

# AORTA Bulletin

A publication of the  
Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates

Issue 152

November 2011

Since 1976

## West Hayden Island Proposal Threatens Passenger Rail

*Portland-* The Port of Portland's plan to establish a massive freight-train assembly loop and connector-Y to the BNSF (Burlington Northern Santa Fe) mainline is a prescription for choking passenger-train traffic where it crosses the Columbia River, says **AORTA** policy director Jim Howell.

He made his concern known to the West Hayden Island Advisory Committee on Oct. 21. This committee is charged with recommending a single development concept to City Council.

The port, which owns West Hayden Island, wants the City of Portland to annex the land and allow development of about 300 of its 800 acres for industrial development with rail access. **AORTA** in no way endorses this use of West

Hayden Island

This plan would allow merging almost-two-mile-long unit-trains on the island with other rail traffic, further complicating the colossal congestion of freight and passenger-rail moving across the island, which relies on a restrictive, hundred-year-old swing-span bridge.

The port plan would turn a portion of undeveloped West Hayden into a freight yard for assembling automobile and bulk commodity trains, some 10,000 feet long, and feed them onto the BNSF main line. This, argues Howell, would add substantially to the already-existing rail congestion and make it nearly impossible to schedule newly expected passenger trains on the tracks that have

*continued on pg 3 see Hayden Island*



## OIW, United Streetcar Call on Congress to Support American Jobs

*Clackamas, OR (Sep 9, 2011)* – In response to President Barack Obama's national address on the American Jobs Act, Oregon Iron Works, Inc. and its subsidiary United Streetcar are calling on Congress to put aside ideological disagreements and instead, make American workers and American businesses the number one priority.

"As an American manufacturer that employs hundreds of skilled Oregonians, we support President Obama's jobs plan, and agree that ultimately our great nation's economic recovery must be driven by businesses and American workers," stated Terry Aarnio, chairman of Oregon Iron Works, Inc. "President Obama's leadership last night gave investors and businesses the confidence and certainty we all need to help lift our economy out of the recession. This leadership must be equally demonstrated by Congress."

Oregon Iron Works, Inc. and United Streetcar believe that the American Jobs Act strikes the appropriate balance between immediate investments that create or save jobs now and tax and policy reforms that will help put the United States on a sustainable fiscal

*continued on pg 2 ... see Oregon Ironworks*

## Rep Jefferson Smith to Speak **AORTA** Annual Meeting, Nov. 12

State Representative Jefferson Smith (D-47th District) and Portland mayoral candidate will give a rousing presentation to the **AORTA** annual meeting on Saturday, Nov. 12. We are most fortunate to have him as a keynoter.

Rep. Smith has not been shy about his antipathy to the proposed Columbia River Crossing as currently envisioned, a controversial freeway bridge that has already cost taxpayers \$140 million, and to which **AORTA** has proposed a less expensive and more transit-friendly alternative.

And, as earlier promised, **AORTA** President Donald Leap will deliver his riveting visual presentation on why the Cascades Corridor needs more trains, applauded in Seattle by a special Washington legislative committee, chaired by Lt. Gov. Brad Owen.

The annual meeting is coming

*contd on pg 3 ...see AORTA Annual Meeting*

## USDOT LaHood Announces \$13.6M Grant for Oregon Rail

*Washington, D.C.-* On Sep. 28 U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced a \$13.6 million grant to the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to modernize the Portland Union Station, upgrade passenger rail service along Amtrak's Cascades route and continue further development of an integrated, statewide rail network

"These investments will improve passenger and freight rail service in Oregon," said Secretary LaHood. "By providing more efficient and reliable rail service, we are building a stronger economic future."

While the funds will help bring improvements along the corridor, they do nothing actually to increase service according to **AORTA** Vice President Dan McFarling. "The state's top priority should be increased frequency and reliability. The State of Oregon has

*continued on pg 2 ... see \$13.6M Grant*

The **AORTA Bulletin** is published  
4-6 times/year by the

**Association of  
Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates**

A nonprofit citizen advocate group working to educate the public about the need for safe, fiscally responsible, environmentally sound transportation. Incorporated as the  
**Oregon Association of Railway Passengers.**

Portland Union Station  
800 NW 6th Avenue, Suite 253  
PO Box 2772, Portland, OR 97208-2772  
503.241.7185

<b>President</b>	Donald Leap	503.789.2290
<b>Vice President</b>	Dan McFarling	503.642.4077
<b>Secretary</b>	Jon Nuxoll	541.684.8883
<b>Treasurer</b>	Kenneth Peters	503.646.5034
<b>Past President</b>	Jim Long	503.313.7382
<b>Bulletin Editor</b>	Dan McFarling	503.642.4077

**Also serving on the Board of Directors**

Jim Howell, Claudia Howells, Dave Jannuzzi,  
Robert Krebs, Mike Morrison, Ray Polani and  
Floyd Smith.

