



Issues and Responses

June 24, 2008

Recently some concerns have been raised that suggest the need for clarification of project information. The concerns highlighted below are followed by a short response and reference to data in the Alternatives Analysis Report where applicable.

I-5 traffic will become much worse if a connector is built

Alternatives 3, 4, 5 and 6 all add capacity (travel lanes) to I-5 to accommodate future growth. As a result, they show peak period traffic volumes increasing from about **1% to 30%** over the No Build condition. The percentage change varies among locations along I-5 and I-205. The increase in traffic is caused by vehicles shifting away from non-freeway routes to the interstate and is attracted to the freeway because of the planned increase in travel lanes. Federal Highway Administration rules do not allow new transportation projects to negatively impact freeway operations. Therefore, I-5 improvements are required elements of Alternatives 3, 4, 5 and 6. (see Alternatives Analysis Report section 7.4-3 and figures 7.4-1, 7.4-2 and 7.5-2)

The cost is too high

The highest estimated cost is just over \$1 billion in 2008 dollars. Any finally selected solution will be built in stages or phases over time as funding becomes available. Most major transportation projects are completed in just such a manner. The study cost estimates are based on an appropriate methodology and level of detail for this type of analysis. References to higher costs may use assumptions that differ with the comparative analysis used in this study. (see Alternatives Analysis Report section 5.5)

Town Center congestion is not helped by the connectors

The total traffic and truck volumes in town centers (and other locations) are shown in Alternatives Analysis Report figure 7.4-1. Close examination of the figure shows total traffic volumes varying among town centers across the alternatives. Trucks as a percentage of total traffic generally decrease in town centers with Alternatives 4, 5, and 6. (see Alternatives Analysis Report section 7.5.3)

Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 will harm the natural environment

Those alternatives do show larger potential impacts to natural resources. Given the broad width of the connector corridors, there are considerable opportunities and flexibility in the location and design of this project to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects. Projects can also present opportunities for enhancing and protecting adjacent natural resource areas. (see Alternatives Analysis Report sections 8.2, 8.3, and 8.4)

Too much property will be affected

Estimates of the impacts on residential, commercial and industrial property for Alternatives 3, 4, 5, and 6 show that 110 – 180 residences and 10 – 130 commercial/industrial sites may be affected. For Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 the majority of potential property impacts are due to I-5 improvements. The land use and revenue impacts have been estimated as well. (see Alternative Analysis Report section 8.1).

Alternative 6 violates Oregon land use law

Actually Alternative 6 is an outcome of the application of Oregon land use law by implementing systems planning direction from the Metro Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP shows a corridor alignment similar to Alternative 6 as one possible solution for study. The Department of Land Conservation and Development has concurred that the need and mode of connector improvement has already been established and that the decision on its location (inside or outside the UGB) can be deferred to the outcome of a study like the project Alternatives Analysis. If a solution outside the UGB is selected, a Goal Exception will be required. This process is entirely consistent with Oregon land use law with a specific emphasis on Goals 12 and 14.

A connector will encourage more urban sprawl

Metro and Washington County are currently conducting a study of the project's likely affect on location and timing of planned growth. That information is expected soon and will be taken into account as part of the preferred solution decision. Regional framework and growth planning defines future growth. Roadway design and management techniques such as access control, phasing, and Interchange Area Management Planning can be used to avoid undesired land use consequences.