



Image: HRVRC

# Non-Motorized Crossing Alternatives at the Hood River Bridge

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Prepared for The Port of Hood River &  
Hood River Valley Residents Committee

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## Executive Summary

The Hood River Bridge connects the City of Hood River in Oregon with the cities of White Salmon and Bingen in Washington across the Columbia River. Although located in a section of the Columbia River Gorge well known for outdoor recreation and residents with active lifestyles, the Hood River Bridge is currently inaccessible to bicyclists and pedestrians due to extremely narrow travel lanes, heavy vehicle traffic, and other conditions that make it unsuitable for non-motorized traffic. Structural solutions for non-motorized access on the Hood River Bridge, such as the addition of a multi-use pathway on the bridge, have been explored previously by the Port of Hood River but were found to be cost prohibitive. Bridge replacement has also recently been studied, but is not anticipated within the next 20 years.

With the nearest alternative river crossings located approximately 20 miles up and downriver, the demand for improved bicycle and pedestrian access across the Hood River Bridge and between the nearby communities has been a longstanding concern of community members. In June 2009, the Port of Hood River and the Hood River Valley Residents Committee (HRVRC) contracted with Alta Planning + Design to investigate and recommend a course of action to enable bicyclist and pedestrians to cross the Hood River Bridge.

Over the course of this study existing conditions of the Hood River Bridge and the surrounding area were documented and multiple interviews were conducted with local stakeholders to discuss the issue and potential solutions. Interviews were conducted in June and July and included representatives from the cities of Hood River, White Salmon, Bingen, local transit agencies, regional transportation and economic development agencies, the Oregon and Washington Departments of Transportation, and private businesses. During each interview the interviewees were asked for their input on the following draft alternative crossing scenarios:

- Casual Carpool/Informal Rideshare
- Transit/Formal Vehicle Ferry
- Water Ferry
- Combination Informal Rideshare/Seasonal Formal Vehicle Ferry

On the whole, stakeholders were very supportive of the project and recognized a general need for improved transportation options between the two states. There was most support for a crossing alternative that would expand upon existing transit services between the three communities and across the bridge, providing bicycle racks on transit vehicles.

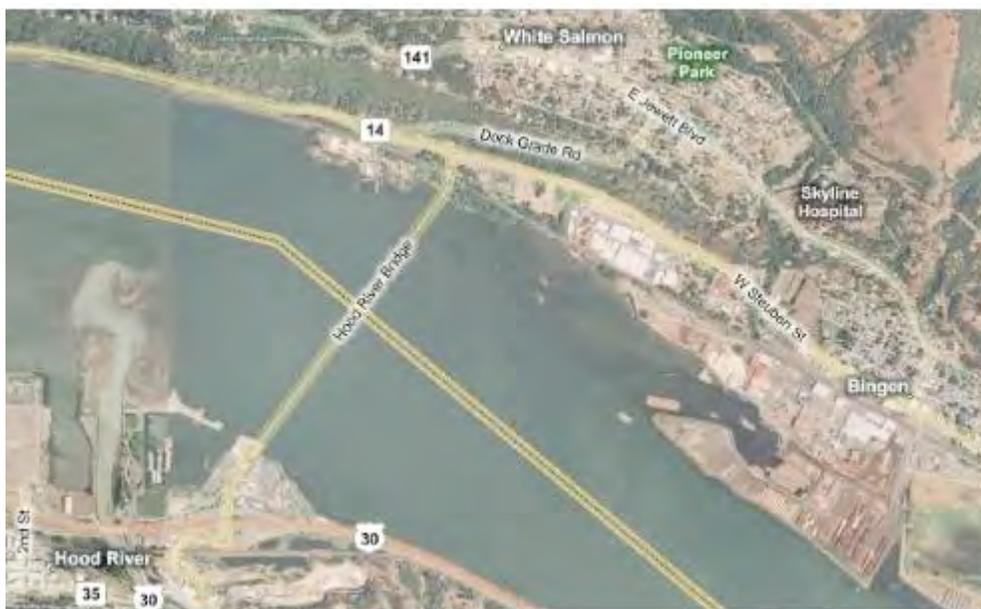
Alternatives used in other jurisdictions facing similar transportation barriers were researched. These alternatives were then analyzed in terms of their feasibility at addressing non-motorized crossing limitations at the Hood River Bridge. Due to existing bridge conditions and the lengthy delay for bridge replacement, only non-structural alternatives for non-motorized access were explored.

Recommended alternatives were selected based on user safety and convenience, cost-effectiveness, potential liability concerns, and impacts on traffic operations. Based on stakeholder interviews and analysis of potential alternatives, it is recommended that the Port, HRVRC, and surrounding communities pursue one of two alternatives, presented in preferred order:

1. Establish a new or expanded fixed-route transit service that serves communities in both Washington and Oregon and crosses the Hood River Bridge multiple times a day, with bicycle racks installed on all transit vehicles serving the route. The service should operate year round to facilitate commute and medical trips as well as non-motorized bridge crossings.
2. If a year round fixed-route transit service is determined financially infeasible, it is recommended that the Port pursue development of informal rideshare pick-up and drop-off sites combined with a seasonal fixed-route transit service.

## Introduction

The Hood River Bridge is approximately one-mile in length and connects the City of Hood River in Oregon with the cities of White Salmon and Bingen in Washington across the Columbia River (Figure 1). Approximately 60 miles east of Portland, Oregon within the Columbia River Gorge, the Hood River Bridge is located in an area well known for outdoor recreation and residents with active lifestyles. The area benefits economically from tourism, including visits by touring and recreational cyclists. The demand for improved bicycle and pedestrian access across the Hood River Bridge and between the nearby communities of Hood River, White Salmon, and Bingen has been a longstanding concern of community members.

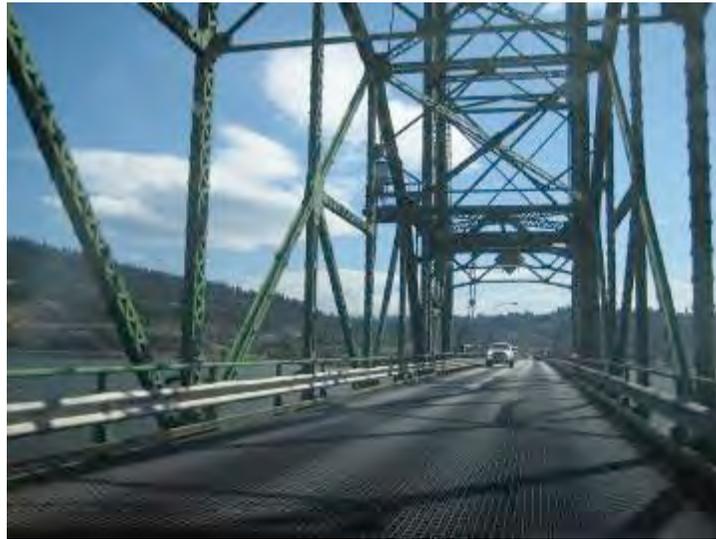


**Figure 1 - The Hood River Bridge connects the communities of Hood River, White Salmon, and Bingen.**

In June 2009, the Port of Hood River and the Hood River Valley Residents Committee (HRVRC) contracted with Alta Planning + Design to investigate and recommend a course of action to enable bicyclist and pedestrians to cross the Hood River Bridge. Over the course of this study existing conditions on the bridge and the surrounding area were documented and multiple interviews were conducted with local stakeholders to discuss the problem and potential solutions. Research of alternatives used in other jurisdictions facing similar transportation barriers was then completed and analyzed in terms of their ability to address non-motorized crossing limitations at the Hood River Bridge. In the following sections, the results of these efforts and recommendations for action are presented.

## Existing Conditions

The Hood River Bridge is extremely narrow with travel lanes less than 10-feet in width (Figure 2). The steel grate surface is not suitable for bicycle traffic as it can become slippery in wet weather and has locations where narrow bicycle tires could become wedged in the surface grate. The Port of Hood River, the bridge owner and operator, notes that the existing bridge railings do not meet the AASHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials) standard of 42-inches recommended for bicycle rail height (Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, 1999). Due to these conditions, bicycle and pedestrian access to the bridge is currently prohibited.



**Figure 2 – The Hood River Bridge is very narrow, providing less than 10 feet in width in each travel direction.**

According to the Port of Hood River, nearly 80% of bridge traffic originates from Washington State. This traffic pattern is influenced by access to Interstate 84 and greater employment opportunities in Oregon, as well as the lack of a sales tax in Oregon.

The nearest bicycle accessible bridges crossing the Columbia River are approximately 20 miles east and west of the Hood River Bridge, making cycling an infeasible commute option for those in the Hood River area who need or want to travel between Washington and Oregon.

The Dalles Bridge/Interstate 197 is located 23 miles east of Hood River. Although bicyclists are not prohibited from crossing the bridge, it is not a designated bicycle route. As on the Hood River Bridge, lane widths on The Dalles Bridge are very narrow and require bicyclists to ride in the travel lane or walk their bicycle on a sidewalk located on the east side of the bridge. The Bridge of the Gods is located 21 miles west of Hood River. This toll bridge (50 cent toll for bicycles) is of similar construction to the Hood River Bridge but at approximately .4 miles, is approximately half the length and receives significantly less traffic. A Port of Cascade Locks representative recommended that cyclists crossing this bridge should be experienced riders.

Structural solutions for non-motorized access on the Hood River Bridge, such as the addition of a multi-use pathway on the bridge, have been explored previously by the Port of Hood River but were found to be cost prohibitive, requiring major structural improvements in order for the bridge to support the increased load.

Replacement of the Hood River Bridge has been recently studied, however construction of a new bridge is not anticipated in the next 20 years. A Draft Environmental Impact Report was completed in 2003 (SR-35 Columbia River Crossing) and identified a preferred alternative for a replacement bridge that would include bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Funding sources for the preparation of a final environmental impact report, right of way acquisition, and eventual bridge replacement continues to be explored.

Due to existing bridge conditions and the lengthy delay for bridge replacement, only non-structural alternatives for bicycle (and potentially pedestrian) access across the Hood River Bridge are being explored in this study.

