

Hayden Island: Strategic Resource for Sustainable Urban Future?

Shadrach Pilip-Florea

Certificate of Real Estate Development Graduate Student Alumnus



Hayden Island is the northern gateway to Oregon and sits at the nexus of the two largest cities of our region. Much of the discussion regarding the potential I-5 Columbia River Crossing has been dominated by its size, number of lanes, and whether to toll. But, as the region fiercely debates the environmental impact and potential sprawl that a large new bridge might precipitate, it is the development potential of a strategic island larger than downtown Portland that hangs in the balance.

The approximately 1,400-acre island lies strategically at the symbolic heart of the region between the confluence of the Columbia and Willamette Rivers and the international airport. It is traversed by the major freeway and rail corridors between Canada and Mexico and borders the only shipping channel from Idaho to the Pacific. It is home to almost every imaginable use—industrial, office, retail, hotel, residential and recreational. If developed properly, new connections to the city's only island community could make it a national model of first-rate sustainable urban redevelopment. The maritime setting with its 11 miles of waterfront and stunning views of Mt. Hood could reinforce Hayden Island as a highly desirable place to live, work, and play that reduces commuting trips to downtown Portland. It could serve as a model to those residents and developers who have been historically resistant to mixed-use, transit-oriented development (TOD). If done poorly, our region risks further dividing and isolating it, permanently strangling its development potential and decimating its resources.

Hayden Island has the right ingredients for development, centrally located vacant and underdeveloped land. It has a long history as a crossroads of critical connections, and is proximate to downtowns on both sides of the river. The owners of the depressed Jantzen Beach retail center have considered redevelopment, potentially into a mixed-use Main Street transit-oriented development (TOD) centered on a new light rail station. Oregon's lack of a sales tax reinforces a favorable retail environment attracting Washington residents. The island's compact setting offers many needed amenities within a short distance, and many residents today live without cars. If connections and subsequent development are wisely planned along a central spine, Hayden Island could emulate New York's similarly shaped Roosevelt Island, a community in the East River largely without automobiles.

Hayden Island is a 5.25-mile long, linear island that is actually made of two islands, Hayden Island and Tomahawk Island, which were merged by a narrow strip of dredging fill. Over half of the island (831 acres) on the west is undeveloped and currently held in reserve for a possible Port of Portland expansion. The eastern half is home to 2,200 residents and 238 businesses, employing nearly 3,000 employees¹. The retail shops draw people from all over the region and the 5,000 boats moored on Hayden Island attract owners from both states.



In October 2006 amid rumors of a potential Walmart, then Councilor, now Mayor, Sam Adams and the Portland City Council instituted a development moratorium on the Island. Unique in the city known for its famed planning, the island had never had a neighborhood plan. In fact, Hayden Island did not even become a part of the city until 1986 when it was annexed to provide police and fire services. Through a series of public meetings and workshops over the last four years, the [Hayden Island Neighborhood Network](#) (HINooN) partnered with the Columbia River Crossing organization and the city in developing a new plan for the eastern half of the island. A [final plan](#) was prepared by the City of Portland's [Bureau of Planning and Sustainability](#) and was approved by the city council this past summer².

Until recently, residents have proven very supportive of development plans and anxious for better connections to the region. The new bridge was marketed to island residents as an opportunity to reconnect its halves, long divided by I-5. The Neighborhood Preferred Alternative plan, among those presented to it, called for a high bridge that would fly over the island. This promised to open up some land for limited development underneath. Most significantly, a new Tomahawk Main Street was to connect the main eastern artery, Tomahawk Island Drive, with both the new light rail station and the future Jantzen Beach Main Street development.



¹ City of Portland, *East Hayden Island Neighborhood Plan*

² Portland Tribune 2009, [Hayden Island Nice to Meet you](#)

However, the latest construction plans presented by [Columbia River Crossing](#) (CRC), the organization formed and controlled by the two states' transportation departments to shepherd the project, has thrown the neighborhood into disarray. The revisions, along with others on the north side of the river, purport to shave an estimated \$400 to \$650 million from the original \$4.1 billion price tag. They call for dropping the original proposed elevated flyover in favor of a cheaper construction that reuses the existing North Portland Harbor Bridge and berms the freeway above grade. The new freeway would be wider and displace 37 businesses, including the Safeway, the community's only grocery store and pharmacy. Tomahawk Main Street nominally survived the revisions, but now would tunnel under I-5 and will require permanent pumping to prevent flooding³.

Hayden Island Neighborhood Association president and Portland City Council candidate, Ed Garren, spoke for many during the December 4, 2009 project sponsors' meeting proclaiming, "Our Island is getting shafted." He discussed the years he had worked with both the CRC and the City in developing a new neighborhood plan, concluding, "This is a classic bait and switch....They are trying to shove this, literally, down the middle of our lives." In addition to angry Hayden Island residents, the contentious meeting was filled with livability activists protesting the large bridge as a harbinger of more auto-congested sprawl.

Metro President David Bragdon compared the treatment of Hayden Island with the overall goals and dated thinking behind the Columbia River Crossing, saying of the proposed refinement: "I think the flaws in the refinement are the same underlying flaws in the project. In the case of Hayden Island, we've said repeatedly that we want to make a better community. And that objective was sacrificed very quickly."⁴

As the impact to Hayden Island has finally come more into focus, Bragdon's observation recalls its history. Hayden Island's future has traditionally been an afterthought to the area's regional bodies. For example, despite the projected massive investment in infrastructure and accompanied zoning that encourages up to two thousand new residential units and more than a million square feet of commercial use, Bragdon's own [Metro](#) agency does not target Hayden Island to be a town center, nor would it likely receive additional support similar to other regional transit centers to help make it so. In fact, should the Port of Portland's planning prevail, the relatively pristine 831-acre western half would likely become another vast parking lot for automobiles off-loaded from auto transport ships. A potential new terminal for the Port, despite historic trends favoring larger market coastal ports, would continue to compete for its diminishing share of international maritime trade by targeting automobile landings.



