



“Working Draft Strategic Plan Recommendations for Public Review”

About this Document

This document is a work-in-progress. It **does not** contain final recommendations. This document **does** contain working draft recommendations in the following areas: Corridor-Wide Freeway Capacity, Transit, River Crossing Capacity, Bridge Influence Area, Spot Improvements, West Arterial and Land Use. Following public input on these working draft recommendations, the Task Force is expected to discuss and adopt **“Draft Strategic Plan Recommendations for the I-5 Corridor”** on January 29, 2001.

This document also highlights areas needing additional work before the Task Force adopts a **“Final Strategic Plan Recommendations for the I-5 Corridor”** in June 2002. Areas for additional work and recommendations include: the bridge and its influence area, land use agreements, transportation demand management (TDM) actions, environmental justice and community enhancements, rail improvements, and a financing and implementation strategy. The Task Force is continuing to work on these areas and will seek public input as they develop additional recommendations.

The **“Final Strategic Plan Recommendations for the I-5 Corridor”** is expected to be adopted by the Task Force in June 2002, following further public input and discussion. The recommendations are expected to be a “package deal.” They will be inter-related and contingent upon each other. The Task Force’s “Final Strategic Plan Recommendations for the I-5 Corridor” will be sent to the Oregon and Washington Transportation Commissions and to the metropolitan planning organizations in Portland and SW Washington for review and potential adoption into their transportation plans. After adoption, the environmental review and project development phase may begin.

Introduction: Working Draft Strategic Plan

The I-5 Partnership brought together Washington and Oregon citizens and leaders to respond to concerns about growing congestion on I-5. Governors Gary Locke and John Kitzhaber have appointed a bi-state Task Force of community, business and elected representatives to develop a Recommended Strategic Plan for the I-5 Corridor between I-84 in Oregon and I-205 in Washington. In developing the strategic plan, the Task Force has been guided by the following Problem, Vision and Values Statement.

Problem

The Interstate 5 Corridor is the most critical segment of the regional transportation system in the Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area. The Corridor provides access to many of the Region’s most important industrial sites and port facilities, and is a link to jobs throughout the

Portland/Vancouver Region. Due to infrastructure deficiencies, lack of multi-modal options, land use patterns, and increasing congestion, businesses and individuals experience more frequent and longer delays in the Corridor. Without attention, the Corridor's problems are likely to increase significantly, further impacting the mobility, accessibility, livability and economic promise of the entire Region.

Vision and Values

This plan is a multi-faceted, integrated plan of transportation policies, capital expenditures, personal and business actions, and incentives to address the future needs of the I-5 Corridor.

The final plan, when implemented, will improve our quality of life by:

- Providing travel mobility, safety, reliability, accessibility and choice of transportation modes for users whether public, private, or commercial and recognizing the varied requirements of local, intra-corridor, and interstate movement;
- Supporting a sound regional economy by addressing the need to move freight efficiently, reliably, and safely through the corridor;
- Supporting a healthy and vibrant land use mix of residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, cultural and historical areas;
- Respecting and protecting natural resources including air quality, wildlife habitat and water resources;
- Supporting balanced achievement of community, neighborhood, and regional goals for growth management, livability, the environment, and a healthy economy with promise for all;
- Distributing fairly the associated benefits and impacts for the region and the neighborhoods adjacent to or affected by the Corridor; and
- Protecting our future with an improved and equitable balance of: livability, mobility, access, public health, environmental stewardship, economic vitality and environmental justice.

Overall Recommendation

Physical improvements in the I-5 Corridor, beyond those already in the region's transportation plans, are warranted and necessary to meet the transportation, economic, and livability needs of the Portland/Vancouver Region. These working draft recommendations are designed to address those needs. The specific plan elements follow.

Plan Elements

I. Corridor-Wide Freeway Capacity

a. Working Draft Recommendation:

1. The Task Force considered expanding the capacity of the Corridor to 4 through lanes in each direction, but does **not** recommend this option.
2. The I-5 freeway between the Fremont Bridge in Portland and the I-205 interchange in Vancouver will be a maximum of 3 through lanes in each direction. This includes widening I-5 to 3 lanes between: a) Delta Park and Lombard (see Section V.a.1) and b) 99th St. to I-205 in Vancouver.
3. One of the 3 through lanes may be designated for use as a high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane during the peak period, in the peak direction.

b. Additional Work:

1. *The Task Force will develop and make recommendations on the potential use and extent of HOV through the I-5 Corridor (including the use of trucks in HOV lanes) in the Spring of 2002 after further public input and discussion.*

II. Transit Capacity

a. Working Draft Recommendations:

1. A light rail loop system, including feeder buses, and new and expanded park and ride lots, should be established in Clark County. In the interim, bi-state transit needs will continue to be served by express bus.
2. The light rail loop system should provide transit mobility, both within Clark County and between Washington and Oregon, in the I-5 and I-205 corridors.
3. The light rail loop system may be constructed in phases.
4. Peak-hour, premium express bus service in the I-5 and I-205 corridors to downtown Portland and to markets not well served by light rail should be provided as a supplemental service to light rail.
5. Transit service in the Corridor should be increased over the next 20 years as planned in the Metro and RTC 20-year transportation plans.

