

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION of the Clark County Board of Commissioners recognizing this region's volunteers, civic leaders and professionals who, over the past two decades, worked tirelessly to create a plan to address congestion in the Interstate 5 corridor through Vancouver and Portland, and expressing the Clark County Board of Commissioners heartfelt appreciation for the countless hours and great effort these groups and individuals expended on behalf of our region's citizens, present and future.

1. WHEREAS, citizens of this region have long recognized the need for improvements in the Interstate 5 corridor through Vancouver and Portland, particularly in the area of the Interstate Bridge; and

2. WHEREAS, in 1996 leaders from the business and transportation sectors of Washington and Oregon (1) met to determine whether the I-5 corridor was negatively impacting the regional economy and

3. WHEREAS, in 1999 area transportation decision-makers established a Policy Committee (2) and appointed a Leadership Committee (3) to identify the magnitude of I-5 congestion, the cost of inaction, improvements needed, funding sources and next steps; and

4. WHEREAS, in January 2000 the Washington and Oregon departments of Transportation (4) published the Portland/Vancouver I-5 Trade Corridor Freight Feasibility and Needs Assessment¹ study, which determined that the corridor was a chokepoint that, without improvements, threatened the region's economic promise and required new freight and passenger capacity across the river; that it would be dependent in part on federal financial assistance and quite likely tolling; and that the region needed a strategic plan to improve the corridor; and

¹ http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/NonCRCRelatedDocuments/I-5_Partnership_Freight_Feasibility_Phase1_Final_Report1.pdf

5. WHEREAS, in 2001, Washington Gov. Gary Locke and Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber formed the I-5 Portland/Vancouver Transportation and Trade Partnership Task Force (5) to study the problems and potential solutions for the I-5 corridor from the I-205/I-5 junction in Washington to the I-84 interchange in Oregon; and

6. WHEREAS, in 2002 the Transportation and Trade Partnership Task Force published its Final Strategic Plan² establishing that improvements were “necessary to meet the transportation, economic, and livability needs of the Portland/Vancouver Region,”³ and suggesting, among other projects, that light rail should be established in Clark County,⁴ that I-5 needed widening,⁵ that new transit and vehicle capacity should be built across the Columbia River and that the region should undertake an Environmental Impact Study (EIS);⁶ and

7. WHEREAS, in 2005 the governors of Washington and Oregon appointed 39 local residents to the CRC Task Force (6), which met 23 times between February 2005 and June 2008 and advised the Washington State and Oregon departments of Transportation on project-related issues. According to the Final EIS, “[t]he Task Force adopted a Vision and Values Statement and a Problem Definition, which led to the approval of a project Purpose and Need Statement[,] ... identified over 70 potential solutions and engaged in a multipart screening and evaluation process that was used to narrow options and package them into components for further study[,] ... assisted with the evaluation of 12 preliminary alternatives and guided the development of the

² http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/NonCRCRelatedDocuments/I-5_Partnership_2002_Strategic_Plan.pdf

³ http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/NonCRCRelatedDocuments/I-5_Partnership_2002_Strategic_Plan.pdf, p. 16

⁴ http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/NonCRCRelatedDocuments/I-5_Partnership_2002_Strategic_Plan.pdf, p. 19

⁵ http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/NonCRCRelatedDocuments/I-5_Partnership_2002_Strategic_Plan.pdf, p. 20

⁶ http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/NonCRCRelatedDocuments/I-5_Partnership_2002_Strategic_Plan.pdf, p. 29

five alternatives presented in the Draft EIS. The final action of the Task Force was to make a recommendation on the locally preferred alternative”;⁷ and

8. WHEREAS, in 2006, after two public open houses, two design workshops with neighborhood leaders and a combined open house-U.S. Coast Guard hearing on bridge options,⁸ four transportation plans and a fifth no-build option were selected for a final proposal; and

9. WHEREAS, on May 2, 2008, the Draft EIS was published by project co-leads (7) the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC), Metro, Clark County Public Transportation Benefit Area (C-TRAN) and Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District (TriMet), pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), and the guidelines of the U.S. Department of Transportation, FHWA and FTA;⁹ and

10. WHEREAS, the broad range of alternatives evaluated in the Draft EIS took into consideration the nearly 4,500 received comments and community participation at 11 open houses and 350 public events, and responses to information sent to nearly 3,000 email addresses and more than 10,000 mailing addresses;¹⁰ and

11. WHEREAS, the Draft EIS was informed by discussions with the CRC Task Force and study by CRC project staff, which led to a set of 23 river crossing ideas being reduced to four and a set of 14 initial public transportation ideas being reduced to five using evaluation

⁷ http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/FINAL_EIS_PDFs/Appendices/CRC_FEIS_Appendix_B.pdf, p. B-10.