## **Stakeholder Interview Summary**

Interviews were conducted in June and July with representatives from the cities of Hood River, White Salmon, Bingen, local transit agencies, regional transportation and economic development agencies, the Oregon and Washington Department of Transportation, private businesses, and a resident involved in local transportation issues.

During each interview, the project purpose was discussed to gauge the stakeholder's interest in establishing non-motorized access across the Hood River Bridge. The following four draft alternative crossing scenarios were presented:

- **Casual Carpool/Informal Rideshare** – Establish pick-up/drop-off sites for informal vehicle ferry. Cyclists and pedestrians “hitch” a ride across the bridge from designated locations in private vehicles with drivers who volunteer to provide a lift. Facilitates an activity that is already occurring.
- **Transit/Formal Vehicle Ferry** – Establish pick-up/drop-off sites and service for a formal vehicle ferry operated by a private or public agency or non-profit. The service may be scheduled or on demand, and may be an extension of existing transit services.
- **Water Ferry** – Establish pick-up/drop-off sites and service for a water ferry across the river.
- **Combination Informal Rideshare/Seasonal Formal Vehicle Ferry** – Provide formal crossing service during season of peak bicycle and pedestrian demand while creating pick-up/drop-off locations that are available year-round for informal vehicle ferry.

Each stakeholder was asked for their input on the draft crossing alternatives, concerns their organization would have, and any opportunities, such as funding programs, ferry pick-up or drop-off locations, that they were aware of. Stakeholders were also asked if they had a preferred alternative and encouraged to share any additional alternatives not yet considered.

## **General Areas of Agreement**

- Stakeholders were very supportive of the project and recognized the lack of bicycle and pedestrian access across the Hood River Bridge as a major barrier to bicycle transportation.
- There was most support for a crossing alternative that would expand upon existing transit services between the three communities and across the Hood River Bridge, providing bicycle racks or trailer on the transit vehicles.
- Several stakeholders viewed seasonal service as a cost-effective alternative as demand for bicycle and pedestrian crossing of the bridge is expected to be low during winter months.
- Several stakeholders identified the need for greater transit service between the three communities, and noted a lack of effective marketing of existing services.
- Many stakeholders raised liability concerns with informal vehicle ferry service primarily because cyclists would receive a ride from drivers they may not know.
- There was little interest in a water-based ferry alternative primarily due to the anticipated high cost and difficulty navigating the Columbia River.

In the following section, key points from each stakeholder interview are presented.

### ***Port of Hood River***

Linda Shames, Port of Hood River, Finance Director

- The bridge is not within the jurisdiction of either Oregon or Washington Departments of Transportation, so they have little concern about its replacement. Replacement of the bridge is not anticipated in next 20-years.
- The Port desires a long-term, reliable solution. “No stop-gap solutions.”
- A casual carpool/informal rideshare alternative may raise safety and liability concerns. When asked about the potential for obtaining background checks and/or registration of volunteer drivers, Linda noted that she did not believe the Port’s insurance would cover this activity.
- In addition to safety considerations, there are additional concerns related to traffic congestion if the bridge were to be opened to bicycle traffic. The Breeze By automated toll payment system was implemented to address toll-related traffic congestion on the bridge. The Port does not favor any alternative, including allowing bicyclist to ride across bridge, that would increase vehicle queuing.
- Approximately 80% of bridge traffic originates in Washington.
- The Port provided a 24-hour traffic report for June 19, 2009. 12,224 vehicles crossed the bridge this day, which was described by Linda as typical during the summer months. Trucks comprised 3.5% of the traffic volume.
- Traffic patterns throughout the day on the bridge are not typical. Rather than exhibiting well-defined morning and evening peak traffic volumes (i.e., rush hours), afternoon peak traffic on the Hood River Bridge is steadily high between 12-5 p.m.

## ***City of Hood River***

Arthur Babitz, City of Hood River, Mayor

- Motor vehicle parking is an ongoing issue in the City of Hood River. The demand for parking far exceeds supply, and is particularly bad during the summer months. The City views bicycle access to the bridge as one method of reducing parking demand by making bicycling a feasible transportation option between Washington and Oregon. Establishing bicycle access across the bridge may also enhance recreational and commute opportunities.
- Local employer, Insitu, is interested in developing some type of commute shuttle service for their employees.
- The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) plans for interchange improvements very near the Hood River Bridge was raised. The City wants to ensure that any alternatives will be coordinated with the ODOT project.
- Emphasized concerns related to traffic congestion on and near the bridge.
- Any legal issues (if they exist) with providing transit services across state lines should be explored in this study.

## ***City of Bingen***

Jan Brending, City of Bingen, City Administrator

- Motor vehicle parking demand is becoming a problem in downtown Bingen.
- Noted a general lack of awareness of existing transit options and understanding of how the services work. Emphasized the need for any new service to be well marketed and allowed an adequate trial period to raise awareness, build ridership, and make route adjustments as needed.
- Raised issue in regards to limiting vehicle ferry service to the bridge ends. For pedestrians, this would require a significant walk to get to the city downtowns, often in areas lacking adequate sidewalk. If limited to vicinity to bridge, service should be coordinated to tie into other transit routes, although transit transfers are inconvenient for passengers.
- The Port of Klickitat is in the County, but Bingen provides city services to the property. Plans for multi-use development have been eliminated. Instead, the property will be light industrial. This is a potential location for a water-ferry service pick-up/drop-off as it can accommodate large vessel. However, she is not particularly in favor of this alternative due to cost-effectiveness and its ability to meet needs of residents.
- Preferred alternative: A fixed-route vehicle ferry service expanding on existing transit service between communities. The service could be offered twice a day to accommodate commuters, serving both bicyclists (with bike racks) and pedestrians.

## ***City of White Salmon***

Dave Poucher, City of White Salmon, Mayor

- Recognizes that the bridge is currently a tremendous barrier to bicycle and pedestrian travel and that developing a solution is imperative both to provide transportation options for residents and for increased tourism and recreational cycling. He feels there is a great deal of latent demand for bicycle and pedestrian access across the bridge.
- Does not favor the casual carpool/informal rideshare alternative. He is concerned that locating a visible and convenient pick-up location that would be approved by the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) will be difficult. The park and ride facility (owned by the City of White Salmon) would work well for transit service/formal vehicle ferry, but it is less convenient and is not adequately visible to passing motorists to work well for casual carpool/informal rideshare.
- Does not favor water ferry alternative due to limited landing sites, challenging river conditions, and the likely high cost.
- Echoed concerns that existing transit services are not marketed well and that the service (dial-a-ride) is confusing.
- White Salmon is also experiencing growing parking demand. He estimates that the parking demand is about 110% of capacity during weekdays.
- Offered an alternative of re-opening bridge to bicycle traffic, providing a smooth surface in the center of the travel lane and potentially licensing cyclists to ensure they can maintain a speed that will not exacerbate bridge congestion.
- Provided an anecdote: Margaret Walker – 83 year old White Salmon resident rides her bike 11 miles a day – she would love to get to Hood River. She currently rides up and downhill to Bingen. Even in the wintertime she gets shoe chains so she can go for walks. We would see her using a service across the bridge.
- Preferred Alternative: Would like to see coordination with Mount Adams Transit to develop a fixed-route, scheduled service across the bridge with bicycle racks provided on transit vehicles.

## ***Columbia Area Transit (CAT)/Hood River County Transportation District***

Dan Schwanz, Executive Director

- CAT provides dial-a-ride service (door-to-door) throughout Hood River County (and partially into Wasco County). Riders must arrange for a ride in advance. Although CAT will occasionally accommodate last-minute requests, they generally cannot.



Figure 3 - Typical Vehicle Used By Local Transit Providers (Photo: Columbia Area Transit)

- Fixed route service is offered daily between Hood River and The Dalles, weekly between Hood River and Portland. The fixed-route service has been operating for approximately two years with minor adjustments to route and schedule to better serve riders. There are no formal bus stops. Instead CAT has uses commercial and public parking lots for bus stops.
- CAT will provide dial-a-ride service to Washington but is generally informal. Trips must originate from Oregon due to funding structure and transit charter. The passenger is responsible for toll cost. Because CAT cannot wait in Washington to pick up the passenger and must continue services in Oregon, the passenger is responsible for two round-trip toll fares when they use CAT to travel across river.
- CAT has eight “cutaway” transit vehicles (Figure 3) that can accommodate 18 ambulatory and two non-ambulatory passengers. No extra vehicles are available.
- CAT vehicles do not currently have bicycle racks installed, although CAT has purchased two Sportworks bicycle racks. These were uninstalled due to lack of use and driver complaints. If there were increased demand for the bicycle racks, CAT would reinstall bicycle racks on their vehicles.
- There has been little transit service coordination with other area transit agencies. Other transit services have expanded and contracted over the years (e.g., Mount Adams used to have a fixed-route service, but funding has since been eliminated). CAT has coordinated to provide joint marketing and schedule information on all area transit services through GorgeTranslink. CAT’s fixed-route service (Oregon only) will also be available on Google Transit within the next six months. Dan notes that it may be difficult to market cross-bridge services to tourists, particularly with the informal vehicle ferry alternative.
- A CAT bus stop previously located in the Port of Hood River parking was eliminated due to low ridership. Also, access to this location is poor due to congestion that can create “tremendous” transit delays of 30 minutes or more.
- In regards to employer-funded transit services, CAT has met with Insitu recently to discuss potential service for employees. Insitu is interested, but nothing has been negotiated yet.
- Operating costs for CAT are approximately \$60/hour.

- Dan does not have a preferred alternative, but emphasized the need for the selected alternative to be financially self-sustaining.

