

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING	)	RESOLUTION NO. 07- 3782B
METRO COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS	)	
CONCERNING THE RANGE OF	)	Introduced by Councilor Rex Burkholder
ALTERNATIVES TO BE ADVANCED TO A	)	
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	)	
STATEMENT FOR THE COLUMBIA RIVER	)	
CROSSING PROJECT	)	

WHEREAS, the Interstate 5 freeway (I-5) is the only continuous north/south interstate freeway on the West Coast, providing a critical national and international transportation link for motor vehicles and truck-hauled freight in the western-most United States, between the Canadian and Mexican borders; and,

WHEREAS, in 1917 a bridge across the Columbia River was completed and in 1958 a second bridge was built adjacent to the first bridge, the two becoming today's I-5 north and south bound bridges. These bridges have had no significant modifications since their completion; and,

WHEREAS, for the Portland/Vancouver metropolitan region, I-5 is one of two major freeways that connect the two states and their shared metropolitan economy; and,

WHEREAS, the estimated cost of truck delay by the year 2020 is an increase of 140 percent to nearly \$34 million dollars; and,

WHEREAS, the I-5 bridge crossing the Columbia River and adjacent bridge influence area segments, known as the Columbia River Crossing (CRC), has extended peak-hour travel demand that exceeds current capacity; and,

WHEREAS, the Interstate 205 Bridge is also reaching its peak-hour period carrying capacity; and,

WHEREAS, current transit service in the I-5 corridor between Portland and Vancouver is also constrained by the limited capacity and congestion in the bridge influence area, greatly limiting transit reliability and operations; and,

WHEREAS, there are significant safety issues relating to the existing bridges with the bridge crossing area and its approach sections experiencing crash rates more than two times higher than statewide averages for comparable urban highways in Washington and Oregon. This is largely due to congestion and outdated designs including interchanges too closely spaced, weave and merge sections which are too short causing sideswiping accidents, vertical grade changes in the bridge span which restrict sight distance, and very narrow shoulders that prevent avoidance maneuvers or safe temporary storage of disabled vehicles; and,

WHEREAS, the I-5 bridges across the Columbia River do not meet current seismic standards, leaving travelers in the I-5 corridor vulnerable to bridge failure in the event of an earthquake; and,

WHEREAS, the configuration of the existing I-5 bridges relative to the downstream Burlington

Northern-Santa Fe rail bridge contributes to hazardous navigation conditions for commercial and recreational boat traffic; and,

WHEREAS, bicycle and pedestrian facilities for crossing the Columbia River along I-5 do not meet current standards; and,

WHEREAS, in 2002, the Metro Council approved Resolution 02-3237A, For the Purpose of Endorsing the I-5 Transportation and Trade Study Recommendations, including recommendations for light rail transit connecting the Portland area with southwest Washington and adding a new supplemental or replacement bridge; and,

WHEREAS, the I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership Strategic Plan endorsed by the Metro Council in 2002 included light rail transit as the recommended transit mode and a maximum of ten lanes as the roadway improvement; and

WHEREAS, the Metro Council approved the Interstate MAX line to Expo center as the locally preferred alternative for high capacity transit in the I-5 north corridor; and,

WHEREAS, Interstate MAX light rail transit was built to Expo Center and has been in operation since May 2004; and,

WHEREAS, in February 2005, the Task Force began its study of the CRC problems and possible solutions; and,

WHEREAS, the Task Force adopted in October 2005 a CRC Project *Vision and Values Statement*; and

WHEREAS, after holding public open houses to gather public comment, in November 2005, the CRC Task Force adopted a CRC Project *Problem Definition*; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force approved a Purpose and Need statement in January 2006, which defined a discrete set of objectives; and,

WHEREAS, in February 2006, the Task Force approved project evaluation criteria against which alternatives would be evaluated; and

WHEREAS, thirty-seven transportation modes or design options were identified, analyzed and combined into alternative project packages; and,

WHEREAS, twelve alternative project packages, consisting of a No Build and eleven other transportation packages that included auto, truck freight, transit, bicycle and pedestrian investments in the CRC Project area were developed in summer 2006; and

