

First Tier of Study Complete

The SR-35 Columbia River Crossing Feasibility Study is being conducted in response to concerns of local businesses and residents about the safety and viability of the existing Hood River Bridge. The study, managed by the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council, in partnership with the Oregon and Washington Departments of Transportation and local cities and counties, is organized into three sequential tiers. Tier I of the study, which was recently completed, identified key issues and produced a draft "Purpose and Need" statement for the project, and resulted in a range of crossing corridors and types of facilities to be studied. During this tier, the project team also initiated an environmental review process and identified the most promising and practical corridors and facility types to be evaluated in more detail in subsequent tiers (II and III). This newsletter summarizes these efforts. For additional information or to view a full report for Tier I, visit our Web site at www.rtc.wa.gov/studies/sr35.

Purpose and Need for Project Defined

The following statement defining the purpose and need for a new crossing was developed and reviewed by project advisory committees and members of the public. It will be used to compare and evaluate alternative crossing facilities.



SR-35 Columbia River Crossing Project Update



Purpose: The purpose of the project is to improve multi-modal movement of people

and goods across the Columbia River between the Bingen/White Salmon, Washington and Hood River, Oregon communities.

Need: The project must satisfy a variety of transportation and other needs, including:

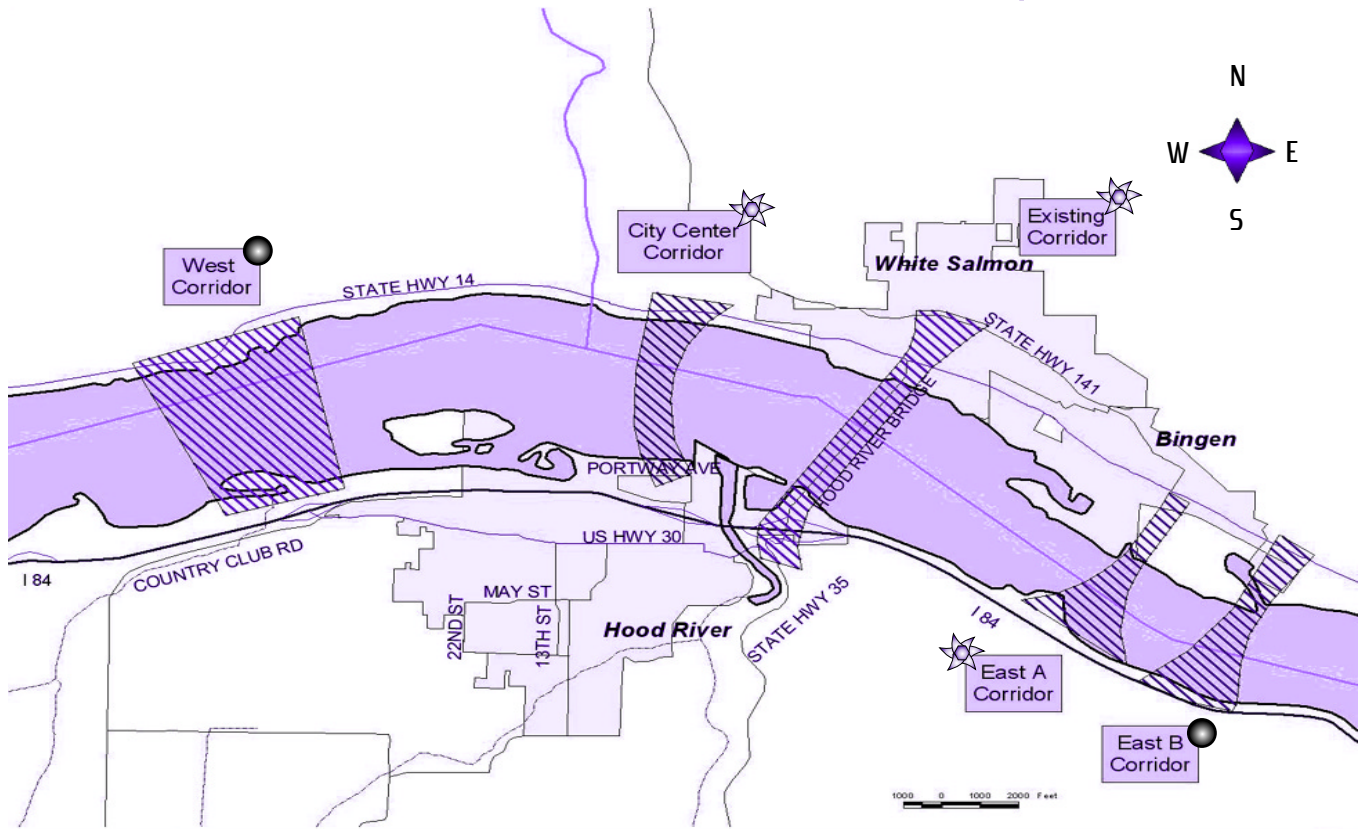
- Provide capacity to safely accommodate traffic.
- Maintain linkages to other roads and facilities.
- Meet future transportation demands.
- Address social demands and economic development objectives.
- Accommodate all modes of travel, including cars, freight, bicycles, pedestrian and river navigation.
- Address safety concerns and conditions.
- Overcome current roadway and bridge deficiencies.