### ***Mount Adams Transit/Klickitat County Senior Services***

Sharon Carter, Director

- Mount Adams Transit operates a dial-a-ride transit service throughout Klickitat County. Mount Adams Transit crosses the bridge into Oregon up to six times daily during weekdays, primarily for medical appointments, but also workforce trips. Due to funding structure, trips generally must originate from Klickitat County, but they will pick up Klickitat County residents when in Oregon.
- Mount Adams Transit used to operate a fixed-route service that crossed the bridge, but funds were eliminated due to low ridership. While ridership started high, it dwindled due to infrequent stops and pickups. They currently provide one seasonal fixed-route service in Washington during the summer to connect local children to recreational sites (funded with drug abuse and alcohol prevention funds).
- Sharon would like to know the numbers of bicyclists and pedestrians and what their destinations are.
- Sharon does not feel that current transit marketing efforts are adequate, but resources are not available for more robust advertising. Also, she acknowledges that an inconsistent service like dial-a-ride service can be tricky to advertise.
- Sharon noted that it is challenging to coordinate dial-a-ride service with other transit systems as dial-a-ride is a door-to-door service. She would like to see better coordination between agencies so that passengers could more easily link trips. Issues with coordination are compounded because passengers prefer a direct service and there are no established bus stops within the CAT system. The Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) will be hiring a mobility manager to assist with the effort of coordinating transit service when dealing with crossing jurisdictional borders, funding tied to specific county, etc.
- Mount Adams' capital and operating funds come from a variety of sources. Mount Adams is a contract driver for Medicaid and the Area on Aging, the bulk of these funds are used to provide transit for medical trips. They also receive Department of Transportation funds for transit for workforce, housing needs, court appointments, and shopping. These trips are open to residents of any age. They usually try to combine workforce trips with trips for medical appointments for efficiency.
- Mount Adams has spoken recently to Insitu regarding workforce transportation. Initially the company inquired about charter service between several counties, but Mount Adams, a publicly funded transit provider, cannot unfairly compete with private charter services. She noted that Mount Adams may look into an expanded public service route if matching funds can be provided but nothing has been agreed to at this point. The timing of Insitu's inquiry is unfortunate as Mount Adams has just received their capital and operating funds and would need to wait until the next funding cycle to request larger vehicles and greater operating funds.
- Mount Adams uses similar transit vehicles as CAT as well as Americans with Disabilities Act compliant minivans with wheelchair lifts. They also have volunteer

drivers who use their personal vehicles to transport passengers (primarily for the longer routes). None of their vehicles have bicycle racks.

- Operating costs are approximately \$60/hour for paid personal (not including bridge tolls). Volunteer drivers are reimbursed for mileage, tolls, and meals (if trip is greater than four hours).
- Whereas CAT passes toll costs onto passengers, Mount Adams absorbs the cost of the tolls. This amounts to approximately \$400 for bridge tolls per billing cycle in addition to the bulk tickets Mount Adams purchases for their volunteer drivers. This is a significant cost to the agency.
- Preferred Alternative: A formal vehicle ferry alternative, preferably a fixed-route, scheduled service. Also likes the idea of seasonal service. Any expanded service would need to address jurisdiction, funding, and toll cost issues.

### ***Skamania County Senior Services***

Marilyn Butler, Director

- Skamania County Senior Services operates a fixed-route service three trips a day, Monday-Friday, between Carson and Vancouver, Washington, as well as a dial-a-ride service that is open to all residents of Skamania County. If passengers call a day in advance to make arrangements, the bus will pick-up and drop-off at locations within ¾-mile of scheduled bus stops.
- Skamania also provides dial-a-ride service across the Hood River Bridge for medical appointments and essential services. Dial-a-ride is open to the general public but is prioritized for senior and Medicaid trips. There are no cross-state restrictions on this service because Hood River is within the agencies service area.
- The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has provided Skamania County Senior Services with a grant for operating costs for general public transit services. They are interested in expanding services further east towards Klickitat, and it is likely that their grant could allow this but it would need to be negotiated.
- Fare for the Vancouver route is one dollar. Dial-a-ride services are free to Skamania County residents.
- Skamania County Senior Services operates a fleet of 8 vehicles (ADA accessible minivans), of which two are back-ups. They will be purchasing a 16-passenger cutaway bus and rear-entry van, and retiring a larger, 26-passenger bus that is no longer cost-effective operate. None of their vehicles have bicycle racks, but they are open to the idea so long as installation does not impede passenger loading/unloading (e.g., does not block ADA access).
- Operating costs are similar to local transit agencies, at approximately \$60/hour.
- Marilyn feels there is a need for greater transit connectivity between White Salmon, Bingen, and Hood River, as well as increased coordination between local transit agencies. It has been a long-term goal to establish regular service between the states.

- Marilyn is open to the idea, proposed by Dale Robins (see below), of each local transit agency sharing responsibility for one of three daily trips across the bridge. She is uncertain that, under current funding scenarios, any of the transit agencies can afford to provide multiple bridge crossings independently.
- Marilyn has discussed employee transit services with Insitu. If funding can be contributed and a transit service that meets both the needs of their employees and the general public can be developed, then Marilyn is open to creative collaborations. Employer support is a good way to build transit demand by establishing dependable ridership.
- Preferred Alternative: A formal vehicle ferry with bicycle racks. However, a dependable source of funding must be identified for expanded transit service. Given the distribution of communities and work sites, any new transit route would need to serve a variety of riders (e.g., seniors, general public, employees) in order to be financially feasible.

### ***Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD)***

Amanda Remington, Executive Director

- MCEDD is interested in providing bicycle and pedestrian access across the Hood River Bridge from an economic development perspective. Their primary interest in this project is in seeing greater support for existing transit services.
- The main concerns MCEDD has with the proposed alternatives are access for special needs population and seasonal operation of a service. Seasonal service seems to eliminate an option for segments of the population (such as employees) who would require a service year round, and would appear to cater to tourists.
- Amanda noted that the bridge toll was a significant burden on transit riders and providers. She would like to see a discounted toll fare for transit providers to reduce this burden, to create incentive for public transit use, and to reduce traffic on the toll bridge.
- MCEDD can act as a resource for this project. The organization provides grants (one-time infusion, no support for on-going costs) and can also provide technical assistance for state and federal grants.

### ***Washington Department of Transportation***

Ken Hash, Local Programs Director

- Ken did not have any bicycle count data for the White Salmon or Bingen area.
- WSDOT does not have a preferred alternative, however, of those presented, the water ferry service would be most difficult to fund.
- WSDOT does not object to use of the park and ride facility as a formal vehicle ferry or informal rideshare pick-up/drop-off location.
- In regards to other pick-up/drop-off locations that may be proposed in the state right of way, WSDOT main concerns are safety and traffic flow. Vehicle pullout locations would require adequate sight distance and space for vehicles to safely pull out of traffic without disrupting traffic on SR 14.

- There are no infrastructure projects planned on SR 14 in the next two years (WSDOT planning schedule).
- Ken recommended two funding opportunities:
  - Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Grant (State)
  - Transportation Enhancement Grant (Federal)

### ***Oregon Department of Transportation***

Kristen Stallman, Scenic Highway Coordinator and Basil Christopher, Region 1 Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator

- ODOT does not have any bicycle count data for the Hood River area.
- Kristen is concerned that an informal rideshare alternative could present liability concerns (e.g., encouraging hitchhiking, safety issues related to strangers picking up passengers). However, she feels that vehicle pullouts for this purpose can be designed to be safe.
- Kristen is uncertain if there is enough demand for a formal vehicle ferry service, particularly year-round. She thinks a seasonal option might be a good option. A pilot program to determine demand for the service has potential.
- ODOT is working on several projects along Interstate 84 to reconnect abandoned sections of the Columbia River Highway. This route will be a “world-class destination for tourism and cycling.” Although ODOT would like to see an alternative for cyclists to get across the Hood River Bridge, they have not been coordinating with Washington Department of Transportation and have heard mixed reviews of cycling conditions on State Route 14.
- ODOT is scheduled to begin construction next spring on Interstate 84 interchange improvements at Exit 64 (exit to the Hood River Bridge). This project involves replacing the Interstate 84 bridge over Button Bridge Road, which is the connector road to Highway 35 and the Hood River Bridge, and making improvements to the roadway beneath the interstate bridge. The purpose and need of this project is to ensure the overpass can safely accommodate overweight vehicles and to relieve safety and congestion issues on the underpass and highway ramps. Button Bridge road will be widened to five lanes, including bicycle lanes in both directions, and a sidewalk on the east side of the roadway. Traffic signals will be installed at Marina Way and the entrance and exit ramps to eastbound and westbound Interstate 84. Construction on this project is scheduled to be complete in 2011. According to the project schedule, Project Specification & Engineering (PS&E) and Right of Way are being completed in August and September 2009.
- Two locations very near the interchange are being considered for potential pick-up locations for informal and formal vehicle ferry. Kristen showed these locations (Sites A and B on attached overview map) to ODOT engineers for their input. In general, ODOT would prefer that the pick-up locations not be directly near the interchange or its off-ramps.

## ***Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (SWRTC)***

Dale Robins

- Does not support the water ferry alternative due to cost-effectiveness.
- Although he acknowledges that hitchhiking across the bridge will continue regardless of which alternative is selected, he notes that signage and well-located pick-up and drop-off locations could make this option more viable. However, he is concerned about liability. Advised that Washington Department of Transportation will be concerned about any vehicle pullouts within their right of way.
- Washington State offers a Rural Mobility Grant Program that could provide seed money to projects such as this one. To be competitive, he recommends that all three transit agencies (Hood River, Klickitat, and Skamania) coordinate and commit funds to establish a service that crosses the bridge regularly (possibly a new transit loop between communities and each transit service takes responsibility for providing one river crossing per day).
- Recommends getting in contact with Skamania County. They have proposed a route that would travel between Stephenson and Hood River, but this route has a low priority for funding.
- Suggested that a reduced bridge toll for carpools could provide an incentive for drivers to pick-up cyclists and pedestrians under the informal vehicle alternative, as well as reduce bridge congestion by encouraging carpooling in general.
- Dale requests that the final report for this study be available to the public. SWRTC would like to incorporate recommendations from this study into their planning documents.
- Preferred Alternative: Expanded public transit across the bridge. Dale feels like this option would be well used by both residents and visitors.

## ***Mount Adams Chamber of Commerce***

Marsha Frost-Holliston, Manager

- The Mount Adams Chamber of Commerce office is located within the White Salmon Park and Ride at the foot of the Hood River Bridge. Occasionally, cyclists arrive at the Hood River Bridge unaware of the bicycle prohibition. These cyclists frequently inquire about river crossing alternatives at the Chamber office. When this occurs, Marsha will often provide a bridge toll ticket or cash equivalent to the cyclist(s) and encourages them to hitch a ride across with passing motorists.
- The Chamber board is aware of this activity, but no formal funding is provided. Occasionally, when bridge toll tickets are unavailable, Marsha will pull the cash equivalent from the office tip jar. It is unlikely that the Chamber will ever make formal funding available for this activity. However, if a funding were established, the Chamber would likely be agreeable to distributing the tickets to tourist cyclists.
- Marsha only provides this courtesy to bicycling tourists. This courtesy is not offered to locals (who in general should be aware of the non-motorized crossing prohibition) or pedestrians.

