

**Meeting:** Columbia River Crossing Task Force

**Meeting Date:** May 17, 2006, 4:00–6:30 p.m.

**Location:** WSDOT SW Region Headquarters,  
11018 NE 51<sup>st</sup> Circle, Vancouver, WA

**Members Present:**

Tom Miller for Sam Adams, City of Portland  
Dr. Wayne Branch, Clark College  
Rich Brown, Bank of America  
Richard Brandman for Rex Burkholder,  
Metro  
Bob Byrd, Identity Clark County  
Lora Caine, Friends of Clark County  
Serena Cruz, Multnomah County  
Hal Dengerink, Washington State University  
Vancouver (Task Force Co-chair)  
Elliot Eki, Oregon/Idaho AAA  
Dave Frei, Arnada Neighborhood  
Association  
Jill Fuglister, Coalition for a Livable Future  
Jerry Grossnickle, Columbia River Tugboat  
Association  
Brad Halverson, Overlook Neighborhood  
Association  
Fred Hansen, TriMet  
Henry Hewitt, Stoel Rives (Task Force Co-  
chair)

Adrienne DeDona for Eric Holmes, City of  
Battle Ground  
Dean Lookingbill, Regional Transportation  
Council  
Ed Lynch, Vancouver National Historic  
Reserve Trust  
Betty Sue Morris, C-TRAN  
John Ostrowski, C-TRAN  
Katy Brooks for Larry Paulson, Port of  
Vancouver, USA  
Bart Phillips, Columbia River Economic  
Development Council  
Royce Pollard, City of Vancouver  
Bob Russel, Oregon Trucking Association  
Jonathan Schlueter, Westside Economic  
Alliance  
Steve Stuart, Clark County  
Walter Valenta, Bridgeton Neighborhood  
Association  
Tom Zelenka, Oregon Freight Advisory  
Committee

**Absent Members:**

Charles Becker, City of Gresham  
Brett Hinsley, Columbia Pacific Building  
Trades  
Monica Isbell, Portland Business Alliance  
Dick Malin, Central Park Neighborhood  
Association  
Mark McCloud, Greater Vancouver  
Chamber of Commerce  
Steve Petersen, Portland Business Alliance  
Janet Ray, Washington AAA  
Karen Schmidt, Washington Freight Mobility  
Strategic Investment Board

Jeri Sundvall-Williams, Environmental  
Justice Action Group  
Scot Walstra, Greater Vancouver Chamber  
of Commerce  
Bill Wyatt, Port of Portland

**Project Team Members Present:**

Ron Anderson	John Osborn	Lynn Rust
Doug Ficco	Peter Ovington	Gregg Snyder
Jeff Heilman	David Parisi	Rex Wong
Jay Lyman	Anne Pressentin	
Linda Mullen	Laura Reilly	

**Announcements**

**The purpose of the meeting** was announced by Co-chair Hal Dengerink:

- to finish the discussion and selection of components to move forward for further study;
- to consider transit and replacement bridge ideas begun at April 26 meeting;
- to discuss how the Task Force wants project staff to combine these components into packages.

**Peak Oil and Demand Modeling:** Staff is working to arrange for a speaker on these topics and will schedule this for an upcoming meeting.

**Regional Transportation Council resolution:**

Reminder that Task Force alternates may not participate in voting.

**Action:** Motion passed:  
Motion to support the Regional Transportation Council board's *Policy Statement on Guidance for the Transportation Corridors Visioning Process and Context for Addressing New Columbia River Crossings* (see meeting materials, attachment from RTC).

All approved except Jill Fuglister, who abstained.

Walter Valenta noted that there is also some interest in including Bi-State Coordination Committee as a forum for discussing this issue. Steve Stuart said it could be brought up at that meeting the next morning.

**Other materials:** A handout was given to Task Force members titled *Appendix A: Attachments to Public Comments, April 12-13, 2005 Open Houses* in response to Dave Frei's request for attachments referred to in the *Database of Public Comments Received through April Open Houses*.

