

Hines, Maurice

From: andrew neerman [blueruinpx@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, October 24, 2011 8:41 PM
To: Columbia River Crossing
Subject: FEIS Comment

P-084-001

I am writing to express my opposition to the CRC as currently conceived. This is a bloated freeway-expansion project that will encourage sprawl in Clark County, greatly worsen the bottleneck at the Rose Quarter, and potentially send many more vehicles onto surface arterials in North and Northeast Portland (areas that have already suffered greatly due to freeway construction, misguided "urban renewal", racism, economic disadvantage, and environmental injustice). It is grossly out of step with the contemporary priorities and values of this region and I strongly urge the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration to reject the FEIS.

Several alternatives have been proposed that are more sensible and affordable. We need to start over and have a much more inclusive and transparent planning process that examines how the region can design, fund, and build a project that is lean, smart, and sustainable. Additionally, congestion tolling should be implemented now on both current Columbia crossings (I-5 and I-205) with the intention of reducing existing congestion and building up a fund for a future project that includes, among other things, construction of an arterial bridge between N Portland and Vancouver that can carry local traffic as well as MAX light rail and bike/pedestrian facilities.

Elected officials at both the State and Federal level have expressed their dissatisfaction with both the planning process and the projected cost. Lawsuits are guaranteed if the project continues to move forward. A campaign of direct action aimed at preventing construction is also likely.

Not only can we not afford the CRC, it is a terrible idea that will negatively impact the region for decades to come.

Sincerely,
Andrew Neerman
NE resident and business owner

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<http://www.blueruinpx.com>

He who binds to himself a joy
doth the winged life destroy;
but he who kisses the joy as it flies
lives in eternity's sunrise
--William Blake

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As described in Chapter 3 (Section 3.4) of the 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 FEIS concludes that the likelihood of substantial induced sprawl from the CRC project is very low. In fact, the CRC project will likely support the region's goals of concentrating development in regional centers, reinforcing existing corridors, and promoting transit and pedestrian friendly development and development patterns. The region's goals are reinforced by the project's 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.

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.

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) completed Phase I construction of the I-5 Delta Park widening project in fall 2010. Phase I of the project involved widening I-5 and lengthening the entrance and exit ramps at Victory Boulevard and Columbia Boulevard. Phase II involves improving local streets and will begin when funding is secured. Phase I of the Delta Park project widened the current 2-lane segment of southbound I-5 to 3 lanes. There are currently no immediate plans to widen I-5 south of Delta Park. Neither the CRC project nor the Delta Park projects are intended to address the southbound traffic congestion that currently exists near the I-5/I-405 split. However, traffic analyses show the congestion at the split will not be worsened because of the Columbia River Crossing project. The main reason is that fewer cars are expected to cross the river with a project in 2030 than without a project. This is due to the provision of improved transit service and tolling.

Beyond the CRC and Delta Park projects, the I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership Final Strategic Plan recommended a comprehensive list of modal actions relating to: additional transit capacity and service; additional rail capacity; land use and land use accord; transportation

demand/system management; environmental justice; additional elements and strategies (such as new river crossings); and financing. RTC and Metro are tasked with initiating recommendations as part of their regional transportation planning role. Examples of current efforts include RTC's evaluation of future high-capacity transit in Clark County, and evaluation of needs for future river crossings. Regional planners have investigated solutions to existing bottlenecks at the I-5 connections with I-405 and I-84. ODOT is responsible for conducting ongoing studies to identify other congestion problems on I-5 in Oregon that may need to be addressed in the future.

Tolling cannot typically be implemented on an existing interstate highway unless substantial improvements are also made. Pre-construction tolling on the I-5 crossing may be possible.

An arterial bridge option between Vancouver and Portland was studied in the early CRC alternatives evaluation process, and was dropped because it did little to address the purpose and need for the project (see Chapter 2 of the FEIS).