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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,

B-017-001 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.

B-017-002 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.

B-017-003 Community Connection

The community connection or lid over I-5 from Evergreen to the 8th 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.

B-017-004 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.

500 East Broadway, Suite 110 ☉ Vancouver, Washington 98660 ☉ Telephone 360.567.0626/503.227.0423 ☉ Facsimile 360.567.0621

B-017-001

Thank you for taking the time to submit your comments on the I-5 CRC DEIS.

B-017-002

Preferences for specific alternatives or options, as expressed in comments received before and after the issuance of the DEIS, were shared with local sponsor agencies to inform decision making. Following the close of the 60-day DEIS public comment period in July 2008, the CRC project's six local sponsor agencies selected a replacement I-5 bridge with light rail to Clark College as the project's Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). These sponsor agencies, which include the Portland City Council, Vancouver City Council, TriMet Board, C-TRAN Board, Metro Council, RTC Board, considered the DEIS analysis, public comment, and a recommendation from the CRC Task Force when voting on the LPA.

With the LPA, new bridges will replace the existing Interstate Bridges to carry I-5 traffic, light rail, pedestrians and bicyclists across the Columbia River. Light rail will extend from the Expo Center MAX Station in Portland to a station and park and ride at Clark College in Vancouver. Pedestrians and bicyclists would travel along a wider and safer path than exists today.

For a more detailed description of highway, transit, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements associated with the LPA, see Chapter 2 of the FEIS.

B-017-003

Thank you for taking the time to submit your comments on the I-5 CRC DEIS. The project sponsors consider the proposed lid (Community Connector) as a critical component in the overall design of the facility.

B-017-004

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.

15th & Washington Block: For several years, we have controlled the vacant block bound by 15th, 16th, 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.

B-017-005Couplet Concerns

The DEIS Executive Summary shows the couplet alignment running on 6th 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 6th Street to the C Street on-ramp and the ability to connect a southbound lane on C Street to 6th Street would be compromised.

B-017-004

Following the selection of the LPA in July of 2008, the CRC enlisted the help of community members - residents, business owners, transit-dependent populations and commuters - who had interest in light rail planning to form the Vancouver Working Group (VWG). The VWG met regularly to develop recommendations and provided feedback to the CRC project, the City of Vancouver and C-TRAN on transit alignments, proposed station locations and design, security and park and ride facilities in downtown Vancouver. Following approximately 5 months of coordination, in addition to public open houses and walking tours, the VWG recommended the Washington-Broadway Couplet through downtown Vancouver to C-TRAN and City of Vancouver staff. Per the Vancouver Working Group Final Report (October 2009), this alignment was preferred largely because it spread the potential impacts and benefits across two streets, as opposed to concentrating them on a single street. This alignment was adopted as part of the LPA and is analyzed in the FEIS. For more information on the transit alignment decision-making process please see Chapter 2 (Section 2.7) of the FEIS.

B-017-005

Thank you for your comment. Preferences for specific alternatives or options, as expressed in comments received before and after the issuance of the DEIS, were shared with local sponsor agencies to inform decision making. The light rail alignment will travel on 7th street in order to form the couplet. For more information on the LPA, please see Chapter 2 of the FEIS.

B-017-005

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

A 7th Street alignment would also allow for a LRT station on Washington between 6th and 7th. 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 7th Street alignment.

B-017-006Lincoln 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 24th and Broadway and at 33rd and Main could both yield public / private developments that would greatly enhance and complement the adjacent neighborhoods.

B-017-007Mill 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.

B-017-006

The Clark College transit terminus was chosen by project sponsors as part of the LPA in July 2008, as it was deemed to most effectively balance the cost of the project and the projected community benefits.

RTC's Clark County High Capacity Transit System Study, published in December of 2008, analyzed specific high-capacity transit improvements that could connect with existing and future transit facilities and be extended throughout Clark County To view their Final HCT System Study, visit RTC's website at www.rtc.wa.gov.

B-017-007

The light rail transit terminus will be Clark College. There is a proposed Clark College park and ride with 1910 parking spaces at the terminus. It is expected that the majority of park and riders would utilize this lot. There is also a Mill District park and ride proposed, with ground floor retail and 420 parking spaces.

The CRC project modeled how drivers would access the three proposed Park and Ride lots in Vancouver during the morning peak commute. Two of the three Park and Rides – Clark College and SR-14 – are located adjacent to major thoroughfares (I-5 and SR 14). The Mill Plain Park and Ride, though not adjacent to I-5 or a state route, is located between two major arterials, Mill Plain and Fourth Plain Boulevards. This modeling confirmed the majority of drivers (69%-92%) would access the Park and Rides from major roads including I-5, SR 14, SR 500, Mill Plain and Forth Plain.

B-017-0086th & C Streets

It is not clear from the DEIS how the intersection of 6th 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 6th Street.

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

B-017-009Main Street Extension

One of the many positive improvements associated with the preliminary plans is the extension of Main Street from 5th 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

B-017-008

With the CRC project improvements at the SR-14 interchange, drivers would be able to make a right hand turn from 6th Street eastbound onto the C Street on-ramp to SR-14 eastbound and I-5 southbound. Drivers would not be able to make a right hand turn from C Street southbound onto 6th Street westbound, and would instead need to make a right turn one block to the north, on 7th Street, and an immediate left turn onto Broadway Street to access 6th Street.

B-017-009

Thank you for your comment. Preferences for specific alternatives or options, as expressed in comments received before and after the issuance of the DEIS, were shared with local sponsor agencies to inform decision making.