



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

mayor correct.

Northwest Mountain Region
Colorado, Idaho, Montana
Oregon, Utah, Washington
Wyoming

Airports Division
1601 Lind Ave. SW, Suite 315
Renton, Washington 98057-3356

September 5, 2008

R 09/08/08

Hon. Mayor-Elect Sam Adams
City of Portland
City Hall
1221 SW 4th Avenue, Room 220
Portland, OR 97204

Hon. Mayor Royce Pollard
City of Vancouver
City Hall
P.O. Box 1995
Vancouver, WA 98668

Dear Mayor-Elect Adams and Mayor Pollard:

Thank you for your August 5, 2008, letter, asking the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to join you as a full partner in the development of height design parameters for the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) bridge project. The FAA has been involved with the project as a cooperating agency under the National Environmental Policy Act since 2006, and has previously provided comments to the CRC Task Force on several alternatives for input into the project's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). While we understand and appreciate your desire to develop a bridge to meet the needs of your communities, we cannot provide a single point of contact from our agency "empowered to make decisions for the FAA as well as act as a policy and technical resource relative to aviation design parameters and options." In order to provide thorough and adequate technical guidance on a proposed project such as the CRC, the FAA would have to involve staff from at least five different divisions – and no one representative from any of these divisions would have the authority to bind members of the others. Consequently, the FAA must decline the invitation as proffered.

Perhaps an explanation of some of our general concerns regarding design and how it affects existing airports and the National Airspace System (NAS) is in order. Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR) Part 77, *Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace*, defines the various airspace surfaces necessary for safe operation of aircraft. In addition to Part 77, there are other obstruction criteria, such as for instrument departures and one-engine inoperative situations, that must be evaluated. Also, potential effects of navigational aids must be simulation-modeled, based on specific proposal(s).

Because there are competing demands on navigable airspace, the FAA has established a procedure for notifying us when there will be proposed construction affecting that navigable airspace. Once notified by the proponent of a proposed construction, several different divisions of the FAA (including Flight Procedures, Flight Standards, Air Traffic, Airway Facilities, Airports, and each branch of the military services) need the opportunity to review and comment on the proposal. Each division has its own specific set of technical criteria which govern its review. This is why, until we have a specific proposal in front of us, no one from the FAA can determine what the potential effects on the navigable airspace may be – either at Pearson Airfield or Portland International Airport. There are too many variables which must be considered in making a determination like the ones we are charged with

issuing. This is also why it is not possible to designate one individual, or representative, from the FAA who is knowledgeable in all aspects of the operations, and who could be authorized to speak on behalf of the entire agency regarding our policy and technical guidance.

We do want to be of assistance. The CRC project is clearly important to the communities it would serve, and it could potentially affect airports that also serve those communities. With that in mind, we propose as an alternative for the two of you, or your designated representatives, to meet with representatives from the various divisions in the FAA. The CRC Task Force Project Team met with the FAA here at the Regional Office a few years ago, and we believe it was instrumental in providing clear guidance for the alternatives developed as part of the DEIS. We would like to offer our offices for a meeting with you, including those same divisions, on the potential effects the CRC project could pose to the NAS.

It is my sincere hope you will take us up on our briefing offer at our Regional Office in Renton, WA. Although we cannot participate directly in your design process as requested, such a briefing can help assure your design is compatible with operations at Portland International Airport and Pearson Airpark. Let me know if this proposal addresses your needs.

Sincerely,



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cc: Seattle ADO