- The Chamber office operates Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. during the off-season (Labor Day to Memorial Day), and Sunday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. during the season (Memorial Day to Labor Day).
- The number of cyclists inquiring about river crossing opportunities varies considerably throughout the year. Predictably, there are more cyclists during the summer months (Marsha estimates approximately five/month), and none in the winter. Often cyclists are riding solo, which seems to make it easier for them to secure a ride across the bridge from passing motorists.
- The Chamber has not explored liability concerns associated with providing bridge toll tickets to cyclists.
- Marsha noted that cyclists seeking a ride across the bridge typically wait at the corner of Hood River Bridge and State Route 14. Occasionally motorists will temporarily block traffic when picking up bicyclist passengers. If a designated site can be established for casual carpool/informal rideshare pick-ups, Marsha believes this would reduce instances of blocked traffic.
- Preferred Alternative: Expansion of existing transit service with bicycle racks provided on transit vehicles. Spoke specifically of Insitu's interest in establishing transportation that would serve their employees.

## ***DaKine***

Andrew Bryden, Designer

- DaKine's company headquarters is located in Hood River, Oregon. Of the 60 employees working at the Hood River office, an estimated 10% live across river in the White Salmon or Bingen area. Most employees work between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. There are tentative plans to move the Hood River office closer to the river near the Full Sail exhibition hall.
- There are no bicycle facilities (e.g., showers, bicycle racks) at DaKine offices. Bicycle commuters store their bicycles in a hallway.
- Most employees drive to the office. They purchase monthly parking meter passes for \$35 and park on street or in city lots. Overall, Andrew does not describe bicycle commuting as part of the culture at DaKine and does not think the company would be interested in contributing financially to a vehicle ferry service across the bridge. However, employees may be interested in scheduled transit service that can get them across river.
- Andrew estimates that 12 employees currently bicycle to work and they would likely be those most interested in establishing access across the Hood River Bridge (if not for commuting, then for recreation).
- Andrew would like it if it was possible to "flag down" dial-a-ride vehicles when they are crossing the bridge.
- Noted that several community members do not understand where the bridge toll revenue is spent. Some agree that there should be a toll, but no more than cost recovery. They are under the impression that the Port receives a profit from the

bridge toll and should be charging less. If a profit is being made by the Port, then Andrew recommends it be used to fund a vehicle ferry service.

- Described the cities of Hood River, White Salmon, and Bingen as, “one town separated by the river.”
- Does not like the idea of re-opening the bridge to bicycle traffic due to safety concerns.
- Preferred Alternative: A formal vehicle shuttle with bicycle racks that provides a ride across the bridge. However, if the shuttle were to travel between the communities (perhaps a loop route) that would be best. Feels that a seasonal service may be most practical. A fare of a dollar or less would be ideal, although if higher it may still be a bargain when considering parking costs.

### *Insitu*

Johanna Wyers, Lead of the Insitu Green Committee

- Insitu currently employs approximately 600 employees (of which approximately 450 work in the Columbia River Gorge) and is expecting continued growth over the next few years. Employees work non-traditional hours. While some employees work 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., many others work odd hours, off-site or from home. Johanna did not have data approximating the percentage of employees that reside in Hood River, Bingen, or White Salmon. However, she noted a trend towards moving to Washington due to the lack of an income tax.
- The Insitu Green Committee’s primary interest is in waste management/reduction, but they are also involved in other sustainability-related activities such as exploring transportation options for their employees.
- Johanna sees potential for bicycle commuting at Insitu should a bridge crossing alternative be developed.
- Insitu’s three Gorge locations have showers but not all have bicycle facilities such as bicycle racks. The company has recently released a request for proposals to develop a 350,000 sq. ft. campus that may include more developed bicycle facilities.
- Insitu’s past involvement in transit/employee shuttle began in 2006 when Insitu had 60 employees. A survey was distributed to in regards to interest in an employee shuttle. Although there was interest and funding for a shuttle was requested, at the time the proposal was not financially feasible. Two area employees (including one Insitu employee) spoke with area transit providers and the Port proposing a shuttle/public transit service, but there was a lack of interest and the momentum behind the effort eventually subsided. More recently, Insitu has reopened discussions with local transit agencies regarding the possibility of providing expanded transit service for their employees.
- Insitu does not have a preferred alternative at this time. However, Insitu employees would likely require a reliable, consistent vehicle ferry service. Seasonal service has merit as fewer people would have interest in cycling during the winter. A transit shuttle of some type is viewed as most feasible, ideally connecting to bike paths leading to city centers and other destinations.

## *Horizons*

Bruce Bolme, Resident & Horizons team member

- The Horizons website describes the program as, ‘a community leadership program aimed at reducing poverty in small rural communities. It is funded by the Northwest Area Foundation and facilitated through Washington State University.’ Bruce works with Horizons is primarily in the area of food and nutrition, although he was involved early on with a recent transportation survey conducted by Horizons.
- Horizons’ transportation-related activities started in early 2007. They formed six community groups to identify community priorities and how to make the community better. The groups recognized transportation as an area for improvement. As a practical exercise they put together a survey on transportation that was administered in 2008. The survey and responses are available on the MCEDD website: <http://www.mcedd.org/demographics/demographics.htm>
- Bruce believes that the general awareness about transit options is not high and that it may not be viewed as transportation available to the general public.
- He does not support a water-ferry alternative. In regards to an informal vehicle ferry, he recommends the Port provide a free or reduced toll as an incentive.
- Preferred Alternative: A vehicle shuttle that would provide trips between the park-and-ride lot and the former CAT bus stop in the Port parking lot. This may be seasonal or on-demand service (e.g., call the Port and they pick you up). As the owner and operator of the bridge, Bruce believes it is the Port’s responsibility to fund and operate this service.
- His “dream” alternative would include using an electric vehicle (converted engine) with an attached trailer or bicycle rack to provide the bridge crossing service. He has experience with such conversions and would be interested in assisting should the Port be interested in this alternative.

## **Case Studies**

Bicyclist and pedestrian access issue are common in many communities due to physical and regulatory barriers, inadequate facilities, and/or a lack of access to transit services. The following section provides case studies of how communities have resolved bicycle and pedestrian access issues and explores how these and other solutions could be applied to the Hood River Bridge. Alternatives are considered based upon bicyclist and pedestrian safety, convenience, cost-effectiveness, as well as potential liability concerns and impacts on traffic operations.

### **Case Studies**

- **Casual Carpool/Informal Rideshare**
- **Transit/Formal Vehicle Ferry**
- **Water Ferry**

## ***Casual Carpool/Informal Rideshare***

Case Study Communities/Agencies: San Francisco Bay Area, California, Washington, D.C. Metro Area, Crested Butte, Colorado

Hitchhiking, the act of securing transportation (usually free) from passing motorists can occur along nearly any roadway. A prospective hitchhiker merely holds up their thumb or a sign indicating their destination and waits on the side of the road until a willing motorist pulls over to offer them a ride. It is a spontaneous and simple transaction.

In recent decades congested commutes in urbanized regions, such as the San Francisco Bay Area and the Washington, D.C. Metro Area, have led to an evolution in hitchhiking, transforming the practice from a spontaneous offer of a ride to an efficient and organized, yet informal carpool network. In these metropolitan areas traffic congestion during peak commute hours is legendary and High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes were installed to encourage carpooling and reduce the number of vehicles on the roadway. HOV lanes work by incentivizing carpooling, allowing drivers with one or more additional passengers (the required number of passengers varies depending on the HOV location and time of day) to travel in special carpool lanes, bypassing the gridlock in regular travel lanes and speeding up their commutes. In addition to reducing a carpooler's travel time, in many areas carpool vehicles are also exempt from paying tolls, providing further incentive to carry additional passengers.

Resourceful commuters seeking to reduce the pain of a long commute capitalized on the HOV system by developing informal rideshares (also known as casual carpools or slugging). Drivers seeking to avoid a toll and reduce the length of their trip stop by known pick-up locations—frequently park and ride lots, transit facilities, or shopping center parking lots located near parking, transit, and with easy access to HOV lanes—where prospective riders queue for a lift to the city center. Some pick-up locations are signed as carpools (Figure 4), but many become known via word of mouth and informal online rideshare discussion boards. When the driver has enough passengers to qualify for the HOV lane, they head towards the city center where passengers are dropped off at a generally understood central location, such as the Financial District in downtown San Francisco. The passengers then walk or use public transit to get to their final destination. The informal rideshare is predominantly one-way. Passengers generally use transit or queue again at another pick-up location for their return commute.<sup>1</sup> No money is exchanged for the ride since the relationship is mutually beneficial to both driver and passengers: a fast, free ride into town for the passengers and a fast, toll-free drive for the driver (Casual Carpool News).

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<sup>1</sup> In the San Francisco Bay Area, drivers are only tolled on their trip into the city center, so carpool drivers are not tolled on their return trip.

Informal ridesharing is entirely unregulated and unaffiliated with local governments or public transit agencies. Many agencies acknowledge the significant impact informal rideshare has on reducing peak hour congestion, but do not officially encourage hitchhiking, preferring to instead encourage commuters to pre-arranged carpools. However, agencies will sometimes refer prospective drivers and passengers to online informal rideshare websites where they can learn about pick-up and drop-off locations, etiquette, and discussion boards.



**Figure 4 - Casual carpool lines in the San Francisco Bay Area. Image: Reuters Pictures.**

Hitchhiking has also been semi-formalized in rural parts of the country such as Crested Butte, Colorado, where hitchhiking is a common method of transportation between other nearby towns and recreational facilities, particularly amongst college students. In Crested Butte, signs have been installed along certain roadways (Figure 5) indicating the presence of hitchhiking stations—gravel paved sections of roadway 12-24 feet in width where drivers may pull over to pick up hitchhikers.

