

A Proposal for a Bus Path Between Vancouver and Hillsboro

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I believe that extending C-Tran Express service to Intel Ronler Acres/Orenco and Jones Farm would be worthwhile. However, given the Hobson's Choice of I-5 to I-405 to US 26 West versus I-5 to Marine Drive to the St. John's Bridge to US 30 to Cornelius Pass Road, it has seemed an impossible task. However, I believe that I have come up with a potential routing that uses non-obvious locations for bus jumps to bypass the two worst backups on the route. Cornelius Pass Road has just been rebuilt so the buses should move much more quickly through there than they would have a few months ago.

Would you please also discuss this routing with the ODOT staff and your partners as well? It is as follows, from the 99<sup>th</sup> Street TC to Jones Farm with details following.

Leaving 99<sup>th</sup> Street TC the buses would use the bus-on-shoulder facility to as close to the bridge as it will extend, just as Downtown-, Marquam Hill- and Lloyd Center-bound buses will. After crossing the bridge, the buses to Hillsboro would exit at Marine Drive and turn left toward Terminal 6. At Portland Avenue they would turn left again and continue to Fessenden Avenue in North Portland. They would turn right and follow the Fessenden bus route around to Syracuse at the north end of the St. Johns Bridge.

The buses would then turn right across the bridge and move into the left lane. At the south end of the bridge they would turn **left** down the south leg of Bridge Avenue to the point at which the two directions divide. At this point the eastbound lane of South Bridge Avenue would be moved to the right a bit and a left turn lane added directly adjacent to the northbound transition ramp between US 30 and southbound Bridge Street. Admittedly, to create a turn bay long enough to hold one of C-Tran's 45 foot hybrid buses means that the cliff to the right has to be dug into a few feet. It would not be "free", but it would probably not be millions of dollars either.

The intersection here would be re-configured so that traffic headed westbound on US 30 and turning left onto South Bridge Avenue would do so about twenty yards to the west and at a sharper angle. Leaving the "stop line" the left turning traffic would continue west perhaps sixty feet and then turn sharply left. The path would be more "S" shaped. Here is the intersection as it is configured today:



The reconfigured intersection would have the “stop lines” where they are today, but the “slip ramp” between US 30 westbound and South Bridge Avenue would look more like the figure below:



The black line represents the new path for westbound vehicles on US 30 turning left onto the South Bridge Avenue ramp. The lower part of the “C” described by the red line represents the bus queue holding lane for one bus *from Vancouver* waiting to turn left onto US 30 toward Hillsboro. The curve from “dg” to the left-hand travel lane westbound on US 30 represents the “turn across” path for **BUSES ONLY** which is the major time-saver on this route.

The green line represents the route for buses *from Hillsboro* headed to Vancouver. Basically the interchange re-configuration would make the existing center “refuge” into a **BUS ONLY right** “turn-across” queue jump.

*Turn-across movements* are fairly rare in roadway design, but they are used frequently with surface rail. A good example is the Muni M Ocean car line when it leaves the 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue median at both the north and south ends of the San Francisco State University campus. Traffic signals stop the traffic across which the LRV’s must move, and the transit vehicle turns from the center lane *across the stopped traffic* to its next right-of-way. Because the queue jump toward Hillsboro moves the turn-across sixty or so feet from the Vancouver turn-across, they can occur at the same time. Traffic westbound on US 30 would have to