**PNW NARP Leaders**

Art Poole, Vice-Chair	Coos Bay, OR
Jim Hamre, NW Division Leader	Puyallup, WA
Stephanie Weber, Rep Coordinator	Kirkland, WA

**NARP State Representatives**

Robert Flint	Alaska (Anchorage)
Vacant	Idaho
Barry Green	Montana (Glendive)
Donald Leap	Oregon (Portland)
Mike Morrison	Oregon (Portland)
Jim Hamre	Washington (Puyallup)
Robert Lawrence	Washington (Mill Creek)
Stephanie Weber	Washington (Kirkland)

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP**

Introductory, living lightly	\$ 18
Regular	25
Family	30
Steward	100
Sponsor	250
Corporate/Government	500

E-Mail: [OregonRail@aol.com](mailto:OregonRail@aol.com)  
Web Site: [www.AORTArail.org](http://www.AORTArail.org)

**Oregon Ironworks** ... continued from page 1

path in the future. Specifically, the company supports investments, under the President's plan and the regular transportation and infrastructure bill, that will put people to work rebuilding America's aging infrastructure and policies that ensure publicly funded projects are built with American hands.

"For decades we have built bridges and dams and know very well that greater investments are needed to ensure that our transportation and power grid infrastructure remain reliable for business and people," stated Robert Beal, chief executive officer of Oregon Iron Works, Inc. "As an American small business never do we want the people of this great nation to forget how to do things with their hands or to see the 'Made in the U.S.A.' become a thing of the past. This isn't just about pride – it is a matter of economic security for our families and national security for our country."

United Streetcar is known for having manufactured the first modern American-made streetcar in nearly 60 years. The

company is a success story for how government and business can come together to create economic opportunity for citizens. This success is due in part to federal Buy America rules that support American businesses and their employees. These rules ensure that tax dollars are invested here in the United States – and not exported to foreign countries.

"Last night President Obama said he wanted to see more products stamped with 'Made in America.' We couldn't agree more and invite other businesses to join the cause in rebuilding this country by building in America," stated Chandra Brown, president of United Streetcar. "Whether a business takes the tradition of American ingenuity and makes something old new again like we did with streetcars or captures American innovation to build something never seen before, businesses and their employees can lead the way to a better, stronger future for our country under the President's jobs plan and a timely reauthorization of the transportation and infrastructure bill."

## Oregon Iron Works/United Streetcar

- Oregon Iron Works founded in 1944.
- It has grown to 400-plus skilled craftsmen and office employees.
- Over \$120M in annual sales, representing over 800,000 man hours per year.
- Oregon Iron Works formed the wholly-owned subsidiary United Streetcar in December 2005.
- United Streetcar's mission is to provide modern, efficient, safe and reliable American-made streetcars and to be a pioneering force in increasing urban transit options throughout the US.
- United Streetcar manufactured the first modern Buy America compliant streetcar in the U.S. for Portland.
- Content of the car is over 70 percent American made (90% by 2012).
- The car was fabricated and assembled at Clackamas.
- United Streetcar unveiled the only streetcar test track America on March 21, 2011.

**\$13.6M Grant** ... continued from pg 1

purchased two new high-speed Talgo trains, expected to be delivered in 2012. But we have no plan to increase frequency or to operate and maintain the new trains."

The grant includes:

- \$4 million to fund preliminary engineering and environmental work for track replacement and expansion, facility upgrades to comply with the Americans with Disability Act, as well

as energy conservation measures at Portland Union Station. ODOT will contribute \$1 million to this project.

- \$1.3 million to support final design and construction of additional work on the station's roof and other structural upgrades, coupled with a \$5.9 million grant previously awarded by FRA for roof replacement. The work will also include seismic upgrades, replacing gutters, downspouts, repairing skylights and windows, and insulation in the attic.

- \$4.2 million for a draft and final environmental work and service planning to identify improvements for the Cascades route from Eugene to Portland, OR. ODOT will contribute \$5.8 million for this phase of the project.

"Oregon needs to be working with Talgo and with Union Pacific Railroad to develop plans to maintain our new trains and to increase frequency of passenger trains between Portland and Eugene," according to McFarling.

