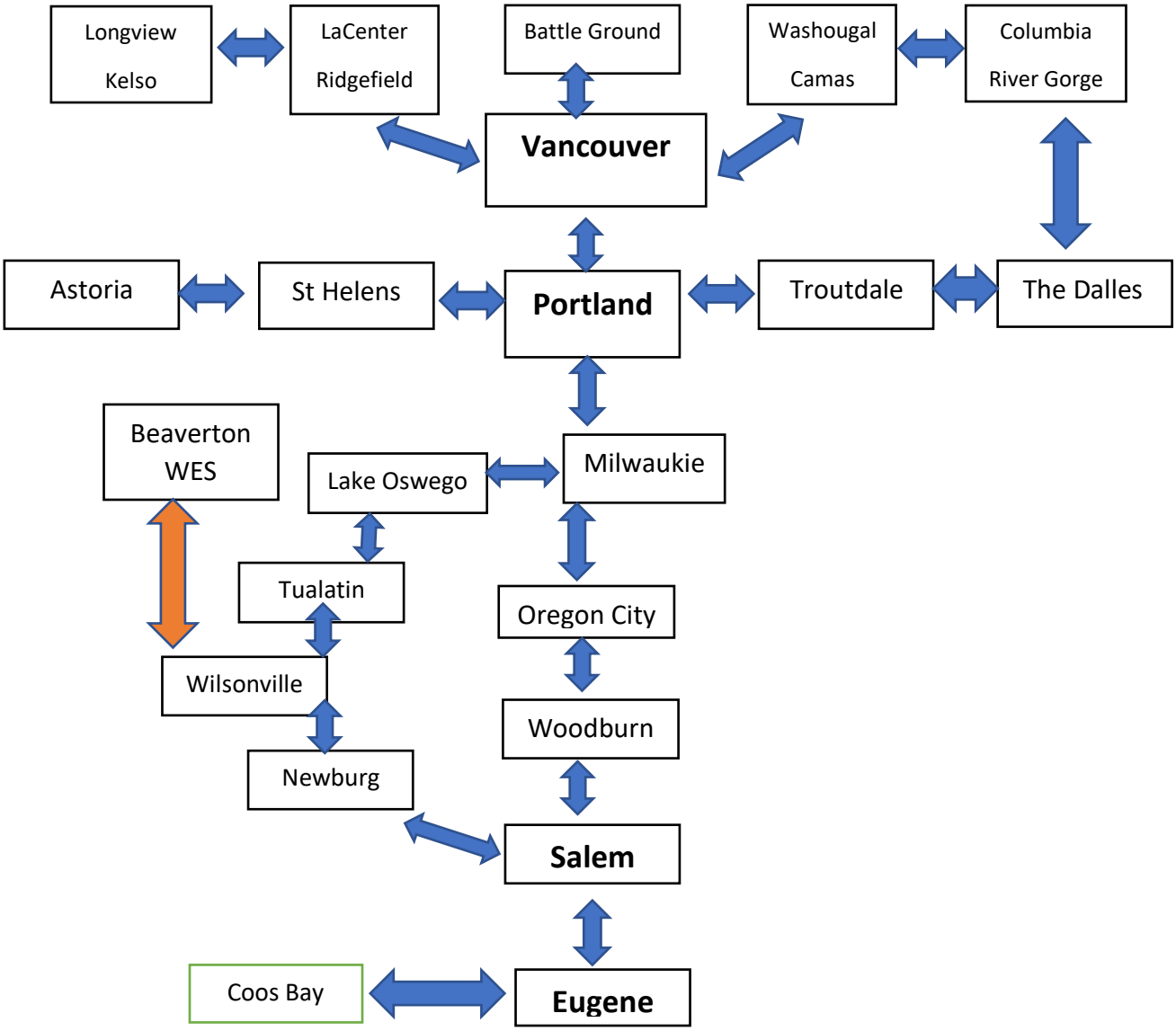
Regional Passenger Rail Service could help Climate Change and Equity

ODOT and WASHDOT needs to plan for passenger rail development. I-5 congestion could be reduced by developing regional electric-battery passenger rail service on the existing rail lines from SW Washington through the Willamette Valley. Climate change can be reduced by regional electric passenger rail development in Oregon and Washington. A bus goes about one mile on a fifth of a gallon of diesel, costing about one dollar to move **40** passengers. The San Francisco BART passenger rail car uses about 3.5 Kilowatt/Hour per mile costing about 35 cents to move **150** passengers. A fleet of Stadler Battery powered Passenger Cars (FLIRT) are in service in Germany which has proved to reduce carbon emissions. Battery or Hydrogen powered Rail cars could be used in the Northwest to reduce greenhouse gases. Regional Rail travel is faster than automobiles. Rail commuters would avoid tolls, bypass I-5 Bridge and the congested Rose Quarter as currently proposed by the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program. Tolling does little to reduce carbon emissions, while electric powered passenger rail cars have tremendous emission reduction. Rail travel provides safer travel and equity to all citizens.

Regional Passenger Rail system with only 17 foot wide right of way can move as many passengers per hour as a four lane freeway. Rail is much cheaper and faster to build than a freeway. Passenger trains could travel during the day and Freight trains can use the same rails at night. The following map shows corridors which have freight trains running that could be modified relative cheaply to add regional rail passenger service.