

The Coalition for a Livable Future, an Oregon non-profit working towards sustainability, has identified 13 recommendations for the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) to be a “climate smart” project. The CRC team is in agreement that the project should be smart for the environment, the region and the traveling public, and is working to make it so.

The CRC team has reviewed each recommendation (in bold below) and provided a description of how the project is meeting the recommendation. CRC would like to note that several of the recommendations are beyond the scope or authority of the Columbia River Crossing project and require regional, state, or federal policies, authority or coordination to achieve.

CRC continues to work with agencies at each of these levels to create a project that is climate smart and provides solutions to the problems on I-5.

Implement congested-based tolling of the current I-5 bridges or both the I-5 bridges and I-205 bridge starting immediately, as a strategy for managing demand as well as a funding mechanism. Use proceeds to fund transit improvements, while adopting pricing mitigation measures for low-income users, such as rebates or income-based exemptions.

- Variable tolling is recommended by CRC as a key component to reduce vehicle traffic in the project area during peak times. The project assumes electronic tolling on the I-5 Bridge and that toll amounts will vary based on time of travel. This will help manage demand and provide funding.
- An analysis of estimated carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in 2030 at the river crossing demonstrates that carbon emissions will be lower with tolling than without tolling.
- Tolling must be authorized in Washington by the legislature and in Oregon by the Transportation Commission
- The I-205 bridge is not included in federal pilot programs for tolling, and as such, is currently prohibited from implementing tolls.
- However, traffic modeling shows that tolling I-5 but not I-205 does not cause a great amount of traffic diversion to I-205. Because I-205 is almost at capacity now, models show that in the future people will either: not make trips, travel during non-peak hours, shift to transit, or be willing to pay the toll to cross I-5 bridge in a safe and efficient manner.

Build light rail in the crossing by first focusing on extending MAX to Hayden Island and then to Vancouver and dramatically increase the convenience of public transit on both sides of the river for all users, especially those most dependent on it, by making it quicker, more frequent, and more comfortable.

- The CRC project is a multi-modal project, and high-capacity transit is an integral and necessary part of improving travel in the corridor. In fact, high capacity transit is in the CRC Purpose and Need, the guiding document for the project.
- A decision on the high capacity transit mode has not been made yet, however findings indicate that light rail performs better than bus rapid transit.

- The project will connect the existing MAX line to Vancouver with a viable high capacity transit option.
- The anticipated \$750 million in new federal New Starts funding requires accessing larger transit markets (potential riders). A competitive application must extend into Vancouver, since a Hayden Island terminus would not provide sufficient ridership.
- Traffic modeling shows that tolling will encourage more transit ridership. In 2030, there will be as many as 6.5 million passenger trips over the I-5 crossing annually.

Maintain or reduce the existing number of lanes. According to research by *Sightline Institute* for every extra one-mile stretch of lane added to a congested highway will increase climate warming CO2 emissions more than 100,000 tons over 50 years.

- The applicability of the Sightline study to CRC is limited because it considered what happens when a new highway lane is added in an urban area, as opposed to a reconstruction project like CRC. Adding transit, tolls and improving bike and pedestrian facilities were not considered in the Sightline study.
- All build options being evaluated in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) maintain the existing number of through lanes in both directions on I-5.
- Currently, interchange spacing in the project area is less than the one-mile minimum standard for urban interchange spacing and collision rates are twice as high in the project area as similar urban highways in Oregon. Adding auxiliary lanes between closely spaced interchanges will improve traffic flow and reduce collisions.
- Either two or three additional auxiliary lanes will be built across the river to more safely connect closely spaced interchanges and reduce the high collision rates. Additional auxiliary lanes will decrease collision rates by improving the flow of traffic from interchange to interchange. Mobility for freight and other vehicles will increase through the five-mile project area.
- Initial studies for the replacement bridge option with tolling and light rail indicate a reduction in CO2 emissions for year 2030 compared to No-Build conditions.
- Regionally, CO2 levels could be reduced by more fuel-efficient cars, low-carbon fuel alternatives and reducing vehicle miles traveled.

Reallocate a lane for shared transit/freight/carpool use and invest in fixing the current rail bridge to address existing river navigation issues and increase shipping by train.

- High occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes work when they are part of a network. They could potentially be a useful tool for CRC if employed as part of a regional plan.
- Should the region adopt and develop a HOV system, lanes within the bridge influence area could potentially be restriped as part of the network. The five-mile CRC project by itself is too short in length to provide the true benefits of a HOV lane.
- CRC has looked at HOV lanes and freight lanes as part of its technical analysis. Because HOV and freight lanes are typically located on the inside freeway lane next to the barrier, and because about 70 percent of the vehicles enter and/or exit I-5 within the five mile study area, access to and from a HOV lane could create severe operational problems.

- The proposed replacement bridge option improves river navigation and does not require changes to the opening of the current rail bridge. The maritime community is in support of a replacement bridge because they believe it will improve shipping and receiving goods by barge.
- WSDOT and ODOT are committed to work with the railroad bridge owner to address navigational issues.

Rezone land appropriately to ensure “inclusionary” compact development around light rail station areas, future frequent service transit corridors, and other appropriate areas to limit sprawl development. Inclusionary rezoning would require that 30% of the housing be affordable to residents at or below 80% of area median family income.

