

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING)  
A POSITION ON A THIRD COLUMBIA )  
RIVER HIGHWAY BRIDGE )

RESOLUTION NO. 96-2316

Introduced by Rod Monroe,  
Chair, JPACT

WHEREAS, In 1995 the City of Vancouver, Clark County and the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) established the Transportation Futures Committee to review a broad range of issues relating to travel within Clark County and between Clark County and the Oregon portion of the metropolitan area; and

WHEREAS, The Clark County Transportation Futures Committee has recommended evaluating the costs and impacts of a range of transportation alternatives addressing bi-state travel, including two possible locations for a third highway crossing of the Columbia River; and

WHEREAS, One bridge location, around the west side of Vancouver Lake, crossing the Columbia River near Rivergate, then crossing the Willamette River near Linnton, crossing through Forest Park and continuing to Highway 26 in Washington County, raises the following concerns:

- It would be inconsistent with state, regional and local land use policies in Oregon and it would increase pressure to expand the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and accelerate growth pressures on satellite communities in the Highway 30 corridor such as Sauvie Island, Scappoose and St. Helens.
- It would raise extremely serious environmental issues with regard to threatened and endangered fish in the Columbia and

Willamette Rivers, impacts to Forest Park, a major scenic and recreational resource, and it would potentially sever the continuous wildlife corridor which links Forest Park with the coastal mountains.

- It would not serve a significant existing travel market; less than 1 percent of the current regional travel is between Clark County and Washington County.

WHEREAS, The second bridge location, through east Clark County west of Camas, crossing the Columbia River near Troutdale and with a possible connection to Highway 26, raises these concerns:

- It would be inconsistent with state, regional and local land use policies in Oregon and it would increase pressure to expand the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and accelerate growth pressures on communities such as Troutdale, Wood Village, Fairview, Gresham, Boring, and Sandy.
- It would also increase growth pressure within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area in both Oregon and Washington.
- It would raise environmental issues with regard to threatened and endangered fish in the Columbia as well as to environmentally sensitive areas such as the Sandy River watershed.
- It would not serve a significant existing travel market; the Oregon portion of this corridor is currently served by I-205 and I-84.

WHEREAS, The two bridge concepts under consideration by the Clark County Futures Committee are inconsistent with state,

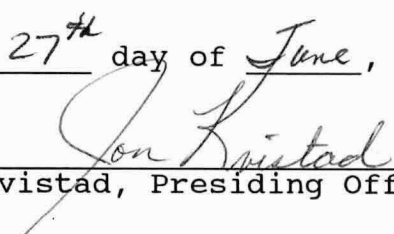
regional and local land use policies in both Oregon and Washington which seek to develop communities served by a range of transportation options including transit; and

WHEREAS, The two bridge concepts under consideration by the Clark County Futures Committee are inconsistent with state, regional and local transportation policies which call for improved accessibility through the development of multi-modal facilities that address fundamental regional and community goals such as environmental protection and support of the regional economy; now, therefore,


BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Metro Council finds that the two Columbia River crossing concepts under consideration by the Clark County Futures Committee are inconsistent with long-range planning efforts in the Oregon portion of the metropolitan area, would not provide significant transportation benefits to residents of the region and should not be studied further.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 27<sup>th</sup> day of June, 1996.

  
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Jon Kvistad, Presiding Officer

Approved as to Form:

  
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Daniel B. Cooper, General Counsel

STAFF REPORT

CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 96-2316 FOR THE PURPOSE OF  
ESTABLISHING A POSITION ON A THIRD COLUMBIA RIVER HIGHWAY  
BRIDGE

Date: April 9, 1996

Presented by: Andrew Cotugno

PROPOSED ACTION

The adoption of this resolution states the finding that the two Columbia River crossing concepts under consideration by the Clark County Futures Committee are inconsistent with the long-range transportation and land use plans in the Oregon portion of the Portland metropolitan region.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

In September 1995, the City of Vancouver, Clark County and the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) formed the Clark County Transportation Futures Committee to explore the full range of options for improving transportation in Clark County. This committee has directed staff to prepare information on a range of possible bi-state improvements including I-5 corridor light rail, I-205 corridor light rail, a third auto bridge west of Vancouver Lake, or a third auto bridge west of Camas.

The purpose of this assessment is to allow for comparison among the options at a broad sketch level. This sketch level comparison will be accomplished through the development of order-of-magnitude cost estimates, a general assessment of environmental impacts (including land use compatibility) and an assessment of the transportation benefit and function of the proposed improvement. In order to facilitate this assessment, the committee has defined the two third auto bridge options for purposes of preparing the sketch level assessment.

In 1989, JPACT and the Metro Council considered the issues involved in a third auto bridge connecting Clark County through Multnomah County to Washington County. At that time, there was significant public testimony expressing concern with the potential environmental damage that could be caused by a route adjacent to Vancouver Lake, crossing Sauvie Island, climbing through Forest Park and connecting to Highway 26. Of particular concern among Oregon residents who submitted comments at that time were the potential environmental impacts to Forest Park. Forest Park is seen as a major regional recreational and scenic asset and, of particular concern, was the possibility that a major roadway through the West Hills, even north of Forest Park, could sever the wildlife corridor between the Portland hills and the coast range.

The Region 2040 process in Oregon and the Growth Management Act process in Clark County have provided both portions of the region with a long-range planning framework. Both third bridge locations currently under consideration are inconsistent with these long-range plans. The western alignment would operate largely outside of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and it would accelerate development pressure on communities in the U.S. 30 corridor such as Sauvie Island, Scappoose, and St. Helens.

The eastern alignment would be inconsistent with the long-range planning framework by increasing development pressure on communities such as Troutdale, Wood Village, Fairview, Gresham, Boring and Sandy in the Highway 26/Mt. Hood corridor and by increasing development pressure on the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area.

Neither third bridge location would serve a significant existing travel market. The major travel movement served by the western alignment, Clark County to Washington County travel, represents less than 1 percent of regional work trips, and even less for all trip purposes. The eastern alignment would serve the periphery of the region, an area already served by I-84 and I-205.