III. River Crossing Capacity

a. Working Draft Recommendations:

1. New transit and vehicle capacity should be constructed across the Columbia River in the I-5 Corridor.
2. **For vehicles**, there should be no more than 3 through lanes in each direction and up to two supplemental lanes (auxiliary or local access) in each direction across

the Columbia River (total 5 lanes in each direction). **For transit**, there should be two light rail tracks across the Columbia River in the I-5 Corridor.

3. In adding river-crossing capacity, every effort should be made to avoid displacements and encroachments.
4. The proposed design should include safety considerations.

b. Additional Work (January – June 2002):

1. *The Task Force will discuss and formulate a recommendation on whether the joint-function, river crossing should be on one structure or two, as part of the Implementation and Finance Plan. (See Section X, below.)*
2. *Whether the new capacity is on a replacement bridge or supplemental bridge will be decided by the Task Force after further public input and discussion.*

**IV. Bridge Influence Area: SR 500 to Columbia Blvd.
(Including Vancouver Interchanges)**

a. Working Draft Recommendation:

1. Between the SR 500 and Columbia Blvd. interchanges, the freeway needs to be designed to balance all of the on and off traffic, consistent with 3 through lane Corridor capacity and 5 lanes of bridge capacity, in each direction.

b. Notes

1. *This 4-mile section has the highest concentration of interchanges and traffic entering and exiting the freeway. Over half the traffic crossing the I-5 bridge begins or ends the I-5 portion of its trip between the SR 500 interchange in Vancouver and the Columbia Blvd. interchange in Portland.*
2. *In adding river-crossing capacity, every effort should be made to avoid displacements and encroachments.*

c. Additional Work (Jan-June 2002):

1. *The Task Force directs staff to present a solution or solutions that balance the following: minimizing the disruption to neighborhoods and the environment while matching bridge and freeway lane configurations, addressing merging and weaving problems, and safely and efficiently moving traffic on and off the freeway. This includes the entire SR500/I-5 interchange. Staff shall work collaboratively with the community to identify and develop new conceptual designs for the interchanges. These will be prepared and reviewed by the Task Force in the Spring of 2002.*
2. *The Task Force will then develop and make recommendations for I-5 between SR 500 and Columbia Blvd., after further public input and discussion.*

V. Spot Improvements

a. Working Draft Recommendations:

1. I-5 should be widened to three through lanes in each direction between the Delta Park and Lombard interchanges in Oregon. This project should go to construction as quickly as possible.
2. The Columbia Blvd. interchange in Oregon should be made into a full interchange (add ramps for southbound traffic to exit at Columbia Blvd. and for northbound traffic to enter the freeway from Columbia Blvd.).
3. Both the Delta Park to Lombard project and the Columbia Blvd. interchange project should be considered for design at the same time. As part of this design effort, there needs to be a phasing and financing plan, with the recognition that the Delta Park project is the first priority.
4. The transportation issues south of the I-5/Fremont Bridge junction must be addressed and solved. The Mayor of Portland, the Governor of the State of Oregon, and JPACT should join together to appoint a group of public and private sector stakeholders to study and make recommendations for long-term transportation solutions for the entire I-5/I-405 freeway loop.

VI. Land Use

a. Working Draft Recommendations:

1. To protect existing capacity and support economic development, jurisdictions and agencies in the Corridor need to agree on a plan to manage land development to avoid adversely impacting I-5 or the Region's growth management plans.
2. Before construction of any additional cross-river transportation capacity is initiated in the Corridor, jurisdictions and agencies must have a documented, complementary understanding for a functionally integrated, regional transportation and land use system.

b. Notes:

1. *The Portland/Vancouver region's transportation and land use systems are integrally related, each impacting and influencing the other.*
2. *Each jurisdiction has the right and responsibility to control its own planning, development and enforcement processes.*
3. *Effectively managing the transportation/land use relationship is critical to: a) efficiently and fairly using transportation capacity, b) supporting each government's adopted growth management plans, and c) preserving and protecting the sizeable public investment in the Region's transportation system.*
4. *As land values in the Corridor increase, especially around interchanges and transit station areas, requests for zone changes are likely. Unless action is taken now, the Corridor's transportation and economic development opportunities will erode, especially with the loss of industrial lands.*

c. Additional Work (Jan-June 2002):

1. *Prior to June 30, 2002, the Task Force will develop a Model Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) to preserve the I-5 Corridor's transportation system, especially for trade. The model IGA will focus on protecting the capacity and functionality of interchanges and transit station areas even if no cross-river transportation capacity is added now.*
2. *Prior to June 30, 2002, the Task Force will outline the key elements of Comprehensive Regional Accord to achieve the fundamental goals for a functionally integrated, regional transportation and land use system. As the post-Task Force planning process proceeds, local jurisdictions whose land use decisions may impact the Corridor, will further develop and agree to a workable Accord before new cross-river transportation capacity is added to the Corridor.*

