

# I-5 and I-205 Toll Projects

## Managing Congestion and Raising Revenue



Summer 2020

## We Have a Congestion Problem

People traveling in or through the Portland metro area experience impacts to their quality of life from traffic congestion on highways and local roadways. From 2015 to 2017 the average number of congested hours on the freeways increased by 13%. This costs the Portland metro region \$2 million per day in time and productivity. This is valuable time where people and goods are stuck sitting in traffic—and it's getting worse. By 2040<sup>1</sup>, there will be a 35% increase in population and 1.8 million more vehicular trips per weekday traveling in or through the region.

### Working on a Solution

In 2017, the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 2017, known as “Keep Oregon Moving.” This bill committed hundreds of millions of dollars in projects that will address our congestion problem and improve the transportation system in the region and statewide. HB 2017 funded bottleneck relief highway projects, freight rail enhancements, improvements to transit, and upgrades to biking and walking facilities. The Legislature also directed the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) to pursue and implement tolling on I-5 and

I-205 in the Portland Metro region to help manage traffic congestion. A 2018 feasibility analysis, which included both technical analysis and public input, determined that tolling could help manage congestion and raise revenue on I-5 and I-205. Revenue raised from tolling could be used for congestion relief.

***We need to explore every tool for addressing congestion and a funding strategy to support these efforts as gas tax revenue declines. Tolling is one tool.***

### How Will Tolls Relieve Congestion?

The use of variable rate tolls manages traffic flows and improves roadway efficiency by charging a higher price during peak traffic periods. The higher fee encourages some drivers to consider using other travel options such as carpools or transit or changing their travel time to other, less congested times of the day. A small reduction in the number of vehicles on a road can significantly improve travel flow.

<sup>1</sup>Oregon Department of Transportation. 2018 Traffic Performance Report.

Portland: Oregon Department of Transportation: Region 1, December 2018. Web. 7 Nov. 2019.

## Listening to the Community

Tolling is a new concept to most Oregonians. During the 2018 feasibility analysis, the feedback from the community was nearly unanimous across demographics: There is a congestion problem, it is having a negative impact on quality of life, and it is getting worse.

Discussions with the public, regional stakeholders and elected officials revealed three consistent themes with tolling:

- The need to avoid negatively affecting low-income communities
- The need for improved transit and other transportation choices
- The need to address the potential of tolling to divert traffic to local streets

ODOT is committed to continue gathering feedback from the public and will work to address these concerns throughout the next project phase.

## Prioritizing Equity and Mobility

ODOT seeks to ensure everyone benefits from reduced congestion and improved mobility.



ODOT has heard concerns about how this program could have negative impacts for people with lower incomes. High housing costs have priced many low-income and vulnerable communities out of centrally located neighborhoods, and they are now living farther away from employment and services. These same individuals often have less flexibility with travel times and may not have access to other transportation options.

ODOT plans to collaborate with community partners to work toward an equitable distribution of the benefits of reduced congestion. An equity framework will guide the whole of this project, with the goal of gaining better outcomes for traditionally disadvantaged and underserved communities. ODOT will convene an Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee in early 2020 to aid these efforts.

## Current Status

Building on the 2018 feasibility analysis, ODOT is moving ahead:

**I-205.** Evaluate I-205 tolling options to raise revenue and manage congestion through variable rate tolls on I-205 at or near the Abernethy Bridge. Revenue generated by these tolls could help fund the planned widening and seismic improvements from Stafford Road to OR 213<sup>2</sup>, building a third lane in each direction of I-205 and completing seismic upgrades to the Abernethy Bridge and eight other bridges. The environmental review process for I-205 tolling will begin in early 2020. Tolling could begin in 2023.