WHEREAS, the twelve alternative project packages were screened using the approved evaluation criteria; those that met the evaluation criteria were recommended to advance; and those that did not meet the evaluation criteria were recommended to not advance; and,

WHEREAS CRC staff have recommended, consistent with the evaluation criteria, that the No Build and a Replacement Bridge and either light rail transit or bus rapid transit be advanced to a draft environmental impact statement; and

WHEREAS, any of the build alternatives would require a change to the Regional Transportation Plan and this would require Metro Council approval; and,

WHEREAS, any transportation investment decision about the Columbia River Crossing Project will have a substantial impact on the economy and livability of the Metro region; and,

WHEREAS, the CRC Project is guided, in part, by the recommendations of a 39 member Task Force, of which the Metro Council has one representative; and,

WHEREAS, the Metro Council has had CRC Project briefings or discussions on October 3 and 17, and December 5, 2006; and,

WHEREAS, the Metro Council has, through both existing policy and through public discussion by the Council, established policy concerns and objectives that should be advanced with regard to the CRC Project; and,

WHEREAS, the Metro Council desires to establish policy guidance for its representative on the Task Force concerning those alternatives to be advanced for study in a draft environmental impact statement; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED,

that the Metro Council recommends the following policy guidance to its CRC Task Force representative:

1. The Metro Council supports the following CRC staff recommendations for alternatives to be advanced to a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS): a) a No Build option, b) a Replacement Bridge with Light Rail Transit (LRT) and express bus option and c) a Replacement Bridge with Bus Rapid Transit and express bus option.

2. In addition to the CRC staff recommended alternatives, the Metro Council supports including in the DEIS for additional analysis an alternative that includes a supplemental bridge built to current seismic standards to carry cars, trucks, high capacity transit, bicycles and pedestrians. This alternative retains the existing I-5 bridges for freeway travel with incremental improvements to those bridges and the key access ramps, to improve flow and increase safety on I-5. Additionally, this alternative could include replacing the swing span of the downstream railroad bridge with a movable span located in a mid-river location.

3. The Metro Council recognizes that a range of transit alternatives between the Expo Center and Vancouver, Washington in the I-5 corridor must be considered in the Columbia River Crossing DEIS and that substantial data and analysis about ridership, costs, etc. have yet to be completed. However, based on A) investments already made in this corridor by both the Metro region and the Federal Transit Administration to construct Interstate MAX; and, B) existing data that has been developed during the

Alternatives Analysis over the past two years, the Metro Council notes that light rail transit has shown to date to have more promise to cost-effectively meet the transit demand in the corridor.

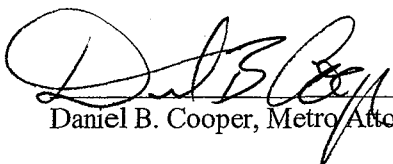
4. The alternatives advanced to the DEIS must be responsive to financial considerations. Tolling or another user pay financing source should be considered with all of the alternatives advanced to the DEIS.

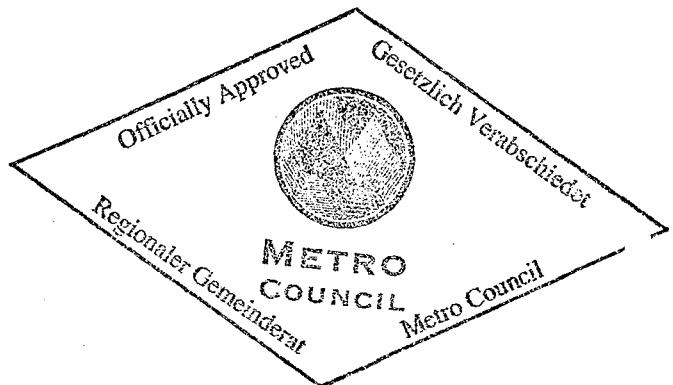
5. Given the impact of the existing transportation facility and the potential impact of any future facility, the following should be part of any DEIS analysis: a) land use changes that reduce the amount of 2035 peak-hour commuting across the Columbia River; b) mitigation programs that address existing and potential future health impacts caused by motor vehicle emissions; c) creating motor vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian links across I-5 to the two halves of Hayden Island; and d) investigation of capping I-5 in downtown Vancouver as a mitigation measure that re-connects historic elements in the City of Vancouver, e) transportation demand management (TDM)/ transportation system management (TSM) policies augmenting build options, and f) other issues related to environmental justice.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this *22nd* day of *February*, 2007.

