

I have watched the billions in tax payers money being spent on planning the Columbia River Crossing with almost total disbelief. However, this concept reflects the flawed goals of the Oregon Department of Transportation, an agency that needs to be flushed and new goals created with new personnel.

I was equally appalled at the process and decisions on the Newberg bypass. Most citizens agreed that the logical bypass was to go East from the West end of Dundee and take the bypass to the Charboneau/Champoeg overpass. After all, the objective was to relieve the traffic in Dundee, Newberg, Sherwood, Tigard and Tualatin, at least that was what I thought the goal was. In place of meeting the objective in this case, they opted to destroy much of the lower priced housing in Newberg and dump all of the bypass traffic into Wilsonville.

It is my opinion that the Columbia River Crossing will be a travesty for the following reasons:

1. The most prevailing reason for not building the Columbia River Crossing is that both City of Portland and City of Vancouver have expressed major concerns about the growing traffic problems in the core of both cities. Remember the concept of the West Side Bypass, the one that was proposed to go West off of I-5 South of Tualatin and join I-5 again North of Washougal? There is nothing structurally wrong with the bridges that now cross the river at Jantzen Beach, and yet they want to tear these down and tie up traffic going North and South for five years while we struggle without bridges? The West Side Bypass would relieve the traffic on the existing bridges, relieve traffic through both Cities and provide for a faster flow for commerce passing through the region in a North/South direction. Personally, I hate downtown Portland so bad that I would love to get to Seattle without having to go through the City.
2. The Columbia River Crossing will most likely absorb all funds available for ODOT projects for the duration of the project. Columbia River Crossing must be built in the shortest time possible because it will cripple the region as it struggles without bridges across the Columbia. The West Side Bypass could be built in phases, thus not absorbing all of the resources available **AND NOT** leave the rest of the State without funds for needed projects. It could be a ten year project in place of a hurry up and get it done project. For those of you that remember the debate when I-205 was built, please require ODOT start with the construction of the bridge.
3. The State and local municipalities continue to support the growth of Intel and other high tech companies in the Silicon Forest. The West Side bypass would open up access to housing in the Southern and Southeastern parts of the metroplex as well as St. Helens, North Portland and even Longview, to help support the jobs we so desperately need. Take it from someone that lives in the area, light rail is nothing more than a large toy train set that Metro loves to play with. The voters in the region have repeatedly turned down funding for their projects and the voters are ignored. They are losing \$7.5 million a year on one of their boondoggles alone, the Wilsonville line that runs on the main train tracks to Beaverton. It is sparsely ridden. I see it go by many times with one or two riders. They finally tinted the windows on the cars so people could not readily see the number of empty seats.
4. The North/South arterials that now serve the region, I-5 and I-205 are likewise already overloaded. If I want to go North into Washington, I have to leave no later than 5:30 AM or spend five hours getting from Sherwood to Woodland. The cost of the Columbia River Crossing will be paid by the cost of making these arterials eight and ten lanes, requiring at least two new bridges over the Willamette River. Building one new bridge North of Washougal would seemingly make more economic sense than the Columbia River Crossing. It certainly seems to me it would be smarter from a standpoint of the inconvenience and delays in traffic and commerce that will be caused by improvements to infrastructure that will be needed to support the Columbia River Crossing and to build the Crossing itself.

Please do not cripple this State's statewide transportation projects by approving a project that will suck the treasury dry for many years and cripple both human and commerce movement while the project is being built. Taking light rail to Vancouver and providing bicycle lanes is not important enough to short change the rest of the State's needed transportation project.