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COLUMBIA RIVER CROSSING DRAFT EIS
PUBLIC HEARING

WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 2008

RED LION HOTEL
VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON

P-1042-001

Extensive technical and public review and input has been included in all phases of the CRC project, from developing a purpose and need statement, screening a wide variety of alternatives, and developing a Draft and Final EIS. A supplemental draft is required if changes to alternatives after the draft are substantial and/ or if there are new significant impacts not previously discussed in the draft and/or there are changes in laws or regulations after the draft. The DEIS identified potential mitigation measures for all potentially significant as well as many non-significant impacts, and the FEIS further analyzes and develops mitigation measures and plans to a higher level of detail and refinement. CEQ NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1502.9(c)) do not require agencies to prepare a supplemental draft EIS just because an FEIS includes refined alternatives and additional information. Such changes are typical and expected in the planning process, and are consistent with CEQ and FHWA NEPA regulations. Between publication of the DEIS and FEIS, FTA and FHWA prepared three NEPA re-evaluations and a documented categorical exclusion (DCE) to complete changes in the project since the DEIS. The NEPA re-evaluations addressed the change in the project from: 1) the 17th Street transit alignment, 2) the composite deck truss bridge type, and 3) all other changes in design between the DEIS and the FEIS. The DCE addressed the impacts from the track work on the steel bridge.

Both agencies concluded from these evaluations that these changes and new information would not result in any significant environmental impacts that were not previously considered in the DEIS. For more information, see Appendix O of the FEIS.

00060
1 that the other thing that I am sort of
2 bothered by is not only sort of just the
3 general, like, busting on you guys that's
4 been happening, but also I think that we
5 cannot let Pierce Airfield make a decision
6 of how tall a bridge should be. I think
7 it's matter of national security and also
8 an economic matter for this whole -- for
9 the whole northwest.
10 With that, thank you, Gentlemen.
11 HAL DENGERRINK: Thank you, Tadd.
12 Joe.
13 JOE CORTRIGHT: Joe Cortright,
14 Portland.
15 On reading the Draft Environmental
16 Impact Statement, I was struck that as a
17 work of literature it reminds me of Marcel
18 Proust's Remembrance of Things Past --
19 extraordinarily long turgid work written
20 in a foreign language obsessed with the
21 time gone by -- and one other thing, a
22 work of fiction.
23 I think there are 15 flaws in the
24 draft environmental impact statement and
25 I'll go through them quickly.

P-1042-001

00061

P-1042-002 1 I think it fails to comply with
2 Oregon State's transportation policy --
3 planned policy 1G that requires low cost
4 options to be implemented before --
5 COURT REPORTER: Slow down please.
6 JOE CORTRIGHT: If I get more
7 time, I will go slower.
8 -- Cost options to be implemented
9 before building a large project in
10 Washington's comparable policy.
P-1042-003 11 It violates, two, Oregon's overall
12 use in greenhouse gases.
13 Three, Washington's statutory goal of
14 reducing greenhouse gasses.
P-1042-004 15 Four, Washington statutory goal of
16 reducing per capita vehicle miles
17 traveled.
18 Five, the project uses improperly
19 inflated estimates of traffic by using the
20 same land use assumptions in the no build
21 alternative and the build scenarios, which
22 is incorrect.
P-1042-005 23 It -- the EIS violates NEPA by
24 failing to give separate consideration to
25 transit alternatives and separate analysis

P-1042-002

Oregon Highway Plan's Policy 1G states "it is the policy of the State of Oregon to maintain highway performance and improve safety by improving system efficiency and management before adding capacity". This region has invested heavily in transportation system management (TSM) and transportation demand management (TDM) measures to improve the efficiency of the region's highways and lower vehicular demand in order to reduce the need for significant capital investments. Though many TSM and TDM measures are already in place in the I-5 corridor, the project team evaluated options to increase these low-cost measures. Screening evaluations during the development of a reasonable range of alternatives found that alternatives with only aggressive TSM/TDM measures did not meet the project's needs for addressing substandard highway design features and did not sufficiently alleviate automotive demand to reduce congestion around the I-5 crossing. These screening evaluations revealed that alternatives that best met the project's purpose and need included a mix of infrastructure investments to offer high-capacity transit and to address deficient highway design and capacity over the river and at nearby interchanges.