³ December 4, 2009 Columbia River Crossing Project Sponsors Meeting [Revision packet](#); Original reporting.

⁴ Metro 2009, [Regional and Town Centers](#)

With any new bridge or light rail, the island's central infrastructure will need to be rebuilt. This presents an unusual opportunity to design a livable and walkable urban core centered on a light rail station, while encouraging higher value redevelopment of the neighboring properties. The recently approved East Hayden Island neighborhood plan aims for this possibility, but it provides no incentives for realizing that objective. It allows for the Jantzen Beach subarea bordering light rail to remain an auto-oriented regional retail center. It grants protected zoning for the neighboring low-density mobile home parks and current auto storage lots, which is hardly an effective, highest and best use of valuable waterfront land centrally located between the region's two largest cities.

The centerpiece of the planned new infrastructure is a light rail station meant to be visible from the freeway and welcome visitors to both Oregon and Portland⁵. A symbol of the region's forward thinking, it could easily be an underutilized station surrounded by big-box stores and vast parking lots. Rather than an iconic example of a mixed-use waterfront TOD, Hayden Island's station would be an ironic monument beside a 10-12 lane freeway on an island whose largest land use will be automobile storage. For a region that defines itself in the forefront of sustainable urban land use, this is fundamentally flawed, dated thinking.

A Thumbnail Development History

First recorded as Menzies Island in 1792 by British Lt. Broughton, Hayden Island has held a series of names. Lewis and Clark labeled it Painted Image Island for an impressively carved canoe they encountered while camping there. The Hudson Bay Company called it Vancouver Island, then Shaw's Island after a fort colonel, and finally it was renamed for Guy Hayden, an early mayor of Vancouver who owned a farm on the island.



In 1908, the double-tracked railroad swing bridge (now the BNSF) that neatly bisects the island was built. This replaced the Northern Pacific Ferry that had transported entire trains across the Columbia. The electric powered bridge is the oldest single pin swing bridge in Washington and in 1982 was placed on the National Register of Historic places. The development of this crucial link insured that all north-south rail traffic in the Pacific would pass through Portland. However, its swing span is too narrow for modern barges and is located too far north of the high span of the I-5 Bridge, requiring 600-foot long barges to execute complex reverse S-curve movements in only 4,000 feet. It is that problem that causes I-5 Bridge lifts in high wind and water conditions, although they do not need or use it at most other times. The Port of Portland has identified the need for its replacement within the next decade (at an estimated cost \$56 million in 2006)⁶.

⁵ City of Portland 2008, [Hayden Island Concept Plan](#)

⁶ Global Insight 2006, [Portland and Vancouver International and Domestic Trade Capacity](#) (for Port of Portland, Metro, and Port of Vancouver); page 10

The island was used for farming and grazing until 1917 when the first interstate bridge for automobile traffic opened, which is now its east-span, northbound bridge. The photograph below shows that the east span was originally a flat bridge, later raised on different-height columns on top of the piers in 1957 when the west span was built. The east span replaced the overcrowded Pacific Power and Light ferry and opened the island to development. To pay for construction, there was a nickel per crossing toll until 1929. The second matching three-lane bridge was built in 1958, and tolls of 20 to 60 cents were reinstated until 1966, when construction costs were fully recouped⁷.



In the roaring twenties, Oregon sportswear leader, Jantzen Knitting Mills, teamed with Hayden Island Amusement Company to build the 112-acre Jantzen Beach Amusement Park as a promotion for Jantzen swimming suits. Trumpeted as the Coney Island of the West, it had roller coasters, ballrooms, a C.W. Parker merry-go-round, and swimming pools. Today the pools' pumping facilities are still in use, having been converted to pump drinking water to Hayden Island.

Thanks to dikes erected on the Columbia, the park survived the flood of 1946 that destroyed the neighboring, burgeoning city of Vanport (today's Delta Park), and for decades the park was a popular weekend destination with over 30 million visitors over its 42 years. However, by the sixties, a series of accidents befell the park and with the reinstated freeway tolls and changing recreation fashions, it had fallen into disfavor⁸.

In 1970, the park closed its doors and, except for the historic carousel, the buildings were all demolished and the site was redeveloped into Jantzen Beach Center mall. A traditional enclosed mall, it was anchored with a K-Mart on one end and a Sears on the other. Although never very fashionable, the mall did fairly well due to its favorable location. Ever since Washington State passed the Revenue Act of 1935, it has had a sales tax, while Oregon voters have defeated a sales tax nine times. A short distance across the bridge from Vancouver, Hayden Island has benefitted enormously from this tax discrepancy. Every year tens of thousands of Washingtonians cross the bridge to shop tax-free.

During the booming post-war years, boaters flocked to develop the island, and moorages sprouted along the shores of the calm channel of North Portland Harbor. With its easy access to both the Columbia and I-5, the island is a desirable location for boaters. The island is particularly popular with sail-boaters with the wide expanse of the Columbia just to the east, home to weekly regattas. The protected moorage, including covered moorage at Columbia River Yacht Club, is in high demand assisted by the 8.2% Washington sales



⁷ Columbia River Crossing 2009, [About the Bridge](#)

⁸ PDXHistory.com, [Jantzen Beach](#)

or use tax applicable to boats. The summer population swells with yachters which helps support local restaurants and neighborhood shops, allowing more development than the Island's population alone would allow.

