

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING THE)	RESOLUTION NO. 06-3704
CONSISTENCY OF THE LOCALLY PREFERRED)	
ALTERNATIVE FOR THE INTERSTATE 5/)	
DELTA PARK TO LOMBARD PROJECT WITH)	Introduced by Councilor Rex Burkholder
THE ADOPTED INTERSTATE 5/ DELTA PARK)	
TO LOMBARD PROJECT IN THE REGIONAL)	
TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND)	
RECOMMENDING PROJECT APPROVAL)	

WHEREAS, JPACT and the Metro Council approved the 2000 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) by Ordinance No. 00-869A, For the Purpose of Adopting the 2000 Regional Transportation Plan; and

WHEREAS, the approved 2000 RTP recounted the transportation conditions in the Interstate 5 north corridor and stated that “To address these problems, the I-5 Trade Corridor Study will evaluate different capacity and transit improvements in this corridor and make recommendations for inclusion in the Regional Transportation Plan”; and

WHEREAS, the I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership Strategic Plan was endorsed by JPACT and Metro Council by Resolution No. 02-3237A, For the Purpose of Endorsing the I-5 Transportation and Trade Study Recommendations; and

WHEREAS, in Resolution No. 02-3237A, For the Purpose of Endorsing the I-5 Transportation and Trade Study Recommendations, JPACT and the Metro Council concluded that transportation improvements include: “Three through-lanes in each direction on I-5, between I-405 in Portland and I-205 in Clark County including southbound through Delta Park including designation of one of the three through lanes as an High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane as feasible... “ and directing Metro staff to incorporate this and other Strategic Plan recommendations into the next update of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP); and

WHEREAS, JPACT and the Metro Council approved Ordinance No. 04-1045A, For the Purpose of Amending the 2000 Regional Transportation Plan (“RTP”) for Consistency with the 2004 Interim Federal RTP and Statewide Planning Goals; and

WHEREAS, the approved 2004 RTP Project lists as project number 4005: “I-5 North Improvements, Lombard Street to Expo Center/Delta Park, widen to six lanes,” as one of the financially constrained projects; and

WHEREAS, the approved 2004 RTP states that: “This heavily traveled route is the main connection between Portland and Vancouver. In addition to a number of planned and proposed highway capacity improvements, light rail is proposed along Interstate Avenue to the Expo Center, and may eventually extend to Vancouver. As improvements are implemented in this corridor, the following design considerations should be addressed: - consider HOV lanes and peak period pricing, -transit alternatives from Vancouver to Portland Central City (including light rail transit and express bus)...”; and

WHEREAS, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) initiated the I-5 Delta Park to Lombard Project, providing a public involvement process and prepared, based on public comment, project alternatives and an Environmental Assessment of alternatives which, if constructed, would widen this segment of I-5 to six lanes, including three lanes southbound; and

WHEREAS, ODOT assessed the likely outcome of a southbound HOV lane in addition to the existing northbound HOV lane; and

WHEREAS, the Columbia River Crossing Project will address transit, including HOV as well as highway, bicycle, pedestrian access in the I-5 bridge influence area immediately north of the I-5 Delta Park to Lombard segment; and

WHEREAS, ODOT convened a Hearings Panel that heard public testimony on the alternatives and Environmental Assessment in February 2006 and from which Hearings Panel recommendations were formulated for consideration; and

WHEREAS, the Bi-State Coordination Committee, the City of Portland and JPACT have recommended approval of a Preferred Alternative for the I-5 Delta Park to Lombard Project, including the Hearings Panel recommendations; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Metro Council:

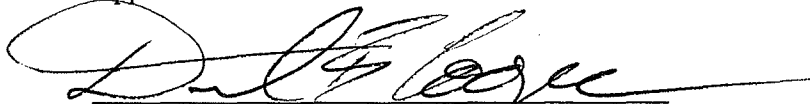
1. Concludes that the Preferred Alternative for the I-5 Delta Park to Lombard Project, as described in the Hearings Panel recommendations attached as Exhibit "A" to this resolution, is consistent with the I-5 Delta Park to Lombard Project in the 2004 Regional Transportation Plan as demonstrated in Exhibit "A" the I-5 Delta Park (Victory Boulevard to Lombard Section) Land Use Technical Report, December 2005, and the Transportation and Traffic Technical Report, I-5: Delta Park (Victory Boulevard to Lombard Section), Parisi Associates, December 2005.