P-1042-003

While there was no standard threshold or standardized methodology for estimating greenhouse gas emissions when the DEIS was being developed, the project team worked with federal and state agencies to develop an appropriate analysis methodology that would allow disclosure of impacts and a comparison of alternatives. The DEIS, Chapter 3, Section 3.19.8, summarized the results of GHG emissions and climate change analysis conducted for the DEIS alternatives. Further detail was included in the Energy Technical Report that was released along with the DEIS.

Following the public comment period on the DEIS, the CRC project team was requested by the Metro Council and Portland City Council to secure

	00062	
P-1042-005	1	of tolling. You have bundled all of the
	2	alternatives. Under NEPA, you have to
	3	look at all the alternatives separately.
	4	It violates NEPA by failing to
	5	advance the analysis of the A-Plus
	6	Alternative and the Aorta Alternatives
	7	that came through your process and were
	8	reasonable alternatives.
P-1042-006	9	It fails to account for the effect of
	10	higher gas prices on travel demand, which
	11	are already reduced in demand.
P-1042-007	12	You failed to properly account for
	13	induced demand that will occur as a result
	14	of this project. You essentially assumed
	15	it away in your analysis.
P-1042-008	16	You have failed to allow for the
	17	future implementation of carbon reduction
	18	policies, either (inaudible) or carbon
	19	trade that we -- carbon taxes that we know
	20	will reduce future traffic demand.
P-1042-009	21	You studiously ignored the decline in
	22	traffic levels on I-5 over the last three
	23	years -- down half a percent in 2006, 1.2
	24	percent in 2007 and three percent the last
	25	12 months.

independent review of the GHG evaluation conducted for the DEIS. The “Columbia River Crossing Greenhouse Gas Emission Analysis Expert Review Panel Report” (January 8, 2009) describes the activities and findings of the independent review panel. The panel concluded that the GHG evaluation methods and the findings in the DEIS were valid and reasonable. They also found that the findings were likely conservative, and that the LPA would likely reduce GHG emissions even more than estimated in the DEIS. The GHG and climate change analysis of the FEIS updates the analysis that was in DEIS, but the basic conclusion that the LPA would have lower emissions than No-Build, remains unchanged.

Based on the modeling and analysis, the CRC LPA is expected to significantly increase transit ridership and reduce the number of vehicles crossing the river. This shift toward transit, reduction in auto crossing, reduced congestion, removal of bridge lifts, and lower accident rates, are all factors that contribute to lower CO2 emissions with the project than without it. These factors will also make it easier for the region to meet goals for reducing GHG emissions.

P-1042-004

With the LPA, the VMT in the area is almost unchanged when compared to no-build. Congestion pricing and light rail actually result in fewer vehicular river crossings with the LPA than with the No-Build scenario. Depending on the methods, the analysis suggest either a slight (around 1%) increase or slight decrease in VMT. The differences are the result of measuring the daily traffic versus the 9 hour peak period, regional versus corridor VMT, etc.

But this VMT is not per capita. Rather, population in the MSA is projected to increase by nearly one million people. The rise in VMT from existing to the No-Build (2030) is 23%. Compared to the effect of population growth, the project's impacts are nearly non-existent and

within the modeling margin of error.

00063

P-1042-010 1 You violated public record laws of
2 Oregon and Washington by failing to
3 respond to my February 22nd request for --
4 in any timely or complete way, for all
5 documents relating to forecasts and
6 tolling.

P-1042-011 7 You failed to analyze the opportunity
8 costs of spending 4 billion dollars on
9 this project and then not spending that
10 comparable amount of money on other
11 projects.

