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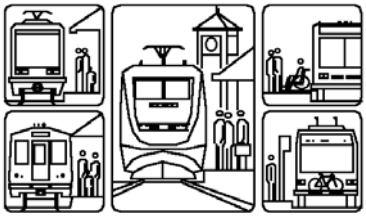

Feb. 5, 2007

To: The CRC Task Force
From: Jim Howell
Re: Public transit in the CRC Corridor

Why is a $2 billion mega-bridge the only recommended option to come out of the CRC process? Because of a belief that 20 years from now, 50,000 more vehicles a day will need to cross the Columbia River.

This belief is based on forecast modeling that predicts, in 20 years, 80% of all peak-hour, prime-direction commuter travel will still be in single occupancy vehicles.

Sophisticated forecast models are only as good as the assumptions programmed into them. How and why are the assumptions regarding public transportation wrong?

The year 2020 origins and destinations in the PM Peak shown on Figures 3-1 and 3-6 in the "Draft Components Step A Screening Report" for both "All Trips" and "Transit Only Trips" suggest that inadequate transit networks may have been fed into the forecast model.

These maps clearly show a high concentration of jobs on Hayden Island and in north, northeast and northwest Portland, as well as in downtown Portland and the Lloyd district, yet show few of these jobs being accessed by public transportation. They also show a poor distribution of home-base destinations in Clark County. Most of the trips end at the high capacity transit park and ride lots, instead of being distributed from the stations by good local transit service.

These O & D transit patterns strongly indicate that inferior transit networks were assumed in the forecast. Well-designed bus networks on both sides of the river, interfaced with light rail, would produce a distribution of dots on the "transit only" map similar to the distribution on the "all trip" map. Experience shows that transit systems heavily dependent on park and ride access are inferior in attracting

ridership. Once people are in their cars, it is too easy for them to stay in it for the remainder of their trip.

Availability, frequency and reliability are more important than speed in attracting people to public transit, especially if driving becomes less reliable due to traffic congestion and incidents. Over time, the growing cost of driving will also attract commuters to switch to using the transit system.

Light rail is just one component of a well-designed transit system. It is the logical mode for crossing the river. It is not affected by traffic, is already built from Portland City Center to Expo Center, has convenient station locations for connecting bus service if it is provided, and has the high capacity (the equivalent of a 10-lane freeway) for future ridership growth. It also would be cheaper to operate than buses.

The basic foundation for the perceived need to replace the current bridges with a new mega-bridge is the outrageous assumption that 180,000 vehicles must cross it every day and only 20% of peak-hour prime direction commuters will use public transportation.

Is a higher transit travel share a far-fetched notion for 20 years into the future? Remember that twenty years ago there was great skepticism among some otherwise forward thinking people that MAX would have any significant impact on travel patterns.

Attachments:

- Figure 3-1 and Figure 3-6 from the Draft Components Step A Screening Report

Contact:

- Jim Howell 503-284-7182 jimhowell89@hotmail.com

## Figure 3-1. OR Origins and WA Destinations in PM Peak Period (2020)

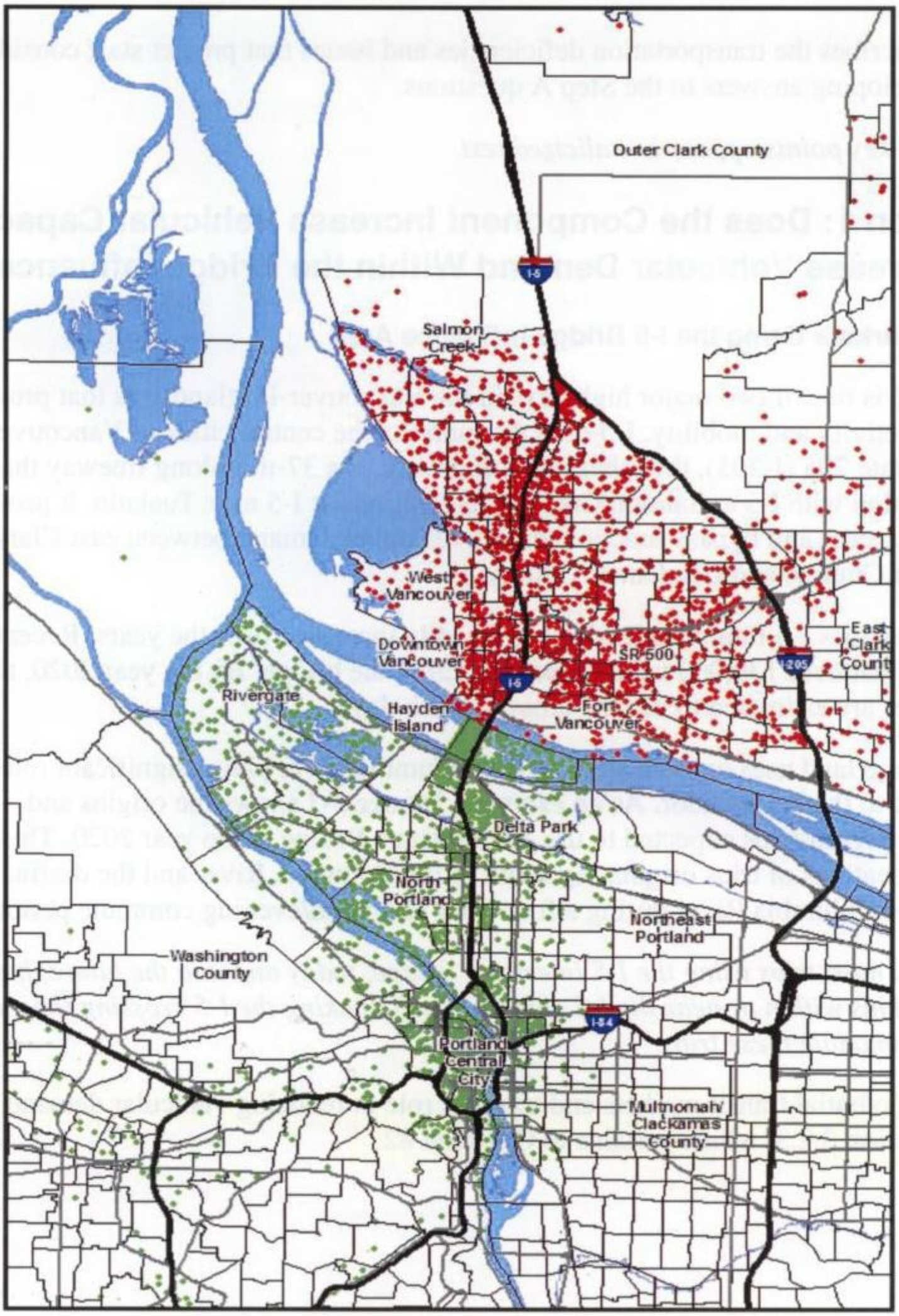

**Figure 3-6. Year 2020: OR Origins and WA Destinations in PM Peak Period – Transit Only**