

Hines, Maurice

From: Tweet [tweetfamily@comcast.net]
Sent: Monday, October 24, 2011 10:54 PM
To: Columbia River Crossing
Subject: Feedback on the proposed Columbia River Crossing project, please confirm you got this message by reply

P-099-001

I am against the CRC project as currently planned. I am a Ph.D. physicist working in industrial research for over 20 years with 75 US patents and over 75 technical publications. So, I know something about math, logic, and reasoning.

1) **No Need for Light Rail.** The numbers and case made for the CRC makes no sense to me whatsoever. In particular, the demand that ¼ of the cost be spent on light rail is completely absurd. I have spent 9 years of my life living in Japan. I know what high density conditions are like, where a train system is a necessity. We have nothing like that here in the Vancouver area, and we are unlikely to have anything remotely approaching a need for light rail in the next 100 years. Indeed, at least two of the local public officials who are cheerleaders for this project have admitted in writing or public meetings that light rail is a want, not a need, and probably won't be a need for 20-30 years. We have far more important and useful ways to spend our tax money (or not spend it, since we are simply borrowing it from our great-grand children).

P-099-002

2) **False Projections.** The projections used by the CRC to justify this project have already been proven to be false. In particular, traffic projections made in 2006 have already found to be significantly overestimated. But the lie is perpetuated, since these same false projections are being used in the EIS to continue to justify the CRC plan with light rail! This is a blatantly dishonest practice! If I did this in my job, I would justifiably be fired on the spot! It seems only the government can get away with this! Bernie Madoff would be proud! If they can't predict 5 years in the future, how are we to believe their projections 30 years into the future?

P-099-003

3) **Light Rail is the Most Inflexible and Expensive "Solution" to Traffic Problems.** I find this obsession with light rail to be completely illogical. To spend ¼ of the cost on a totally inflexible and exorbitantly expensive system that serves only 2 to 3% of the commuters makes no sense at all. Why go with the most expensive solution? Buses are far cheaper and vastly more flexible than trains. HOV lanes are nearly free and can be extremely effective. There are much easier solutions.

P-099-004

4) **Trains are Old Technology.** One of the areas I work on is renewable energy, including solar and batteries. This last May I was at a research conference on electric vehicles held at Pacific Northwest National Lab in Richland Washington. Famous scientists and engineers from all over the world were there describing the amazing progress being made in new battery technology. Prof Yet-Ming Chang of MIT showed some particularly impressive work with his new "ooze" battery, and had formed a company, M24, to commercialize it. Prof. Chang has already successfully commercialized other battery technologies with his company, A123 Systems. My point is that, in 20 to 30 years we may all be driving electric vehicles. We may also be driving vehicles that practically drive themselves, so that rush hour traffic can be much denser, yet safer. Some of this technology is already coming to market. So, why lock ourselves into trains running on fixed tracks, a 19th century technology, when we live in the 21st? After all, 20 years ago, the Prius wasn't even on Toyota's drawing board yet!

P-099-001

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 leadership 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 Boulevard, 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-099-002

Traffic forecasts reported in the DEIS and used to inform decisions on a locally preferred alternative were derived from adopted regional employment and population forecasts, and from state-of-the-art modeling and evaluation conducted by Metro, RTC, and the project team. These

P-099-005 5) **No Trust in Management of Project.** The gross mismanagement of this project by the CRC, along with the arrogance and obscene over-charging of taxpayers by the primary vendor, Dave Evans and Associates is enough to justify cancelling the project and starting completely over with a totally new cast of characters. This is detailed in the excellent reports by the Forensic Auditor, Tiffany Couch. Dave Evans and Associates is even suing to keep from having to explain how they have spent millions of dollars they have gotten from Washington State taxpayers. That alone should be reason enough to ban them from bidding on any more government projects.

P-099-006 6) **Demand for County-Wide Vote.** Before this project is settled, all voters in Clark County (and perhaps surrounding counties) who will be forced to pay for this farce must be allowed to vote on it, at the very least whether light rail should be included. To do otherwise is to force this down our throats and is unconscionable, and should be illegal, if it isn't already.

Sincerely,

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traffic forecasts were reviewed by all project sponsor agencies as well as FTA and FHWA.

An independent panel of traffic modeling experts was convened in October 2008 to review the modeling methods and findings. These experts concluded that the project's approach to estimating future travel demand was reasonable and that it relied on accepted practices employed in metropolitan regions throughout the country. These findings are summarized in the "Columbia River Crossing Travel Demand Model Review Report" (November 25, 2008). This independent review confirmed the CRC modeling approach used to address multiple variables that can affect travel demand, including gasoline prices, tolling, travel demand measures, and induced development.

The number of trips on I-5 across the river is projected to reach 184,000 in 2030. Even if this level of traffic did not occur until 2050, the facility would still need to accommodate it. And the facility is intended to have decades of functional service.

P-099-003

As illustrated in the DEIS, and summarized in Exhibit 29 (page S-33) of the Executive Summary, light rail would better serve transit riders than bus rapid transit (BRT) within the CRC project area. Light rail would carry more passengers across the river during the PM peak, result in more people choosing to take transit, faster travel times through the project area, fewer potential noise impacts, and lower costs per incremental rider than BRT. Additionally, light rail is more likely to attract desirable development on Hayden Island and in downtown Vancouver, which is consistent with local land use plans.

High occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes work when they are part of a network, and could potentially be a useful tool in the CRC area if employed as part of a regional plan. The five-mile CRC project by itself is

too short in length to provide the true benefits of HOV lanes, but should the region adopt and develop an HOV system, lanes within the bridge influence area could potentially be designated as part of the network.

The CRC project team has looked at HOV lanes and freight lanes, which are typically located on the inside freeway lane next to the barrier, as part of its technical analysis. Because about 70 percent of the vehicles enter and/or exit I-5 within the five mile study area, access to and from a HOV lane or freight lane could create traffic operational problems by increasing lane changes (for example, HOVs entering the freeway and needing to merge all the way to the inside lane). The results of this analysis are described in more detail in Section 3.1 of the DEIS.

P-099-004

Changing technology, peak oil, and other projections of future conditions have been considered. While automated personal vehicles could eventually dramatically increase interstate capacity, it is not likely to eliminate or significantly diminish the demand for public transit, particularly in the foreseeable future. Mode choice depends on much more than just the volume-to-capacity ratio of interstate links. For example, parking capacity and cost are also significant factors in mode choice. See the CRC Traffic Technical Report for further discussion of factors that affect mode choice.

P-099-005

Past financial performance is an important issue but is not relevant to the NEPA review process. The Record of Decision concludes the NEPA analysis. It indicates which alternative has been selected by the federal government, and allows for the continued design, eligibility for federal funding and permitting, and eventual construction of that alternative. The Locally Preferred Alternative is supported by local, regional, state, and federal agencies and has been selected following an exhaustive analysis and public involvement program.

The project takes the issues of financial management very seriously. The project is currently developing new financial reporting mechanisms and has started providing monthly reports on the internet. The project will continue to work with the public to improve transparency and an understanding of the resources required for an undertaking of this scale.

P-099-006

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.