

**Parsons, Susan**

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**From:** Sharonnasset [sharonnasset@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 22, 2012 11:34 PM  
**To:** Moore-Love, Karla  
**Cc:** samadams@ci.portland.or.us; amanda@ci.portland.or.us; randy@ci.portland.or.us  
**Subject:** Public comment May 23 You have the opportunity to act courageously,  
**Attachments:** #1\_\_CCC-letters201010CitizenDocs-2.pdf; #1-B\_RTC\_letter\_TBN\_not\_studied.pdf;  
 #2\_Current\_Bridge\_good\_for\_50.doc

You have the opportunity to act courageously, something you have done in the pass on other matters, and I believe you are strong enough to do on this important issue.

So where is your moral compass and will you make things right?

Good Day Council Members,

The last time I came before Portland City Council the person who spoke before me commented about CRC Lying. A Council Member attacked him, saying he didn't want to hear something like that unless they could prove their statement. When my time came I said I had, had the same experience that CRC had knowingly made false statements. I was told to bring the data forward to the members. Except for Council Member Amada Fritz NONE of you would even call back or have a staffer handle it..... even though I called your offices several times.

I had stated that the CRC had not studied the Third Bridge project that was accepted into the NEPA Process. In Council Chambers CRC made false statements about the "Third Bridge"..... SAYING it was studied!

I am attaching two letters. One from the SW WA Regional Transportation Council a CRC Signatory Agency and the Board of Clark County Commissioner, who did spend a great deal of time looking into this issue ..... the final paragraph that the "Third Bridge" was NOT vetted! Is clear.

The reason CRC purposefully made false statements about a "third / port to port" being studied to this Council and others is also clear..... CRC is suppose to study a range of alternatives bought in during the NEPA Scoping Process AND they are to avoid impacts.

The CRC current project is 400' wide on Jantzen Beach and over 50' in the air on an earthen brume. The loss of 39 businesses, over 600 permanent jobs, and 29 homes with 11 years of construction on the I-5 freeway and Jantzen Beach as ground zero. This is just the Oregon side of the current project.

The "Third Briidge" is mostly on bare, vacant publicly owned land - and not one flagger on I-5. No business, jobs, or homes are lost. No added congestion, destruction of utilities, or infrastructure.

That is reason enough for CRC to make a false statement to elected officials. So do you respect people, property, and the NEPA requirements enough to insist that alternatives are thoroughly (NEPA Thoroughly) studied so you know all benefits

and impacts? So you can honestly say "we studied Thoroughly all reasonable alternatives" before we went forward with something so destructive to our communities and region. You now know the truth.... NOT vetted or studied. Once you know the truth you can never go back to not knowing. MLK Jr.

#### REQUEST

I am asking this Council today to send a letter to Oregon JOINT COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT ON COLUMBIA RIVER CROSSING. That for the benefit of our region and communities you are asking the committee to immediately recommend to the Governor that alternative third bridge crossings next to the BNSF rail bridge be Thoroughly studied, before the City of Portland will sign off on construction permits for a new Columbia River crossing bridge.

Someone has to be a hero in the process, is that you?

#### Attached

1. Two letter that the Third Bridge crossing was NOT studied.
  2. The current I-5 bridge has 60 yrs. of life left with no required repairs (Sept. 2011 report)
  3. Newspaper article on destruction of Jantzen Beach and 600+ job loss
  4. Comparison maps of the destruction of JB and no impact of a third crossing
  5. Infrastructure to or ports and industrial areas bring jobs.
  6. Map of Third Bridge Now
  7. A Bridge Too False < [http://wwweek.com/portland/article-17566-a\\_bridge\\_too\\_false.html](http://wwweek.com/portland/article-17566-a_bridge_too_false.html) >
  8. Petition signed by 55 people from JB in 2007 stating NEPA Process not followed
- Sharon Nasset  
503.283.9585



proud past, promising future

CLARK COUNTY  
WASHINGTON

BOARD OF CLARK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Regional Transportation Council  
RECEIVED  
AUG 4 2010

July 23, 2010

The Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC)  
c/o Ms. Molly Coston, Chair  
1300 Franklin Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Clark County Public Service Center  
Vancouver, Washington 98666-1366

**RE: Columbia River Crossing (CRC) Environmental Impact Study / Third Bridge Analysis**

Dear Chair Coston and Council Members:

This correspondence is in follow up to a repeated request to RTC by concerned citizens about the lack of a "third bridge option" being studied and included in CRC's Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS). The specific area these citizens are interested in includes a new 6-lane freeway connecting I-5 at Mill Plain, west to the Port of Vancouver, south to Hayden Island, Marine Dr., and connecting with HWY-30 near Newberry Hill.

The CRC project references in a March 22, 2006, document, RC-14. RC-14 was used to create a possible transportation alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Study. RC-14 modeled a multilane, multimodal bi-state industrial arterial or corridor starting near I-5 and Mill Plain, crossing next to the BNSF rail bridge and connecting south to Marine Drive. Traffic analysis of the RC-14 alternative showed that it did not sufficiently relieve traffic congestion to any significant degree on the I-5/Columbia River Bridge and therefore was not advanced into the next round of alternatives. In sum, this alternative provided for a new industrial corridor, but did not provide for a major freeway that would adequately address freeway congestion.

A new freeway corridor alternative was also studied. It was identified as RC-16 (New Western Highway). This alternative functioned as a new freeway bypass to I-5, but did not directly connect to I-5 via Mill Plain. The proposed corridor started near Ridgefield and went around the ports.

Given the specific concern, as stated above, the answer is no. A "third bridge option" as a new freeway starting at I-5 and Mill Plain was not fully vetted.

Sincerely,

Steve Stuart, Chair

Tom Mielke

Marc Boldt

cc: Ms. Sharon Nasset  
Ms. Tamara McLane

1300 Franklin Street • P.O. Box 5000 • Vancouver, WA 98666-5000 • tel: [360] 397-2232 • fax: [360] 397-6058 • www.clark.wa.gov



10/5/10 Referenced by Tamara McLane



CLARK COUNTY  
WASHINGTON

proud past, promising future

BOARD OF CLARK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Regional Transportation Council  
RECEIVED  
JUL 27 2010

July 22, 2010

The Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC)  
c/o Ms. Molly Coston, Chair  
1300 Franklin Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Clark County Public Service Center  
Vancouver, Washington 98666-1366

**RE: Fourth Plain Boulevard Becoming a Major Freight Arterial/Corridor**

Dear Chair Coston and Council Members:

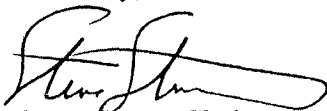
The Clark County Board of Commissioners has been approached by members of the Shumway Neighborhood Association regarding the increasing volume of freight through established residential neighborhoods.

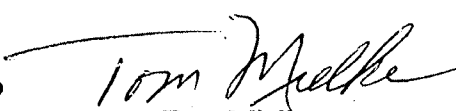
The Shumway Neighborhood Association has been actively working with the Arnada Neighborhood Association, Hough Neighborhood Association, Fruit Valley Neighborhood Association and the Carter Park Neighborhood Association to prevent Fourth Plain Boulevard from becoming a major freight arterial through these established neighborhoods.

