

# Columbia River Crossing

Modernizing a five-mile I-5 interstate span  
created in 1917 and last updated in 1958



## Correcting False CRC Claims

- **Claim:** An investment of \$450 million from Washington will result in a \$3.1-3.5 billion infrastructure project.  
**They forgot to mention** the \$100 million/year tolls which will escalate to over \$200 million/yr and total over \$4 Billion over 30 years. **\$4 Billion to get \$3.5 Billion is not a good deal.** (59,000 commuters x \$2000/yr. tolls)
- **Claim:** More than a decade of input from citizens and local elected leaders.  
**Most of the input was ignored.** Here is a direct quote from one CRC document: *“The decision meetings would be open to the public, but only minimum legal notices would be provided and no display advertising would be placed. **We would not encourage public participation.**”*
- **Claim:** Unanimous support for Locally Preferred Alternative.  
**There is little real support for light rail** - Vancouver **voters refused to pay even 1/10 cent** sales tax to operate light rail.
- **Claim:** For the Final EIS, the range of one-way toll rates studied for the financial analysis was between \$1 and \$3 (2006 dollars, see Exhibit 4.3-3 from the FEIS). This range in 2020 dollars (post construction) would be \$1.41 to \$4.24. (pg 23)  
**The minimum toll is \$4.24 each way.** Page 4-19 of the FEIS states: *“scenarios based on either the Base (Schedule 1) or Schedule 2 toll rates do not appear to be viable. The finance plan scenario shown assumes Toll Rate Schedule 3 and employs its entire borrowing capacity. It employs 3 years of precompletion tolling on a cash basis and a small amount of residual toll revenues. (Emphasis added) (The actual tolls in Schedule 3 - **tolls of \$4.24 each way in 2020. That is about \$2000/yr for rush hour commuters.**)*
- **Claim:** A light rail component is absolutely necessary to secure \$850 million in New Starts federal funding for this project,  
**Deceptive:** New Starts is a Federal Transit Agency program & they only give money to build transit. It is **completely unrelated to Federal Highway money for the freeway component, including the bridge.**
- **Claim:** Local revenues and tolling will also be needed  
**Only for the mega project. If we remove the light rail and un-needed interchange work, then the project comes in at less \$800 million. After \$400 million from the Federal Highway Administration, that leaves only \$200 million from each state and NO TOLLS.**
- **Claim:** An estimated 25 % lower operations and maintenance cost per rider  
**Why does C-Tran need additional revenue** to operate it, if it is cheaper?

- **Claim:** If light rail is removed from the project, additional environmental review process will be required, which would delay the project for years if not decades.  
**To quote their own document:** “*A supplemental EIS would likely require 12 to 24 months to complete.*” That is a small delay to save over a billion dollars.
  - **Claim:** Any further attempt to change the current bridge design will cause years, if not decades of delay.  
**Hurry up and buy this baby**, before someone else gets it! Just like a used car salesperson. Actually only **12-24 months to save Billions is a good deal**. See above
  - **Claim:** Eliminates last national interstate bridge lift  
**Low cost changes** to railroad bridge will **cut lifts by 90+%**
  - **Claim:** Improves crossing to modern seismic standards  
**Reality:** The current bridges are less likely to fall than other Portland I5 bridges.
  - **Claim:** Improves commute time and reduces congestion  
**Only slightly:** ONE MINUTE in the am and EIGHT MINUTES in the pm, for a **toll cost of \$48/hr. saved**
  - **Claim:** Reduces accidents and emergency bottlenecks  
**Other 15 bridges have more accidents**
  - **Claim:** We will lose ... \$450 million from Oregon if light rail is eliminated from the project.  
**Light rail is not the only contingency** attached to Oregon’s \$450 million. It must also pass muster with Oregon’s State Treasurer among other restrictions.
  - **Claim:** The I-5 Bridge does not meet current safety and seismic standards.  
**Most bridges DO NOT** meet the latest (“current”) standards.
  - **Claim:** Compared to bus rapid transit, light rail provides: Better travel times [light rail averages 17 mph versus BRT’s 14.5 mph, including stops]  
**They forgot to tell you** that the **current express bus takes 15 minutes** from downtown to downtown while the **light rail will take over 30 minutes!**
  - **Claim:** Greater potential for nearby transit oriented development  
**This is the real reason for light rail** - **to enable high density development with taxpayer subsidies.**
  - **Claim:** The approved project design anticipates a significant mode shift from single occupancy vehicles to transit.  
**They claim a transit usage approaching that of New York City.** **That is simply unrealistic.** The history of transit is one of steady decline since the automobile became affordable almost 100 years ago. Why would people abandon their convenient, fast cars for slow, inconvenient transit?
  - **Claim:** What happens if light rail ridership projections aren’t met? Will express bus service be cut?  
**TriMet has cut bus service more severely than its light rail**
  - **Claim:** Based on current modeling, in 2030 during the PM 2-hour peak, trains are operating at approximately 98 percent capacity with 7.5 minute headways, which equates to a two hour peak load of approximately 4,180 riders.  
**Reality:** That is with all riders standing and is **about the capacity of a single lane of a freeway, but at the cost of a five lane freeway! Is this really the wave of the future?**
  - **Claim:** Generates a regional economic benefit of \$5-8 billion  
**They forgot the cost of tolls & cost over-runs.** **The cost is over \$4 billion** when you include tolls. Even more when you include the depressed economic activity due to an effective tax increase of \$100-\$200 million/yr. Still more when you have to pay for cost over-runs.
- The 59,000 residents from Clark County that work in Oregon deserve better than to be bled of \$2000/yr just to get to work.** That is a total of \$120 million out of the local economy, about \$10 million in lost sales tax due to loss of \$300 million in purchasing power over 30 yrs.