

Hines, Maurice

From: LM Patella [lmpatella@comcast.net]
Sent: Monday, October 24, 2011 7:26 PM
To: Columbia River Crossing
Subject: Problems with Columbia River Crossing
Attachments: CRC comments.docx

To Whom it may concern,

P-085-001

Attached are my comments on why the Columbian River Crossing project should not be funded.

Lawrence M. Patella
CDR USN (ret)

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P-085-001

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

To whom it may concern,

P-085-001 I Lawrence M. Patella, Commander United States Navy Retire, Strongly object to the States of Washington and Oregon, the Columbia River Crossing, Portland's Tri-met, Clark County C-Tran, Vancouver City Council and Clark County's Board of commissioner's misleading the citizens of Clark County Washington and Portland Oregon about the need, the cost and the reason for demolishing a perfectly good Bridge for the sole purpose of bringing Light Rail across the Columbia River to Vancouver Washington.

P-085-002 Not only have these local politician been misleading the public they have been working behind the scenes and have Cancelled a promised 2011 Vote Light Rail. They have lobbied the state legislatures to create new and change existing legislation that will allow them to proceed with the expenditure of 10 billion tax payer dollar so they can to "Ram Down the Tax Payer's Throats" excessive property taxes, fees, Bridge tolls, and the sale of revenue bonds to fund a small portion of the building of a 10 billion dollar Light Rail platform across the Columbia River.

P-085-003 Acutely aware that Vancouver, Washington does not have sufficient population density to support the proposed 10 billion dollar Columbia River Crossing project, Clark County's Transit Authority has, in spite of the fact that their assets exceed their liabilities by some 114 million dollars and have a 50 million dollar are attempting to impose an outrageous tax increase to increase bus ridership in an attempt to show that there is sufficient bus ridership to support light rail. Below are two presentations that I have made to educate the voter that they are being taken to the Cleaners.

P-085-004 Why are local politicians, including most of the Vancouver City Council and two thirds of the Clark County Commissioners allowing Columbian River Crossing Planners to mislead the public.
In case you missed it, Eric Florip (Columbian Staff Writer) Article "TRAFFIC UNCERTAINTIES FAIL TO HALT CRC PROCESS" in yesterday fish wrapper says volumes about their inability to manage the project.

Are they so anxious to waste 10 billion (not the bogus 3.1 billion they would like you to believe) taxpayer dollars that they would deliberately leave out of the Final CRC Environmental Impact Statement updated traffic information that clearly shows the information they submitted is over inflated.

Now why would they do that: Let's examine their reasons for not submitting accurate information to the decision makers? But first Lets revisit the reason the local tax and spend politicians said we need this gigantic Boondoggle.

They Said: Transportation on I-5, the most important transportation artery on the entire west coast of the United States is so congested that it is adversely impacting the economic development on the entire west coast.

Here is why they don't want the decision makers to know what we taxpayers have known all along. I-5 is not congested. The purpose of the Bridge Boondoggle is to provide a platform for bringing Light Rail the Gravy/Crime Train from Portland to Vancouver.

But I digress let's get back to the CRC Planners misleading statements.

P-085-002

There will not be a public vote on construction of the various CRC project elements. However, as a public project, it must be approved and funded by the decisions of elected officials who are themselves directly elected by voters. Long-term operation and maintenance of the new light rail line will be funded through C-TRAN and TriMet. For its share of the operations and maintenance funding, C-TRAN plans on pursuing a public vote.

P-085-003

Light rail has been endorsed by every local Sponsoring Agency (Vancouver City Council, C-TRAN, RTC, Portland City Council, TriMet, and Metro), whose boards include elected officials from throughout the area.

Annual light rail passenger trips crossing the I-5 bridge in 2030 are projected to be 6.1 million, with daily ridership around 18,700. The travel time for the morning commute by light rail between downtown Vancouver and Pioneer Square in downtown Portland will be approximately 34 minutes. Light rail would travel on a dedicated right-of-way, with more reliable travel times than auto drivers dealing with unpredictable road conditions, traffic congestion, and parking challenges.

