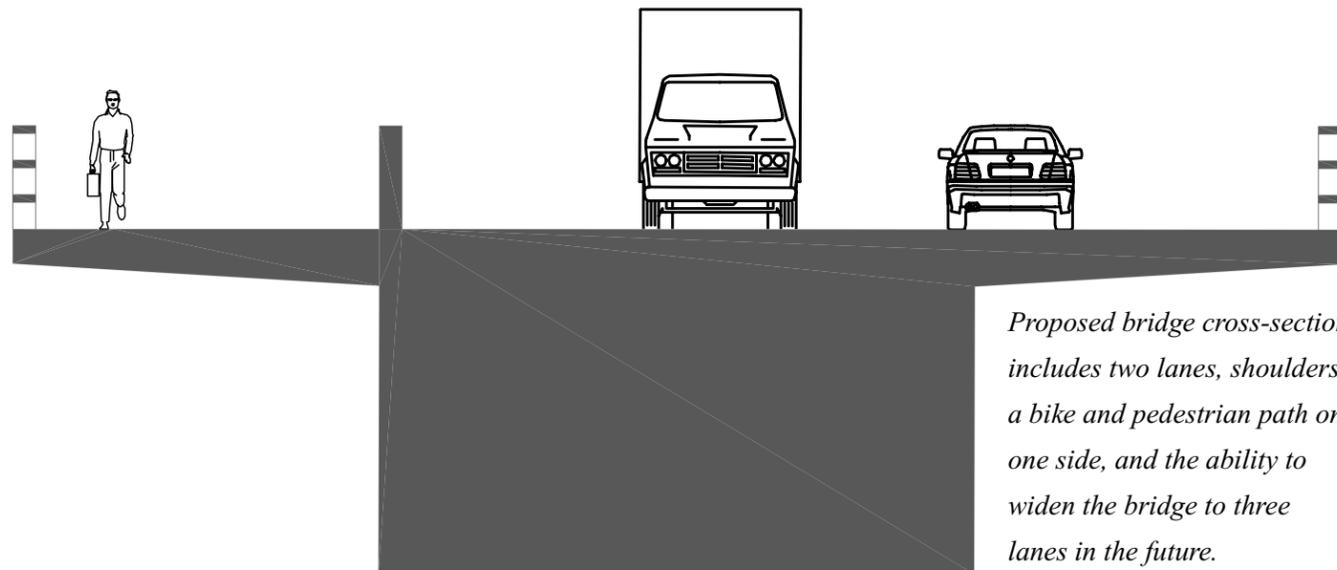


SW Washington Regional Transportation Council
PO Box 1366
Vancouver, WA 98666



Proposed bridge cross-section includes two lanes, shoulders, a bike and pedestrian path on one side, and the ability to widen the bridge to three lanes in the future.

For More Info—

To find out more about the project and comment:

- **Attend the next community open house May 15, 2003, 5 to 8 p.m. at Fidel's in Bingen, Washington**
- Request a presentation to your neighborhood, business and civic group; call Dale Robins, 360-397-6067, ext. 5212.
- Visit our Web site at www.rtc.wa.gov/studies/sr35.

Who to Contact for More Information

Please contact:
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www.rtc.wa.gov/studies/sr35

Volume 6

Spring, 2003

Study of New and Improved Bridge Moves Forward

The study of improvements to the Columbia River crossing between Hood River, Oregon and Bingen/White Salmon, Washington has entered its third phase. It includes detailed study and a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for the three remaining "action" alternatives under study, as well as a "no action" alternative. Initial analysis of these alternatives has been completed and will be presented at a public open house on May 15, 2003 in Bingen, Washington. A recommended preferred alternative also will be presented for review and comment at the meeting.

