

Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee (EMAC) Meeting 21 Public Comments

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| Date received | 12/06/2022 |
| Source | Project inbox |
| From | Ken |
| Subject | Committee Public Comment |

Ken has questions about EMAC.

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| Date received | 12/05/2022 |
| Source | Project inbox |
| From | Joseph Jensen |
| Subject | EMAC Public Comment |

I am against ALL Tolling!!! BTW, congestion pricing just puts an extra cost burden on those going to and from work for the most part. Direct most transportation dollars toward expanding highway capacity!!!

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| Date received | 12/05/2022 |
| Source | Project inbox |
| From | Alan Schlesinger |
| Subject | Scoping Comments - EMAC, RTAC, STRAC, RMPP Scoping Comment |

Hi! Here's my opinion on the tolling plan.

In general, I'm against it due to the fact that it will pose problems for those who can least afford it as well as place undue cost and problems for businesses and independent contractors that deliver items, as well as possible problems for those who live on "alternate" routes that will become more crowded by those wishing to avoid tolls. There may also be a lot of other unforeseen problems as well.

A number of questions come up such as:

1. Will all drivers need to have transponders installed on their cars? At what cost?
2. Will delivery drivers who may have to use the proposed tolling routes many times a day be reimbursed for tolling costs? (Tolls may be supposedly no more than two dollars per tolling spot but this can really add up if these spots are driven past several times daily! And we all know that those tolls will eventually go up!)
3. Just how much will it cost businesses that use fleets of vehicles for deliveries for things such as transponders or any other equipment they may need as a result? And will they be reimbursed in any way?
4. What about transitory drivers such as the person driving from Redding to Seattle for a business or pleasure trip? How will they pay toll if they don't have a transponder, or will they need one installed beforehand?

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5. How much additional traffic will clog alternate routes by those who wish to avoid tolls and how will this affect residents and businesses along these routes?

If toll roads are a must, there is a better way.

When Orange County, California introduced toll roads, they didn't toll existing roads but instead built new roads attached to the existing roads. This included toll roads attached to I-5. This way, users could "opt-in" rather than be automatically forced to pay tolls. Those who want to avoid traffic can opt to use the toll roads, and those who don't want to pay tolls or can't afford to pay tolls stay on the non-toll roads and still get to where they want to go.

The main advantage is that those who opt to use the toll roads help add the additional funds that are needed and automatically lessen the traffic on the existing non-toll roads and highways at the same time, and those who cannot really afford tolls wouldn't have to pay them by staying on the non-tolled roads. Win-win!

In addition, there would likely be far less, if any, traffic on "alternate" routes from drivers trying to avoid tolls!

A similar system, where alternate roads and freeways can be built, or even just special lanes added that would be "tolling" lanes, would help in the Portland area and be a better alternative to tolling all lanes of I-5 and I-205 and would likely be less controversial.

Sure, it would probably take longer to implement and yes, there would be obstacles to overcome, especially if new roads are to be built or existing roads widened to accommodate one or two new "tolling" lanes, but in the long run, it would actually be a better and probably more acceptable and workable plan for those on both sides of the issue.

A special lane, or a separate span on the I-5 and Glenn Jackson bridges would also likely be more acceptable to Washington State, which has expressed concern for residents of Vancouver, many of whom need to go to Portland to work.

I strongly urge ODOT to consider this type of alternative. Talk to the officials in Orange County to see how they worked out the problems also.

I'm certainly not an engineer or technical traffic person, but I am a delivery driver here in the Portland area and I am originally from Southern California and know that the toll roads in Orange County seem to work pretty well without forcing everyone to pay tolls.

If you want to reach me, or have any questions for me, please let me know.

Thanks for letting me have my opinion on this issue.

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| Date received | 12/09/2022 |
| Source | Project inbox |
| From | Cindy Belles |
| Subject | Committee Public Comment |

If the purpose of tolling I-205 is to reduce congestion, then why charge tolling at 2:00 am when there is no traffic?

How will charging people to drive on I-205 during rush hours reduce traffic when most don't have a choice of the hours they work/commute? All it will do is inflict financial pain on the people who need to get to work, and the traffic congestion will remain the same. Public transportation isn't an option for most people, and bus routes don't even exist in a lot of places. Tri-Met is discontinuing routes in Tualatin and Sherwood, as a matter of fact. We don't live in New York City where a subway system can take you practically door-to-door to where you need to go, so I wish Metro and ODOT would stop acting as if we do.

I've heard that as much as 60% of the revenue from tolls will be spent on the collection of them. That's insane and incredibly wasteful. This tolling plan should be scrapped if so much of the money you are charging drivers is going toward anything other than infrastructure improvements.