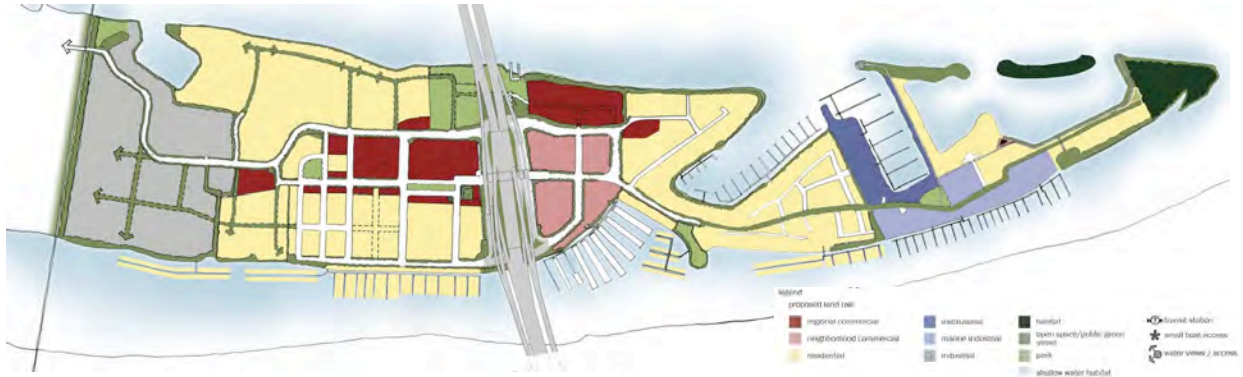
Housing on the island developed sporadically with the first mobile home parks taking advantage of the cheap land in the fifties. Low-rise condominiums and apartment complexes developed in the sixties. Floating homes also became popular as a counter-cultural lifestyle choice. In the last decade the island was somewhat late to the regional residential build-out and only two new projects were started. The luxury condominium complexes, Salpare Bay and Waterside, were begun to take advantage of the waterfront setting. The 84-unit [Waterside](#) with new moorage was completed in 2009 and units are selling slowly in the currently oversaturated market. The seven building, 204-unit Salpare Bay currently sits unfinished in foreclosure with multiple liens and lawsuits⁹. However, its accompanying moorage was completed and is now half leased. Today the island is home to 1,581 residential units.

Hayden Island Today and the New Neighborhood Plan



Much of the eastern half (east of the BNSF bridge) of Hayden Island is developed with retail, office, hotel, residential, and a variety of industrial uses. The business park to the west of Jantzen Beach is home to several small industries such as Huggy Bear, a cabinet manufacturer, and, as befits its maritime location, multiple marine businesses, such as Schooner Creek, a builder of sailboats and small yachts. The vast paved expanse directly adjacent to the BNSF railroad is home to the Manheim Portland Automobile Auction.

⁹ Portland Business Journal 2009, [Troubled Project in Court](#)



East Hayden Island Conceptual Neighborhood Plan

The new neighborhood plan protects many existing uses while pointing to some transformations for the island. The plan preserves most of the existing residential stock including its single-family, multifamily, floating and mobile housing. It also calls for protecting the industrial uses in the west. A new park with views of the Columbia and neighboring Vancouver was to have been built on the north under the earlier flyover bridge plan. Today, the island has only one park on the eastern tip of the island. A light rail station with a public plaza would be built immediately west of I-5. The station is intended to serve as the symbolic center of the island and be visible from the freeway.

Residential development on Hayden Island is complicated by its location in the Portland Airport flight path. Therefore, it falls under federal government guidelines for noise ordinances that state and local municipalities administer. The guidelines call for no residential development above 75 Ldn (day-night equivalent noise levels) and recommend dampening measures above 65 Ldn. Portland was one of the first cities to write a comprehensive noise ordinance into its zoning code in 1975. Ldn contours were mapped in a 1990 survey and most of Hayden Island falls in the 65 Ldn, with the northern swath (including the mobile home park, current Red Lion hotel and some moorages) falling into the more restricted 68 Ldn area. The current Portland zoning code bans new residential development at and above the 68 Ldn noise contour, and calls for certified noise insulation be installed on all residential projects in the airport noise overlay¹⁰.

Ostensibly to protect existing affordable housing, the new plan rezoned the mobile park to the north from General Commercial to R2 (that allows one unit per 2,000 square feet, a use that is inconsistent with its location in the Ldn68 noise contour, which may render significant future residential development options moot). Recognizing this possibility, the Hayden Island plan includes changes to the zoning code that allow the transfer of residential development rights from louder zones to quieter zones. The undeveloped western half falls under the 65 Ldn and 62 Ldn contours¹¹.

Jantzen Beach and a New Central Core:

Most dramatically, the east island neighborhood plan calls for a new green, pedestrian and bike friendly street grid to be built in the place of the existing Jantzen Beach SuperCenter. The new central Tomahawk Main Street is to connect the new center with residents on the western side of I-5. Concurrent with the new physical infrastructure, the plan implements new district zoning and

¹⁰ Portland Zoning Code, Chapter 33.470 Portland International Airport Noise Impact Zone

¹¹ Portland Zoning Code, Chapter 33.532 Hayden Island Plan district

development standards that encourage the development of transit-oriented mixed-use projects with up to 2,000 new residential units¹¹.

Jantzen Beach is the name of the I-5 exit ramp and the Jantzen Beach Super Center is the commercial retail development that, to most of us, defines Hayden Island. The shopping mall and big box outlets sprawl over 80 acres immediately west of the freeway. The commercial area has over 875,000 square feet of leasable retail space with 3,100 parking spaces. The new neighborhood plan allows for the site to be redeveloped into a Main Street retail center, more akin to so-called lifestyle centers like Durham's [Bridgeport Village](#), or Hillsboro's [Streets of Tanasbourne](#).

