Q. What is the existing service level for that crossing? Does this incorporate trips from vested land use applications?

I do not know the LOS for the crossing. However, the roads at the crossing were modeled to be operating at LOS A under then current traffic flows. This LOS is expected to drop to F on Blackburn Road and Old Highway 99 South with projected year 2025 population growth.

Q. What current population projections does the City rely on in its planning for the next 20 years?

The City, in its planning documents, has used a midpoint of the Office of Financial Management's (OFM) 2025 low and medium forecasts. I believe the City of Mount Vernon was allocated roughly about 20,000 people, representing about a 70% increase in its UGA population within a 20 year planning horizon.

Q. Has the City in its planning conducted a needs analysis in order to accommodate such population growth?

Yes. Work of this nature was conducted through the Community and Economic Development Department. It included an evaluation of the area of commercial lands that the City is expected to need during the next 20 years (to year 2025).

Q. What were the conclusions of the analysis for such growth?

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One of the important conclusions that I am aware of is that the City will need roughly an additional 800 acres of commercial land during the next twenty years.

Q. Looking specifically to the area within the City including the Hickox Road crossing, what are the municipality's plans for growth in that area?

This area east of the railroad tracks is zoned for commercial development.

Q. What is the permitted land uses and zoning in that area?

This area is zoned for commercial development.

Q. Are you aware of any specific plans for motor vehicle transportation developments in that area?

The City's comp plan transportation element capital facilities plan includes improvement of the I-5 interchange at Hickox Road into a full interchange. On several occasions, this project has been discussed with WSDOT staff encouraging them to include it on the I-5 corridor plan currently under development.
Secondly, there is approximately $4 million from a State appropriation for location of a park and ride facility that has been awarded. One of the sites with very high technical merit for selection of the facility is near/at the I-5 interchange at Hickox Road.

Q. As it currently sits, are the transportation facilities in that area sufficient to provide commercial growth it is zoned for? Why or why not?

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No. According to traffic models, without other planned improvements in the transportation system, Old Highway 99 South will drop below acceptable levels of service.

Q. What then, are the municipality's plans for traffic flow and its options for making use of the crossing in the future?

The Hickox crossing is not specifically part of the City's plans to make traffic flow on Old Highway 99 South work at acceptable levels of service. However, the crossing provides a grid connection in the existing system that provides capacity, options and flexibility that will otherwise not exist. These assets of the crossing are important given the high growth rate of the City (this rate currently exceeds predicted growth rates), its deficiencies in commercial land, which will likely need to be located in the South Mount Vernon area, and the location of the I-5 interchange at Hickox Road which will increase the need to maintain traffic options for getting to and from the interstate.

Q. Currently, does the City have enough developable commercial lands within it Urban Growth Area to accommodate the need for commercial and industrial growth?

No. According to studies the City needs roughly an additional 800 acres.

Q. Does the Hickox Road Crossing abut the City's Urban Growth Boundary?

Yes. And the City's Southern limits.

Q. In your opinion would closure of the crossing assist in the City's planning efforts to achieve more commercial and industrial development? Why or why not?

No. There are only two feasible locations in the City's area to obtain an additional 800 acres—the River Bend area and South Mount Vernon (ie. the area near Hickox Road rail crossing).

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Closing the Hickox rail crossing will increase the difficulty of locating commercial land in South Mount Vernon by reducing access to the lands in this area.

Q. Have you previously had discussions with WSDOT officials regarding the project and if so did you express any opinions regarding this?

Yes. I sent a letter to Jeffrey T. Schultz, Rail Operations Technical Expert, WSDOT, dated June 30, 2006 opposing the closure of the crossing because of its effect on the ability of Mount Vernon to attract needed commercial development, its limitations to traffic options for the existing transportation grid in the City's Urban Growth Area, and the reduction of access across the railroad for emergency vehicles and operations.

Q. Has WSDOT proposed any alternatives to closure to your knowledge?

No.

I declare under the penalty of perjury pursuant to the laws of the State of Washington that the foregoing is true and correct.

DATED this 5th day of November, 2007 at Mount Vernon, Washington.

Esco Bell

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DISTINGUISHING QUALIFICATIONS

- Nine years experience directing a public works department
- More than five years experience as the engineering department head in a city
- Nineteen years experience in engineering and managing municipal and county infrastructure projects and challenges
- Reviews projects and programs for quality assurance and policy compliance
- Manages staff, consultants, developers and contractors
- Acts as agency staff engineer
- Works with other agencies and the public

SUMMARY OF RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

In January 2005 I was appointed as the Public Works Director for the City of Mount Vernon, Washington, where I have furthered my executive leadership experience working directly for the mayor in managing a multi-faceted department of sixty-five employees.