**Environmental Justice Update**

- An environmental justice training has been scheduled for the June Task Force meeting. The trainer will be John Ridgeway of the Washington State Department of Ecology, who will lead this full discussion of the federal Environmental Justice rules and how they apply to the CRC project. Note: June meeting will be extended to four hours to accommodate this (4pm to 8pm).

- In addition, a more extensive training for community members will take place in July – a four hour session led by national Environmental Justice leader, Running Grass, who works with the federal Environmental Protection Agency. Task Force members will receive an email with the invitation and must RSVP if they want to attend.
- A summary of the Environmental Justice Program is in the meeting materials, also posted on Web site at [www.columbiarivercrossing.org/materials/meetingMaterials.aspx](http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/materials/meetingMaterials.aspx) (under Task Force Meeting Materials, May 17, 2006).

## Meeting Minutes

**Action:** The April 26, 2006, meeting minutes were approved with the correction that Bart Phillips was present, not absent, at that meeting.

## Public Comment Period One

Opportunity for those who wish to address the topic of component selection and did not speak at the April 26 meeting. One commenter spoke:

**Travis Huennekens** expressed disappointment that the I-605 proposal was eliminated and that further study was not done on it. He went to a WSDOT open house attended by Columbia River Crossing staff and asked for data on seismic issues and the information he received didn't contain that information. He said it is not the engineering way to make a decision before having all the data and facts.

--(Co-chair Dengerink responded that the Task Force did consider data at its March and April meetings before disqualifying other alternatives and that the Regional Transportation Council will be looking at other such alternatives.)

## Continue Discussion and Selection of Components

Co-chair Henry Hewitt resumed the role of chairperson for this portion of the agenda to pick up where left off after April meeting. Task Force will address which River Crossing and Transit components to advance for further study.

<p><b>NOTE:</b> <i>Task force questions and comments are in italics</i> (Staff responses are in parentheses)</p>
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## River Crossing Components

- *Asked if it matters if you double-decked or single-decked a new bridge? Did height come into consideration?*  
-- (Yes, we considered that and looked at the minimum possible elevation.)
- *Commented that Pearson Airport is an important asset for the region.*

**Action:** Voted to remove from further consideration River Crossing (RC) components 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, and 20 (passed unanimously).

**Action:** RC components recommended to advance: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 13, 23

**Discussion:**

- *Commented in favor of removing movable bridge options entirely (RC-1 and RC-2).*  
--(We've heard that in our outreach. But regarding differences in height of the bridge, until we can fully understand impacts to downtown Vancouver, Hayden Island, and marine navigation, it is premature to make that decision.)
- *Commented in favor of removing other RC components sooner, but is willing to let it go for now.*
- *Commented that it may be possible to live with a movable bridge if lift frequency is nearly zero.*
- *Commented that the tunnel option should be taken off the table.*  
--(We couldn't find reasons to fail it under first six tests, but frankly it is unlikely to progress very far given potential impacts on endangered salmon and Fort Vancouver.)
- *Commented that you have to show that a tunnel wouldn't cut off a big portion of downtown Vancouver.*
- *Asked how far in the studies we'll go until we can cull more components.*  
--(We're trying to be faithful to six screening questions, but we're working on a memo for June meeting that would take tunnel off the table.)

**Action:**

Vote to keep RC-1 under consideration (passed by majority).

Vote to keep RC-2 under consideration (pass unanimously).

Vote to keep RC-3, 4, 7, 8, 9 under consideration (passed; one opposed).

Vote to keep RC-13 under consideration (passed; four opposed).

**Transit Components**

**TR 1-6 • Transit Components 1 through 6 are recommended by staff to advance.**

**Discussion:**

- *Asked if there is enough of a distinction between TR-1/TR-2 and TR-3/TR-4 to make them separate.*  
--(TR 1 and 2 are primarily peak, point to point service. In TR 3 and 4, it is all-day service and there are stations spaced every mile or two.)
- *Asked if staff has a sense of what combination of transit components would produce the highest transit ridership.*  
--(Today, transit carries five percent of all trips over bridge. We believe based on past work that transit can be a viable option.)
- *Asked if any of the components have a projected limitation on number of riders they can handle. For instance, what's envisioned with streetcar, which may have capacity limitations?*  
--(Yes, streetcar has capacity limitations compared to light rail. We envisioned streetcar operating along Interstate MAX line between Portland and Clark County, but that may pose real technical problems and we may find very soon that it's not a viable option, which we would outline in a memorandum. We looked at streetcar as part of the NEPA scoping process.)

