

Summary of Columbia River Crossing Environmental Justice Program

Demographic Analysis – The project team conducted a demographic analysis of the area in 2005 to determine which communities need to be included in the outreach and environmental portions of the project. The analysis showed the project team needs to target efforts to reach low income, African-American, Latino, Vietnamese and Russian-Speaking populations.

Communities and Environmental Justice Working Group – The project has begun developing a work program and recruitment strategy to form a working group made up of people representing the groups identified above, as well as representatives from the neighborhoods with a logical nexus to the project area.

The purpose of this group is to ensure that communities affected by the project have meaningful opportunities to learn about and provide input to the project as it is developed. The working group provides the project team a structure for receiving input and recommendations from representatives of neighborhoods and underrepresented communities. It will serve as a focal point for distribution of information and input on issues that affect them and those they represent, and to solicit advice on how the project can best engage their representative communities.

Environmental Justice Training – The project team is organizing a series of trainings on Environmental Justice. A 90 minute training will be offered to Task Force members at the June meeting. The trainer is John Ridgway of the Washington Department of Ecology, who conducts EJ workshops for Ecology as well as other State and Local agencies. An additional four hour training will be offered for Task Force, Working Group and other community members, most likely in July. It will be conducted by Running Grass, a gentleman who works with EPA. He is a national caliber EJ trainer who offers a highly participatory and interactive class. In addition to the training he will provide for the project, Running Grass' other EJ sessions are available to CRC project participants and if there is interest, we can organize transportation to sessions offered outside of the Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan area.

Outreach– The Communications Team is in the process of identifying organizations and events that attract communities we need to reach so we can begin providing detailed project information to people where they are already gathering.

Materials and Translations – The project translates major milestone information into Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese and disseminates the pieces via minority media outlets. Types of material translated include the project newsletters and Open House press releases. We provided translators at the Open Houses. As our outreach program develops, we will take materials with us to the various events we attend. Translated materials are also available on the project web site.

Environmental Justice Methods and Data Report – The purpose of this report is to determine if there are disproportionate impacts to low income and minority residents within the project area. It is part of the material collected in the draft Environmental Impact Study to determine the project's potential impacts and benefits to the natural and built environment.