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12/2/24

In 2006 the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) program was designed to improve I-5 corridor movement of freight and citizens. In 2012 voters rejected the CRC design. The current IBR design is not much different and does little to improve movement on I-5 corridor. IBR admits once the Seven Billion Dollar bridge is completed in 2035 auto commute times across Columbia will be about the same as today. Freight movement and citizens must be given alternatives to motor vehicle travel. The alternative should be High Performance Rail (HPR) on the rail corridors that exist today. High Performance Rail improvements from Canada to Mexico would reduce I-5 traffic. The congestion on the I-5 segment across the Columbia River and Portland Rose Quarter would be reduced by High Performance Rail. HPR increases rail freight and rail passenger travel with speeds up to 120 MPH.

BNSF and UP Railroads are receptive to Federal funds and private investments to add more capacity to their railroad corridors. Both railroads are restricted to 79 MPH on the west coast, but HPR would allow 120 MPH speeds. Passing tracks and sidings would allow passenger trains and lighter freight trains to get around slower freight trains.

Thirty percent of the US population are not able to drive an automobile. Rail travel would help this segment of our nation achieve a much-needed means of travel.

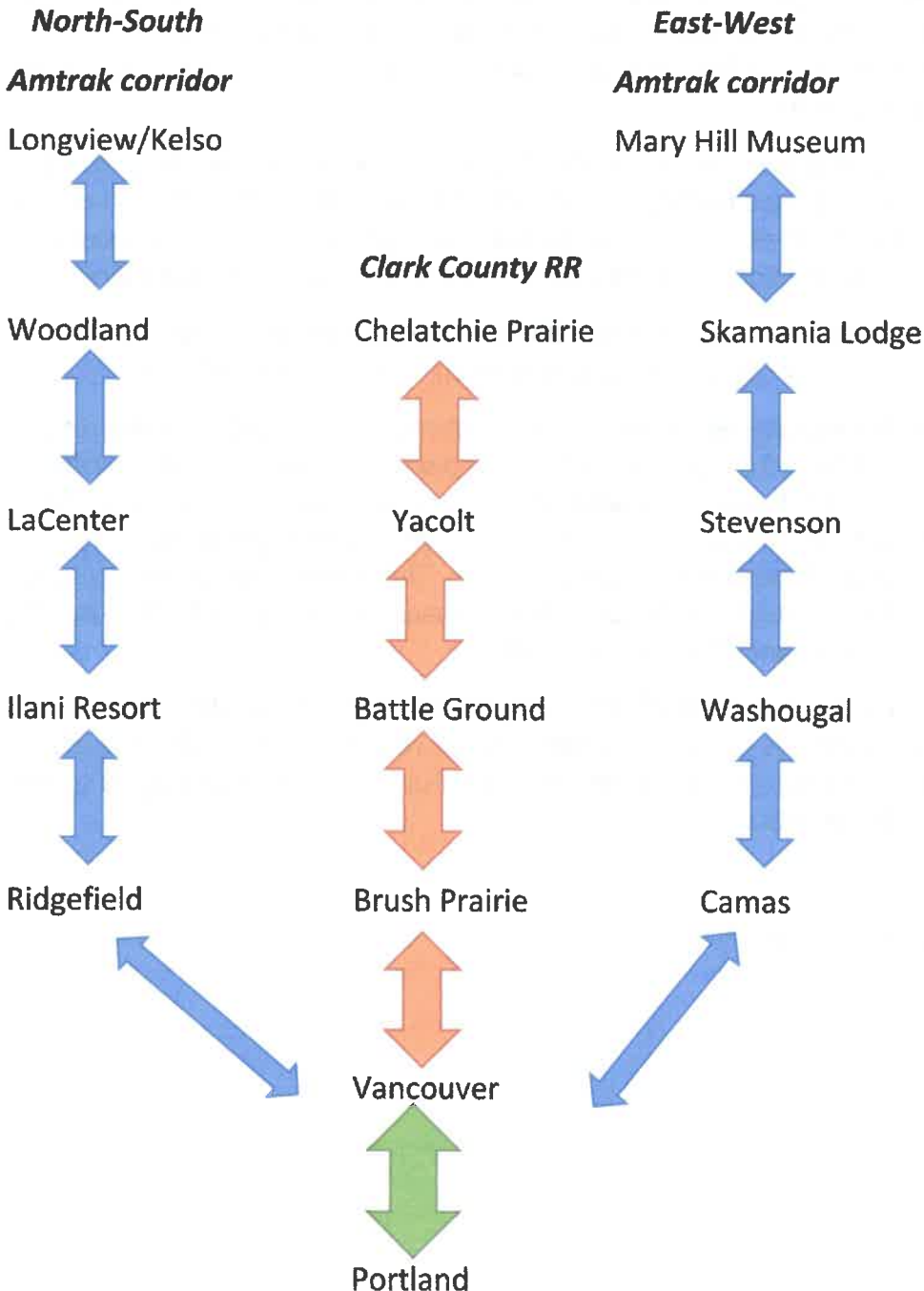
The Interstate Bridge Replacement design must be changed to a more common-sense design. An Immersed Tube Tunnel built for I-5 long distance freight and automobiles would improve movement through the area. The existing Interstate Bridge should be repurposed for local traffic and pedestrian travelers. The cost to upgrade the current Interstate Bridge would be less than 1/2 Billion dollars. The annual maintenance cost is about 2 million dollars. A major earthquake could damage the Interstate Bridge, but the IBR design may not withstand "The Big One" either.

