



Coalition for a
Livable Future



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**FIVE GROUPS CALL FOR AN IMMEDIATE RESTART
OF DEADLOCKED I-5 PLANNING PROCESS**

Portland, OR – The Coalition for a Livable Future, the Bicycle Transportation Alliance, Environment Oregon, Environment Washington, and Upstream Public Health join forces today in calling for a new plan for the Columbia River Crossing.

Seeing no regional agreement on the size, funding, congestion management, or design of the project, the five groups are calling for a restart of the deadlocked planning process. The groups are promoting a new approach – a “CRC 2.0” – that starts with region’s shared values of economic vitality, affordable transportation, safe and healthy neighborhoods, and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Oregon and Washington residents have already spent \$80 million on the CRC, with another \$50 million committed, yet the region is still without agreement on even the basic elements of the project.

Likely Vancouver mayor-elect Leavitt has committed to voters that he will not accept tolls on a new I-5 bridge. Tolling has been described by leaders – including the director of the Washington Department of Transportation and the Mayor of Portland – as an essential and non-negotiable element of the CRC.

Leavitt joins a growing chorus of Oregon and Washington leaders who do not support the Columbia River Crossing proposal. Portland Mayor Sam Adams recently withdrew his support for the 12-lane plan, saying “No tolls, no new bridge.” Metro President David Bragdon has expressed concern that the proposed “jumbo” highway project would “probably either result in much worse traffic than we suffer from today, or simply move the traffic around to spots where the impact would be just as bad.”

In addition, federal officials have stated that the \$4 billion price tag is unrealistic, and state legislators in Oregon and Washington have shown little support for the project.

“Without agreement to impose tolls, and with clear signals from Congress and the two state legislatures that \$4 billion is not realistic, we need an alternative plan we can afford,” says Joe Cortright, an expert in regional economics.

The new plan would use least cost planning principles and include land use changes, transportation investments, and management strategies. Like the LUTRAQ process that led to a successful alternative to the Westside Bypass freeway in the early 1990s, the design should be created outside the Departments of Transportation.

“We need a new plan,” said Jill Fuglister, co-director of Coalition for a Livable Future. “Portland-Vancouver has long been a model of sustainability. If done right, a new project could help the region take our sustainable transportation legacy to the next level. If done wrong, it would irreparably tarnish our green credentials.”

“Rather than pick apart the \$4 billion, unpopular version, we should start with our shared goals and see what could be done to meet them,” says Scott Bricker, Executive Director of the Bicycle Transportation Alliance. “In this economy, we should be maintaining and optimizing the roads we already have, not building bigger and more expensive ones that degrade our communities.”

“With Metro, Portland, and Vancouver all working to reduce the carbon footprint of the region’s transportation system, now is the time to step back and figure out the elements that will help the states reach our respective climate goals,” said Heather Shute, Policy Advocate for Environment Washington. “It is unacceptable in 2009 to continue to pretend it’s ok to spend billions of dollars on a project that increases global warming pollution by 32%.”

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