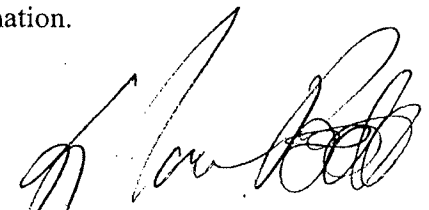
While Clark County understands that the area in question is under the jurisdiction of the city of Vancouver, the concerned home and property owners are also located in Commissioner District 3. Thus, their outreach to the Clark County Board of Commissioners.

The Board of Commissioners respectfully asks RTC to include in its current work program a comprehensive freight access study of the entire transportation network west of and in connection with Interstate-5. We further respectfully ask all RTC member organizations to understand these well established residential neighborhoods' concerns for their livability, not to mention potential affects on home and/or property value if Fourth Plain Blvd.'s designation should change. We would hope (1) RTC staff will actively include and work with all of the neighborhood associations and (2) that this work would be completed before any public conversation about the proposed change in Fourth Plain's designation.

Sincerely,

  
Steve Stuart, Chair

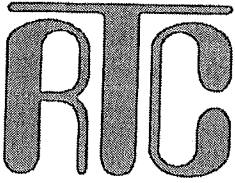
  
Tom Mielke

  
Marc Boldt

1300 Franklin Street • P.O. Box 5000 • Vancouver, WA 98666-5000 • tel: [360] 397-2232 • fax: [360] 397-6058 • www.clark.wa.gov



10/5/10 Referenced by Tamara  
McLave



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360-397-6132 fax  
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15

November 22, 2010

Ms. Sharon Nasset  
1113 N. Baldwin Street  
Portland, OR 97217

**Member Jurisdictions**

Clark County  
Skamania County  
Klickitat County  
City of Vancouver  
City of Camas  
City of Washougal  
City of Battle Ground  
City of Ridgefield  
City of La Center  
Town of Yacolt  
City of Stevenson  
City of North Bonneville  
City of White Salmon  
City of Bingen  
City of Goldendale  
C-TRAN  
Washington DOT  
Port of Vancouver  
Port of Camas-Washougal  
Port of Ridgefield  
Port of Skamania County  
Port of Klickitat  
Metro  
Oregon DOT  
15th Legislative District  
17th Legislative District  
18th Legislative District  
19th Legislative District

Dear Ms. Nasset:

This letter is in follow up to your request about a "third bridge option" being studied and included in CRC's Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS). Your specific area of interest is about a project described as a new 6-lane freeway connecting I-5 at Mill Plain, west to the Port of Vancouver, south to Hayden Island, Marine Drive, and connecting with highway 30 near Newberry Hill.

The CRC project references in a March 22, 2006 document, RC-14. RC-14 was a possible transportation alternative in the DEIS. RC-14 modeled a multilane, multimodal bi-state industrial corridor starting near I-5 and Mill Plain crossing next to the current BNSF rail bridge and connecting south to Marine Drive. Traffic analysis of the RC-14 alternative showed that it did not sufficiently relieve traffic congestion to any significant degree on the I-5 Columbian River Bridge and therefore not advanced into the next round of alternatives. In sum, this alternative provided for a new industrial corridor, but did not provide for a major freeway that would adequately address I-5 traffic congestion.

A new freeway corridor alternative corridor was also studied. It was identified as RC-16, a New Western Highway. This alternative functioned as a new freeway bypass to I-5 but did not provide direct freeway access to I-5 via Mill Plain.

It is also worth noting that in 2008 RTC completed a Transportation Corridor Visioning Study (<http://www.rtc.wa.gov/reports/vision/VisioningCorridors.pdf>) that studied new freeway corridors throughout Clark County per a new 50-year growth scenario and given those corridors how a corridor to the east and west might be connected across the Columbia River.

Given your specific concern as stated above, no a "third bridge option" as a new freeway starting at I-5 and Mill Plain was not fully vetted.

Sincerely,

RTC Chair, Washougal Councilperson Molly Coston

cc: RTC Board of Directors

Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council

Current Bridge good for 50-60 years.

Here is the link to the ODOT webpage where they say the bridge is good for another 50-60 years:

[http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/REGION1/interstate\\_bridges\\_elec/index.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/REGION1/interstate_bridges_elec/index.shtml)

COUV.COM did a story on it a while ago at:

<http://couv.com/crc-light-rail-project/bridges-60-more-years>

At Hayden Island interchange, the Columbia River Crossing will cast a huge footprint

Published: Saturday, September 24, 2011, 10:05 PM    Updated: Sunday, September 25, 2011, 8:24 PM

Jeff Manning, The Oregonian By Jeff Manning, The Oregonian

Columbia River Crossing will impact Hayden Island

Enlarge Jamie Francis, The Oregonian Columbia River Crossing will impact Hayden Island gallery (10 photos)

On the docks of Jantzen Beach Moorage, looking out over the silent blue-green current of North Portland Harbor, the roar of I-5 fades.

The harbor, which separates Hayden Island from the Oregon mainland, is home to one of the largest collections of floating homes on the West Coast.

Drawn by the powerful pull of the water, some of these proud river rats, as they call themselves, have lived here 20, even 30 years and say they wouldn't live anywhere else.

But change is looming.

Thirty-five floating homes sit directly in the path of the Columbia River Crossing, the big bridge-freeway expansion. The CRC intends to forcibly buy out the locals as construction nears, a plan that inspires resistance, resignation and hope that the project gets derailed by its considerable funding woes.

Sherry May, 65, stands to lose the home she's lived in since 1986. "I'm in the firing line," she said. "My fear is that Hayden Island will become a concrete pad, and this magical place will be gone."

For most Northwesterners, the CRC remains an abstraction, a symbol of painful progress or big government run amok, depending on their politics. To Hayden Island's 2,270 residents, it's a life-altering reality.

The CRC plans one of its largest, most expensive and controversial sections across the island's midsection. The existing freeway is to be replaced by a 17-lane behemoth that will stand up to 45-feet high and 450-feet-wide. The CRC estimates the Hayden Island interchange will take more than five years to build. Early estimates put the cost at between \$575 million and \$650

million, making it the single most expensive element in the five-mile \$3.1 billion project other than the new Columbia River bridges.

In addition to the 35 floating homes in harm's way, 39 businesses, including the one full-service grocery store and pharmacy, are slated for acquisition and demolition.

The scale of the project generates high anxiety on the island that has never completely died down, despite years of negotiation and outreach and several significant and expensive concessions by the highway builders.

"We're ground zero," said Roger Staver, a longtime resident and former head of the island's neighborhood association. "If things are not put back together properly, this island will never be the same."

#### UNSAFE AT ANY SPEED

GS.11HAYD125.jpgView full size

Many Northwesterners know Hayden Island only as home to the Jantzen Beach Center, a once bustling mall that has seen better days. It also boasts a diverse neighborhood, ranging from the prosperous, leafy east end to the more hardscrabble west end, dominated by the shopping center and vast parking lots, fast-food restaurants and a large manufactured home park west of the shopping center.

The island's location tucked between the Oregon mainland, the river and downtown Vancouver explains the enormous size and cost of the Hayden Island interchange.

