

# Meeting Summary

<b>Subject</b>	Regional Toll Advisory Committee Meeting #7
<b>Date and Time</b>	May 22, 2023 / 9:00-11:00 a.m.
<b>Location</b>	Hybrid: Billy Frank Jr. Conference Center at Ecotrust and online via Zoom

Attendee	Organization / Role	Attendance
Michelle Belkot	Clark County	Virtual
Rory Bialostosky	City of West Linn	In person
Frank Bubenik	City of Tualatin	In person
Shawn Donaghy	C-TRAN (Washington business)	In person
Nafisa Fai	Washington County	In person
Carley Francis	Washington State Dept. of Transportation	In person
Sarah Iannarone	The Street Trust	In person
Jon Isaacs	Portland Business Alliance	Virtual
Jana Jarvis	Oregon Trucking Association	In person
Susheela Jayapal	Multnomah County	In person
Katherine Kelly (alternate for Anne McEnery-Ogle)	City of Vancouver	In person
Emily Motter (alternate for Julie Wilcke Pilmer)	Ride Connection	Virtual
Willy Myers	Columbia Pacific Building Trades Council	In person
James Paulson	EMAC Liaison	In person
Lynn Peterson	Metro	Virtual
Matt Ransom	SW Washington Regional Transportation Council	Virtual
Dean Reynolds	Cowlitz Indian Tribe	Virtual
Curtis Robinhold	Port of Portland	In person
Paul Savas	Clackamas County	In person
JC Vannatta	TriMet	In person
Kasi Woidyla	Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center	In person
Keith Lynch	FHWA (ex officio)	In person
Brendan Finn	ODOT, Urban Mobility Office (ex officio)	In person
Della Mosier	ODOT, Urban Mobility Office (ex officio)	In person
Kris Strickler	ODOT Director, Chair	In person
Kirsten Beale	Committee coordinator	In person
Anne Pressentin	Project team	In person
Sylvia Ciborowski	Project team	In person
Jodi Mescher	Notetaker	In person
Nick Fazio	Zoom host	Virtual
Logan Cullums	Zoom support	In person

*Committee member regrets:* Mingus Mapps, City of Portland.

# 1 Welcome and Agenda Review

Brendan Finn, ODOT, welcomed the meeting attendees. Nick Fazio, project team, talked through the meeting logistics and reminded the audience that this is a public meeting and a hybrid meeting.

Director Strickler said that the meeting is focused on listening to RTAC members in response to the Governor's direction to delay toll collection until 2026. There are near-term and long-term deliverables for 2023 that ODOT is seeking input on. Director Strickler acknowledged that RTAC members don't feel heard, some members would like more details about the impacts of tolling, some members would like an estimate on when the information will be available, and some members would like to move the discussion towards solutions.

Director Strickler said that the congestion pricing element of the toll program is the best tool that ODOT has to reduce greenhouse gases (GHG). While it will not solve all problems, the toll program will help the agency and local partners reduce GHG, reduce congestion, provide more reliability in the region, and create a funding stream to address some of the transportation needs in the region.

Director Strickler stated that while toll collection is paused until 2026, the work is ongoing for gantry design, procurement of gantries, and back-office systems. ODOT has a target to deliver implementation reports by December 2023 that include ODOT's plans to mitigate diversion and address equity concerns. Director Strickler commented that he is proud of the pioneering work done with the Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee (EMAC) to focus on equity.

Director Strickler commented that while the purpose of the meeting is to reset engagement, this is not the first time that ODOT will be hearing from committee members. ODOT has heard that equity and a low-income toll program must be a priority for the OTC. Some RTAC members are seeking better alignment between the I-205 Toll Project and the Regional Mobility Pricing Project (RMPP). Some RTAC members would like clarity on the future of the committee because the work of the committee will likely continue longer than originally set out. Some RTAC members would like more definition on the connection between the committee and the new legislative subcommittee (JCT). Additionally, some members have expressed that mitigation projects should be available at day one of toll implementation, and transit gaps should be addressed.

Director Strickler commented that the project needs to move towards tangible outcomes and address mitigation anxieties. He said we need members to find value in the discussions and we need to get this right. He reiterated that the purpose of the meeting is to hear from RTAC members and said that ODOT will not be able to address all concerns, but wants to be more clear moving forward about timelines and what can be addressed.

Brendan reviewed the Governor's letter which acknowledged tolling as a critical component to how we fund transportation infrastructure and provided direction to delay implementation of toll collection until 2026. The Governor also requested deliverable deadlines for an updated financial plan for projects within ODOT's Urban Mobility Strategy by July 1, 2023, and to provide implementation reports on mitigation, diversion, and equity by December 15, 2023.