2. Concludes that the ODOT decision about whether the additional southbound lane on I-5 should be a general purpose lane, an HOV lane, or a managed lane should be made in concert with the Columbia River Crossing Project or prior to the opening of the new lane to traffic, whichever is sooner. Furthermore, ODOT's decision should be made only after consideration of recommendations from the Bi-State Coordination Committee, JPACT and the Metro Council, with the recognition that an amendment to the RTP by the Council may be necessary.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 9th day of June 2006.


David Bragdon, Council President

Approved as to Form:


Daniel B. Cooper, Metro Attorney

I-5 Delta Park: Victory to Lombard Section

Recommendations of the I-5 Delta Park Hearings Panel for the Locally Preferred Alternative

April 28, 2006

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to convey the recommendations of the I-5 Delta Park Hearings Panel regarding the selection of a Preferred Alternative for the I-5 Delta Park Project. The Hearings Panel was composed of: Charlie Sciscione, ODOT Deputy Region 1 Manager, Cathy Nelson, ODOT Technical Services Manager/Chief Engineer, City of Portland Commissioner Sam Adams, Sue Keil, Director of the Portland Office of Transportation, Metro Councilor Rex Burkholder, and Vancouver Mayor Royce Pollard.

The recommendations are based on the findings of the Environmental Assessment, public comments on the Environmental Assessment, recommendations from the project's Citizen Advisory Committee and Environmental Justice Work Group, recommendations from local, regional and state staff, and input from ODOT's local, state and federal environmental regulators.

The Hearings Panel's recommendations will be sent to the Bi-State Coordinating Committee, the Portland City Council, the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation, and the Collaborative Environmental and Transportation Agreement for Streamlining (CETAS) for review and endorsement in May/June 2006. The Preferred Alternative will be documented in a Revised Environmental Assessment that is expected to be published in July/August 2006.

Background:

The I-5: Delta Park to Lombard project was one of several highway, transit and rail projects recommended by the I-5 Strategic Partnership. It is the first of the recommended projects to be developed for the I-5 Corridor. The Columbia River Crossing Project is the next project that will be developed. The public process for that project has recently been initiated.

Over the past three years, considerable public input has been solicited and considered at all stages of developing the I-5 Delta Park Project. ODOT formed two project advisory committees, a Citizen Advisory Committee and the Environmental Justice Work Group, to guide development of the project. The advisory committees and public input have influenced the development of the purpose and need statement for the project, the evaluation factors for the project, the range of alternatives studied in the Environmental Assessment, and the recommendation of the preferred alternative.

In developing this project ODOT has also worked closely with regional and local jurisdictions, most notably with staff from City of Portland's Transportation, Planning, Parks, and Environmental Services bureaus and staff from the Portland Development Commission.

The Environmental Assessment for this project included a No Build alternative and four Build alternatives. Each of the Build alternatives proposed the same improvements to the I-5 freeway including: widening I-5 to three lanes southbound, widening shoulders and medians northbound, reconstructing the southbound Columbia Blvd. on ramp as a merge lane, and geometric changes at the Columbia Blvd. and Lombard Blvd. interchanges. The four Build alternatives differed from one another in the proposed changes in access between Columbia Blvd. and I-5.

This project is anticipated to be constructed in two phases. Phase I construction would include the proposed I-5 freeway improvements. This phase of construction is anticipated to begin in 2008 and be completed in 2010. Phase II construction would include the proposed changes in access between Columbia Blvd. and I-5. A construction year for Phase II has not yet been established.

Recommendations:

The Hearings Panel's recommendations are presented below and are separated into the following categories:

- ❖ Preferred Alternative Recommendation
- ❖ Recommended Changes to the Preferred Alternative
- ❖ Recommendations for Final Design and Construction Phases
- ❖ Mitigation Measures and Community Enhancements Recommendations
- ❖ High Occupancy Vehicle Lane Recommendations
- ❖ Phasing and Financing Recommendations

Preferred Alternative Recommendation:

The Hearings Panel recommends Alternative 2-Argyle on the Hill as the preferred alternative for the I-5 Delta Park Project for the following reasons:

Transportation:

- ◆ The proposed improvements to I-5, which are common to all four Build alternatives, will improve the operation, efficiency and safety of the freeway in the project area. The greatest operation and efficiency improvements will be experienced during the mid-day, evening, and weekend periods.
- ◆ Alternative 2 reinforces existing access routes, maintains familiar freeway travel patterns, and makes the least change in freeway access.
- ◆ Alternative 2 does not require traffic calming measures to encourage use of the new freeway access route.
- ◆ Alternative 2 reconstructs the Denver Avenue Bridge over Columbia Blvd., which is a long-term capital maintenance/replacement liability concern for the City and ODOT.
- ◆ Alternative 2 has the least negative traffic impact on the operation of Portland International Raceway.

