

Draft Environmental Impact Statement Guide

Fact Sheet  June 2008

The Columbia River Crossing (CRC) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was released May 2, 2008, for a 60-day public comment period. The report describes the:

- Existing conditions of the project area
- Purpose and need of the project
- Five alternatives analyzed
- Expected positive and negative effects of each alternative to community, natural and cultural resources
- Options to avoid, minimize or mitigate negative effects
- Preliminary analysis of costs, financing and cost effectiveness
- Coordination between agencies

Why was the Draft EIS Developed?

A Draft EIS is required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the federal law regulating the decision-making process for federally funded projects. The purpose of NEPA is to help ensure that public projects address the needs of the community while avoiding, minimizing or mitigating negative effects on community, natural and cultural resources. NEPA requires agencies that receive federal funding to consider the public's input when a project may affect the community or its natural or cultural resources.

The CRC Draft EIS does not recommend a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). The document presents data for the public, project sponsors and stakeholders to consider in recommending an LPA.

The LPA is the alternative selected by local decision-makers as the preferred solution to the project's identified needs. These local decision-makers are:

- Oregon Department of Transportation
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council
- Metro
- C-TRAN
- TriMet
- City of Vancouver
- City of Portland 



What Happens Next?

The CRC Task Force will consider Draft EIS findings and public input before making a recommendation on an LPA in June 2008. Then, local sponsoring agencies will endorse an LPA by August 2008. The LPA would then be adopted into Metro's Regional Transportation Plan and RTCs Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The CRC LPA will designate a river crossing, transit mode and transit terminus for the project.

Other aspects of the project will be determined after the LPA is selected:

- Financing and tolling plan
- Optimized lane configuration for safety lanes across the river
- Pedestrian and bicycle path elements
- Refined highway, bridge and transit design
- Mitigation plan
- Construction management plan

CRC will continue to seek public input throughout the project development process. The Record of Decision will confirm these decisions in late 2009, after the release of the Final EIS. 



Examples of Draft EIS Comments

Example #1

Tell who you are/why you are interested

I am a supporter of the Historic Trandalour Theater. In the Draft EIS, I notice interchange design options for Meyer Road.

Given the likely impacts to the theater, I like the interchange design which could leave land to replace land lost to the expansion of the highway.

Identify project details that you like and/or dislike

Example #2

Suggest ways to address your concern

I am a resident of the Blaney Park neighborhood. I support transit that connects to other systems easily.


I am interested in station comfort. I would like to see design amenities included which protect riders from the elements, like covered waiting areas.

I think pedestrian and bicycle amenities at stations are very important. In particular, enough bicycle parking in good visible locations should be provided.

Provide opinions or preferences on specific impacts and, where possible, use examples or data

Why Comment?

The CRC Draft EIS is a summary of the potential community and environmental effects the five project alternatives are likely to have on the surrounding area. Public review and comments on the report are important to:

- Ensure that community, natural and cultural resources and effects are fully identified and evaluated.
- Help select a preferred alternative and ensure that all reasonable alternatives are properly considered.
- Shape an LPA and identify measures that could be taken to minimize negative effects. 

The Columbia River Crossing Draft EIS includes Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation

In addition to NEPA, federal laws also require federally-funded transportation projects to avoid effecting land that is used as a public park or wildlife refuge or has historic value. Use of the land is allowed if no other realistic option exists or if the effects of using the land are minimal.

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act (as described in federal regulations Title 23 CFR 774) states that the use of significant historic resources, public parks and recreation facilities, and wildlife refuges can only occur if there is no prudent alternative that would avoid the impacts, or the impacts are *de minimis*. *De minimis* impacts are those that “will not adversely affect the features, attributes or activities qualifying the property for protection under Section 4(f).”

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have proposed that the potential impacts from CRC alternatives to four public parks would qualify as *de minimis* impacts:

- Waterfront Park
- Waterfront Trail
- Leverich Park
- Kiggins Bowl and Trail

Chapter 5 of the project’s Draft EIS contains more details about each of these sites. 



Draft EIS Comment Period

Public comment period: May 2 to July 1, 2008

The project is seeking public input and review of the Draft EIS and proposed *de minimis* findings, as well as other findings in the Section 4(f) evaluation. All comments received between May 2 and July 1, 2008, are identified as Draft EIS comments and will be formally responded to in the Final EIS, expected in 2009.

Where should I send comments?

Comments must be postmarked by July 1, 2008.