The stretch of Interstate 5 here is hopelessly obsolete. Federal standards call for freeway interchanges to be a minimum of two miles apart -- obviously not realistic in urban areas. The CRC area boasts seven major interchanges in 5.5 miles, the four from Marine Drive and Hayden Island in Oregon and State Route 14 and Mill Plain in Washington are barely a mile apart. That's a formula for constant traffic trouble, as too many drivers bob and weave to enter or exit the freeway.

The existing northbound ramp from Hayden Island onto I-5 is particularly inadequate. "It's not long enough to merge, there is too much speed differential, too many trucks," said Kris Strickler, CRC deputy director.



The stretch of I-5 from Hayden Island to the Columbia River bridge has the highest accident rate in all of the interstate's 300-miles in Oregon.

To make the interchanges safer and more functional, CRC engineers contend, there is only one solution: more lanes. They designed a new Hayden Island crossing chock-full of so-called collector-distributor lanes parallel to the main freeway to maneuver outside the main traffic flow to enter and exit. The design also includes "braided" ramps that weave under and over one another, one of them 81-feet high.

By the time the CRC engineers unveiled their initial designs, the freeway at Hayden Island was 22-lanes wide.

The CRC also made a fateful decision to include a 1.4-mile extension of light rail into downtown Vancouver. The trains would cross the North Portland Harbor on a new bridge just west of the existing I-5 crossing. The light rail bridge, together with the decision to build the new Columbia River spans just downstream of the existing bridges puts the floating homes and much of the island's main commercial strip in the path.

Critics have proposed alternatives to the CRC's interchange that they say are more reasonably sized and cheaper.

Tom Warne, the Utah traffic engineer who led an independent review of the CRC's work, said Hayden Island's location jammed between Marine Drive and the Columbia River limited the engineers' options.

"Because it is so compressed, for safety reasons, you have to increase the size," Warne said. "When you add it all up, there's no question about it, it's very big."

## BIG FOOTPRINT

Reporter Jeff Manning on the Columbia River Crossing project Jeff Manning describes the new Oregon-Washington bridge project and its impact on the local community of Hayden Island.

The traffic engineers' 22-lane solution created a quick backlash.

Urban planners, who revel in Portland's reputation for clever, forward-thinking transportation solutions, recoiled. A digitally altered aerial image began circulating that showed the island dissected by a jaw-droppingly large freeway.

"The interchange on Hayden Island is an utter monstrosity," said Pulitzer Prize-winning architecture critic Robert Campbell at a 2010 symposium on the CRC. It's a "horrible dark place that they're creating there."

Islanders were conflicted.

Most residents, even the potentially displaced floating home occupants, say relief from traffic congestion is badly needed. A downtown commute that takes seven minutes on a quiet morning can take 45 to 90 minutes in the chronically jammed afternoons.

But the forced relocation of locals and the impact on businesses gave all islanders pause. In addition to its Safeway, the expanded freeway will cost the island one of its two bank branches and several of its busiest restaurants.

By the CRC's own reckoning, the 39 businesses slated for demolition employ more than 600 people.

Critics pointed out an obvious solution that would lessen the blow and perhaps save hundreds of millions of dollars: eliminate the Hayden Island interchange altogether.

Leading the charge was Sam Adams. At his direction, the city hired engineering firm URS Corp. to review the CRC's plan. URS and others suggested an alternative: building a local-access bridge linking the island to the Oregon mainland.

The bridge would offer islanders a route to the city besides the freeway. If they needed to get on the interstate, they could at the Marine Drive interchange, just across North Portland Harbor.

The Independent Review Panel, experts convened in 2010 to evaluate CRC plans, said the critics had a point.

"The Hayden Island interchange is the only one that, from a system perspective as well as design challenge, may warrant consideration for removal," the panel said in its final report. "If... residents and businesses can live with and indeed thrive relying on indirect access to I-5 via Marine Drive, then the impacts on the island can be greatly reduced; and freeway operations potentially improved as well."

## COMMERCE TRUMPS

More

The Oregonian's continuing coverage of Columbia River Crossing

Environmental impact statement of the CRC

Details of EIS on Hayden Island

Killing the interchange turned out to be a non-starter.

Powerful players insisted on fully built out freeway access. Chief among them were the owners of Jantzen Beach Center.

The shopping center is a shadow of its former self. But its owner has pledged \$32 million to tear down the mall and rebuild Jantzen Beach to its former glory.

To justify that investment, Jantzen Beach needs to again draw thousands of shoppers to the island, including Washingtonians, who once flocked to the island to escape their sales tax, said Lyle Arnall, a managing director with Edens & Avant, the Columbia, S.C.-based company that manages the center.

"What we've relayed to the CRC is that having direct I-5 access to the island is everything," Arnall said. "For us, if the island and the market is interested in seeing vital retail, we feel pretty strongly that we need direct freeway access."

Some locals tried to buck Edens & Avant and continue to fight for the smaller footprint. "The reason the interchange is going to stay is the businesses on the island, the mall," said Pamela Ferguson, a resident of the manufactured home park and co-founder of the Hayden Island Livability Project. "It's always the residents against the mall. And the mall usually wins."

But other islanders sided with the shopping center. Facing the loss of Safeway, they say Jantzen Beach offers the only shot at drawing another full-service grocer.

Edens & Avant gained credibility with the locals with its recent success persuading retail powerhouse Target to build a much-larger, 138,000-square-foot store adjacent to its current store. The store will include a pharmacy and, will sell some groceries.

"Without an interchange, all retailers leave the island," said Victor Viets, a retired engineer who has been an influential player in the public debate. "The mall and the big boxes would become a dust bowl."

The Port of Portland also had concerns. It argued that routing traffic onto Marine Drive would overwhelm that interchange, the crucial link from I-5 to the port's North Portland shipping terminals.

"The Port really objected to that plan," said Henry Hewitt, a Portland lawyer and member of the CRC Project Sponsors Council. "It was concerned Marine Drive would be suffocated."

In the end, even the city agreed. Marine Drive couldn't handle the thousands of shoppers Jantzen Beach Center hopes to attract, said John Gillam, a Portland transportation planner.

## SHRINKING THE BRIDGE

Some participants in the debate commended the CRC for its open mind.

"I've got to give CRC credit, they were willing to listen to all the stakeholders and make changes," said Jeff Stuhr, a Portland architect.

"Where they get caught in the cross hairs is that there are all these competing interests that are determined to get what they want."

The CRC, characteristically, did agree to several significant concessions in hopes of winning over the locals.

Most important, they agreed in 2010 to downsize the Columbia River bridges. In the process, the Hayden Island crossing went from 22 to 17 lanes.

The CRC also tentatively agreed to two significant traffic improvements on the island. It will construct a loop road circumventing the shopping center and the rest of Hayden Island's retail hub. It also plans a new Tomahawk Drive underneath the new freeway connecting the island's east and west ends. The CRC has agreed to throw one more bone -- that previously proposed local-access bridge, which amounts to two vehicle lanes added to the light rail bridge.

When the Metro Council approved the final environmental impact statement, councilors urged the CRC to establish a "community enhancement fund" to further mitigate impact to the locals. The CRC agreed to consider such a fund but has made no promises.

