

We, the members of the Community Environmental Justice Group (CEJG), have been meeting since August of 2006. We are a collection of neighborhood and community representatives within the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) influence area and represent the communities which will be most significantly impacted by this project. Many of our communities contain low income and minority individuals who historically have been overly impacted and excluded from the development and decision making process.

On January 9, 2007 we reviewed the CRC Staff Recommendation of alternatives for advancement into the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

It is the consensus of this group that we cannot accept or decline the Staff Recommendation. We believe there are too many unanswered questions regarding the impacts facing the communities we represent.

While we acknowledge improvement to the transportation facilities in the corridor significantly benefit the region, the following issues have yet to be addressed to our satisfaction:

- I. I. Health and Environmental Impacts (include, but are not limited to Air Quality and Noise)
- II. Displacement of Homes, Businesses, Resources, Neighborhoods and Impacts on Quality of Life
- III. Study of Alternatives for Corridor Placement and the Impact Area

I. Health and Environmental Impacts

The CEJG members are concerned about current and future air quality and noise issues, particularly within 1500 feet of the I-5 corridor.

We would like to know the current level of emissions (including diesel emissions) and noise levels to establish a base line for data collection.

We would like to know what air quality and noise standards will be negotiated for construction equipment and related project vehicles.

We would like to know how the air quality and noise standards will be monitored and how they will be mitigated during and after the project is complete, to insure no air quality degradation for ten years within the Bridge Impact Area (BIA).

II. Displacement of Homes, Businesses, Resources, Neighborhoods and Impacts on Quality of Life.

After completing a bus tour of the BIA, the CEJG members calculate the possibility of approximately 100 homes and more than 20 businesses along both sides of the bridge being removed, destroyed or heavily impacted.

We would like to know what compensations and mitigation measures will be made for those home owners, renters and business owners.

Hayden Island could potentially lose virtually all of the neighborhood shopping resources (grocery, pharmacy, restaurants, fuel stations and other retailers).

III. Alternatives and Corridor

Many believe the current corridor is already extended to its maximum and should not be expanded further. Members in Vancouver, Hayden Island and Portland have expressed strong concerns about the significant deterioration of their quality of life both during construction and after the project is completed.

Conclusion

Although the CEJG believes that many, if not most of these issues can be mitigated as specific plans unfold, it is unwilling to offer endorsement of the “Build” option until more specific and detailed planning and solutions are offered to deal with the issues described above.

Therefore, after all of these considerations, the CEJG cannot accept or decline the Staff Recommendation.

We must have more information.

Agreed upon this Fifteenth Day of February, 2007, by unanimous consensus of the following members:

Dave Frei,
CRC Task Force Member
Arnada Neighborhood Association Member
Vancouver, WA

Anne McEnery-Ogle, Chair
Shumway Neighborhood Association
Vancouver, WA

Edward G. Garren,
Hayden Island Neighborhood Network (HiNoon)
Portland, OR

Nicole Williams,
Environmental Justice Action Group,
Boise Neighborhood, Local 36
Portland, OR

Marcia Ward,
Salmon Creek
Vancouver (Hazel Dell), WA

Dave Skagen,
Rose Village Neighborhood, K Street
Vancouver, WA

Kris Long,
Vancouver, WA

John Benson,
Piedmont Neighborhood Association
Portland, OR

Jonath Colón-Montesi,
N/NE Neighborhood Coalition,
Portland, OR

Matt Whitney, President
Bridgeton Neighborhood Association
Portland, OR

The following members participated in drafting the response letter, but did not attend the meeting on February 15, 2007: Michelle Tworoger and Connie Sherrard