

Comments submitted by Steve Larrance
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As you requested in your 11-15-16 cover letter to SAC members the following is an abbreviated list of my comments and concerns regarding the draft-final of the Washington County Transportation Futures Report dated November 2016. As you know I've read and thought about every word in the Report and would have preferred to discuss it all at our SAC meetings but that was not how you chose to structure SAC meetings. In this response to the Report I will not try to cover it all but instead be as brief as possible to highlight some of the areas which: 1) could help solve our transportation congestion problems 2) some of the text which I believe lead the reader to incorrect conclusions and 3) the areas that were omitted which could and should have contributed to a rational scientific study of our County's existing transportation situation and the proven options to correct the flaws. For the most part my comments will refer to Chapter 7, which you describe as the study findings.

Thank you for pointing out in Chapter 7 3.2.5 that about "half of Washington County residents work outside the County and half of the people who work in Washington County live outside of it, which accounts for the bi-directional commute patterns". There is no reason to assume this will change dramatically in the future. Why do many of the assumptions in the report/study seem to state as fact that this pattern will change due to the existing plans? This assumption is contained within many conclusion type statements within the report. I will not list them all. Sure it would be great if everyone lived across the street from where they work but it has never been true and will never be true. There are multiple wage earners in every household and they change jobs frequently. We have not discovered or measured any major pattern where people abandon their home investment and home family environment to follow one family members' job re-location within the region. The best we can do to in the planning world to make more opportunities for locating jobs closer to residences is create new limited access corridors where industry and commercial jobs have always chosen to locate. That alone has the potential to locate jobs closer to existing and planned residential areas. But this opportunity is not pointed out in the report/study nor are the positive transportation impacts of building a jobs corridor contained within the analysis of creating new limited access corridors. It's a glaring omission, but not the least or last omission. Instead this attribute was associated with transit improvements, which all three evaluated options contain. But as we know major employers looking to site in our community have purchased properties fairly close to limited access roadways in order to move their goods, service vehicles and employees. And that is how it is done world wide.

Another planning opportunity completely omitted in this study was not taking into account the unique length of the study time frame, 50 years. For once we have more than 20 years to look into the future. This should have, but didn't, allow us to see transportation improvements in a time sequence. In terms of Oregon Land Use and Transportation Planning where every future project must be on multiple plans to ever be funded and built this study missed the mark to establish the short term, mid term and long term needs and cost effective solutions. The study needed to seize the opportunity to designate the location and size of the necessary limited access public right of way located between Hwy. 99 and Hwy. 26 to accomplish servicing the known transportation and utility needs that our Urban Reserves process has established. It needs

to be stated that designating new limited access corridors are an absolute necessity due to known existing and future service deficiencies. The Urban Reserves are still a blank slate. With the future vision that should have been a major portion of the study's conclusions we could not only know where and how big to make limited access corridors within the future urban areas for all forms of future public and private vehicles but most important we could have planned near by land uses to be most compatible with and supportive of the transportation investments. Once again the study assumes that only transit has this type of long range planning opportunity. There would be many benefits of adopting a 50 year plan that couples future public and private dollars to short term, mid term and long term projects. The plan could envision short term and mid term improvements to existing and new arterial roads and include a new limited access parkway in the future urban areas to carry commuters via transit and private vehicle and freight from I-5 around Sherwood and non stop north to the jobs in north Hillsboro and beyond across the Willamette to the Portland Airport. That would be a short and mid term plan that actually works and serves all modes. Also that 50 year plan must include a new west side interstate corridor to contain future public and private vehicles and public utilities to service the growth we know will happen within that 50 year horizon. Future right of way costs would be minimized and future mitigation costs of transportation improvements being "shoe horned" into existing development would be minimized. I think we all know that the "least cost solution" to the many congestion points within the Portland central city freeway system is to build an alternative route. We would be buying back capacity on that central Portland system. I talked with a well known and very respected transportation engineer just prior to the start of the Transportation Futures Study. That person told me that if the need to build a new west side interstate transportation corridor with a new bridge over the Columbia River was not a big part of the conclusion of this study then something was very wrong. Has politics over come reality?

Speaking of omitted pieces of the study, why didn't we analysis how the east half of our region works with their comprehensive system of large and small limited access corridors allowing them to barely rely on their existing extensive network of arterials in both east west and north south directions. Any truly scientific study would without a doubt look to the mirror image in close proximity for comparison. More proof that politics won over good science? I asked for this comparison many times starting before the study even began. This study suffers in its absence.

I certainly think transit investment should be part of our futures transportation investment plans. We need to continue to improve our transit system and public access to it. Like wise we need to continue to improve the bike and walking infrastructure so these modes become more safe and more available. But what we can't do is spend more money than we need to accomplish these goals. We need to be realistic about the total cost to operate our transit system including labor cost which was not stated in the overall cost for Package A. We must select transit vehicle types that allow for changes in the future, work in all weather events, can be used in any direction on as many routes as possible and absolutely work to move large numbers of people rapidly away from danger in the event of a large emergency or earth quake event. Rail is not the most worthy option to accomplish all of these tasks. John A. Charles, Jr. of the Cascade Policy Institute, recently released the attached 2016 Annual Community Survey. The numbers cite that while walking (5% to 9%) and biking (3% to 8%) increased during the period from 1997 to 2016 transit use has gone down from 12% to 10% with a high of 15% in 2008. Tri-Mets operating

budget went up from \$212.2 million in 1998 to \$542.2 million in 2016. That's an inflation adjusted increase of 72%. Over \$3.6 billion was spent on rail construction during that same period. That is a large investment and on going budget to commit to a mode that serves only 1/10 of the commute trips. <http://cascadepolicy.org/blog/2016/12/06/portlands-regional-transit-strategy-is-not-working/>