The CRC hasn't put a price tag on any of those improvements.

Meanwhile, the floating home owners wonder when and if anyone will mitigate their impact.

Oregon law requires the CRC to get new appraisals of the properties and make offers based on those appraisals. But staying on the river may prove difficult as moorage space for floating homes is scarce.

Some of the homeowners asked the CRC to build them a new moorage elsewhere in the harbor. The CRC declined.

Rich and Ginny Sorem bought their two-story, 1,500-square-foot Jantzen Beach home 4 years ago near the peak of the market. They're concerned they will take a beating financially if they're forced to sell in the midst of the housing bust. A bigger worry is having to leave the river and going back to "life on the ground."

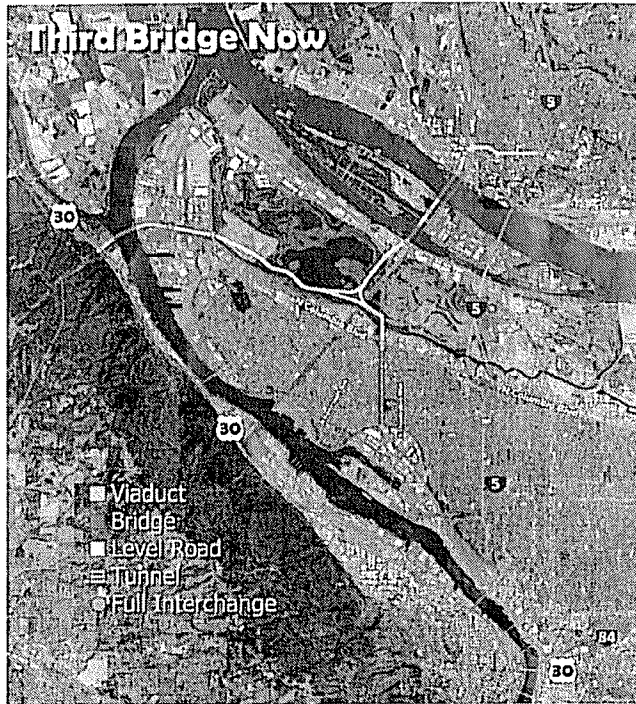
It's a throwback neighborhood where neighbors know one another by first name, folks will haul in a cord of wood for a sick neighbor and a river full of blue herons and beavers awaits at their front door.

"We boat and swim and kayak, all from our deck," Rich Sorem said. "The biggest thing we would miss is life on the water and the friends that we've made. It's an incredible lifestyle."

-- Jeff Manning

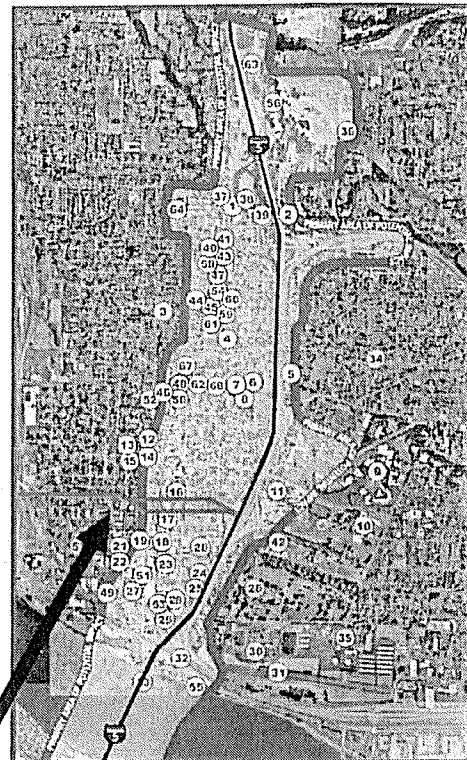
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[www.thirdbridgenow.com](http://www.thirdbridgenow.com)



Washington Neighborhoods : resource map

Columbia River CROSSING



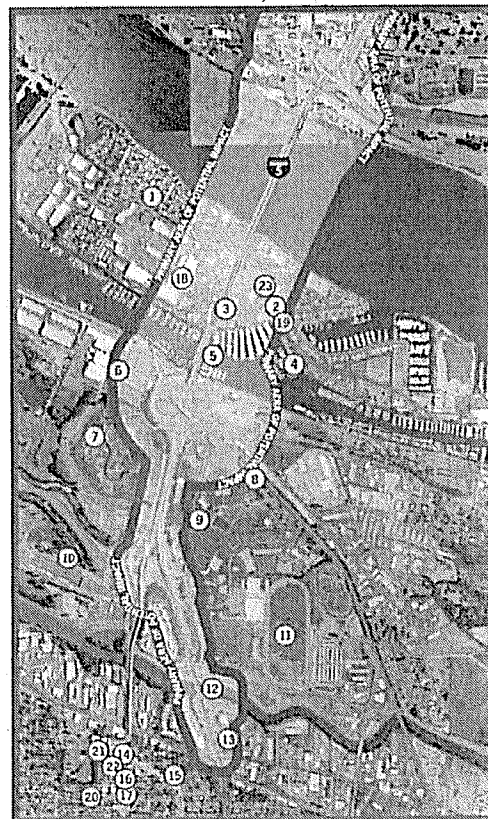
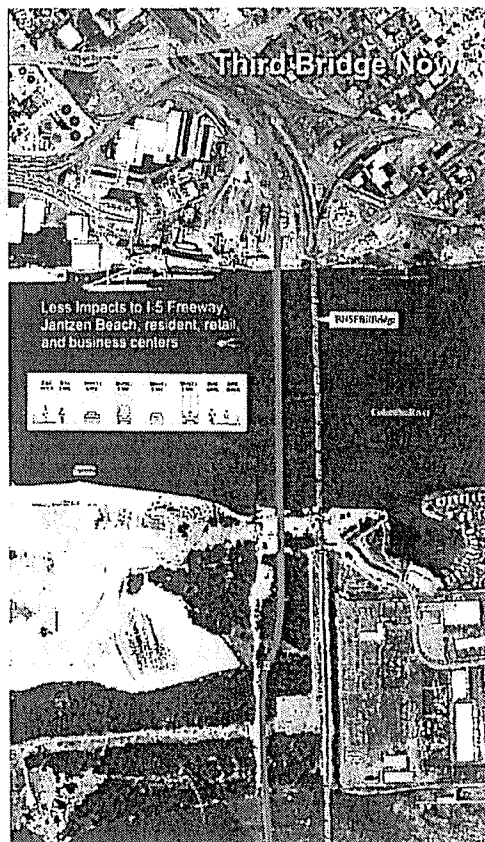
**FAR less impact**  
Potential impact of new Third Bridge Proposal is outlined

**Primary Area of Potential Impact**  
for Columbia River

Crossing proposed project:

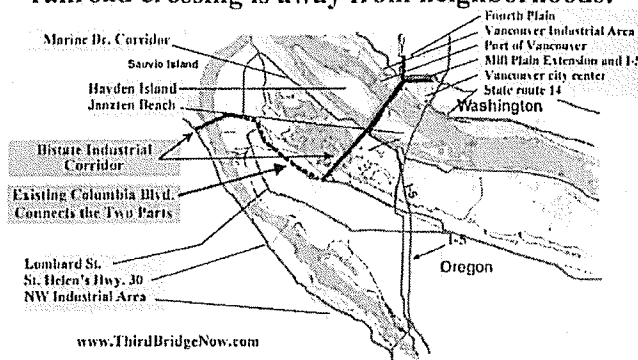
Oregon Neighborhoods : resource map

Columbia River CROSSING



# New Third Bridge

The new Third Bridge at the railroad crossing is away from neighborhoods:

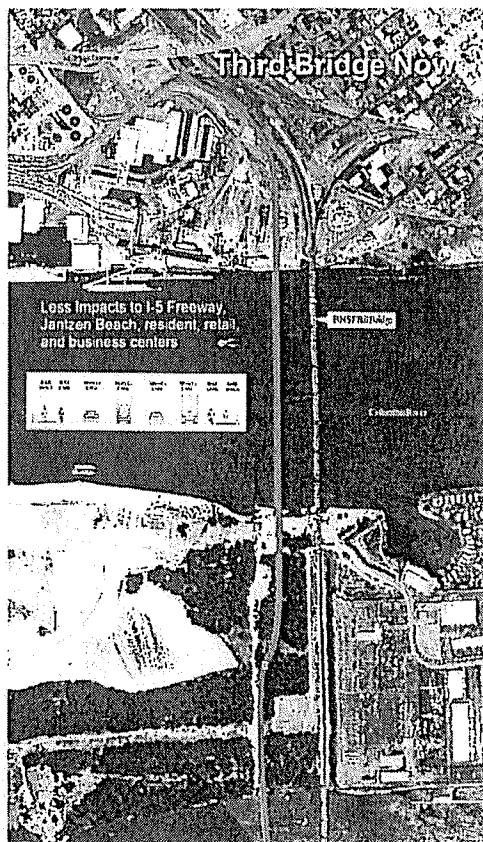


## FAR less impact

Potential impact of new Third Bridge Proposal is outlined

**"Primary Area of Potential Impact"** for Columbia River Crossing proposed project:

- Historic Ft, Vancouver
- Approximately one hundred homes
- Jantzen Beach businesses and homes
- High bridge "lands" far away from river
- Very Expensive, costs \$2-6 Billion



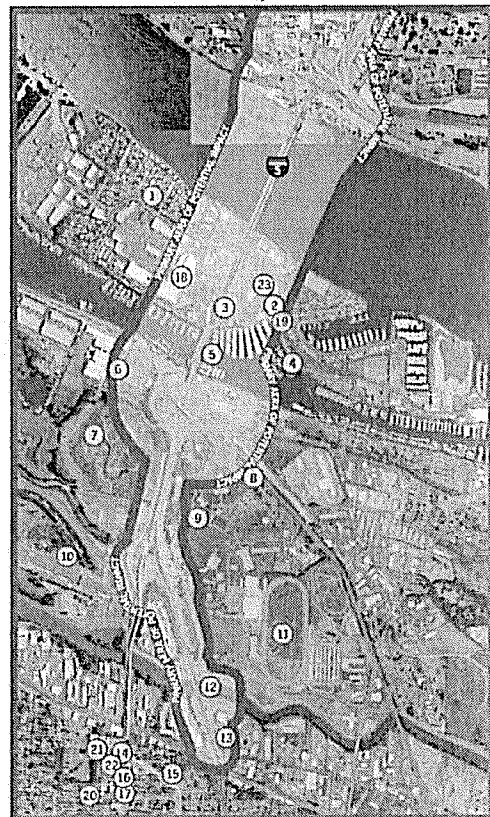
Washington Neighborhoods :a: Columbia River CROSSING resource map



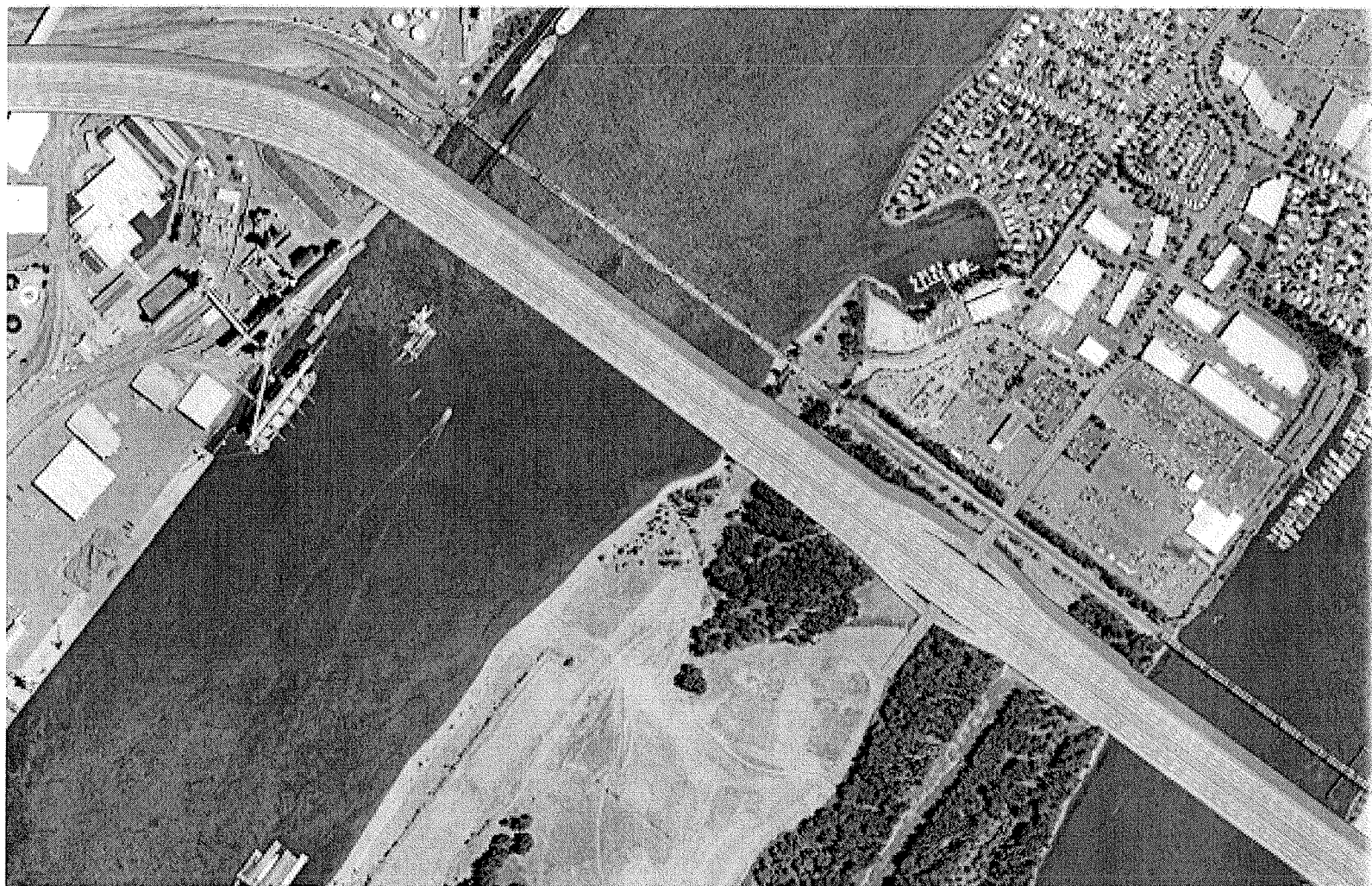
## Primary Area of Potential Impact

for Columbia River Crossing proposed project:

Oregon Neighborhoods :a: Columbia River CROSSING resource map









# Third Bridge Now

- Viaduct
- Bridge
- Level Road
- Tunnel
- Interchange

N Columbia Blvd

N Portsmouth Ave

N Clatskanie Blvd

N Columbia Blvd



# In search of more industrial land

Policy makers, planners, citizens and business leaders can help solve the problem by working together

While the recession has reduced the demand for available, developable industrial properties in the Portland-metropolitan area, this is only a short-term phenomenon. In the past few years, Metro was charged with determining future expansion of the urban growth boundary. After months of debate, lines were drawn to outline urban reserves as well as rural reserves.