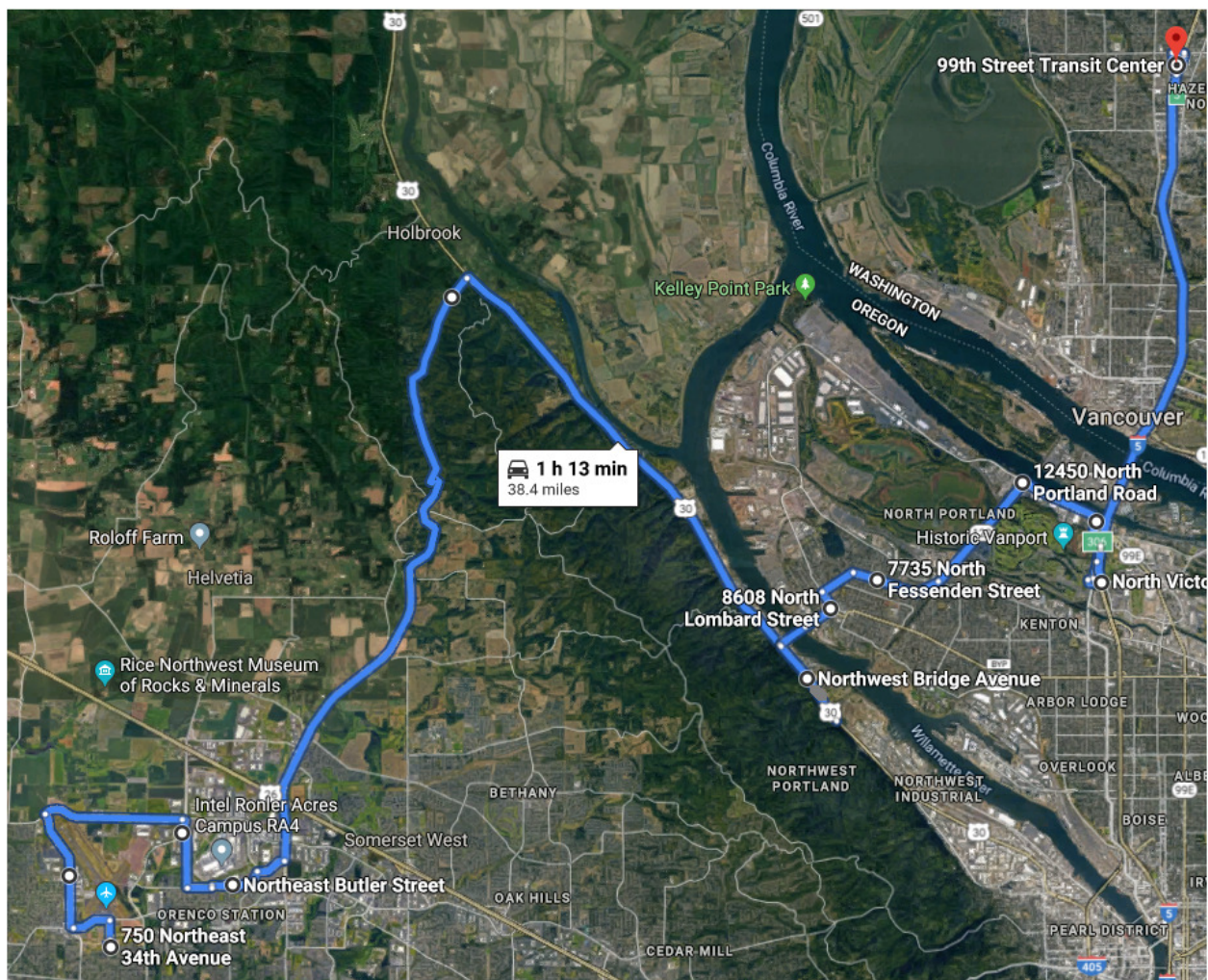


be stopped unlike today, but there aren't going to be buses more often than perhaps every six to ten minutes.

The "turn-across" signal should precede the left-turn for other vehicles so that buses headed toward Vancouver arrive at the intersection at the south end of the St. John's Bridge *ahead* of the private autos.

Buses to Hillsboro would continue west of US 30 to Cornelius Pass Road, having bypassed the **horrible** congestion on the northbound Bridge Avenue ramp and at the traffic signal at the bottom. There is a single left-turn bay at the intersection of US 30 and Cornelius Pass Road. If money can be found, it would be great to move the westbound roadway over one lane's width for a hundred yards in order to include a bus-only queue between the main lanes and the existing left-turn queue. When the queue is occupied by a bus, it should get a few second long advanced green.

The bus would then travel over Cornelius Pass as so many thousands of commuters from Clark County do today, pass by Ronler Acres and Jones Farm and terminate at the Fair Complex Station where riders could transfer to MAX if they so chose. The full route is shown here:

