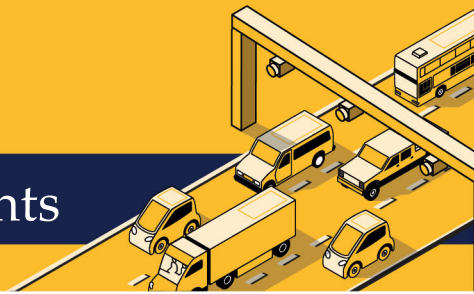


Oregon Toll Program

Committee Meeting #15 – Public Comments



Date received 10/25/2021

Source Project inbox

From Elizabeth Graser-Lindsey

Subject: Committee Public Comment -- Public Feedback on I205 Tolling Project

ATTACHED PUBLIC COMMENT TRANSCRIBED BELOW (*transcription was provided by sender. Attachment follows*):

Dear Decision Makers on I205 Tolling Project:

The I-205 Tolling Project update for public comment states in its Purpose, "The I-205 Toll Project will use variable-rate tolls on the Abernethy and Tualatin River Bridges to raise revenue to complete the I-205 Improvements Project and manage congestion." The lack of revenue to complete I-205 Improvement Projects and to prevent regional congestion is an open acknowledgement that the lack of System Development Charges (SDCs) for regional transportation -- highways and freeways -- charged for new regional development is causing harm to the region.

- This harm takes the form of congestion that impacts each trip that residents take such as slowing the trip and making it inefficient wasting residents' time and fuel and likely reducing roadway safety.
- This harm also takes the form of development not covering its costs to the region nor factoring in the cost of transportation into development decision.
- It turns out that SDCs for regional transportation are a congestion-reduction/demand management tool (despite AskODOT's assertion to the contrary). Therefore they naturally would encourage compact urban forms, discourage driving and would benefit climate. When an organization or individual bears the actual cost of their (new development) impacts, they factor those costs into their decision making -- such as whether to develop (or live) close in e.g. near transportation hubs and transit or whether to develop in remote sprawling locations. System Development Charges for regional transportation could be quite complementary to enacting Vehicle Miles Travelled charges and Vehicle Miles Reduction programs, that are under consideration. If they were implemented in that way, SDCs would be a strong congestion-reduction/demand management tool and they would help with encouraging infill and with discouraging sprawl and its exorbitant costs.

Tolls are a poor congestion-reduction/demand management tool because they penalize people for unavoidably using the regional inefficient system of roads connecting sprawling and incomplete communities (e.g. they tax people going to work or not using transit because of last mile considerations and they push some traffic on to surface streets causing more problems) rather than giving them positive options – like compact urban forms -- so they don't need to congest the roads.

- ODOT's failure to charge SDCs for regional transportation is the main cause of regional congestion which has built up over many years when regional-transportation SDCs were a potential, but untapped, funding source. While SDCs can't be charged for congestion that predates new development, new development can pay for the congestion it generates as soon as you implement the SDCs. And, as soon as you implement the SDCs, the "funding gap" to correct congestion will stop growing.
- It is much more sensible to penalize the public in such a way that there is an incentive for them to live close to work (through a regional-transportation SDC that the developer would tend to pass on to the home buyer) than to enable the public to cheaply live far from work and service and urban centers (through no ODOT SDC) and then penalize the entire public (through new tolls) for the sprawling transportation needed to service the sprawling development.
- It is unreasonable for the long-time transportation system users to have to subsidize new development that overcrowded the roadway system in recent years/decades. Tolls are essentially a new development subsidy paid by the general public. Development should pay its own way, not pass its costs on to the general public.
- Using tolls to do what SDCs should have done and still could do causes cynicism in much of the public and damages the good will that we need to solve serious problems such as climate change.
- Furthermore, subsidizing new development through tolls puts ODOT further from decreasing transportation greenhouse gas emissions, ODOT's GAP graph (see attachment). The GAP is the failure to meet the emission reduction target because we see (elsewhere in ODOT data) that per capita emissions have leveled off or reduced and it's the encouraging of population growth (new development) that keeps Oregon's transportation greenhouse gas emissions from taking the trajectory that the legislature and governor have legally-given.
- And subsidizing new development through tolls puts ODOT further from complying with Statewide Planning Goals 12 and 14 that direct transportation plans and development to stay within the carrying capacity of the air which the GHG emission goals indicate has been surpassed.

