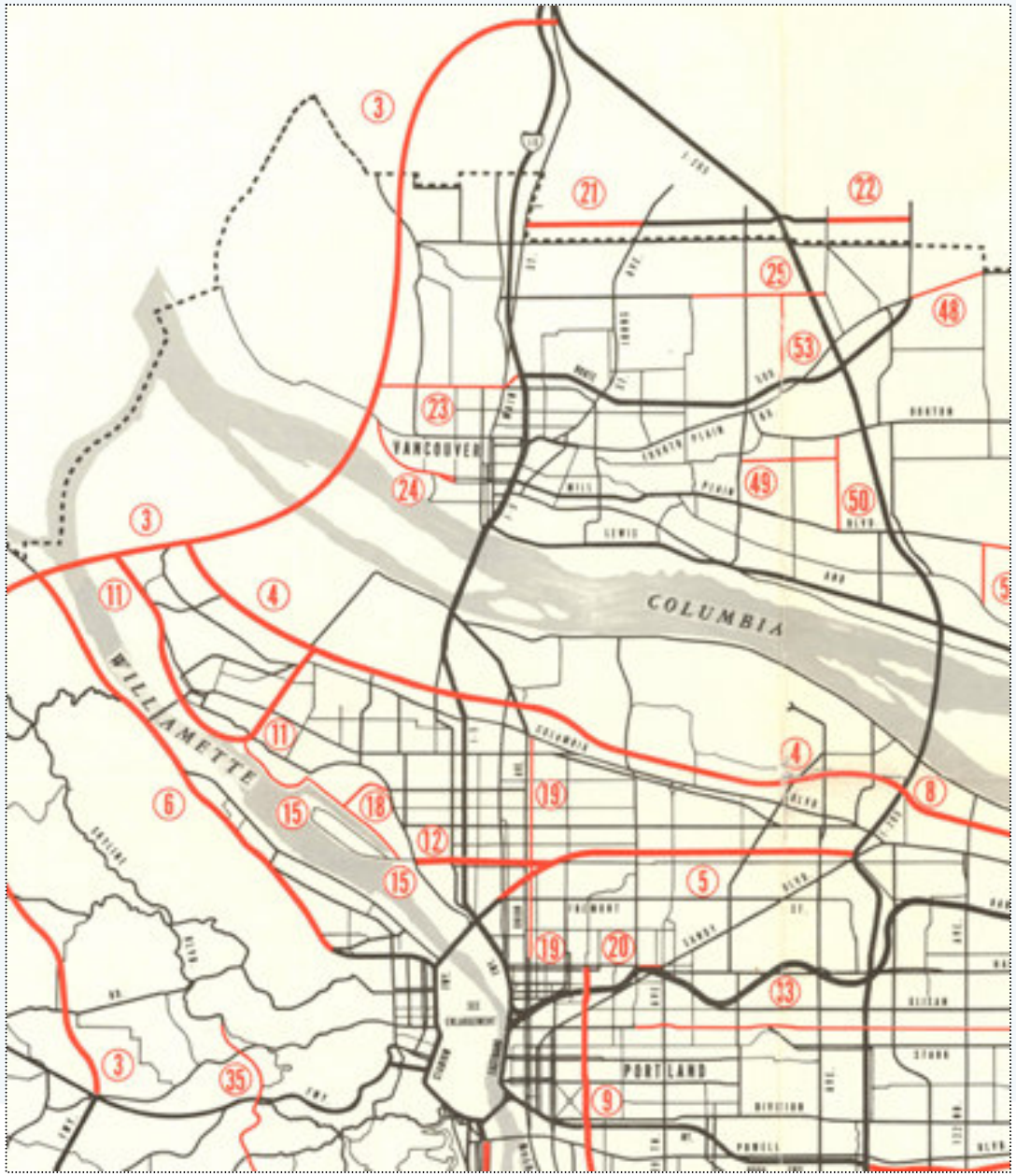
- Portland Vancouver Metropolitan Area Transportation Study – 1970, 1990 Horizon Year



New Freeways

  - Massive freeway program resulted in community backlash and major policy shift


PVMTS
TRANSPORTATION PLAN
1990
Existing or Committed — Proposed Improvement
FREEWAY – EXPRESSWAY
ARTERIAL
COLLECTOR
Study Area Boundary
Improvement Key
(See Reverse Side of Map)
COLUMBIA
RIVER
WILLAMETTE
RIVER
VANCOUVER
WASHOUGAL
CAMAS
PORTLAND
FAIRVIEW
TROUTDALE
GRESHAM
BEAVERTON
TIGARD
TUALATIN
LAKE OSWEGO
MILWAUKIE
GLADSTONE
WEST LINN
OREGON CITY
PORTLAND CBD ENLARGEMENT



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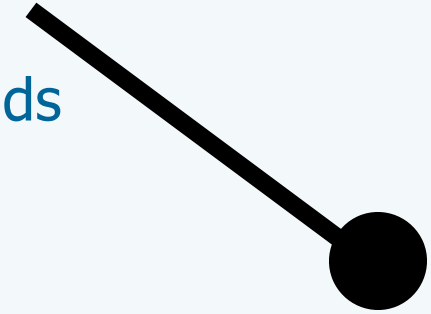
Regional Planning History and Context

- Public backlash to PVMTS resulted in major policy shift in early 1970's
  - Portland Downtown Plan 1972
  - Governor's Task Force 1973
  - Withdrawal of Interstate Funds
    - Mt Hood Freeway - 1973
    - I-505 - 1979
  - Shift funds to Light Rail



High Capacity Transit (HCT)

1973 Oregon Governor's Task Force Changed Policy Direction

- New major radial highway capacity would no longer be constructed in the region.
- Future capacity and level of service on major radial corridors would be primarily dependent on high capacity transit.
- Highway improvements would primarily be employed to fix bottlenecks, balance the system and respond to safety and weave problems.
- The pattern and type of development in the Portland region would be dependent on high capacity transit and the comprehensive plans of the counties and cities in the region would be based on that assumption.

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Policy Question: How to Provide Bi-State Mobility?

- Washington State legislative Study, 1977
- FHWA Feasibility Study, 1979
- Washington State Legislative Study, 1980
- Governor's Bi-State Task Force on Transportation, 1981
- Washington Legislature Bi-State Accessibility Study, 1988
- Bi-State Transportation Study, 1990

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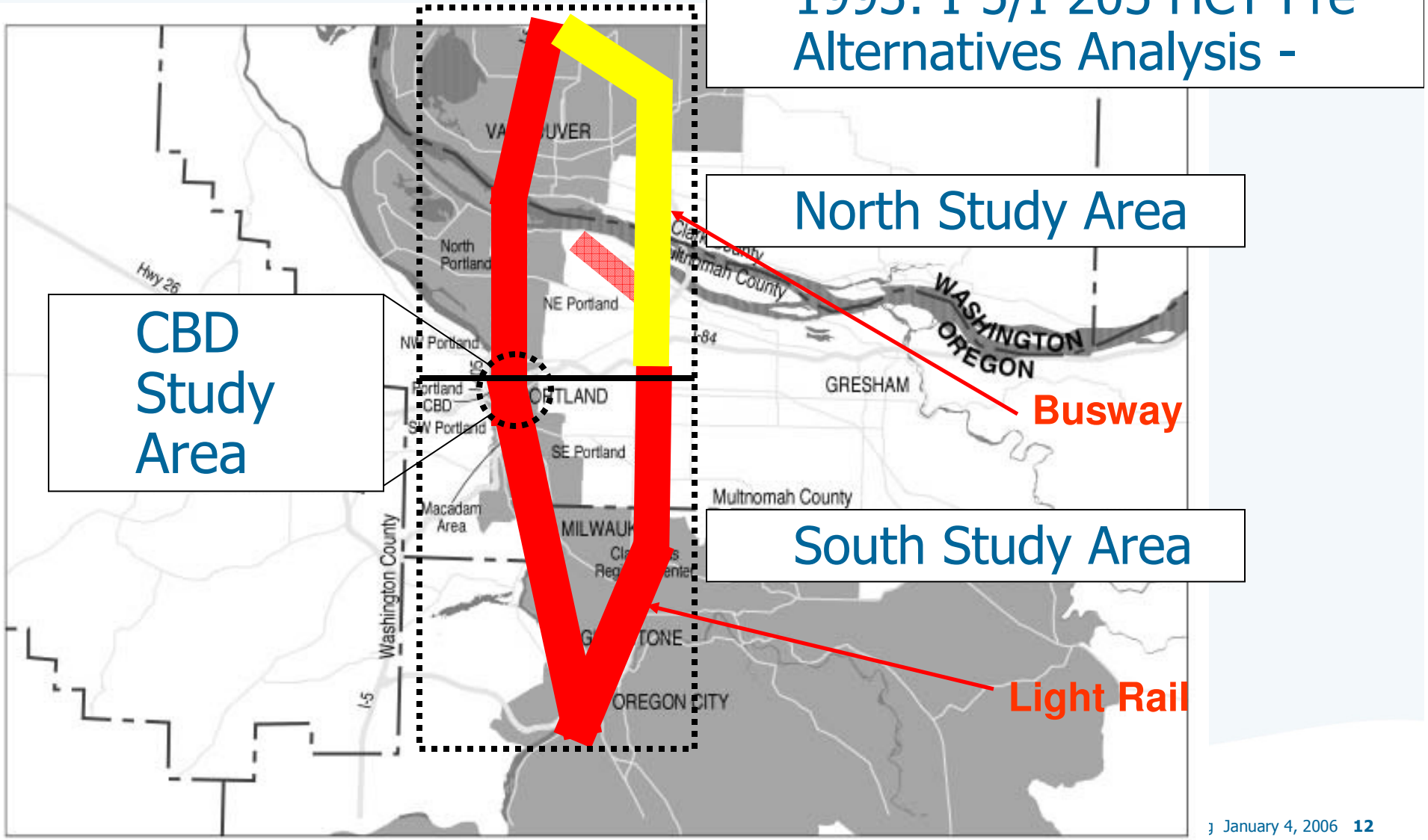
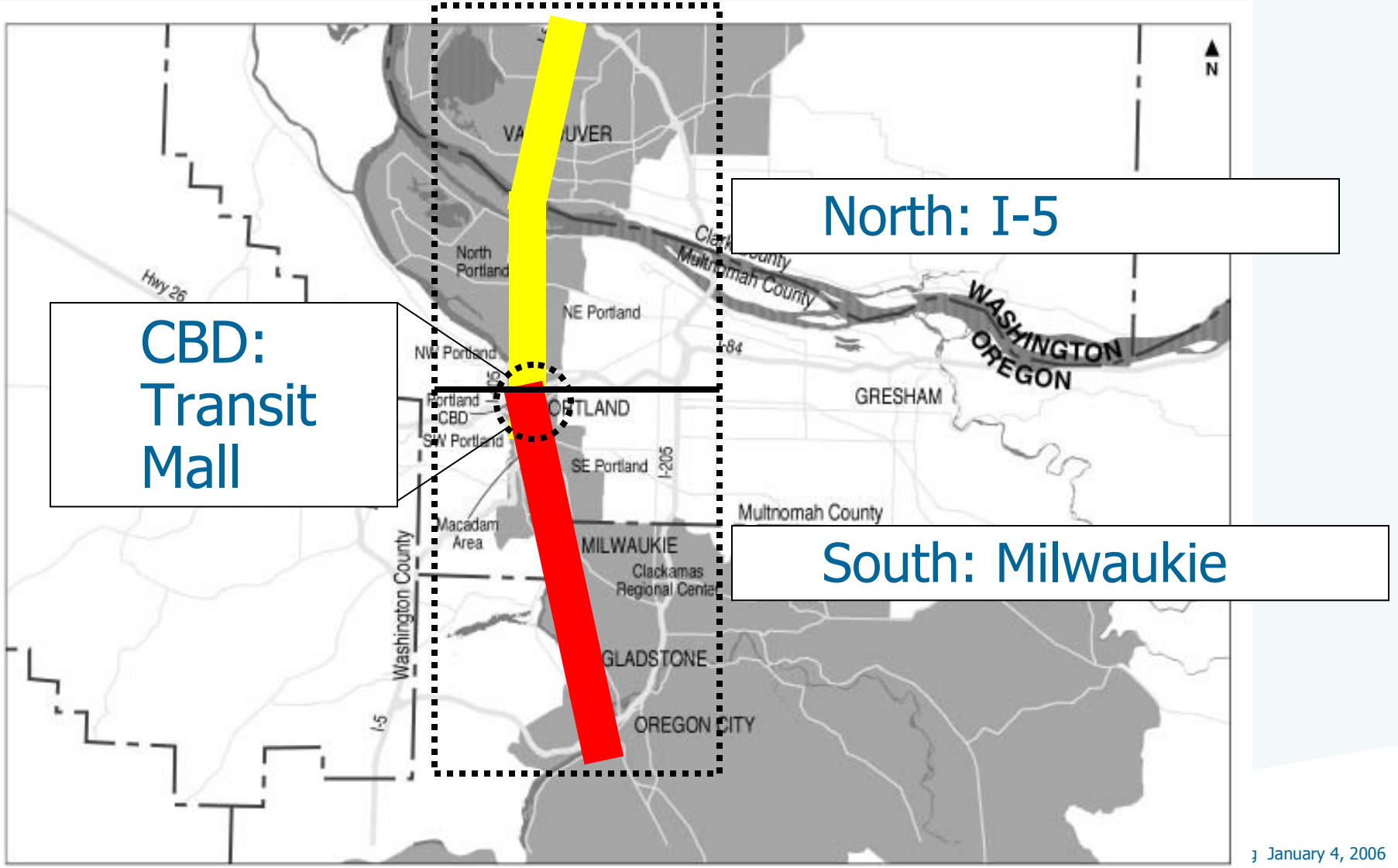
Results of Bi-State Studies