The three remaining alternatives (see map, next page) are all located near the existing bridge and include:

- EC-1 would be directly west of the existing bridge, until about midway across the river where it would curve to the west before connecting with Dock Grade Road in Washington. This alternative also would include raising SR-14 by several feet and realigning and improving Dock Grade Road to accommodate increased traffic.
- EC-2 would be directly west of the existing bridge and would connect to SR-14 in Washington. SR-14 would be improved to include turn lanes and signals at this intersection.
- EC-3 would be directly east of the existing bridge and would connect to SR-14. It would bow slightly to the east over the navigation channel. As with EC-2, SR-14 would be improved to include turn lanes and signals where the bridge connects to it.

Each alternative would include facilities for autos, trucks, bicycles and pedestrians. In each case, the new bridge would be high enough to allow river traffic to pass under the bridge without the need to raise and lower a "lift span" or drawbridge section. For each alternative, the existing bridge would be demolished. If space permits, short and mid-term improvements also would be undertaken, including modifying toll collection facilities, making improvements to nearby intersections with Interstate 84 exit and approach ramps and closing one local access point. More detailed evaluation and design of these alternatives may be conducted as part of a possible future phase.

SR-35 Columbia River Crossing Project Update



Environmental Impact Statement Process Underway

This phase of the bridge study includes preparation of a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). The DEIS evaluates the alternatives described previously, as well as a "no-action" alternative which would be to continue using the existing bridge, possibly demolishing it when it can no longer be safely operated (in approximately 30 years). The DEIS assesses impacts on a variety of environmental and human factors such as air and water quality, fish and wildlife, recreation, and economics, among others. Preparation of the DEIS involves review and comment by a variety of state and federal agencies, local governments and the general public. An advisory committee of local officials and citizens will continue to provide guidance at key points in the study. Public meetings will provide other citizens with opportunities to comment as well. The accompanying flow-chart illustrates the DEIS process (see page 3).

Preliminary analysis of the alternatives to be studied in the DEIS has been completed (see pages 2 to 3) and will be presented at the May 15 public open house. A recommended preliminary preferred alternative will be presented at that time (EC-2).

A final environmental impact statement (FEIS) also may be prepared following completion of the DEIS. The FEIS would describe alternatives, including proposed construction methods, in more detail. Funding for the FEIS has not yet been approved, though an application for funding has been submitted, with possible approval in 2004.

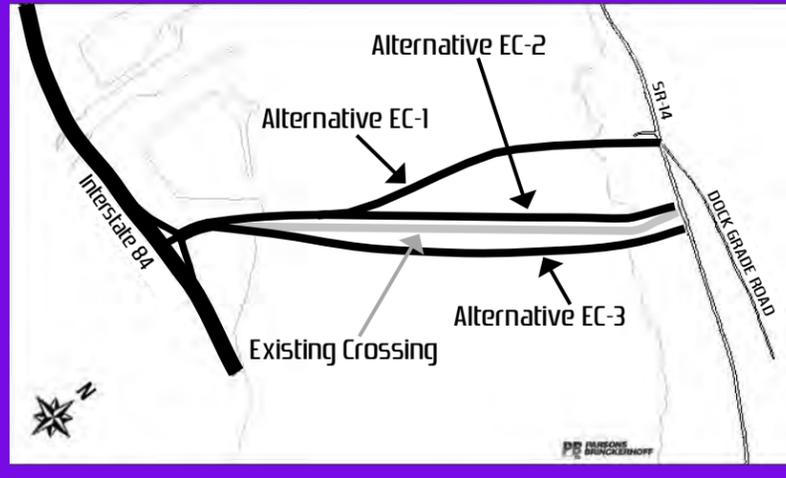
COME TO A PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE AT FIDEL'S RESTAURANT IN BINGEN ON MAY 15, 5 TO 8 PM, TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE STUDY



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.



SR-35 Columbia River Crossing Study ALTERNATIVES



Preliminary Technical Research Complete

The project team has completed its preliminary analysis of the impact of each bridge alternative on a variety of environmental and other resources, including:

Air Quality. No substantial effects on air quality are expected. Pollution during construction would be reduced by following best management practices and procedures required and recommended by state environmental agencies. The project area currently meets state and federal air quality requirements.