## United Streetcar Unveils America's Only Streetcar Test Track Officials Tout Skilled American Workers

(Publication of this article on a March 21 event at OIW was delayed because of space limitations)

It was a powerhouse gathering of elected, business and labor officials who proclaimed a powerful message of workforce cooperation and productivity.

The U.S. transportation secretary and members of Oregon's congressional delegation enthusiastically endorsed American manufacturing while the host company president praised her employees and unveiled the nation's only streetcar test track (see picture on page 1).

A throng of skilled union workers, public officials and contractors crowded United Streetcar's new fabrication bay March 21, where the Clackamas firm is building the first modern streetcars in America since the early 1950s—six trains for Portland and seven for Tucson. United Streetcar is a subsidiary of Oregon Iron Works, Inc.

"We are celebrating American jobs and American manufacturing," declared United Streetcar President Chandra Brown. She went on to applaud her company's collaboration with the federal government, which invested \$2.4 million in a U.S. propulsion system built by Rockwell Automation of Wisconsin that will allow United Streetcar to build vehicles that are 90 percent American made.

"U.S. manufacturing is alive and well," Brown announced, "and we will be exporting these cars," she predicted in her typical ebullient manner. She heaped praise on members of Oregon's congressional delegation and on U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood.

"We're taking trains to the next generation," LaHood told the audience. "Now they will be built in America."

LaHood celebrated the Portland area as one of "the most magnificent places in the world to live" and he recognized the workforce here as "creative and hardworking."

US Congressman Earl Blumenauer said the United Streetcar announcement heralded the reintroduction of the modern American streetcar.

Congressman Peter DeFazio of Springfield, member of the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, called on Congress to give

government the tools through the pending transportation reauthorization bill to build trains in America.

Congressman Kurt Schrader of Canby, made the case for building products in the U.S. and sending them abroad: "We want to export rail cars, not jobs."

And Portland Mayor Sam Adams took a veiled poke at Midwest governors who have rejected federal stimulus money dedicated by the Obama administration for passenger rail. "Thanks," he said, addressing the gathered political decision-makers, "for sticking to the vision in the face of illogical opposition."

When the speeches were done, massive doors of the fabrication bay were drawn open to reveal United Streetcar's new test track, the only one in America.

-Floyd Smith

### United Streetcar Test Track

The only streetcar test track America, unveiled March 21, 2011.

**Location:** Adjacent United Streetcar's assembly bay, Clackamas, Oregon.

**Power capacity:** 250 kilowatts.

**Power:** 750 volts of direct current.

**Features:** 3100 feet long. 1300 ties. 38 overhead catenary system poles.

3 tight radius turns. car speed—up to 12 mph.

More technical information available at:  
[unitedstreetcar.com/products/](http://unitedstreetcar.com/products/)

Hayden Island

... continued from pg 1

long moved people and freight up and down the West Coast.

Many question whether this unspoiled natural area is an appropriate location for industrial development.

Howell says the flawed Hayden proposal would be improved by embracing key elements—a lift-span and an alternative passenger-train bypass— included in the Common Sense Alternative to the proposed Columbia River Crossing, the massive freeway bridge commonly referred to as the CRC. Howell has presented the Common Sense Alternative to Port Director Bill Wyatt, who is supportive of replacing the swing-span with a lift-span on the old bridge.

The Common Sense Alternative, which Howell co-authored, includes retaining the 1909 bridge for use by freight trains while removing the swing-span and installing a modern lift-span to better facilitate river traffic and to speed the process of opening and closing the old rail bridge. In addition, the alternative calls for a new, elevated bypass-bridge for passenger-train (and freight-truck) traffic. This bridge would arc above the Columbia River to expedite passage of boats and barges beneath.

The **AORTA** board of directors, meeting Oct. 22, renewed its approval of Howell's information campaign supporting the Common Sense Alternative against the CRC as proposed and expressed concern about the congestion affecting passenger-rail traffic that would result from developing West Hayden Island.

[See diagram on page 4.]