- Third bridge is not a cost-effective solution
- Make better use of existing capacity through transportation system management
- Address existing bottlenecks
- Increase capacity with transit

Choosing Between I-5 and I-205 for Transit: 1991 - 1993



Choosing Between I-5 and I-205: 1991 - 1993



A Balanced Transportation System

- 2000 Regional Transportation Plan
- I-5 Trade Corridor Study
- I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership

Improve Existing
Freeway Corridor
along with HCT

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2000 Regional Transportation Plan

- Addressed multi-modal needs in I-5 Corridor through:
  - HOV lanes and peak period pricing
  - Improve transit
  - Consider added Interstate Bridge capacity
  - Maintain access between Portland and Clark County
  - Maintain off-peak freight mobility
  - Consider reversible express lanes on I-5
  - Consider new arterial freight connections between Highway 30, port facilities in Portland and Vancouver
  - Maintain access to freight intermodal facilities
  - Address freight rail needs
  - Construct Columbia Blvd interchange improvements for freight access
  - Reduce through-traffic on MLK and Interstate Ave

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I-5 Trade Corridor Study

I-5 Trade Corridor Study

- Initiated to address freight problem in the corridor
- Major conclusions:
  - Doing nothing will result in unacceptable economic impacts and congestion
  - Solution must be multi-modal

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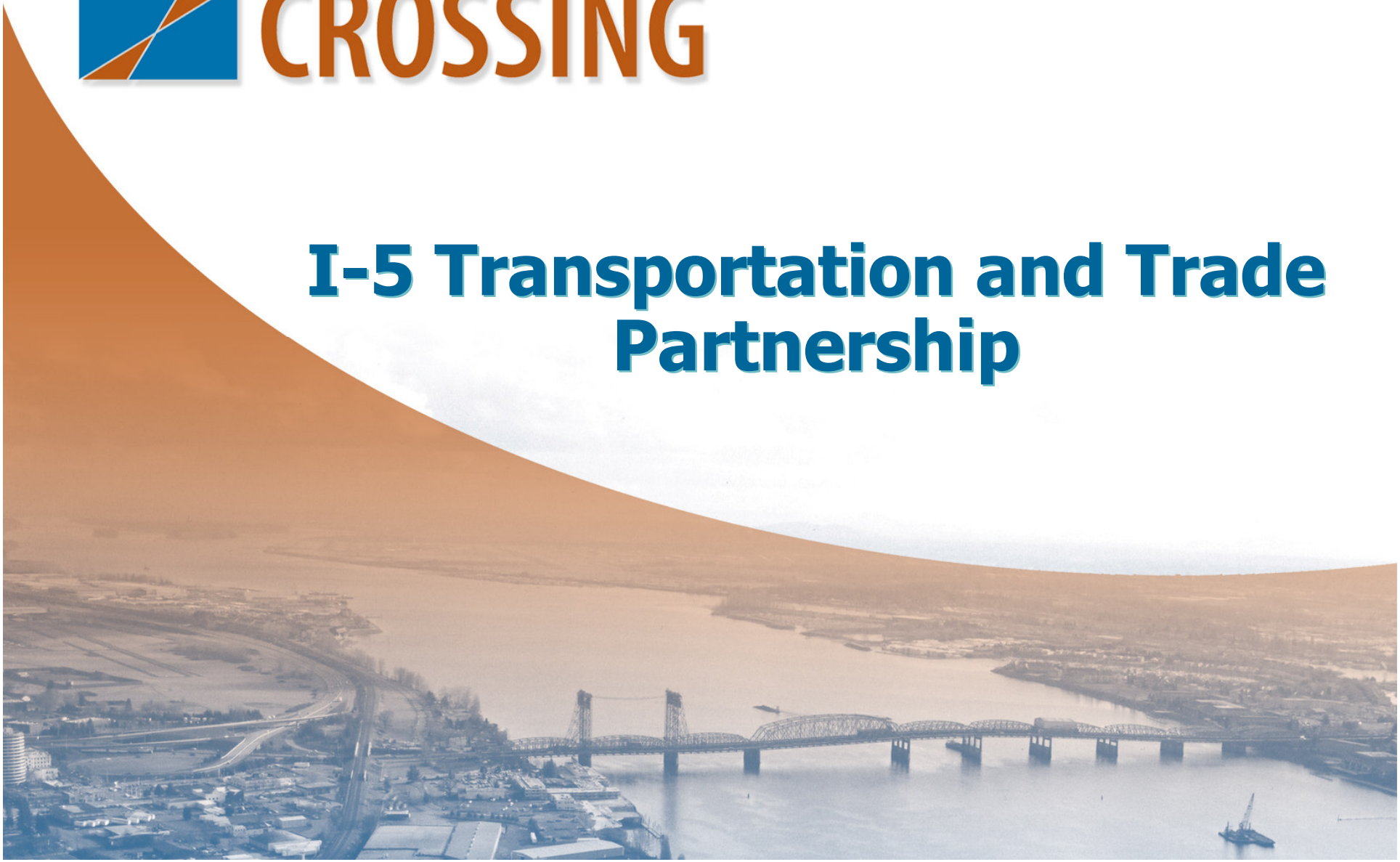
I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership



Key Findings from the I-5 Partnership

- "Without attention, the corridor's problems are likely to increase significantly, further impacting the mobility, accessibility, livability, and economic promise of the entire region."
- Doing nothing in the next 20 years:
  - Traffic volumes increase by 45%
  - Vehicle travel times increase 22%
  - Vehicle hours of delay increase by 77%; by 92% along truck routes
  - Congested lane-miles increase by 40%
  - Value of truck delay increases by 140%

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Key Findings from the I-5 Partnership

- Bridge Influence Area concepts improve traffic speeds, lessen delays and reduce congestion
- I-5 is the most direct route for the majority of trips across the Columbia River due to the high number of employment and other activity centers served by I-5
- Many trips enter and/or exit I-5 within the Bridge Influence Area
- Bridge Influence Area improvements are likely to result in minimal traffic increases on I-5 outside of the Area

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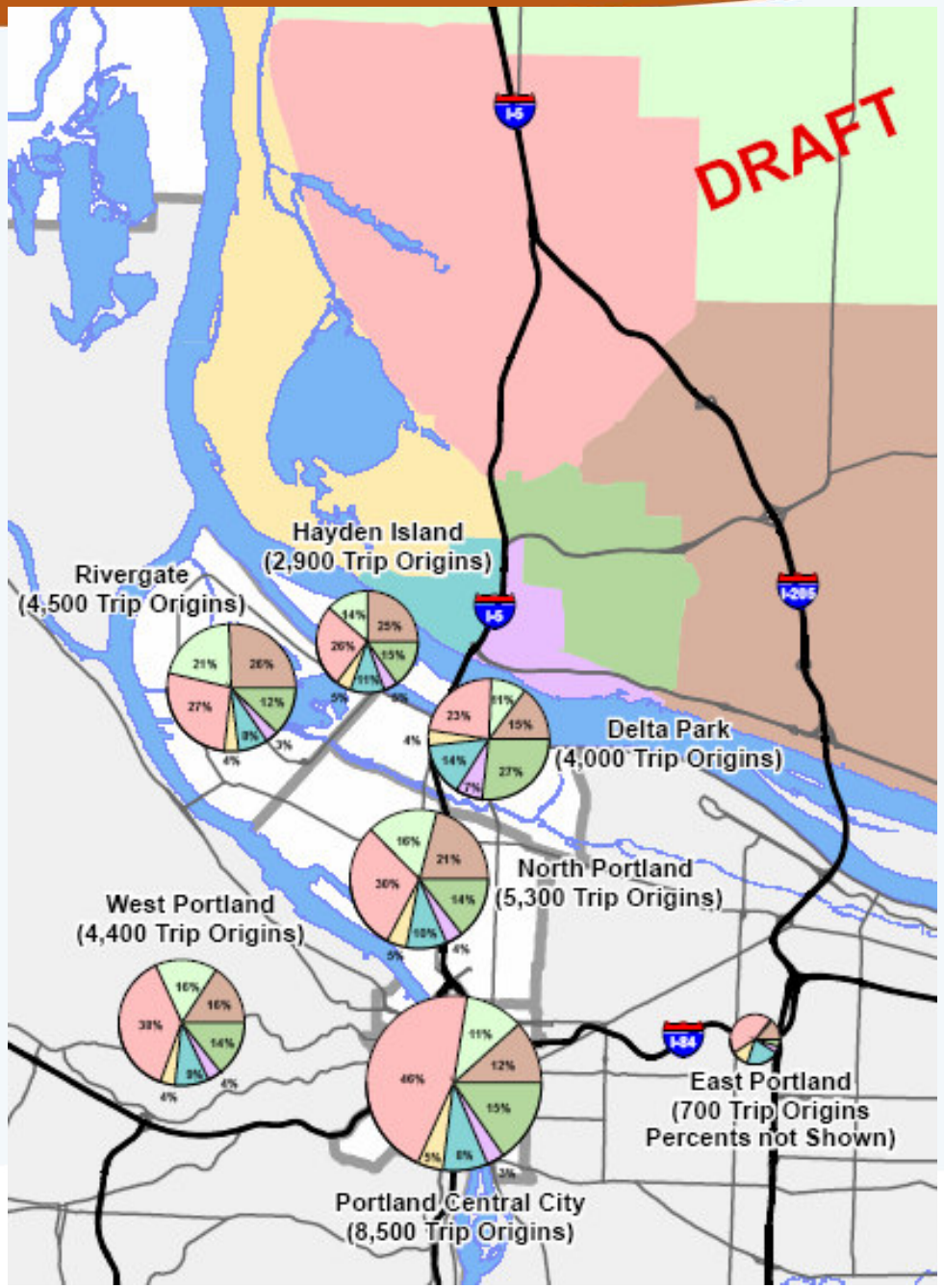
Trips across the I-5 Bridge

- Year 2020 projections
- Most trip origins and destinations focused along I-5 corridor



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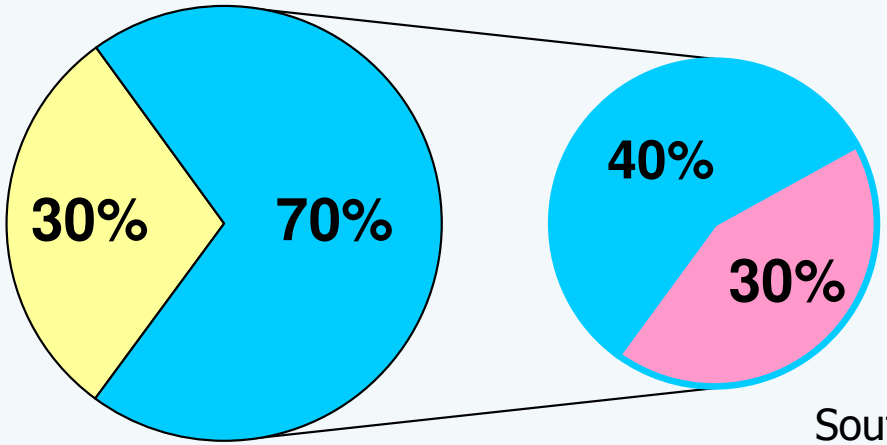
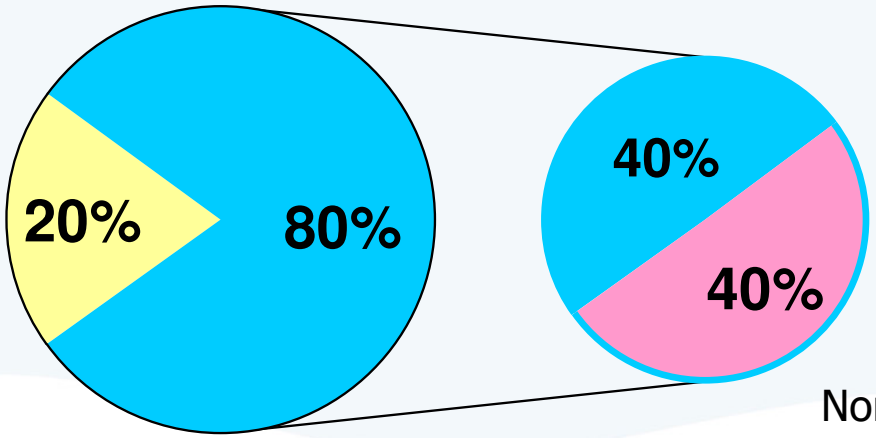
I-5 Columbia River Bridge Traffic

