



Longview named one of the top ten prettiest towns in America by Forbes - March 29, 2012

P.O. Box 128
 Longview, WA 98632-7080
 www.mylongview.com

July 11, 2016

Office of Environmental Analysis
 Surface Transportation Board
 395 E Street, SW
 Washington, DC 20423

Melanie Yasbin
 Law Offices of Louis E. Gitomer
 600 Baltimore Avenue, Suite 301
 Towson, MD 21204

RE: Docket No. AB-1244X, Columbia & Cowlitz Railway, LLC – Abandonment Exemption – in Cowlitz County, WA

Thank you for providing the City of Longview the opportunity to comment on the above referenced proposal. City staff have reviewed the Combined Environmental and Historic Report dated June 1, 2016, that is to provide the basis for an independent environmental analysis of this proceeding. Based upon our reading of the Combined Report, we offer the following comments and ask that they be reflected in the record.

Environmental Report

Proposed Action and Alternatives. In addition to removing the track “and materials” from the Line, other infrastructure should be removed, including but not limited to all signs and crossing arms.

Transportation System. Positive effects of the proposed action would include the removal of grade crossings of City streets at which buses would no longer be required to stop, thus reducing rear-end vehicle collisions.

Land Use. (i) indicates that the Columbia & Cowlitz Railway considers the proposed abandonment to be consistent with existing land use plans; that the area surrounding the Line is rural in nature; and that the City of Longview was contacted about the Report with no response received by June 1, 2016. A generalized statement about the area perceived land use compatibility does not indicate any consistency or inconsistency with our Comprehensive Plan; in actuality the area surrounding the Line within the City of Longview is urban in nature; and the City was not contacted about the Report until receiving a letter dated June 1, 2016, from the Law Offices of Louis E. Gittomer, LLC, transmitting the Report on June 6, 2016.

Noise. Continued non-use and the proposed abandonment of the Line would lead to a reduction of noise in urban residential areas.

Safety. Continued non-use and the proposed abandonment of the Line would lead to an increase in safety at urban rail crossings.

Historic Report

2. The indicated width of the railroad corridor right of way – six (6) feet outside of the rail) – seems narrow to us; our parcel information indicates most of the railroad corridor right of way is 50 feet wide. Did Weyerhaeuser, the previous owner, retain underlying right of way outside of the 6-foot dimension noted? Minor corrections to the written description of the right of way in one sentence: “Turning northwest, the Line crosses Clark Street and Fisher Lane.” That should be, “Turning *northeast*, the Line crosses Clark Street and Fishers Lane.”

In addition to the above comments, the City of Longview will in due course consider publishing and filing the appropriate documents to make the Line within the city limits available for trail use. If the City elects to pursue that, actual eventual trail use may be coordinated with the City of Kelso and Cowlitz County, given that the Line exits the Longview city limits twice and enters the City of Kelso city limits near Clark Street for a short distance as well as Cowlitz County jurisdiction adjacent to the Westside Highway south of Nevada Drive.

Sincerely,



David M. Campbell
City Manager

cc: Mayor and City Council

Kurt Sacha, Assistant City Manager, Finance Director

Jennifer Wills, Parks and Recreation Director

Jeff Cameron, Public Works Director

John Brickey, Community Development Director

Cowlitz County Board of Commissioners

City of Kelso



Executive Office
P.O. Box 128 • Longview, WA 98632-7080

PORTLAND
OR 970
11 JUL '16
PM 6 L

NEOPOST FIRST-CLASS MAIL
07/11/2016
US POSTAGE \$000.46
ZIP 98632
04111255021

