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## **A five step Common Sense Alternative to the CRC**

The current proposal will induce more traffic, which will create more congestion, spew more greenhouse gases, create more sprawl and further degrade our communities. It includes extensively modifying five interchanges and demolishing the existing bridges (that have been considered by both DOTs to be structurally sound and well maintained). These projects alone represent almost \$2 billion of the proposed \$3.6 billion CRC and do not include either the new bridge or light rail.

The following five projects will address all the issues identified as the CRC's "Purpose and Needs". They would **reduce** traffic demand on the freeway by providing other crossing alternatives, thus eliminate the need to expand I-5. They could be built sooner, cheaper and in phases with potentially more sources of funding.

### **The Common Sense Alternative**

#### **1. BNSF Bridge**

Modify the BNSF Railroad Bridge with a new lift span located to allow most river traffic to pass under the high spans of the I-5 Bridges without opening their draw-spans.

A proposal to replace the swing span on the railroad bridge with a lift span located closer to the center of the river was submitted to the US Coast Guard in 2003 for "Truman and Hobbs" funding. It was rejected because of lack of evidence of a navigational hazard. This proposal should be resubmitted since hazards will remain if the I-5 bridges are retained. The Truman Hobbs Act provides 100% federal funding.

(Approximate cost - \$50 million)

#### **2. High-Speed Rail**

Build a high-level multi-modal bridge adjacent to the BNSF Railroad Bridge for intercity passenger trains (future high-speed rail), commuter trains, local traffic, bicycles and pedestrians. This bridge could be designed as a beautiful two tower cable-stayed structure since it would be further downriver from Pearson Air Park than the proposed freeway bridge.

In addition, grade-separated bypasses of North Portland freight junctions and Vancouver freight yards will be needed along with a high-level loading platform at Vancouver Station.

This total bypass of approximately three miles of congested freight track will provide the capacity for fast, frequent and reliable passenger rail service between Seattle and Portland within the decade. Looking to the future, this segment of track should be built to meet "high-speed" specifications in anticipation of true "high-speed rail" service. It will also provide the track capacity for fast (10-12 minutes) commuter trips between Union Station and Vancouver Station that could connect to local buses. This commuter system could eventually be extended north to Ridgefield and south to Oregon City.

In addition, the bridge could accommodate local traffic (2-lanes) bicycles and pedestrians. This would allow Vancouver commuters direct access by cars, buses and bicycles to North Portland jobs without getting tangled in freeway traffic. The motorway could directly connect Marine Drive and Mill Plain Blvd. allowing trucks an alternative to negotiating the congested I-5/Marine Drive interchange.

(Approximate cost - \$800 million)

### **3. MAX to Hayden Island**

Build a multi-modal bridge over North Portland Harbor for light rail, local traffic (2-lanes), bicycles and pedestrians under Marine Drive and connected to Expo Road, Bridgeton and MLK Blvd. It could follow approximately the same alignment as Concept "D" in the CRC proposal.

Build a MAX Station at grade on Hayden Island with transfer facilities for a local Hayden Island shuttle bus and C-Tran buses from Vancouver. Do not provide park-and-ride facilities.

(Approximate cost - \$50 million)

### **4. Local Bridge to Vancouver**

Build a high-level multi-modal bridge over The Columbia River between Hayden Island and Vancouver's old Boise Cascade site for transit (light rail and/or bus), local traffic (2-lanes), bicycles and pedestrians.

The design could be a single economical pre-stressed box girder since it would only need one level with four lanes, two for general traffic and two for transit. The transit lanes could accommodate buses, light rail or both.

This does not include extending light rail into Clark County, which could be done at a later time, at less cost than proposed in the CRC if it did not include 29,000 auto-centric parking spaces.

With this bridge in place, the Hayden Island ramps to and from Vancouver could be closed during peak hours (except for buses and emergency vehicles), which would greatly reduce the northbound traffic turbulence south of the Interstate Bridges. The closure would also discourage unauthorized park-and-ride on Hayden Island.

(Approximate cost - \$400 million)

### **5. Seismic Upgrade**

Do Seismic upgrade of existing I-5 freeway bridges.

(Approximate cost - \$100 million)

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