Diversion off of freeways is going to paralyze the towns of Willamette and Oregon City. The gridlock on side streets in the area will be disastrous. It's not fair to make the existing residents and business people drive over a thousand speed bumps that you've installed to discourage diversion, either.

I would really like someone to address my questions/comments. ODOT representatives seem to ignore these legitimate concerns or give canned answers like telling everyone to take the bus or ride a bike – well, that doesn't work for my mobility-challenged 80-year-old mother and a lot of other people too.

Please enter my comments into the public record.

Please reply.

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| Date received | 12/16/2022 |
| Source | Project inbox |
| From | Heather Walker-Dale |
| Subject | EMAC Public Comment |

Dear all,

I live in Clackamas county and strongly oppose the proposed tolls on both I-5 and I-205 as (an exorbitant) means of regressive taxation often on those who can least afford it. We need better green public transport—European-style fast rail lines—not this antiquated and cumbersome program of expensive tolls. Tolling disproportionately harms lower-income people who need to drive, sometimes long distances, for work. As Research Fellow at The University Transportation Research Center Jonathan Peters has noted, tolling “is a regressive form of taxation. This can be very, very painful for a low-income household,” Peters said. “It could be the straw that breaks the camel’s back for the working poor.”

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Additionally, tolling disrupts local communities as drivers search for alternate toll-free roadways that were not built for such traffic volumes. I see this already, often, when there is some disruption on the freeways and our parallel roads are clogged for huge lengths of time at T-junctions not built to handle such congestion.

There are MANY other ways to raise funds for road projects that come with many fewer drawbacks and disruptions, and I urge you to explore those alternatives, again if necessary, in place of tolling. I know of no Oregon resident in my community that welcomes this and many who are worried about daily concerns like collecting groceries if such tolls come into effect.

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| Date received | 12/19/2022 |
| Source | Project inbox |
| From | Gerald & Susan Baker |
| Subject | EMAC: I-5 tolls impacting Charbonneau |

Hello Oregon Tolling Team - EMAC,

I am a retired 76-year-old Charbonneau resident and I am very concerned about the impact of I-5 tolling on the Boone Bridge on my expenses and our community broadly. Charbonneau, which is part of the town of Wilsonville, lies just south of the Boone Bridge. My wife and I cross the Boone Bridge every day to shop, pick up grandkids, go to the doctor and many other reasons. Charbonneau is isolated from just about everything by the Boone Bridge and tolling on the bridge would be financially very damaging for all of us in Charbonneau on fixed incomes. I recognize the need for Oregon to generate income for highway maintenance and expansion but putting a toll reader on the bridge would be a huge hardship on all 3,000 Charbonneau residents. If I-5 tolling is implemented, two solutions for Charbonneau residents would be acceptable: (A) moving the toll reader north or south of the bridge, or (B) granting Charbonneau residents an exemption from paying tolls when crossing the Boone Bridge. Please consider providing a solution to avoid the extreme hardship on Charbonneau residents like my wife and me when planning the tolling network.

Thank you for your consideration!

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| Date received | 01/06/2023 |
| Source | Project inbox |
| From | Gary & Marti Moody |
| Subject | Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee |

WE STRONGLY DISAGREE WITH TOLLING OUR HIGHWAYS AND DO NOT WANT IT!!!! We live just off the abernathy bridge and will need to pay tolls every time we are on I205. This is wrong and unfair as we will have to pay tolls constantly. People living near I205 will have the greatest, and wrongful and unfair financial impact! I have read extensively the intent of this toll and it cannot and will not improve traffic flow. As for forcing people to side streets and neighborhoods to lessen congestion on I205 is an absurd proposal. There are no direct driving routes avoiding I205 due to the river. The alternate routes are no solution to reduced traffic on highways. In fact, it is plain wrong to try to convince us that it is!! The other suggestions are not an effective solution either. This appears to be just another tax revenue move that Oregon is FORCING on Oregonians, with no effective solution to help the actual problem.

There are many reasons that tolling is a bad idea. A few are the environmental impact from idling side street vehicles, toll prices, sun-setting of tolls, use of funds, tolling overhead, no free hours, no free lanes, and why only 1 small but expensive section of I-205 to start.

I have read alternative suggestions you have received that are better solutions to the traffic issue that don't require a toll. I am pleading that there is NO toll and that you insist truly improving the problem. Stop spending more and more money on a result that will not solve the problem. We all know that the budget for this project will have many overruns, take much longer than we're told, and in the end won't help anything. This state seems to have a belief system that if the issue just gets more money it will be fixed. Never has, never will, and as taxpayers we resent this tactic deeply. Stop forcing your opinions on us and actually be responsible with solutions that work. DON'T FOCE THIS ON US! WE DON'T WANTIT!

Thank you. Listen to we the people, please!