  
David Bragdon, Council President

Approved as to Form:

  
Daniel B. Cooper, Metro Attorney



BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING	)	RESOLUTION NO. 07- 3782A
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CONCERNING THE RANGE OF	)	Introduced by Councilor Rex Burkholder
ALTERNATIVES TO BE ADVANCED TO A	)	
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	)	
STATEMENT FOR THE COLUMBIA RIVER	)	
CROSSING PROJECT	)	

WHEREAS, the Interstate 5 freeway (I-5) is the only continuous north/south interstate freeway on the West Coast, providing a critical national and international transportation link for motor vehicles and truck-hauled freight in the western-most United States, between the Canadian and Mexican borders; and,

WHEREAS, in 1917 a bridge across the Columbia River was completed and in 1958 a second bridge was built adjacent to the first bridge, the two becoming today's I-5 north and south bound bridges. These bridges have had no significant modifications since their completion; and,

WHEREAS, for the Portland/Vancouver metropolitan region, I-5 is one of two major freeways that connect the two states and their shared metropolitan economy; and,

WHEREAS, the estimated cost of truck delay by the year 2020 is an increase of 140 percent to nearly \$34 million dollars; and,

WHEREAS, the I-5 bridge crossing the Columbia River and adjacent bridge influence area segments, known as the Columbia River Crossing (CRC), has extended peak-hour travel demand that exceeds current capacity; and,

WHEREAS, the Interstate 205 Bridge is also reaching its peak-hour period carrying capacity; and,

WHEREAS, current transit service in the I-5 corridor between Portland and Vancouver is also constrained by the limited capacity and congestion in the bridge influence area, greatly limiting transit reliability and operations; and,

WHEREAS, there are significant safety issues relating to the existing bridges with the bridge crossing area and its approach sections experiencing crash rates more than two times higher than statewide averages for comparable urban highways in Washington and Oregon. This is largely due to congestion and outdated designs including interchanges too closely spaced, weave and merge sections which are too short causing sideswiping accidents, vertical grade changes in the bridge span which restrict sight distance, and very narrow shoulders that prevent avoidance maneuvers or safe temporary storage of disabled vehicles; and,

WHEREAS, the I-5 bridges across the Columbia River do not meet current seismic standards, leaving travelers in the I-5 corridor vulnerable to bridge failure in the event of an earthquake; and,

WHEREAS, the configuration of the existing I-5 bridges relative to the downstream Burlington

Northern-Santa Fe rail bridge contributes to hazardous navigation conditions for commercial and recreational boat traffic; and,

WHEREAS, bicycle and pedestrian facilities for crossing the Columbia River along I-5 do not meet current standards; and,

WHEREAS, in 2002, the Metro Council approved Resolution 02-3237A, For the Purpose of Endorsing the I-5 Transportation and Trade Study Recommendations, including recommendations for light rail transit connecting the Portland area with southwest Washington and adding a new supplemental or replacement bridge; and,

WHEREAS, the I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership Strategic Plan endorsed by the Metro Council in 2002 included light rail transit as the recommended transit mode and a maximum of ten lanes as the roadway improvement; and

WHEREAS, the Metro Council approved the Interstate MAX line to Expo center as the locally preferred alternative for high capacity transit in the I-5 north corridor; and,

WHEREAS, Interstate MAX light rail transit was built to Expo Center and has been in operation since May 2004; and,

WHEREAS, in February 2005, the Task Force began its study of the CRC problems and possible solutions; and,