2020 Through Trips vs. Bridge Influence Area Trips



Southbound
AM Peak Period



Northbound
PM Peak Period

Through Trips

Enters or Exits I-5 within the BIA

Enters and Exits I-5 within the BIA

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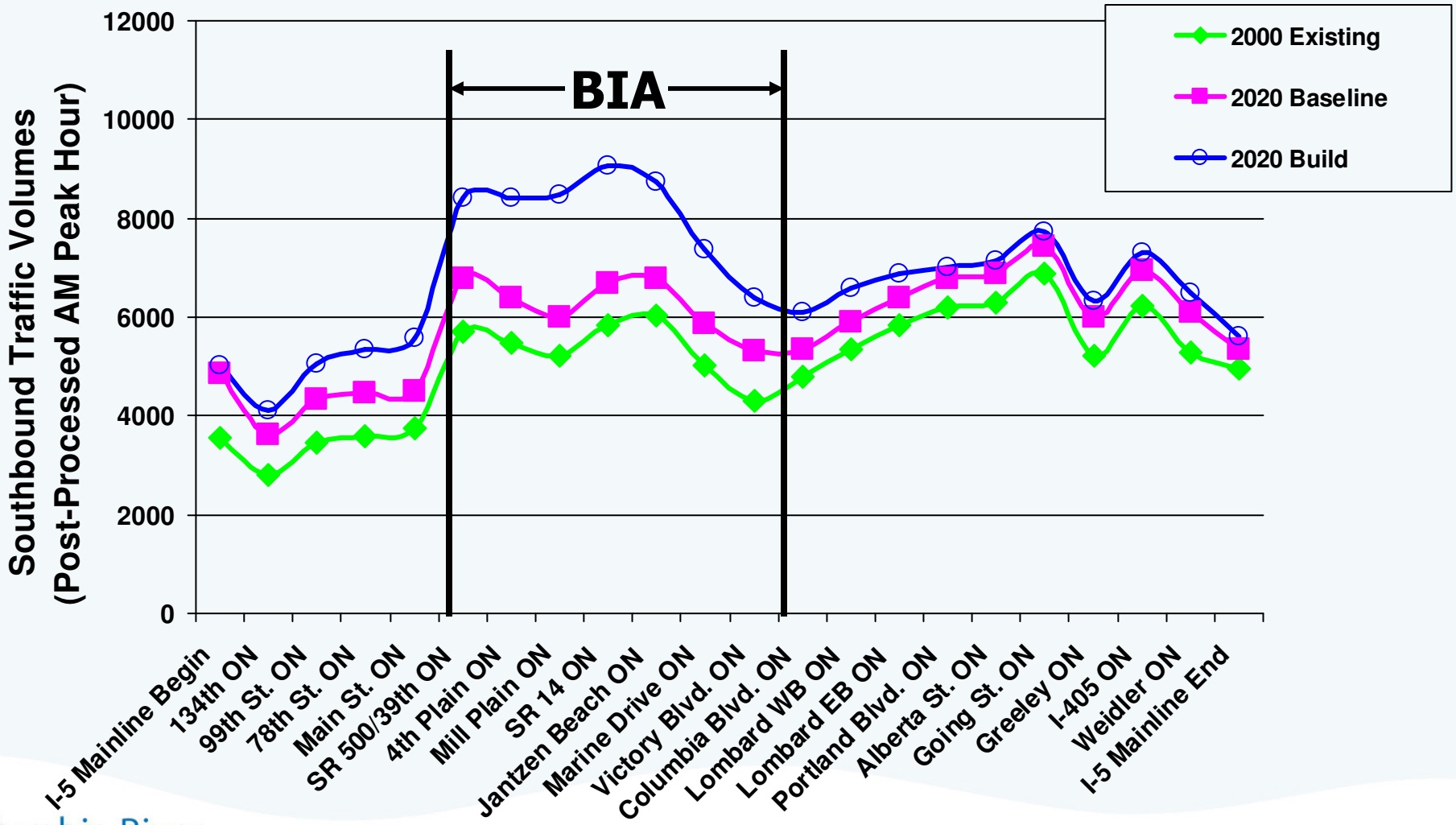
Southbound Travel Volumes

Along I-5 (AM Peak Hour)



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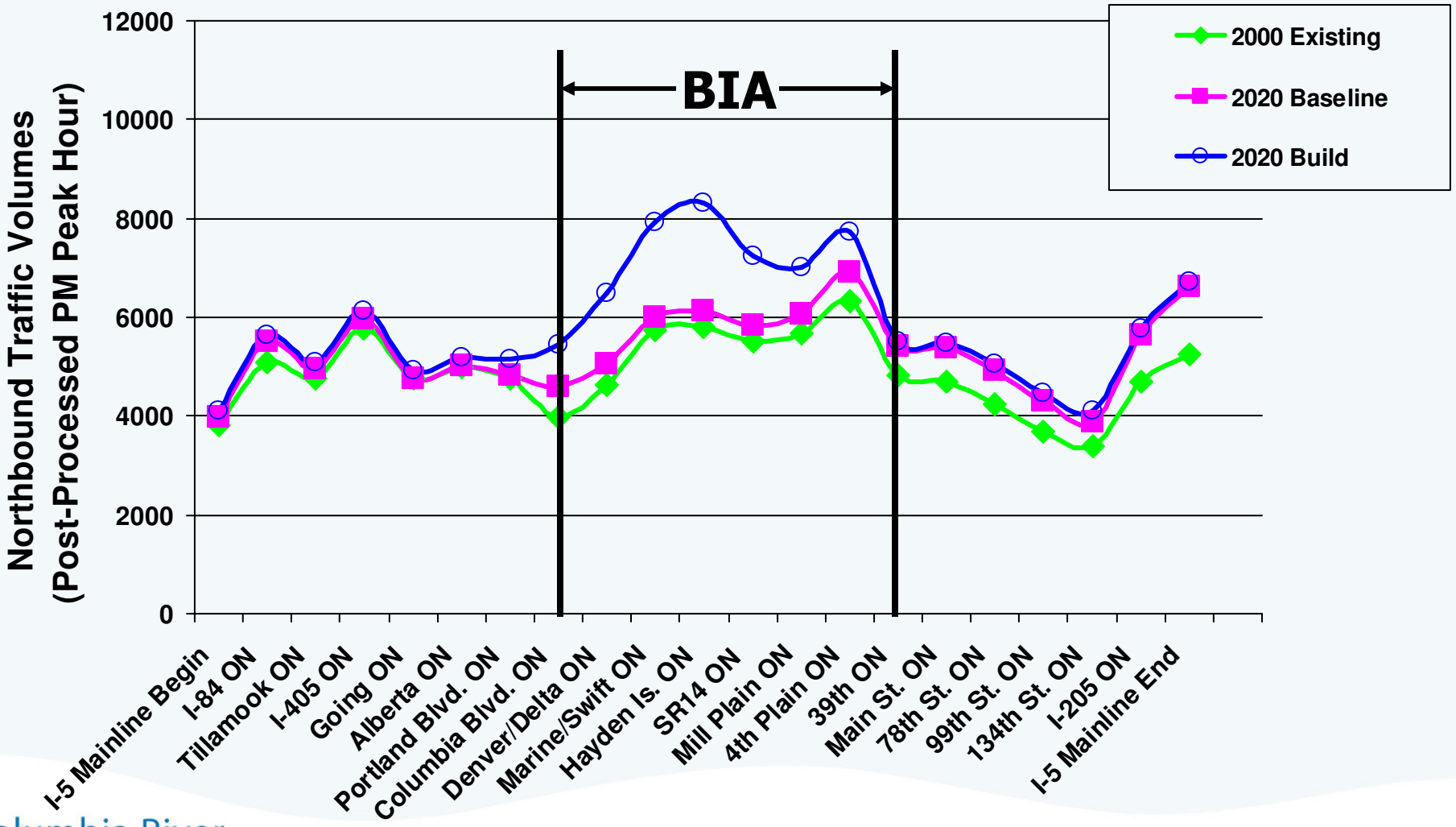
Northbound Travel Volumes

Along I-5 (PM Peak Hour)



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Findings from the I-5 Partnership for Other Corridors

1. New freeway corridor/western bypass
2. Added capacity to I-205
3. West arterial road
4. Arterial only bridge

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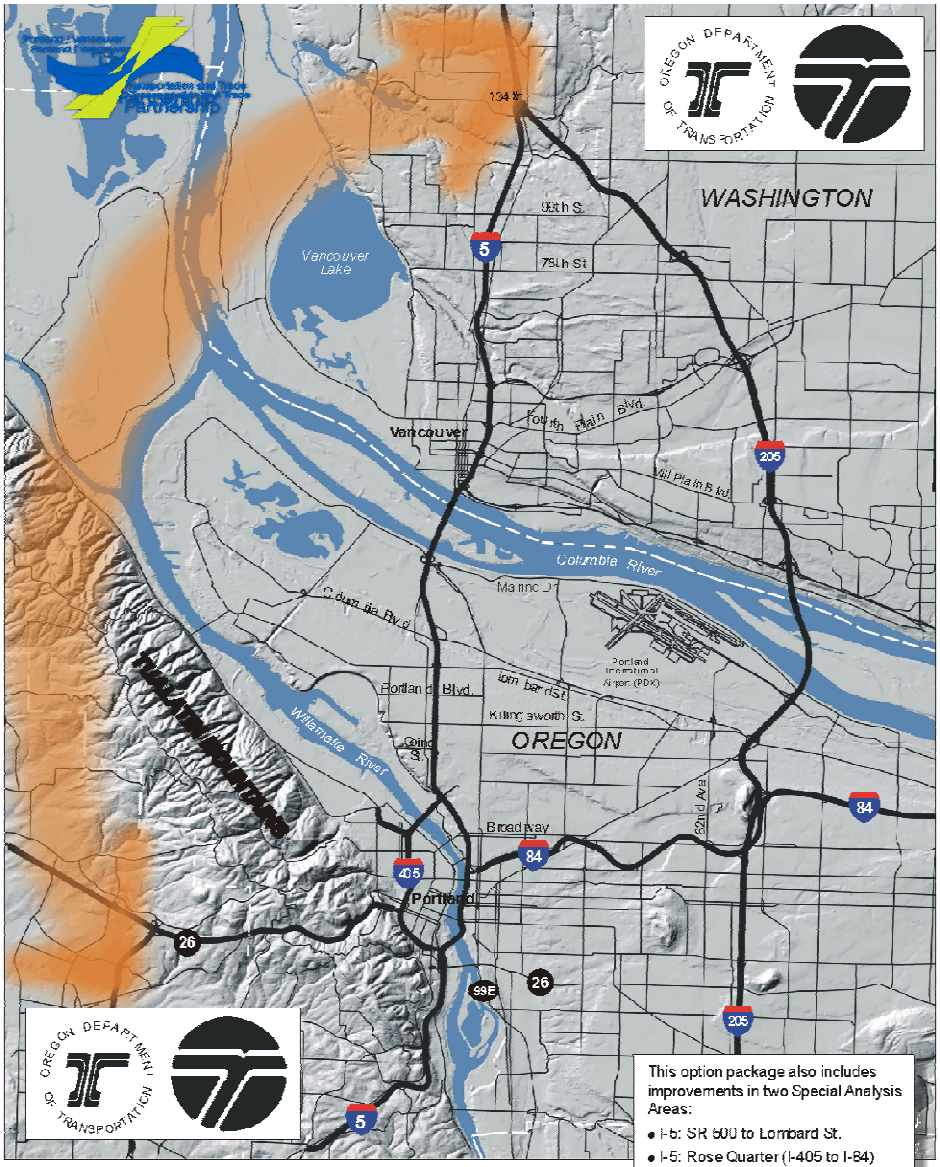
New Freeway Corridor/ Western Bypass

- New westside freeway corridor connecting Clark County, WA and Washington County, OR

Option Package No. 9:
New freeway corridor



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New Freeway Corridor/Western Bypass

- Bypass would do little to address congestion in I-5 corridor (most trips in I-5 corridor start or end near I-5)
- Would be located outside of Urban Growth Boundary and would result in very significant impacts to Vancouver lowlands, Sauvie Island, Tualatin Mountains
- Conflicts with local, regional, and state land use policies
- Bi-state boards (RTC and Metro) rejected this as an option
- Governor's Task Force recommended against further study

Added Capacity to I-205

- Proposal to provide additional capacity to the I-205 corridor

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Added Capacity to I-205

- Many vehicle-trips are currently made on I-205 due to congestion on I-5
- Previous analysis showed that 12% to 14% of I-205's traffic would shift to I-5 with Bridge Influence Area capacity improvements …
- Resulting in shorter trips (less vehicle-miles traveled) in the region, as well as less congestion on I-205
- This also validates that I-5 is the most direct route for the majority of trips across the Columbia River and adding capacity to I-205 would only marginally improve I-5 operations