Neither Crested Butte Zoning and Building Director, Bob Gillie, nor Marshall, Tom Martin, could recall what agency was originally responsible for installing the signs (they have been in a place for a very long time), but both recall that the primary goal behind their installation was to eliminate the hazard of drivers failing to exit the roadway when picking up hitchhikers. Similar to other jurisdictions where informal rideshare is practiced, the City of Crested Butte does not officially encourage hitchhiking and there is no formal policy regarding the hitchhiking stations. Neither Gillie nor Martin were aware of any complaints or safety issues associated with the hitchhiking stations and noted that the local hitchhiking activity has diminished significantly with the introduction of a frequent, free transit route between popular hitchhiking destinations. Questions regarding liability associated with providing the hitchhiking stations have not been raised in Crested Butte.



Figure 5 - A sign in Crested Butte, Colorado designates an area for picking up hitchhikers. Image: digihitch.com

### ***Transit/Formal Vehicle Ferry***

#### **Case Study Communities/Agencies: California Department of Transportation**

Transit-bike connections expand the reach and flexibility of bicycling for commutes and recreation. The option to bring a bicycle along during a transit trip allows cyclists to cycle one-way or extend the distance of their trip. It also acts as a guaranteed ride home should sickness, equipment failure, or poor weather prevent them from cycling home. Bicycles on transit also may be the only way for cyclists to bypass barriers, such as regulatory restrictions or physical conditions, which prevent them from cycling a portion of their route. For these reasons, transit vehicles in many communities are frequently outfitted with retractable bicycle racks that allow cyclists to store their bicycle on the transit vehicle during all or a portion of their travel.

Most transit agencies use all-weather, after-market bicycle racks that can hold two to three bicycles on the front of transit vehicles. When not in use the bicycle racks can be folded up out of the way (Figure 6). Similar bicycle rack models are available for consumer vehicles. To accommodate a greater number of cyclists, bicycle trailers are available which have capacity for up to 16 bicycles.



**Figure 6 – A cyclist loads her bicycle on a public transit vehicle.**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) operates a special bicycle ferry service across the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge during peak weekday commute hours when bicycles are not allowed on the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system. The Bike Shuttle service accommodates up to 14 bicyclists on a van-bike trailer combination. Cyclists place bicycles on an attached trailer and board the van (Figure 7) paying a one-dollar, one-way fare. The Caltrans Bike Shuttle makes 4 trips in the commute direction and 3 trips in the non-commute direction for both the AM and PM commute periods, with a frequency of approximately every 45 minutes. Operating costs for the Caltrans Bike Shuttle average \$9,000 per month. Approximately \$1,700 is recovered each month through bike shuttle fares.



**Figure 7 - A bicycle ferry operated by the Caltrans. Image: Andy Chow**

## **Water Ferry**

### **Case Study Communities/Agencies: Winooski River, Vermont**

Bicycle transportation is not limited to roadways. Water ferries large and small provide service to pedestrians and cyclists in many locations throughout North America. Successful small-scale bicycle ferries in operation in Vermont and on Martha's Vineyard offer quick moving ferries design specifically for bicycle and pedestrian travel. In Vermont, the Winooski River Ferry (Figure 8) provided connections across the Winooski River for users of the Burlington Bike Path and the Colchester Causeway (Local Motion). This ferry, operated from 2000-2003 by the non-profit Local Motion, was eventually replaced by the opening of the Burlington-Colchester Bridge in 2003. Setup costs for the Winooski River Ferry were \$100,000, mostly paid by state-funded grants. Yearly operating costs were \$70,000, with labor as the largest expense. During its operation the ferry ran 100 days a year and boarded between 19,000 and 25,000 passengers each season.



**Figure 8 - Local Motion bike ferry crossing the Winooski River in Vermont**

Local Motion continues to operate the Winooski River Bike Ferry seasonally in other locations along the Causeway for recreational purposes. Operating costs are underwritten by local businesses and partially funded by passenger donations. Costs are further reduced by the contributions of volunteer staff labor (e.g., greeters, deckhands).

## **Application of Case Study Alternatives to the Hood River Bridge**

In this section the alternatives explored above are considered within the context of the Hood River Bridge and surrounding communities. Each alternative includes analysis of potential pick-up and/or drop-off locations. Several potential sites were examined for this study and an overview map identifying all of these locations has been provided along with a matrix that examines the feasibility of each site for use as a pick-up and/or drop-off location. Many potential sites identified in the attached map and matrix were eliminated early-on due to visibility, safety, or other conditions that made the site less than ideal for use as a pick-up and/or drop-off location. In the following section, only those sites considered ideal for pick-up and/or drop-off are discussed.

### ***Casual Carpool/Informal Rideshare***

Due to the nature of hitchhiking, it will likely remain unattractive as a transportation option for many cyclists and pedestrians who would like to cross the Hood River Bridge.

Pedestrians and cyclists may be uncomfortable accepting rides from strangers, an activity most have been advised against since childhood. In large urban areas where informal rideshare has been successful there is a perceived safety in numbers. In 2001, the Los Angeles Times estimated that 8,000 people in the San Francisco Bay Area participated in an informal rideshare each weekday (Glionna, 2001) and it has become a more or less accepted method of transportation in this region. Due to the incentive of the HOV lane, passengers can generally be certain that there will be other commuters in the vehicle and that they will not be riding alone with the driver. If informal rideshare pick-up locations in the vicinity of the Hood River Bridge are highly visible and well utilized this may help to provide the perceived safety in numbers experienced in larger informal ridesharing networks. Nonetheless, due to the low population densities of the communities surrounding the Hood River Bridge and lack of a centralized regional destination, the cyclist or pedestrian may very well be hitchhiking alone the majority of the time.

Establishing locations for informal ridesharing naturally raises liability concerns due to the perceived risk associated with travelling with strangers. While hitchhiking is legal in both Oregon and Washington under certain conditions (See Appendix C), legal advice has not been solicited in regards to potential liability incurred by an agency that provides a designated location for informal rideshare. However, in the author's opinion, the likelihood of a jurisdiction being held liable in the case of accident or injury to passenger, driver, or their property because they provide a space for informal rideshare to take place is likely to be low. Drivers and passengers have personal responsibility for their decision to offer or accept a ride from someone they do not know. Several communities, including those in the Columbia Gorge, participate in government sponsored online carpool matching services such as [CarpoolMatchNW.org](http://CarpoolMatchNW.org) where people unknown to each other are matched as potential carpool partners based on their location and commute characteristics. As with informal ridesharing, participants in carpool matching services are neither screened nor certified. All participants must use their discretion when choosing rideshare partners or providing personal information.

A second issue for an informal rideshare across the Hood River Bridge involves the return trip for would-be passengers. While informal rideshare passengers in other areas have the back-up option of taking public transit for their return trip, passengers hitching a ride across the Hood River Bridge, which is not served by fixed-route public transit, risk being unable to get a ride back across. Furthermore, cyclists are dependent on vehicles that have bicycle racks or can otherwise accommodate a bicycle. This lack of reliability presents a significant barrier, particularly for cyclists and pedestrians who need to cross the bridge as part of their commute.

Lastly, there is the question of incentives. What incentive is a driver crossing the Hood River Bridge offered to pick-up additional passengers? In urban areas, drivers are offered the incentive of HOV lanes and, in some areas, the elimination of a toll. The Hood River Bridge does not have HOV lanes. Elimination or reduction of the toll for carpooling vehicles could

act as an incentive. Although passengers may be willing to pay the toll as a measure of goodwill, hitchhiking is generally understood to be free and there is no guarantee to the driver that their passengers will pay the toll.

In spite of the limitations noted above hitchhiking is already a commonly accepted method for bicyclists and pedestrians to get across the Hood River Bridge according to several local residents and stakeholders. Presumably, the provision of highly visible, safe, and convenient locations to pick up passengers would help to facilitate this practice, particularly if pick-up locations are signed and marketed as transportation options. Additionally, excluding a one-time capital investment for site development and on-going expenses associated with routine maintenance, informal rideshare pick-up sites can operate year-round at almost no cost.

### **Recommended Pick-Up & Drop-Off Locations**

The success of an informal rideshare option will depend largely on the availability of convenient and highly visible pick-up sites. While safe drop-off locations are also important, drivers have more flexibility in identifying a safe drop-off location than when picking up passengers (they may even ask their passenger where they would prefer to be dropped off). Drivers can access the Hood River Bridge from several directions. If the informal rideshare pick-up spot is located in a downtown area or along other routes, drivers who do not pass by that location will not see a waiting passenger, reducing the pool of potential “volunteer” drivers. Locating informal rideshare pick-up sites very near the bridge ensures that a maximum number of drivers approaching the bridge can see that a person is waiting for a lift across, increasing the odds that one will provide a waiting passenger with a lift across.

In Oregon, Site B (Figure 9) meets the criteria above and could be used as a northbound informal rideshare pick-up site. This location is also easily accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists via the existing non-motorized bridge over the Hood River as well as the planned bicycle lanes and sidewalk designed in the Interchange 84 improvement project. Discussions with Jerry Hautamaki, Port Contract Engineer, indicate that vehicles movements to and from this location are unlikely to interfere with the planned signal at Marina Drive or the Toll Plaza. Additionally, the new signal will create gaps between platoons of vehicles, providing time and space for drivers to reenter traffic headed toward the toll plaza and select the appropriate toll lane. In the event that drivers are unable to easily reenter traffic, a right-turn only driveway immediately north of this site allows drivers the option to circulate back to the signal at Marina Drive. After crossing the bridge, northbound passengers can be dropped off in the White Salmon Park and Ride (Site D) or at numerous locations in or on the way to White Salmon and Bingen.





**Figure 11 - Site B Plan View**

Informal rideshare pick-up locations in Washington State are somewhat constrained due to limited visibility. In contrast to the Oregon side of the Hood River Bridge, there are no potential sites approaching the bridge in Washington that 100% of southbound traffic must pass (Figure 12). However, Sites D (Figure 13) and J (Figure 15) could potentially serve as southbound informal rideshare pick-up sites. Both sites are readily accessible via paved shoulders and a sidewalk along State Route 14, and, according to Mr. Hautamaki, nearly half of southbound bridge traffic approaches from either direction, passing either site. After crossing the bridge, southbound passengers can conveniently be dropped off in the Port of Hood River parking lots (Sites C and F in Appendix B), or at numerous locations in or on the way to Hood River.



