

In the 1970's ODOT planned a MEGA Freeway project called the Mt Hood Freeway. One billion federal dollars was dedicated to build the 4 ½ mile freeway from Marquam Bridge to I-205. Property was condemned and houses were torn down through Southeast Portland for this Mega freeway. Common sense for less freeways took hold in Portland and ODOT was ordered to stop. The one billion dollars was dispersed to five other smaller transportation projects in Portland. \$210 million dollars was used to build 16 miles of MAX light rail system from Gresham to Portland. Those funds purchased 26 LRV vehicles, 26 stations, a maintenance facility, and several bridges.

ODOT and WashDOT has been planning a four billion dollar MEGA freeway to cross 3100 feet of river. The latest design shows a tall 116 foot bridge. Wheel chairs and bicycles will have to climb and descend equivalent to a 10 story building to use this structure to cross the Columbia River. The conceptual drawing shows a spiral ramp to access the Vancouver Waterfront. This is not safe nor attractive to wheel chair users and bicycles.

Is it reasonable to spend 4 billion dollars to build the tall bridge to accommodate river traffic and remove one traffic light on I-5? A more suitable and user friendly design would be a lower profile drawbridge at one fourth the cost.

In the IBR Modified Locally Preferred Alternative, HOV lanes are not an option, Why Not? I have been driving and bus commuting across the Columbia River for over 10 years. Because of the HOV lane the northbound I-5 has always been minutes faster than the south bound I-5. HOV lane enforcement has been lax but new developments in technology would make HOV trips even faster and making it attractive to carpools and buses. A new bridge should have HOV lanes.

Climate Change must be addressed with bold new steps in transportation. The City of Vancouver is at a very important crossroad to transportation in the Northwest. Clark County is blessed with a publicly owned rail corridor through the center of the county. Regional Passenger Railcars powered by batteries could be moving citizens from Battle Ground and Brush Prairie through Vancouver to Portland. Also railroad lines coming from Ridgefield - LaCenter and Camas-Washougal go through Vancouver to Portland. The greenhouse reduction from rail transportation is tremendous. A transportation hub could be planned at the current AMTRAK station area. A future High Speed Rail line could have a station at that same location. The transportation hub would be served by C-Tran buses along with battery powered rail cars. AMTRAK and The Cascades trains already cross the Columbia River from Vancouver into Portland in less than 15 minutes, much faster than the future Interstate Bridge Replacement Bridge will provide for auto travel.

The \$4 billion dollars for the IBR MEGA bridge could be used for a smaller billion dollar drawbridge and a billion dollar regional rail system. History can repeat itself.

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