From: dsohigian@gmail.com
To: Columbia River Crossing;
CC:
Subject: Comment from CRC DraftEIS Comments Page
Date: Thursday, May 29, 2008 7:05:54 PM
Attachments:

Home Zip Code: 97201
Work Zip Code: 97201

Person:

Person commutes in the travel area via:

P-0686-001

1. In Support of the following bridge options:
Do Nothing

2. In Support of the following High Capacity Transit options:
Light Rail between Vancouver and Portland
Do Not Add HCT

3. Support of Bus Rapid Transit or Light Rail by location:
Lincoln Terminus: No Opinion
Kiggins Bowl Terminus: No Opinion
Mill Plain (MOS) Terminus: No Opinion
Clark College (MOS) Terminus: No Opinion

Contact Information:
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Portland, OR 97201

Comments:

P-0686-002

My view is that we need to reduce the amount of auto traffic around the region, and that includes between Vancouver and Portland. The decisions about the CRC will dramatically affect the choices that individuals make in where they live, where they

P-0686-001

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.

P-0686-002

As described in Chapter 3 (Section 3.4) of the DEIS and FEIS, and in the Indirect Effects Technical Report, highway capacity improvements and access improvements can induce development in suburban and rural areas that were not previously served, or were greatly underserved, by highway access. The DEIS outlines a comprehensive analysis of the potential induced growth effects that could be expected from the CRC project. A review of national research on induced growth indicates that there are six factors that tend to be associated with highway projects that

P-0686-002

work, where their kids go to school and how they get between all of these places. Reducing auto congestion on the CRC will encourage more driving, more suburban sprawl and separation of community. We need to encourage people to live near where they work, or to use means other than personal autos to get to where they need to go. Making public transport, biking, walking and carpooling the default choice for getting around our region should be the goal. It won't be easy, or cheap, because of the big cultural shift required, but I know that our region is up to the task.

The system we have today, which relies on personal autos to keep our economy healthy, has served us well for many years. But it cannot continue to scale. High gas prices and home foreclosures are the symptoms of a longer term shift that we need to be aware of in our planning. More of the same just won't serve us in the long term.

My family is lucky enough to live near our children's school and my work. To us, it feels like a luxury to be able to get around by public transport, bike and foot. It is a luxury that we would like more people to be able to afford, but for most, it is out of reach. Projects like the CRC keep this luxury out of reach by encouraging unsustainable practices. Increased auto traffic means developers are encouraged to build further out. It means that business are encouraged to hire from further off. It means that centralized shopping dominates.

P-0686-003

My specific suggestions for the CRC would be for a plan that reduces the amount of lanes available for personal autos and dramatically increases flow of public transport and bike options. Make the public transport options as fast or faster than personal auto and people will get out of their cars. Express service from between downtown Vancouver and downtown Portland would be a crucial piece of the puzzle. This may all sound a little far-fetched right now, but the long-term future of our region depends on these important choices. The future will not look like today but only bigger. The future will be fundamentally different.

induce sprawl. These are discussed in the Indirect Effects Technical Report. Based on the CRC project team's comparison of those national research findings to CRC's travel demand modeling, Metro's 2001 land use / transportation modeling, and a review of Clark County, City of Vancouver, City of Portland and Metro land use planning and growth management regulations, the DEIS and the FEIS conclude that the likelihood of substantial induced sprawl from the CRC project is very low. In fact, the CRC project, because of its location in an already urbanized area, the inclusion of new tolls that manage demand, the inclusion of new light rail, and the active regulation of growth management in the region, the CRC project will likely reinforce the region's goals of concentrating development in regional centers, reinforcing existing corridors, and promoting transit and pedestrian friendly development and development patterns.

In October, 2008, the project convened a panel of national experts to review the travel demand model methodology and conclusions, including a land use evaluation. The panel unanimously concluded that CRC's methods and the conclusions were valid and reasonable. Specifically, the panel noted that CRC would "have a low impact to induce growth…because the project is located in a mature urban area," and that it would "contribute to a better jobs housing balance in Clark County…a positive outcome of the project". These results are summarizes in the "Columbia River Crossing Travel Demand Model Review Report" (November 25, 2008).

In 2010, Metro ran the MetroScope model (an integrated land use and transportation model) to forecast growth associated with transportation improvements of a 12-lane river crossing and light rail to Clark College. Even with a 12-lane river crossing, the model showed only minimal changes in employment location and housing demand compared to the No-Build Alternative.

For a more detailed discussion regarding potential indirect land use changes as a result of the CRC project, including the likely land use changes associated with the introduction of light rail, please see Chapter 3 (Section 3.4) of the FEIS.

P-0686-003

The evaluation of the five alternatives in the DEIS was preceded by an extensive evaluation and screening of a wide array of possible solutions to the CRC project's Purpose and Need statement. Chapter 2 of the DEIS (Section 2.5) explains how the project's Sponsoring Agencies generated ideas and solicited the public, stakeholders, other agencies, and tribes for ideas on how to meet the Purpose and Need. This effort produced a long list of potential solutions, many of which were non-auto oriented options such as various transit modes and techniques for operating the existing highway system more efficiently without any capital investment. These options were evaluated for whether and how they met the project's Purpose and Need, and the findings were reviewed by project sponsors, the public, agencies, and other stakeholders. Alternatives that included only TDM/TSM strategies, or provided only transit improvements, would provide benefits, but could only address a very limited portion of the project’s purpose and need. This extensive analysis found that in order for an alternative to meet the six "needs" included in the Purpose and Need (described in Chapter 1 of the DEIS), it had to provide at least some measure of capital improvements to I-5 in the project area. Alternatives that did not include such improvements did not adequately address the seismic vulnerability of the existing I-5 bridges, traffic congestion on I-5, or the existing safety problems caused by sub-standard design of the highway in this corridor. The DEIS evaluated alternatives with more demand management (higher toll) and increased transit service with less investment in highway infrastructure improvements (Alternatives 4 and 5) compared to the toll and transit service levels included in Alternatives 2 and 3. The additional service and higher toll provided only marginal reductions in I-5 vehicle

volumes, and they came primarily at the cost of greater traffic diversion to I-205. This analysis found that a more balanced investment in highway and transit, as represented by Alternatives 2 and 3, performed considerably better on a broad set of criteria.