**Figure 12 – Vehicles traveling from the west of the bridge miss opportunities to pick up passengers on the east side and vice versa. There is limited space at the intersection to site a pick-up location that all southbound bridge traffic must pass.**

Site D is already developed as a park and ride facility and can readily serve both southbound pick-ups and northbound drop-offs with only minor improvements (e.g., signage).



**Figure 13 – Site D: White Salmon Park and Ride**

Site J is currently undeveloped and owned by the Washington Department of Transportation (WASHDOT). The WASHDOT Design Manual establishes guidelines for the design of slow-vehicle turnouts. The design manual requires a minimum length of 100 feet with a constant cross slope for a slow-vehicle turnout<sup>2</sup>. A width of 12 feet from the edge of roadway is desirable. The pullout should also be located where decision sight distance is available, although it may be located where at least design stopping distance is available with engineer justification. WASHDOT is the property owner of Site J and Department approval would be required for development of a vehicle pullout within their right of way.

Table 2 below provides a cost estimate for improvements at Site J. This estimate excludes land cost and costs associated with engineering and specifications. Existing and future cross sections and a plan view diagram for Site J improvements are provided in Figure 14 and Figure 15 below.

**Table 2 – Cost Estimates for Site J Improvements**

Item	Estimated Quantity	Unit Cost	Estimated Cost
Clearing & Grubbing	100 LF	\$25.00	\$2500.00
Excavation & Grading	200 CY	\$50.00	\$10,000.00
Retaining Wall (>4')	600 SF	\$40.00	\$24,000.00
Drainage	100 LF	\$3.00	\$300.00
Asphalt (.2')	1200 SF	\$1.35	\$1620.00
Signage	1	\$150.00	\$150.00
Striping	100 LF	\$0.70	\$70.00
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$38,640</b>

<sup>2</sup> According to the WASHDOT Design Manual, slow-moving vehicle turnouts are not technically not auxiliary lanes, their design is covered under the same chapter because they serve a similar function.

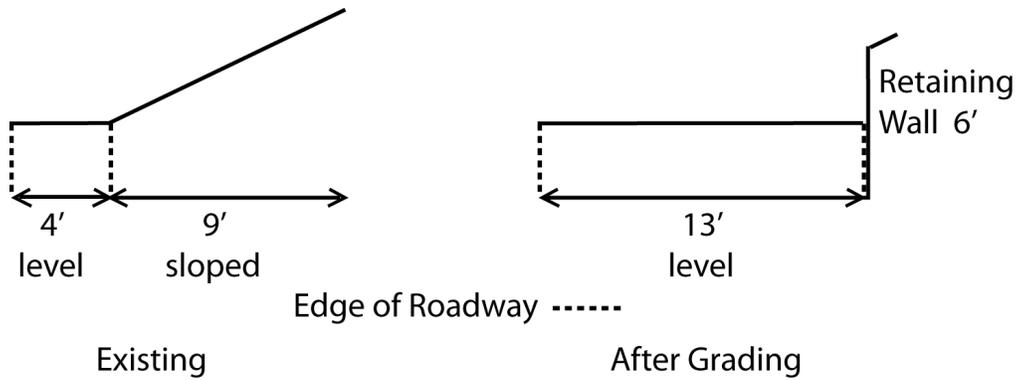


Figure 14 - Site J Cross Section

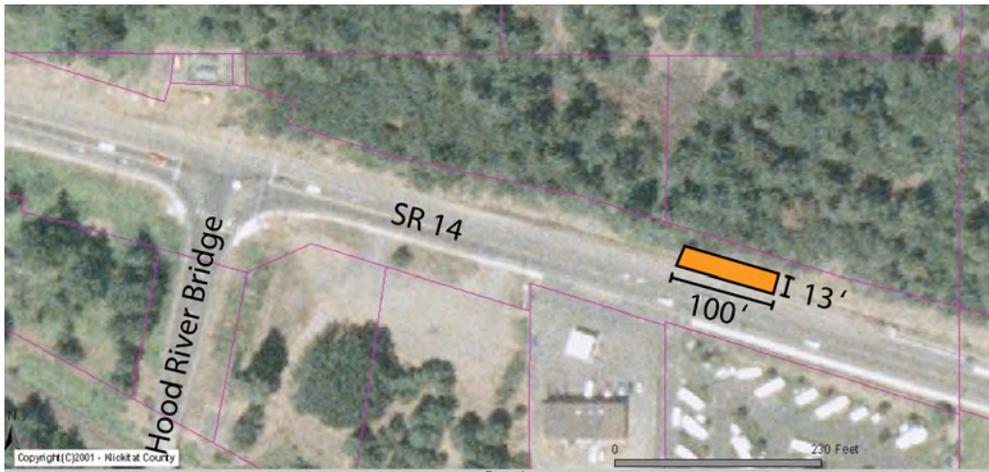


Figure 15 - Site J Plan View

In addition to the locations noted above, existing transit stops within city centers (already semi-formally used by local transit agencies) or new locations could also be used for informal rideshare pick-up and drop-off. This option may better serve pedestrians who, if transported across the bridge, would still need to walk 1+ miles to get to city centers, and is a no- or low-cost option. On the other hand, as mentioned previously, the disadvantage to this option is the reduced pool of “volunteer” drivers who would pass by waiting passengers due to route variations.

### ***Transit/Formal Vehicle Ferry***

There are many variations on formal vehicle ferry service that could provide bicyclist and pedestrian access across the Hood River Bridge. Options range from expansion of existing transit services to a privately operated shuttle service. Each alternative could provide transit between the communities of Hood River, White Salmon, and Bingen, or could simply provide access between each end of the Hood River Bridge. Similarly, each service could operate seasonally or year-round.

#### Expansion of Existing Transit Service

Currently no fixed-route service crosses the Hood River Bridge. Mount Adams Transit, Skamania County Senior Services, and Columbia Area Transit (CAT) cross the bridge (Mount Adams Transit most frequently) when providing dial-a-ride services, however

arrangements for dial-a-ride must be made a minimum of 24 hours in advance and are limited to weekdays.

Among the stakeholders interviewed for this report, there was greatest support for a bridge crossing alternative that would expand upon existing transit services. Several stakeholders interviewed indicated an overall need for greater public transit service between the three communities, specifically a scheduled fixed-route service. By providing bicycle racks on fixed-route vehicles, both public transit and non-motorized barriers to crossing the Hood River Bridge are resolved. Liability is not likely to be a concern under this alternative, as transit agencies would carry their own liability insurance.

Mount Adams Transit, Skamania County Senior Services, and CAT all have an estimated operating cost of \$60/hour. Racks accommodating two bicycles average approximately \$700-\$1000 each (rack plus installation hardware). Total cost for an expanded transit alternative would depend upon the transit route, length and frequency of service, the number of bicycle racks needed, and whether new vehicles would need to be acquired.

One potential cost saving strategy suggested by a stakeholder involves coordination between the three transit agencies to each cover at least one route between communities in both Washington and Oregon per day. Another cost saving alternative is to limit service to seasons of highest anticipated bicyclist and pedestrian demand (e.g., Memorial Day through Labor Day).

Both CAT and Mount Adams Transit noted restrictions on their ability to pick-up passengers who do not reside in the transit service's home county. This restriction appears to be primarily tied to the agencies' funding structure and charters. Both transit services receive funding from their respective states and county, and thus are chartered to provide transportation services for their residents. In order to overcome this restriction, a transit account funded jointly by participating counties and states may need to be established. If this alternative is pursued, a transit demand study could be conducted to determine the percentage of funds each agency should contribute to the service.

Regional employers located in the vicinity of the Hood River Bridge may also contribute to transit funding for expanded service. Employers in the region, such as Insitu, have demonstrated interest in providing transit services for their employees, either through charter-like service or expanded public transit routes that include work sites.

### **Recommended Pick-Up/Drop-Off Locations**

Fixed-route transit service pick-up and drop-off locations, unlike informal rideshare locations, are less dependent on visibility. Scheduled stops are published and passengers have certainty that their ride will arrive at the time and location advertised. Emphasis is instead on adequate space and accessibility.

In Oregon, parking areas at Site F (Figure 16) and Site H (Figure 17) both provide adequate space for north and southbound transit vehicles. Bicycle and pedestrian street connections to both locations is good, although Site H is located approximately ½ mile outside of Hood River, potentially too far out of direction for some passengers.



**Figure 16 – Site F: Port of Hood River Parking Lot & Multiuse Bridge**



**Figure 17 - Site H: ODOT Parking Lot Across from China Gorge Restaurant**

In Washington, Site D is an ideal location for a north and southbound transit stop with both sidewalk and paved roadway shoulder access along State Route 14.

In addition to the above sites, existing or new transit stops within town centers should also be utilized, providing cyclists and pedestrians the option to ride into town rather than only to each bridge end.

Privately Operated Shuttle Service

Although a privately operated service that provides scheduled publicly accessible bicycle transportation was not identified in case study research, this too is a potential alternative provided there is a willing operator, such as a large employer or the Port of Hood River. If operated by a private entity, a memorandum of agreement would need to be executed between the Port and the private operator to ensure bicyclists and pedestrians will be picked-up at stops at each end of the bridge. If the shuttle service is partially or fully publicly funded, the vehicles will likely need to be American with Disabilities Act accessible.

Bicycle racks and/or bicycle trailers could be installed on shuttle vehicles. Bicycle trailers that can accommodate 14-16 bicycles average \$11,000 each. Depending on the type of vehicle used, lower cost consumer model bicycle racks may also be installed.

Similarly, an on-demand bicycle ferry service was not identified in case study research, but provided there is a willing operator, all-weather call boxes could be installed at each bridge end. Cyclists would then call for immediate pick-up and crossing service. On demand service could also operate on a seasonal basis.

#### **Recommended Pick-Up/Drop-Off Locations**

Potential locations for shuttle pick-up and drop-off include those described under expansion of existing transit service but may vary depending on the shuttle operator.