The CRC project planning for light rail incorporates and supports the principles of Vancouver's City Center Vision Plan. Downtown Vancouver has seen recent growth in higher density mixed use projects from three to 12 stories in height. In addition, another 4,000 downtown condominiums are proposed or pending as part of new developments. The core of Vancouver has, along with many of the larger corridors such as Fourth Plain Blvd, medium to high density residential development and an urban mix of uses. Transit demand in these areas is quite high, and ridership will increase with the introduction of light rail.

P-085-004

- a. The CRC Traffic forecast may not be updated until 2013. Isn't that when they plan to break ground. It must be their plan to stay away from the reduced traffic numbers until the fed approve the environmental impact statement already submitted.
- b. Anne Pressentin (CRC Spokeswoman): "We are looking for very much the long Horizon. Even if traffic counts don't climb as soon as originally projected, it doesn't mean that it is not going to happen". But I thought Current Congestion was a huge problem, now that the numbers are not there it is no big deal. Baloney.
- c. Andy Cotugno, (Policy adviser with Portland's Metro): In response to the question how much traffic will steer clear of I-5 once polling starts, he said: "That answer will wait until 2013 – and with good reason. When CRC planners go to borrow money for the project they will need to do so with the most current data possible before tolls pay it back".

I have no idea what the hell he is talking about. I can however tell him that one of two things will happen. Motorist will flock to I-205 or a toll will be put on I-205. Duh!

- d. Nancy Boyd: She said: Leaving older, higher traffic projection in the environmental impact statement are a better reflection of the highest possible impact.

Nancy, please don't insult our intelligence, leaving the higher, bogus, numbers in the EIS will Give your inaccurate Environmental Impact Statement a better chance of being approved.

- e. And how about Cotungo saying: "If Clark County continues to struggle with double-digit unemployment, residents may end up battling Interstate 5 bridge traffic to find work".

What a crock. And I thought as our Good Mayor, who was against bridge tolls before he was for them said once the bridge, light rail and tolls were in place new industries, business and job would be coming to Vancouver.

And so it goes

L. M. Patella
CDR USN (ret)

P-085-005

Good Morning, Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this Council on what I consider C-Tran's Outrageous attempt to dig deeper and deeper into the taxpayer's pockets. For those of you who do not know me, I am Larry Patella, A retired Naval Officer, who commanded three ships during my 31 years in the United States Navy. I am a Former Manager of the Port of Portland's Navigation Division where I managed for 21 years, under contract to the Corp of Engineers the Maintenance Dredging of the Columbia River Navigation Channel. In those positions, I have over some 52 years seen enough waste of taxpayer dollars to make the most ardent spender of taxpayer dollars extremely ill. I am currently the Executive Director of the Western Dredging Association, a non-profit educational association that covers the Western Hemisphere. The goals and objectives of Western Dredging Association are to promote the exchange of information and knowledge as it relates to dredging, navigation, marine engineering and construction, as well as the enhancement of the Marine Environment. To fill my spare time I recently opened, a small business in the Carter Park Neighborhood in an attempt to do a little of my own revitalization and job creation.

Long-term operation and maintenance of the new light rail line will be funded through C-TRAN and TriMet. For its share of the operations and maintenance funding, C-TRAN plans on having a public vote.

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Significant work has gone into developing the CRC project, including an ongoing public involvement effort. The public involvement program includes numerous advisory groups to ensure the values and interests of the community are reflected in project decisions. These groups include representatives of public agencies, businesses, civic organizations, neighborhoods and freight, commuter and environmental groups. Feedback from the general public and advisory groups has been generally supportive of the project, including support for the transit, bicycle, pedestrian, highway, interchange, and financing elements of the project. See Chapter 2 (Section 2.7) of the FEIS for more discussion on the process used to develop project alternatives and select a Locally Preferred Alternative.

