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Columbia River Crossing

June 19, 2008

Columbia River Crossing  
c/o Heather Gundersen  
700 Washington Street, Suite 300  
Vancouver, WA 98660



Re: Comments on Draft EIS

Columbia River Crossing Team,

First, we would like you all to know that we respect and appreciate the exceptional level of commitment and detailed analysis that you bring to this critically important project.

Second, we strongly support the overall project concept and specifically Alternative 3: Replacement Crossing with Light Rail.

We do have some comments that we ask you to consider.

#### Community Connection

The community connection or lid over I-5 from Evergreen to the 8<sup>th</sup> Street Alley is especially important not only to our Riverwest project but also to the downtown and the Vancouver National Historic Reserve. It reunites both sides of the freeway physically and symbolically. The existence and design of this connection will profoundly affect what we develop on the eastern side of Riverwest and its design. The designs of the lid and of Riverwest should be harmonious and we look forward to working with you as the community connection evolves.

#### Two-Way LRT Alternative Preferred

We believe that the two-way alternative for LRT will have significantly more beneficial community development impact on downtown Vancouver than the couplet alternative.

**Station Proximity:** Real estate within one to two blocks of LRT stations will benefit because their employees and patrons will be able to easily arrive and depart from a single convenient location. When inbound and outbound stations are split, the real estate between the stations benefits, but riders must always walk at least two blocks sometime during the round trip, regardless of weather, to use the system. Most riders will have to walk longer distances.

Split stations result in less convenient one-way stations being proximate to more real estate. Two-way stations result in much more convenient stations being proximate to less real estate. We believe that fewer, more convenient stations will have a much greater development impact at less public cost.

**Impacts on Non-Station Blocks:** While real estate and community development will be stimulated for those blocks within one or two blocks of LRT stations, real estate more than two blocks away from LRT stations and that face on the LRT tracks will be negatively affected. Auto access and parking on these streets will be restricted. It will not be apparently convenient for transit riders to access those block faces. The couplet alternative doubles the number of blocks that are negatively affected in this way.

**15<sup>th</sup> & Washington Block:** For several years, we have controlled the vacant block bound by 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, Washington and Main Streets with the intent of developing a significant project on this site at the appropriate time. The Vancouver City Center Vision Plan reinforces this concept. We assume that significant bus / LRT transfers will occur close to this block. The construction of a LRT system presents the opportunity for a functionally and architecturally unique transit-related development on our block. However, we believe that a couplet system dilutes the benefit that proximity to a two-way station could bring to the site.

We specifically request that the impacts of a development of a major transit related, public / private development project on this block be analyzed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

#### Couplet Concerns

The DEIS Executive Summary shows the couplet alignment running on 6<sup>th</sup> Street and then turning north onto Broadway. This alignment would have a major negative impact on our existing building at 500 E. Broadway, the West Coast Bank building, and on a building that is now being designed for the half block to the west of the West Coast Bank building. No station would be sufficiently close to benefit our buildings. The tracks would restrict auto traffic on this now heavily used street. The ability to connect 6<sup>th</sup> Street to the C Street on-ramp and the ability to connect a southbound lane on C Street to 6<sup>th</sup> Street would be compromised.

Beyond the specific negative impacts on our properties, the 6<sup>th</sup> Street alignment impairs auto traffic on 6<sup>th</sup> which, because it connects from C Street to the Port, is heavily traveled. An alignment on 7<sup>th</sup> which, because it only runs between C Street and Washington, would not impact a heavily traveled street. A 6<sup>th</sup> Street alignment also impairs turning movements into the Vancouvercenter garage – presently the City's largest public parking structure.

A 7<sup>th</sup> Street alignment would also allow for a LRT station on Washington between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. A station in this location would be most convenient to Vancouvercenter and visitors to Esther Short Park, lessen the negative non-station block impacts in the downtown by two block faces and therefore two blocks and be no less convenient for Vancouver convention center visitors than a station one block further south.

If the couplet alternative is selected, we strongly prefer a 7<sup>th</sup> Street alignment.

#### Lincoln Terminus Preferred

As we have emphasized above, we believe that there is significant potential for positive community development through transit related development projects. We further believe that the Lincoln Terminus with a two-way alignment on Broadway between McLoughlin and Fourth Plain holds the most potential for positive community development of the four alternatives.

The proposed stations at 24<sup>th</sup> and Broadway and at 33<sup>rd</sup> and Main could both yield public / private developments that would greatly enhance and complement the adjacent neighborhoods.

#### Mill Plain MOS Opposed

The one terminus alternative to which we strongly object is the Mill Plain MOS. The success of LRT depends on park and ride transit patrons. However, from a community development perspective, park and ride facilities are deadly urban activities. The patrons arrive in the morning, consume precious parking spaces all day and leave in the late afternoon / early evening with very little impact on retail. Parkers that can not be accommodated in the park and ride structure will consume on-street parking legitimately or illegitimately. The drivers of these cars will use the local streets in the am and pm peaks when road capacity is most dear.

The Mill Plain station has great potential for transit related, joint development, but locating even a 500 car park and ride facility at this location would destroy any possibility of realizing that potential.

### 6<sup>th</sup> & C Streets

It is not clear from the DEIS how the intersection of 6<sup>th</sup> and C Streets is intended to be reconstructed. It is our strong preference that:

- Eastbound traffic on 6th Street be allowed to make a right hand turn onto the C Street on-ramp; and
- Southbound traffic on C Street be allowed to make a right hand turn onto 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

We recognize that C Street will need to be somewhat elevated at 6<sup>th</sup>, that a left hand turn from 6<sup>th</sup> Street to C Street is not viable, and that a left hand turn from a C Street off-ramp onto 6<sup>th</sup> is not viable.

### Main Street Extension

One of the many positive improvements associated with the preliminary plans is the extension of Main Street from 5<sup>th</sup> to Columbia Way. We strongly support this extension. However, it will be challenging to create an environment along this extension that feels safe and inviting to pedestrians and we urge you to be open to creative solutions.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for your consideration of our opinions.

Sincerely,

  
Lance E. Killian

  
George H. Killian

  
Stephen M. Burdick

cc: Mayor Royce E. Pollard  
Vancouver City Council  
Pat McDonnell  
Thayer Rorabaugh