

February 12, 2014

To OR legislators

From: Citizen of Camas in Clark County, WA, Margaret Tweet, opposed to the exorbitant CRC light rail bridge plan

I'm writing in opposition to the bloated CRC project that has been characterized by failed bridge designs, ignoring public concerns, and wasteful spending.

Please do not force voter rejected light rail and TriMet poor management on Clark County WA. We don't need a gold plated train to cross the river.

The paid for bus system we have is working fine, and can handle the demand for decades to come because buses are flexible in route and vehicle size to match the true demand. CRC rosy traffic predictions haven't come true, and rosy light rail predictions won't either. <http://cascadepolicy.org/blog/2013/02/11/testimony-on-hb-2800-light-rail-to-vancouver-vs-ctran-express-buses/>

The current I-5 bridge is functional and allows for upriver commerce. There are less costly means to reduce bridge lifts, such as disallowing bridge lifts for a sailboat at 6 PM on a weekday during heavy traffic. Modifications to the BNSF bridge could also reduce bridge lifts greatly. Opening up the OR HOV lane in I-5 northbound leading up to the bridge from 3-6 PM weekdays is also a no cost means of improving congestion by allowing all traffic including freight and commercial vehicles equal access to the road.

Below is a reply to my question to Congresswoman Jaime Herrera-Beutler's office regarding Bus service as the transit component of a bridge across the Columbia....

**Bus rapid transit qualifies for New Starts funding. Here is a link to the USDOT's fact sheet on New Starts. The second sentence specifically names bus rapid transit as a qualified mode.**  
[http://www.fta.dot.gov/12304\\_2607.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/12304_2607.html)

**Because bus rapid transit often costs a fraction of light rail's cost the CRC would probably not get \$850 million for it. However, New Starts funds can only go toward the building of the *transit* portion of the bridge, so that much money would be unnecessary for BRT.**

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When the OR CRC oversight committee met in OR in 2011, they asked about the bus alternative instead of light rail **"CRC Deputy Director Kris Strickler said cost was a driving force behind presenting five different alternatives in the DEIS, some of which offered bus rapid transit instead of light rail." "At that time, cost was a factor," Strickler said. "It was a driver in the discussion."**

<http://couv.com/issues/crc-too-expensive-oregon>

Clark County, WA voters were promised a vote on light rail when it was proposed for the CRC bridge in the 2008 LPA. The vote was held, and voters rejected light rail on the proposed CRC twice, in November 2012, and November 2013. Clark County does not have the population, density, or demand for high capacity light rail. Public investment should be based on true need, and met economically. According to the CRC FEIS, only about 2.5% of trips across the bridge are on light rail, a demand met by more flexible and less costly bus service that runs in a lane shared with freight and other traffic. Light rail is estimated to cost over \$ 1 Billion just to build, and hogs an entire deck of a double decker bridge, interrupting river traffic and increasing costs by at least \$86 MILLION for the loss to existing businesses. <http://couv.com/?s=Light+rail+impedes+river+traffic>

November, 2012, over **56.51%** of Clark County Ctran voters rejected the Ctran proposition to extend light rail on the proposed CRC bridge into Clark County.

***C-Tran Proposition 1 November 6, 2012. "Resolution BR-12-009 and RCW 81.104 authorize a proposition to increase the sales and use tax by 0.1 percent, or one penny on a ten dollar purchase, to fund the C-TRAN share of the maintenance and operations costs ONLY of the Columbia River Crossing Project light rail extension between Expo Center and Clark Park & Ride and the local capital share and operations and maintenance costs of the Fourth Plain Boulevard Bus Rapid Transit project."*** <http://www.clark.wa.gov/elections/results/2012/2012Nov6ElectionResults.pdf>

November 2013, the vote was extended countywide, and 68.39% of voters affirmed the 2012 vote against light rail on any bridge across the Columbia River. Voters favored additional bridges across the Columbia River

<http://vote.wa.gov/results/20131105/clark/>

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"Plans for tolling Interstate 5 at the CRC will cause Interstate 205 to reach capacity. Meanwhile, traffic on Interstate 5 will plummet to half that originally predicted by state officials. State officials were counting on higher traffic counts—and the tolls drivers would pay—to cover the costs of the \$2.8 billion project. The projections were made by CDM Smith—the company the CRC hired to perform an investment grade analysis on tolls—but were previously not disclosed by the CRC to state legislators or the media, despite a number of public records requests."

(Click link below to see graph showing **CRC traffic predictions have not come true so far**, and another link to a report on traffic within the article.)

[http://www.wweek.com/portland/blog-30724-tolls\\_on\\_the\\_columbi.html](http://www.wweek.com/portland/blog-30724-tolls_on_the_columbi.html)

According to a live blogger for the OR CRC oversight committee, [Hart Noecker @HartNoecker Follow](#)

CDM Smith says [#CRC](#) peak tolling would start at \$4.50. Each way.

[2:11 PM - 14 Jan 2014](#)

toll rates are charged by the axle.  
Toll costs are projected to increase over time.

According to Kris Strickler, in SALEM, Ore. - Part of the video testimony from the Columbia River Crossing legislative oversight hearings held, January 14th, 2014 at the Oregon Capitol, increasing tolls is one way to address cost overruns.

Kris Strickler, former CRC staffer and consultant and current project director for ODOT answers questions about cost overruns up to \$1 BILLION.

<http://rebelmetropolis.org/salem-crc-hearing-liveblog-round-2/>

note the actual 520 floating bridge in Seattle toll rates:

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Tolling/520/520tollrates.htm> Note the high tolls per axle

Tolls coming for the alternate crossing, I-90

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/I90/CrossLakeWATolling/FAQ.htm>

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"Tolling the Glenn Jackson Bridge on I-205 is not part of the current project, but could arise separately, Strickler said."

[http://www.oregonlive.com/business/index.ssf/2013/08/oregon-led\\_columbia\\_river\\_cros.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/business/index.ssf/2013/08/oregon-led_columbia_river_cros.html)

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OR Governor Kitzhaber on tolling both I-5 and I-205 bridge

"Light rail and tolling, Kitzhaber said, "creates incentives for people to get out of cars," and while light rail partially encourages that, tolling is a necessary financial incentive to "create a pressure to inspire" people to use that public transit."

"The governors said they favor higher tolls during peak use hours. After the meeting, the governors also said they haven't ruled out the idea of tolling Interstate 205, to keep down congestion from those going out of their way to dodge tolls on I-5."

Full story <http://www.columbian.com/news/2011/apr/25/governors-build-truss-bridge-replace-i-5-span/>

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CRC Toll costs

#1. both the FEIS and the Capital and Operating plan were published in Sept. 2011. Why are those numbers in 2006 year dollars?

#2. Page 4-11 of the FEIS calls for tolls to be \$3.00 one-way during commute times. That 3.00 in 2006 is **\$4.14 in 2019 or \$8.28 round trip.**

#3. Page 40 of the Capital and Operating Plan calls for \$6.00 one way tolls. That \$6 cost in 2006 equates to **\$8.27 in 2019 or \$16.54 round trip.**