The long-term outcome of these decisions will be limited to expansion development, which will undoubtedly occur only as money becomes available to build infrastructure to support such growth (namely, sewer and transportation systems). Therefore, the potential supply of industrial land is basically stagnant. It appears that as the recession subsides and demand increases for industrial uses, pressure will again mount.

What can be done?

Because land-use policy has been set, it becomes even more imperative that policy makers, planners, community citizens and, in particular, business leaders, work together to help solve the issue of a lack of developable land. Incentives to redevelop brownfields should be revisited. Programs are needed to relax the



## BROKER BUZZ

Tom Dechenne

extensive restrictions and costs of redeveloping properties within industrial districts. An example is the recent River Plan, which was amended and basically tabled until a workable plan would allow industrial redevelopment (expansion), or at least retention of industrial firms that provide family-wage jobs.

Other programs, such as the enterprise zone (at least within the city of Portland), the e-commerce zone and urban renewal districts, as spearheaded by the Portland Development Commission, are examples of attempts to foster growth in specific areas. Such programs aim to stimulate economic relief, which may have the potential to spur development, at least in the short run.

Transportation decisions also need policy makers' attention for the effective use of industrial properties. The industrial real estate sector has two primary functions: warehousing and distributing goods, and manufacturing or assembling goods and related services. In Portland, a sec-

## Recent improvements in the Rivergate area (both highways and rail) have been beneficial for continued growth in that area.

ondary market, these functions overlap; however, in most cases they are not compatible with other uses like retail and office.

Recent improvements in the Rivergate area (both highways and rail) have been beneficial for continued growth in that area. Other minor steps are being taken in the "management systems" of existing arterials, but the need to streamline freight movement still exists.

Distribution of goods covers a wide variety of needs, from large warehouse distribution centers to air freight delivery, small package delivery and delivery of perishable food items. These all can add to congestion.

Another question that often arises: How do we create land parcels for industrial users in need of 20-acre, 50-acre or even 100-acre parcels? Basically, it is not in the cards economically to assemble such parcels at competitive prices if our only choices are redevelopment of existing parcels.

However, the metropolitan community has at least one

opportunity in the near future, and that is West Hayden Island. The Port of Portland purchased the roughly 800-acre property in the early 1980s and has another opportunity to provide a large industrial land parcel if the city and Metro allow the use to occur.

The plan is to create 350 acres of industrial land. This location has the distinct opportunity to achieve three primary purposes: enhance marine terminal use; provide rail service with an area large enough to load and unload large unit trains; and offer easy truck access to Interstate 5.

The land also could provide significant overall leverage to enhance the region's growth. While the density and number of family-wage jobs would not be as great for this type of use as manufacturing, it would allow the greater metro area to continue to grow as a distribution hub serving not only the West Coast, but also Pacific Rim growth countries.

The Port of Portland also recently purchased the 700-acre former Reynolds Aluminum site

in Troutdale. After extensive environmental cleanup, it is now in the beginning stages of development, as evidenced by the recent 70-acre FedEx project.

As an industrial real estate broker, it is becoming increasingly difficult to help firms move here or stay here. It's more important now than ever to help planners and policy makers understand today's market dynamics. Last year, there were 36 land sales in the metro area, and 34 were two acres or smaller.

While some parcels are available, gains in demand will leave supply extremely short. It is critical to ensure that "available industrial properties" live up to their description or can become available at competitive prices, at least with other regional markets such as Seattle and Salt Lake City.

The business voice must continue to reach cities, counties and Metro, as well as the two states directly affecting this metropolitan area, if our land-use plan is to be effective and allow controlled, and continued, growth.

*Tom Dechenne specializes in leases and sales of industrial and land properties as an associate vice president at NAI Norris, Beggs & Simpson, a real estate brokerage and asset/property management company. Contact him at 503-223-7181 or tdechenne@nai-nbs.com.*

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June 1st, 2011 NIGEL JAQUISS | Cover Story

### A Bridge Too False

Turns out most of the case for the \$3.6 billion Columbia River Crossing Isn't true.

lede.pinocchio\_3730ILLUSTRATION: philipcheaney.com

If anyone should love the idea of creating jobs and boosting the Oregon economy, it's Katie Eyre Brewer.

Eyre Brewer is a freshman Republican representative from Hillsboro, as well as a former leader of the local chamber of commerce and the planning commission, where she got chummy with big Washington County employers like Intel, Solarworld and Genentech.

She won her House seat with big campaign checks from lobbying groups such as Associated Oregon Industries, the Oregon Business Association and Associated General Contractors.

Eyre Brewer, 45, is also a CPA for Harsch Investment Properties—the Schnitzer family real estate empire—and has plenty of experience analyzing complex financial deals.

Yet Eyre Brewer is saying no to the state's single biggest job-creation plan: the proposed \$3.6 billion Interstate 5 bridge project between Oregon and Washington, known as the Columbia River Crossing.

The state's most powerful interests want the project: big business (including Eyre Brewer's top campaign donors), labor unions and Gov. John Kitzhaber.

Eyre Brewer is standing up to the project's backers for a simple reason: She thinks the arguments for the Columbia River Crossing are flimsy, ill conceived and often untrue.

"Before I got here, I thought the important questions about the CRC had been asked and answered," Eyre Brewer says. "I was terribly surprised."

She is not alone. More than 20 lawmakers—Republicans and Democrats—have raised hard questions about the project. They say Oregon hasn't taken a serious look at the project's risks or at cheaper ways to fix the traffic problems at the Oregon-Washington border.

In the current legislative session, lawmakers have debated the proper size of chicken cages, whether it's OK to use plastic bags, and what kind of dirt should be named the official state soil. But they have only glanced at the project known as the CRC.

Lawmakers supportive of the project introduced a toothless measure, House Joint Memorial 22, which urges Congress to fund the CRC but doesn't commit a single dime of state money—yet.

Eyre Brewer and critics oppose even that feel-good memorial, saying if it passes, backers could claim the Legislature supports the CRC. March hearings on HJM 22 exposed growing skepticism and opposition to the project.

“We’ve had no substantive debate on the project,” says State Rep. Mitch Greenlick (D-Portland), a CRC critic who calls the project “a steamroller headed off a cliff.”

