

Regional Passenger Rail would help Portland area traffic

Planning transportation methods for citizens needs to make economical and equitable sense. I would like to advocate using the existing Railroad Right of Way as a Regional Rail corridor. Using this existing Right of Way would avoid the environmental obstacles and land acquisitions generally found when building a new system. Passenger trains would be able to travel at higher speeds to move passengers quickly and safely.

Crossing the Columbia River by regional passenger rail would reduce traffic on I-5 especially at the Rose Quarter area. Crossing the Willamette River from Milwaukie to Lake Oswego would also reduce traffic on Hwy 43 and Hwy 99 in Milwaukie. This rail transportation would reduce the demand on I-5 in the Willamette Valley. The original Willamette Valley regional rail system moved over one and a half million passengers a year from 1915 to 1920.

This concept moves passengers equitably from many communities when commuters in this corridor need to travel in several directions through out the day. This is different than one directional commuter rail system.

Bicycle users, pedestrians as well as bus riders could access this system to and from this corridor.

The rail line would be built with Positive Train Control (PTC) for the safest movement of all trains. *The Cascades* train cars now used can attain speeds of 120 MPH if curves and crossings are upgraded and extended down the Willamette Valley. Electric battery powered rail cars could be used such as the Stadler Rail car used in Germany.

Using the current railroad bridge structures would save start-up cost. And rail bridges are much more resilient to major earthquakes compared with highway structures.

Portland & Western, Union Pacific, BN-SF and Portland Vancouver Junction Railroad could be involved in a public/private partnership.

This concept deserves a feasibility study to enhance auto, truck, light rail and bus travel in our region.

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