

Washougal is spread out along the Columbia River and Highway 14 and the rail tracks run right along it. The downtown, the parks and schools are clustered along it too. A national wildlife refuge is adjacent to the tracks and a state park is about a quarter of a mile away. And up the Washougal River Road we have an internationally known Motocross Park.

I hope in your study you address the problem of traffic in small towns like Washougal. We have only one overpass. It's right at the downtown and so it gets congested at certain times of the day. We also have 5 at-grade crossings. I live at the west end of town and so, when I go downtown to the library, the P.O., the hardware store, I use the crossing near my house because it is faster than waiting for the overpass which has a stoplight. At the east end of town, the high school and middle school are on one side of the tracks and a large residential area is on the other. There is a crossing there, but, if it gets tied up, the overpass is over a mile away.

For this proposed coal terminal in Longview, they are talking about increasing the train traffic there by about 16 trains a day; what if the terminal proposed for Bellingham goes in? That's another 18 trains or so. And then there is the proposed oil terminal in Vancouver. How many trains a day is that? And these three proposals are the ones we know about. I fear that this precipitous increase in train traffic is going to increase traffic tie-ups in every city located along the rail lines. How is this going to affect our property values if it's always a hassle to get out to Highway 14 or simply to our downtown? Washougal has been renovating the downtown and it's attractive and viable. Several new businesses have started up. I don't know much about business, but will people want to locate here if we become known for our traffic congestion?

I am very much in favor of shipping things by rail; my concern is with a huge and sudden increase in rail traffic that no one could foresee. What provisions are being made to mitigate the effects of that on local communities, and who is going to pay for it? Please include the study of these effects in a broad EIS and help us understand what might happen to our communities.

Diana L. Gordon
642 I Street
Washougal, WA 98671