

Hi Brett,

I am a fierce supporter of Frog Ferry, the passenger ferry that would serve Portland (and eventually Vancouver) with a series of 10 stops going as far south as Oregon City. The initial build-out would be between the Cathedral Park dock in St Johns and Riverplace in downtown. There is an 8 year research and design effort behind this concept, with a team that has consulted with the nation's principal ferry operators. The mystery for all of them is why Portland is so behind in getting this mode of transit in place. We have the dubious distinction of being only 1 of 4 cities of this size in the nation on a major river, NOT to have water transit. The need in the identified pilot neighborhoods is real, with St Johns as a BIPOC and underserved community pegging the worst air, worst transit access, worst business recovery since the pandemic. The sister dock, at Riverplace, would serve the downtown, where recovery issues don't need elaboration. A ferry would be good for everyone. The impact is 50,000 cars off the roads, offsetting over 80,000 metric tons of carbon. Additionally, if the worst happens during our lifetimes, St Johns has no viable exodus other than to the west over the St Johns Bridge--an unreliable bet at best. Other than the Interstate over the Columbia, all other bridges are owned by BNSF and currently deemed to be in failing condition by PBOT planners. There is no plan from BNSF to improve them. The City's negotiating strength is minimal. Generally, railroads prevail in a stance of ongoing flagrant neglect. A ferry might at least give us a fighting chance.

I have given testimony before the City Council, Tri-Met and Metro, and am well aware of how a reflexive response can skew toward the false narrative of competing funds. Ferry funding is a completely separate category of funding at the federal level, where the bulk of this project would be sourced. The City's involvement, to a large degree, is the in-kind use of existing, underused docks.

Frog Ferry can present all the research to date, and would be happy to do so for the Climate Solutions team. Having served as personal staff to former Mayor Neil Goldschmidt when the City Council voted against a NW freeway to the east and went for a system of mass transit with the downtown Mall and Max trains instead--I know Portland has the capacity to make big transportation decisions on behalf of the environment. We need to do it again.

Thank you,
Jennifer Schloming