Albert Einstein is quoted as defining insanity: "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results". Is that the outcome of this study, to continue to do that which doesn't work? One of the biggest problems with this study are bad assumptions. And it started from the beginning. We were told that the slate was clean, that existing plans and rules were not to limit our discussions. But instead it was later mentioned and stated in this study that "Adopted local and regional transportation system plans ... establish the launching off point for this study". That is a bad assumption. Unless I'm mistaken the existing transportation plans and policies for the last twenty five years are in fact what created our immense problems of congestion and the related safety and air pollution problems, lack of capacity and alternative routes, intrusion of non local commute traffic into residential neighborhoods destroying livability and land values, tremendous waste of peoples time and fuel while stuck in traffic, lack of freight mobility and general frustration felt by the public contributing greatly to mistrust of our local and state governments. The transportation system is the location where people most often interact with and are impacted by their government's decisions. They lump all governments together in their belief that they are being under served and over spent. This study squanders the opportunity to create a new and public path out of the existing mess. Only after many of the SAC members insisted that the second public on line survey must attempt to fully engage the general public in discussion of this study was staff willing to do so. The first on line survey was specifically sent to transit users and bike advocates. Their responses to that first survey accounted for more than three times the county wide percent of those system user mode types. Let's be honest, a big part of this study should be to determine exactly which transportation infrastructure investments the general public will financially support. To accomplish that governments and elected leaders need to listen, discuss with the public how to best meet their needs in an affordable package then quickly move to accomplish the improvements. That's the path the original MSTIP program chose and it worked, thankfully. Without MSTIP there wouldn't be most of the current transportation infrastructure in place in Washington County today. It worked then and it will work again if we forget the proven problematic existing plans and policies and begin a new plan to address the problems. We have already built most all of what LUTRAQ said was necessary to serve the growth without new limited access corridors but as we all agree it didn't work. We need a whole new approach.

It was totally unprofessional to include data that seems to indicate that new routes cause more cars on the road system. New more efficient routes that will move more people more quickly will draw people off of less efficient local street routes. Yea!! Isn't that what we want. Yes it shows up as new trips on a computer model but really trips are relocating to safer less neighborhood intrusive routes. No car was ever purchased in the last fifty years because a new road was built. Another much less than professional "what if" analysis contained in this study is the wild assumption that future technology would increase operational capacity due to autonomous and connected-vehicle enhancements by 20% to 40%. We found just as many expert predictions stating just the opposite. These numbers emerged out of thin wishful air. in

fact many of the experts we asked said self driving cars will create much much more traffic. For instance the study information stated that the family self driving car could take Dad to work then go back and do the same for Mom and then create a new trip for each child going to school and then go on to be a UBER car throughout the day. Many more trips than the old sedan that sat in the parking lot all day. In addition on line shopping also means many new delivery trips into the neighborhood for each purchase whereas formally there was one trip to the regional mall. Yes, connected lines of cars could travel closer together but only in limited access corridors because trains of cars and intersections don't work well together as is the case with MAX in down town Portland. This study states that there will be much more congestion, in more locations and for longer portions of day regardless of what improvements occur. So improved signal coordination and phone apps only help if there is movement in the traffic flow. Without new routes new technology will be useless.

I like that the study begrudgingly in bits and pieces lists the attributes of having a new north south limited access corridor. It needs to be rewritten to more directly indicate that Option C together with arterial improvements from Option B are the correct solution to address all the service needs for the next 50 years. It will be interesting to see if the raw data from the second on line survey agrees with my opinion. I formally request to see that raw data. It appears that the draft study contains an error in showing Figures 7-16 and 7-17 as exactly the same map. The two figures were supposed to show the different positive impacts in moving congestion off of existing local urban and rural roads that limited access corridor alignment in and near the west UGB would have in comparison to an alignment farther west. The text does describe the differences and states that the more urban alignment "draws more traffic from nearby urban arterials and rural routes". In another location it is stated that "adding a new north south limited access route would do more than the transit option or the arterial improvement option to accomplish needed improvement to our system". The study states "A new higher speed, limited access North-South limited Access Road would help meet growing travel demand by carrying 6,000 vph during the PM peak period." "Parkway investment would help reduce demand on current roadways while moving more traffic overall compared to Package A" (transit alone). "The Parkway investment is able to maintain reductions on current roadways even with the higher growth of Scenario 2." Else where it is stated that a limited access north south facility would draw traffic out of the city centers. So if the reader is willing to hunt for and piece together the facts the attributes that adding alternate routes including limited access road and transit corridors can be gleaned from the report/study.

To be accepted as good science this report/study should have been more straight forward in stating which option or combination of options work and in what time frame they would realistically need to occur to adequately service existing and future transportation needs. We didn't need more confusion in this already complicated discussion by injecting all the wishful assumptions about future transit use with understated cost and technology enhancements that don't help in stop and go traffic and could cause more unnecessary trips by the self driving family car. And it surely would have been improved by the inclusion of the comparison the types of facilities utilized in other portions of our region to enable those portions to have shorter peak usage periods and less neighborhood intrusion by commuter traffic.