

From: [Todd Horenstein](#)
To: [Draft EIS Feedback;](#) 
CC:
Subject: Draft EIS comments
Date: Tuesday, July 01, 2008 3:57:51 PM
Attachments: [CRC DRAFT EIS Comments 1July 08.doc](#)

Greetings,

Attached are comments from Vancouver Public Schools pertaining to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Columbia River Crossing Project.

The School District appreciates the opportunity to submit comments and looks forward to further involvement as the project progresses.

Thank You.

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July 1, 2008

Columbia River Crossing
DraftEISfeedback@columbiarivercrossing.org
700 Washington Street, Suite 300
Vancouver, WA 98660

Thank you for providing an opportunity to comment on the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) Draft Environmental Statement (EIS). As you may know, Vancouver Public Schools spans many zip codes throughout the CRC Corridor, serving approximately 22,000 students and employing more than 3,000 people. We have 132 school busses transporting at least 14,000 regular education students and special needs students per day. The CRC will affect our students, families, employees and operations in various ways.

The Vancouver School District is a proponent of community initiatives that strengthen our diverse economy, provide family wage jobs, and promote a desirable quality of life throughout the region. These conditions improve neighborhoods and help our community sustain the public infrastructure. We believe the CRC project supports these initiatives.

In addition to the benefits a new bridge and/or high capacity transit (HCT) could bring to the local and regional economy, we also recognize several key big picture issues that we would like the CRC team address. Potential impacts on K-12 school sites within the project area include increased traffic, pedestrian and school bus stop safety, and general safety/security for our students who may use the HCT system/stops/terminus. HCT systems provide significant value for commuters, including students. However, inappropriate use, including the potential for youth criminal activity to become more mobile, presents a new dynamic for schools and neighborhoods. Although each of the terminus options impacts school sites, Kiggins Bowl and Lincoln sites are a primary concern due to their immediate proximity to Discovery Middle School (grades 6-8), Vancouver School of Arts and Academics, (VSAA, grades 6-12), and Kiggins Bowl, the district's shared athletic/events stadium. Although these terminus options provide convenient access to these district and community facilities for scheduled purposes, safety/security impacts from some transit ridership should be considered and mitigated to the greatest possible extent.

The following concerns and suggestions for further consideration are a result of our review of the CRC Draft EIS.

Safety and security at the stops and terminus is a significant concern. The identified terminus locations are relatively close to multiple school campuses. Schools, by their nature, often become gathering places for nonschool or community scheduled activities. Improving access to school sites is beneficial, however, using the new transit system to access school sites also may encourage undesirable activity. A comprehensive safety analysis of the options should be conducted with the opportunity to learn from Portland's experiences such as its rider advocate program. On-site monitoring in the trains/busses and stations is essential, not only for physical safety but also for fare checks so riders are vested in the trip and not traveling without purpose. The safety plan analysis should identify and include an expansive response area beyond the terminus to address the impact on school sites. Ideally, an on-site security post at the station open 24/7 would be established to prevent unwanted or illegal activities at a vacant structure after hours.

Increased traffic at a park and ride or terminus could exacerbate an already heavily traveled area. Easy access to I-5 and the impacts associated with accessing the parking facilities via neighborhood streets should be analyzed further.

Pedestrian safety, particularly where children are present, requires careful consideration of existing sidewalks, crosswalks and safe routes to schools given increased traffic in and around the stops and terminus. Impacts on nearby schools and school bus stops should be assessed thoroughly with the safety of our young people in mind.

Certain educational benefits may be derived through an effectively designed and efficiently operated HCT system. Combining resources to reduce trips and providing transit service in the areas where traffic is expected to increase, thereby reducing our carbon footprint, can help teach children to be responsible stewards of the environmental by using public transportation. Measuring these outcomes to the extent possible may be a worthwhile analysis.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit feedback on the CRC Draft EIS. We would be glad to assist with the consideration that is needed to address each of these issues as the combined CRC, HCT and LPA decision process moves forward.

Sincerely,

Steven T. Webb, Ed.D.
Superintendent