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| Date received | 01/06/2023 |
| Source | Project Inbox |
| From | Gay Walker |
| Subject | EMAC Public Comment |

Dear Sir/Madam;

I understand members of the public may write to this site with their comments about the proposed ODOT tolling initiative until midnight tonight.

I am writing to add my voice to those who believe such a toll set up would massively damage those who are least able to pay. As you must know, the huge bedroom communities of Canby and Woodburn, of Albany and Aloha, provide workers for much of Portland's commercial enterprises, and they would be most affected by a \$10 toll (\$5 each way, I understand). I think this is very short-sighted. The cost of

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setting up the electronic tagging system alone is staggering, so how long will it be in place before that is paid for?

Tolls do NOT cut down on traffic and congestion, as many more people will be taking the back roads to avoid the tolls, and the congestion is already great there at rush hour since people's GPS systems direct them around back-ups and the increasing slowness of I-5 and 205 during rush hour.

Tolls are also a great burden for those who are on a fixed income and need to get into Wilsonville from Charbonneau for their basic grocery shopping. Who can justify \$10 to go buy groceries beyond the cost of running the car and gas?

Surely there are other ways to pay for what's needed? An annual tax on electric cars for road use would be one possibility (I have one and would be willing as it only seems fair). Encouraging more to go electric? Higher annual or biennial DEQ fees?

I am hoping there will NOT be tolls set up.. Having lived in a state (CT) with toll booths for 20 years which were then actually removed when their goals had been met was edifying. But the tolls electronically zapped between NYC and CT is a nightmare, and their roads are horrible, so how did that help? Please keep Oregon smartly out of this pot hole!

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| Date received | 01/07/2023 |
| Source | Project inbox |
| From | Christopher Hale |
| Subject | EMAC public comment re: scoping for RMPP |

I'm writing to comment on the plan for tolling and congestion pricing on I-5 and I-205. As it currently stands, there are multiple changes that must be made.

First, a bit of background to understand my perspective. I'm a full time ER doctor, who has witnessed first hand the human toll of our current climate crisis. Over the past few years, we have seen our ER flooded with people suffering from heat stroke during our record setting heat waves each summer. When yearly wildfire smoke chokes our air, patient's flood our ER in respiratory distress. This is especially devastating to our most vulnerable populations: children, the elderly, and the economically or historically disadvantaged. As our country warms, tropical diseases are already working their way north into our country. If climate change continues unabated, this will only worsen.

I am also the father of two small children, 4 and 5 years old. I lay awake at night, thinking of the future we are leaving for them. We have a critically narrow window of time in which to fend off the worst outcomes of the climate crisis. Every year that we put off the changes that must be made, and every project where we do not focus every effort on building a sustainable transportation system, we condemn our children and grandchildren to a grim future.

As a commitment to my children, we have made a pledge to do everything in our power to build a brighter future for them. As such, my wife and I bring our kids to and from school every day by bicycle. And I commute to and from work every day by bicycle, on a route that uses that relies on the I-205 multiuser

path. Every day, I ride along side the many vehicles congesting this road. The only way to reduce congestion long term and build an equitable, sustainable transportation system is if we give these drivers other viable transportation options.

It is with this perspective that I see the potential for tolling and congestion pricing, but also see where the current plan falls short of what it must accomplish.

The primary purpose of the Regional Mobility Pricing Project should be to reduce vehicle miles traveled. This will help reduce congestion while simultaneously decreasing air pollution, vehicle related deaths, and combatting climate change.

The primary purpose of the RMPP should NOT be revenue, and that revenue should NOT be used to fund further roadway expansion. Doing so will only cause the well known phenomenon of induced demand, meaning that widening freeways leads to more people driving, which causes recurrent congestion, and an INCREASE in pollution, climate exacerbating carbon emissions, and increased deaths of pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.

Any revenue generated from tolling and congestion pricing should be used to fund safe, low-carbon multimodal transportation options, like increased and expanded train services, bus only lanes that allow buses to preferentially bypass congested personal vehicle lanes, infrastructure that allows increased bicycling and micro mobility options, and a plan that prioritizes safety of pedestrians over vehicles.

It is critical that all of the “Urban Mobility Strategy” projects and plans for tolling in the regional freeway system have a complete environmental analysis, including an Environmental Impact Statement.

ODOT should also develop a mechanism to exchange toll revenue for unrestricted federal dollars, in order to fund transit options and projects that do NOT involve expanding freeways for private motor vehicle use.

The travel time impacts shouldn't be assessed for only personal motor vehicle drivers. This is fundamentally unfair, especially for those of lesser means who may not be able to afford to own a car. They are already at an economic disadvantage, and it is an injustice to ignore the effect of the project on their commute by bus, trains, or other means.

