

Hines, Maurice

From: Richard Thomas [rtcouv@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, October 24, 2011 5:20 PM
To: Columbia River Crossing
Subject: CRC

To whom it may concern:

P-096-001

I have lived on both sides of the Columbia and in east and west Portland metro for about 30 years and have a front row seat to the efforts to handle mass transit. What we have devolved to today is a huge industry in this area devoted to massive projects totally isolated from the realities of public opinion and fiscal prudence.

The heart of the CRC project is the unilateral DEMAND from Portland to include light rail. Once again, the people of Vancouver and Clark County have said no. Metro Portland voters said NO-- twice.

P-096-002

But you know all of this, as well as the dismal financial performance of the existing system. You have ignored facts and statistics that refute the value of such a huge proposal. To date, the CRC syndicate has spent well over \$100 million in an attempt to force the issue. No independent analysis will ever justify the existing plans, but onward you go.

P-096-003

Of the many unintended consequences from the current plan is the loss of revenue to Portland area businesses. Put a toll on these bridges and many people will factor that in to whether to shop in Oregon. The savings on sales tax will not be enough to breach the physic barrier created by a toll.

P-096-004

WE the People, don't want it, can't afford and won't stand for it. You cannot cram this monstrosity down our throats.

Richard Thomas
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Richard Thomas

P-096-001

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.

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.

P-096-002

All specific comments and criticisms received have been considered. The FEIS analysis and findings show benefits from the selected alternative, as well as adverse impacts. Independent analysis was provided on many topics, as discussed in the FEIS.

P-096-003

This issue was addressed as part of the economics analysis and is described in detail in the Economics Technical Report. This report, and Chapter 3 (Section 3.4) of the DEIS, note that the increased costs incurred because of tolls would generally be offset by the improved travel options and travel times. Under existing and No-Build Alternative conditions, congestion delays and high crash rates have significant costs for local businesses and travelers; improving these conditions is one of the purposes of the project.

Tolls could discourage home-based shopping trips from Clark County to points in northern Oregon, such as Hayden Island and Airport Way. However, the variable-rate toll structure that was evaluated in the DEIS allows for different rates to be charged by time of day. Therefore, discretionary trips, such as those between Oregon and Washington for retail purposes, could be taken in off-peak hours when toll rates are at their lowest, reducing the effect of the tolls on these types of trips. Also, CRC would provide improved transit connections between Clark County and Oregon, offering travelers a toll-free alternative for reaching destinations across the river.

P-096-004

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 that 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.