Due to the transitory nature of smaller retail malls, by the 1990s the Jantzen Beach shopping center was no longer fashionable. In 1996, MBK Northwest of Portland invested \$50 million to convert Jantzen Beach from a traditional mall into a big-box power center. It demolished the western leg of the mall to create the parking lot and surrounding tilt up big-box stores. The eastern half of the mall was refurbished with a food court and a restored Parker carousel¹². Today a two-story Target anchors the north end of the largely empty mall. Further west is the power center with a Home Depot, Barnes & Noble, and other midsize retailers, sharing space with the empty shells of Linens'n Things, CompUSA, Circuit City, and other retailers that did not survive the recent economic downturn. However, Hayden Island continues to draw a significant number of customers from both states to its remaining power center tenants. It is the closest regional retail center to serve rapidly gentrifying North Portland.

In fall of 2009, the Michigan State Pension Fund, the owners of Jantzen Beach SuperCenter, retained East coast retail developers [Edens & Avant](#) to take over management from developer [Madison Marquette](#). Edens & Avant currently manages over 140 centers, primarily grocery neighborhood centers but also a smattering of auto-oriented, box-anchored shopping centers-similar to the existing Jantzen Beach center. Madison Marquette had a history of successfully redeveloping depressed properties into mixed-use regional retail centers, and projects such as [Bay Street](#) in Emeryville, California that turned an isolated brownfield into a dense main street urban village with high-end retailers with residents above that offered a potential template for Jantzen Beach¹².

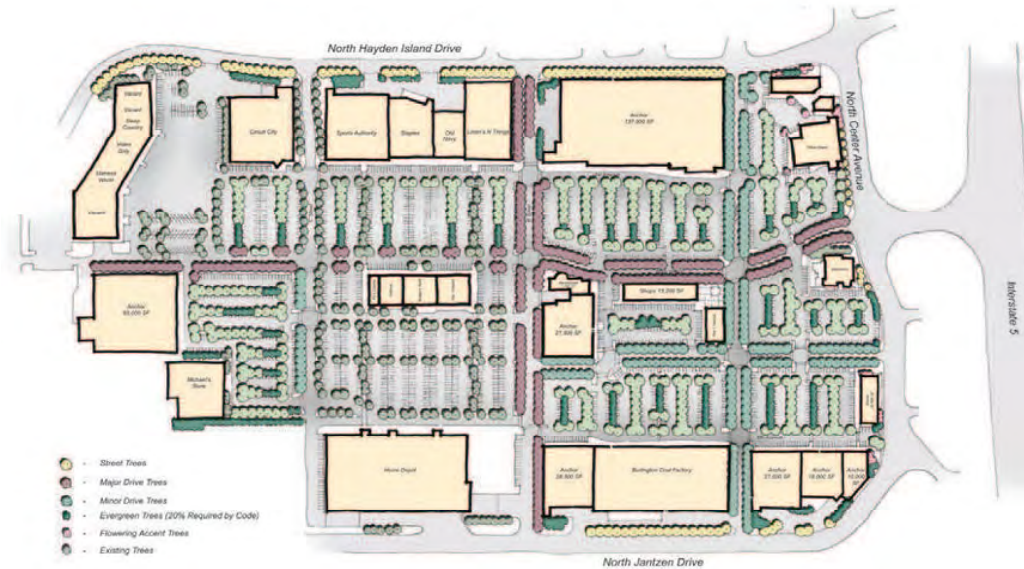
In the last few years, Edens & Avant have expanded to include mixed-use projects. Most significantly it has just begun a redevelopment of the 31-acre [Mosaic district](#) in Merrifield VA, near Washington DC. The Mosaic district is a LEED for neighborhoods development pilot project of 1.89 million square feet, with retail and office space, a movie theatre and 1,000 new residential units built along a new street grid. It is planned to be somewhat like Bridgeport Village in offering a more upscale retail environment than existing big-box development, but with the added benefit of being centered on transit with apartments and condos built above¹³.

Like the Mosaic District, the new base zoning of the Jantzen Beach sub-area plan allows for a large redevelopment (up to 2,204,000 square feet with substantial bonuses available for residential uses). In addition, the sub-area plan allows for building heights up to 80 feet next to transit stations and the area within one-quarter mile of the station will be eligible for the city's transit-oriented

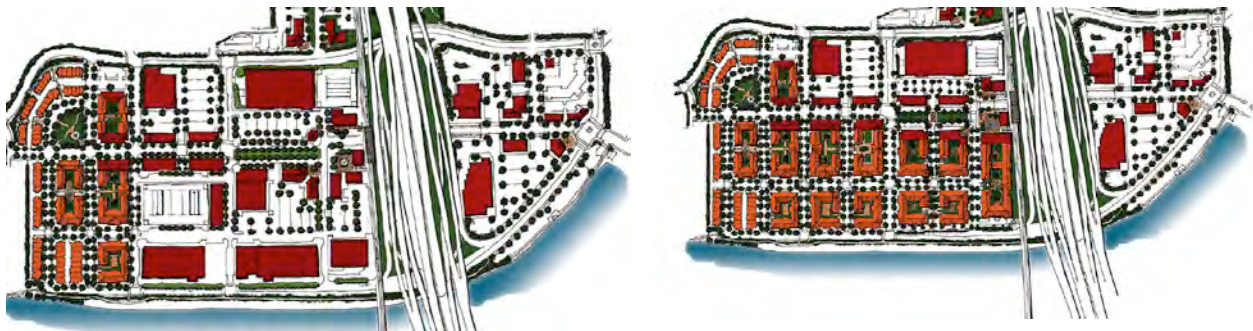
¹² Portland Business Journal 2004, [New Management takes over Jantzen Beach](#)

¹³ Washington D.C. Business Journal, 2008 [Fairfax County tees up first TIF Development](#)

development tax exemption program, allowing up to 10 years in property tax exemption for new residential construction.