- *Asked what would give us the most flexibility to carry the most people and be able to have the system change over time?*  
--(A good light rail system will carry more riders than the other options on the table.)
- *Asked if there are projections re: who would pay for operations of bridge structure as well as transit components?*  
--(The bridge structure will be partly a highway bridge, partly a transit bridge. We're working on how we would pay for it. Traditionally it has been a 50/50 split between Oregon/Washington. If you're asking about operating costs, though, we haven't done those analyses yet.)
- *Commented that we should keep options on the table as long as we can until memos come forward. We agreed to a process and this is it.*

**Action:** Vote passed to leave TR-1 through TR 6 on for further consideration.

**TR 7-14 • Transit components 7 through 14 are recommended by staff *not* to advance:**

**Discussion:**

--(TR 7, 8, 10, 13 have operational characteristics problems)

--(TR 9, 11, 12, 14 have system integration problems)

*Commented that high speed rail, heavy rail, and commuter rail are important for this region. It needs to be taken into someone's agenda.*

*Asked if staff looked at what would happen if you built a commuter rail track, too.*

--(Studies found that rail lines are already so congested with freight traffic and intercity Amtrak service. Would only work with separate rail network, which I-5 Partnership study deemed in the billions and expensive. But it wasn't just cost; it was that commuters wouldn't be well-served by a system that goes quite a bit west and then comes back around.)

*Commented that freight rail is already so congested. You can't use the existing system for commuter rail.*

*Commented that rail options shouldn't be cut out yet because they could mitigate congestion.*

*Commented that RTC did a study on commuter rail and asked Dean Lookingbill to make available to task force members.*

*Commented that much of this discussion is tangential to why TR-11 failed.*

*Commented that there should be some way to capture in the history of this document that these rail options are important, even if not fully possible.*

*Commented that Metro found that existing rail tracks don't serve areas with higher numbers of potential users. Commuter rail doesn't serve non-peak travelers.*

*Co-chair Hewitt commented that regardless of the outcome of this vote, we'll find a way to memorialize the rail options (freight, high-speed, and commuter rail) to be further considered with respect to future transportation issues in the corridor.*

**Action:** Vote passed to drop from further consideration: TR-7, 8, 9, 10.  
Several opposed to dropping TR-11 (commuter rail).

### **Discussion of TR-11...**

**Action:** Vote to advance for further consideration TR-11 (commuter rail, but *not* on BNSF freight rail alignment): 9 votes for vs. 9 votes opposed, 2 abstentions  
TR-11 stays on the table for now.

--(For the next meeting, staff will provide Task Force members with a summary of two prior studies.)

**Action:** Vote to eliminate TR-12 (heavy rail) – passed unanimously.

**Action:** Vote to eliminate TR-13 and TR-14 passed.

## **Packaging Components – Issues and Approaches**

**Action:** Discussion. No action required.

Staff led a discussion exercise seeking Task Force members' comments and suggestions about the bundling of individual components into alternative packages. This was intended to guide staff as they come back in June with recommendations for packages.

Jay Lyman presented Packaging Goals, followed by Draft Packaging Principles, and led a discussion around “themes” or general organizing principles, e.g. how do we minimize our highway investment while we accomplish our mobility goals? He said the Task Force should package complementary components together.

*Concerned that we're going to get policy themes chosen by staff without us having had a chance to weigh in.*

--(We're not coming back with a cooked meal but rather the start of a conversation at the next two meetings. It's a starting point to begin conversation, not a finalized step.)

