PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR IBR PROGRAM EQUITY ADVISORY GROUP

Received between November 21, 2022 – January 21, 2023

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1/21/23

EAG Public Comment

My question concerning the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program: Why haven't **all** possible transit alternatives been reviewed by the IBR staff? Just one mile away from the I-5 Bridge, railroad tracks take passengers from Vancouver to Portland in 15 minutes. A regional passenger rail system could be built for one-sixth the cost of the IBR bridge proposal. Such a transit system could easily move as many as 25% or more Southwest Washington citizens that cross the I-5 Bridge. If 25% of the daily 144,000 auto trips were removed from I-5, the I-5 Bridge and the Rose Quarter freeway expansion would not be necessary. Regional rail transportation is a climate improvement solution. Stadler battery-powered passenger rail cars are being used in Germany now for that purpose. Stadler could build these rail cars in their Utah manufacturing facilities.

Regional passenger rail vehicles are different than light rail vehicles since they can travel on existing freight rail tracks. One seventeen foot wide railroad track built alongside the existing freight rail tracks could be used for passenger trains during the day, freight trains could use the same tracks during off peak hours at night. This transit system would have less environmental impact to build, cost less than freeways and could be built faster.

As a start, one track could be laid from Ridgefield to Vancouver, Battle Ground to Vancouver and Camas to Vancouver. These tracks would allow passenger trains travelling to Portland to cut travel time in half compared to automobiles. In future the tracks could be extended to Longview to the north. And later if railroad tracks were added to the Hood River crossing bridge, excursion trains could travel up and down the Columbia Gorge as a wonderful scenic tourist attraction.

Dave Rowe, A commuter from Battle Ground to Lake Oswego

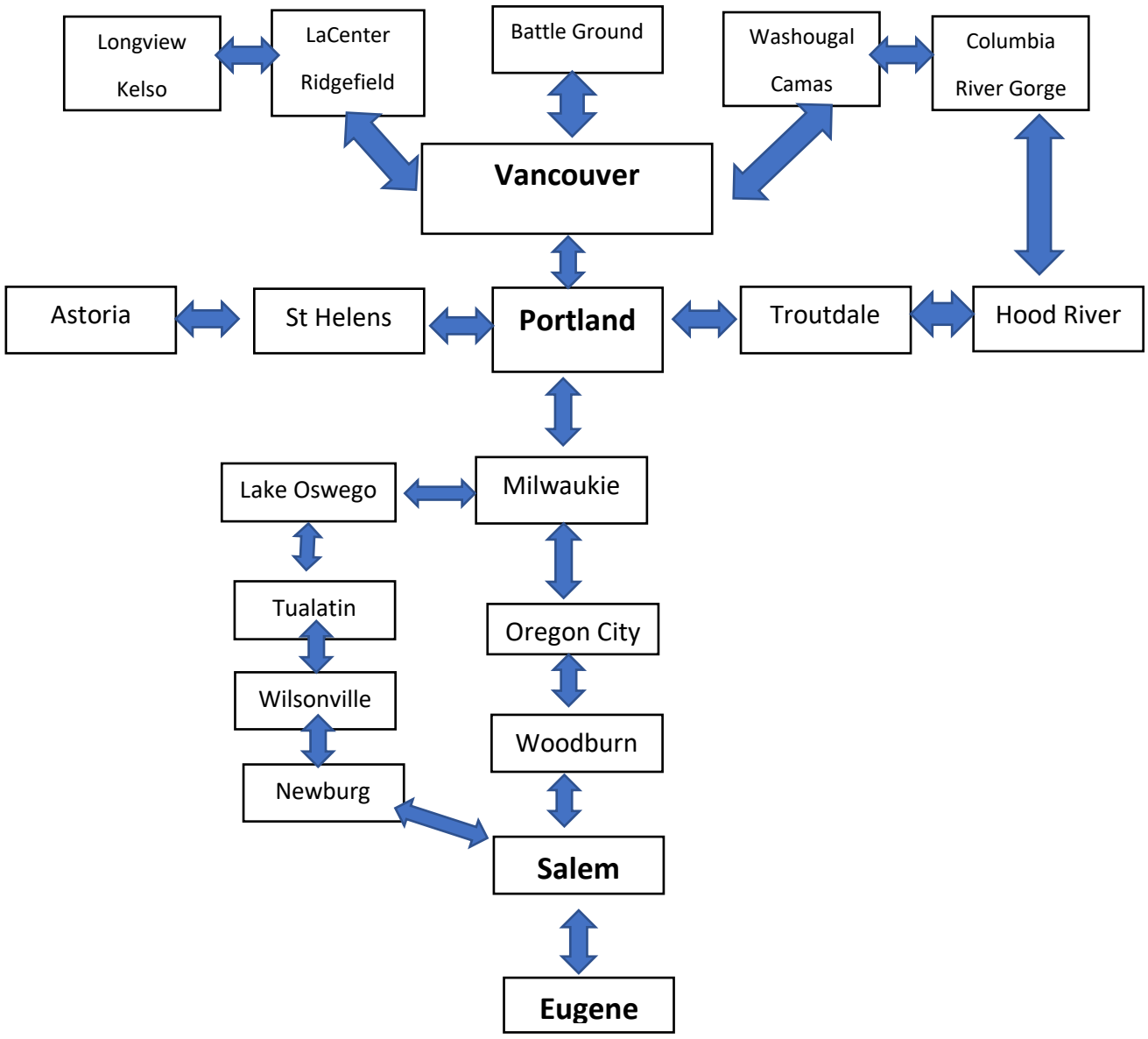
Attachments: regional rail corridors Willamette Valley and coast.pdf, RR in SW Washington and Hood River.pdf

** ADA compliant versions of the attachments can be made available upon request*

Regional Passenger Rail Service could help Climate Change

ODOT and WASHDOT needs to plan for passenger rail development. I-5 congestion could be reduced by developing regional electric passenger rail service on the existing rail lines from SW Washington through the Willamette Valley. Climate change can be reduced by regional electric passenger rail development in Oregon and Washington. A bus goes about one mile on a fifth of a gallon of diesel, costing about one dollar to move **40** passengers. The San Francisco BART passenger rail car uses about 3.5 Kilowatt/Hour per mile costing about 35 cents to move **150** passengers. A fleet of Stadler Battery powered Passenger Cars (FLIRT) are in service in Germany which has proved to reduce carbon emissions. Battery or Hydrogen powered Rail cars could be used in the Northwest to reduce greenhouse gases. Regional Rail travel is faster than automobiles. Rail commuters would avoid tolls, bypass I-5 Bridge and the congested Rose Quarter as currently proposed by the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program. Tolling does little to reduce carbon emissions, while electric powered passenger rail cars have tremendous emission reduction.

Regional Passenger Rail system with only 17 foot wide right of way can move as many passengers per hour as an eight lane freeway and much cheaper to build than a freeway. Passenger trains could travel during the day and Freight trains can use the same rails at night.



Existing railroad corridors in SW Washington could be developed into regional passenger rail corridors. This concept could use BIL funding for a cost-benefit analysis and economic analysis. Regional Rail could reduce the 143,000 autos crossing the Columbia River by at least 25%. And reduce travel time to Portland by 50% compared to MAX light rail and auto. It would be possible to have scenic excursion trains along the Columbia Gorge. Rail travel reduces rubber tire particles entering the streams and rivers. To combat global warming SW Washington needs Regional Passenger Rail.