

Columbia Crossing Mobility Council
- Concept -

Project Sponsors Council – March 6, 2009

Background/Preamble:

The Columbia River Crossing Project is a long term, comprehensive, multi-modal transportation project that will bring significant economic and environmental benefits and improve the quality of life in the bi-state region. The I-5 corridor is nationally significant and the most important trade and commerce corridor on the entire West Coast. This project addresses one of the most significant chokepoints in this corridor.

The accomplishments achieved to date have been primarily due to the cooperation of all the project partners at the state, local and regional levels. That cooperation was founded in a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) in July 2008 that was unanimously supported by all partner agencies. The LPA achieved consensus on the following higher level outcomes:

- The project will build a replacement bridge.
- The project will incorporate light rail transit as the high capacity transit mode.
- The light rail transit extension will terminate at Clark College in Vancouver.
- The project will provide a range of options and significant improvements for those wishing to use alternate modes of travel within the corridor (light rail transit, bus, shared ride, bicycle and pedestrian).

Several other areas of agreement are apparent as we move forward through the final phase of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and into design:

- The replacement bridge will be constructed with adequate width to accommodate six lanes in each direction to provide for safe operations between interchanges and efficient movement of people and goods.
- This project is consistent with the regional plans that call for three through lanes in each direction on I-5 within the metropolitan area.
- The finance plan will consist, in part, of tolling options to not only repay debt and ongoing operations and maintenance, but also to help as a tool to manage the travel performance of the Columbia River crossings.
- The Project Sponsors Council will begin evaluation of issues related to tolling at its June 2009 meeting and commence a process for public dialogue and discussion about tolling.
- The project will increase the safety in the corridor by improving the interchanges within the project area.
- The project will create predictable and reliable trip durations for freight and other high-priority trips moving through and within the corridor.
- The project will help to maintain regional trips on the facility, rather than spilling over to local collectors and arterials due to congestion.
- At its June 2009 meeting, the Project Sponsors Council will endorse membership of a technical group to draft performance measures.
- By January 2010, the afore-mentioned group will present recommendations to the Project Sponsors Council.

Columbia Crossing Mobility Council

The Project Sponsors Council supports creation of a local advisory Mobility Council to advise the state departments of transportation (DOTs) and transit districts on the optimal long-term performance of the Columbia River crossings. It is through such a partnership that the federal, state, regional and local needs will be achieved. The Project Sponsors Council supports practical and measurable performance standards to maintain long term system management.

This complex project has significant areas of agreement among the local agencies and stakeholders. The areas of agreement as noted above will serve as the starting point of a Council to advise the DOTs and transit agencies on ways to not only achieve the goals of the local communities, but also preserve the integrity and function of this yet to be constructed national asset.

Purpose:

The purpose of this Mobility Council is to provide recommendations to the DOTs and transit agencies on ways to actively manage mobility for all modes of transportation on the Columbia River crossings and their adjoining city streets and highways. This Mobility Council will help maximize the long-term benefits of the new multi-modal crossing for all users and affected stakeholders in an equitable manner by recommending the implementation of the agreed upon goals.

Partners:

Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT), City of Portland, Oregon, City of Vancouver, Washington, Tri-Met, C-TRAN, Metro, RTC, Port of Portland, Port of Vancouver

Council Structure:

Along with a Chair appointed jointly by the governors of the states of Oregon and Washington, each Partner appoints a non-elected citizen representative to serve a three-year term on the Columbia Crossing Mobility Council.

Process:

The DOTs will provide staff to the Mobility Council which will hold its first meeting at such time as the CRC Project Sponsors Council deems it necessary.

Each year the Mobility Council will recommend a Columbia Crossing Mobility Operations Plan for consideration by ODOT and WSDOT, and TriMet and C-TRAN, and others, as applicable.

The Mobility Council will consult with other local, state and federal agencies relevant to issues being considered.

The Mobility Council's annual recommendations may include, but are not limited to, tools such as:

- Toll rate structures, provided they are consistent with toll bond covenants and do not negatively impact the ability to pay bonds or meet other project related financial needs with toll revenues (including operations and maintenance)
- Travel and auxiliary lane uses and access

- Applicable transit policies
- Transportation demand management (TDM) strategies

The Plan will be forwarded from the Mobility Council to the DOTs and Transit Agencies. At that point, ODOT and WSDOT, and C-TRAN and TriMet, and others, as applicable, will either accept the Plan as is, or reject it with comments.

- a. The Oregon and Washington DOT commissions or CEOs, or transit agency boards or directors as applicable will consider the Plan before taking action.
- b. When accepted, the Plan will be implemented by the DOTs, Transit Agencies and others as applicable.
- c. If applicable sections of the Plan are rejected by either DOT or Transit Agency, the Plan will be sent back to the Mobility Council with comments and a request to amend the Plan. The Mobility Council will resubmit a revised Plan for approval by ODOT and WSDOT, or C-TRAN and TriMet, or others, as applicable.
- d. If agreement on a revised Plan cannot be reached within 90 days, the ODOT and WSDOT Transportation Commission Chairs, or their CEOs, or the Chairs of C-TRAN and TriMet, or their delegates, will convene with the Chair of the Mobility Council to resolve any differences and complete the annual Columbia Crossing Mobility Operations Plan.
- e. If agreement cannot be reached as outlined in (d) above, the DOTs and transit agencies and others, as applicable, may act without recommendation in accordance with their best judgment on how to achieve the agreed upon performance goals.
- f. When toll rate decisions need to be adjusted at a faster rate than this process identifies in order to satisfy bond needs (including operations and maintenance), the DOTs are entitled to act on those decisions while giving the greatest possible consideration to the performance goals of the project.
- g. The Columbia Crossing Mobility Council may recommend extending this process to pertinent operations of other Partners.