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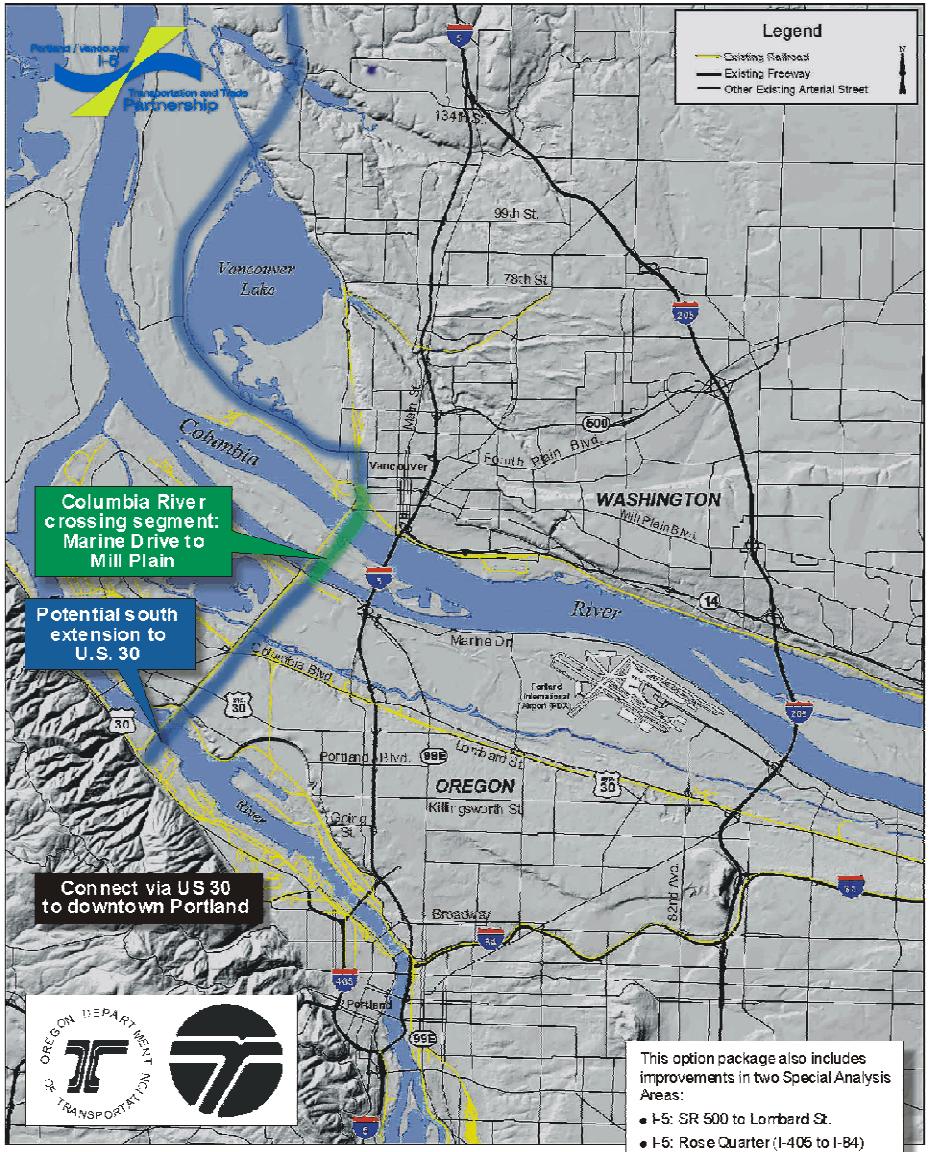
West Arterial Road

- New arterial roadway corridor between Mill Plain Blvd. and Marine Drive or US 30
- Would follow railroad alignment

Option Package No. 8:
New arterial corridor / Columbia River crossing



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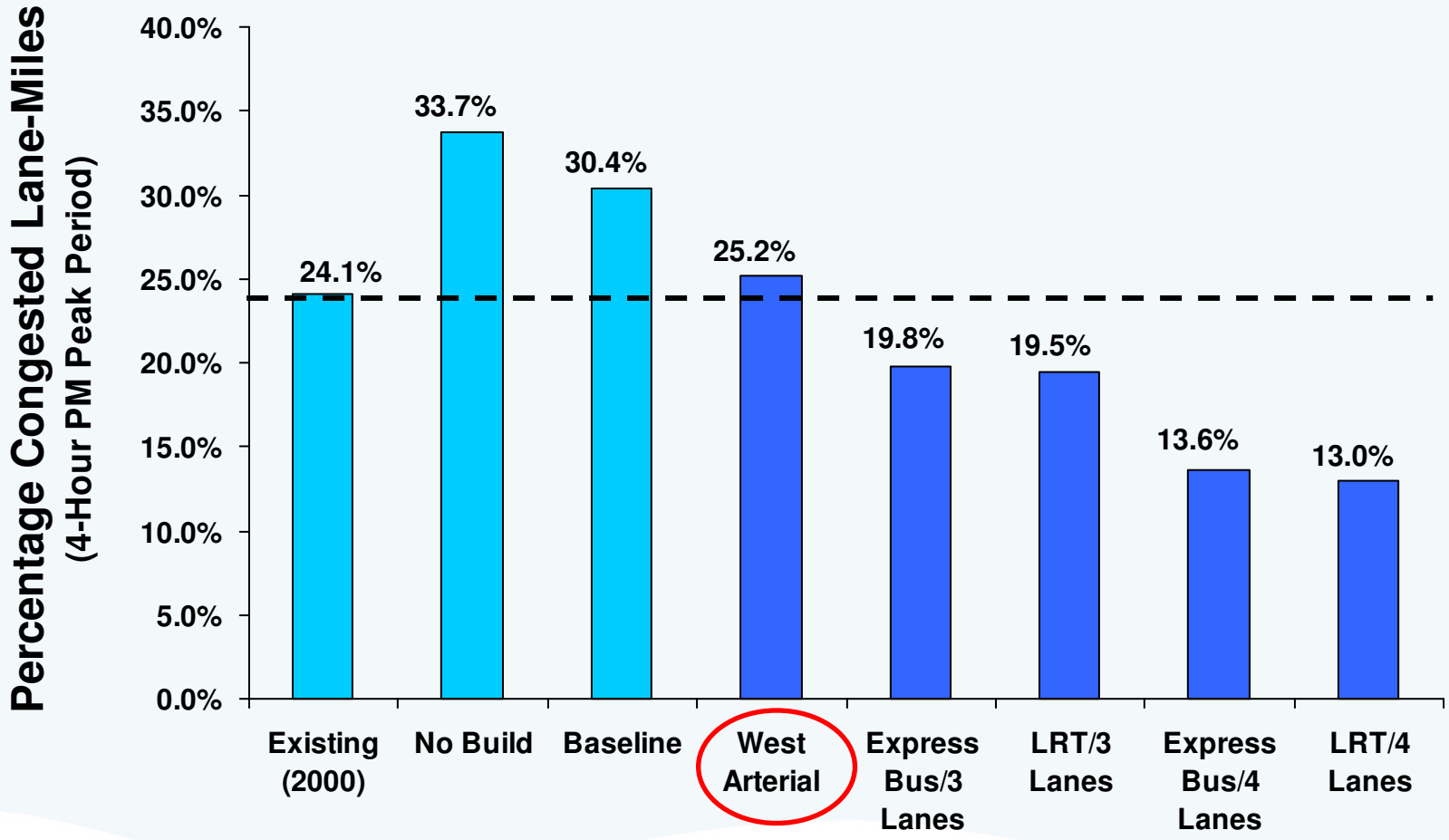
Congestion on I-5 and I-205

Congested Lane-Miles (PM Peak)



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Traffic Increases on Vancouver Streets with inclusion of West Arterial Road

- North/south arterial roadways parallel to I-5:
  - Highest hourly volumes of all options considered
  - Over 500 vph more than under Baseline conditions
  - Up to 900 vph more than under Bridge Influence Area options
- East/west arterial roadways west of I-5:
  - Highest hourly volumes of all options considered
  - Over 900 vph more than under Baseline conditions
  - Up to 1,200 vph more than under Bridge Influence Area options

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West Arterial Road

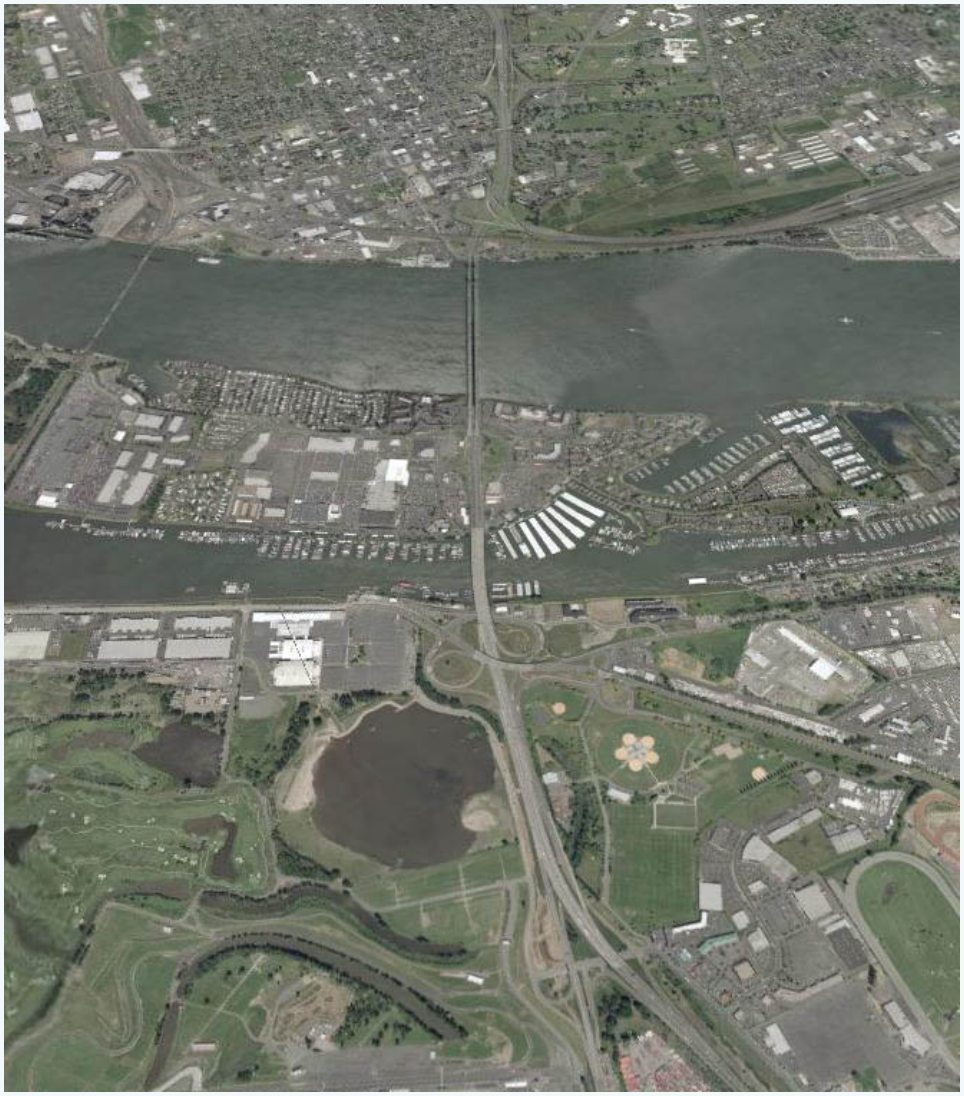
- Pluses:
  - Would benefit the regional transportation system by providing an additional connection
  - Would connect the ports
  - Would relieve St. Johns neighborhood of through truck traffic
  - Would provide an efficient south-north arterial for freight and other traffic in North Portland

West Arterial Road

- Minuses:
  - Would not connect the primary travel origins and destinations in the I-5 corridor
  - Would not perform near as well as any Bridge Influence Area options, e.g., travel speeds, congestion
  - Would impact downtown Vancouver and Vancouver neighborhoods
  - Would likely result in major environmental impacts to Hayden Island that would be difficult to mitigate
- Strategic Plan: Recommendation not to study as alternative to Bridge Influence Area options.

