Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates
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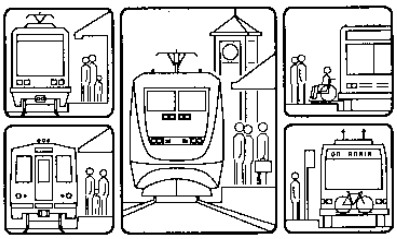

Memorandum

Date: **May 4, 2005**
To: **Columbia River Crossing Task Force**
From: **Jim Howell**
Subject: **Keeping I-5 on the Existing Columbia River Bridges**

The *Project Briefing* given at the first meeting on Feb 3, of the Columbia River Task Force, indicated that the 10-lane replacement bridge and the 8-lane freeway plus two lane arterial concepts were the only concepts that "worked" and other concepts considered "didn't show promise". Such an assertion implies that an exhaustive alternatives analysis has already been done.
Given that such a comprehensive investigation of options has not been done, is it wise to jump to this conclusion so early in the assessment process?

The existing bridge, which actually comprises two bridges, accommodates six lanes of traffic. Only four of these lanes function as through lanes because the outside lanes function as merge lanes from the on-ramps located at each end of the bridge. By moving these on-ramps away from the bridge area, all six lanes on the bridge can accommodate freeway through traffic.

The southbound on-ramp from SR14 and downtown Vancouver can be moved to Hayden Island by providing a freeway connecting lane on a new multi-modal bridge that will be needed for light rail and local traffic. (see attached ***Non-Freeway Multi-modal Columbia Crossing Alternative***).

The northbound Hayden Island on-ramp can be eliminated because this access can be provided from the new on-ramp at N. Hayden Drive, over the existing Portland Harbor Bridge and through the Marine Drive Interchange. Access from I-5 North can use the same route to the new off-ramp at N. Hayden Drive.

Adding another northbound lane on the existing Portland Harbor Bridge can mitigate the traffic backups that frequently occur on the northbound ramp from Marine Drive Interchange. This lane already exists and is now being used by pedestrians and bicycles that could relocate to a new Portland Harbor Bridge, which will be needed for local traffic and MAX trains.

Local trips between North Portland, Hayden Island and Vancouver will most likely use this new bridge, further reducing traffic on this on-ramp.

The minimal environmental impact, cost savings and potential for quicker development suggests that this option should to be considered seriously.

In addition, the study should investigate the need and viability of building another bridge near the existing Railroad Bridge for local traffic and future high-speed rail. A bridge in this corridor could greatly reduce the impacts of freight movements on I-5 between the Port of Portland, West Hayden Island and the Port of Vancouver. In the future, this bridge could accommodate a separate passenger rail bypass, removing Amtrak and some commuter trains from the rail freight traffic in this congested corridor. (See attached Vancouver Waterfront sketch.)

Both of these bridges could probably be built for less money than a massive freeway bridge because they would require less land acquisition, fewer approach structures and roadway realignments and could be constructed with little impact on I-5 traffic.

More importantly, they would greatly reduce demand on the freeway system by providing many more river-crossing alternatives.

