

Douglas R. Allen
734 SE 47th Ave.
Portland, OR 97215
May 11, 2015

TO: Southwest Corridor Steering Committee
Testimony for May 11, 2015 Meeting

Co-chairs Dirksen and Stacey; Members of the Committee:

At the December 2014 Steering Committee meeting, I asked you to direct staff to evaluate the AORTA long light rail tunnel proposal to the same level as the other alternatives under consideration.

This means looking at running time, ridership, and cost.

It also means engaging in a conversation with us to make sure that our proposal is accurately represented in the analysis.

At the March 2015 meeting, Jim Howell made a similar request. Note that AORTA has been asking for analysis of a tunnel with a South Waterfront portal since June of 2012.

From what feedback we have received, staff believe that our proposal is too expensive, and is therefore not buildable. Yet staff have continued to evaluate alternatives that are clearly less cost-effective.

Here is a round-number comparison among the tunnel alternatives, using information from your May 2015 Tunnel Alignment Report. We have extrapolated the cost-per-mile of the Marquam Hill tunnel to estimate a cost for the AORTA proposal.

Tunnel Option Comparisons for the 12-mile SW Corridor Project

Option	Type	Sta.	Length	Cost	Cost/mi.	%Corr.	Surface
Marquam Hill	Mined	2	2.4 mi	\$1.3 B	\$0.5 B	20.0%	9.6 mi
Hillsdale	C&C	1	0.3 mi	\$0.7 B	\$2.3 B	0.25%	11.7 mi
PCC	C&C	1	0.5 mi	\$0.5 B	\$1.0 B	0.42%	11.5 mi
AORTA	Mined	4	6.0 mi	\$3.0 B	\$0.5 B	50.0%	6.0 mi

The Marquam Hill-Hillsdale tunnel reportedly saves between 1 and 2.8 minutes of travel time compared with the "representative alignment" (depending on which document you are reading). It is probably 3-4 minutes saved over the Naito Parkway surface alignment, although I have not been able to find any numbers in the publicly available reports. We estimate that the AORTA alternative saves at least 7 minutes from downtown to PCC compared with the Naito Parkway alignment.

Our proposal avoids some of the identified problems with the Duniway Park and Hillsdale portals of the medium length tunnel. It provides LRT service to PCC, perhaps at an incremental cost less than the cut and cover PCC option currently under consideration. With four deep stations, our proposal may provide economies of scale in underground station construction, although we won't know that unless it is studied.

Here is what you must do first: Direct staff to collaborate with us in analyzing ridership and running time for our proposal. The cost will be minimal. You don't need to hire any consultants, since Metro owns the ridership model, and TriMet has the software to calculate running time.

This initial analysis of what is obviously a superior alternative is necessary to meet minimal standards for FTA alternatives analysis.

The next step after that is to obtain probability estimates of the construction cost for all of the alternatives. This means providing the Steering Committee with estimates of the range of likely costs for the alternatives being considered, along with estimates of their probability. This information does not appear in any of the publicly distributed documents, so this may involve some consultant work, but since it needs to be done for all the other alternatives, there should be a modest marginal expense in obtaining that information for the AORTA alternative.

Note that in Seattle, they are finishing up a 3 mile, \$2 billion light rail tunnel project extending from downtown north to Husky Stadium, with one intermediate station. This project is about \$150 million under budget. A later phase extends the line 4.3 miles to Northgate, and an additional phase 8.2 miles further north to Lynnwood.

Governor Inslee and local leaders are asking the Washington Legislature for permission to go to voters for \$15 billion to continue light rail expansion. Republican legislators want to limit this to \$11.3 billion.

In Washington, they apparently consider it quite reasonable to plan for expensive light rail projects designed in part as alternatives to congested I-5 commuting. The Southwest Corridor Steering Committee owes it to this region to ask for analysis of an ambitious alternative that would really do something useful. Why not give the voters of this region the facts on all reasonable alternatives, and give them the opportunity to decide?