

Meeting Summary

Subject	Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee Meeting #21
Date and Time	February 1, 2023 / 2:30 pm to 5:00 pm
Location	Hybrid; recording available via YouTube livestream

Attendees	Organization
Ismael Armenta	At-large member, Oregon Walks
Tangerine Behere	Ride Connection
Paul Burgess	Fourth Plain Forward
LaQuinta Daniels	Clark County Juvenile Court
John Gardner	TriMet
James Paulson	WorkSystems, Inc.
Eduardo Ramos	At-large member
Rachel Winslow	At-large member
Dr. Philip Wu	Oregon Environmental Council
Commissioner Sharon Smith	Oregon Transportation Commission Liaison

Not in attendance: Jeff Christian, At-large member; Germain Flentroy, Beyond Black; Amanda Garcia-Snell, Washington County Community Engagement; Fabian Hidalgo Guerrero, Oregon Food Bank; Adam Torres, Clackamas County Public Health.

Name	Meeting Role	Name	Meeting Role
Jessica Stanton	Facilitator	Jodi Mescher	Project team
Garet Prior	Project team	Kirsten Beale	Project team
Erika McCalpine	Project team	Adela Mu	Project team
Nick Fazio	Zoom host	Rebecca Steiner	Project team
Rochelle Brahall	Project team	Aliza Whalen	Project team
Logan Cullums	Project team	Aidan Simpson	Project team
MJ Jackson	Project team		

1 Welcome

Jessica Stanton, Facilitator, welcomed Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee (EMAC) members, reviewed meeting logistics, and led a centering exercise.

2 Where We've Been and Where We're Going

Jessica reviewed the EMAC Statement of Purpose. She provided an overview of the meeting agenda and objectives, which included discussing what EMAC should prioritize in the 2022 – 2025 Work Plan, brainstorming what a successful ODOT-EMAC Accountability Workshop could look like, and updating the committee on advancing process and outcome equity.

Oregon Transportation Commissioner Sharon Smith welcomed meeting attendees and noted that she will continue to serve as the OTC liaison until a new Commissioner is appointed.

Erika McCalpine, ODOT Office of Equity and Civil Rights, noted her appreciation for EMAC members and the work they are doing. She added that EMAC's work is valued and ODOT is listening.

Jessica then reviewed the goals and outcomes of EMAC Meeting 20 and the two EMAC Subcommittee meetings held in January.

3 EMAC 2022 – 2025 Work Plan

Rochelle Brahall, project team, provided an overview of the 2022 – 2025 Work Plan and highlighted the main focus areas for future EMAC work, which are the toll projects, the Low-Income Toll Program, and accountability. She discussed the workstreams related to each focus area and reviewed the guiding questions that informed EMAC's recommendations to the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC).

Rochelle then shared EMAC member input on the work plan from prior committee and subcommittee meeting discussions. Resounding feedback aligned with the following themes: discernment, effective collaboration, rate setting and revenue, accountability, and engagement.

Discussion question: Where can EMAC enact the most significant impact on equity for the Toll Program? How can the Work Plan advance equity while addressing barriers designing an equitable Toll Program?

- An EMAC member commented that toll rate and revenue distribution are important conversations.
- An EMAC member commented that it would be helpful to review previous work that went into establishing the workplan to balance priorities with previous commitments EMAC made.
 - Gareth commented that ODOT sits at many tables, and it would be challenging to work backwards because EMAC wouldn't get to discuss other issues.
 - The EMAC member responded that they are fine with where the conversation is going.

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- An EMAC member commented that bureaucracy tends to do what has been previously done, so EMAC's role will be to continue to bring equity into the conversation. They added that the relationships between EMAC, RTAC, and STRAC will be important.
 - Another EMAC member added that EMAC should find opportunities to move equity recommendations forward to STRAC and RTAC.
- Erika McCalpine commented that her role is to ensure that equity is embedded in everything ODOT does. She asked how ODOT can do a better job of letting EMAC know that they hear their concerns and feedback.
 - An EMAC member responded that ODOT has done a good job of conveying a consistent message throughout all venues, including STRAC. They added that the equity training at the first STRAC meeting was excellent, but it was high-level and showed the relative amount of time centering equity at STRAC compared to EMAC.
- An EMAC member commented that they would like clarity on the administrative costs for the toll program. They would also like to know how long it could take to pay off capital infrastructure costs.
 - Garet responded that ODOT needs to work to answer that question.
 - Another EMAC member responded that the 5% estimate for administrative costs discussed at a previous RTAC meeting was just for the operation costs typical to existing tolling facilities. The actual administrative costs in Oregon will be higher since this is a new toll program. They also noted that a 30-year repayment timeline is currently being discussed.
- An EMAC member asked to clarify the roles of the different committees.

Poll: Please select one EMAC 2022 – 2025 Work Plan workstream that is your highest priority.

- Toll Projects – Engagement
- Toll Projects – Indicators
- Toll Projects – Mitigation and localized impacts
- Low-Income Toll Program – Credits, discounts, and operations
- Low-Income Toll Program – Engagement and enrollment
- Accountability and future oversight of the Toll Program
- Rate-Setting
- Revenue Allocation

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Poll results

- Revenue Allocation: 50%
- Toll Projects – Engagement: 25%
- Low-Income Toll Program – Credits, discounts, and operations: 25%

Jessica asked if the poll results accurately represent EMAC's priorities for 2023.