⁸ http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/FINAL_EIS_PDFs/Appendices/CRC_FEIS_Appendix_B.pdf, p. B-7.

⁹ <http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/DraftEIS/DraftEISPrefaceAndAcronyms.pdf>, p. xi.

¹⁰ <http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/DraftEIS/DraftEISPrefaceAndAcronyms.pdf>, p. xi.

criteria developed with local agency sponsors (WSDOT, ODOT, RTC, Metro, TriMet, C-TRAN, the City of Vancouver and the City of Portland (8)¹¹), the CRC Task Force, and state and federal permitting agencies (together constituting the Interstate Collaborative Environmental Process Group (InterCEP)) (9), “and extensive public input”;¹² and

12. WHEREAS, in July 2008, after the Draft EIS was published, local project sponsors—WSDOT, ODOT, RTC, Metro, C-TRAN and TriMet—adopted the Locally Preferred Alternative, which included a new river crossing, an extension of light rail to Clark College, bicycle and pedestrian improvements throughout the corridor, a toll on motorists, and transportation demand and system management measures;¹³ and

13. WHEREAS, the governors of Washington and Oregon formed the Project Sponsors Council (10) to consider technical information and input from advisory groups and citizen comments, and advise the departments of Transportation on future project development, and in 2010 the PSC collaborated to refine various components of the Locally Preferred Alternative;¹⁴ ¹⁵ and

14. WHEREAS, in 2010 the City of Vancouver and C-TRAN selected a light rail route through downtown Vancouver;¹⁶ and

15. WHEREAS, in April 2010 the governors of Washington and Oregon convened an Independent Review Panel (11) of eight transportation experts to ensure that the CRC Project’s key study assumptions and methods were reasonable;¹⁷ and

¹¹ <http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/DraftEIS/DraftEISPrefaceAndAcronyms.pdf>, p. xi.

¹² <http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/DraftEIS/DraftEISPrefaceAndAcronyms.pdf>, xi.

¹³ http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/FINAL_EIS_PDFs/CRC_FEIS_Cover_Introduction.pdf, p. iii.

¹⁴ <http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/AdvisoryGroups/PSC.aspx>

¹⁵ http://columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/GeneralProjectDocs/PSC%20Final%20Report_091310/PSC%20Final%20Report_091310.pdf

¹⁶ <http://columbiarivercrossing.org/ProjectInformation/ProblemsSolutions/ProjectTimeline.aspx>

¹⁷ http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/IRP/GovernorsPressRelease%20_041310.pdf, p. 1.

16. WHEREAS, in September 2010 the two state departments of Transportation accepted the Independent Review Panel's findings and recommendations, including that the CRC must move forward to build a new bridge as soon as possible;¹⁸ and

17. WHEREAS, in October 2010 the two state departments of Transportation convened a Bridge Expert Review Panel (12) of 16 national and international experts to evaluate bridge types and configurations for the replacement I-5 bridge;¹⁹ and

18. WHEREAS, in January 2011 the National Marine Fisheries Service issued an opinion stating that the proposed CRC project would not likely jeopardize the existence or habitat of various species of fish;²⁰ and

19. WHEREAS, in March 2011 the governors of Washington and Oregon accepted the Bridge Review Panel's recommendation for a deck truss bridge;²¹ and

20. WHEREAS, July 20, 2011, the office of the Oregon State Treasury presented a report, at the request of Oregon Gov. Kitzhaber, on the CRC's financing plan, the recommendations of which CRC then incorporated into the Final EIS;²² and

21. WHEREAS, in September 2011 the Final EIS was published; and

22. WHEREAS, between October 2005 and September 2011, when the Final EIS was published, project staff had more than 27,000 public outreach contacts at 900 events;²³ and

23. WHEREAS, in September 2011 the Oregon state legislature created a Joint Legislative Oversight Committee (13) on CRC that was charged with reviewing and providing oversight on all aspects of the CRC project, including the project's finance plan;²⁴ and

¹⁸ http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/IRP/DOT_PressRelease_092810.pdf

¹⁹ http://columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/GeneralProjectDocs/BridgeExpertReviewPanel_PanelistBios.pdf

²⁰ http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/Biological_Assessment_Opinion/NMFS_Biological_Opinion_011911.pdf

²¹ <http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/Newsroom/Default.aspx?Tag=3>

²² <http://columbiarivercrossing.org/ProjectInformation/ResearchAndResults/FinancialPlanReview.aspx>

²³ http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/FINAL_EIS_PDFs/CRC_FEIS_Cover_Introduction.pdf, p. xxvi.