Arterial Only Bridge

- Would be a stand-alone bridge providing a connection between downtown Vancouver, Hayden Island, Marine Drive and Victory Boulevard



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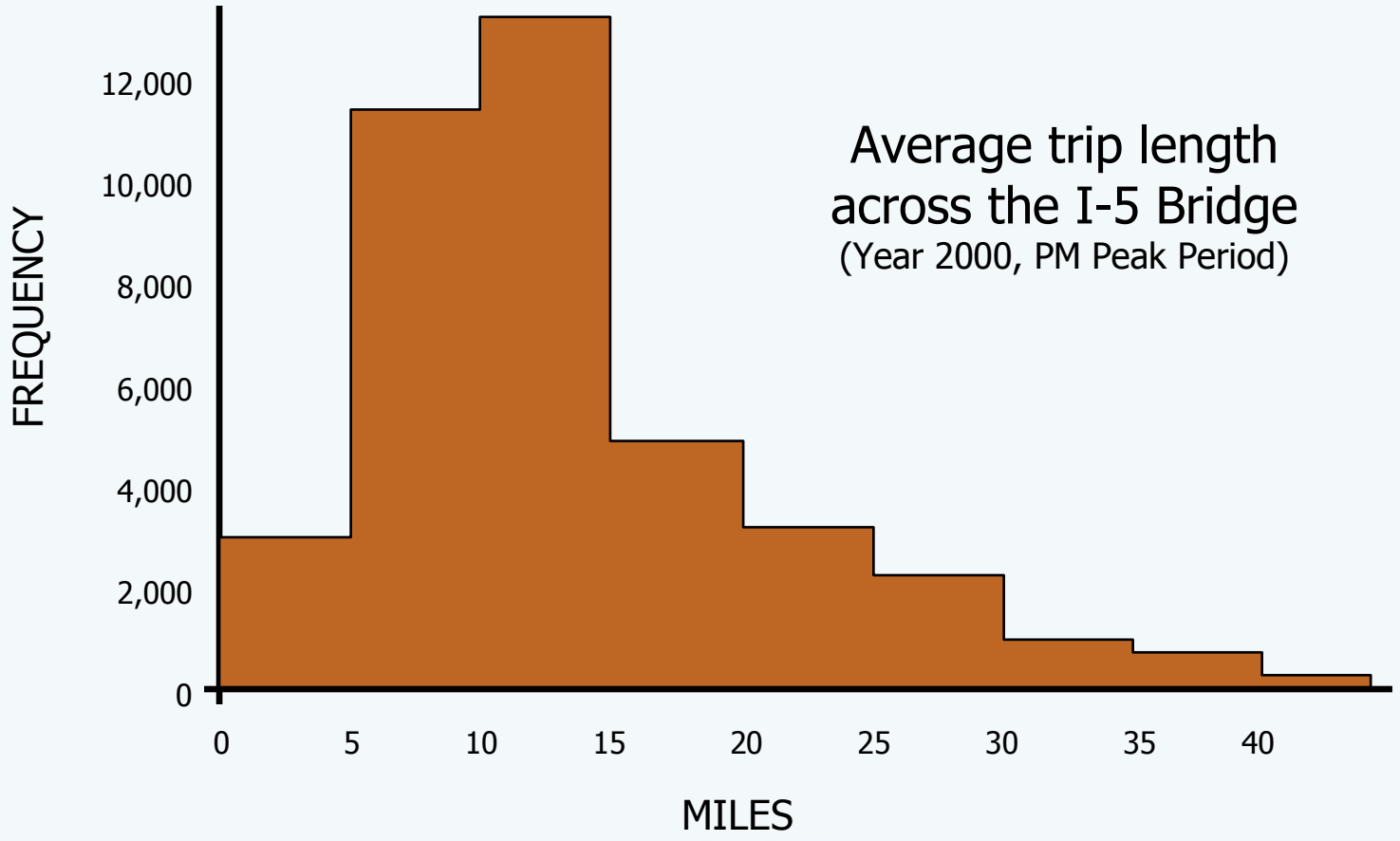
Lengths of Vehicle-Trips Across I-5 Bridge



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Arterial Only Bridge

- Most trips are regional, not local
- Arterial only bridge would slightly improve freeway performance by removing local trips, but …
- Up to 25% of this traffic would be to or from I-5
- Users of I-5 would continue to experience a significant increase in congestion and delay

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Arterial Only Bridge

- Additional congestion would occur in downtown Vancouver and at Marine Drive
- Arterial bridge, in combination with I-5 mainline improvements, could provide some transportation benefits
- Strategic Plan: States that arterial-only concepts do not show promise for addressing the Corridor's problems and should not be considered in the EIS

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Range and Scope of I-5 Bridge Influence Area Alternatives

Alternatives Considered:

- All concepts suggested during scoping must be considered.
- Concepts will be screened using the Evaluation Framework (Step A and Step B screening).
  - To what degree does the concept address the Purpose and Need for the project?
  - Using the evaluation criteria, how does the concept rank relative to other concepts?
- Where appropriate, information from prior studies will be used to evaluate proposed concepts that have been previously considered.

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Questions?

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DRAFT Screening and Evaluation Framework

This framework establishes a logical process for narrowing (or screening) the large number of transportation components that will be generated at the outset of the project. The framework also establishes criteria and related performance measures to:

- Measure the effectiveness of components and subsequent alternative packages in addressing the problems identified in the *Problem Definition*, and
- relate the degree to which community values as identified in the CRC Task Force's V*ision and Values Statement* are achieved.

The project will use the same criteria throughout the process. However, measures for gauging the performance of alternatives against the criteria will become successively more specific and may be modified as more detailed data becomes available.

Through successive screening, the most promising components are packaged into viable alternatives. These are then narrowed further to provide alternatives to be considered in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Components and alternatives that do not pass from one screening level to the next will be dropped from further consideration. Ultimately, the evaluation criteria will be used to support selection of a preferred alternative.

Generation of Components

The I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership *Final Strategic Plan* provided recommendations to shape transportation improvements on I-5 between Columbia Boulevard in Portland and State Route (SR) 500 in Vancouver, an area referred to as the "bridge influence area." However, many of the recommendations were not specific, leaving many ways to package and implement solutions. In addition, new ideas requiring further evaluation may surface through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping process.

Schedule

The project team will follow this screening schedule:

- Feb/April 2006 — Component screening and packaging of remaining components into alternatives to be evaluated further
- Late fall 2006 — Screening of alternatives and deciding which alternatives will be evaluated in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS)
- Early 2008 — Selection of a preferred alternative

The evaluation framework is comprised of three elements, which are attached:

Contents

The following materials comprise the remainder of this framework:

- **Glossary of terms**
- **Overall Steps in the Screening and Evaluation Process**
- **Component Screening Step A**
- **Component Screening Step B**

(Criteria from Step B are also used during the alternative package screening and selection of a preferred alternative)

Glossary of Terms

Component- A specific idea proposed to address one or more of the identified needs in the I-5 bridge influence area. For example, each of several viable river crossing ideas is a separate component under the "river crossing" category.

Transportation Category- Components are organized and screened among eight (8) transportation categories based on the nature of the component. For example, all transit components (bus, light rail, other) are organized within the "transit" category and all river crossing components within the "river crossing" category. Due to their common reliance on highway and bridge facilities, bicycle, pedestrian, and freight components will be screened jointly with roadway and river crossing categories.

Screening- The process of assessing and narrowing the range of components and alternative packages relative to established screening criteria and documentation of the screening process and resulting outcomes. Screening represents the body of work completed in forming the range of alternatives to advance into the EIS. Component screening occurs within and not across transportation categories. Alternative packages are screened relative to one another.

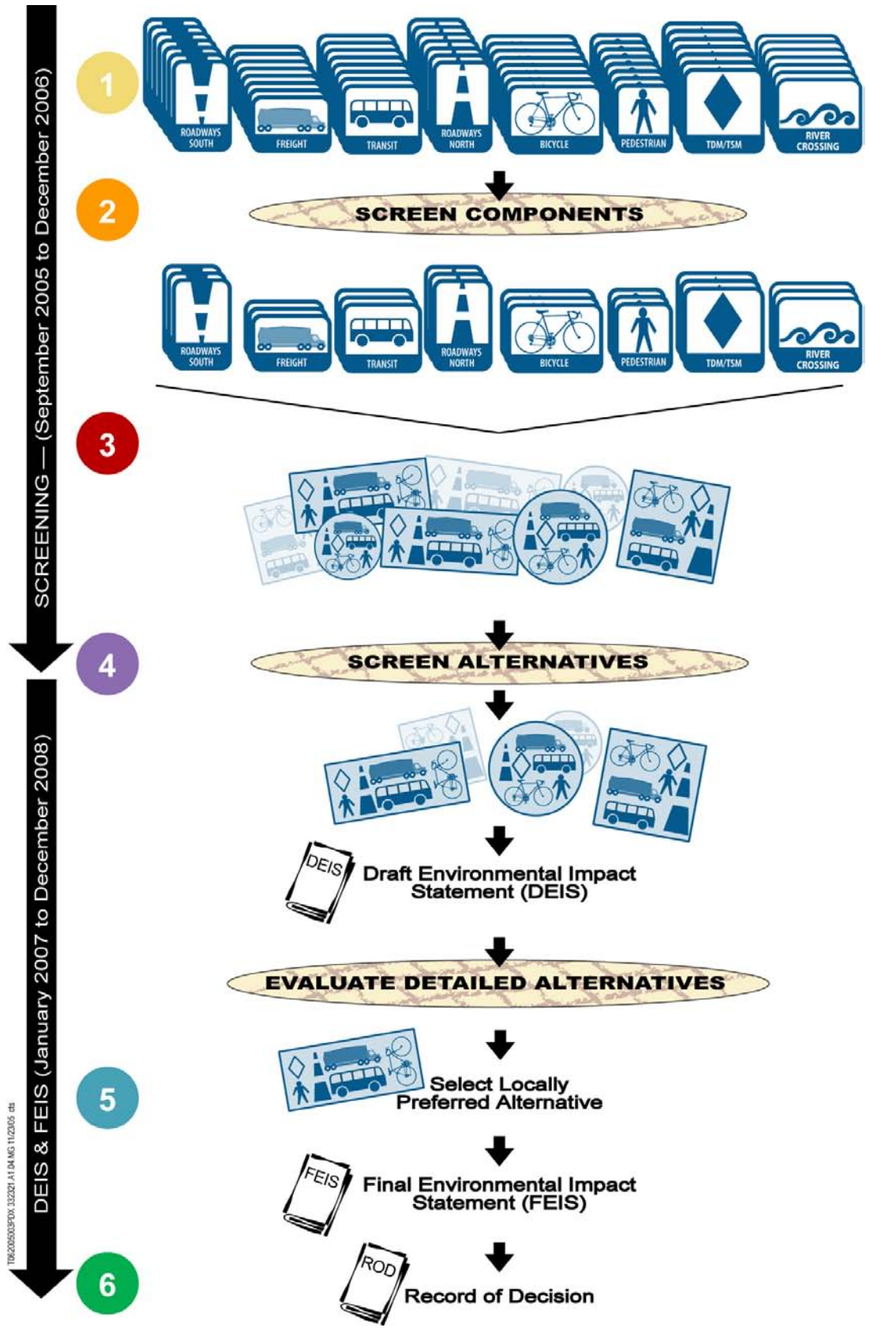
Criteria- Principles reflecting the CRC Task force adopted *Vision and Values Statements* by which components and alternative packages will be considered.

Performance Measure- Used to assess the degree to which the established criteria are satisfied. Measures are mostly qualitative during component screening given limited available data and become more quantitative during alternative package screening and selection of a preferred alternative as detailed data is generated.

Alternative- The end result of the screening process, each alternative is a carefully matched and fully formed assembly of components intended to address the project purpose and need and allow for comparison of performance relative to established evaluation criteria.

Evaluation- Different and distinct from screening, evaluation is the process of comparing and contrasting the adopted range of alternatives during the EIS, leading to selection of a preferred alternative. Performance measures at this stage are the most quantifiable.

Scoping Process- A process for early identification of potentially significant environmental issues and suggestions for potential improvements. This process begins with a project/process introduction to the environmental review agencies and the public, initiating coordination and involvement activities that will span the life of the project.



Steps in the Screening and Evaluation Process

1 Identify Transportation Components

To begin, a wide range of improvement ideas (or components) will be generated from two sources: (1) recommendations in the 2002 I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership Final Strategic Plan; and (2) additional suggestions from the public and affected agencies received during the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping process. The project team will organize these components into transportation categories to make the process of screening the components more clear: Roadways North, River Crossing, Roadways South, Freight, Transit, Bicycle/Pedestrian, and Transportation Demand Management (TDM)/Transportation System Management (TSM).

2 Screen Components

Component screening occurs using a two-step process (Steps A and B) for each component within the above categories to successively narrow the number of possible solutions. **Step A** is a pass/fail process in which transportation components are screened against questions derived from the *Problem Definition* (See attachment *Step A: Component Screening*). To determine if each component offers an improvement, they will be compared to the No Build condition. Components that pass in Step A will be evaluated further against **Step B** criteria that were developed to reflect values identified in the CRC Task Force's V*ision and Values Statement* (See attachment *Step B: Component Screening*). Project staff will rate each of the remaining components numerically on an established scale (for example 1-5) using data drawn mostly from previous studies. They will identify components that perform better than others in each category and recommend which components to advance for inclusion in alternative packages. Results will be presented in a Component Screening Report. Although many of the components may have benefits that extend beyond the bridge influence area, for this component screening, measures will focus on changes within the bridge influence area.

3 Assemble Alternative Packages

Project staff will assemble a representative set of alternative packages spanning the bridge influence area from the components that pass the first screening. Alternative packages will include components from each transportation category that blend together in a logical manner considering, for example, alignment and operational requirements. In some instances, one alternative package may sufficiently represent several other possible component combinations for analysis purposes. Assembling alternative packages allows project staff to model and analyze the integrated transportation system performance of I-5 within the bridge influence area, as well as other impacts and benefits, that cannot be assessed at the component level. Agreement on the range of alternatives to be considered is a major decision point in the project development process.

4 Narrow Range of Alternatives

Further screening will reduce the set of alternative packages to a reasonable range of Build Alternatives for comparison with the No-Build Alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Performance measures will be modified to take advantage of new data available at this point in the project. Project staff will rate the performance of each alternative against these measures and will summarize results in an Alternatives Analysis Report. The most effective packages will advance into the Draft EIS either "as is" or after being modified based on screening results. Agreement on the alternatives to be evaluated in the Draft EIS is a major decision point in the project development process.

