

Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice Program

Environmental Justice is defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA, as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, culture, education or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

Fair treatment means that no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic groups, should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local and tribal environmental programs and policies.

Meaningful involvement means that:

- Potentially affected community residents have an appropriate opportunity to participate in decisions about a proposed activity that will affect their environment and/or health;
- The public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision;
- The concerns of all participants involved are considered in the decision making process; and
- The decision makers seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.



Community and Environmental Justice Group

To achieve the goal of meaningful public involvement in the project, the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) project formed the Community and Environmental Justice Group (CEJG). The members of the CEJG come from neighborhoods in the project area and include environmental justice communities (low-income, African American, Latino), one liaison from the CRC Task Force, and five at-large members. They represent the diverse interests and perspectives of Vancouver, Portland and Hayden Island neighborhoods potentially affected by the project.

The CEJG provides input to CRC project staff in these areas:

- Identifying community concerns in the project development process
- Presenting recommendations at key milestones

- Raising relevant issues of interest (or potential impact) such as air quality, noise, highway interchange alignments and design features to help inform the project's efforts to avoid, minimize and/or mitigate potential community impacts
- Assisting CRC staff in effectively engaging the public in the project

Environmental Justice Training

On September 30, 2006, CRC hosted an environmental justice training for CEJG members, the CRC Task Force and the public. Nationally recognized environmental justice expert Running Grass led the workshop. The participants learned the basic concepts of environmental justice, identified specific environmental justice issues facing the project, and learned about resources and strategies for dealing with environmental justice concerns. Additional training sessions led by Running Grass are available to CRC project participants.

Environmental Justice Methods and Data Report

The purpose of this CRC report is to determine if uneven impacts to low income and minority residents exist within the project area. The report is part of the material collected for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement or Draft EIS. The Draft EIS serves as a tool for decision making and is required for major projects that have community and environmental effects. Decision makers consider positive and negative effects when selecting a preferred alternative.

Outreach Efforts

Since the beginning of the project, CRC staff members have talked with thousands of people at fairs, festivals, open houses, neighborhood meetings and leadership breakfasts. With the help of the Community and Environmental Justice Group, the CRC staff will



continue to engage in diverse outreach efforts to provide relevant and timely information about the project to communities in the project area.

How can I get involved?

- Visit the website at www.ColumbiaRiverCrossing.org to sign up for updates
- Attend an advisory group meeting
- Invite CRC staff to your group to discuss the project
- Attend a CEJG meeting:
CEJG meets 6:00 – 8:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month at the Kenton Firehouse in North Portland (2209 N. Schofield) or the Vancouver Housing Authority (2500 Main Street). The meetings are open to the public.

How can I comment on the project?

Email: feedback@columbiarivercrossing.org
 Mail: 700 Washington St., Suite 300
 Vancouver, WA 98660
 Phone: 360-737-2726 or 503-256-2726
 Fax: 360-737-0294

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