By 2030, the region's population is expected to increase by one million people. This increase will result in more people needing to travel between home, work, school, recreation, etc. In 2005, 135,000 vehicles crossed the Columbia River on the Interstate Bridge, which led to 4-6 hours of congestion each weekday. By 2030, 184,000 are predicted to cross the river, which would lead to 15 hours of daily congestion if no action is taken.

Congestion occurs when vehicle demand is greater than a transportation system's capacity. It results in slower speeds and increased travel times. CRC defines congestion as vehicles traveling less than 30 mph. The Columbia River Crossing project uses information gathered from Metro's nationally-recognized travel demand models to determine the project's effect on congestion. These models predict trip frequency, types or modes of transportation, destination, and time of day. Transportation

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That said I will get right to the point. There is no need for the empire building C-Tran to continue on almost a yearly basis to dig deeper and deeper into the people's pockets. I am certain you are thinking how or why I would or could make such a statement.

Here is how and why. Are you aware that included in C-Tran's Annual Financial Report for the year ending December 31, 2010, signed by C-Tran Officers Jeff Hamm and Diane O'Reagan, is Brian Sonntag, Washington State Auditor's final analysis concerning the financial health of C-Tran. He stated:

"The assets of the PTBA (C-Tran) exceeded on December 31, 2010, liabilities by 114,751,751 Taxpayer Dollars. He went on to say, of this amount 49,717,245 taxpayer dollars may be used to meet C-Tran's ongoing obligations to provide service to the public, including capital programs, and to meet its other obligations.

Historically, C-Tran has only spent an average of approximately 6 or 7 million of the reserve funds in any given year. So why is C-Tran now, with Taxpayers facing the worst economic crisis since the Great 1929 Depression planning on depleting the Taxpayer's Reserve Fund? C-Tran documents tell me that by the end of 2011 only 4 million dollars will be left in the Taxpayer's Reserve Fund.

There can only be one of two answers for this unusual expenditure of taxpayer dollars. One is C-Tran and its Board of Directors are unable to run C-Tran as a business, or C-Tran and its Board of Directors are deliberately depleting the taxpayer's reserve fund so they can demonstrate to the taxpaying public they are in dire need of additional taxpayer dollars.

Ladies and Gentlemen, now is not the time, what with 12.3 % of Clark County Citizens unemployed, losing their homes, not knowing where their next dollar is coming from to impose any additional taxes. C-Tran like the people they are duty bound to serve needs to stop its empire building schemes and concentrate on their primary goals and objectives. Those Goals and Objectives are in my opinion to provide cost effective, efficient and needed bus service. Running empty busses in and around Clark County is not something anyone could or should consider cost effective, efficient or needed. It is in the opinion of many simply empire building and a waste of Taxpayer dollars.

From the information available to me, it does not appear that C-Tran Staff or its Board of Directors have any idea how much service Clark County needs? I say this because on March 9th 2011 in an email to me, Marc Boldt County Commissioner and C-Tran Board Chairman admitted many C-Tran Busses are running around Clark County Empty. In his email, a copy has been provided to you, he states "If we cannot get busses full we need to start cutting the ones that are empty". Marc also stated and I Quote "I do not want to take anyone one from their car." He also advised me that none of the revenues from yet another sales tax increase will be used for light rail.

Let's further examine these statements. When I compare information sent to me in the numerous emails exchanges with the C-Tran Board Chairman and the mountain of C-Tran documents obtained via the Washington Public Disclosure act and C-Tran's Statement For

planners use these models to analyze the effects of such factors as increased population and employment, transportation improvements, and new developments on the transportation system.