- An EMAC member responded that they would rank revenue allocation and Low-Income Toll Program credits, discounts, and operations at the same level of priority.
 - Another EMAC member agreed.
- An EMAC member responded that toll project engagement should also be considered a top priority.
- An EMAC member confirmed that revenue allocation is a priority based on what they are hearing in the community.
- An EMAC member commented that revenue allocation and the Low-Income Toll Program credits are two issues; revenue allocation is a more systematic question about where the revenue is spent whereas the Low-Income Toll Program credits are an operational discussion.

Jessica noted that EMAC member priorities seem to align with **revenue allocation and Low-Income Toll Program credits, discounts, and operations**. EMAC members agreed.

- An EMAC member asked if the committee should address these priorities at the same time.
 - Another EMAC member responded that EMAC will be the only body that is discussing these issues at the same time, which will be important to address the toll program holistically.
- An EMAC member noted the importance of equity in engagement.

Jessica asked if EMAC should include **engagement** as a top-three priority.

- An EMAC member commented that each member has an individual vote for a consensus-based decision. In their opinion, focusing on engagement will have a longer and more resilient effect on the community.

Jessica thanked EMAC members and noted that this conversation around priorities will continue.

4 Turning Recommendations into Commitments and Sustaining Accountability

Jessica reviewed EMAC's recommendations to the OTC in July 2022 and the foundational statements that center equity in the Toll Program. EMAC proposed six recommended actions that encompass congestion management, disadvantaged business enterprises, accountability, revenue generation, community-based organizations, and rate-setting.

Jessica discussed the ODOT Accountability Workshops that will be held in July 2023 and July 2024. These workshops will be a shared opportunity to define a vision for an accountability structure that will sustain an equitable Toll Program.

Small group discussion: What does accountability look like to EMAC? What policies, processes and strategies are needed to ensure the Oregon Toll Program achieves sustainable equitable outcomes?

Small Group 1	Small Group 2	Small Group 3 (Virtual)
Paul Burgess	Dr. Philip Wu	Tangerine Behere
James Paulson	LaQuinta Daniels	Commissioner Smith
	Eduardo Ramos	Rachel Winslow
		Izzy Armenta
		John Gardner

Small Group 1 – Key Messages:

- EMAC serves as a constituency of those without a voice. There is a need to make sure STRAC and RTAC have buy-in and to bring voice of the community to these committees.
- There is a geographic divide between Southwest Washington, central Portland, and outlying areas of the Portland metro in Oregon. Tradeoffs will vary, and some areas will be more able to make tradeoffs.
- ODOT should maintain and understand the measures for how groups are being impacted and increase transparency around metrics.
- After EMAC sunsets, there should be an external body for accountability and feedback.
- ODOT needs to uphold accountability and respond after comments are made to establish and maintain trust.

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Small Group 2 – Key Messages:

- Equity engagement with communities should include Southwest Washington, low-income communities, and transit users. Generally, ODOT should ensure that all people are engaged.
- Accountability includes closing the feedback loop and ensuring that promises from ODOT have been upheld.
- There should be a long-term oversight body to monitor measurable impacts. Monitoring could include tracking the LITOP, TriMet bus lines, and transit ridership.
- Accountability workshops should ensure a feedback loop with communities present.

Small Group 3 – Key Messages:

- Accountability should prioritize some in-person communication to ensure that people without access to technology are reached.
- Accountability should also include transparent communication – there is a need for a feedback loop. If people are not weighing into the decision, that leads to detachment and disempowerment. Diverse stakeholders should discuss actions and trade-offs.
- The public should have more information around future revenue use.
- The project team needs to meet certain benchmarks. What are the consequences of not meeting those?

5 Update from ODOT on Advancing Equity

Garet Prior, ODOT, provided an overview of the Oregon Highway Plan (OHP) Toll Amendment. The OHP incorporated language from EMAC's 2022 recommendations to the OTC. He added that STRAC and RTAC are guided by the policy language.

Rochelle provided an update on the Regional Mobility Pricing Project (RMPP) Indicators, previously discussed at the January EMAC subcommittee meeting. EMAC members are asked to provide feedback on the indicators by February 8th.

Kirsten Hauge, project team, provided an update on the I-205 Draft Environmental Assessment and shared that there will be an upcoming 45-day comment period. Kirsten added that the project team is seeking feedback from EMAC on the upcoming engagement activities to ensure they are engaging with their communities and meeting people where they are. Kirsten continued to provide an overview of the RMPP scoping comment period as well as next step for RMPP.

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Garet proceeded to share updates on the Low-Income Toll Program. The project team is developing a work plan for STRAC to inform EMAC and STRAC involvement. Garet noted that there is significant back-office work to prepare options for further analysis and discussion in the spring and summer of 2023.

- An EMAC member asked what closing the feedback loop would entail.
 - Kirsten responded that the project team will be sharing a report summarized the comments received during the RMPP scoping period. EMAC suggestions are welcome regarding how to better share that report with communities.