In January 2009 Madison Marquette proposed to the Portland planning commission a possible phased redevelopment plan. The first phase would demolish the remaining mall and expand the auto oriented big-box power center. Sub-sequent development would gradually replace the box stores with mixed-use multistoried buildings on a street grid. In crafting the new neighborhood plan the city is allowing more big-box retail space now with the hope that it will eventually develop into a mixed-use TOD commensurate with the huge public investment in the freeway and light rail. It is strange that a city and a region that has poured large amounts of current and future funds into building new TOD centers such as Beaverton Round, Gresham Station, or South Waterfront would let this current development opportunity lapse. The developer may restrict development to retail only. In an [article](#) posted on the Edens & Avant website, CEO Terry Brown stated: "We're only doing projects that are retail-driven, even though a lot of developers had considered mixed-use projects, the credit markets have impacted them. Today, mixed-use isn't as competitive as traditional retail-only centers."¹⁴



Phases I & II

On the east side of I-5, a neighborhood retail center is envisioned to serve the eastern half of the island with local services. Currently this area is home to Safeway, a Hooters restaurant, a gas station,

¹⁴ Global Real Estate Monitor, 2008 [Edens & Avant mix it up](#)

numerous fast-food drive-throughs, a carwash, and several empty retail buildings (including an abandoned Zupans). However the new revisions to the CRC will dramatically widen the freeway's footprint, destroying the existing businesses (e.g. Safeway) that were originally preserved by the neighborhood plan. If the current revisions by CRC are accepted, the city should revisit that plan.

Further East, Columbia Crossings, the island's largest owner of moorages, (not to be confused with the state transportation departments ODOT/WADOT bridge planning effort) is said to be planning two new residential projects. The neighborhood plan calls for allowing height limits up to 80 feet to accommodate its plans for 800 new units in two point towers. Additionally a new moorage is allowed to the east of the existing Sundance Marina, on the Southeast shore.

Typically in urban planning, one quarter mile, approximately a 15-minute walk, is considered the maximum distance that people will choose to walk rather than drive. Hayden Island, with its average half-mile width, points towards a development plan focused on a central spine of a traditional main street, one with dense commercial uses grouped along the center and multi-storied residential uses interspersed both above and behind, leaving the edges more natural for ample waterfront activities, pedestrian and bicycle trails.

With 11 miles of waterfront shore served by transit, Hayden Island represents an unparalleled regional resource for residential recreation. The northern edge would be particularly suited for an extended urban waterfront with vistas of Mt. Hood and Vancouver's redeveloping urban waterfront (the site of the former Boise Cascade industrial complex). Waterfront restaurants similar to Vancouver's Columbia Shores popular McMenamin's and Beaches would enliven the waterfront and relate to development across the river at the Boise Cascade urban waterfront development. The two existing hotels, Jantzen Beach Red Lion and Thunderbird, could be knitted into such an urban waterfront fabric.

Sustainable Urban Islands- Roosevelt Island and Treasure Island

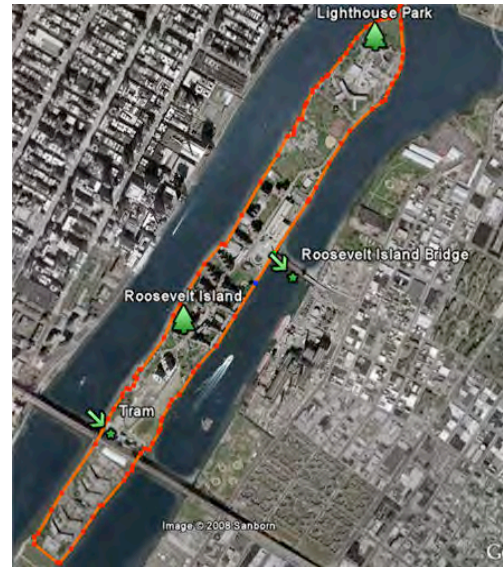
Roosevelt Island is a popular mixed income residential community on a small narrow island of only 147 acres in New York's East River. Two miles long but no wider than 800 feet, the island is home to approximately 12,000 residents. Like Hayden Island, Roosevelt Island is bisected by a heavily traveled bridge, the Queensboro Bridge, N.Y. state route 25, which carries commuters from Manhattan to Queens.



Formerly known as Welfare Island, it was historically the site of asylums, prisons, hospitals, and poorhouses. In 1969, New York State's Urban Development Corporation was granted a 99-year lease in order to redevelop the island. As part of the federal government's New Communities program, the island

was a so-called ‘new town in a town’. The master plan envisioned high density, but humanly scaled, development largely without automobiles. Vehicles are parked in a central garage near the bridge, and minibus shuttles circle the island offering residents a ride for 25 cents¹⁵. At light rail planning meetings, several residents of Hayden Island requested a similar service for the island, picking up at the light rail station and then dropping off at residences or places of employment on the island. Currently, the population is too small to support this; however, future higher value development could allow for the necessary density to provide a similar minibus along a central spine.

In 1976, an aerial tramway was built as an alternative to an expensive new bridge to connect the island to Manhattan. The country’s first urban tram, it carries commuters to a terminal at Second Avenue and East 60th St. At its peak, it rises 250 feet over the river and offers spectacular views of the city. The [Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation](#), a state public-benefit corporation, was formed in 1984 to manage the tram, minibuses, central parking garage, and sports centers. The City and Port of Portland (which owns the western half) could form a joint Hayden Island Development Corporation to formulate and implement a better plan for the island’s integrated development. Roosevelt Island was developed in three phases, each of multiple housing projects that integrated with the existing infrastructure. A similar multiple phase approach for the larger Hayden Island could begin with a public-private partnership for Jantzen Beach.