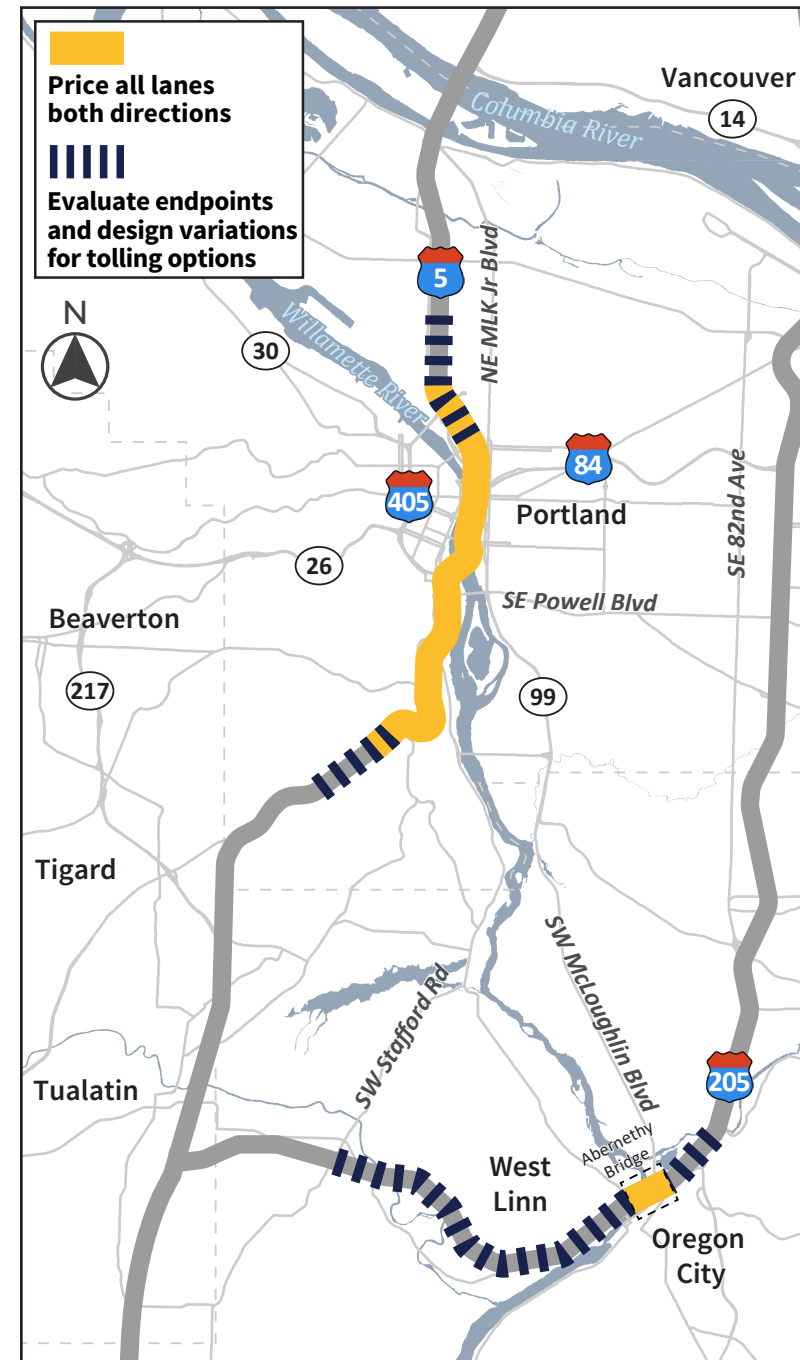
**I-5.** Initiate additional traffic and mobility analysis for I-5 that examines start and end points for variable rate tolls with a goal of reducing congestion on about seven miles of I-5 through central Portland approximately between North Going/Alberta Street and Southwest Multnomah Boulevard. ODOT anticipates completing this initial analysis by 2021. The results of this analysis will inform the starting timeframe and alternatives for an environmental review.

<sup>2</sup><https://www.i205corridor.org/>

## What We Heard

*“My 25-minute commute from Wilsonville to work in NE Portland has grown to 50 minutes. It’s frequently more than an hour, and sometimes up to two hours. For me, this means more stress at work and home, and less sleep. I worry about my lower-income neighbors who are facing the same challenges.”*

– Public comment received during ODOT’s 2018 Feasibility Analysis



## Expected Benefits of Tolling

### Commuters

- Improved travel time
- Increased reliability and efficiency for all freeway users
- Reduced risk of rear-end crashes
- Improved transportation facilities funded by toll revenue

### Climate and Communities

- Reduced time sitting in traffic provides quality of life benefits, such as lower stress, and may allow for more time to do the things you enjoy
- Reduced freeway traffic congestion will decrease air pollution in adjacent neighborhoods
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions and fuel consumption results when traffic moves more freely and there is less stop-and-go traffic
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions, with use of transit
- Increased transit use with some road users switching travel modes

### Commerce

- Reduced truck travel times saves freight costs, which are often passed on to the end user
- Improved reliability of shipping times