P-1042-012 12 You do not have a realistic financial
13 plan for this project and you assume the
14 increase in federal taxes that do not
15 exist. You should know that -- you should
16 be honestly telling everyone in this room
17 that a bridge will not get built here
18 unless there is at least a five dollar
19 round trip peak hour toll.
20 If you are in favor of this bridge,
21 you have to be in favor of tolling it
22 because that is the only way that it will
23 be paid for.
24 And you have not been honest in
25 revealing the likelihood that you will

Traffic forecasts reported in the DEIS and used to inform decisions on a locally preferred alternative were derived from adopted regional employment and population forecasts and state-of-the-art modeling and evaluation conducted by Metro, RTC and the project team, and reviewed by all project sponsor agencies as well as FTA and FHWA. In addition, an independent panel of traffic modeling experts was convened in October 2008 to review the modeling methods and findings. These experts concluded that the project's approach to estimating future travel demand was reasonable and that it relied on accepted practices employed in metropolitan regions throughout the country. These findings are summarized in the "Columbia River Crossing Travel Demand Model Review Report" (November 25, 2008). This independent review confirmed the approach CRC modeling used to address multiple variables that can affect travel demand, including gasoline prices, tolling, travel demand measures and induced development.

P-1042-005

The evaluation of the five alternatives in the DEIS was preceded by an 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. After identifying this wide array of options, the project evaluated whether and how they met the project's Purpose and Need, and 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.

00064
P-1042-012 | 1 also toll the I-205 bridge as part of this
 2 project.
 3 And you also have not produced an
 4 investment grade toll forecast, one that
 5 would be relied upon to issue bonds -- I
 6 will be happy to revise and extend my
 7 remarks in writing.
 8 Thank you.
 9 HAL DENGIERINK: Joe, could you --
 10 can you e-mail us a copy of that because I
 11 don't think that our court reporter got a
 12 lot of it. Thank you.
 13 Okay. I want to bring up the next
 14 three folks. Bob Wachter, Karen Axell
 15 and -- sorry, I can't read it. It looks
 16 like somebody who lives on 107th Street in
 17 Vancouver.
 18 Okay. Okay. Sorry about that.
 19 Okay. Our court reporter has stepped out
 20 a moment. The recording is going on.
 21 Okay. So I would like to go ahead and
 22 proceed here recognizing that we will be
 23 able to transcribe this from the
 24 recording.
 25 Okay. So Frank.

Alternatives that did not include such improvements in the highway generally 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). This analysis found that a more balanced investment in highway and transit, as represented by Alternatives 2 and 3, performed best.

Regarding Option A+, it placed a strong emphasis on implementing congestion pricing as a disincentive to making automobile trips across the Columbia River. The option did not meet the Purpose and Need for the project because it didn't address many of the safety deficiencies on I-5 and also wouldn't address the congestion and mobility problems on I-5. The analysis was described in more detail in a memo to the Fourth Alternative Subcommittee, dated March 15, 2007, and was available on request prior to publication of the DEIS. In addition to supporting Option A+, AORTA had an interest in other components and ideas analyzed and discussed as a part of this project. Without more information on which AORTA proposals are being referred to in this comment, a specific reply is not possible.

P-1042-006

Significant increases in oil prices can have both short term and long term effects on travel behavior. In the short term, the options for responding to rising gas prices are more limited, and include driving less and/or changing from driving to walking, biking or transit for at least some trips. During recent increases in gasoline prices transit use increased and off-peak highway travel decreased. Peak period highway travel changed little.

Over the long term, there are more options for adjusting to changes in

00115

1 CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER
2
3 STATE OF WASHINGTON)
4 County of Clark)
5
6 I, Cathy S. Taylor, a notary public
7 for the State of Washington do hereby
8 certify that I transcribed to the best of
9 my ability said proceedings written by me
10 in machine shorthand and thereafter
11 reduced to typewriting; and that the
12 foregoing transcript constitutes a full,
13 true and accurate record of said
14 proceedings and of the whole thereof.
15
16
17
18
19 Witness my hand and notarial seal
20 this 16th day of June, 2008.
21
22 _____
23 Cathy S. Taylor, RPR, CSR
24 Notary Public for the State of Washington
25 My Commission expires April 15, 2009

gasoline prices, besides changing driving behavior. Technological advances and legislative mandates can increase fuel efficiency standards in the long term. In turn, as older vehicles wear out, more consumers can replace them with more fuel efficient vehicles. Automobile manufacturers are developing and will continue to develop new vehicle and engine technologies that require much less, or even no, petroleum-based fuels. This trend is already happening as evidenced by the growing popularity of gasoline-electric hybrid and small electric vehicles.