VII. Transportation Demand Management/Transportation System Management (TDM/TSM)

a. Working Draft Recommendation:

1. Transportation demand management and transportation system management actions are important, need to be consistent, and will be made a part of the “Final Strategic Plan Recommendations for the I-5 Corridor.”

b. Additional Work (Jan-June 2002):

1. *The Task Force will develop recommendations by the Spring of 2002 for bi-state TDM/TSM actions to be implemented in the Corridor before new cross-river transportation capacity is added.*
2. *The Task Force will further explore the use of congestion pricing as one of the tools for managing demand.*

VIII. Freight and Passenger Rail

a. Additional Work (Jan-June 2002):

1. *Work is currently underway to identify the capital and operating needs of the freight and passenger rail system. This work is expected to be complete in April 2002.*
2. *As part of the freight and passenger rail analysis, the estimated cost, ridership, and viability of a commuter rail system will be completed, and following public input, discussed by the Task Force.*
3. *The Task Force will develop and recommend a plan for improving Corridor heavy rail in the Spring of 2002 after further public input and discussion.*

IX. Environmental Justice and Community Enhancements

a. Additional Work (Jan-June 2002):

1. *The Task Force recognizes the need to address environmental justice and community concerns resulting from these working draft recommendations. The Task Force directs project staff to: a) continue conducting the environmental justice analysis, b) work with the affected communities to collaboratively explore potential community concerns regarding these working draft recommendations and c) develop measures to address those concern, such as neighborhood connectivity, a community foundation, air quality monitoring, etc. As a part of addressing environmental justice and community enhancements, a plan for addressing the needs of local streets will also be developed.*
2. *The Task Force will develop and recommend a plan based on the environmental justice analysis and community concerns in the Spring of 2002 after further public input and discussion.*

X. Implementation and Financing Strategy

a. Additional Work (Jan-June 2002):

- 1. An implementation strategy describing the phasing of improvements, TDM/TSM actions, and land use actions needs to be developed. The Task Force will develop and recommend an implementation strategy in the Spring of 2002 after further public input and discussion.*
- 2. Capital and operating costs of the working draft recommended improvements, even for improvements already in regional transportation plans, will likely exceed expected revenues. The Task Force will develop and recommend a financing strategy in the Spring of 2002 after further public input and discussion.*

XI. West Arterial Road

a. Working Draft Recommendation:

- 1. No further study of the option at this time, however, this alternative should be identified as a potential transportation solution for consideration in the future.*

b. Notes:

- 1. This option has several benefits to the regional transportation system including: relieving traffic on I-5, providing an additional connection between Oregon and Washington, relieving the St. Johns neighborhood of through truck traffic, and providing an efficient south-north arterial for a) freight movement between key industrial areas in the Portland/Vancouver area and b) other traffic in North Portland.*
- 2. However, the traffic impacts to Vancouver neighborhoods and the downtown Vancouver district are significant. It is very likely that arterial roads leading to this new connection would need to be widened to accommodate the traffic traveling between the West Arterial Road and the freeway. The widening of these arterial roads would be detrimental.*

XII. Additional Elements and Strategies Considered

- 1. As part of the Task Force's work it considered many potential elements and strategies that are not specifically commented upon in this draft document. They include: addressing the corridor's problems with land use actions and/or transportation demand management alone, a new freeway with bridge outside the I-5 corridor (East of I-205, West of I-5) to connect Oregon and Washington, monorail, personal rapid transit, hovercraft buses, people-movers, water taxi, ferry, helicopters, gondola, etc. The Task Force also considered various combinations of the elements and strategies noted.*
- 2. If you would like more information about those topic or have additional ideas, comments or concerns, please visit the project web site at: www.I-5partnership.com or call us at 1-866-STUDI-5.*

XIII. Next Steps:

- **Public Open Houses** – to give input on these Working Draft Strategic Plan Recommendations

January 14, 2002

4:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Hudson's Bay High School Commons
1206 E Reserve St.
Vancouver

January 16, 2002

4:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Kaiser Town Hall
3704 N. Interstate Ave.
Portland

- **Community Forum Meeting** – to give input on these Working Draft Strategic Plan Recommendations

January 12, 2002

9 a.m. - Noon
Leupke Center
1009 E. McLoughlin Blvd.
Vancouver, WA

- **Task Force Meeting** – Adoption of Draft Strategic Plan Recommendations

January 29, 2002

3:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Leupke Center
1009 E. McLoughlin Blvd.
Vancouver, WA

- **Further Public Input and Task Force Work: February through June 2002**
- **June 2002 - Task Force Adoption of Final Strategic Plan Recommendations**