



Portland Pedestrian Advisory Committee

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Members June 18, 2010

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To:

Portland Mayor Sam Adams
Portland City Council Members
CRC Independent Review Panel Members
CRC Project Sponsors Council Members
CRC Project
Metro Council Members
Representative Earl Blumenauer
Senator Ron Wyden
Senator Jeff Merkley

Subject: Columbia River Crossing Project (CRC) LPA Endorsement Rescinded

Dear Reader,

The Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC) for the City of Portland has actively contributed to the formulation of the Columbia River Crossing project design for several years through its representation on the Pedestrian Bicycle Advisory Committee (PBAC) and in reviews by the full committee of key elements at significant milestones.

Our support for the project has been firm but conditional. Early on we expressed concerns to the project leadership about short circuiting consideration of regional and statewide transportation, environmental and urban design policies. A narrowly defined project study area, reluctant embrace of multi-modal goals, and lack of concern for urban design issues characterized CRC project framing statements and contributed to the ongoing friction with local leadership. Fundamental flaws in the regional traffic and land use impact analysis and mediocre quality of design of the structure and especially the Hayden Island interchange seemed intractable. On the other hand, with CRC project staffs' informative and responsive facilitation, real progress in developing a quality bike, pedestrian, and transit facility led to our endorsement of the LPA in the Fall of 2009.

By the end of 2009, with congressional demands to reduce cost, the now oxymoronic "Locally Preferred Alternative" or cost cut LPA was presented with shocking disregard for the needs of cyclists and pedestrians that had been carefully integrated into earlier designs. The 12-lane highway bridge posing as a 10-lane bridge was preserved. A long silence in the ensuing months was reassuring in that dissatisfaction with the results caused the state's governors to appoint a bi-state committee to evaluate the project direction and to consider options that would address concerns of local government.

However, we are acutely aware that the base line for the project remains the cost cut LPA. We take strong exception to the following deficiencies:

1. Reduced bicycle and pedestrian connections to Hayden Island. The pedestrian walkway provided on the reused channel crossing bridge was removed entirely. This provided the important connection between the Bridgeton neighborhood to the south and Hayden Island shopping, residential and workplace destinations as well as a safe walk off facility for stranded

motorists. Access to Hayden Island now requires hundreds of feet of out of direction travel to reach the remaining walkway.

2. Bike and pedestrian facilities have been made inadequate to carry projected volumes in a safe manner. The sole remaining bike-ped path programmed to connect to the main river crossing was reduced to 16 feet from the south bank Forty Mile loop to the point where it joins the 24 foot wide bike ped path on the main river crossing. The 24-foot width was not an arbitrary number but one based upon safe separation between modes and 30 year projections of cyclist and walker traffic volumes. It includes 6-foot lanes in each direction for fast moving cyclists as well as 12 feet to be shared by slower cyclists and pedestrians moving in both directions. This would be similar to bike lanes and sidewalks mandated for city arterials. Moreover, the adjacent empty under bridge cell could be used for expansion beyond the 30 year projection horizon. The truncated and dangerously narrow 16-foot path connecting what is likely to be the most heavily used segment between the Island and North Portland is simply inadequate in width.
3. The reduced cost "LPA" claimed to have narrowed the bridge to 10 lanes from 12. Actually each bridge was narrowed by a mere 4 feet so that with lane striping they could be converted easily from 10 to 12 lanes. Whenever the prospect of widening ped facilities was mentioned early in the process, the PBAC was told that every foot of sidewalk width would cost millions. Somehow this thinking failed to translate to reducing auto lanes or lane width while bike and ped facilities were dismantled in the name of savings.
4. The resulting design is pieced together at the south end, inflicts maximum degradation to the urban environment of Hayden Island, opens the floodgates of traffic to plug I-5 at the Rose Quarter, opens the opportunity for more high-speed accidents and results in a bridge of no memorable quality and provides grossly inadequate pedestrian and bicycle facilities to serve the surrounding urban fabric.

For the reasons stated above, the Portland Pedestrian Advisory *withdraws support for the proposed LPA and retracts past recommendations for approval*. We will comment separately on other options that may be developed once we have had the opportunity for a full review.

Thank you for considering our views.



David Aulwes
Chair, Portland Pedestrian Advisory Committee

cc: Paul Smith, Portland Bureau of Transportation
John Gillam, Portland Bureau of Transportation
David Parisi, Columbia River Crossing Project