Discussion of themes is summarized in the following notes from the flip chart:

### **Packaging Components – Issues and Approaches**

#### **Issues**

- Capital financing
- Operational financing
- Financing Approaches – between OR and WA
- Freight
- Connections

- Community impacts
- Environmental Justice
- Timing/Phasing

#### Approaches

- Avoid including components likely to be eliminated (i.e.- RC-13)
- Maximize through traffic
- Emphasize transit
- Express Aspiration and Pragmatism to:
  - Goals : 50% HOV
  - Targets :
- Use Vision and Values

## **Public Comment Two**

**David Rowe** cited Calgary, Canada, as a good example of transportation planning that utilizes light rail and buses. He said they had the same problem as the Portland-Vancouver region and now have no traffic jams. He included a handout showing Calgary's transit system and said that the solution to traffic congestion is rail transportation with more than two railcars.

**Ray Whitford** thanked co-chair Hewitt for what he said about the importance of rail. Mr. Whitford expressed disappointment that high-speed rail was taken off, but glad Hewitt appreciates its importance to our region. Mr. Whitford said it's important to have roads because we like our individuality, but it's going to be important to have rail options. We're going to have to follow Europe and find the best examples around the world. He reminded the Task Force that everyone around the country is looking at them as they decide this question.

## **Next Meeting**

NOTE: Longer, four-hour meeting next time to allow time for environmental justice training.  
Wednesday, June 14, 2006  
4pm – 8pm

# **Appendices to Task Force Meeting Summary**

**Handouts from Public Commenters**

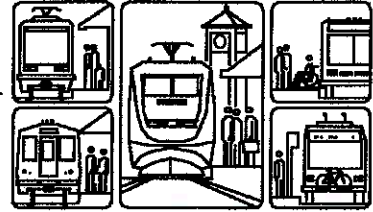


## **Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates**

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*Also known as OreARP • Oregon Association of Railway Passengers*

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### **MEMORANDUM**

May 4, 2006

To: Columbia River Crossing Task Force  
From: Jim Howell, \_\_\_ Board Member  
Subject: MAX Across the River

Buses are no substitute for light rail. The MAX Yellow Line now extends within one mile of the Washington border and it would be totally irresponsible not to extend it into Clark County, even if it were only to the 7<sup>th</sup> Street C-Tran Transit Center.

Express buses on the freeway or in bus lanes do not provide the critical connectivity to north and northeast Portland transit service.

The current transit service provided by TriMet and C-Tran is uncoordinated, unreliable and very expensive to operate.

TriMet provides 154 slow local trips a weekday on the #6 MLK Route to Hayden Island and Vancouver while providing 166, lightly used trips, to and from the Expo Center, only 1.5 miles and 5 minutes from the heart of downtown Vancouver.

In addition, C-Tran provides 112 trips on 5 bus routes on I-5 to downtown Portland, Lloyd Center and OHSU with no interface with any TriMet routes along the way.

If the Yellow line were extended to downtown Vancouver, its running time to downtown Portland would be about the same as the C-Tran express buses but would be far more reliable. Unlike freeway running the Yellow Line interfaces with eastside bus and MAX routes providing direct access to and from many more destinations. In addition, it would be much cheaper to operate.

If C-Tran wants to run express buses on the freeway in addition to this service, they should operate on the existing six-lane facility. Their desire to operate BRT should not be a ruse to add lanes to the freeway.

There should be no compromise on the public transportation mode for the Columbia River Crossing. It must be an extension of the Yellow Light Rail line.