-Floyd Smith

**AORTA** Annual Meeting, November 12 at Multnomah Hotel in Portland ...continued from pg 1

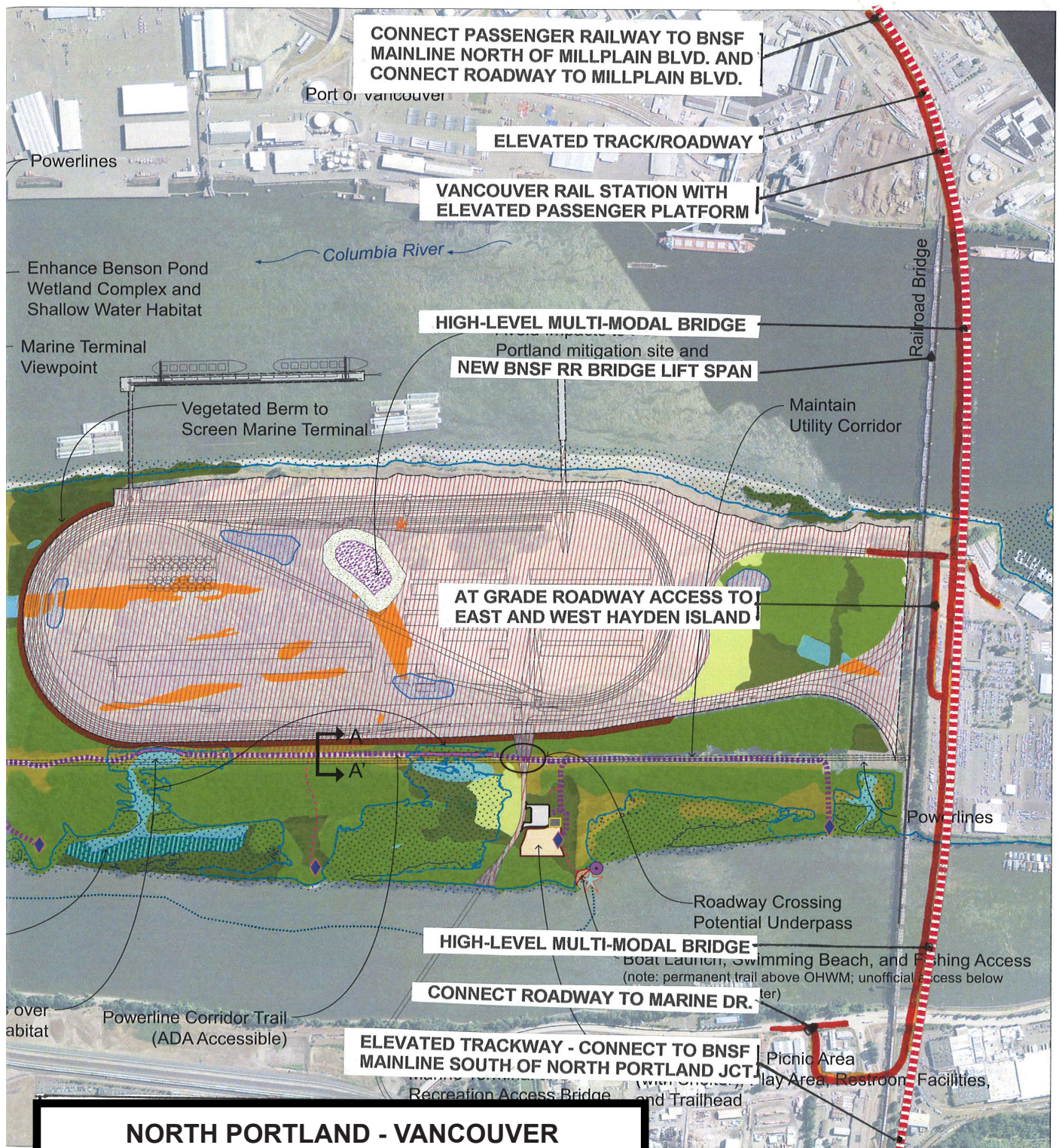
very soon. We're expecting an excellent turnout of rail policy enthusiasts. Be one of them: 11am to 4pm, Saturday, Nov. 12, in the Fireside Room, Portland Embassy Suites—Downtown (the historic Multnomah Hotel), 319 SW Pine St. Easy light rail access from Union Station on TriMet, and within the fare-free rail zone.

Please sign up now. The price is only \$37 per attendee for a fine meal and afternoon of transportation talk, information sharing, and political

advocacy. This event also commemorates **AORTA**'s 35th anniversary, so it's an occasion not to be missed.

Mail your check today to: **AORTA**, P.O. Box 2772, Portland, OR 97208-2772. Add a friend or relative to your registration. Make it a party. (If you feel that your check won't arrive in time, you can pay at the door, but in that case please send an email indicating your plans to [OregonRail@aol.com](mailto:OregonRail@aol.com).)





Jim Howell 10-15-11  
Jimhowell89@hotmail.com