From: Tina Keller
To: Columbia River Crossing;
CC:
Subject: CRC plans
Date: Wednesday, June 18, 2008 8:06:28 AM
Attachments:

P-1096-001 I am a resident of Vancouver and I commute to Portland for my job. I have some comments and questions about the crossing plan:

P-1096-002
- How are higher gas prices being factored into the plan? I have seen a significant reduction in cars crossing the bridge over the past several months and I know this wasn't part of the original forcast.

P-1096-003
- When is a real toll option going to be factored in so that there is a viable means to pay for the bridge by the people who actually use it every day. I am surprised that this is not being promoted more actively.

P-1096-004
- Why does the light rail plan have to go down Main Street? There has been significant investment made in making that a viable retail center and the construction will drive those merchants out of business.

P-1096-005
- Do we REALLY need a 12 lane bridge??? That seems so excessive. Adding a bunch of through lanes will not solve the bottleneck problem that is pervasive all along where I-5 runs through Portland. The trucks and through traffic should be directed to I-205 or to use rail.

P-1096-006
- I really do believe that the lift span bridge needs to be replaced.

P-1096-007
- Light rail must come to Clark County.
- There must good ped and bike access to crossing the river.

P-1096-008
- Please look at the proposal for the Hayden Island interchange as a model for the Vancouver side. I am very concerned about how the bridge is going to land and the impact that it has on Vancouver.

Thanks,

Tina Keller

P-1096-001

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

P-1096-002

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 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-1096-003

Tolling was evaluated in the DEIS and FEIS, and included in the LPA for two important reasons. First, a toll may be necessary to pay for the construction of this project, as discussed in Chapter 4 of the FEIS. Second, a toll provides a valuable travel demand management tool that encourages travelers to take alternative modes (including light rail provided by this project), travel at off-peak periods, or reduce their auto trips. This demand management reduces congestion and extends the effective service life of the facility. When the existing I-5 northbound

bridge was built in 1917, it was paid for with a toll. The southbound I-5 bridge, built in 1958, was also funded partially by tolls. In 2008, the Washington legislature passed enabling language for tolling on I-5, provided that each facility is later authorized under specific legislation. Once authorized by the legislature, the Washington Transportation Commission has the authority to set the toll rates. In Oregon, and the Oregon Transportation Commission has the authority to toll a facility and to set the toll rates.

P-1096-004

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.

P-1096-005

Following the selection of the LPA in July of 2008, the CRC Project Sponsors Council (PSC) was developed to provide recommendations to the project on a variety of issues, including the number of add/drop lanes over the river crossing. Over the course of several months, PSC was

provided with operational characteristics and potential environmental impacts of 8-, 10-, and 12-lane options. These technical evaluation criteria included, but were not limited to, traffic safety, congestion, traffic diversion onto local streets and I-205, regional vehicle miles travelled, transit ridership, regional economic impact, effects to neighborhoods, and protected species and habitats. In additional to the technical information, PSC received input from CRC advisory groups and reviewed public comment submitted to the project and obtained during two public Q&A sessions in January 2009 regarding the number of lanes decision, as well as hearings conducted by Portland City Council and by Metro Council. In August 2010, the PSC voted unanimously to recommend that the replacement bridges be constructed with 10 lanes and full shoulders. For more information regarding the number of lanes decision making process, see Chapter 2 (Section 2.7) of the FEIS.

The proposed new lanes are add/drop lanes (i.e., lanes that connect two or more interchanges), which are used to alleviate safety issues associated with the closely spaced interchanges in the project area, and accommodate the 68 to 75% of traffic that enters and/or exits I-5 within two miles of the Columbia River.

P-1096-006

According to the Feasibility of Diverting Truck Freight to Rail in the Columbia River Corridor Technical Memorandum produced by CRC project staff in April 2006, trains cannot move smaller loads as cost-effectively as trucks and may even be more costly for shipping distances under 500 miles. This is a key point, as the average trip distance by truck in the Portland/Vancouver region is 199 miles. While there are certainly some commodities that could shift form truck to rail in the region, it is probably a very minimal amount, probably not part of a consistent and regular shipment schedule, and would not significantly ease congestion along I-5 in the project area.

Additionally, the Vancouver-Portland region is the "last mile" for 85 percent of the freight traveling in the region. That is, goods are produced, assembled, and/or delivered within the region, and the overwhelming majority of the local shippers and customers are not located on a rail spur or within a rail/intermodal terminal. Even if there was a targeted effort to use railroads more frequently, the goods would need to travel by truck on regional roads and freeways to arrive at rail terminals. In fact, most of the goods produced or received from the rail system must drive those goods by truck to or from the rail lines; and, increased rail service would likely lead to greater use of trucks for this very reason.

Regarding the use of I-205: this option is chosen by some trucking entities and some drivers especially when they are passing through the area without stopping. However a considerable amount of the freight moving in and out of the area comes from and goes to the Ports, both of which are very close to I-5.

P-1096-007

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-1096-008

The CRC build alternative would increase the physical width of the I-5 alignment through Vancouver, but would not decrease connectivity. Several aspects of the project would increase connectivity between downtown Vancouver on the west side of I-5 and the Historic Reserve as well as other areas east of I-5. For example, the extension of LRT to Clark College provides a direct connection between the east and west sides of I-5. In addition, with the mitigation measures proposed, such as the Evergreen Boulevard Community Connector, as well as other access improvements as described in Chapter 2 of the FEIS, the project would result in a net benefit to both cultural landscape and physical connectivity.