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To:	Draft EIS Feedback;
CC:	
Subject:	Anticipate higher energy costs
Date:	Friday, May 30, 2008 12:01:41 PM
Attachments:	

I am concerned about the forecasts of future transportation needs and the cost of a new Columbia River crossing. This is a particularly difficult time to make such forecasts because the future of energy is so uncertain. Any forecast of traffic 15 years from now, or even of the cost of steel, concrete and energy in the next ten years is likely to be wrong.

Using the old bridges as envisioned in options four and five would not solve the problem of lifting the bridges for river traffic. It would present northbound drivers with the confusing choice of two roads that both go to the same place. Also, as near as I can figure from the cost estimates, the cost of reinforcing them for earthquake resistance approaches the cost of a new span.

So that means new bridges for the highway, options two and three. The proposed design is a monstrosity, with the bridges needing to be high for river traffic and low for air traffic. One way to ameliorate its ugliness is to reduce the number of lanes. That would reduce their cost too.

It is very likely that well within the bridges' lifetime, and probably even before they are finished, petroleum-based fuels and energy-intensive materials such as concrete and steel will become much, much more expensive. This does not seem to be a scenario that the planners allowed for. Besides making the cost of the bridges go through the roof, it would reduce the amount of driving, therefore reducing the capacity the new crossing would need.

I recommend that you adopt option two or three with fewer traffic lanes than are currently envisioned. The construction should be in phases so that after each step the costs and requirements can be re-figured with up-to-date information. The one thing we know is that mass transit will have to play a bigger part in our future transportation. Therefore, the mass transit/bike/pedestrian bridge should be built first. Incidentally, the bridge could accommodate both high-capacity bus and light

rail by paving the trackways. That way we have the flexibility to adapt to future needs.

I propose to put the bulk of the effort into building the transit bridge rapidly while preliminary work goes on for one of the highway bridges at a slower pace. In a two or three years the need for, and cost of, future highway capacity will be clearer and the third span can be begun if it is still feasible.

Carter Kennedy