


From: [Stephen Houston](#)
To: [Columbia River Crossing:](#) 
CC:
Subject: Proposed Bridge Project
Date: Monday, June 30, 2008 8:35:53 PM
Attachments:

More than 15 years ago, I was a member of the Transportation Futures Committee and the only member to be given a "Perfect Attendance Award" by Mayor Pollard. One of our strongest conclusions was that building more roads would not reduce congestion in the long run, but only increase our reliance on the single occupancy vehicle mode of transportation we've had for the better part of the last 75 years. This reliance needed to be reduced, especially by our use of mass transit and clever planning of our cities to encourage mass transit's efficiency. At the time, we knew nothing of global warming, peak oil, or had any dream that gas prices could skyrocket as they recently have done. Armed with this new data, and our earlier conclusions, I would urge the following be done.

1. Replace the bridge. Most engineers will tell you it is far easier to design and build a structure to withstand the earthquake and other forces that will be put on it when it is built up to modern codes, with modern techniques and materials. If the old bridge is kept, we'll keep all of its continuing maintenance headaches and shortfalls. The bridge capacity should be the same as now, three travel lanes in both directions, with emergency lanes that would minimize the disruptions caused by any accidents. Bicycle and pedestrian paths...large ones...should of course be included.
2. Decrease reliance on the car and put in the light rail. Opponents state that busses are more efficient, but busses are small, and easy to remove if economic times get tough and cutbacks have to ensue. Once light rail is in place, it is there permanently and allows for development around it, thus improving its efficiency and allowing us to rebuild our cities for people rather than cars. Light rail can operate on electricity generated by wind, hydro, thermal, nuclear, or solar. Busses can only operate on diesel, and whether fossil or bio, add more carbon dioxide to the atmosphere than the equivalent amount of generation at a central plant would for powering a light rail system.

3. I know it's not in the plan, but light rail should be extended up through the heart of Clark County via the Glenn Jackson bridge. It's already been built, can withstand the loads imposed by light rail, and would certainly be a swifter route to lay in, relieving congestion sooner than the newer bridge would.

4. Again, it's not in the plan, but Clark County needs to stop paving over its farmland and planting subdivisions, designed only to be accessible by car. We have to reverse this trend of large subdivisions and remake our cities to be more compact, pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

(A draft of this letter was inadvertently sent to you earlier; please ignore it.)

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