

EI-3090
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08/08/2007 07:19 PM

To <Christa.Dean@stb.dot.gov>, "Wood, Andrew"
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"Vicki King" <vking@triangleassociates.com>, "Gregory,"
cc
bcc

Subject FW: Rail road comments

Updated comments from Paul Carpentier.

From: Paul Carpentier [mailto:pcarp@homenetnw.net]
Sent: Wednesday, August 08, 2007 4:13 PM
To: Steve Shinn; Robert Russell; Roger Hansen; Phinney, Elizabeth; PETE C,
Subject: Rail road comments

Elizabeth Phinney
Rail Environmental Manager
phinnee@wsdot.wa.gov
August 8, 2007

I am writing to update my original comments (included at end of this letter) submitted to you at the open house held at the Port of Moses Lake. Those original comments were prepared prior to the open house and as such need some clarification.

The Northern Columbia Basin Railroad Project Feasibility Study dated February 2006 does not include the route that was presented at the open house. Segment 1 route as presented at the open house is considerably different than the preferred Segment 1 route in the study. It may be even worse as the route would cross Wheeler Road in addition to Road L, Broadway, Stratford and several other residential roads.

I mentioned in my original comments that I felt that Exhibit C- Environmental Fatal Flaw Analysis Evaluation Matrix was fatally flawed. Segment 1, whether from the study or the new Segment 1 preferred route, is not answered appropriately for a number of questions in the matrix. Without going into minute detail (which I would be happy to do if you care to contact me) I will list a few general areas I think are misstated.

- Homes, farms or business would be displaced
- Farmland would be impacted
- It would divide the community
- It would adversely impact low-income populations
- It would deter emergency vehicles
- It would decrease pedestrian and bicycle safety
- It would be a visual distraction to nearby residents
- Air quality would deteriorate
- Homes and schools would be impacted by noise
- Valuable land and vegetation would be impacted
- Wetlands would be impacted

As a business owner and property owner who lives on Broadway I can say that those are some very busy roads that you would cross within the city limits. If this rail is built it should be done to the north of town along the route that was previously abandoned or head from the port to Soap Lake (Segment 5). Eventually completion of both would be ideal. The current preferred Segment 1 is short-sighted.

Sincerely,

Paul S. Carpentier
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Railroad decisions are for 50 years. Segment 1 (Wheeler to Parker Horn) break-even analysis calls for 3382 to 10145 rail cars per year. That is a lot of congestion on 4 major arterials within the city limits. Wheeler road, road L, East Broadway and Stratford road already have much automobile traffic.

Grade separated crossings should be required but are not included in any cost analysis for Segment 1. The increase in cost would require an increase in the number of rail cars to break-even. It won't get any cheaper in the future.

A map showing details of routes need to be made public. Segments 1 & 3 move through residential areas, Longview school, farm ground, wetlands and would affect anyone living north of road 4. One hundred thirteen (113) pedestrians have been killed 1998-2005 in the state of Washington (Seattle Times news source). I have no idea on how many vehicle/train fatalities occur. Safety should be a major consideration.

Segment 1 (Wheeler to Parker Horn) costs are understated. Major parcels of land are affected and many would have reduced utility after the railroad project was completed. As mentioned above all major arterials running north out of the city would be negatively impacted.

Segment 5 (North GCIA to Soap Lake) costs are overstated. This is basically a straight, level route out through rocky uninhabited land. It would not interfere with wetlands, no body of waters to cross or any other significant factor. This is where the rail should be run. The days of railroads running through prime real estate should be over.

Exhibit C- Environmental Fatal Flaw Analysis Evaluation Matrix is fatally flawed. Some questions within Segments 1(Wheeler to Parker Horn), Segment 3 (rehabilitation of Parker Horn

to GCIA) and Segment 5 (New rail to Soap Lake) are answered incorrectly or at least incompletely. The answers in Exhibit C I would question relate to Land Use and Growth, Social and Economic, Transportation/Traffic, Visual Quality and Biological Environment.

I am not by any means anti-growth. I would like to see the community grow and prosper. Segments 1 and 3 seem to be poor choices for large amounts of rail traffic. Another route needs to be found. Perhaps the state of Washington could be approached as they own several rail lines. This certainly would meet their ownership criteria of preserving or expanding rail service. A significant portion of the report addresses the congestion on the West side. Bringing new industry to the state should be a priority.

Paul Carpentier
July 19, 2007
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