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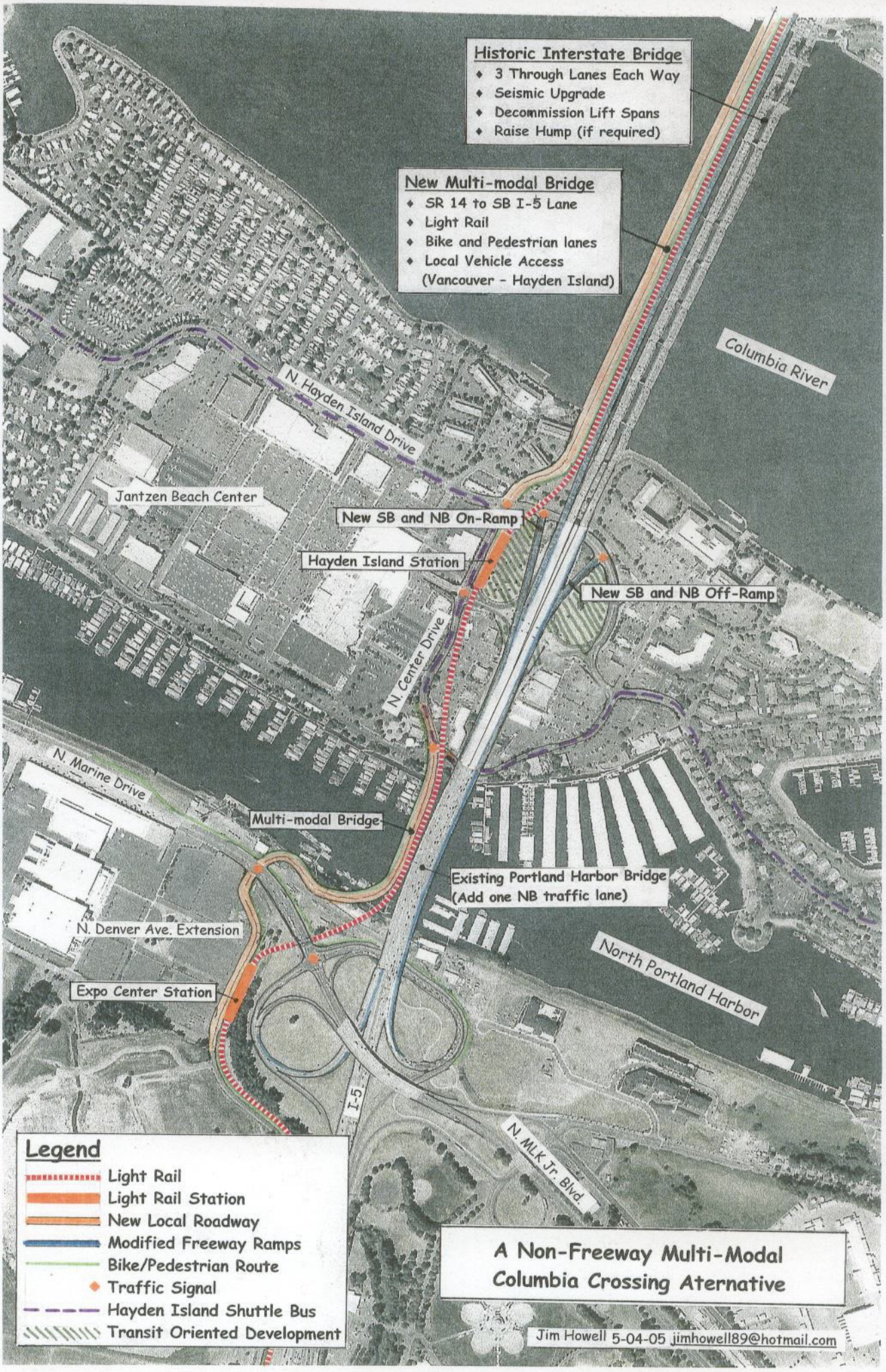
Historic Interstate Bridge
3 Through Lanes Each Way
Seismic Upgrade
Decommission Lift Spans
Raise Hump (if required)
New Multi-modal Bridge
SR 14 to SB I-5 Lane
Light Rail
Bike and Pedestrian lanes
Local Vehicle Access
(Vancouver – Hayden Island)
Columbia River
N. Hayden Island Drive
Jantzen Beach Center
New SB and NB On-Ramp
Hayden Island Station
New SB and NB Off-Ramp
N. Center Drive
N. Marine Drive
Multi-modal Bridge
Existing Portland Harbor Bridge
(Add one NB traffic lane)
N. Denver Ave. Extension
North Portland Harbor
Expo Center Station
I-5
N. MLK Jr. Blvd.
Legend
Light Rail
Light Rail Station
New Local Roadway
Modified Freeway Ramps
Bike/Pedestrian Route
Traffic Signal
Hayden Island Shuttle Bus
Transit Oriented Development
A Non-Freeway Multi-Modal
Columbia Crossing Aternative
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A Vancouver Waterfront Redevelopment Proposal

By Jim Howell 5-2-05
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