

Columbia River Crossing: Project Sponsors Council Roles and Responsibilities (Draft 10/15/05)

TO: Jay Lyman/CRC
COPIES: Amy Echols/CRC
FROM: Marcy Schwartz/CRC
DATE: October 15, 2005

In the first meeting of the Project Sponsors Council (PSC) it is important for the members to develop an understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to other groups participating in the project. This is especially significant because the agencies represented on the PSC are involved in many other project-related activities and there is a large potential for overlap and inefficiency if these distinctions are not established at the outset. I have summarized my thoughts and suggestions below to initiate discussion. It is in the Project Development Team's (PDT) interest to come to agreement on its preferences concerning the PSC as soon as possible so the appropriate presentation can be developed and so we can "work" the issues with individual PSC members in advance of the meeting.

Decision Making

As I see it, the PSC is a decision making body. It is expected to make the following decisions during the course of the project:

- Approval of the Problem Definition
- Approval of the Evaluation Framework
- Approval of the range of alternatives
- Approval of the alternatives to be considered in the EIS
- Approval of the locally preferred alternative

The approval of the locally preferred alternative by the PSC would trigger individual agency public hearings. Each elected official body (Board of Directors, Commission, City Council, and so on) would take action, presumably to endorse the locally preferred alternative recommended by the PSC. The PSC members would be entrusted to make the other decisions on behalf of their fellow elected officials with no need for public hearings or individual agency endorsements.

At each decision point, the PDT would disseminate a briefing packet ten days in advance of the meeting containing the following information:

- The PDT's recommendation

- The Task Force recommendation
- A summary of public comment
- A summary of agency comment. I am assuming the concurrence points (formal or informal) of the joint regulatory review group would precede the PSC decision points, but this bears more thought and discussion with Jeff and Heather. It seems risky to me to have the PSC decide something, only to discover that the joint agency group disagrees or wants a different wording of the document.

I assume that each PSC member would be briefed in advance of the decision meetings by senior staff of their organizations. Senior staff is responsible for providing requested information and responding to questions. It is expected that each of the PSC decision meetings would result in a decision with no need for extended deliberations in future meetings. This approach would require extensive coordination among PDT members prior to the meetings.

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. The Task Force chairs would be expected to attend and respond to PSC questions concerning the Task Force recommendations. Task Force members would be made aware of the meetings. Meeting notes would be prepared and posted on the website.

Project Advisors

Beyond these formal decisions, the PSC may want to consider interim items---component identification and evaluation, initial alternative descriptions, funding options to be included in the alternatives, and so on. I feel such meetings can be scheduled, but should be kept to a minimum and not scheduled on a regular basis. Staff members from each of these organizations are actively participating in the PDT, in the working groups, and in the Regional Partners Group (RPG). Indeed, several of the PSC members also sit on the Task Force where these items are discussed in detail. The organizations have ample opportunities to influence the direction and content of the work that will ultimately be presented to the PSC. If individual PDC members desire more detailed information on the progress of the project, they can consult one-on-one with their senior staff members. Again, the PDT should manage the “care and feeding” of individual PSC members to ensure they have the required level and frequency of information.

Non-decision meetings should be treated as opportunities for the PSC members to advise the PDT on key issues. No “official” decisions should be made at the meetings. No public notice would be provided and Task Force participation would not be sought. Meeting notes would be prepared but not posted on the website (the same as RPG and working group meeting notes).

I look forward to discussion of these items. Let me know if I can modify this information to support presentation and discussion among the Project Directors and other team members.