#### ***Combination Informal Rideshare/Seasonal Formal Vehicle Ferry***

Several stakeholders viewed a combination of informal rideshare and seasonal formal vehicle ferry service as a cost-effective alternative due to expected seasonal variations in bicycle and pedestrian demand for bridge crossings. Under this alternative a formal vehicle ferry would provide crossing service during the late spring to early fall (e.g., Memorial Day to Labor Day) when bicyclist and pedestrian demand is expected to be of highest, scaling down or eliminating services in the winter and early spring when demand is expected to be the lowest. By providing sites for informal rideshare pick-up, bicyclists and pedestrians who wish to cross the bridge during the off-season or between formal vehicle ferry pick-ups still have the option to use informal rideshare to cross the Hood River Bridge.

#### **Recommended Pick-Up/Drop-Off Locations**

Ideally pick-up and drop-off locations for informal rideshare and formal vehicle ferry service would be located at the same site. This facilitates informal rideshare passengers transferring to and from transit as well as raises the visibility of both transportation options across the bridge. Unfortunately, the few locations ideal for casual carpool (highly visible and accessible near the bridge) are typically less ideal for formal vehicle ferry due to space restrictions and the availability of better locations nearby. Therefore, prospective pick-up and drop-off locations identified in the previous sections would be used under this alternative.

Informal rideshare and a formal vehicle ferry could also share pick-up and drop-off locations within towns. These locations would need to be well signed and marketed to ensure residents and visitors are aware of their location. Once again, due to the distance of informal rideshare pick-up locations from the bridge, there remains an issue of reduced visibility and reduced opportunity for pick-up.

#### ***Water Ferry***

Marina facilities capable of accommodating river ferry traffic are available both in Hood River, Oregon (Port of Hood River) and in Bingen, Washington (Port of Klickitat). A bicycle and pedestrian-only river ferry service could not only provide a needed connection between the three communities, but as a novel transit method, could act as a tourist draw in and of itself.

However, the Columbia River, unlike other water bodies serviced by small-scale river ferries, is large and powerful. Even with a larger vessel, high winds and large wave conditions frequently experienced on the Columbia River make navigation difficult and would likely limit a water ferry to seasonal service. Furthermore, stakeholder interviews indicate that of the alternatives explored in this report, the water ferry alternative, with high anticipated capital and operating costs, would likely be the most difficult to fund. Due to these concerns and a general lack of stakeholder interest in this option, this alternative has not been explored further.

## Recommendations

Based on stakeholder interviews and analysis of potential alternatives, it is recommended that the Port, HRVRC, and the surrounding communities pursue one of the two following alternatives, presented in preferred order:

1. Establishment of a new or expanded fixed-route transit service that serves communities in both Washington and Oregon and crosses the Hood River Bridge multiple times a day. Bicycle racks should be outfitted on all transit vehicles used for this route.

As noted earlier, this alternative is ideal because it addresses both a general demand for bi-state transit noted by nearly all interviewed stakeholders while simultaneously providing a convenient, reliable, and safe method for bicyclists to cross the Hood River Bridge. This service would optimally operate year-round so as to serve multiple types of passengers, including those who would use the service for commute, medical, and other trips. In pursuit of a new or expanded transit service, a transit demand study should be completed to provide information needed to develop the transit service area and route, determine frequency of service, as well as inform funding options.

2. If it is determined that it is not financially feasible to operate such a fixed-route service year-round, it is recommended that development of informal rideshare pick-up and drop-off site combined with a seasonal fixed-route transit service be pursued.

The combination of informal rideshare with seasonal transit service may be a more cost-effective alternative due to expected seasonal variations in bicycle and pedestrian demand for bridge crossings. By providing sites for informal rideshare, bicyclists and pedestrians who need to cross the bridge during the off-season or between transit pick-ups would still have the option to use informal rideshare to cross the Hood River Bridge.

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## Appendix A - Potential Pick-Up and Drop-Off Sites

Site	Approx. Size	Ownership	Opportunities	Constraints	Addl. Info. Needed	Determination
A	1400 sq. ft.	Port of Hood River, but ODOT will acquire as part of interchange project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Located very near the bridge.</li> <li>▪ Highly visible and accessible to all drivers approaching bridge – ideal for informal rideshare pick-up.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Would require regrade and tree removal.</li> <li>▪ Portion of site may be eliminated by DOT project.</li> <li>▪ Proximity to On/Off Ramps and signals will be a concern to DOT/Port – sight distance, adequate stopping distance, potential to create congestion.</li> <li>▪ Located southeast of Marina Dr. intersection, which according to J. Hautamaki, is the “pinch point” – most congested and problematic.</li> <li>▪ Access control will be an issue with DOT.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Eliminated</b> due to conflicts with intersection turning movements, lack of adequate stopping distance, etc.</li> </ul>
B	1440 sq. ft	Port of Hood River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Located very near the bridge.</li> <li>▪ Highly visible and accessible to all drivers approaching bridge –ideal for informal rideshare pick-up.</li> <li>▪ According to J. Hautamaki, the proximity of this site to the toll plaza should not create a problem with a “weave” movement. When the Marina Dr. intersection is signalized, it will create gaps in the platoons of vehicles, allowing time and space for vehicles to re-enter traffic and choose the appropriate toll lane.</li> <li>▪ The right-turn only driveway north of this location creates an additional option for drivers to reenter traffic towards the toll should conditions become congested.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Would require regrade and tree removal.</li> <li>▪ According to L. Shames, vehicles are currently required to turn right into driveway north of this location into the Stuart Fraser property and circulate back to the Marina Dr. intersection. According to J. Hautamaki, this turn requirement would be difficult to enforce. It is also less convenient for drivers offering rides.</li> <li>▪ Not ideal for formal vehicle ferry due to limited space. There are better locations nearby.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Owner of property needs to be determined.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Ideal</b> for an informal rideshare pick-up location.</li> <li>▪ <b>Not ideal</b> for formal vehicle ferry service; better locations nearby.</li> </ul>

## Appendix A - Potential Pick-Up and Drop-Off Sites

Site	Approx. Size	Ownership	Opportunities	Constraints	Addl. Info. Required	Determination
C	80 parking spaces	Port of Hood River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate space located very near the bridge.</li> <li>Proximity to multi-modal bridge provides good bicycle/pedestrian access to and from Hood River.</li> <li>Could serve as a convenient southbound informal rideshare drop-off.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of visibility reduces effectiveness of location for informal pick-up.</li> <li>CAT noted difficulty exiting parking lots near the bridge during peak hours due to congestion. However, this issue will likely be reduced with the installation of the signals.</li> <li>Although this lot is owned by the Port, improvements were funded by the State Marine Board. If a portion of this lot were reserved for informal/formal pick-up/drop-off, we would need OK from State Marine Board.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can permission be obtained from the State Marine Board?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Ideal</b> for formal vehicle ferry service.</li> <li><b>Ideal</b> for informal rideshare drop-off.</li> <li><b>Not ideal</b> for informal rideshare pick-up due to poor visibility.</li> </ul>
D	56 parking spaces	City of White Salmon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate space located very near the bridge.</li> <li>Ideal for formal vehicle ferry and informal rideshare pick-up and drop-off.</li> <li>White Salmon and DOT OK with use of lot for this purpose.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of visibility may reduce effectiveness of this location for informal pick-up. However, according to J. Hautamaki, approximately 50% of southbound bridge traffic approaches from this direction.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Ideal</b> for formal vehicle ferry and informal rideshare pick-up and drop-off.</li> </ul>
E	80,000 sq. ft.	Composed of three parcels under private ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential location for northbound formal vehicle ferry drop-off.</li> <li>Easement (or less formal permission) may be obtained for use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Due to location on eastbound side of road and a median barrier that prevents left-turns from this property, this location is less ideal for use as a pick-up location.</li> <li>Site is currently undeveloped.</li> <li>Requires permission from property owner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the timeline for parcel development?</li> <li>Can permission be obtained from property owners?</li> <li>Can driveway be extended for left-turn movements from this parcel?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Eliminated</b> due to poor access.</li> </ul>

## Appendix A - Potential Pick-Up and Drop-Off Sites

Site	Approx. Size	Ownership	Opportunities	Constraints	Addl. Info. Required	Determination
F	70 parking spaces	Port of Hood River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate space located very near bridge.</li> <li>Proximity to multi-modal bridge provides excellent bicycle/pedestrian access to and from Hood River.</li> <li>No permission from State Marine Board required for use of this lot.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of visibility makes this site unsuitable for informal rideshare pick-up.</li> <li>CAT noted difficulty exiting parking lots near the bridge during peak hours due to congestion. However, this issue will likely be reduced with the installation of the signals.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Ideal</b> for formal vehicle ferry service.</li> <li><b>Not ideal</b> for informal rideshare due to visibility.</li> </ul>
G	250 parking spaces	Stevenson Ranch Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has been used previously as transit stop – ideal for formal vehicle ferry pick-up/drop-off.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CAT noted difficulty exiting this parking lot during peak hours due to bridge congestion. However, this issue will likely be reduced with the installation of the signals.</li> <li>Requires permission from property owner to use as formal/informal vehicle pick-up/drop-off.</li> <li>Existing parking and circulation issues at this location and plans for expansion may further exacerbate these problems.</li> <li>Visibility is poor making this location less ideal for informal rideshare pick-up.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Property owner permission to use this location?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Not ideal</b> for informal rideshare pick-up due to visibility and congestion issues.</li> <li>Potential location for formal vehicle pick-up/drop-off.</li> </ul>
H	40 parking spaces	ODOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ideal location for formal pick-up/drop-off.</li> <li>Good bicycle &amp; pedestrian access to/from location and downtown Hood River.</li> <li>ODOT OK with use of this location.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Located approximately ½ mile outside of downtown Hood River.</li> <li>Lack of visibility reduces effectiveness of location for informal rideshare pick-up.</li> <li>Not all vehicles approaching the bridge use this route, diluting the number of potential drivers for informal rideshare.</li> <li>Not a formal park and ride lot (although used this way).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within the National Scenic Area - additional improvements (signage) would require approval.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Ideal</b> for formal pick-up/drop-off, but stops located in town may be more convenient.</li> <li><b>Not ideal</b> for informal rideshare.</li> </ul>