Based on the Metro model's past ability to predict transportation effects, the CRC project is confident in the data received from Metro and uses it to determine what impact the project will have on congestion. The improvements proposed by the project to the highway and seven interchanges will help better accommodate increased future vehicle traffic. New auxiliary lanes and longer on/off ramps will allow safer and more efficient merging and weaving to enter or exit the freeway. Narrow lanes and shoulders will be widened to current standards. Shoulders will be added where they are currently missing. All of these changes will improve the flow of traffic in the bottleneck area of the Interstate Bridge.

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This comment refers primarily to C-TRAN's budget and the author's commentary on C-TRAN's use of funds. In response to the portion relevant to CRC, long-term operation and maintenance of the new light rail line will be funded through C-TRAN and TriMet. For its share of the operations and maintenance funding, C-TRAN plans on having a public vote.

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Proposition 1, I am at a loss to understand why C-Tran is, during this current economic Crisis that has our City, County, State and Nation millions, billions and trillions of dollars in debt, misleading the public.

Having admitted that many C-Tran busses are running around Clark County Empty why is C-Tran now using threats in their outrageous attempt to raise taxes. Why are they threatening to cut 35% of all services? Why not as Commissioner Boldt suggested, just cut the empty busses? Why not redesign the entire system so that it is more effective, and more efficient. Why not reduce or eliminate the wasteful spending of taxpayer dollars on so called capital projects. For instance, if millions and millions of taxpayer dollars have to be spent to build park and ride lots, some with elegant buildings or multi-level parking garages for the dreaded automobile, then it probably is not, with only an average of 7 bus rider per trip worth the taxpayer's money or efforts.

As for the Commissioners statement that new tax revenues will not be used for Light Rail, not true. C-TRAN Tax revenues have and continue to be used to support and promote light rail. 3 million dollars were spent 5 or six years ago on light rail planning and studies. The mere fact that the CRC project will not be built without light rail and C-Tran has and continues to support with our tax dollars, the CRC project, it is proof enough that past, current and future tax dollars Picked from the taxpayer's pockets has, is and will be used to support bringing light rail to Clark County. It appears the only purpose of Proposition 1 is to replenish what has already been spent on Light Rail.

May I be so bold as to ask all C-Tran Staff, C-Tran Board Members and those of you in this room, a simple question? A question that all who spend taxpayer dollars should ask themselves.

If the money C-Tran is picking from the taxpayer' pockets and is spending was yours, your personal funds, funds that would take food out of your children's mouths and adequate shelter away from them would you do it?

As for C-Tran Board Chairman not wanting to take people out of their cars, why then did he include in his Statement for Proposition 1 "C-Tran Serves you by taking cars off our roads and highways".

Now I ask you, do you really think running empty busses transporting approximately 2% of the commuting public around Clark County can or will ever take any cars off our roads and highways. Of course not. The Automobile is and has been one of the most important economic engines the Good Ole USA ever had. Just think for a minute about the great number of jobs that buying, owning and using an automobile has created. And please Can someone, anyone explain to me why Cars have to be taken off the road for a super expensive transit system to be successful.

I would like to leave you with two thought. They are:

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1. Ask any high school graduate if they would rather have an automobile or lifetime bus or light rail pass as a graduation present and
2. Do you know how to Spell Automobile. If not the correct spelling is F R E E D O M.

In Closing, All need to understand that the only money that C-Tran has is what it takes from the taxpayers. C-Tran does not need to dig deeper and deeper into the taxpayer's pockets to provide a first class bus service. As Custodians of the taxpayer's hard earned dollars C-Tran has a fiduciary responsibility to properly manage the taxpayer's dollars. C-Tran's empire building needs to stop; C-Tran needs to prioritize spending. C-Tran needs to learn that nothing is free, including Tinted Window Busses bought with tax payer dollars that come out of our other pockets. C-Tran needs to understand not only do we not have a bottomless pit of money, that it cost money and lots of it just to own busses, buildings, and property. And if they, who get to spend taxpayer dollars, are having perceived difficult financial problems, just think about the problems those of us who are having our pockets picked have.

Thank You

L. M. Patella
CDR USN (ret)