5 Select a Locally Preferred Alternative

Following preparation of the Draft EIS, project staff will again compare alternatives against the evaluation criteria using more detailed data compiled during preparation of the Draft EIS. This evaluation will be presented in a report to support selection of a preferred alternative. Agreement on the preferred alternative is a major decision point in the project development process.

6 Secure Federal Approval

The project team will document the locally preferred alternative in the Final EIS and submit it to the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration for approval. If all requirements have been met, these agencies will issue a Record of Decision to document final selection of the alternative to be built.

Step A: Pass/Fail Transportation Component Screening

Component:_____ **Screening Questions** Does the component achieve the following?	**Roadway North/ Freight/ Bicycle/ Pedestrian**	**River Crossing/ Freight/ Bicycle/ Pedestrian**	**Roadway South/ Freight/ Bicycle/ Pedestrian**	**Transit**	**TSM/ TDM**	**Pass**	**Fail**	**Not Applicable**	**Unknown**	**Reason(s) to Drop**
Increase vehicular capacity or decrease vehicular demand within the bridge influence area? For example, will the component provide additional travel lanes, remove a constraining bottleneck, or provide other modes of travel that can reduce the demand to travel by vehicle in the I-5 bridge influence area?	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦					
Improve transit performance within the bridge influence area? For example, will the component provide an exclusive high-capacity transitway, transit preferential lanes or other bus-specific improvements enough to improve transit capacity and performance in the bridge influence area?				♦	♦					
Improve freight mobility within the bridge influence area? For example, will the component provide truck freight priority or increase vehicular capacity or reduce vehicular demand enough to improve truck-hauled freight movements and reduce truck congestion in the bridge influence area? Will it improve or maintain access to existing freight facilities?	♦	♦	♦		♦					
Improve safety and decrease vulnerability to incidents within the bridge influence area? For example, will the component eliminate or minimize features that may be attributable to incidents within the bridge influence area such as a key bottleneck, closely spaced on and off ramps, or narrow shoulders?	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦					
Improve bicycle and pedestrian mobility within the bridge influence area? For example, will the component provide a continuous, connected and functional bicycle and pedestrian facility across the Columbia River?	♦	♦	♦							
Reduce seismic risk of the I-5 Columbia River crossing? For example, will the component seismically retrofit the existing Columbia River crossing and/or provide a new crossing that meets seismic standards?		♦								

Notes:

- Components will be screened only against the questions relevant to their categories (indicated by ♦)
- Components that fail the relevant questions will be screened out, and the only way components will be prevented from proceeding to Step B component screening is if they receive a "fail" rating.
- Bicycle, pedestrian, and freight components will be evaluated with the roadway and river crossing categories given their inter-relationship.
- All components will be compared to the No Build, which includes transportation improvements adopted in the regional transportation plans but no improvements at the Columbia River crossing.

Step B: Component Screening	Suggested Changes per: Task Force [1], Resource Agencies [2], Staff [3] (compiled since November 30 Task Force Meeting)
Criteria	**Component Screening Performance Measures**
1 Community Livability and Human Resources	
1.1 Minimize adverse impacts to, or reduce noise levels	1.1 Magnitude (on a qualitative scale) of residential properties within approximate noise impact contour
1.2 Minimize adverse impacts to, or enhance neighborhood cohesion	*1.2 Criteria 1.2 to be assessed during alternative package screening*
1.3 Minimize adverse impacts to, or enhance air quality	*1.3 Criteria 1.3 to be assessed during alternative package screening*
1.4 Avoid or minimize residential displacements	1.4 Magnitude (on a qualitative scale) of residential properties crossed by component's conceptual footprint
1.5 Avoid or minimize business displacements	1.5 Magnitude (on a qualitative scale) of commercial/industrial properties crossed by component's conceptual footprint
1.6 Avoid or minimize adverse impacts on historic, **prehistoric[2]** and cultural resources	1.6 Magnitude and significance (on a qualitative scale) of historic, **prehistoric[3]** and cultural resource properties crossed by component's conceptual footprint
1.7 Avoid or minimize adverse impacts on public park and recreation resources	1.7 Magnitude and significance (on a qualitative scale) of public park and recreation resources crossed by component's conceptual footprint
1.8 Support local comprehensive plans, **including jurisdiction-approved neighborhood plans[1]**	*1.8 Criteria 1.8 to be assessed during alternative package screening*
1.9 Incorporate aesthetic values of the community in the project design[1]	***1.9 Criteria 1.9 to be assessed during alternative package screening and/or alternative evaluation[3]***
2 Mobility, Reliability, Accessibility, Congestion Reduction, and Efficiency	
2.1 Reduce travel times and delay on I-5 **in the I-5 corridor and[3]** within the bridge influence area for passenger vehicles	2.1 Potential (on a qualitative scale) for component to improve peak period passenger vehicle travel times and delay on I-5 through the bridge influence area
2.2 Reduce travel times and delay on I-5 **in the I-5 corridor and[3]** within the bridge influence area for transit modes	2.2 Potential (on a qualitative scale) for component to reduce peak period travel time and delay for transit vehicles on I-5 through the bridge influence area
2.3 Reduce the number of hours of daily highway congestion along I-5 **within the bridge influence area[1]**	2.3 Potential (on a qualitative scale) for component to reduce the number of hours of daily highway congestion within the bridge influence area
2.4 Enhance or maintain accessibility of jobs, housing, **health care and education[1]** to I-5 within the bridge influence area	2.4 *Criteria 2.4 to be assessed during alternative package screening* ***and/or alternative evaluation[3]***
2.5 Improve **person[1]** throughput of I-5 Columbia River crossing	2.5 Potential (on a qualitative scale) for component to increase the level of persons crossing Columbia River via I-5 by mode during the peak period
2.6 Improve vehicle throughput of I-5 Columbia River crossing[1]	**2.6 Potential (on a qualitative scale) for component to increase the peak period level of vehicles by mode crossing Columbia River via I-5[3]**
3 Modal Choice	
3.1 **Provide for multi-modal[1]** transportation choices	3.1 Potential (on a qualitative scale) for increasing transit capacity as a percentage of total daily capacity and peak period capacity across the I-5 Columbia River bridge
3.2 Improve **transit[1]** service to target markets	3.2 Potential (on a qualitative scale) to improve transit service in the I-5 corridor to identified travel markets **considering frequency, connectivity, span of hours, number of transfers, and travel time[3]**
3.3 Improve bike/pedestrian connectivity	3.3 Ability (on a qualitative scale) to improve connectivity of bicycle and pedestrian trips through the I-5 bridge influence area
3.4 Decrease percentage of Single Occupancy Vehicle travel	3.4 Potential (on a qualitative scale) for component to reduce the percentage of single occupancy vehicle travel during the peak period on I-5 within the bridge influence area
4 Safety	
4.1 Enhance vehicle/freight safety	4.1 Potential (on a qualitative scale) for component to improve vehicle/freight safety within the bridge influence area
4.2 Enhance bike/pedestrian facilities and safety	4.2 Quality (on a qualitative scale) of bicycle and pedestrian pathways provided within a component, **considering design standards such as ADA**
4.3 Enhance or maintain marine safety	4.3 Quality (on a qualitative scale) of navigation channel geometrics to accommodate ship movements **considering turning movement and potential lift restrictions[3]**
4.4 Enhance or maintain aviation safety	4.4 Ability (on a qualitative scale) to accommodate FAA clearance zone for Pearson Airpark
4.5 Provide sustained life-line connectivity	4.5 Ability (on a qualitative scale) to accommodate life-line connections in the I-5 corridor across the Columbia River to be maintained in an earthquake
4.6 Enhance I-5 incident/emergency response access within the bridge influence area	4.6 Quality (on a qualitative scale) to accommodate incident/emergency service access to incidents on I-5 in the bridge influence area
5 Regional Economy; Freight Mobility	
5.1 Reduce travel times and reduce delay for vehicle-moved freight on I-5 within the bridge influence area	5.1 Range of travel times (on a qualitative scale) between up to five origin/destination pairs of typical freight centers within the bridge influence area (e.g., between Port of Vancouver and Columbia Blvd. interchange)
5.2 Reduce travel times and reduce delay for vehicle-moved freight on I-5 through the bridge influence area	5.2 Potential (on a qualitative scale) for component to reduce daily delay for trucks on I-5 through the bridge influence area during midday periods
5.3 Enhance or maintain efficiency of marine navigation	5.3 Potential (on a qualitative scale) for component to avert extension of "no bridge lift" periods tied to I-5 congestion
5.4 Improve freight truck throughput of the bridge influence area	5.4 Potential (on a qualitative scale) for component to increase freight vehicle throughput across the Columbia River via I-5
5.5 Avoid or minimize adverse impacts to the parallel freight rail corridor[1]	***5.5 Criteria 5.5 to be assessed during alternative package screening and/or alternative evaluation[3]***
6 Stewardship of Natural Resources	
6.1 **Avoid or[2]** minimize adverse impacts to, or enhance threatened or endangered fish or wildlife habitat	6.1 Magnitude (on a qualitative scale) of direct impact on designated critical habitat and other threatened or endangered species habitat
6.2 **Avoid or[2]** minimize adverse impacts to, or enhance other fish or wildlife habitat	6.2 Magnitude (on a qualitative scale) of direct impact on other fish and wildlife habitat
6.3 Avoid or minimize adverse impacts to rare, threatened, or endangered plant species	6.3 Magnitude (on a qualitative scale) of direct impact on rare, threatened, or endangered plant species
6.4 **Avoid or[2]** minimize adverse impacts to, or enhance wetlands	6.4 Magnitude and significance (on a qualitative scale) of direct impact on wetlands
6.5 **Avoid or[2]** minimize adverse impacts to, or enhance water quality	6.5 Magnitude (on a qualitative scale) of net increase in impervious surface area
6.6 **~~Reduce~~ Minimize[3]** total energy consumption of construction and **facility[1]** operations	*6.6 Criteria 6.6 to be assessed during* ***~~alternative package screening~~ alternative evaluation[3]***
6.7 Minimize adverse impacts to, or enhance waterways[2]	**6.7 Magnitude and significance (on a qualitative scale) of direct impact on waterways[3]**
7 Distribution of Benefits and Impacts	
7.1 Avoid or minimize disproportionate adverse impacts on low income and minority populations	7.1 Magnitude (on a qualitative scale) of potential residential property acquisitions in blocks or block groups with high share of low income or minority populations (compare to impacts in other blocks or block groups)
7.2 Provide for equitable distribution of benefits **to low income and minority populations[1]**	7.2 Potential improvements (on a qualitative scale) to vehicle and transit travel times between representative low income or minority areas and selected destinations (including employment, education and commercial areas)
8 Cost Effectiveness and Financial Resources	
8.1 Ensure **facility construction, maintenance and operation[1]** cost effectiveness	*8.1 Criteria 8.1 to be assessed during alternative package screening* ***and/or alternative evaluation[3]***
8.2 Ensure a reliable funding plan for the project	*8.2 Criteria 8.2 to be assessed during alternative package screening* ***and/or alternative evaluation[3]***
9 Bi-State Cooperation	
9.1 Support adopted regional growth management and comprehensive plans	*9.1 Criteria 9.1 to be assessed during alternative package screening* ***and/or alternative evaluation[3]***
10 Constructability	
10.1 Maintain transportation operations during construction	*10.1 Criteria 10.1 to be assessed during alternative package screening* ***and/or alternative evaluation[3]***
10.2 Minimize adverse construction impacts	*10.2 Criteria 10.2 to be assessed during alternative package screening* ***and/or alternative evaluation[3]***
10.3 Provide flexibility to accommodate future expansion[1]	***10.3 Criteria 10.3 to be assessed during alternative package screening and/or alternative evaluation[3]***
10.4 Use construction practices and materials that minimize environmental impact[1]	***10.4 Criteria 10.4 to be assessed during alternative package screening and/or alternative evaluation3***

Notes:
- Bicycle, pedestrian and freight components will be evaluated with the roadway and **river[3]** crossing categories given their interrelationship.
- These criteria will be used in alternative screening **and the selection of a preferred alternative[3]**, but the performance measures will change.
- Where noted, insufficient data will exist to report on certain criteria during component screening. Data will be available during subsequent analysis of alternative packages.