Energy. While energy would be consumed during construction of bridge improvements, use of the new bridge would help reduce future daily energy use.

Fish and Wildlife. There are 10 fish species in the area listed as threatened or endangered. Some of these species may be affected by construction, including effects of noise and increased turbidity of the river water. Additional habitat areas for predatory fish also could be created. However, in the area near the shoreline, habitat for predatory fish would be reduced. In addition, one of the alternatives (EC-1) could impact upland habitat for two species of concern.

Hazardous Materials. Work on some of the bridge alternatives would take place in a number of areas where hazardous materials such as pesticides, insecticides, fertilizers, chemically treated

railroad ties, chemical spills or other contaminants were used. In addition, the existing bridge and related structures could contain materials such as asbestos and/or lead based paint that could be exposed during demolition.

Land Use. One of the alternatives (EC-1) would result in potential displacements of businesses or portions of commercial or light industrial properties.

Noise. Future increases in traffic on Interstate 84 and other nearby transportation facilities would increase noise levels, regardless of whether a new bridge is constructed. Over the long term, construction of a new bridge would not affect noise levels and would not cause increases in noise that would exceed federal standards. However, there would be increased noise during construction.

Social and Economic Elements. As noted previously, one alternative would displace an existing business. Construction also would affect bridge users and recreationists, particularly windsurfers and kiteboarders. There would be minor, short-term impacts on use of the nearby Columbia River treaty access fishing sites. These impacts and increases in tolls needed to finance bridge improvements may burden low-income area residents and visitors.

Soils and Geology. On the south side of the Columbia River, stormwater runoff would increase the potential for erosion where the bridge approach would be realigned slightly for each alternative. Under Alternative EC-1, Dock Grade Road would be realigned and pushed deeper into the steep slope. Slopes in this area are relatively unstable, resulting in a high risk of failure.

Transportation. All three "action" alternatives would improve mobility for cars, trucks, bicycles and pedestrians. The existing bridge is not wide enough to adequately accommodate trucks, has no bicycle/pedestrian facilities, and no shoulders. Adjacent intersections (e.g., I-84/Highway 35 and Highway 35/Marina Way) would be improved in conjunction with construction of a new bridge to reduce congestion and improve safety.