Neighborhood Livability:

- ◆ Alternative 2 results in the greatest reduction in traffic on existing Argyle Way and would provide the greatest improvement to the pedestrian environment along the existing Argyle Way. The volume of auto and truck traffic on Argyle Way has been identified as negatively impacting future development in the Kenton Light Rail Station area. This alternative relocates Argyle Way to the periphery of the Kenton downtown, and away from Kenton Park, downtown Kenton and the light rail station.
- ◆ Alternative 2 results in a noticeable decrease in noise levels for approximately 3 blocks of mixed use/residential properties and Kenton Park.
- ◆ Alternative 2 minimizes impacts on the planned Columbia Slough Trail.

Environmental Impacts:

- ◆ Alternative 2 has the least environmental impacts and is, therefore, consistent with City of Portland's Type II Environmental Review requirements and approval criteria.
- ◆ Alternative 2 affects less environmentally sensitive land by expanding existing development rather than building a new bridge over the Columbia Slough.
- ◆ Alternative 2 maintains the wildlife corridor for North and Northeast Portland by not breaking up existing habitat for birds and animals along the Columbia Slough with new bridges or roads.
- ◆ Alternative 2 minimizes impacts on the existing forested riparian strip located between the N. Denver Avenue bridge and the I-5 bridge. New bridges or roads along the slough would remove vegetation and replace it with new impervious surface. This would result in a potential increase in pollutants and sediment entering the slough.
- ◆ Alternative 2 requires the least amount of new impervious surface (paving). Impervious surfaces have the potential to increase stormwater runoff, raise water temperature, and increase pollutant loading into nearby waterways.

Economic/Redevelopment Impacts:

- ◆ Alternative 2 minimizes business displacements.
- ◆ Alternative 2 has the potential to positively affect the redevelopment prospects of high density sites around Argyle Way and Interstate Avenue, provided funding certainty for the Phase II interchange work.
- ◆ Alternative 2 has the second lowest property acquisitions.

Recommendations for Changes to the Preferred Alternative:

The Hearings Panel recommends that Alternative 2 be amended as follows and that these changes be documented in the project's Revised Environmental Assessment:

- ❖ The reconstruction of the Denver Avenue Bridge over the Columbia Slough should be added to Alternative 2. Reconstructing both of the Denver Avenue Bridges at the same time will minimize community disruption in the long term.

- ❖ The Schmeer Road realignment should be moved further south to minimize impacts to the TMT Development/Container Care property. The opportunity to move the Schmeer Road realignment further south is provided by reconstructing the Denver Avenue Bridge over the Columbia Slough.

Recommendations for Final Design and Construction Phases:

As Phase I and Phase II of the I-5 Delta Park Project go through the final design and construction work, the Hearings Panel recommends that:

- ❖ During Phase I, ODOT further investigate ramp meters and lane treatments on the Columbia Blvd. southbound on-ramp with the objective of balancing the desire for most efficient entry to I-5 for trucks with the operational needs of the ramp.
- ❖ ODOT develop Phase II improvements in cooperation with the Portland Office of Transportation to ensure that the local circulation elements (new Argyle Way, Denver Avenue Bridges and Schmeer Road) are developed with appropriate City input and review.
- ❖ ODOT ensure that development of Phase II improvements includes opportunities for public input on roadway and structures designs for local circulation elements including: the new Argyle Way, the Denver Avenue Bridges, and Schmeer Road.
- ❖ During development of Phase II improvements, ODOT continue to investigate design modifications for the new Argyle Way alignment balancing the objectives of minimizing property impacts, maximizing re-development opportunities, and optimizing transportation safety and operations.
- ❖ During development of Phase II improvements, ODOT continue to investigate design options for bicycle and pedestrian facilities on the Denver Avenue Bridges balancing the objectives of providing good bicycle and pedestrian access, accommodating freight movement, minimizing property impacts, and optimizing traffic safety and operations.
- ❖ During Phase I and Phase II, ODOT coordinate with the Portland Office of Transportation to provide for City review of the construction management plan, which will ensure the least possible business and community disruption during the construction of these improvements.
- ❖ ODOT work with the Portland Office of Transportation to vacate portions of the existing Argyle Way during Phase II construction to help the area around Argyle Way to reach its full redevelopment potential.
- ❖ ODOT and the Portland Office of Transportation develop an Intergovernmental Agreement(s) regarding the ownership and maintenance of local circulation elements of the project, the development of an access management plan for the interchange area, and the implementation of local system community enhancements.