Columbia River CROSSING

Evaluation Framework

Task Force Meeting

January 4, 2006

Overview from November 30, 2005 Task Force Meeting

- The Task Force…
  - Received overview presentation of the process involved in crafting the evaluation framework
  - Worked in four small groups to review, discuss, comment on screening criteria
  - Reported small group discussion and recommendations to the larger task force
  - Charged staff to respond to comments with recommended changes to framework

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Staff Response to Task Force

- Staff and Task Force received summary of the Task Force 11-30-05 small group comments
- Staff considered all comments and is recommending changes to incorporate most
- Staff also received comments from InterCEP group
- Approach to reviewing comments tonight:
  - Address screening criteria section by section
  - Within each section, overview of comments and proposed response to criteria
  - Group discussion

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Format

- Upcoming slides present proposed criteria changes
- Proposed text changes on slides are color coded to match hard copy criteria in front of you
  - Black text is unchanged from prior versions of criteria
  - Red text- response to Task Force comments[1]
  - Blue text- response to InterCEP comments[2]
  - Green text- represents staff edits[3]

  All proposed changes are also underlined

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1. Community Livability and Human Resources

No proposed changes to Criteria 1.1 through 1.5 or 1.7

- 1.1 Minimize adverse impacts to, or reduce noise levels
- 1.2 Minimize adverse impacts to, or enhance neighborhood cohesion
- 1.3 Minimize adverse impacts to, or enhance air quality
- 1.4 Avoid or minimize residential displacements
- 1.5 Avoid or minimize business displacements
- 1.7 Avoid or minimize adverse impacts on public park and recreation resources

1. Community Livability and Human Resources

- 1.6 Avoid or minimize adverse impacts on historic, prehistoric and cultural resources
- 1.8 Support local comprehensive plans, including jurisdiction-approved neighborhood plans
- 1.9 Incorporate aesthetic values of the community in the project design

Discussion

2. Mobility, Reliability, Accessibility, Congestion Reduction, and Efficiency

- 2.1 Reduce travel times and delay on I-5 in the I-5 corridor and within the bridge influence area for passenger vehicles
- 2.2 Reduce travel times and delay on I-5 in the I-5 corridor and within the bridge influence area for transit modes
- 2.3 Reduce the number of hours of daily highway congestion along I-5 within the bridge influence area
- 2.4 Enhance or maintain accessibility of jobs, housing, health care and education to I-5 within the bridge influence area
- 2.5 Improve person throughput of I-5 Columbia River crossing
- 2.6 Improve vehicle throughput of I-5 Columbia River crossing

Discussion

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Black- Unchanged Red- Task Force

3. Modal Choice

- 3.1 Provide for multi-modal transportation choices
- 3.2 Improve transit service to target markets

No proposed changes to Criteria 3.3 and 3.4

- 3.3 Improve bike/pedestrian connectivity
- 3.4 Decrease percentage of Single Occupancy Vehicle travel

Discussion

4. Safety

No proposed changes to the six safety criteria

- 4.1 Enhance vehicle/freight safety
- 4.2 Enhance bike/pedestrian facilities and safety
- 4.3 Enhance or maintain marine safety
- 4.4 Enhance or maintain aviation safety
- 4.5 Provide sustained life-line connectivity
- 4.6 Enhance I-5 incident/emergency response access within the bridge influence area

Minor edits to Performance Measures for Criteria 4.2 & 4.3

Discussion

5. Regional Economy; Freight Mobility

No Changes to Criteria 5.1 through 5.4

- 5.1 Reduce travel times and reduce delay for vehicle-moved freight on I-5 within the bridge influence area
- 5.2 Reduce travel times and reduce delay for vehicle-moved freight onI-5 through the bridge influence area
- 5.3 Enhance or maintain efficiency of marine navigation
- 5.4 Improve freight truck throughput of the bridge influence area
- 5.5 Avoid or minimize adverse impacts to the parallel freight rail corridor

Discussion

6. Stewardship of Natural Resources

- 6.1 Avoid or minimize adverse impacts to, or enhance threatened or endangered fish or wildlife habitat
- 6.2 Avoid or minimize adverse impacts to, or enhance other fish or wildlife habitat
- 6.3 Avoid or minimize adverse impacts to rare, threatened, or endangered plant species
- 6.4 Avoid or minimize adverse impacts to, or enhance wetlands
- 6.5 Avoid or minimize adverse impacts to, or enhance water quality
- 6.6 Minimize total energy consumption of construction and facility operations
- 6.7 Avoid or minimize adverse impacts to, or enhance waterways

Discussion

7. Distribution of Benefits and Impacts

No proposed changes to Criteria 7.1

- 7.1 Avoid or minimize disproportionate adverse impacts on low income and minority populations
- 7.2 Provide for equitable distribution of benefits to low income and minority populations

Discussion

8. Cost Effectiveness and Financial Resources

- 8.1 Ensure facility construction, maintenance and operation cost effectiveness

No proposed changes to Criteria 8.2

- 8.2 Ensure a reliable funding plan for the project

Discussion

9. Bi-State Cooperation

No proposed changes to Criteria 9.1

- 9.1 Support adopted regional growth management and comprehensive plans

Discussion

10. Constructability

No proposed changes to Criteria 10.1 and 10.2

- 10.1 Maintain transportation operations during construction
- 10.2 Minimize adverse construction impacts
- 10.3 Provide flexibility to accommodate future expansion
- 10.4 Use construction practices and materials that minimize environmental impact

Discussion

Evaluation Framework- Next Steps

- Incorporate Task Force comments from tonight
- Recommendation by Task Force for adoption
- Present final evaluation framework to Project Sponsors Council and InterCEP for adoption
- Turn attention to component screening and alternative packaging

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FINAL

PROBLEM DEFINITION

December 27, 2005

Introduction

Major transportation agencies in the Vancouver-Portland region have joined together to lead development of transportation improvements to the 5-mile segment of Interstate 5 (I-5) between State Route (SR) 500 in Vancouver and Columbia Boulevard in Portland, including the bridges across the Columbia River (the I-5 Bridge Influence Area). Improvements are expected to address highway, vehicular freight, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle needs.

Function and Role of the I-5 Bridge Influence Area

I-5 is the only continuous north/south interstate highway on the West Coast, providing a commerce link for the United States, Canada, and Mexico. In the Vancouver-Portland region, I-5 is one of two major highways that provide interstate connectivity and mobility. I-5 directly connects the central cities of Vancouver and Portland. Interstate 205 (I-205), a 37-mile long freeway that extends from its connection with I-5 at Salmon Creek to its terminus with I-5 near Tualatin, provides a more suburban and bypass function and serves travel demand between east Clark County, east Multnomah County, and Clackamas County.

Operation of the I-5 crossing over the Columbia River is directly influenced by the 5-mile segment of I-5 between SR 500 in Vancouver and Columbia Boulevard in Portland. Known as the I-5 Bridge Influence Area, this segment includes eight interchanges, including connections with four state highways (SR 14, SR 500, and SR 501 in Washington and OR 99E in Oregon) and with several major arterial roadways, that serve a variety of land uses, and provides access to downtown Vancouver, two international ports, industrial centers, residential neighborhoods, retail centers, and recreational areas.

The existing I-5 crossing of the Columbia River consists of two side-by-side bridges that have lift spans. They were built four decades apart and the cost of each was financed with bridge tolls. The eastern bridge (serving northbound traffic) was built in 1917 and the western bridge (serving southbound traffic) was built in 1958. The two-bridge crossing, which served 30,000

vehicles per day in the 1960s, now carries more than 125,000 automobiles, buses, and trucks each weekday. While many of these trips are regionally-oriented (average trip length is 16 miles), it is estimated that 70 to 80 percent of trips using the I-5 crossing actually enter and/or exit I-5 within the 5-mile long I-5 Bridge Influence Area.

A second interstate highway river crossing is located 6 miles east (upstream) of the I-5 crossing. The I-205 Glenn Jackson Bridge, which opened in 1982, carries about 140,000 vehicles per day and is reaching its peak-hour period carrying capacity. This bridge has a fixed span. No other river crossing options in the metropolitan area are available between the two states. The next closest bridges for automobile use are located at Longview, Washington, 46 miles to the west, and at Cascade Locks, Oregon, 40 miles east of the I-5 bridge crossing.

A rail bridge is located about a mile west (downstream) of the I-5 crossing. The Burlington Northern-Santa Fe (BNSF) rail bridge was built in 1908 and features a swinging span to accommodate river traffic. The I-5 crossing's lift spans were designed to align with the rail bridge's swing span.

The I-5 Bridge Influence Area serves several broad travel markets:

- Through travel. These users travel from outside the Vancouver-Portland region to destinations that are also outside the region—for example, a freight or tourist trip from Seattle, Washington to Eugene, Oregon. These users represent about 7 percent of the total vehicle-trips crossing the river during the peak periods.

- Regional travel. Most of these users travel between Clark County and the Portland metropolitan area (Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties), or vice-versa, without stopping in the I-5 Bridge Influence Area. These trips account for about 47 percent of the total vehicle-trips crossing the river during the peak periods.

  Seven percent of the total trips crossing the river originate within the region and are destined outside of the region, or originate outside of the region and are destined within the region, for example, a trip from Salem, Oregon to Clark County.

- Local travel. Most of these users travel between the I-5 Bridge Influence Area and other locations within the Vancouver/Portland metropolitan area, or vice-versa. For example, a trip from a southeast Portland neighborhood to downtown Vancouver is considered a local trip. These trips account for about 32 percent of the vehicle-trips crossing the I-5 bridge during the peak periods.

  Two percent of the total trips crossing the river originate outside the region and are destined to a location within the I-5 Bridge Influence Area, or originate within this area and are destined outside of the region, for example, a trip from Longview, Washington to Portland Meadows.

- Internal travel. These users stay entirely within the I-5 Bridge Influence Area—for example, from downtown Vancouver to Hayden Island. This constitutes about 5 percent of the trips crossing the I-5 bridge during the peak periods.

Current Problems	Details/Background
1. Travel demand exceeds capacity in the I-5 Bridge Influence Area, causing heavy congestion and delay during peak travel periods for automobile, transit, and freight traffic. This limits mobility within the region and impedes access to major activity centers.	Heavy traffic congestion has resulted from growth in regional population and employment and in interstate commerce over the last two decades. The existing I-5 bridge crossing provides 3 lanes of capacity in each direction, with a directional capacity of about 5,500 vehicles per hour. Travel demand currently exceeds that capacity during peak periods. As a result, stop-and-go traffic conditions last 2 to 5 hours in the mornings and afternoons. These conditions are aggravated by vehicle merges, traffic accidents, and vehicle breakdowns. Due to excess travel demand in the I-5 Bridge Influence Area, many travelers take longer, alternative routes such as I-205, or circulate on local streets to less direct I-5 interchanges. In addition, spillover traffic from I-5 onto parallel arterial roadways increases local congestion. Although the lift span is used only in off-peak periods, it affects travel reliability across the river and creates extensive traffic delays. The span is opened 20 to 30 times a month, with the greatest number of lifts occurring during the winter when water levels are at their highest. Each lift takes approximately 10 minutes, creating traffic delays that can last up to an hour. During peak periods when the lifts are not allowed, river traffic must maneuver a tight S-curve route through the rail bridge opening and the highest fixed span of the I-5 crossing, creating hazardous navigation conditions.
2. Transit service between Vancouver and Portland is constrained by the limited capacity in the I-5 corridor and is subject to the same congestion as other vehicles, affecting transit reliability and operations.	The I-5 bridge is a critical bi-state transit link for transit patrons traveling between Vancouver and Portland. Bi-state transit service includes local fixed-route bus service between downtown Portland and downtown Vancouver (using the I-5 bridge), commuter-oriented peak period express routes from Clark County park-and-rides and transit centers to downtown Portland on both I-5 and I-205, and I-205 shuttle service between Fisher's Landing Transit Center and the Parkrose Transit Center. Current congestion in the I-5 Bridge Influence Area has an adverse impact on transit travel speed and service reliability. Between 1998 and 2005, local bus travel times between the Vancouver Transit Center and Hayden Island increased 50 percent during the peak period. Local buses crossing the I-5 bridge in the southbound direction currently take up to three times longer during parts of the morning

	peak period compared to off peak periods. On average, local bus travel times are between 10 percent and 60 percent longer when traveling in the peak period direction. Commuter buses also experience congestion and incident-related delays. Commuter buses traveling southbound during the morning peak period have travel times between 45 percent and 115 percent longer than commuter buses traveling during off-peak periods. Commuter buses traveling northbound during the afternoon peak period have the advantage of using the northbound High Occupancy Vehicle lane, however, these buses still experience travel times between 35 percent and 60 percent longer than commuter buses traveling during the off-peak periods.
3. The access of truck-hauled freight to nationally and regionally significant industrial and commercial districts, as well as connections to marine, rail, and air freight facilities, is impaired by congestion in the I-5 Bridge Influence Area.	I-5 is the primary supply-chain for goods moving into and out of the Vancouver-Portland region and the Pacific Northwest. Access to nationally and regionally significant industrial and commercial districts, including the Ports of Vancouver and Portland, and connections to marine, rail and air freight facilities, is adversely affected by congestion in the I-5 Bridge Influence Area. Congestion is increasingly spreading into the off-peak periods (including weekends) used by freight carriers. Declining freight carrier access slows delivery times and increases shipping costs, diminishing the attractiveness of I-5 and the uses served by I-5, and negatively affecting the region's economy. Recent forecasts indicate that truck traffic in the region will double, and the logistics requirements for freight delivery time will become increasingly "just-in-time" – placing even more pressure on travel time reliability.
4. The I-5 bridge crossing area and its approach sections experience crash rates over two times higher than statewide averages for comparable urban freeways in Washington and Oregon, largely due to outdated design. Incident evaluations attribute crashes to congestion, closely spaced interchanges, short weave and merge sections, vertical grade changes in the bridge span, and narrow shoulders.	Over 300 reported crashes occur annually in the I-5 Bridge Influence Area. Crashes have resulted in substantial property damage and injury; some have resulted in fatalities. The causes are: **Close Interchange Spacing** The 5-mile Bridge Influence Area contains eight closely spaced interchanges. These interchanges provide access to several east-west highways and arterial roadways that serve a mix of interstate, regional, and local trip purposes. The average distance between the interchanges is 1/2 mile, as compared with a recommended minimum spacing of 1 mile between interchanges located in urban areas. **Short Weave and Merge Sections** Short weave sections for vehicles entering and exiting the