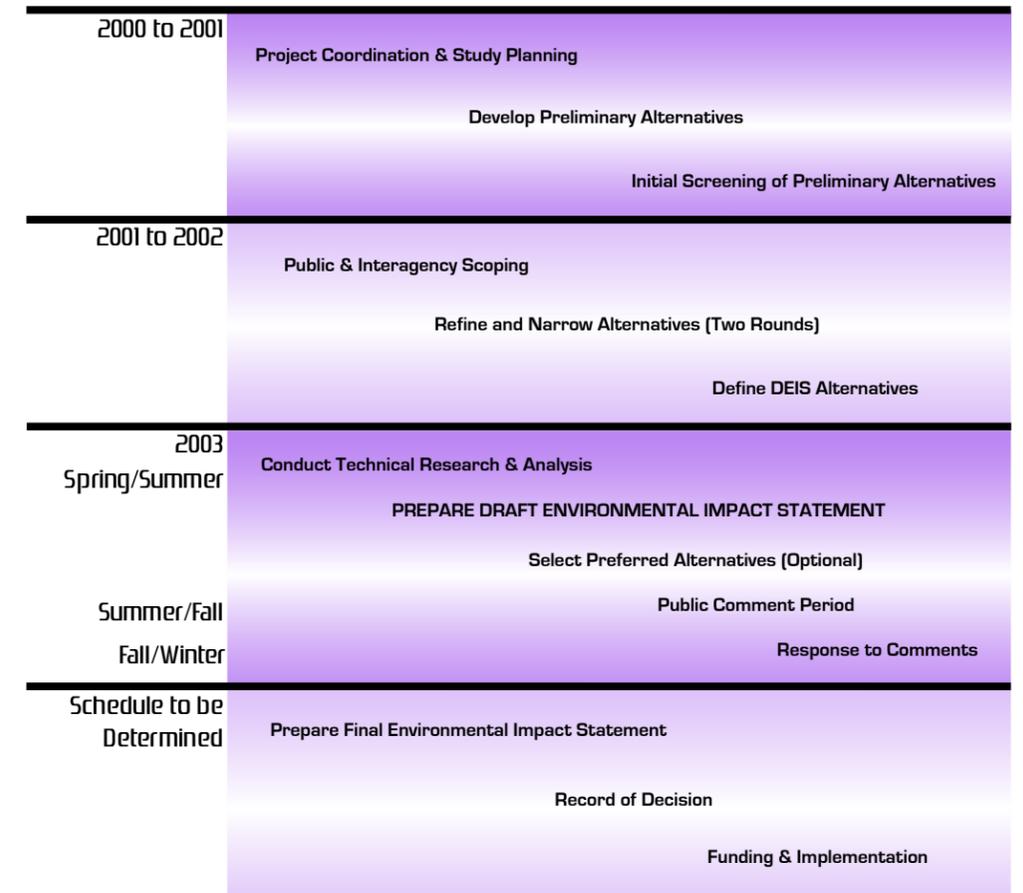
Vegetation and Wetlands. It is expected that no jurisdictional wetlands would be affected. The EC-3 Alternative likely would require removal of a large white oak east of the existing bridge on the Washington side of the river. There would be temporary and permanent impacts to plants along the shoreline. The EC-1 alternative would have the smallest impact on shoreline vegetation but the highest impact on upland vegetation (near Dock Grade Road).

Visual. There has been careful consideration given to the architectural and structural design of a new bridge to help maintain the integrity of the surrounding environment and ensure the bridge is in harmony with the surrounding natural landscape. Other visual impacts would vary by alternative. Differences include:

- No change would occur under the No Action Alternative, unless the existing bridge were demolished.
- Improvements to Dock Grade Road as part of Alternative EC-1 would result in additional visual impacts to the Washington side.
- Alternatives EC-2 and EC-3 would remove mature trees and vegetation, which would alter existing views.

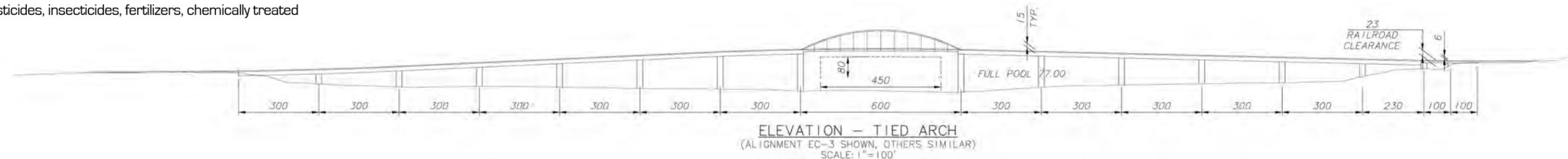
Water Quality. A variety of impacts would result from construction activities, including impacts on turbidity, risk of spills from concrete operations, drilling and motorized equipment. In the long term, water quality would be improved as stormwater from the bridge is collected and treated. Currently, the metal grate on the existing bridge allows stormwater to flow directly into the river. Minimal effects on flood elevations would be expected.

NEPA Process



Results of Technical Analysis to be Presented at Next Public Meeting

The next public meeting, scheduled for May 15, 2003 at Fidel's Restaurant in Bingen, Washington, will provide an opportunity to review and comment on preliminary analysis of bridge alternatives. A recommended proposed preliminary alternative (EC-2) also will be presented.



C O N C E P T U A L B R I D G E F E A T U R E S