Neither Eyre Brewer, Greenlick nor any of the growing number of CRC opponents deny there is a traffic problem between Portland and Vancouver.

But the specter of the CRC brings Oregon to a defining moment. If built, it would be the biggest transportation project since the 1966 completion of I-5 and—in modern terms—would rival the construction of Bonneville Dam.

Yet Oregonians have failed to grasp the possibility its leaders might dump billions on a massive road project that emphasizes cars over mass transit and, as the state’s own records show, relies on faulty assumptions and won’t fix the traffic problem.

WW looked at the central claims CRC backers make. Here’s what we found:

**NOT THE GOLDEN GATE:** In February, nearly three years after CRC partners chose a novel design, an expert panel told Oregon and Washington to choose a more “viable” design like the artist’s rendering above.

Credits: CRC

Myth No. 1:

Spending billions on a new I-5 bridge project at the Columbia River will solve congestion.

Anybody who drives from Portland to the ’Couv at rush hour knows trying to cross the Columbia can be a disaster. Radio traffic reporters use the phrase “slowing at Delta Park” more often than they say their stations’ call letters.

In hopes of unclogging the bridge, the CRC—a partnership between Oregon and Washington—would create a new freeway span, widen I-5, improve seven major interchanges and run light rail to Vancouver. As a lot of CRC critics say, it’s not so much a new bridge as a massive freeway project that just happens to cross a river.

To make the CRC happen, Oregon lawmakers will eventually need to approve \$450 million as the state’s share. That money doesn’t include the \$126 million Oregon and Washington have already spent on planning. (Much of that money was wasted chasing a bridge design a February 2011 bridge review panel called “not a viable option.”)



CRC supporters say the congestion costs the region millions a year by tying up freight that travels along I-5. Oregon Department of Transportation figures show \$40 billion worth of freight moves across the existing bridge every year—sometimes slowly.

“This is the worst freight bottleneck in the nation,” ODOT Director Matt Garrett told lawmakers March 28 during a hearing for House Joint Memorial 22.

Garrett’s boss, Gov. Kitzhaber, echoed his claim. “Commerce is increasingly impacted by congestion at a pinch point now considered the worst spot anywhere between Mexico and Canada,” Kitzhaber said in an April 25 speech at Hayden Island.

The congestion is real. But Garrett and Kitzhaber are wrong.

Inrix is a Kirkland, Wash., firm that collects and studies traffic data. In 2010, Inrix ranked the Interstate Bridge 214th in the nation for congestion. On the I-5 corridor alone, the bridge trailed far behind five Los Angeles bottlenecks.

SOURCE: CRC

Most of the traffic crossing the I-5 bridge, ODOT records show, is single-occupancy vehicles heading south out of Clark County in the morning and then home again in the afternoon. “This is a project primarily for the benefit of Vancouver commuters,” Rep. Ben Cannon (D-Portland), a CRC critic, testified on March 28.

Let’s say Oregon and Washington ignore critics such as Cannon and move forward with construction. How much time would those Clark County commuters save each day heading to work across this \$3.6 billion highway project?

One minute.

That’s right: A 2010 governors’ independent review panel found the massive project will shave exactly 60 seconds off the peak morning commute.

And here’s why: The Interstate Bridge and nearby interchanges are just one bottleneck. The project does nothing to fix the choke point at the Rose Quarter, five miles south, where I-5 narrows to two lanes.

Today, the bridge actually serves as a traffic-control device by slowing the flow of cars headed toward the Rose Quarter. A wider bridge with streamlined interchanges will simply create a bigger jam down the road.

Last summer, the governors’ review panel said that failing to address the Rose Quarter congestion would be like hooking a garden hose to a fire hydrant.

“Questions about the reasonableness of investment in the CRC bridge because of unresolved issues to the south [the Rose Quarter] threaten the viability of the project,” the panel wrote in July 2010.

The proposed bridge will charge a toll of at least \$2 in each direction. So see if this makes sense: A commuter living in Vancouver could pay \$1,000 a year in tolls for a big, wide bridge—and not get to her Portland office more than a minute sooner than she does now.

Patricia McCaig, a consultant to the CRC project, says the project offers a wide range of improvements, and it would be a mistake to zero in on selected details and miss the big picture. “You can focus on any small measures, but the project has real and tangible benefits,” she says.

Myth No. 2:

We have to build a bridge because the traffic is only going to get worse.

ODOT and the Washington Department of Transportation say the number of vehicles crossing the Interstate Bridge in 2030 will be 184,000 a day—that’s a 45 percent increase over today. That flood of additional vehicles, they say, means the five-mile stretch around the Interstate Bridge needs more capacity.

Traffic did increase steadily until the middle of the last decade. More than anything, the case for the CRC is built on an assumption it would continue.

Here’s the problem for CRC: It didn’t.

Joe Cortright, a Portland economist critical of the project, looked at ODOT’s traffic projections and compared them to how many cars actually crossed the river.

The CRC backers projected traffic would increase about 1.3 percent a year from 2005 until 2030.

But from 2005 to 2009, Cortright found, traffic over the bridge declined nearly 1 percent each year. In fact, fewer vehicles crossed the bridge in 2009 than in 1999.

ODOT officials don’t dispute Cortright’s findings, but they note bridge traffic ticked up slightly in 2010.

Still, nearly 15,000 fewer cars a day use the bridge today than the CRC said would be the case.

ODOT's Garrett says the phenomenon is temporary. "It is typical for traffic volumes to decline during a recession and to rise during boom periods," he wrote in a Jan. 21 letter to lawmakers.

Cortright, who has been hired by Plaid Pantry to analyze the project, counters that the dip began three years before the economy tanked. And he says high gas prices—which have more than doubled since ODOT made its projections—have permanently shifted drivers' behavior.

"It's very apparent that the traffic decline had everything to do with the big run-up in gas prices," Cortright says. "It's not a local phenomenon. It's national. And even as gas prices declined from 2008, driving has not gone back up."

SOURCE: CRC

Myth No. 3:

The current bridge is too dangerous.

As any parent knows, when logic fails, try fear.

"I recognize the importance of replacing the Interstate Bridge to address a wide range of public priorities," Kitzhaber said April 25 when he helped unveil the latest design for the bridge. "First and foremost, safety."

Proponents claim the safety concerns are twofold: seismic danger and crashes.

Sen. Bruce Starr (R-Hillsboro) invoked the Japanese earthquake in recent CRC testimony. "If there's a big quake off the Oregon coast, the [Interstate] bridge would be rendered inoperative," said Starr, a CRC supporter. ODOT's Garrett amped up that point. "If there's a big shake, that bridge will come down," he told legislators.

Earthquakes are a risk in Portland. But if Oregon gets hit with a massive quake (experts say "the big one" could be a magnitude 9.0), many bridges will become scrap metal.

The Interstate Bridge was built in 1917. The second set of lanes was added in 1958, when the older one was refurbished. So you might think the Interstate Bridge would be the first to go.

Not according to ODOT's own reports. The agency's data show there are more than two dozen I-5 bridges in Oregon in worse shape than the Interstate Bridge, including the Marquam Bridge over the Willamette River.