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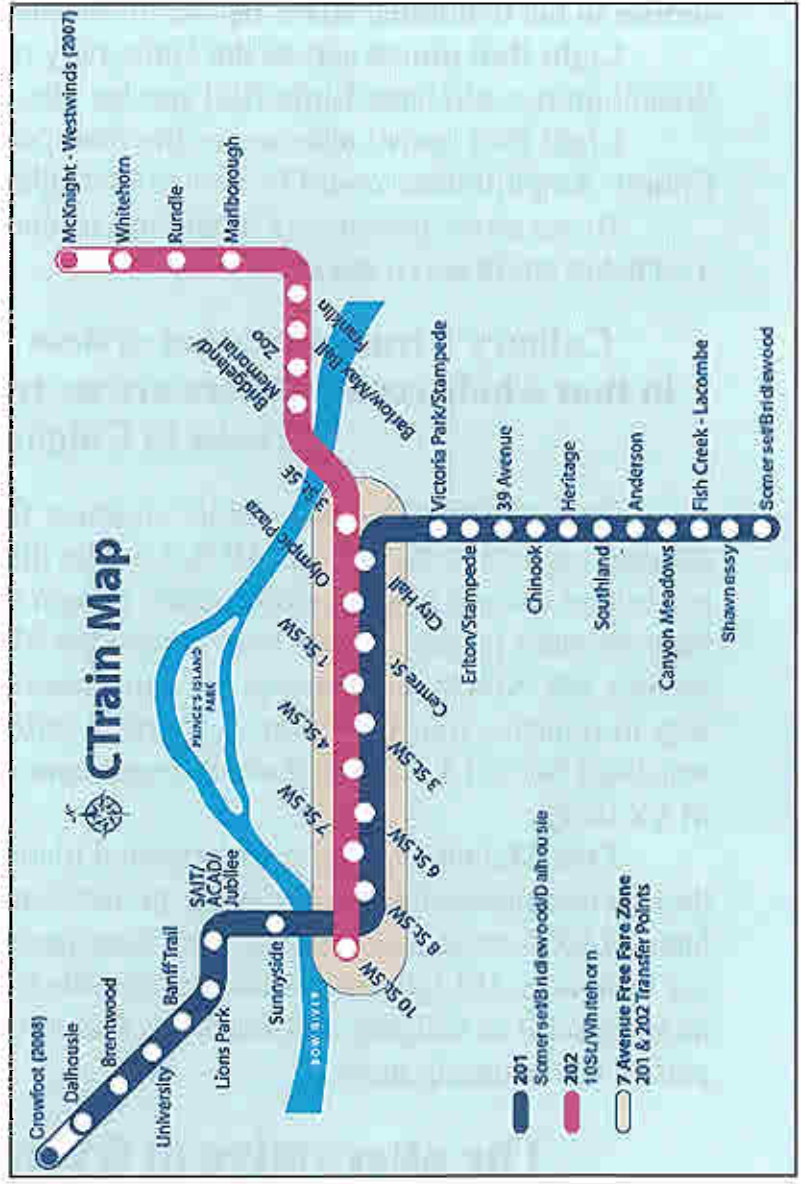
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## Calgary's Light Rail Transit Line

Calgary Transit operates a fleet of 115 Seimens-Duweg built LRVs that operate on 35.7 kilometres of track and 34 stations. Operations began in 1981 with one line starting at Anderson Road and ending at 8 ST. S.W.



My name is David L. Rowe, I live in Battle Ground.

Calgary, Alberta, Canada is an example of good transportation planning:

Calgary Light Rail transit crosses the Bow River in two places. This is similar to the Columbia River between Portland and Vancouver.

Light Rail transit serves the University of Calgary. The University of Washington could have Light Rail service also.

Light Rail transit also serves the Stampede Park in Calgary. The Clark County Amphitheater could be served by Light Rail Transit as well.

Buses move passengers in and out of the train stations in Calgary. C-TRAN could serve the same duty.

**Calgary's transportation system was designed for growth in that whole region. There are no traffic jams for cars and trucks in Calgary.**

Don McDonald was the chief engineer for building the Edmonton, Alberta Light Rail System. In 1978 Tri-Met hired Don McDonald as a consultant to help lead the preliminary design of the Banfield Freeway improvement project. It was later named the MAX Light Rail Transit system. Mr. McDonald showed the auto freeway designers there was a better way to improve transportation. A fourteen mile system of Light Rail Transit was built for \$214 million. Twenty years later close to 116,000 riders use MAX daily.

Don McDonald also recommended planning for a future subway through downtown Portland in order to use four-car consists. Twenty years later MAX is at capacity during rush hour because MAX is limited to two car train-sets. If Light Rail is built across the Columbia River it will be just as successful as Calgary and Portland. Plans for four-car consists should be part of the planning now.

**The alternative to freeway traffic jams is  
Rail Transportation**

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