Please responsibly address Oregon's transportation funding gap and failure to reach GHG emission goals through System Development Charges rather than tolls.

October 25, 2021

Dear Decision Makers on I205 Tolling Project:

The I-205 Tolling Project update for public comment states in its Purpose, "The I-205 Toll Project will use variable-rate tolls on the Abernethy and Tualatin River Bridges to raise revenue to complete the I-205 Improvements Project and manage congestion."

The lack of revenue to complete I-205 Improvement Projects and to prevent regional congestion is an open acknowledgement that the lack of System Development Charges (SDCs) for regional transportation -- highways and freeways -- charged for new regional development is causing harm to the region.

- This harm takes the form of congestion that impacts each trip that residents take such as slowing the trip and making it inefficient wasting residents' time and fuel and likely reducing roadway safety.
- This harm also takes the form of development not covering its costs to the region nor factoring in the cost of transportation into development decision.
- It turns out that **SDCs for regional transportation are a congestion-reduction/demand management tool** (despite AskODOT's assertion to the contrary¹). Therefore **they naturally would encourage compact urban forms, discourage driving and would benefit climate**. When an organization or individual bears the actual cost of their (new development) impacts, they factor those costs into their decision making -- such as whether to develop (or live) close in e.g. near transportation hubs and transit or whether to develop in remote

1

Elizabeth Lindsey <eaglsing@gmail.com> Jun 11, 2018, 11:34 AM

Good morning Elizabeth –

Thanks for reaching out to Ask ODOT with your questions about system development charges (SDCs). As you probably know, the funding decisions and mechanisms involved with transportation projects are complex. ODOT is funded in large part by fuel taxes (both state and federal) and often works in partnership with local jurisdictions to complete projects.

You specifically asked whether ODOT has considered funding projects through System Development Charges. The short answer is yes. However, SDCs can only be assessed on new development and the revenues from those charges are only invested in related projects. As SDCs cannot be assessed at a high enough rate to cover 100% of project costs, this leaves a funding gap. Often, if these projects are not included in investment plans (either by the state or another jurisdiction) then these projects (and the SDC funds already generated/committed) sit awaiting additional funding. For myriad reasons, ODOT does not currently assess SDCs or rely on revenues generated therein to maintain our transportation system. In the past, some state facilities have been included in local government SDCs revenues.

You also asked about value pricing as a revenue generation mechanism. As you may know, the Oregon Legislature passed [HB 2017, Keep Oregon Moving](#), during the 2017 legislative session. In that funding package, the Legislature directed ODOT to evaluate different value pricing options both as a congestion-reduction/demand management tool and a revenue generation tool. Consistent with the legislative direction, ODOT is in the process of [evaluating all available options](#), with input from the Policy Advisory Committee and members of the public. If tolls are ever placed on Oregon roadways, it will be after engagement with the public, the [legislature](#), and the [Oregon Transportation Commission](#).

As a final note, value pricing focuses on demand management *and* revenue generation, whereas SDCs aren't an effective roadway management tool.

If you're interested in specific projects in your area or specific details about the value pricing options I'd be happy to talk in more detail, or direct you to the right person. Hope this helps. Please let me know if you have additional questions. Thanks.

Lindsay

Lindsay Baker
Government Relations Manager
Oregon Department of Transportation
355 Capitol St. NE
Salem, OR 97301
(503) 877-7019 (cell)

sprawling locations. **System Development Charges for regional transportation could be quite complementary to enacting Vehicle Miles Travelled charges and Vehicle Miles Reduction programs**, that are under consideration. If they were implemented in that way, SDCs would be a strong congestion-reduction/demand management tool and they would help with encouraging infill and with discouraging sprawl and its exorbitant costs.