WHEREAS, the Task Force adopted in October 2005 a CRC Project *Vision and Values Statement*; and

WHEREAS, after holding public open houses to gather public comment, in November 2005, the CRC Task Force adopted a CRC Project *Problem Definition*; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force approved a Purpose and Need statement in January 2006, which defined a discrete set of objectives; and,

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WHEREAS CRC staff have recommended, consistent with the evaluation criteria, that the No Build and a Replacement Bridge and either light rail transit or bus rapid transit be advanced to a draft environmental impact statement; and

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2. In addition to the CRC staff recommended alternatives, the Metro Council supports including in the DEIS for additional analysis an alternative that includes a supplemental bridge built to current seismic standards to carry cars, trucks, high capacity transit, bicycles and pedestrians. This alternative retains the existing I-5 bridges for freeway travel with incremental improvements to those bridges and the key access ramps, to improve flow and increase safety on I-5. Additionally, this alternative could include replacing the swing span of the downstream railroad bridge with a movable span located in a mid-river location.

3. The Metro Council recognizes that a range of transit alternatives between the Expo Center and Vancouver, Washington in the I-5 corridor must be considered in the Columbia River Crossing DEIS and that substantial data and analysis about ridership, costs, etc. have yet to be completed. However, based on A) investments already made in this corridor by both the Metro region and the Federal Transit Administration to construct Interstate MAX; and, B) existing data that has been developed during the

Alternatives Analysis over the past two years, the Metro Council notes that light rail transit has shown to date to have more promise to cost-effectively meet the transit demand in the corridor.

4. The alternatives advanced to the DEIS must be responsive to financial considerations. Tolling or another user pay financing source should be considered with all of the alternatives advanced to the DEIS.

5. Given the impact of the existing transportation facility and the potential impact of any future facility, the following should be part of any DEIS analysis: a) mitigation programs that address existing and potential future health impacts caused by motor vehicle emissions; b) creating motor vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian links across I-5 to the two halves of Hayden Island; and c) investigation of capping I-5 in downtown Vancouver as a mitigation measure that re-connects historic elements in the City of Vancouver, d) transportation demand management (TDM)/ transportation system management (TSM) policies augmenting build options, and e) other issues related to environmental justice.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this        day of                    , 2007.

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David Bragdon, Council President

Approved as to Form:

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Daniel B. Cooper, Metro Attorney



BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

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2. In addition to the CRC staff recommended alternatives, the Metro Council supports including in the DEIS for additional analysis an alternative that includes a low rise with lift span supplemental bridge built to current seismic standards to carry cars, trucks, high capacity transit, bicycles and pedestrians. This alternative retains the existing I-5 bridges for freeway travel with incremental improvements to those bridges and the key access ramps, to improve flow and increase safety on I-5. Additionally, this alternative would include replacing the swing span of the downstream railroad bridge with a movable span located in a mid-river location on the railroad bridge, thereby aligning with the current lift span of the I-5 bridges.
3. The Metro Council recognizes that a range of transit alternatives between the Expo Center and Vancouver, Washington in the I-5 corridor must be considered in the Columbia River Crossing DEIS and that substantial data and analysis about ridership, costs, etc. have yet to be completed. However, based on

A) investments already made in this corridor by both the Metro region and the Federal Transit Administration to construct Interstate MAX; and, B) existing data that has been developed during the Alternatives Analysis over the past two years, the Metro Council notes that light rail transit has shown to date to have more promise to cost-effectively meet the transit demand in the corridor.

4. The alternatives advanced to the DEIS must be responsive to financial considerations. Tolling or another user pay financing source should be considered with all of the alternatives advanced to the DEIS.

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ADOPTED by the Metro Council this        day of        , 2007.