The Marquam is rated a lot lower for its ability to withstand a big quake, despite being built in 1966. No one seems in a big rush to claim that bridge is unsafe or to replace it.



Another claim CRC backers like to make is the number of crashes on either side of the Interstate Bridge. They often exaggerate here as well.

“Currently, the I-5 Columbia River bridges have the highest incidence of crashes of any highway segment in Oregon,” Portland Business Alliance lobbyist Bernie Bottomly told lawmakers in written testimony on March 28. ODOT’s Garrett supported that claim with a PowerPoint presentation that included slides claiming that the Interstate Bridge had the “highest crash locations on I-5 in Oregon.”

Again, false. ODOT’s own stats show that both the Marquam and Fremont bridges have higher crash rates than the Interstate Bridge, and other stretches of Oregon highways see far more crashes per mile traveled.

The CRC’s McCaig says it’s important to look at the big picture. “There are nearly 400 crashes a year in the bridge area,” she says. “That’s twice the rate for urban freeways.”

What’s important, she says, is to realize that substandard interchange spacing, a lack of highway shoulders and frequent bridge lifts are dangerous and cause congestion.

“Safety matters in terms of a functioning system that keeps people and freight moving,” she says.

SOURCE: CRC; ILLUSTRATIONS: philipcheaney.com

Myth No. 4:

We have a plan to pay for it.

CRC supporters think they’ll get \$1.4 billion from tolls, about \$1.3 billion in federal money, and \$900 million from Oregon and Washington.

The money from the feds and the states is far from certain. But even if the money comes through, projected toll revenues are shaky.

Patricia McCaig, the governor’s adviser on the CRC, says that the project’s budget is solid and has been vetted by transportation finance experts.

“It’s in no one’s best interest not to do diligent, thoughtful, rigorous and conservative work looking at these numbers,” McCaig told lawmakers on March 30.

Both states would borrow heavily to pay for construction and use toll revenue to repay their lenders.

As noted earlier, traffic projections are already way off. Cortright says that creates two kinds of risk.

First, it may make potential lenders skittish—and they might demand higher interest rates. Second, if traffic is less than projected, then the states may not have enough toll money to make their interest payments and would have to look elsewhere to cover the costs.

Either way, Cortright says, the project becomes more expensive than backers say. “What it means,” he says, “is the project can’t pay for itself.”

That prospect scares some lawmakers who have reviewed the numbers. “I think the traffic counts are faulty,” Sen. Chris Telfer (R-Bend), a CPA and member of the Senate finance committee, told WW. “That creates a serious problem for the financing plan.”

What’s the answer?

In April, Kitzhaber and Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire resolved what at first seemed to be the remaining big CRC question: What’s the bridge going to look like? Should it be a Golden Gate-like landmark, or a utilitarian slab like the Glenn Jackson Bridge on I-205? (They chose the latter.)

That debate was in some sense a misdirection—like a street-corner game of three-card monte. By focusing on aesthetics, the public missed the real question: Is the project as currently conceived worth doing at all?

Many CRC critics want Oregon to look at smaller, less-expensive steps that could accomplish more for less.

“This project has just spiraled out of control,” says George Crandall, a Portland planning consultant who has urged CRC proponents to reconsider the plan. “Are we really looking at the real problem and the right solutions?”

If, as proponents say, congestion and safety are the top concerns, Oregon and Washington could toll the existing I-5 bridge. That would reduce traffic by nearly 15 percent immediately, according to CRC studies, and pay for seismic upgrades to the existing bridge.

ODOT could also provide incentives for carpooling and express lanes for trucks. And it could build a separate local traffic bridge for Hayden Island, reducing congestion on I-5 near the Interstate Bridge.

Of course, none of those 21st-century approaches would allow ODOT to do what it and its political benefactors want to do: build stuff.

Whether the CRC gets started or is forced back to the drawing board should ultimately be in the hands of the Oregon House. That's because any new tax measure—and that's what will be necessary if Oregon kicks in \$450 million—must start there.

Eyre Brewer, the freshman legislator from Hillsboro, will be waiting with a giant “stop” sign.

“We need to ask the overarching questions,” Eyre Brewer says. “Have we identified the problems we are trying to solve, and are we proposing the best solutions? I just don't think they've made that case.”

We're ODOT — Trust Us

If the CRC were to go forward, the Oregon Department of Transportation would be the lead agency for all construction on this side of the river. It would be a far more complex job than ODOT has tackled in decades. But the agency does take on big projects. Two current ones give some observers cause for concern.

The first is ODOT's ongoing effort to realign U.S. Highway 20, between Corvallis and Newport. It's a fiasco.

Engineering failures have led to landslides, and giant concrete supports to elevate the highway have tipped. ODOT originally said the project would cost \$110 million. Today it's not close to being done and the price has hit \$230 million.

“This project has faced unique challenges,” ODOT spokesman Patrick Cooney says.

Closer to home, ODOT's second-biggest ongoing project is in Southeast Portland, and it, too, has cost far more money and taken much longer than originally anticipated.

The project? Rebuilding the Southeast Grand Avenue/Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard viaduct on McLoughlin Boulevard just west of Division Street.

In 2002, ODOT estimated the cost of replacing a short and straight stretch of elevated highway at \$32 million. If the CRC is like building a house, the viaduct project is akin to nailing two boards together. And yet, as that project inches toward completion later this year, ODOT figures show it will end up costing about \$95 million—three times the original budget. It's also at least two years behind schedule.

ODOT spokesman Dave Thompson says there are good reasons the project ended up so different from plans.

First, he says, the scope of the work changed significantly. Instead of renovating the viaduct, ODOT determined it had to replace it. Asphalt costs rose dramatically, and seismic fixes required an additional million pounds of steel. The need to keep two lanes

open in each direction complicated construction, as did the discovery that the viaduct was built on 66 feet of old fill from sawmills.

Thompson says the delays and cost overruns are not a reflection on ODOT, nor should the viaduct experience be used to generalize about what could happen with the CRC. Each project, he says, is unique.

“People tend to forget the caveats and complexities, and remember only the original estimate,” Thompson says. “But the scope of the job changed.”

Rep. Katie Eyre Brewer expressed concerns about ODOT’s previous performance in her March testimony on House Joint Memorial 22. That earned her a follow-up visit from ODOT Director Matt Garrett. She says she wasn’t satisfied by his explanation as to why project costs significantly exceed original budgets.

“They say sometimes the projects grow,” Eyre Brewer says. “I can’t speak to whether that is mismanagement, but their history of cost overruns is enough to make you question them.” —NJ

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**Moore-Love, Karla**

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**From:** Sharonnasset [sharonnasset@aol.com]

**Sent:** Monday, April 30, 2012 2:33 PM

**To:** Moore-Love, Karla

**Subject:** Testifying at City Council

Hello Karla,

I would like to testify at Portland City Council on Wednesday May 23, 2012. I would like to talk about the Columbia River Crossing.

Thank you,

Sharon Nasset

503.283.9585

4/30/2012


544

Request of Sharon Nasset to address Council regarding Columbia River Crossing  
(Communication)

MAY 23 2012  
PLACED ON FILE

Filed MAY 18 2012

**LaVonne Griffin-Valade**  
Auditor of the City of Portland

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