Mitigation Measures and Community Enhancements Recommendations:

With regard to mitigation measures and community enhancements, the Hearings Panel recommends:

- ❖ Implementing the full mitigation and conservation measures outlined in the Environmental Assessment including: erosion and sediment control measures, air and water pollution control measures, wetlands mitigation measures, landscaping and riparian re-vegetation measures, fish conservation measures, fencing for the Columbian Cemetery, and meaningful workforce diversity and DBE goals.
- ❖ Adding an additional mitigation measure to the Environmental Assessment for ODOT to provide technical assistance during Phase II of construction to help local businesses prepare for the construction impacts of both of the Denver Avenue Bridge replacements.
- ❖ Setting the Community Enhancement Fund for the I-5 Delta Park Project at \$1 million.

High Occupancy Vehicle Lane Recommendations:

With regard to an HOV lane or other managed lane, the Hearings Panel recommends that:

- ❖ The I-5 Delta Park Revised Environmental Assessment identify that one of the I-5 southbound lanes may be operated as an HOV or managed lane in the future between, approximately, the Marine Drive and Alberta interchanges.
- ❖ ODOT make a decision about whether or not to operate a southbound HOV or managed lane in Oregon by the time the I-5 Delta Park Project is opened to traffic, in approximately 2010. In making this decision ODOT should seek recommendations from the Bi-State Coordination Committee, JPACT and Metro Council and seek an amendment to the RTP as necessary.
- ❖ ODOT conduct additional investigation of a southbound HOV or managed lane using traffic data and traffic models constructed for the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) Project in order to explore:
 - ◆ Transit service assumptions for a HOV or managed lane;
 - ◆ The length and duration of congestion on I-5, SR 14 and SR 500 with and without an HOV or managed lane;
 - ◆ The feasibility of operating the lane as a managed lane;
 - ◆ Enforcement levels needed for an HOV or managed lane;
 - ◆ How CRC Project decisions regarding future high-capacity transit, freeway, and transportation demand management would support operation of an HOV or managed lane in Oregon.
- ❖ ODOT coordinate its analysis and decision making regarding a southbound HOV or managed lane with the Bi-State Coordination Committee and appropriate Bi-State staff.
- ❖ The CRC Project continue to investigate HOV and managed lane concepts for the Portland/Vancouver I-5 corridor through the EIS.

The Hearings Panel makes these recommendations for the following reasons:

- ❖ Local, regional, state and federal policies are supportive of providing transportation options other than the single-occupancy vehicle in the I-5 corridor.
- ❖ More investigation of transit service levels, congestion impacts, feasibility, and enforcement is warranted prior to making a final decision about southbound HOV or managed lane implementation.
- ❖ Additional information about the long-range southbound HOV and managed lane system is likely to result from the Columbia River Crossing Project. The decision about implementation of a southbound HOV or managed lane in Oregon should be coordinated, to the greatest extent practicable, with the CRC Project direction for HOV and managed lanes.

Phasing and Financing Recommendations:

The Hearings Panel recommends that funding for design, property acquisition and construction of Phase II be prioritized by ODOT and the City, and a project implementation schedule for Phase II construction be established.

STAFF REPORT

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 06-3704, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING THE CONSISTENCY OF THE LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE WITH THE ADOPTED INTERSTATE 5/ DELTA PARK TO LOMBARD PROJECT IN THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND RECOMMENDING PROJECT APPROVAL

Date: May 30, 2006

Prepared by: Mark Turpel

BACKGROUND

The Interstate 5 (I-5) freeway is the major West Coast road system serving people and good movement north and south via auto, bus and truck both in the Metro area and as far as the Canadian and Mexican borders.

The 2000 Regional Transportation Plan recognized the transportation challenges of the corridor along I-5 from the Marquam Bridge to the Interstate Bridge and referenced the I-5 Trade and Transportation Partnership project as a process that would identify needed transportation actions on both sides of the Columbia River in the vicinity of I-5. Governors Gary Locke and John Kitzhaber appointed a bi-state I-5 Transportation and Trade Task Force of community, business, and elected representatives in January 2001 to develop the plan. The Task Force adopted al *Strategic Plan* on June 2002. The recommendations included:

- Three through-lanes in each direction on I-5, including southbound through Delta Park.
- A phased light rail loop in Clark County in the vicinity of the I-5, SR500/4th Plain and I-205 corridors.
- An additional span or a replacement bridge for the I-5 crossing of the Columbia River, with up to 2 additional lanes for merging and 2 light rail tracks.
- Interchange improvements and additional merging lanes where needed between SR500 in Vancouver and Columbia Boulevard in Portland. These include a full interchange at Columbia Boulevard.
- Capacity improvements for freight rail.
- Bi-state coordination of land use and management of our transportation system to reduce demand on the freeway and to protect the corridor investments.
- Involving communities along the corridor to ensure that the final project outcomes are equitable.