Tolls are a poor congestion-reduction/demand management tool because they penalize people for unavoidably using the regional inefficient system of roads connecting sprawling and incomplete communities (e.g. they tax people going to work or not using transit because of last mile considerations and they push some traffic on to surface streets causing more problems) rather than giving them positive options – like compact urban forms -- so they don't need to congest the roads.

- ODOT's failure to charge SDCs for regional transportation is the main cause of regional congestion which has built up over many years when regional-transportation SDCs were a potential, but untapped, funding source. While SDCs can't be charged for congestion that predates new development, new development can pay for the congestion it generates as soon as you implement the SDCs. And, as soon as you implement the SDCs, the "funding gap" to correct congestion will stop growing.
- It is much more sensible to penalize the public in such a way that there is an incentive for them to live close to work (through a regional-transportation SDC that the developer would tend to pass on to the home buyer) than to enable the public to cheaply live far from work and service and urban centers (through no ODOT SDC) and then penalize the entire public (through new tolls) for the sprawling transportation needed to service the sprawling development.
- It is unreasonable for the long-time transportation system users to have to subsidize new development that overcrowded the roadway system in recent years/decades. Tolls are essentially a new development subsidy paid by the general public. Development should pay its own way, not pass its costs on to the general public.
- Using tolls to do what SDCs should have done and still could do causes cynicism in much of the public and damages the good will that we need to solve serious problems such as climate change.
- Furthermore, **subsidizing new development through tolls puts ODOT further from decreasing transportation greenhouse gas emissions,**

ODOT's GAP graph

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JwV6SevgC3k&feature=youtu.be> 6:00/57:57)

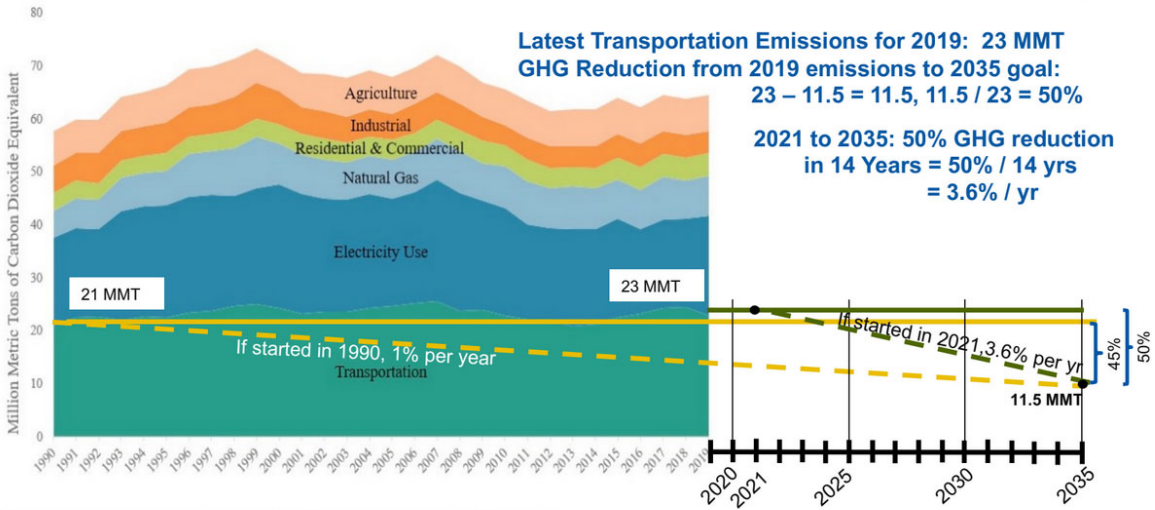


The GAP is the failure to meet the emission reduction target.

because we see (elsewhere in ODOT data) that per capita emissions have leveled off or reduced and it's the encouraging of population growth (new

development) that keeps Oregon's transportation greenhouse gas emissions from taking the trajectory that the legislature and governor have legally-given.

Greenhouse gas emissions from 1990-2019



Emissions from transportation and electricity use are Oregon's largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions.

Datasource: <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/aq/programs/Pages/GHG-Inventory.aspx>

- And subsidizing new development through tolls puts ODOT further from complying with Statewide Planning Goals 12² and 14³ that direct transportation plans and development to stay within the carrying capacity of the air which the GHG emission goals indicate has been surpassed.