Submit comments by:

- E-mail: DraftEISfeedback@columbiarivercrossing.org
- Mail:
 - Columbia River Crossing
 - c/o Heather Gundersen
 - 700 Washington Street, Suite 300
 - Vancouver, WA 98660
- Fax: 360-737-0294
- Online comment form: www.ColumbiaRiverCrossing.org
- Making a statement to a court reporter at the open houses and public hearings.
- Handing completed comment form to staff at the open houses and public hearings, informal question and answer sessions or other presentations.

If you have a disability or need translation services, please contact Carley Francis at 360-816-8869 for assistance commenting.

How will I know that my comment was received?

When you comment by e-mail, mail or fax, you will receive an e-mail, postcard or fax to acknowledge your comment within 2 weeks. Comments delivered directly to CRC staff or the court reporter at a public hearing or presentation will not receive an e-mail, postcard or fax acknowledging receipt.

Your comment will be considered and responded to in the Final EIS. Comments may be grouped with like comments and may be condensed for clarity. 

Learn More and Comment in Person

During the public comment period two public hearings and open houses and four informal question and answer sessions will be held to help the public learn about and comment on the project.

Public hearings and open houses

Wednesday, May 28, 2008

Open House: 5–8 p.m.

Public Hearing: 6–8 p.m.

Red Lion Hotel Vancouver Washington at the Quay,
Grand Ballroom
100 Columbia Street, Vancouver, WA 98660

Thursday, May 29, 2008

Open House: 5–8 p.m.

Public Hearing: 6–8 p.m.

Portland Metropolitan Exposition Center, Hall D
2060 North Marine Drive, Portland, OR 97217

Note: Expo Center parking is free

Informal question and answer sessions

Thursday, May 15, 2008

6–8:30 p.m.

Jantzen Beach SuperCenter

1405 N Jantzen Beach Center, Portland, OR 97217

Saturday, June 7, 2008

9 a.m.–12 p.m.

Firstenburg Community Center

700 NE 136th Avenue, Vancouver, WA 98684

Saturday, June 14, 2008

12:30–3:30 p.m.

Beaverton Main Library

12375 SW 5th Street, Beaverton, OR 97005

Thursday, June 19, 2008

6–8:30 p.m.

Clark Public Utilities

1200 Fort Vancouver Way, Vancouver, WA 98663 

Reviewing the Draft EIS

The document is available online at the project web site:
www.ColumbiaRiverCrossing.org.

The Executive Summary and a CD of the full Draft EIS are available for free. Executive Summaries and CDs are available at CRC, WSDOT SW Region and ODOT Region 1 offices.

A printed copy of the Draft EIS can be purchased and picked up at the CRC project office for \$50; for a mailed copy include \$7 for shipping. Checks or money orders should be made out to WSDOT.

The document can also be viewed at the following locations:

Oregon Locations

Portland

Albina Library: 3605 NE 15th Avenue
Matt Dishman Community Center: 77 NE Knott Street
Multnomah County Central Library: 801 SW 10th Avenue
North Portland Library: 512 N Killingsworth Street
North Portland Neighborhood Services: 2209 N Schofield Street
ODOT Region 1: 123 NW Flanders Street
Peninsula Park Community Center: 700 N Rosa Parks Way
Portland Community College, Cascade Campus, Library:
705 N Killingsworth Street
Portland State University, Branford P. Millar Library:
1875 SW Park Avenue
St. Johns Community Center: 8427 N Central Street
St. Johns Library: 7510 N Charleston Avenue

University Park Community Center: 9009 N Foss Avenue
University of Portland Library, Wilson W. Clark Memorial
Library: 5000 N Willamette Boulevard

Salem

ODOT Headquarters, Room 135: 355 Capitol Street NE

Washington Locations

Vancouver

Clark College, Cannell Library: 1933 Fort Vancouver Way
Columbia River Crossing: 700 Washington Street, Suite 300
Esther Short Building: 610 Esther Street
Firstenburg Center: 700 NE 136th Avenue
Fort Vancouver Regional Library: 1007 E Mill Plain Boulevard
Luepke Center: 1009 E McLoughlin Boulevard
Marshall Center: 1009 E McLoughlin Boulevard
Rise and Stars Community Center, Vancouver Housing
Authority: 500 Omaha Way
Washington State University, Vancouver Campus, Library:
14204 NE Salmon Creek Avenue
Water Resources Education Center: 4600 SE Columbia Way
WSDOT SW Region: 11018 NE 51st Circle

Olympia

WSDOT State Library: 310 Maple Park Avenue SE



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