Through these employees (and hired consultants when needed), I am responsible for the planning, programming, budgeting, and effectiveness of a broad spectrum of public works infrastructure programs that serve the needs of a rapidly growing city of approximately 30,000 population. The public works department is organized into six divisions: capital programs, program coordination, wastewater, street and collection system operations, equipment maintenance and solid waste. The revenues for these programs are approximately $16 million per year including approximately $15 million dollars in infrastructure capital improvement projects per year (two thirds of these improvements are for transportation with funding that is heavily dependent upon grant appropriations and partnerships with other agencies).

My work includes interacting and working jointly with other departments, an elected council, Federal, State and local governments, and the public.

A portion of the employees in the public works department are covered by a labor union. I work closely with the mayor and staff negotiating new labor contracts. I am responsible to train, develop and (when necessary) discipline employees, and for all of the processes (with

the assistance of the human resources director) involved in hiring employees up to the point of a recommendation to the mayor.

Achievements of the public works department during my tenure include: completed the design, funding and construction implementation of a $38.5 million upgrade to the City's wastewater treatment plant; completion of a $3 million bridge demolition project; considerably increased the street maintenance program (for example, doubled the street and reconstruction program from 2 ½ miles per year to 5 miles per year); completed a $1 million new piped outfall for the wastewater treatment plant; advanced the design, funding and implementation of major transportation improvements; completed intersection improvements; considerably increased the basic sewer maintenance program from less than one thousand feet per year to over 3000 feet; completed the design and construction of a $1.5 million wastewater pump station; obtained and implemented an innovative flood wall for better flood fight protection on the Skagit River; successfully participated in the policy group and operational management required to conduct a major flood fight on the Skagit River (in November of 2006 required approximately 1400 volunteers and constructed approximately 1 1/2 miles of sand bag wall and flood fight protection for the downtown of the City; accomplished multiple minor traffic improvements that collectively improve the flow and safety of traffic near schools and throughout the City; for example: installed radar speed signs in several elementary school zones, modernized signs in these zones, constructed street improvements to close gaps in sidewalks near schools, and re-striped intersections for added capacity; and advanced the City's effort (together with other members of the project team) to provide permanent flood protection and renovation of the downtown.

As the Director of Public Works/County Engineer of Pacific County, Washington from 1998 to 2005, I acquired executive leadership experience working directly for the board of county commissioners in managing a multi-faceted department of fifty employees.

Through these employees (and hired consultants when needed), I was responsible for the planning, programming, budgeting, and effectiveness of a broad spectrum of public works infrastructure programs: road and bridge engineering design and construction, project surveying, transportation planning, pavement management, environmental permitting, geographic information systems, a small sanitary sewer utility, administration and engineering for a flood control zone district, development review, public works maintenance, accounting and finance, fleet and equipment maintenance and repair, county computer services, telecommunications, buildings and grounds maintenance, and parks. The budget for these programs was approximately $7 million per year including approximately $2 to $3 million dollars in infrastructure capital improvement projects.

My work included interacting and working jointly with other departments, elected officials, State and local governments and the public.

Employees in the department of public works were covered by two different labor unions. I worked closely with these unions and served on and/or worked closely with the management negotiation teams that worked on new labor contracts. I was responsible to train, develop and (when necessary) discipline employees, and for all of the processes involved in hiring employees up to the point of a recommendation to the county commissioners.

Notable achievements of the department of public works during my tenure include: dramatically increasing the funding, programs and projects to solve flood problems on the Washington Long Beach Peninsula including in-house design and construction management of a 36-inch diameter storm water ocean outfall project with 500 feet of microtunneling work; reorganization of the engineering office and successfully completing higher project loads with smaller staff and no turnover; dramatically increasing the production of maintenance crews (for example, doubled the road preservation program from 12 miles per year to 25 while reducing the unit cost); built and improved relationships with key community stakeholders; implemented tough budget cuts while maintaining responsible levels of service.

In 2005 I left Pacific County for the opportunity to return to city work managing a larger department in a rapidly growing city.

My public works director years are well augmented with eleven years of experience working for a fast growing city near Portland, Oregon. Before coming to Pacific County, I was the City Engineer/Engineering Projects Supervisor of St. Helens, Oregon, where I managed the engineering department (two senior engineering technicians, one part time engineering aid and one summer intern) in providing full engineering services for this small city's needs.

As the only licensed engineer on staff, I was closely involved with all in-house projects from conception and design through construction. These in-house projects typically covered the full range of smaller scale public projects including pump stations, sewer lines, storm drains, water lines, streets, paving, and such special items as theme street lighting.