Similarly, any project should include an analysis of the impacts to education, affordable housing, access to jobs, safety of pedestrians and bicyclists, air pollution, and other impacts on people living in underserved communities (racial minorities, those in poverty, etc).

As currently proposed, the RMPP does not even reflect the recommendations of ODOT's own Equitable and Mobility Advisory Committee (EMAC). EMAC should be involved in all discussions about the RMPP, in order to ensure revenue is administered equitably, and equitable outcomes.

If these changes are made, the plan for tolling and congestion pricing on I-205 and I-5 could become a critical component to our city's long term plans to build an equitable, sustainable, and model transportation system of the future. It will build a a future for our children and grandchildren where people

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have enhanced mobility, while also maximizing their health, safety, and happiness. Remember, YOUR children and grandchildren will look back at the decisions you make right now, and judge you for how they build their future. Do whatever is necessary to make their future a bright one.

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| Date received | 01/20/2023 |
| Source | Project inbox |
| From | Dave Carr |
| Subject | EMAC Public Comment |

To whom it may concern,

Please accept the attached one-page document as feedback for the Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee Meeting #21 to be held February 1, 2023/2:30 to 5:00 p.m.

This is "Committee Public Comment"

(This letter has been submitted twice, after receiving revised instructions for the subject line in your auto-reply.)

Thanks for your consideration,
David L. Carr
West Linn Resident
503-351-4207
davidmlcarr@gmail.com<<mailto:davidmlcarr@gmail.com>>

To the Members of ODOT, Tri-Met, and the Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee,
1/29/2023

In this letter I hope to convince you to reconsider your I-205 Abernathy Bridge tolling plan.

I do not have any issues with your plans to toll: I realize that with shrinking gas tax revenues tolling is inevitable. I do not have any issues with your plans to implement congestion pricing: that is one way in which a toll can spread out traffic and have a positive effect. I do not have any issues with your plans to assist lower-income commuters, particularly with the egregious amounts I have seen proposed for a single trip across the Abernathy Bridge.

But your current plans for tolling across the I-205 Abernathy Bridge will not meet your second stated goal: "Limit additional rerouting to adjacent roads and neighborhoods due to drivers avoiding the tolled interstates."

I have three main arguments against the current plan:

- The Abernathy Bridge toll will exacerbate traffic diversion, not reduce it.
- These tolls will place a major burden on the local area businesses as well as residents.
- Doing a 'pilot project' rather than implementing all tolls at once will place an unfair burden on the local population, instead of sharing the cost amongst all who commute into downtown.

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Any Economics 101 professor would tell you that increasing the cost of consumption will decrease demand. The argument that raising tolls which will reduce traffic and which will 'bring back local traffic to the highway' is circular at best. Sure, raise tolls to \$100 a trip and there will be zero congestion; but that obviously can't be the goal: the goal is an efficient commute for the majority of commuters. Peak pricing will have a positive effect; but the higher the toll the greater the negative effect, especially when first implemented. The increase in (cost-conscious) drivers using an alternate route will more than offset those (rich) few who will move off the local road and go back onto the freeway.

Local businesses will be hit with a double-whammy: workers will balk at paying an expensive toll that might wipe out up to an hour's pay each day, therefore causing local employment shortages, or require local businesses to raise worker's salaries (which will be passed on to consumers, reducing demand). In addition to this supply-side hit, demand will be reduced as commuters will take the cheaper, local option, and not cross that bridge when they come to it. Increased traffic on the side roads will also reduce local demand – those on the hill will stay on the hill, and those in the east side of West Linn won't cross over to the historic district as often, due to increased diversionary traffic on Willamette Falls Drive.

Tolls across the three main bridges that provide North/South access to Multnomah County should produce plenty of revenue to offset the loss in gas tax revenue and provide funds to repair all roads and bridges within that area. These three bridges have no easy alternative route, and thus diversionary traffic will be minimal.

Therefore, my recommendations are:

- Do not tax traffic over the Abernathy Bridge. Diversionary options are too plentiful to expect they will not be taken en-masse, causing substantial harm to local residents and businesses.
- Instead, tax traffic crossing the Boone Bridge, the I-5 Interstate Bridge, and the Glenn Jackson I-205 Bridge. None of these areas have easily accessible diversionary routes, thus achieving your goal to:
"Limit additional rerouting to adjacent roads and neighborhoods due to drivers avoiding the tolled interstates."
- Begin toll rates at lower rates than currently envisioned, and do it across all three spans at once. This will reduce objections, while still producing revenue to offset gas tax revenues. As gas tax revenues continue to be reduced, higher tolls in the future will make more sense to the voting public than gouging local commuters now.

I know you are busy, so I have summarized my main points into this one-page letter.

Sincerely yours,

David L. Carr, West Linn Resident 503-351-4207 davidmlcarr@google.com