

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release



FORT VANCOUVER
National Trust

Public invited to view potential Vancouver Community Connector designs; *Project will reconnect Downtown Vancouver to Fort Vancouver National Site*

Contact: Elson Strahan, 360-992-1835

President & CEO, Fort Vancouver National Trust

Steering Committee Chairman, Community Connector Invitational Design Competition

(VANCOUVER, Washington—October 8, 2009) The public is invited to view potential designs for the Community Connector Project, which will reconnect Fort Vancouver National Site with downtown Vancouver. The public exhibit and design presentations will be presented at the Pearson Air Museum, 1115 E. Fifth Street, Vancouver between October 9 and 17, with the winning design announced on October 19 at 10:00 am at the General O.O. Howard House, 750 Anderson Street, Vancouver, WA.

The Vancouver Community Connector Invitational Design Competition is being conducted under the direction of Donald J. Stastny FAIA FAICP of StastnyBrun Architects in Portland. Stastny has conducted design competitions and provided professional design services around the world. Most recently, Stastny conducted the design competition for the Smithsonian's new National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Why is a Connector Needed?

For more than a century, historic Fort Vancouver was connected to and had a strong interaction with downtown Vancouver. The construction of Interstate 5 in 1955 severed this bond. Since then, pedestrian reconnections of downtown and historic Fort Vancouver have been envisioned and repeatedly adopted as a planning goal. This vision will become reality with the Vancouver Community Connector project.

Impacts of the CRC Project

The Columbia River Crossing (CRC) project to rebuild the I-5 Bridge between Vancouver and Portland is vital to meeting regional and national transportation needs.

Nevertheless, the CRC project will produce significant negative impacts on the Fort Vancouver National Site, including construction intrusion, increased sound and visual encroachment created by the new I-5 corridor, and the taking of up to three acres of National Park Service (NPS) property currently listed on the National Historic Register.

Because of these impacts, mitigation is required under Federal law. In its draft environmental impact statement regarding the CRC project, the NPS notes that required mitigation must provide improved connections between downtown Vancouver and the historic site, including an expanded pedestrian overpass at Evergreen Boulevard. NPS stated that the visual and sound impact of the CRC project must be minimized "through site-specific, culturally and historically appropriate design or visual buffers." Such connections have long been adopted as a planning goal by the NPS and the City.

Fort Vancouver National Trust president Elson Strahan observed: “In determining how the mitigation requirements will be satisfied, the NPS has envisioned a solution that does not simply seek compensation, but adds significant value to the City, region and State. The Community Connector will contribute to our community’s economic development and will honor our heritage. It will also serve as the welcoming gate for Washington, reflecting the fact that this is the birthplace of Northwest history.”

Vancouver Community Connector at a Glance

Public exhibit and comments:

October 9, 16, 17: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

October 10 & 12: 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Pearson Air Museum, 1115 E. Fifth Street, Vancouver, WA

Design presentation public meeting:

October 14, 8:30 a.m. – noon; 1:30 p.m.-5 p.m.,

Pearson Air Museum, 1115 E. Fifth Street, Vancouver, WA

The Design Teams:

- Danadjieva & Koenig Associates + HNTB: 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.
- Gustafson Guthrie Nichol + Allied Works: 10:30 - Noon
- Hood Design + Diller Scofidio & Renfro: 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.
- Mayer/Reed + OLIN + Holst: 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Winning design announced at press conference:

October 19, 10:00 a.m.

General O.O. Howard House, 750 Anderson Street, Vancouver, WA

The Jury:

- Roger Boothe, Director of Urban Design, City of Cambridge, Massachusetts
- Hank Florence, Historic Architect and Manager, External Cultural Programs for the Pacific West Region
- Richard Haag, Dean Emeritus, Department of Landscape Architecture, University of Washington
- Daniel Hunter, Co-director, Access to Design Professions
- Pat Jollota, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Vancouver, and published historian
- Michael Pride, Associate Professor, University of Cincinnati School of Architecture and Interior Design
- Don Wagner, Southwest Regional Administrator, Washington Department of Transportation

The Competition Manager:

- StastnyBrun Architects, Inc.