In addition, the configuration of the existing I-5 bridges relative to the downstream BNSF rail bridge contributes to hazardous navigation conditions for commercial and recreational boat traffic.	freeway generate backups and delay due to difficulty in maneuvering, especially for large trucks. The proportion of trucks is high because this segment provides arterial street access to both ports. Outdated designs for entrance and exit ramps cause backups onto the mainline at exit ramps. Most of the entrance ramps do not provide enough space for vehicles to merge safely with through traffic. **Vertical Grade Changes** Vertical grade changes in the bridge span over the Columbia River create sight distance limitations that reduce speeds and create potential hazards to motorists. **Narrow Highway Shoulder Width** Several segments of the I-5 Bridge Influence Area, including the I-5 bridge, have narrow inside and outside shoulders in both travel directions. In several locations, shoulders are as little as 1-foot wide (10- to 12-foot wide shoulders are standard). The lack of shoulders positions many motorists undesirably close to physical barriers that border I-5. Many drivers respond with caution by slowing down to increase separation from vehicles ahead and behind. Increased vehicle spacing reduces vehicle throughput and contributes to freeway congestion. In addition, the lack of safe areas for incident response, disabled vehicle pullout, and driver recovery also impairs the ability to manage highway operations and recover from events that interrupt traffic flow. **Hazards for River Navigation** The I-5 crossing's lift span cannot be raised during peak traffic periods. This requires river traffic heading downstream on the Columbia River to navigate under the bridge's high fixed spans near the middle of the river, then quickly turn to line up with the narrow opening of the rail bridge on the north side of the river. This maneuver is especially difficult during high river levels and could result in a collision between a vessel and one of the bridges.
5. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities for crossing the Columbia River in the I-5 Bridge Influence Area are not designed to promote non-motorized access and connectivity across the river.	The width of the bicycle/pedestrian facility on the I-5 bridge is substandard (6 to 8 feet) and located extremely close to traffic. Separated multi-use paths should be at least 10 feet wide. Bicycle and pedestrian connections between North Marine Drive, Hayden Island, and Vancouver require out-of-direction travel. For example, no connection exists for

In addition, "low speed vehicles" are not allowed to use the I-5 bridge to cross the river.	pedestrians or bicyclists wanting to stay on the west side of the bridge between Hayden Island and North Marine Drive. In addition, many of the I-5 Bridge Influence Area's features are not in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act design guidelines. "Low speed vehicles" can be propelled via various means, including through the use of different fuels or electric power. These vehicles must have seatbelts, windshields, turn signals, headlights, brake lights and other safety equipment. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, "low speed vehicles" are capable of speeds of up to 25 miles per hour and can be operated on streets with posted speed limits of 35 miles per hour or less. Since I-5 is posted for freeway speeds and since the bridge's multi-use pathway is narrow and permits only non-motorized vehicles, "low speed vehicles" are not allowed to use the I-5 bridge to cross the river.
6. The I-5 bridges across the Columbia River do not meet current seismic standards, leaving them vulnerable to failure in an earthquake.	Previous studies concluded that the existing structures could not be upgraded to fully meet seismic design standards without full bridge reconstruction.
7. The current configuration of I-5 within the I-5 Bridge Influence Area limits east-west connectivity across the highway for all users.	There are a limited number of overcrossings and undercrossings of I-5, particularly across I-5's approaches to the Columbia River bridge crossing, i.e., between downtown Vancouver to the west of I-5 and the numerous land uses to the east of I-5 and between Jantzen Beach and Hayden Island. Users wishing to travel across I-5 often must take circuitous routes.
Future Problems	Details/Background
8. As the Vancouver/ Portland metropolitan region grows, mobility and accessibility for automobile, freight, and transit will decline unless the disparity between demand and capacity in the I-5 Bridge Influence Area is addressed. The increasing disparity between demand and capacity will lead to longer delays, increased accident potential, and diminished	**Regional Growth** Consistent with regionally adopted comprehensive plans, the region's growth forecasts indicate that population, employment, and commercial trade will continue to grow, increasing regional travel demand. • Between 2005 and 2030, the population of the four-county Vancouver-Portland region is projected to increase by 44 percent, from 1.96 million to 2.82 million. • Regional trade is expected to almost double over the next 25 years to over 520 million tons. While currently 64 percent of the region's freight tonnage is hauled by truck, by 2030 it is projected that 73 percent will be

quality of life and economic opportunity.	carried by truck, many including container loads. **Increased Travel Demand** Daily traffic demand over the I-5 bridge is expected to increase by more than 40 percent in 20 years, from 125,000 vehicles in 2000 to 180,000 vehicles in 2020 (traffic is expected to further increase beyond 2020; new travel demand modeling is currently being conducted to predict 2030 levels). The projected increase in use of the bridge is constrained by the lack of capacity to accommodate more vehicles, resulting in an expansion of the peak period to accommodate the projected traffic increase. There will also be a potentially large and underserved transit market for trips between key regional locations traveling or connecting through the I-5 Bridge Influence Area. **Deteriorating Traffic Conditions** Unless improvements are made, traffic conditions in the I-5 Bridge Influence Area are predicted to worsen over the next 20 years: • Traffic congestion and delay will increase, with stop-and-go conditions occurring in both directions for 10 to 12 hours on weekdays. Increased delays on weekends will also result. • The current off-peak periods, which are generally uncongested and favored by freight carriers, will blend into adjacent peak period congestion, increasing freight delay throughout much of the day. • Vehicle-hours of delay during the evening commute period will increase nearly 80 percent, from 18,000 hours to 32,000 hours each day. Vehicle-hours of delay on truck routes will increase by more than 90 percent, from 13,400 hours to 25,800 hours each day. • Average travel times for buses traveling in general purpose lanes on I-5 between downtown Vancouver and downtown Portland are expected to almost double, from 27 minutes in 2000 to 55 minutes in 2020. • With an extension in the duration of congestion, there may be pressure to increase the bridge lift closure periods, further hampering river navigation and increasing the likelihood of accidents between vessels and the bridge. • As traffic demands increase, accident levels will likely rise within the Bridge Influence Area.

	Diminished Mobility and Accessibility • Slower highway speeds will reduce access to jobs, shopping, and recreational uses. • Regional truck freight is projected to increase by about 130 percent in the next 25 years; however, increasing delays between I-5 and freight centers will adversely affect freight distribution and access to ports and terminals, thereby shrinking market areas served by the Vancouver-Portland region. The current Regional Transportation Council Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the Metro Regional Transportation Plan recognize the need for additional capacity to improve the flow of people and freight in the I-5 Bridge Influence Area. Both plans include the I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership Strategic Plan recommendations to increase mobility and accessibility in the I-5 Bridge Influence Area.

PORTLAND BUSINESS ALLIANCE

Leading the way

December 30, 2005

Mr. Hal Dengerink
Co-Chair
Columbia River Crossing Task Force
700 Washington Street
Vancouver, WA 98660

Mr. Henry Hewitt
Co-Chair
Columbia River Crossing Task Force
700 Washington Street
Vancouver, WA 98660

Dear Mr. Dengerink and Mr. Hewitt,

On behalf of the Portland Business Alliance Transportation Committee, we would like to offer the following comments on the DRAFT Evaluation Framework dated November 23, 2005. The bulk of our comments will focus on Step B: Component Screening Criteria and Measures.

Before delving into our substantive comments, we wish to take this opportunity to provide some context about the relationship between transportation infrastructure investments and our regional economy and livability. The Portland Business Alliance, Metro, Port of Portland, ODOT, and many other public and private sector partners recently completed a study entitled "The Cost of Congestion to the Economy of the Portland Region." While the study was not focused on any specific project, it provides key information about the importance of investing in our transportation system, particularly our roads and highways.

The study finds that geography and past investments have made the Portland region a sea and air gateway, as well as a regional rail and highway hub. As a result, Portland's competitiveness is heavily dependent on an efficient and reliable transportation system. However, even with planned improvements, our transportation system will not keep pace with projected increases in freight and general traffic.

Business interviews conducted as part of the study reveal that congestion is already impacting business competitiveness. Further, although all modes are important to an efficient transportation system, few alternatives exist to a smoothly functioning road and highway system for the movement of good and services, service and sales calls and other on-the-clock business travel.

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The study finds that failing to adequately invest in our transportation system will result in a potential loss to the regional economy of $844 million annually by year 2025 – that's $782 per household and 6,500 permanent jobs. Additional investment in the regional transportation system would provide a return of at least $2 for every dollar spent.

The "Cost of Congestion" study highlights the importance of our transportation infrastructure to our region's businesses and overall competitiveness. Because this region is uniquely trade dependent, it is critical to our economy, and therefore our quality of life, that we adequately invest in improvements that ensure an efficient and reliable transportation system. With that as context, we offer the following comments on the DRAFT Evaluation Framework.

Comments/suggestions on Step B: Component Screening Criteria and Measures:

1. Community Livability

1.8 Support *local* comprehensive plans

Comment: We believe it would be beneficial to further define the word local. Our understanding is that some neighborhood plans are recognized by their respective city's comprehensive plans while others are not. While it is important to consider neighborhoods that are most heavily impacted within the bridge influence area, this project is regional in scope and should remain focused on our shared regional vision.

Suggested language change: 1.8 Support *regional* and local comprehensive plans

2. Mobility, Reliability, Accessibility, Congestion Reduction and Efficiency

2.5 Potential (on a qualitative scale) for component to increase the level of persons and vehicles crossing Columbia River via I-5 by mode *during the peak period.*

Comment: The majority of component screening measures gauge improvements during all periods, not just during the peak period or midday period. Many freight related businesses have made schedule changes to avoid peak traffic conditions. Therefore, it is important to increase throughput throughout the day not just during the peak period. We understand that CRC staff has been working from models with data limited to the peak period but in the near term may have access to models with more expanded data.

Suggested language: 2.5 ***Delete*** *'during the peak period'*

3. Modal Choice

3.4 Decrease percentage of *Single Occupancy Vehicle* travel

Comment: Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) trips are typically thought of as discretionary or non-business based. However, many of these SOV trips are, in fact, business related. Utility maintenance crews or business people making regional sales calls are seldom in a vehicle defined as a medium or heavy truck (see the discussion below regarding Regional Economy; Freight Mobility) and are therefore classified as an SOV trip. We believe that decreasing the percentage of SOV travel by offering alternatives, such as bus rapid transit or light rail, is a worthy goal. However, it is equally important to recognize the percentage of SOV trips that cannot be accommodated by these alternatives and that these business-related SOV trips are also critical to the regional economy. We hope that this point will be taken into consideration during the alternatives analysis.

5. Regional Economy; Freight Mobility

5.1 Potential (on a qualitative basis) for component to reduce delay for trucks on I-5 through the bridge influence area *during midday periods*

Comment: We strongly support any component that will improve freight mobility within the bridge influence area. However, as described earlier, it is important to measure how each component will reduce delay throughout the day, not just during midday or peak hour periods.

Suggested language: 5.1 ***Delete*** *'during midday periods'*

5.4 Improve *freight truck* throughput of the bridge influence area.

Comment: Freight truck, for the purposes of this project, is defined as medium (a commercial vehicle under 40,000 lbs and under six tires) and heavy (over 40,000 lbs. and over six tires). This definition excludes smaller delivery and maintenance trucks that also play a role moving freight in and through the I-5 bridge influence area. In addition, as discussed above, business-related SOV trips are also an important part of the regional economy. All of these business-related trips play a role in our regional economy and their role should be adequately taken into consideration during the development and screening of alternatives.

Suggested Addition: 5.5 Maintain or enhance road and rail freight access to Ports and associated transportation facilities

6. Stewardship of Natural Resources

We support the values reflected by each of these criteria. However, it may be unrealistic to expect that the transportation components will enhance wildlife habitat, endangered fish, plants, wetlands and water quality. We would suggest adding the language "avoid or minimize" to criteria 6.1, 6.2, 6.4, 6.5.

Suggested language:
6.1 *Avoid or* minimize adverse impacts to, or enhance endangered fish or wildlife habitat.
6.2 *Avoid or* minimize adverse impacts to, or enhance other fish or wildlife habitat.
6.4 *Avoid or* minimize adverse impacts to, or enhance wetlands.
6.5 Avoid or minimize adverse impacts to, or enhance water quality.

8. Cost Effectiveness and Financial Resources

To the extent possible, funding for various project components should be directly linked to related funding mechanisms.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on this important document.

Sincerely,

Christopher Kopca
Portland Business Alliance
Transportation Committee Chair

cc: Mike Baker, CRC Project Staff