Roosevelt Island is also the only U.S. residential community that has its trash collected by an Automated Vacuum Collection System (AVAC), an underground pipe system that greatly simplifies trash collection by whisking it away to a central collection site. The new street network on the 80-acre Jantzen Beach redevelopment could also lay the groundwork for an sustainable shared system, probably not an AVAC, but perhaps a central district heating and cooling system similar to what the developer [Gerding/Edlen](#) used for the Brewery Blocks in Portland. Future development could tie into the district system.

San Francisco Bay’s [Treasure Island](#) is another planned redevelopment of an urban waterfront island that potentially offers insights for Hayden Island. The 400-acre man-made island was originally built for the 1939 Golden Gate International Exposition, later to be used as a military base and occasionally as a movie studio. In 1996, the base was decommissioned, and the island turned over to the city for redevelopment. The City formed the Treasure Island Development Authority, which retained Lennar Homes to develop a sustainable mixed income residential housing development. Plans call for 6,000 new units (with 2,000 marked to be affordable), three hotels, a 400-slip marina, a retail promenade, new parks and wetlands.¹⁶

¹⁵ Wolfe, Gerald; 1994; *New York: a guide to the metropolis*, pp340-366

¹⁶ San Francisco chronicle 2009, [Treasure Island Utopia gets a reality check](#)



The most striking feature of the new master plan is the angled street grid designed to minimize wind exposure. Like Roosevelt Island, it is hoped to be as car-free as possible. Every resident will live within a 15-minute walk of a transit hub. Parking will be built, but decoupled from units and to be leased separately. All access to the island will be tolled. The island connects with the tolled Bay Bridge, which links Oakland and the East Bay to San Francisco. Automobile ferries will also be tolled to further discourage driving. Were Hayden Island to develop around a central spine, all new residents would be less than a quarter mile, far less than a 15-minute walk, from that central street. If developed densely enough, a minibus service run by an Island Development Corporation might become feasible.

Treasure Island bills itself the most sustainable redevelopment project in the country. Fully 300 acres will be left open as green spaces, with organic farms, sports fields, parks, and wetlands. To take advantage of the heavy bay winds, a small wind farm that provides distributed power to the island will be built. Wastewater is to be treated and then dispersed into the natural wetlands. All of these features could easily be adapted for Hayden Island as well, particularly on some of the 831 undeveloped acres to the west of the island. However Treasure Island will not have a central transit station, nor the favorable retail location that our Hayden Island enjoys.

The important lesson from both Roosevelt Island and Treasure Island is that to maximize both public and private benefit from a centrally located exceptional waterfront island, a detailed and comprehensive development plan that looks at the island as a whole is a vital precondition, and that a publicly controlled development corporation is crucial to implement the development plan. Neither of these essential elements has been accomplished for Hayden Island despite its more than 60 percent ownership by public entities and/or the proposed investment of multibillions of dollars in infrastructure improvements. How is it that in the state most proud of its determination to intimately link, hand in glove, transportation and land use planning, that this has not even been attempted for Hayden Island despite the expenditure of over \$80 million for planning?

West Hayden Island



A vital transportation connection, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad bisects the island. The 831 acres comprising the western 60 percent is largely natural habitat with heavy vegetation dominating the landscape. Outside of a few transmission towers, the only development is the Columbia wastewater treatment plant pump house and de-chlorination facility and a dredge dewatering and storage area. In 1983, voters brought the land into the urban growth boundary, and in 1993 the [Port of Portland](#) used its condemnation powers to take the property. It is Portland's last large developable parcel on the 40-foot deep Columbia River shipping channel and alone is twice the size of Ross Island in the Willamette River.

Portland General Electric purchased the property from Western Trucking Company and then owned it for decades. PGE explored developing its own port facility but then in 1990 it put together a proposal to develop the island for residential use. In 1993 The Port of Portland stepped in and blocked the development. Initially, the Port tried to purchase the site and requested the city to annex the property in order to zone it industrial. After PGE refused to sell, the Port resorted to its condemnation power to acquire the site in 1994.

In 1999, the Port submitted a preliminary \$657 million dollar proposal to build a new terminal capable of handling three ships, similar to the Port of Vancouver's automobile landing facilities. The plans called for a new bridge over the North Portland Harbor channel connecting Hayden Island with Marine Drive. The main centerpiece of the proposal was to build grain terminals for

agricultural giant Archer Daniels Midland on the northern side of island. The western tip of the island was to be left undeveloped¹⁷.

Before Port Development



After Port Development

¹⁷ Portland Tribune 2009, [West Hayden Island Port or Habitat](#)

Fearing that the Port intended to pave most of the island for auto facilities, The Audubon Society, along with several environmental groups, launched a fierce fight to block the development of the island. The Audubon Society considers the Island to have a high habitat value with its large contiguous area, which is more effective at protecting species than smaller fragmented spaces typical of urban areas. In their view, the Port's plans would truly be a case of Joni Mitchell's famous line "they paved paradise and put up a parking lot."

In 2000, the Port of Portland abruptly halted the project and cancelled environmental reviews. Archer Daniels Midland opted to build its new facilities downstream at the Port of Kalama. Losing its main tenant, the Port had no reason to continue to battle the environmental groups, particularly as it was also proposing a contentious expansion of Portland International Airport that neighborhood groups opposed. The Audubon Society has offered to buy the site, but the Port has dismissed them. After voters passed the 2006 bond measure to purchase green spaces, Metro also considered the property for preservation, but it has since been removed from the list after the Port refused to sell¹⁸.