Please responsibly address Oregon's transportation funding gap and failure to reach GHG emission goals through System Development Charges rather than tolls.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Graser-Lindsey
 Beavercreek, OR 97004

² Statewide Planning Goal 12 – Transportation A6. “Plans providing for a transportation system should consider as a major determinant the carrying capacity of the air, land and water resources of the planning area. The land conservation and development actions provided for by such plans should not exceed the carrying capacity of such resources.”

³ Statewide Planning Goal 14 -- Urbanization A3. “Plans providing for the transition from rural to urban land use should take into consideration as to a major determinant the carrying capacity of the air, land and water resources of the planning area. The land conservation and development actions provided for by such plans should not exceed the carrying capacity of such resources.”

Date received	10/27/2021
Source	Project inbox
From	Heidi Petersen

Subject: Committee Public Comment

The toll will cause a hardship for our family. We drive from Oregon City to Tigard on 205 and I-5 four times a day to drop off and pick up our daughter from school. I will end up avoiding the freeway and travel through West Linn and Lake Oswego causing more traffic in these towns. The citizens of Clackamas County do not want tolls. They never go away and only spread once in place. The toll situation makes me want to move to another state. I'm upset this was never put to a vote by the people living here.

Date received	10/27/2021
Source	Project inbox
From	Vivian McQueeney

Subject: Committee Public Comment

I live in Oregon City. All your dumb ideas to toll 205 between OC and West Linn will put even more strain on Arch bridge, Willamette Falls Drive and OC 99E so people can avoid the tolls. Do you not study human behavior??? Get a grip and shut this toll down!

Date received	10/29/2021
Source	Project inbox
From	Robert White

Subject: Public Committee Comment

Please define "equity" being used here.

Why are you envisioning spending transportation dollars for "climate mitigation"? Oregon produces 0.11% of global CO2 (2019 numbers), barely a blip in the total. If you completely remove Oregon's output, and kill the State, there will be no change to the climate.

What evidence is there that tolling will lower miles traveled? There is no option to the current system.

EMAC, from listening to the meeting, seems to be a decision that's been made just looking for support for the decision. You're not listening to the public. There is no hew and cry for tolling!

Date received	11/05/2021
Source	Project inbox
From	Vivian McQueeney

Subject: Committee Public Comment

The I205 proposed toll will NOT eliminate congestion or use during busy times. It will INCREASE congestion on local roads with people diverting to avoid tolls. This is already happening when I205 is stop and go. Also what about locals who live in OC and West Linn who have daily need to travel on old bridge to access one side or the other? Either they will have an unfair cost to use the freeway or congestion even more than already experienced. This is a horrible plan!

Date received	11/07/2021
Source	Project inbox
From	Margaret Groves

Subject: Committee Public Comment: Money from infrastructure bill

Now that the infrastructure bill has passed Congress, will money be used for the I-205 bridge project and therefore obviate the need for tolling? As a West Linn resident the tolling would affect me and my neighbors significantly unless there is a provision to reduce the burden on local residents.

Date received	12/03/2021
Source	Project inbox
From	Jim Welsh

Subject: I-205 Toll Project Committee Public Comment

No to tolls on I-205. No to tolls on I-5. No tolls anywhere. Once tolling takes hold, all it does is increase time after time. Tolls are a regressive tax that mainly affect lower income people and families as they can least afford it. All tolls do is to move traffic off the highways and on to surface streets. 'Solving' one problem just creates another problem.

No to tolls.

Date received	12/03/2021
Source	Project inbox
From	Michael Kelleher

Subject: Committee Public Comment

To all concerned,

I believe that a toll system for use of the Abernethy bridge is a good idea. I was not able to find any information about a plan to adjust toll fees for low-income individuals.

I am a resident of Oregon City and make semi-regular use of the Abernethy bridge. My family is financially stable and can afford to pay these tolls on a regular basis. However, when people make so little that they are struggling to pay for basic needs, they may be forced to take any job they can. If this includes long commutes that necessitate paying expensive [to them] tolls, it becomes another source of stress which can negatively affect their work and emotional state. If people can not earn enough money to support themselves, the state will have to supplement their income and the tolls will amount to a net-zero-gain.