Objectives: A new crossing also should satisfy these additional goals:

- Improve cross-river multi-modal transportation of people and goods.
- Meet current standards for river navigation if any new facility is constructed.
- Avoid, minimize, or compensate for impacts to the natural, built, and aesthetic environment.
- Be financially acceptable and support local economic development.
- Avoid, minimize, or compensate for impacts on cultural and historical resources.
- Maintain the integrity of the interstate highway system.



Corridors Narrowed for Further Study



Selected for further study
 No further study planned

Consultants and staff have reviewed and evaluated the following six corridors:

- **West**, connecting I-84 near the west Hood River interchange in Oregon to SR-14 in Washington.
- **City Center**, connecting from the 2nd Street interchange in Hood River to SR-14 in Washington.
- **Existing Low**, approximately the same alignment as the current bridge.
- **Existing High**, approximately the same alignment as the current bridge at a higher elevation; connecting from Button Junction to Jewett Boulevard (SR-141).
- **East A** connecting Koberg State Park in Oregon to Bingen Point in Washington.
- **East B**, located east of the East A corridor, near Reese’s Mill in Washington.

Based on a preliminary screening summarized on the facing page, **it is recommended that the following alternatives be evaluated in more detail.** All have low or moderate impacts related to three or more criteria.

- **City Center.** This corridor has relatively moderate impacts related to three of six criteria—impacts on the natural, built and aesthetic environment, historical and cultural resources and improving multi-modal

transportation across the river—and low impacts on the interstate highway system.

- **Existing Low.** This corridor has the lowest expected impacts overall, with low conflicts related to three criteria and moderate conflicts for the other three.
- **East A.** This corridor has moderate impacts related to two criteria—improving multi-modal cross-river transportation and impacts on the local economy—and low impacts related to cultural and historical resources.

The following corridors are not recommended for further study. All have high impacts related to three or more criteria, including the stated purpose for the project.

- **West.** This corridor has high impacts related to all but one criteria.
- **Existing High.** This corridor has high conflicts related to three criteria, including the natural, built and aesthetic environment and the ability to improve multi-modal cross-river transportation (project purpose).
- **East B.** This corridor has a high degree of conflict related to five out of six evaluation criteria.

The advisory committees and the regional administrators of the Oregon and Washington Departments of Transportation have concurred with these recommendations.

C r i t e r i a :	C o r r i d o r s						
	West	City Center	Existing Low	Existing High	East A	East B	No Action
Potential to conflict with the following objectives for the project							
Improve cross-river multi-modal transportation while adequately accommodating river navigation	●	●*	○*	●	●*	●	●
Minimize impacts to the natural, built, and aesthetic environment	●	●*	●*	●	●	●	NA
Minimize impacts to recreation activities	●	●*	○*	○	●	●	○
Minimize impacts to cultural and historical resources	●	●	●**	●	○	○	○
Be financially acceptable and support local economic development	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Maintain the integrity of the interstate highway system	○	○	○	○	●	●	○
Should the corridor be considered further in the project's development?	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

● High conflict ● Moderate conflict ○ Low conflict NA Not applicable
 * Would be less for a tunnel ** Would be higher for a tunnel

Facility Types Identified

In the next phase of work (Tier II), these specific types of facilities are being studied in more detail:

- Tunnels, including:
 - “Cut-and-cover,” a shallow tunnel generally used only over dry land.
 - Immersed tube, built and placed in a trough in the river bottom.
 - Bored, created by boring a hole underneath the river.
- Bridges, including:
 - Re-use of the existing bridge with improvements, as a stand-alone facility, or a companion to a new facility.
 - New floating bridge.
 - New low-level bridge with a “lift span” similar to the existing bridge.
 - New high-level “jump span” bridge that would meet horizontal and vertical navigation clearance requirements without a liftspan.

Options Reviewed by Public

Citizens reviewed the options and expressed their opinions about the study and the corridor alternatives:

- About 60 people attended an open house in March, 2001 to review and comment on preliminary corridor and facility type alternatives and evaluation criteria.