Tellingly, around the same time the Port of Portland auctioned off Terminal One. The industrial port facility was sold despite its multimodal connections with the neighboring railroad, Highway 30, and I-405¹⁹. Recognizing the long-term trend of facilities moving downriver and away from the city center, reinvestment in the aged port with a central location did not make sense. The rapid growth rates and recent investment in the lower Columbia ports of Kalama and Longview are indicative of this trend. Unlike Terminal One the Port's action on Hayden Island ignores its central location between the region's two largest cities, and its immediate proximity to the downtown Vancouver's redeveloping waterfront.

Another important consideration is the continuing historic trend of maritime trade migrating to larger coastal Ports. Navigating the Columbia adds an extra day for international ships. On the West Coast the large bay ports of Seattle-Tacoma, Oakland-San Francisco, and particularly the massive Los Angeles-Long Beach continue to take a larger share of international trade. With their huge local markets, better multimodal connections, and ocean proximity, these ports have both economies of scale and offer rapid turn-around, allowing for quicker, cheaper connections that satisfy today's just-in-time and bottom-line oriented global business climate. The departure of several shipping lines from serving Portland evidences the trend. Significantly the Port of Portland is the only major West Coast Port without any long-term leases with international shipping companies²⁰.

Today the Port of Portland has four working terminals, an average size of 256 acres each. Terminal Six, the largest is 455 acres. The Port operates in competition with the [Port of Vancouver](#), which currently advertises 1,106 acres of river frontage available at its' Columbia Gateway. A 2006 Port of Portland trade capacity report projected that the region's maritime trade would increase 67% by 2035. Bulk commodities and automobile storage account for most of the expected growth. The outlook for containers was less certain. The region handles less than 2% of the west coast's containerized shipping, and future post Panamax (i.e. ships larger than today's standard that is

¹⁸ Audubon society of Portland, 2005 [Offer to buy West Hayden Island](#)

¹⁹ Oregonian, 2002, *End of line for Terminal 1*

²⁰ Global Insight 2006, [Portland and Vancouver International and Domestic Trade Capacity](#) (for Port of Portland, Metro, and Port of Vancouver); Outlook of Maritime trade

limited by the size of Panamal Canal) container ships will likely be too large for even a 43' deep Columbia River channel.

The shipping of fully assembled automobiles requires a deep port, good railroad connections, and cheap land. All five Columbia River ports (Portland, Longview, Kalama, St. Helens, and Vancouver) have the necessary infrastructure, and all of them but Portland have large contiguous riverfront parcels that are shovel-ready with land costs that are substantially cheaper than Portland's. As the region aims to add one million people in the next twenty-five years within the confines of the urban growth boundary, is a huge parking lot that provides only a handful of jobs really a prudent use of 831 acres of centrally located waterfront property?

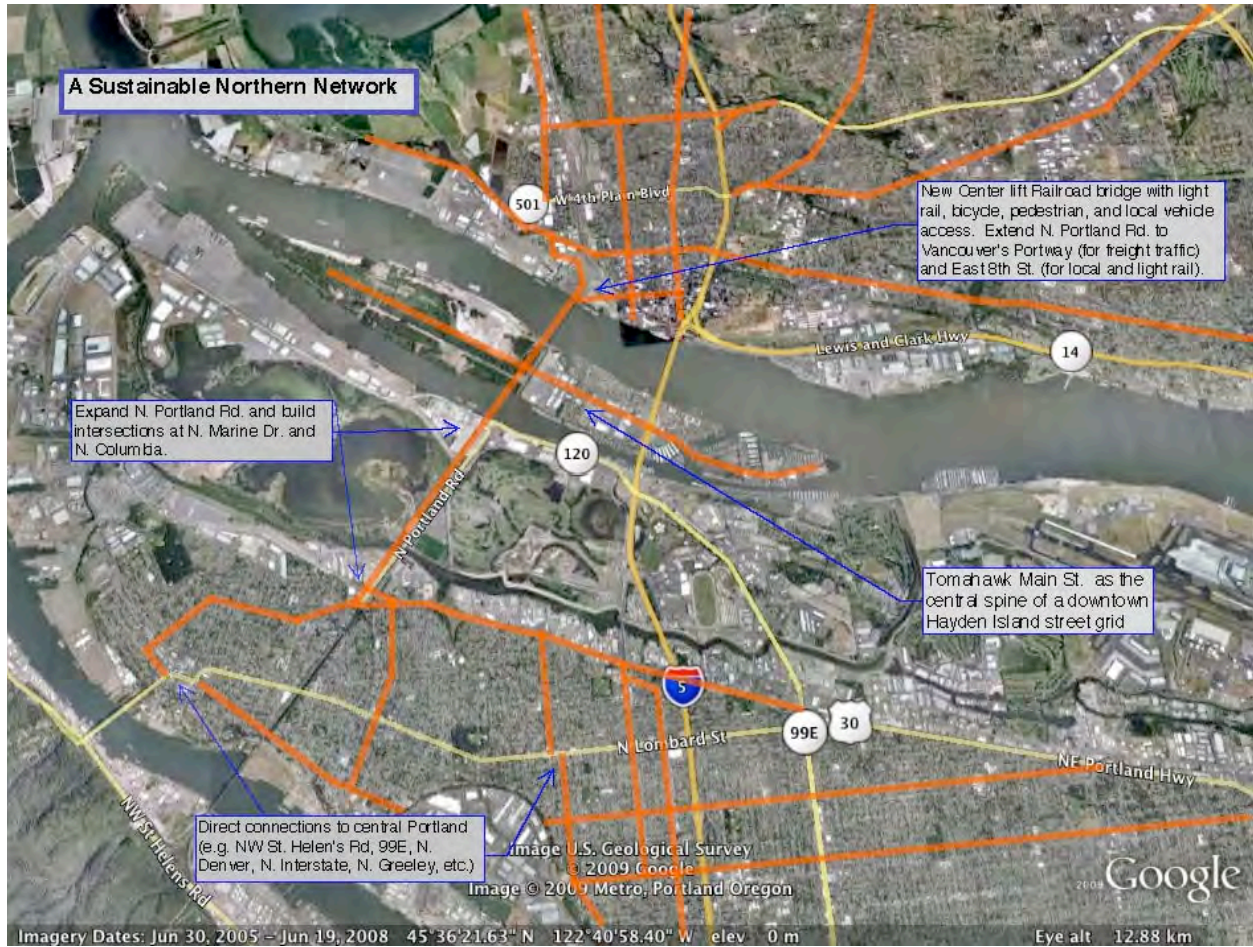
Currently I-5 is the only way on and off the island. As part of the East Hayden Island Plan, the local community called for an arterial bridge onto the island. Only two locations for a bridge were discussed and a location through the approximate center of West Hayden Island was considered preferable. The location would connect with Marine Drive at the eastern edge of Terminal Six.