The City of St. Helens regularly hired consultants to perform professional services for major infrastructure projects. I provided general oversight of these projects and facilitated the effort of the consultants. Project examples included such efforts as development of a geographic information system, taste and odor abatement at a well through aquifer recharge and recovery, corrosion control treatment, major water and sewer line projects, pump stations, reservoir roof replacement, large storm drain projects to reduce I/I, development of a water master plan, seismic stability analysis of a sewage lagoon dike, rehabilitation of large

wastewater treatment plant electrical substations, development of a transportation master plan, update of the storm water management plan. New projects at that time included a water reservoir and a new water source on the Columbia River.

With strong growth pressures, managing and working with developers and contractors to assure that public improvements were designed and constructed to City standards was one of my main responsibilities.

I worked on a task group overseeing the total rehabilitation of the City's 270 million gallon aerated sewage treatment lagoon.

In conjunction with the finance director, I updated and determined infrastructure system development charges.

The last major area of my responsibilities at the City included working with the public and other agencies and providing staff resources to the City Council, Planning Commission, other committees and staff of the City. I attended all Council meetings, prepared and defended the departmental budget before the Council and Budget Committee. I facilitated the formation of local improvement districts to construct public improvements through neighborhood meetings and public hearings.

In 1998 I left the City of St. Helens for the opportunity to manage a larger and more complex public works staff in Pacific County, Washington.

TECHNICAL AND PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

Jan. 2005 to Present	City of Mount Vernon POB 806 Mount Vernon, WA 98273	Public Works Director. Position responsibilities as described above.
Oct. 1998 to Jan. 2005	Pacific County P.O. Box 66 South Bend, WA 98586	Director of Public Works/County Engineer. Position responsibilities as described above.
July 1992 to Sept. 1998.	City of St. Helens P.O. Box 278 St. Helens, Oregon 97051	City Engineer/Engineering Projects Supervisor. Position responsibilities as described above.

April 1988 to July 1992	City of St. Helens P.O. Box 278 St. Helens, Oregon 97051	City Engineer.(Engineer in training until 8/89) Municipal engineering as described above except reported to Public Works Director and was not responsible for preparation of the departmental budget.
Feb. 1987 to April 1988	Keenon Land Services, Inc. L. Jerry Keenon 1311 East Alder Street Vernonia, Oregon 97064	Survey Technician and party chief. Supervised 1-3 people and performed all field and office computations for cadastral land surveys. Performed engineering contract work for the City of St. Helens through Keenon Land Services.
Apr. to Nov. 1986 & 1985	Bureau of Land Management Cadastral Surveys Oregon State Office Portland, Oregon	Survey Technician. Was principal assistant, instrument operator, performed land survey and subdivision computations, sometimes supervised crew.

EDUCATION

M.P.A., Portland State University at Portland, Oregon, 1995
B.S., Civil Engineering, Montana State University at Bozeman, 1984

Participated in five annual strategic planning and executive leadership training sessions (3 days each) hosted by the Washington State Association of County Engineers (1999-2004) Professional development courses in the areas of culvert sizing, hydrology, stormwater NPDES Phase II regulations, land boundary surveys, determination of base flood elevations, wetlands regulations, flood fight operations and management of engineering liability (2000-2003).

Continuing education credit in the areas of computer aided drafting, hydraulics, transportation engineering, bridge inspection, management and supervision, drilling and blasting, Oregon land survey law, project management, traffic safety, design of metal building systems, and municipal storm water management (1988-1999).

PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATIONS

Professional Engineer (Civil), Washington, 1998
Professional Land Surveyor, Oregon, 1992
Professional Engineer (Civil), Oregon, 1989

AWARDS AND ACTIVITIES

Certificate of Acknowledgement, presented June 2004, for my nomination from the Pacific County Board of Commissioners for the Washington County Road Administration's Engineer of the Year Award

Western District President, Washington State Association of County Engineers, 2003-2005; Western District Secretary, 2001-2003

"Certificate of Excellence," 2002, Washington Counties Risk Pool, for demonstrating a commitment to excellence through mastery of skills essential to top quality public service

1997 Conference in Boise, Idaho, American Water Works Association, Pacific Northwest Section. Wrote a paper and delivered a technical presentation, "Surface Water and Flood Impacts on the City of St. Helens' Ranney Wells"

"1994-1995 Award of Excellence," Department of Public Administration, Portland State University, in recognition of superior academic and professional performance

American Society of Civil Engineers

American Public Works Association

REFERENCES

Provided on request