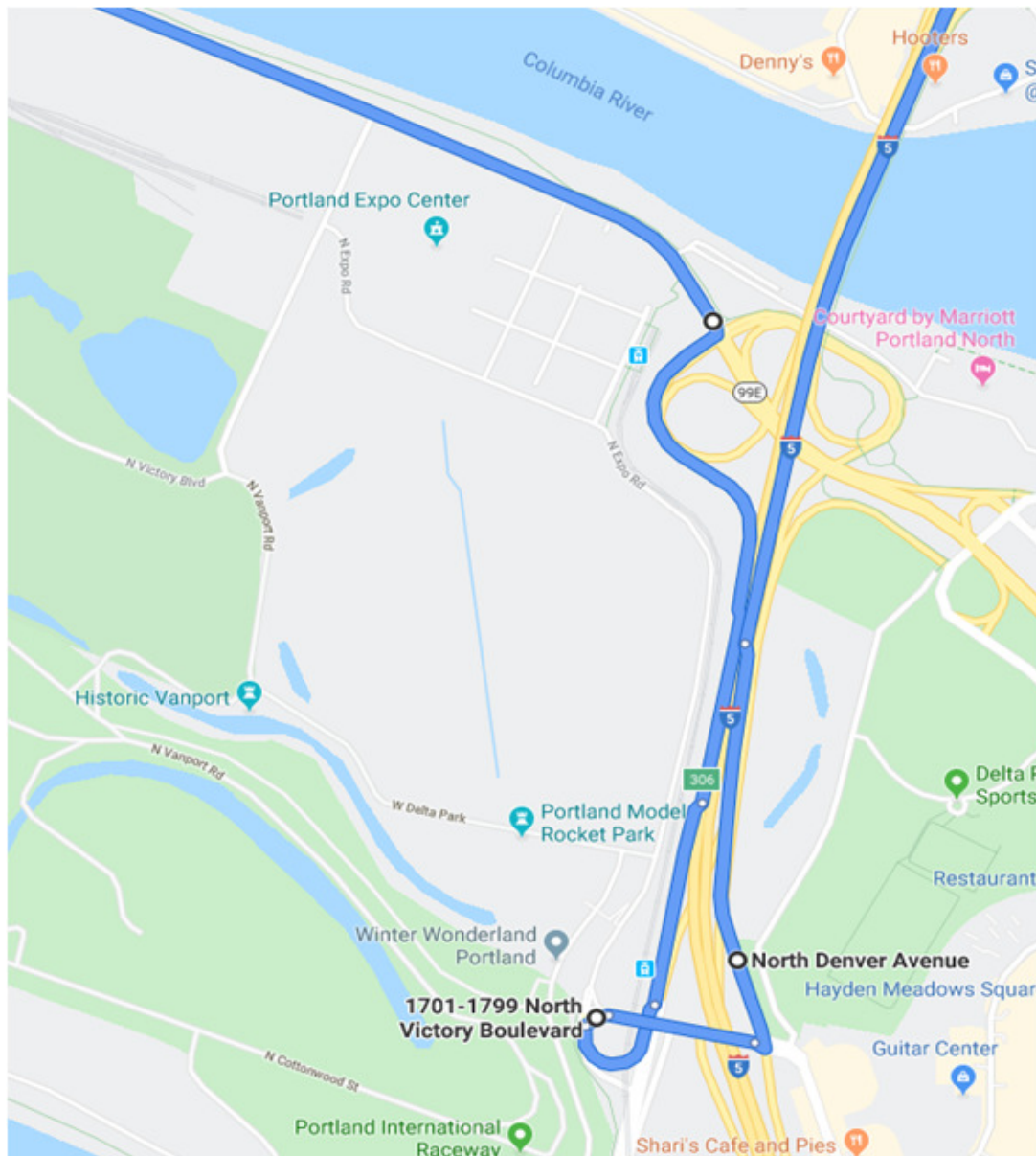


This is actually the full return route. The line to Hillsboro does not have the little jog down to North Victory Avenue, but that is the second unorthodox use of the principle that "sometimes one needs to go farther than seems right in order to go faster". The buses from Vancouver to Hillsboro in the morning

can simply make the standard loop-exit to Marine Drive and turn right onto relatively un-crowded Marine Drive. But in the afternoon it is not unusual for two lanes of traffic to be backed up well to the west of the light at Force Street. And then of course there is the delay in the relatively long looping on-ramp.

So in the afternoon most buses will stay in the nearly always free-flowing right lane to the southbound I-5 on-ramp, take the ramp and stay in the right-most lane in order to exit at Delta Park, continue around the loop to Victory Boulevard and then turn left into the bus lane at the Victory Boulevard on-ramp. A bus going this way can probably expect to save eight to ten minutes in comparison to navigating the usual Marine Drive on-ramp.

Here is a more detailed view of the normal route:



If this makes sense to anyone at WashDOT, ODOT, C-Tran or Tri-Met, please feel free to use it, if only as a starting point for a project to give Clark County-Washington County Tech Corridor commuters a viable bus option sooner rather than later when the Northern Connector is completed.

This can fill the gap until the bridge and that Washington County project are finished.

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