## Project Status

- Feasibility Analysis: Completed 2017-2018
- Planning and Outreach for Environmental Review: In progress
- Tolling Implementation: To be determined

## Get Involved

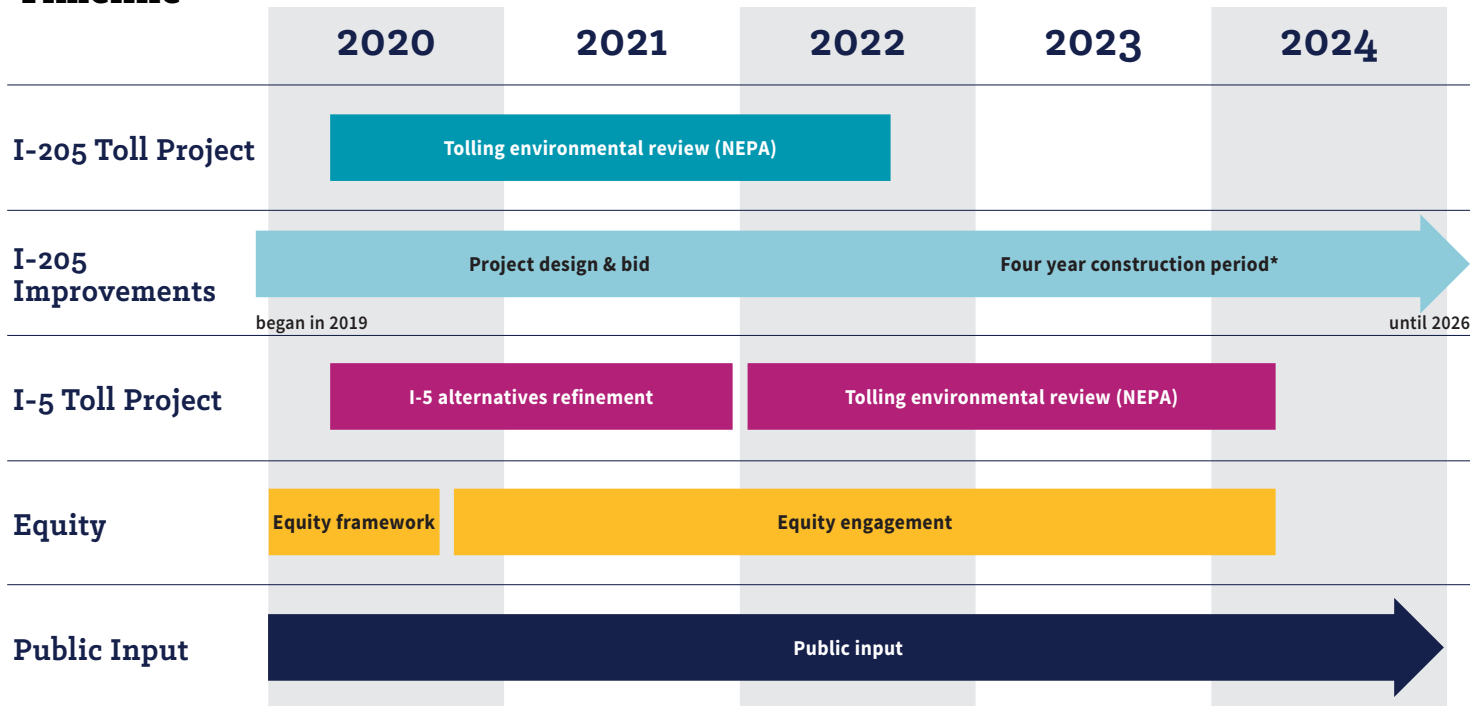
Questions and comments can be submitted at any time to the ODOT project team at:

**Web:** [www.OregonTolling.org](http://www.OregonTolling.org)

**Email:** [oregontolling@odot.state.or.us](mailto:oregontolling@odot.state.or.us)

**Phone:** 1-503-837-3536

## Timeline



\*Construction start dependent on funding availability.

Si desea obtener información sobre este proyecto traducida al español, sírvase llamar al 503-731-4128.

Nếu quý vị muốn thông tin về dự án này được dịch sang tiếng Việt, xin gọi 503-731-4128.

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The information in this document, and the public and agency input received, may be adopted or incorporated by reference into a future environmental review process to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act.