

TO: Joint Interim Committee on the Interstate Bridge (J15B.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov)

FROM: Sam Churchill, Hayden Island resident

DATE: December 13, 2023

SUBJECT: Joint Legislative Action Committee on construction of Interstate 5 Bridge Replacement.

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Dear Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity for Hayden Island to speak about the Interstate Bridge Replacement.

I favor two strategies for the Interstate Bridge Replacement that have NOT been explored.

1. Immersed Tube Tunnels. Eliminate clearance limitations (Coast Guard is happy). It saves the livability of Waterfront Vancouver, and saves \$2-3 BILLION spent raising the freeway and constructing on/off ramps for 3 miles.

2. Autonomous Transit. Cheaper and more efficient than bus or train (75% of their budget is personnel). Holds 12-25 passengers. Door to door service. Your ticket only pays for 7.7% of the operational cost. Give all that payroll subsidy - withheld for TriMet - BACK to the people.

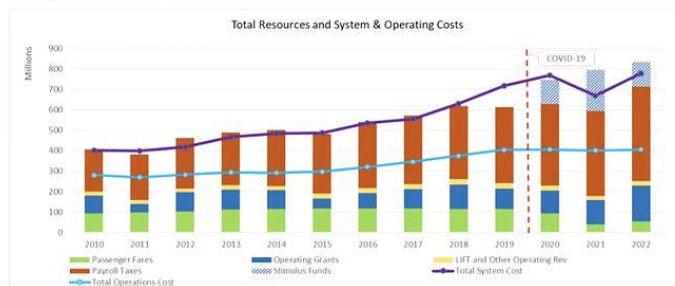


In summary:

- Make autonomous shuttles free. No drivers. The operator saves 75% of the operational cost. Currently TriMet bus fare only covers 7.7% of the actual cost. Save \$500 million (every year) that is taken out by payroll taxes. Save another \$2-3 billion because you don't need extremely high access ramps with an immersed tunnel.

- Don't forget the \$2B for the dedicated light rail bridge. Vancouver BC's immersed tunnel (very similar in size and layout) costs \$4.1B and is TOLL FREE.
- What's wrong with Light Rail to Vancouver WA? A single track each way precludes any "Express Train". Too many stops. Too slow. Too expensive. Plus you have to wait for a bus at the beginning and end of a trip. Or park the car and wait for a (slow) train.
- Free EV shuttles at commute times. Pay per mile other times. Run by a public/private company. No dedicated train bridge necessary. No tolls. Faster. Better. Cheaper.
- I'm 75 years old and don't have a car. I can't make it up the "paperclip" ramp – and I *understand* elevators will likely be inoperable soon after opening.
- If 75% of TriMet's budget is spent on personnel, that's a pretty good impetus to study the cost/benefits of autonomy. Of course, laying off hundreds of people might be political suicide. That's the downside. But if commuters got a free ride out of it, maybe it's a reasonable compromise.
- Maybe give Strickler's O-DOT office \$.50 on every dollar we save under \$6 billion. Same deal with WS-DOT. Encourage saving money.

Total Resources Compared to System & Operating Cost



TRI MET



Th immersed tunnel is basically the idea of Bob Ortblad and Robert Wallis, the Seattle and Vancouver engineers. I added the autonomy wrinkle - but I'm no expert on this stuff.



Thank you.

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