I urge you to halt the overpriced, ineffective IBR project which will displace homeowners and businesses on Hayden Island. Please review the feasibility of a less expensive, more rapidly constructed Immersed Tube Tunnel like the Highway 99 tunnel in Vancouver British Columbia.

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Existing railroad corridors in SW Washington could be developed into regional passenger rail corridors. Cascades/AMTRAK trains travel from Vancouver to Portland in twenty minutes. Faster than autos and trucks. Regional Rail could reduce the 143,000 autos crossing the Columbia River by 25%. And reduce travel time to Portland by 50% compared to MAX light rail. Also, it would reduce rubber tire particles entering the streams and rivers. To combat global warming SW Washington needs Regional Passenger Rail. Dave Rowe dlrowe1910@icloud.com





RAIL TRANSPORTATION STATEMENT - AUGUST 2023



Amtrak Coast Starlight (Los Angeles - Seattle)

Effective rail transportation is essential to avert the worst effects of human-caused climate change. Increasing rail and transit, and moving away from our current heavy emphasis on road and air travel, will bring many environmental, economic, and social benefits.

Rail transportation is inherently much more energy efficient than road transport, especially for freight. Reducing one of the basic factors of production – transportation – reduces the costs of virtually every sector of the economy, thereby increasing sustainability. Electrifying railroad operations will further increase these benefits. Therefore, improving passenger and freight rail transportation needs to be a national priority for the US. The purpose of [this statement](#) is to inform the public about how rail is a sustainable transportation solution and to provide a guide to action to improve the nation's railroads.

SUMMARY

Effective rail transportation is in the best interest of the nation and the planet. The US railroad network is under-utilized, and we should expect more benefits from it. Current rail policies that shortchange the public interest deny Americans the compelling benefits inherent in moving as much freight and passengers by rail as possible.

Sierra Club Rail Transportation Statement - July 2023

Trains are too-often an unsung, but essential, solution to the climate emergency. The inherent energy efficiency of rail transportation means that it is the most climate-friendly form of powered transportation over land. Rail generates only about one-fifth to one-third of the emissions of equivalent road transportation. Nationwide, road transportation is responsible for 82 percent of transportation greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; while rail is responsible for 2 percent. Electrifying railroads will further reduce their GHG emissions and more than triple their energy efficiency.

The climate crisis solution lies in using rail transportation far more than we do and utilizing it in innovative ways. Rapid change in transportation priorities to favor rail transportation can be a fast and effective climate emergency response.

Implementing improved rail services is an important part of the solution to both transportation equity and climate challenges. Well planned, robust passenger and freight rail operations provide benefits such as good jobs, equitable mobility, health and safety, reduced GHG emissions, reduced traffic congestion, and reduced damage to highway infrastructure.

All levels of government need to recognize the importance of robust rail transportation for both passenger and freight. In the near term, cities, counties, states and tribes can leverage grant opportunities such as those offered by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Because most federal grant opportunities require matching funds, it is important for these levels of government to have well-developed project plans that are ready for construction when funding becomes available.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Passenger rail: To effectively compete with automobiles in time and convenience, passenger train service must be appropriately fast, frequent, **safe**, and reliable. Rail transit and regional passenger rail service must be convenient for travel at all times of day or night, not for just commuting to and from the city center for the beginning and end of business hours on weekdays.

Freight rail: All levels of government must take an intermodal approach to transportation policies to assure that public and private investments are made in a manner to encourage freight traffic to move via the safest, most energy efficient, and cost-effective mode.

Rail labor and education: The U.S Department of Transportation and Federal Railroad Administration should develop a comprehensive program to train and educate current U.S. railroad personnel in planning, designing and operating fast, frequent, reliable, and convenient rail passenger and freight service.

Rail electrification: The Federal government must establish a program with the nation's electric utilities and railroads to implement rail electrification nationwide. Electrified rail in heavily-polluted 'non-attainment' areas where trackside communities have been most heavily affected by diesel locomotives, should be a priority for a national rail electrification program.

Federal railroad policy reform: European-style 'open access' railroad policies need to be explored for the U.S., to enable nondiscriminatory access to the national rail network by a wide variety of freight and passenger rail operators.

The full statement is available [here](#).