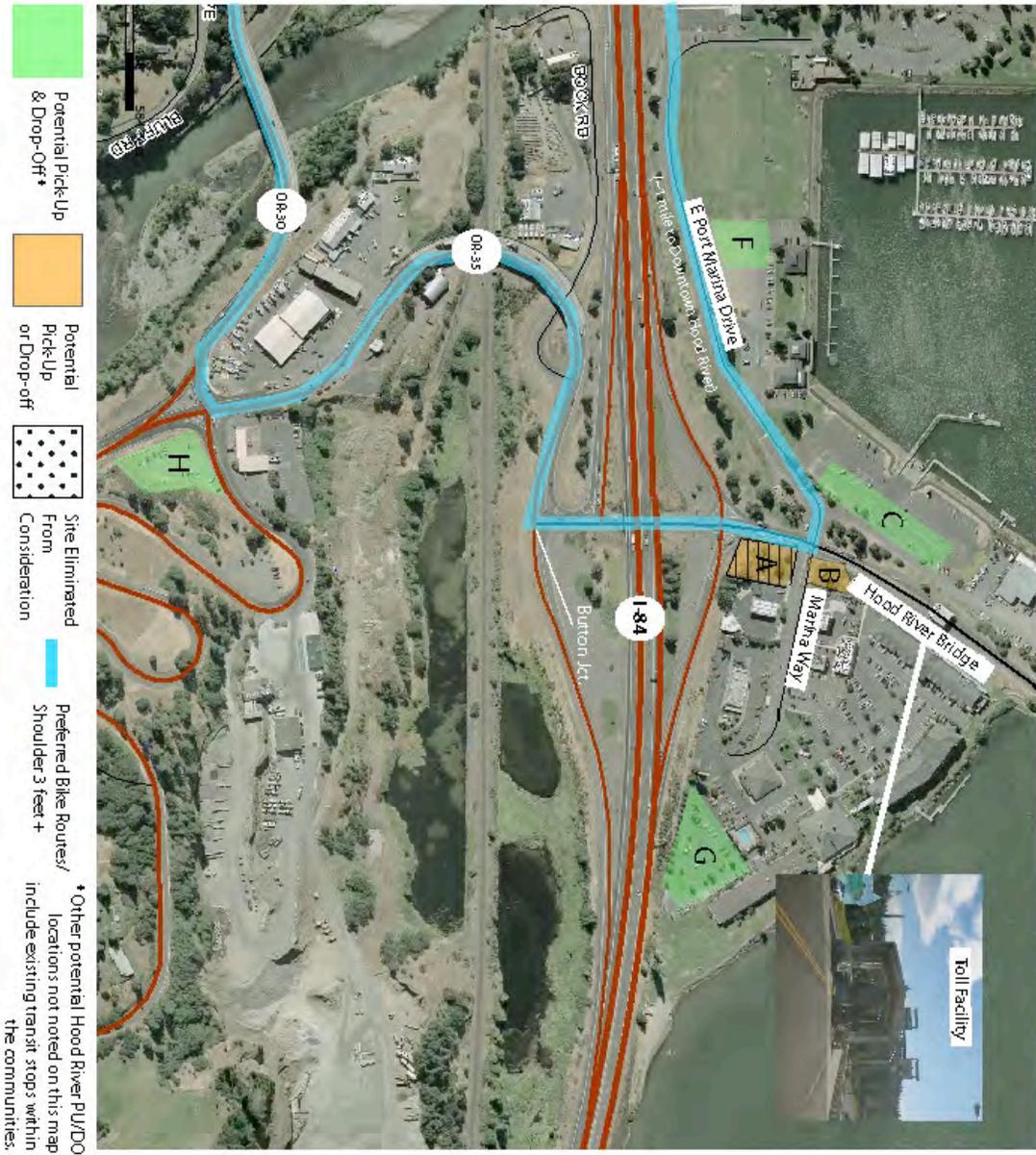
## Appendix A - Potential Pick-Up and Drop-Off Sites

Site	Approx. Size	Ownership	Opportunities	Constraints	Addl. Info. Required	Determination
I	77,000 sq. ft. (+/- 1300 sq. feet required for vehicle pullout)	Stuart Fraser Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Located very near the bridge and highly visible.</li> <li>Potential location for informal rideshare pick-up (southbound)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Likely too close to signal. Drivers would need to cross through traffic to enter left turn pocket for bridge access in a short distance.</li> <li>Steep hill. Would require regrade and potentially utility relocation.</li> <li>Would require permission (or easement) from property owner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WASHDOT approval would need to be obtained for access control and siting of a vehicle pullout.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Eliminated.</b> Unlikely to meet DOT safety and traffic operations requirements.</li> </ul>
J	275,000 sq. ft. (+/- 1300 sq. feet required for vehicle pullout)	WASHDOT property (composed of multiple parcels)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very near the bridge and highly visible.</li> <li>Potential location for informal rideshare pick-up.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steep hill. Would require regrade.</li> <li>WASHDOT approval required for access control and siting of a vehicle pullout.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engineering cost estimates for regrade and construction of vehicle turnout that meets WASHDOT standards.</li> <li>WASHDOT approval would need to be obtained for access control and siting of a vehicle pullout.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Ideal</b> for informal rideshare pick-up.</li> <li><b>Not ideal</b> for formal pick-up; better locations exist elsewhere.</li> </ul>

### Other Potential Locations:

In addition to the locations noted above, existing transit stops within city centers (already semi-formally used by local transit agencies) could be used as formal vehicle ferry and informal rideshare pick-up and drop-off locations. This option may better serve pedestrians (who, if transported across the bridge, would still need to walk 1+ miles to get to city centers) and is a no- or low-cost option. The disadvantage of this option is that the success of informal rideshare depends upon visibility and convenience of pick-up locations. Drivers can access the Hood River Bridge from several directions. Locating informal rideshare pick-up sites very near the bridge at a convenient pick-up location ensures that all drivers approaching the bridge can see that a person is waiting for a lift across. If the informal rideshare pick-up spot is located somewhere else in town or along other routes, drivers who do not pass by that location will not see a waiting passenger, reducing the pool of potential “volunteer” drivers

# Appendix B - Potential Pick-Up and Drop-Off Sites Overview Map



Hood River Bridge - Potential Washington and Oregon Pick-Up & Drop-Off Sites for Bicyclists/Pedestrians

## Appendix C – Washington and Oregon Laws in Regards to Hitchhiking

### Washington

Revised Code of Washington 46.61.255 – Pedestrians soliciting rides or business

- (1) No person shall stand in or on a public roadway or alongside thereof at any place where a motor vehicle cannot safely stop off the main traveled portion thereof for the purpose of soliciting a ride for himself or for another from the occupant of any vehicle.
- (2) It shall be unlawful for any person to solicit a ride for himself or another from within the right-of-way of any limited access facility except in such areas where permission to do so is given and posted by the highway authority of the state, county, city or town having jurisdiction over the highway.
- (3) The provisions of subsections (1) and (2) above shall not be construed to prevent a person upon a public highway from soliciting, or a driver of a vehicle from giving a ride where an emergency actually exists, nor to prevent a person from signaling or requesting transportation from a passenger carrier for the purpose of becoming a passenger thereon for hire.
- (4) No person shall stand in a roadway for the purpose of soliciting employment or business from the occupant of any vehicle.
- (5) No person shall stand on or in proximity to a street or highway for the purpose of soliciting the watching or guarding of any vehicle while parked or about to be parked on a street or highway.
- (6)(a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, the state preempts the field of the regulation of hitchhiking in any form, and no county, city, or town shall take any action in conflict with the provisions of this section.  
  
(b) A county, city, or town may regulate or prohibit hitchhiking in an area in which it has determined that prostitution is occurring and that regulating or prohibiting hitchhiking will help to reduce prostitution in the area.

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=46.61.255>

## Appendix C – Washington and Oregon Laws in Regards to Hitchhiking

### Oregon

Oregon Revised Statutes 814.070, 814.080, and 801.450

814.070 Improper position upon or improperly proceeding along highway; penalty.

(1) A pedestrian commits the offense of pedestrian with improper position upon or improperly proceeding along a highway if the pedestrian does any of the following:

(a) Takes a position upon or proceeds along and upon the roadway where there is an adjacent usable sidewalk or shoulder.

(b) Does not take a position upon or proceed along and upon the shoulder, as far as practicable from the roadway edge, on a highway that has an adjacent shoulder area on one or both sides.

(c) Except in the case of the divided highway, does not take a position upon or proceed along and upon the left shoulder and as far as practicable from the roadway edge on a two-way highway that has no sidewalk and that does have an adjacent shoulder area. This paragraph does not apply to:

(A) A hitchhiker who takes a position upon or proceeds along and upon the right shoulder so long as the hitchhiker does so facing the vehicles using the adjacent lane of the roadway; or

(B) A member of a group that has adopted that section of highway under the provisions of ORS 366.158 and who is obeying the rules of the Department of Transportation for picking up litter on either side of the roadway.

(d) Does not take a position upon or proceed along and upon the right highway shoulder, as far as practicable from the roadway edge, on a divided highway that has no sidewalk and does have a shoulder area. This paragraph does not apply to a member of a group that has adopted that section of highway under the provisions of ORS 366.158 and who is obeying the rules of the Department of Transportation for picking up litter on either side of the roadway.

814.080 Unlawful hitchhiking; penalty.

(1) A person commits the offense of unlawful hitchhiking if the person is on a roadway for the purpose of soliciting a ride.

## Appendix C – Washington and Oregon Laws in Regards to Hitchhiking

(2) The offense described in this section, unlawful hitchhiking, is a Class D traffic violation. [1983 c.338 §559; 1995 c.383 §87]

801.450 “Roadway.”

“Roadway” means the portion of a highway that is improved, designed or ordinarily used for vehicular travel, exclusive of the shoulder. In the event a highway includes two or more separate roadways the term “roadway” shall refer to any such roadway separately, but not to all such roadways collectively. [1983 c.338 §83]

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/ors/814.html>

Note: Initially, it appears that hitchhiking is not legal in the State of Oregon. Both the Oregon State Police and the State Legislative Analyst offices were contacted for clarification on the interpretation of these statutes. Both offices noted that lawful hitchhiking is determined by the definition of roadway as defined in Statute 801.450 (the vehicle traveled way, fog line to fog line) and the hitchhikers position on the roadway as described in statute 814.070. Thus, hitchhiking in Oregon is lawful (unless otherwise posted) so long as the hitchhiker is not in the roadway and is positioned facing traffic on the right shoulder.