24. WHEREAS, in December 2011 the federal Record of Decision was released, stating that the FHWA and FTA found that the requirements of NEPA had been satisfied for the construction and operation of the Selected Alternative of the I-5 CRC Project;²⁵ and

25. WHEREAS, in March 2012 the U.S. Coast Guard announced that the new bridge, at 95 feet above the Columbia River, would not provide enough clearance to meet the “reasonable needs” of ships, and CRC staff agreed to analyze other options for bridge height; and

26. WHEREAS, in March 2012 Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire signed legislation calling for the formation of a Washington legislative oversight committee on CRC (14) that would provide oversight on project plans and financing, and give feedback to WSDOT; and

27. WHEREAS, in November 2012, Clark County voters rejected a sales tax increase that would have covered the local cost to operate light rail; and

28. WHEREAS, on November 9, 2012, a group of 10 Southwest Washington lawmakers (15) called for a complete redesign of the project, citing the recently rejected sales tax increase for light rail, funding problems and lack of public participation in the design;²⁶ and

29. WHEREAS, in November 2012²⁷ the CRC Project released an analysis of a 115- or 116-foot-high bridge that would reduce the number of vessels adversely affected by the bridge height and minimizing additional expenses;²⁸ and

30. WHEREAS, in December 2012 the Washington and Oregon state transportation commissions (16) unanimously approved a bi-state tolling agreement;²⁹ and

²⁴ <http://columbiarivercrossing.org/ProjectInformation/ResearchAndResults/ORLOC.aspx>

²⁵ http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/ROD/CRC_ROD.pdf

²⁶ <http://www.columbian.com/news/2012/nov/08/southwest-washington-lawmakers-ask-scrap-crc-plans/>

²⁷ http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/TechnicalReports/CRC_NavigationImpactReport_110212

²⁸ http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/PressReleases/NewsRelease_121012.pdf

²⁹ <http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/Newsroom/Article.aspx?ID=79>

31. WHEREAS, in March 2013 the Oregon legislature approved \$450 million for the CRC Project, contingent on Washington producing its share of the funding;³⁰ and

32. WHEREAS, the residents of the City of Vancouver as well as those of both Washington and Oregon owe a deep debt of gratitude to the hundreds of citizens who unselfishly gave time away from their work and families, often in evenings and weekends, to serve on advisory committees and in other important capacities to ensure this crossing would meet the demands of a new 100-year bridge; and

33. WHEREAS, we should be especially thankful for the congressional delegation from the states of Washington and Oregon who have strongly supported the CRC project and its federal funding: Washington State U.S. Senators: Patty Murray, Maria Cantwell and Oregon State U.S. Senators: Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley; Washington State Congressional Members: Suzan DelBene, Rick Larsen, Derek Kilmer, Jim McDermott, Adam Smith, Denny Heck and Brian Baird; and Oregon State Congressional Members: Suzanne Bonamici, Earl Blumenaur, Peter DeFazio, and Kurt Schrader.

34. WHEREAS, as of June 2014 nearly \$200 million has been spent on planning the \$2.9 billion bridge³¹ and related transportation solutions that might never be realized.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE Clark County Board of Commissioners:

Section 1. In this time of project dormancy, the Clark County Board of Commissioners takes this opportunity to review the history of the CRC project.

³⁰ <https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2013R1/Measures/Overview/HB2800>

³¹ http://www.oregonlive.com/clark-county/index.ssf/2014/06/columbia_river_crossing_new_i-.html

Section 2. The Clark County Board of Commissioners requests that all participating agencies conscientiously preserve the work that has been completed on the project, so that our region's and its people's investment of time, money and energy do not go for naught.

Section 3. The Clark County Board of Commissioners requests that all agencies be prepared to draw on previous work and engage when and where appropriate in future discussions that could lead to a bridge project in the Vancouver/Portland I-5 corridor.

Section 4. The Clark County Board of Commissioners acknowledges and expresses its deep appreciation to the many people who contributed their time and effort to the CRC project, and we take this opportunity to offer our sincere thanks to all of the groups and individuals who made this work possible. Although we have not identified every participant, we are listing many of the people who participated in the major actions of this project in an addendum to this resolution.