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David Bragdon, Council President

Approved as to Form:

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Daniel B. Cooper, Metro Attorney

## STAFF REPORT

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 07-3782, FOR THE PURPOSE OF  
ESTABLISHING METRO COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE RANGE  
OF ALTERNATIVES TO BE ADVANCED TO A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT  
STATEMENT FOR THE COLUMBIA RIVER CROSSING PROJECT

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Date: February 14, 2007

Prepared by: Richard Brandman  
Mark Turpel

### BACKGROUND

The Interstate 5 Freeway (I-5) is the only continuous north/south interstate freeway on the West Coast, providing the primary corridor from Mexico to Canada for motor vehicles, including truck-hauled freight. The crossing of the Columbia River by I-5 near Hayden Island and Vancouver, Washington includes two bridges, one built in 1917 and the other in 1958. The extended peak hour demand at the I-5 Columbia River Crossing (CRC) exceeds current capacity and by the year 2020, demand is expected to grow significantly. For example, the cost of truck delay is expected to increase 140 percent by 2020.

In 1999, the Bi-State Transportation Committee recommended that the Portland/Vancouver region initiate a public process to develop a plan for the I-5 Corridor based on four principles:

- Doing nothing in the I-5 Corridor is unacceptable;
- There must be a multi-modal solution in the I-5 Corridor - there is no silver bullet;
- Transportation funds are limited. Paying for improvements in the I-5 Corridor will require new funds; and,
- The region must consider measures that promote transportation-efficient development.

Accordingly, the I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership was constituted by Governors Locke and Kitzhaber, including a Metro Council representative. In June 2002, the Partnership completed a Strategic Plan and on November 14, 2002, the Metro Council, through Resolution No. 02-3237A, For the Purpose of Endorsing the I-5 Transportation and Trade Study Recommendations, endorsed the Strategic Plan recommendations including:

- Three through lanes in each direction on I-5, one of which an HOV lane, as feasible;
- Phased light rail loop in Clark County in the vicinity of the I-5, SR500/4th Plan and I-205 corridors;
- An additional or replacement bridge for the I-5 crossing of the Columbia River, with up to two additional lanes for merging plus 2 light rail tracks;
- Interchange improvements and additional auxiliary and/or arterial lanes where needed between SR 500 in Vancouver and Columbia Boulevard in Portland, including a full interchange at Columbia Boulevard;
- Capacity improvements for freight rail;
- Bi-state coordination of land use and management of the transportation system to reduce demand on the freeway and protect corridor improvement;
- Involving communities along the corridor to ensure final project outcomes are equitable and committing to establish a fund for community enhancement;
- Developing additional transportation demand and system strategies to encourage more efficient use of the transportation system.

Several of the recommendations from the Strategic Plan have been completed. For example, planning and environmental assessment of the I-5 Delta Park Project has been completed. Design engineering and financing are being completed currently with construction slated for initiation in the next few years to address capacity issues on I-5 between Delta Park and Lombard.

The I-5 bridge element began in February 2005 with the formation of a 39 member Columbia River Crossing (CRC) Task Force. This Task Force, which includes a Metro Council representative, developed a vision statement, purpose and need statement, screening criteria and reviewed 37 transportation modes/design options, narrowing these to 12.

Issues identified concerning alternatives in the CRC technical analysis included the following:

- Safety - the bridge crossing area and approach sections have crash rates more than two times higher than statewide averages for comparable urban highways. Contributing factors are interchanges too closely spaced, weave and merge sections too short contributing to sideswiping accidents, vertical grade changes that restrict sight distance and very narrow shoulders that prevent avoidance maneuvers or safe temporary storage of disabled vehicles.
- Seismic - neither I-5 bridges meet seismic standards, leaving the I-5 corridor vulnerable in the event of a large earthquake;
- Bridge Alignment - the alignment of the I-5 bridges with the downstream railroad bridge contributes to hazardous barge movements;
- Cost - rehabilitation of the existing bridges, bringing them to current standards would be more costly, both in money and some environmental impacts, such as water habitat conditions, than a replacement bridge;
- Traffic Impact - an arterial bridge would bring unacceptable traffic congestion to downtown Vancouver, Washington.