In the 2nd Quarter 2008 Portland State Real Estate Quarterly & Urban Development Journal²¹, Professor Will Macht presented an alternative plan to the Columbia River Crossing. He argued that instead of an expensive new 12-lane freeway bridge, the DOT's should raise the I-5 bridge 18 feet at its peak to be able to remove the lift span, recover the 38 feet between the two spans to insert two reversible lanes and build an arterial/light rail bridge, as a twin to the BNSF Railroad bridge. The shorter, lower steel bridge, at a 530-foot narrower location, would be far less expensive and would connect the intersection of Marine Drive and North Portland Road with downtown and the Port of Vancouver.



²¹ Macht, Will <http://www.pdx.edu/realestate/news-research-real-estate>



Light rail would have a logical new station near the downtown Vancouver Amtrak & commuter rail station then continue into downtown on West 8th, serving the redeveloped Boise Cascade development and stimulating more mixed-use development in the west end of downtown Vancouver. It would provide the first non-freeway connection between Portland, Hayden Island and Vancouver. The CRC estimates that half of all trips across the I-5 Bridge are in fact local trips,

between north Portland and Vancouver, and a new bridge would open up multiple direct routes between Vancouver and Portland (e.g. Hwy 30, 99E, Interstate, N. Greeley). Freight traffic makes up an additional 7% and the two ports would have an alternative to congested I-5²².

Regardless of the outcome of the Columbia River Crossing debate, the region should consider building this new bridge. Immediately, it would open the center of Hayden Island to appropriate urban development commensurate with its central location, natural amenities, and infrastructure investment. The twin bridge would tie the two street networks together and knit the neighboring but isolated communities of Vancouver, North Portland, and Hayden Island into a more cohesive urban entity. Led by a new town center at Hayden Island, higher density development would be encouraged at the natural centers of downtown Vancouver, St. John's, and Kenton.

Why not North Waterfront?

It is somewhat depressing to compare the massive investment, both in time and financial subsidies, which the region has poured into creating the South Waterfront district, with the seeming indifference it has given to Hayden Island.



In the 38 acres of South Waterfront, PDC and private developers have created a multimodal destination with new streets, new parks, a streetcar, an aerial tram, and soon a new iconic pedestrian and light rail/pedestrian-only bridge over the Willamette, all to mold the small isolated area divided by noisy freeways into a model community of 5,500 residents. While to our north, a 1,400-acre real island, already home to half that many people, with 11 miles of natural waterfront at the confluence of the

Willamette and Columbia Rivers, lies ripe for redevelopment. With appropriate planning its population and services could be the nucleus of an exceptional urban waterfront island growth center.

The CRC revised plan would permanently divide Hayden Island at grade with a mammoth, wide, bermed freeway. Both sides of it are already scarred by suburban sprawl and pockmarked with vast parking lots. Almost none of the uses are currently connected to each other in a walkable manner. The city has conducted a hastily conceived planning process for the eastern half of the island that permits continuation of low-density sprawl and that is not even integrated with a planning process for the western half. The multimillion planning process for the bridge has not even considered in a comprehensive way the integration of a multibillion bridge with potential land use development on the island. And now the Port wants to build shipping terminals to offload cars on the 60 percent of the island it owns that is in mostly natural, heavily treed condition.

²² Columbia River Crossing *Travel Demand Review*, May 2008

Today as the city plans whether to build a \$4 billion, 10-12-lane massive new freeway bridge that will define our region's future identity and permanently divide, rather than connect, our northern neighborhoods, it is worth asking the question again. Are we making a good choice? Throughout the last two decades Clark County has led the region in population growth, with over 400,000 people, and yet downtown Vancouver is still connected to Portland by only a single freeway bridge while 10 bridges cross the Willamette at or near downtown Portland.

There is only a single freeway to access the island. On it, one is not even aware that it is an island. An area larger than downtown Portland, that is strategically located at the symbolic and transportation heart of our entire region, half of which is undeveloped, has enormous potential to be an exceptional model of what an urban waterfront island could be. A place with 11 miles of waterfront on the largest river in the West, adjacent to the second largest downtown in the region and a short distance to the largest, less than 10 minutes to the airport and at the crossroads of the busiest rail and highway corridors lies ripe for redevelopment. More than 60% of it is already publicly owned, and billions of dollars are about to be spent on its infrastructure. Yet no one is even talking about how to pull all these threads together into a place that is truly sustainable, in every way, economically, environmentally, and urbanistically. Where are the planning and development communities when we most need their skills?