James Paulson gave an update on RTAC activities. He shared that most of the work with RTAC has been centered around establishing the committee charter. James added that his edits have been incorporated into the draft charter.

- An EMAC member asked what James' impression was about the composition of the committee.
 - James responded that there are jurisdictional leaders and elected officials on the committee that are accountable to their constituencies. He added that a lot of conversations center around the geography or industry that each person represents.
 - James added that there is a group of RTAC members who are very interested in EMAC's work. He noted that some members recognize EMAC as a group working on equity, but they are not currently familiar with specific recommendations and work that EMAC has put forth.

Dr. Wu shared an update on STRAC's first meeting. Dr. Wu shared that an important discussion that came out of the meeting was about the distinction between policies and rules. The committee came to a shared understanding that policy is the "what" and rules are the "how" to enact those policies. STRAC's charge is limited to rules addressing how customers engage with the system, and rules addressing how rates are set.

- An EMAC member commented that everyone is very focused on the tolling revenue, but no one has clarity yet on how revenue will be generated or where it will be spent.
 - An EMAC member commented that their concern is also about where the tolling revenue will be spent. They shared their concern with the makeup of STRAC and noted that there needs to be some accountability between the three committees.
 - Dr. Wu agreed that the connections between the committees need to be stronger.
 - Garet added that feedback provided to ODOT by EMAC helps to lift up those issues. He added that it is ODOT's responsibility to ensure accountability between the committees.

6 Public Comment

Keith Wilson, President and CEO of Titan Freight Systems and board member of International Road Federation, commented that he works with DOTs worldwide. He is looking at the area and what can be improved, and he is especially interested in the Albina area. He commented that the congestion pricing under consideration is a first generation tolling strategy. He asked to consider the management of the dynamic transportation system. He envisions dynamic pricing in the left lane with prices that change frequently to allow the free flow of traffic on the freeways. He shared that an equitable tolling system would look like a low-income and high-income resident choosing to use the same transportation system, but he added that this assumed everyone has a car. Keith recommended cordon or off-ramp pricing so the Albina residents wouldn't be impacted by diversion.

7 Additional Community Feedback

Jessica asked EMAC members to share feedback that they are hearing from community members.

- An EMAC member commented that they represent working commuters in Southwest Washington who would see significant impacts to their income from tolling.
- An EMAC member shared that they have heard concerns about youth who receive services in Oregon being impacted by tolling.
- An EMAC member shared their concern about workforce and the impact on low-to-middle income workers as they access employment. They added that areas with the least opportunity for jobs often have the worst transit systems and no alternative to driving. They expressed a desire to consider the impacts tolling will have on youth, as it will continue to impact them through their adult lives.
- An EMAC member commented that safety and diversion mitigation is always a factor in how communities will be impacted. They noted that revenue allocation is an important question to answer.
- An EMAC member asked for clarity on how ODOT would define a High-Occupancy Vehicle for the toll program.
 - Gareth responded that this hasn't been defined yet, and that this is a policy question to address.
- An EMAC member asked if there is a commitment on tolling revenue being allocated to transit agencies.
 - Gareth responded that there are Innovative Mobility Grant funds through ODOT. He also added that RTAC, ODOT, and transit agencies are working on a Public Transportation Strategy. This will be shared with EMAC.

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8 Next Steps and Closing

The next EMAC meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 5th. There will be a subcommittee meeting scheduled for early March. EMAC members are asked to complete meeting evaluations.

9 Meeting Evaluation Results

Evaluation #1 - Complete

Q1: What topics or issues do we need to address or revisit in future meetings? Feel free to add anything that you believe was missed in this meeting.

Expound more on closing the feedback loop with regard to the Regional Mobility Pricing Project next steps.

Q2: What aspects of today's meeting and/or the preparation for the meeting did you like or dislike?

I like how the information and materials are provided in advance.

Q3: The meeting met my expectations for equitable involvement and treatment of committee members, consistent with the guiding principles in the Committee Charter.

Strongly agree

Comments (optional): I liked the small group discussion

Q4: The presentation and speakers were engaging and encouraged dialog.

Somewhat agree

Q5: I clearly understood the meeting objectives and knew what we were trying to accomplish.

Somewhat agree

Q6: The communications and materials sent in advance of the meeting were relevant, advanced my learning, and contributed to my ability to meaningfully participate.

Strongly agree

Q7: I had the opportunity to speak, be heard, and contribute to decisions under consideration.

Strongly agree

Comments (optional): Jessica is an outstanding facilitator.

10 Written Public Comment

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

Ken has questions about EMAC.

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!!!

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?

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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?
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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Meeting Summary: , 12/09/2022

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.

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

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Meeting Summary: EMAC: I-5 tolls impacting Charbonneau, 12/19/2022

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.”

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.

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!

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



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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!

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 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.

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Meeting Summary: EMAC public comment re: scoping for RMPP, 01/07/2023

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!

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 have enhanced mobility, while also maximizing their health, safety, and happiness. Remember, YOUR

I-205 Toll Project

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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.

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

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.

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