P-1042-007

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 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 summarized 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-1042-008

At the time of the DEIS preparation there was no pending legislation or regulations to implement a carbon tax on transportation. As we prepared the FEIS, there were still, to our knowledge, no such pending or reasonably foreseeable regulations. It is also likely that over the longer term of the proposed project (25 to over 100 years), vehicle technologies and fuels would change to compensate for a carbon tax or other carbon reduction policies, just as they are adjusting to other factors affecting the price of fossil fuels.

P-1042-009

Traffic forecasts reported in the DEIS and used to inform decisions on a locally preferred alternative were derived from adopted regional employment and population forecasts and state-of-the-art modeling and evaluation conducted by Metro, RTC and the project team, and reviewed by all project sponsor agencies as well as FTA and FHWA. In addition, an independent panel of traffic modeling experts was convened in October 2008 to review the modeling methods and findings. These experts concluded that the project's approach to estimating future travel demand was reasonable and that it relied on accepted practices employed in metropolitan regions throughout the country. These findings are summarized in the "Columbia River Crossing Travel Demand Model Review Report" (November 25, 2008). This independent review confirmed the approach CRC modeling used to address multiple variables that can affect travel demand, including gasoline prices, tolling, travel demand measures and induced development.

Even if population and travel demand grow more slowly than projected, that does not change the need for these kind of improvements. The analysis is based on project growth over the next 20+ years, but the bridge would be build to last at least 100 years. Even if it takes 50% longer to reach those projections (i.e., in 30 rather than 20 years) there would still be substantial need for and benefit from the CRC improvements immediately upon completion and for many years to come.

P-1042-010

Upon reviewing correspondence sent to the project, we were unable to find a request from you via the project's feedback email at feedback@columbiarivercrossing.org or through a formal request for information. Since release of the Draft EIS, the project has produced information related to forecasting and tolling and posted it on a new tolling Web site: <http://tolling.columbiarivercrossing.org/>. If there is still

additional information you are looking for, please feel free to email your request to feedback@columbiarivercrossing.org.

P-1042-011

As the only continuous north-south Interstate on the West Coast connecting the Canadian and Mexican borders, I-5 is vital to the local, regional, and national economy. The I-5 crossing also provides the primary transportation link between Vancouver and Portland, and the only direct connection between the downtown areas of these cities. As described in the DEIS, serious problems face this important crossing, including growing congestion, impaired freight movement, limited public transit options, high auto accident rates, substandard bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and vulnerability to failure in an earthquake. The fact that other important issues face our communities does not diminish the importance of addressing the problems plaguing the I-5 crossing.

CRC assumes funds allocated to other projects would remain dedicated to those projects, and anticipates needing to find new funds to finance the project. Funding for the project will come from a variety of sources including federal grants that would not be available to other transportation projects in the region, State of Oregon, State of Washington, regional and local sources. In addition, it is assumed that the replacement bridge will be tolled. Please refer to Chapter 4 of the FEIS for a description of the current plans for funding construction and operation of the LPA.

P-1042-012

Please refer to Chapter 4 of the FEIS for a description of the current plans for funding construction and operation of the LPA. This discussion provides an updated assessment of likely funding sources for this project, though it is not common practice to receive funding commitments prior to completion of the alternative selection process. As described in the FEIS, project funding is expected to come from a variety

of local, state, and federal sources, with federal funding and tolls providing substantial revenue for the construction. As Oregon and Washington businesses and residents will benefit from the project's multi-modal improvements, both states have been identified as contributors to the project. As jurisdictions on both sides of the river seek to encourage non-auto travel, tolls are not anticipated for bikes, pedestrians, and transit users. Lastly, CRC assumes funds allocated to other projects and purposes would remain dedicated to those projects and purposes.