In November 2002, the Metro Council endorsed the *Strategic Plan* by adopting Resolution No. 02-3237A, For the Purpose of Endorsing the I-5 Transportation and Trade Study Recommendations and directed staff to incorporate the *Strategic Plan* recommendations in the next update of the RTP.

In July 2004, the Metro Council approved the update of the RTP through adopting Ordinance 04-1045A For the Purpose of Amending the 2000 Regional Transportation Plan ("RTP") for Consistency with the 2004 Interim Federal RTP and Statewide Planning Goals. Accordingly, the 2004 Regional

Transportation Plan (RTP) includes project number 4005, widening to six lanes the segment of I-5 from Lombard Street at the southern end to Expo Center/Delta Park at the northern end. This project would provide a consistent freeway width and eliminate a current condition where there is a portion of the freeway segment with two southbound lanes, while the balance of the freeway segment has three lanes each direction.

However, the 2004 RTP also states: "...despite a range of different improvements to the I-5 interstate bridges and transit service, latent demand exists in the corridor that cannot be address with highway capacity improvements alone." The 2004 RTP further states: "Light Rail transit and expanded bus service along parallel arterial streets are effective alternatives to I-5 for access to the Portland central city." The 2004 RTP also states that design considerations should be considered including:

- "HOV lanes and peak period pricing
- transit alternatives from Vancouver to the Portland Central City (including light rail transit and express bus)..."

The I-5 Delta Park to Lombard Project was initiated to look at alternatives along I-5 between Lombard and Delta Park, and, in addition to the direct freeway improvements (primarily changing this segment of I-5 to three lanes each direction by adding one additional lane southbound), four interchange/access alternatives (Full Columbia Ramps, Argyle on the Hill, New Road by the Slough, and Columbia Connector) were identified and assessed. Further, the feasibility of operating the new southbound lane as an HOV lane was assessed.

Most recently, the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) Project has taken up where the I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership left off with regard to highway, transit, bicycle and pedestrian movement across the Columbia River in the immediate vicinity of I-5, just north of the I-5 Delta Park Project. A wide range of transit alternatives will be reviewed and analyzed during this effort and should address the transit questions along I-5 north corridor in Oregon (as well as into Clark County). However, the CRC project could benefit from consideration of whether HOV lanes will be included in the Delta Park to Lombard segment. Accordingly, it has been recommended that ODOT not make a decision about the status of the I-5 Delta Park Project additional southbound lane (whether it should be a general purpose lane, HOV or managed lane) until the CRC Project is further along. This can be achieved because final engineering and even most of the construction can proceed without making a decision about the lane status.

A draft resolution was brought to the Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) on May 26, where it was unanimously recommended for approval. Subsequent to this action, Metro staff concluded that the resolution would be more precise if the resolution title directly stated that the project was already part of the RTP and that the resolves reference the titles of the supporting technical reports and these changes are reflected in the proposed resolution for JPACT and Metro Council consideration.

ANALYSIS/INFORMATION

1. Known Opposition

There have been concerns expressed by residents of the area along I-5 concerning additional air pollution, noise, dust and traffic congestion. These issues are described in the Environmental Assessment and Hearings Panel recommendations (Exhibit "A"). There have been concerns expressed about the operation of a new southbound lane as an HOV or managed lane, including representatives of trucking and Clark County commuters to the Metro area. Further, there have been concerns expressed about whether the proposed project helps implement the region's plans.

2. Legal Antecedents

Resolution No. 98-2625, For the Purpose of Amending the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program to Approve a Six-Month High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lane Demonstration on I-5 Northbound and Associated Financing.

Ordinance No. 00-869A, For the Purpose of Adopting the 2000 Regional Transportation Plan.

Resolution No. 02-3237A, For the Purpose of Endorsing the I-5 Transportation and Trade Study Recommendations.

Ordinance No. 04-1045A, For the Purpose of Amending the 2000 Regional Transportation Plan ("RTP") for Consistency with the 2004 Interim Federal RTP and Statewide Planning Goals.

3. Anticipated Effects

Construction of the I-5 Delta Park to Lombard Project as recommended by Exhibit "A".

4. Budget Impacts

No direct impacts to the Metro budget. The project is included in the list of Financially Constrained System Projects (number 4005) of the Regional Transportation Plan.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve Resolution No. 06-3704, For the Purpose of Determining the Consistency of the Interstate 5/ Delta Park to Lombard Project with the Regional Transportation Plan and Recommending Project Approval.