

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

I attended your last joint meeting via remote video. Thank you for making these public meetings available to the public. I know it's required, but whoever is in charge of the technology to make it possible, needs a big thank you and good job acknowledgement.

In your effort to address high capacity transit over the new I-5 bridge, I hope you understand that the majority of Clark County residents do not want your light rail link from Vancouver to tie into your trains on Interstate Avenue. Again, what in kingdom come do you think you are doing even proposing such nonsense over and over? As you know, Clark County has no light rail system. So this "bringing light rail to Vancouver" rhetoric is just that. It only links Vancouver to Portland's light rail. That option is ludicrous. You can't get 50,000 to 70,000 commuters to work using those slow poke, limited-capacity trains. It's insulting to WA. residents to think you can get by with basically just another way to tax WA. residents for Oregon's light rail without solving the traffic congestion problem. Our county is too spread out and sparsely populated to even begin to consider light rail here. And a huge percentage of Clark County residents do not work in Portland. We don't want to pay taxes for those who do. We have voted it down numerous times. And most Clark County residents don't even understand that we would be paying massive and continuing amounts of money only to link to Portland's light rail system. We still wouldn't have light rail in Vancouver and Clark County.

Anything you propose that results in commuters having to individually get to downtown Vancouver to commute to Portland is an absolutely ridiculous consideration. Clark County is so spread out and commuters are up to 20 miles or more from downtown Vancouver. There isn't enough capacity to bus all the commuters to a central location downtown to get to Portland. And there is definitely not any parking available downtown for commuters to park to get on a bus or any other form of mass transit.

But, having said that, buses are the most efficient and economic way for public transit for Clark County residents. You need to quit insisting that we all have to have "high capacity transit" and make it sound like buses won't cut it. You are back to angling for light rail. Building a tunnel under the Columbia River that connects to I-5 is more sensible for Clark County than what's been considered so far. Or put in a ferry system. Or seriously figure out how to use the existing train tracks and system already in place that Amtrack uses, and which actually stops in both Vancouver and Portland. Anything is more sensible than a link to Portland's light rail system.

In discussing bridge design to take mass transit into consideration, I couldn't agree more with several committee members who are recommending the most simple and cost effective bridge design possible. The I-205 bridge works and it is very enjoyable to drive across for all the gorgeous views. And it has a bike and pedestrian lane right down the center. Why is that design getting ignored? I think it's politics. There are too many fingers in the pie who want a piece of the gigantic sums of money that will be spent on this bridge. If we use the same bridge design as I-205, then architect fees and who knows what else might not be as much as hoped for by all the bidders.

In the last meeting there was talk as if walking and bicycles are an important part of the mass transit needs for the new bridge. Bicycles are not a commuting option for most people. And they are completely unfeasible for commuting across the I-5 bridge. How are you going to get bicycles from the interstate bridge to streets for commuting? Having walking and bicycle lanes across the interstate bridge do not add one iota to high capacity transit planning for the new I-5 bridge. Those options are on the I-205 bridge. I have never seen a large number of walkers or bicycles on the I-205 bridge. They certainly

haven't helped with traffic congestion in any case. Walking and bicycle lanes are for leisure. You aren't going to get Clark County commuters walking or onto bicycles in enough instances to even count. They have no place in serious solutions to high capacity transit.

Taking into consideration your Oregon representatives concerns about the impact of the I-5 replacement on North Portland and Southern Oregon, and all of those who drive over the bridge, there is one sensible solution to the entire I-5 congestion and commuting mess. As much as you all think high capacity transit is necessary you simply are not dealing with the reality of the less densely populated and spread out Clark County. You do not have anywhere near a working solution for bringing high capacity transit into this bridge replacement. I feel like you are mostly sitting there in la-la tax land expecting taxpayers to foot the bill for a high capacity transit system that won't actually work as high capacity transit. It's sort of like building the "bridge to nowhere".

The solution to this congestion mess throughout the entire Portland metropolitan area including the I-5 bridge is a bypass. Put an I-5 bypass in south of the Wilsonville area and connect it to I-5 somewhere past Clark County that makes sense for not jamming up the Vancouver area. You would get so much traffic out of the Portland metro area it would benefit everybody using I-5. You would still have the current I-5 that goes through downtown, but you would eliminate the very significant amount of truck transportation that used I-5 from Canada to Mexico and everyone else who is just passing through with no business, need or desire to drive through the Portland metro area as they travel on I-5 to somewhere else. Anyone wanting to use I-5 to come into the metro area could, of course, still do so. They just wouldn't take the I-5 bypass. Yes, it's a huge costly infrastructure project. But the last price tag I saw for replacing the Interstate bridge with your light rail link was north of \$400 billion and it would not have done anything to reduce congestion over the Interstate bridge and on I-5 through North Portland and in the downtown Portland area. Get the federal government on board with this. Put a massive number of people to work on this bypass and solve the Portland metro area congestion problem on I-5. If you won't even consider such a remarkably sensible solution, then shame on you. Politics. There are a lot of somebodies in the Portland metro area who don't want to lose any business from all the I-5 travelers so would fight a bypass tooth and nail. And moreso, all our government officials are bound and determined to ram mass transit down our throats. So far you've not come up with anything that helps Clark County or any of the Portland metro region. All your solutions except increasing busses are too time consuming, terribly inconvenient and tremendously expensive. Get a bypass built, dedicate one full lane to buses in the metro area of I-5 so the buses move and you will get this mess under control. And keep in mind that more cars are going electric. It won't be long before they all are. No more car pollution.

I appreciate the work of all the committee members and all of your supporting staff as you work toward a solution to rebuilding the I-5 bridge. I am looking forward to sensible, cost effective solutions.

Sincerely, Jerri Noland
Vancouver, WA

Address and telephone number are available if required.