In October 2007, the Metro Council, after hearing CRC staff presentations and discussing the project, approved a letter to the CRC Task Force citing seven principles including:

- Recognize the I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership Strategic Plan;
- Use desired outcomes as a guide;
- Determine project priorities;
- Recognize financial limitations;
- Coordinate with the railroad bridge;
- Provide alternatives in the DEIS that demonstrate the fundamental choices before us;
- Provide thorough public vetting before closing options.

In November 2007, CRC staff, after further consideration of technical analyses and using the approved screening criteria and project purpose and need, recommended three alternatives be advanced to a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). These included:

- Alternative 1) No Action;
- Alternative 2) A Replacement Bridge and Bus Rapid Transit with Complementary Express Bus Service; and
- Alternative 3) A Replacement Bridge and Light Rail Transit with Complementary Express Bus Service.

The Task Force accepted the three alternatives for purposes of taking public comment. Open houses were held and the Task Force is scheduled to make a decision about what to recommend to advance to a DEIS on February 29, 2007.

In addition to Resolution No. 07-3782, FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING METRO COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES TO BE ADVANCED TO A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE COLUMBIA RIVER CROSSING PROJECT, there is Resolution No. 07-3787, FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING METRO COUNCIL GUIDANCE TO ITS REPRESENTATIVE ON THE COLUMBIA RIVER CROSSING TASK FORCE CONCERNING THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES TO BE ADVANCED TO A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT. Resolution No. 07-3787 includes resolves that the three CRC recommended alternatives will not provide an adequate basis for the Metro Council to support an amendment of the RTP, that to obtain a proper basis for making choices the following should also be considered: a non-capital intensive alternative, land use alternative, supplemental bridge (as included in Resolution No. 07-3782), analysis of improvements to the railroad bridge, an alternative emphasizing transit investments. Further, Resolution 07-3787 includes resolves concerning a complete analysis of the full range of costs and benefits and that the ultimate recommended solution could be a blend of alternatives.

## **ANALYSIS/INFORMATION**

### **1. Known Opposition**

Concerns with the CRC staff recommendations include: 1) interest in finding a lower cost option(s); 2) concerns that either bus rapid transit or light rail transit will not provide appropriate transit service; 3) air quality, noise, environmental justice equity and other impacts to those living along the I-5 alignment; 4) increased demands on southern portions of the Portland metropolitan freeway system such as Interstate 84, I-5 through the Rose Quarter and points south; 5) concern that the CRC project could use up most or all of the transportation funds needed for projects throughout the region; 6) concern that the CRC staff recommendation was not consistent with the I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership Strategic Plan, including maximum number of lanes and transit mode.

### **2. Legal Antecedents**

#### **Federal**

- National Environmental Policy Act
- Clean Air Act
- SAFETEA-LU

#### **State**

- State Planning Goals
- State Transportation Planning Rule
- Oregon Transportation Plan
- Oregon Highway Plan
- Oregon Public Transportation Plan
- Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

#### **Metro**

- 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.

The 2004 Regional Transportation Plan as adopted by the Metro Council includes the following in the RTP Project List: 1) Project 1002 Vancouver Light Rail Loop, Expo Center to Vancouver, 2) Projects 4002 and 4003, I-5 Interstate Bridge and I-5 widening, \$251 million for acquiring right-of-way and

"improving I-5/Columbia River bridge (local share of joint project) based on recommendations in I-5 Trade Corridor Study" and, 3) Project 4000, Vancouver Rail Bridge Replacements, to "replace rail bridge swing span based on recommendations from I-5 Trade Corridor EIS study". These projects are not presently part of the financially constrained system of the RTP.

### **3. Anticipated Effects**

The passage of this resolution would give policy guidance to the Metro Council representative serving on the Task Force. The Task Force vote of its 39 members will be taken under advisement by the Oregon Department of Transportation, Washington State Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. Any action to advance alternatives to a DEIS would still require a decision about a preferred alternative and amendment of the Regional Transportation Plan - which would require a separate Metro Council approval.

### **4. Budget Impacts**

This action would not have a direct impact to the Metro budget. However, Metro Council policies about the funding of the Regional Transportation Plan could influence choices about alternatives.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Recommend adoption of Resolution 07-3782.