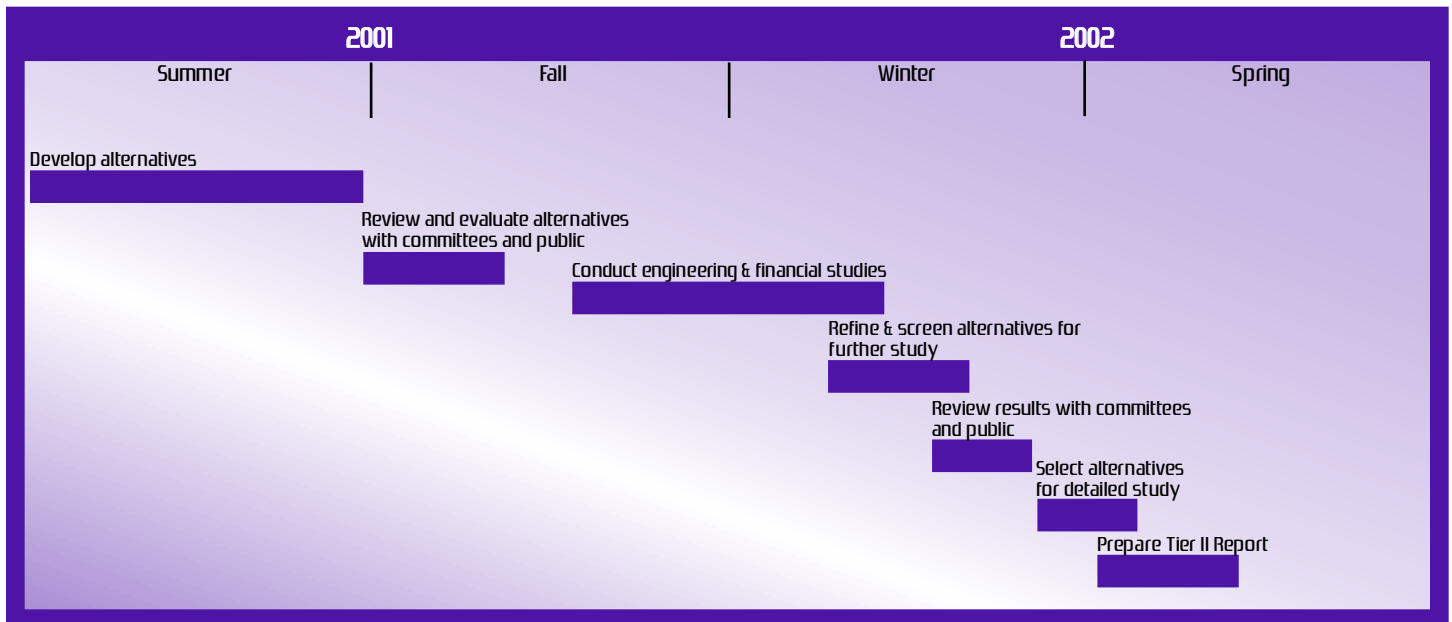
- Approximately 80 people submitted written comments during the public “scoping” period.
- Representatives of 13 state and federal agencies met in March, 2001 to discuss the study.
- The Local Advisory Committee, Steering Committee of local elected officials, and Resource/Regulatory Committee of federal and state agency representatives, met and provided comments.
- Several community groups received presentations about the project.
- More than 400 people are on the mailing list to receive newsletter updates. Copies of the newsletter also were made available at a variety of community gathering places on both sides of the Columbia River.
- Numerous people learned more about the study from the project Web site: www.rtc.wa.gov/studies/sr35.

What's Next?

In the next tier of the study, the project team will develop and evaluate specific crossing alternatives. One or more alternatives may be identified in each of the remaining corridors. Project advisory committees, staff, and the public will review the impacts of these options and a limited number of alternatives will be selected for more detailed evaluation in Tier III. The potential costs and financing of alternatives also will be assessed in Tier II. A public opinion survey will be conducted regarding alternatives and financing methods.

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Tier II Schedule



Information?

Opportunities to find out more about the project and provide comments include:

- Attend the next community open house in Fall, 2001.
- Sit in on a project advisory committee meeting. Upcoming meetings will be in September, 2001 [exact time and location to be announced].
- Request a presentation to your neighborhood, business and civic group; call us at 360-397-6067.
- Visit our Web site at www.rtc.wa.gov/studies/sr35.
- View displays in community buildings in Bingen, Hood River and White Salmon.

For More Information

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