- The CRC project has extensively studied the land use benefits and transit-orientated development associated with each alternative, and has worked closely with Metro and the local governments to identify alternatives that support their land use and community-based plans.
- Providing high capacity transit service to Vancouver should encourage urban densification and transit oriented development around stations.
- Ultimately land use and zoning decisions are the purview of Metro and local governments and are beyond the scope of the CRC project.

Reduce the number of expensive interchange reconstructions being proposed and phase them based on ability to fund them and priority.

- One of the primary goals of the project is to increase safety. The seven interchanges in the project area do not meet federal standards and need to be improved to provide safer travel for vehicles, freight, transit and bicyclists/pedestrians.
- Improving safety results in decreased carbon emissions, because it provides for a reduced number of collisions that cause back-ups with stop-and-go traffic idling.
- Construction phasing will be determined as the financing plan is further refined.
- The primary benefit of interchange reconstruction is to improve system connectivity (especially local connections east to west), not to open land for redevelopment. On Hayden Island, the final footprint of the interchange will be smaller than today's interchange.

Use communications-based information and electronics technologies to make the system more efficient and safe.

- CRC will use active traffic management and travel demand management technologies to improve system flow and reduce travel demand. Examples include ramp meters, improved incident response and better traveler information, as well as tolling.
- The project will use electronic tolling technologies, which will provide for a safer and more efficient system.

Create world-class bike and pedestrian facilities in the crossing, including dramatic improvements to facilities linking riders and walkers to and from the crossing with the existing network of bike/ped routes both within and beyond the 5-mile project's study area. Specifically this means a two-sided facility that is at least 15-feet wide on each side, and has bikes and pedestrians traveling in the same direction as traffic, or a 24-foot wide facility if it is only one-sided.

- CRC is committed to dramatic improvements to the existing pedestrian and bicycle path at the river crossing.
- Bicyclists and pedestrians will be separated from vehicle traffic.
- Signage, lighting and safety will increase for bicyclists and pedestrians, making the system more attractive for potential users.
- Pedestrian and bicycle usage projections and design details will be worked out in the next phase of the project, and included in the Final EIS. The project is working with the CRC Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Group and project sponsors to improve connections to existing bicycle and pedestrian paths.

Dramatically increase funding for programs and infrastructure that help businesses support their employees to reduce demand on the transportation system -- through carpools, vanpools, public transit, flex time, telecommuting, etc.

- The CRC project is considering more than two dozen transportation demand management/transportation system management strategies that will be included in the project. The team will continue to support regional efforts aimed at reducing travel demand and improving system efficiency. Introducing variable tolling and adding high capacity transit will be key components to reducing highway demand.
- WSDOT has a very successful, and state-mandated, commute trip reduction program. CRC will have access to state contacts and best practices for working with employers.
- Many region-wide programs and strategies will be outside the control of the state transportation departments. ODOT and WSDOT will continue supporting these activities aimed at reducing travel demand.

Use the CRC investments to stimulate the local economy by contracting with local businesses and workforce to design, construct, and operate the new facilities, including linking job training and microcredit lending opportunities wherever possible, and prioritizing recruitment from communities that have been most negatively impacted by the freeway. Ensure businesses area standard wages with benefits.

- Both Washington and Oregon and transportation agencies within each state have programs for transportation projects that encourage investments in the local economy and with Disadvantaged and Minority Business Enterprises. The CRC project will work with both states as part of construction planning.

Use most sustainable, least-carbon impact materials and practices for any construction and ongoing maintenance.

- The governor of Oregon is committed to making this the greenest, multi-modal transportation project of this scale that the nation has ever seen.
- CRC will incorporate sustainability principles into all aspects of the project from planning to design to construction to maintenance.
- Construction specifics will be developed as part of the Construction Plan.

- The project will continue to look for additional opportunities to incorporate sustainability best practices as we move forward.
- Both departments of transportation are actively incorporating sustainability into planning.
 - More information about ODOT's Sustainability Program can be found online: http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/SUS/about_us.shtml
 - The WSDOT Sustainability Plan can be found here: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/0B4201A0-9D14-412F-8EA6-85E69A3A928C/0/SPPR10152007.pdf>

Sequester carbon by planting trees and shrubs in the freeway impact zone (within ½ mile on either side of the freeway), and by investing in preservation and expansion of our urban forest region-wide.

- Reconstruction of the Interstate will enable the project to plant thousands of trees, shrubs, and groundcover, in or near the project area, in Washington and Oregon. In addition, street trees will most likely be included along transit alignments.
- CRC's Urban Design Advisory and Community and Environmental Justice groups will develop guidelines and provide input to the project about design and landscaping throughout the corridor.

Establish a fund of at least 1% of the total project cost for community enhancements (natural resource protection and restoration, health facilities, ventilation systems in most impacted homes, air pollution monitoring, landbanking for affordable housing where needed, etc...) in communities adjacent to the freeway, especially those within a half mile on either side of it to mitigate for the disproportionate negative health impacts caused by the freeway.

- Community enhancements are imbedded in the project, including bicycle/pedestrian facilities, community connections, noise mitigation features, landscape features and buffers, and pocket parks.
- Project sponsors, jurisdictions, permitting requirements, and public opinion will factor into what community enhancements are made and in what manner.