Public Provides Guidance Throughout Process

Throughout the feasibility study, members of the community were informed and engaged in the process through a variety of means, including:

- Seven project newsletters, providing regular updates on key decisions and milestones.
- Twelve meetings of three advisory groups, including local officials, citizens, and state and federal regulatory agencies.
- Six public open houses to review progress and provide guidance at regular intervals.
- Bridge design workshop with advisory committee members and other stakeholders.
- Numerous media releases and news articles detailing the status of the study and opportunities to comment.
- Meetings with local civic and business groups.

- A youth bridge design contest sponsored by local businesses.
- Periodic direct mailings and e-mail communications to several hundred interested parties.
- Use of a project Web site to provide access to detailed information about the study.
- Distribution and public review of the DEIS, with copies available at community libraries on both sides of the Columbia and online via the project Web site.

Community members regularly attended public meetings and generally voiced support for a new bridge. A majority of participants in a public opinion poll expressed a willingness to help fund it through tolls. Upon completion of the study, few people took issue with the key findings in the DEIS and none voiced any direct opposition to the proposal to build a new bridge. Comments in earlier phases of the project focused primarily on previous alternatives that were subsequently eliminated from study.

For More Information
If you have questions about the project, please contact:

Dale Robins, Project Manager
Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council
PO Box 1366
Vancouver, WA 98666
Phone: 360.397.6067, ext. 5212
Fax: 360.696.1847
E-Mail: sr35@rtc.wa.gov

Web site address: www.rtc.wa.gov/studies/sr35

Copies of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, its Executive Summary, and a summary of comments on the DEIS are available on the project Web site or upon request via phone or e-mail.

Advisory Committee Members
The following individuals contributed their valuable time and effort to help guide this study:

Randy Anderson
Brian Carlstrom
Mike Clark
Cindi DeBrueller
Mike Doke
Maria Dominguez
Jennifer Donnelly
Comm. Rodger Ford
Jerry Grossnickle
Cecil Jaksha
Karl Kment
Roger Kauble
Michael Lang
Dean Lookingbill
Michael Morneault
Mayor Brian Prigel
Charles Sciscione
Comm. Don Struck
Don Wiley
Risa Wonsly

Despite the community support for a new bridge, several actions can be taken to help keep the project moving, including:

- Asking for support from state and federal congressional representatives on both sides of the Columbia.
- Advocating for short and medium-term improvements.
- Supporting establishment of a bridge replacement fund to help pay for a new bridge.
- Continuing to engage the community and local business leaders.
- Keeping the project in the public eye through regular media releases and public meetings.

Throughout the feasibility study, members of the public voiced support for a new bridge. The study was initiated and funded as a result of local efforts to spur the construction of a new bridge. In the short term, this could be collected by the Port of Hood River under an interagency agreement with Washington and Oregon Departments of Transportation. The sooner such a fund is established, the more impact it will have on leveraging federal funds for a new bridge.

This project is sponsored by the Southwest Regional Transportation Council and Oregon and Washington State Departments of Transportation in cooperation with the cities of Bingen, Hood River and White Salmon, and Hood River, Klickitat and Skamania Counties.
The DEIS studied the impacts and benefits of three alternatives. Two were located west of the existing bridge and one to the east. While the impacts of the three options were relatively similar, the preferred alternative had fewer impacts than the other two options on existing homes and businesses, vegetation, soils, water quality, traffic, visual and archeological resources. The preferred alternative also has a variety of benefits in comparison to the existing bridge, as discussed on page 1 and illustrated here.