Please consider options for reduced-tolls for low-income individuals. I suggest an application process much like the ones used for SNAP benefits. It can be renewed annually with evidence of household income demonstrating financial need.

Thank you,

--Michael Kelleher

Oregon City, OR

Date received	12/03/2021
Source	Project inbox
From	Terry Parker

Subject: Public Comment - Tolling motorists on Oregon roadways is not equity, it's fleecing

To the Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee,

The word "equity" keeps popping up and being splashed around within the dialog of the Regional Mobility Project that would implement congestion pricing and tolling on the freeways in the Portland area. If any of the tolling revenue would be utilized to fund mass transit or bicycle infrastructure, the word "equity" no longer applies and ought to be replaced with the word "fleecing" as it pertains to the motorists who would be paying the tolls. Motorists already

pay tolls in the form of fuel taxes which are already being fleeced to fund alternative infrastructure. Obviously most people, and specifically alternative transport mode users that on a every day basis would benefit by receiving something highly subsidized or for free would be in favor of tolling and allowing the other guy paying for their personal transportation costs. Holistically, genuine "equity" must require that transit riders and bicyclists themselves pay (their own way) for the transit and bicycle infrastructure they utilize.

If, and I say if tolling is implemented in the Portland area, the revenue from tolling MUST only be utilized to upgrade motor vehicle infrastructure including increasing motor vehicle capacity on tolling bypass routes, and NOT to subsidize transit and/or to pay for bicycle infrastructure for freeloaders. The formula must also include not being dictators and treating people like cattle by attempting to herd them to use mass transit or on to bicycles.

Respectfully,

Terry Parker

Senior Citizen

Northeast Portland

Date received	12/10/2021
Source	Project inbox
From	MF Roberts

Subject: Committee public comment

NO TOLLS, PERIOD! Put the issue on the ballot. You work for us, not the other way around.
NO TOLLS, PERIOD!

MF Roberts

Date received	12/10/2021
Source	Project inbox
From	Anthony Warren

Subject: Committee Public Comment

Please stop the plans for tolling on I205 and I5. The people of Oregon do not want this. Please listen to the majority of citizens when they tell you this is not good for Oregonians.

The concerns about toll levels, toll sunseting, negative impact on home values, loss of revenue for local businesses, increased financial burden on low-income travelers resulting in reduced

equity, increased diversion of traffic to side roads, reduced safety in neighborhoods, the lack of non-tolled lanes, no alternate non-tolled routes, and a disproportionate tax burden on local Gladstone, West Linn and Oregon City citizens is too serious to continue pushing this ahead against the will of voters.

-Anthony Warren

Native Oregonian and Tualatin resident, taxpayer

Date received	12/10/2021
Source	Project inbox
From	Kyle Nickels

Subject: A game?

Your latest email stated the December 15th meeting will be for them work on their “Game plan”.

So this is game to you all huh? Interstate.

Means to me you’ve already decided, you will TOLL regardless of what people say, that you will TOLL without exploring ways to reduce expenditures from the exorbitant funds you already collect, that you will TOLL without considering the massive funds being made available from the Federal Government for infrastructure improvements (which also mean any funds you get from the Fed’s will be used Willy-Nilly for frivolous things you want).

A game??

Sad day for citizens when you think this is just a game.

KMN

Date received	12/10/2021
Source	Project inbox
From	Dave Farmer

Subject: Committee public coment

I am concerned about people who don't have traditional banking services. There are a lot of people who use cash only. Homeless, Gypsies, non English speakers, migrant workers. How do they get and keep an account and refill it with money?? Can you give out info on how much % of tolls will go to collecting & operating expenses?? I think that as soon as tolls start on I 205. A flood of diversion traffic will go to I 5. Especially through traffic which includes many big trucks. How much new traffic is the Tribes Cultural Center going to bring in??

Thanks

Dave Farmer

503 888 3423