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To: <Citycouncil@cityofsalem.net>
CC: <manager@cityofsalem.net>
Date: 8/8/2016 1:46 PM
Subject: Comment, August 8, 2016 Council Meeting, Agenda #3.2a

Dear Mayor and Councilors:

Regrettably, I will not be able to attend tonight's meeting, and so I ask that these comments please be included in the public record:

My name is Evan White, and I live in Ward 7. Four years ago, when I ran for Salem City Council, I remember that my friend Jim Lewis and the Salem Association of Realtors asked for my thoughts about the third bridge. I suspected that the "right answer" was "great idea, let's do it as soon as possible, regardless of the costs and benefits." I replied by saying that I was aware that a draft EIS was being prepared, and that I could not answer the question until I reviewed the EIS.

I subsequently obtained a copy of the EIS. For a price of eight hundred million dollars, it would be possible to reduce travel times by an average of about four and a half minutes – twenty years from now.

A hearing was then held before City Council. There was a parade of witnesses from the Chamber of Commerce, the Homebuilders Association, and various realtors who thought that this plan to Los Angelize West Salem was a wonderful idea. Council subsequently adopted the "Preferred Alternative," which would cost only half as much and do less damage to the environment. However, I've seen no estimate of the benefits that might occur from spending more than four hundred million dollars.

One of the purposes of Oregon's land use planning laws is to protect forest and farm lands from unnecessary urban sprawl. I suspect that those who favor the third bridge are actually interested in more urban sprawl, and less interested in efficient urban transportation systems. Why did the Chamber of Commerce so vigorously oppose the payroll transit tax that would have been used to improve our crippled urban transit system? To me, the notion that Oregon's land use planning regulations should be used to encourage more urban sprawl is obscene. Thanks for listening.