Brendan discussed the I-205 Toll Project draft EA comment period, which received about 2,800 comments. In general, there was higher level of consternation, distrust and skepticism received compared to previous comment periods and we need to respond to that. Also, the comments were more personalized. Common themes of comments received focused on diversion, financial impacts, trust and accountability, congestion, public engagement, and financing. We need to show the comments are valued and being responded to. Going forward, we are going to show up differently.

- Kasi Woidyla asked for the demographic breakdown of comment submitters.
  - Brendan said that the team doesn't have that information disaggregated, but they will share that out when available. Director Strickler mentioned the map included in the slide deck which showed the geographic breakdown of where comments came from.

## 2 Reflection and Listening Session

Director Strickler introduced the listening session and encouraged RTAC members to focus the dialogue around how to better frame the tolling project, balance the constraints and implement mitigation.

**Discussion question: What does better engagement and listening look like to you? How can ODOT better engage collectively to get to tangible outcomes?**

- Commissioner Jayapal said that there is a need to balance congestion, revenue, and impacts on low-income communities. She said that congestion pricing can be successful for reducing congestion if it is done right. Public health impacts of reduced congestion should be considered in the toll program. Commissioner Jayapal stated that any revenue raised from the tolls should be shared with local agencies because there will be impacts from diversion on local roads and bridges. She also said that rate-setting should be done in a way that balances revenue generation without disproportionate impacts to low-income individuals. Commissioner Jayapal said that the delay in tolling will require local jurisdictions to invest more time into the process; ODOT needs to have more transparency to show that they are using the extended time to listen and incorporate partner feedback into the process.
  - Director Strickler responded that ODOT is focusing on how the agency can best reflect the feedback they have received in the work moving forward.
- Curtis Robinhold said that a bigger and more comprehensive plan will be more effective. He referenced the success of the congestion pricing in London at addressing climate goals. Curtis also said that equity should be at the front of this work and should consider the impacts to people from toll costs and diversion. He said that this work is hard, but dilly-dallying makes it harder. This work needs to talk about the substance. We need to get on with it. We know we won't all agree. We are grown-ups. Curtis also provided more extensive written comments on behalf of the Port of Portland (attached).
  - Director Strickler agreed that hard work doesn't get easier the longer it is delayed.

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- Jana Jarvis said that the structure of the tolling program changed between discussions for HB 2017 and HB 3055. Initially, tolling was thought of as construction-based tolling with limited congestion pricing, not congestion pricing on all lanes at all times. There are concerns about the additional costs to Oregon-based freight companies and added that the industry is already heading into a trucking recession. The Highway Cost Allocation Study found that the trucking industry is over-paying for highway use. The freight industry is interested in making sure ODOT is financially stable to implement projects identified in HB 2017. The industry is also interested in considering toll costs that are less than the cost of congestion and associated delays.
- Willy Myers said that ODOT should recognize the fear in the community about the unknowns of what the toll program will look like. Fear will evolve to opposition. There needs to be more outreach with communities to share specific details of toll implementation. Willy said that the program needs to mitigate the impacts to people with low and fixed incomes.
- Sarah Iannarone said that meaningful engagement requires a lot of education with community members to establish a basic level of understanding of the program. She said that it is challenging to talk about “congestion pricing” to manage demand and “tolling” to generate revenue. We need internal alignment. Sarah said that true community engagement needs to find new voices and should involve hearing from historically marginalized groups. She added that there should be incentives to increase engagement with marginalized groups. ODOT should include a monitoring framework to address anxieties and track impacts to communities and adjust the program as needed. Sarah commented that the various advisory committees seem to be working in silos and suggested convening a summit to have a discussion amongst all committees and decisions-makers once the legislative session ends, including RTAC, EMAC, STRAC, new legislative subcommittee, and OTC members, to hammer through concerns and get work done.
- Shawn Donaghy said there are questions and concern with how all the pieces fit together. He agreed that the program needs to lead with equity. Shawn represents comments from the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce and expressed concerns about impacts to local business. SW Washington has a vibrant port industry, so impacts to freight and mobility are important to consider, including impacts to Highway 14 and Skamania County. He asked how C-TRAN and TriMet can benefit from tolling and provide travel mode options.
- Commissioner Fai commented that she appreciates the Governor’s direction to pause the implementation of tolls to listen to community members. She advised ODOT to be flexible, nimble and be open to compromise with partners. Commissioner Fai suggested using the extra time to revisit alternatives that have been discussed previously, specifically the option to only toll the added third lane. Commissioner Fai said that she is supportive of moving forward with a plan to invest in public transportation. She agreed that there is a lot of confusion about the program in the community and that ODOT needs to be more transparent with impacts of their decisions. When people know more, they can participate fully.
  - Director Strickler responded that there has not been a conversation about what compromise looks like for the agency and RTAC, but he acknowledged that ODOT, OTC, and partner agencies need to compromise.

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- Mayor Bialostosky said that the City of West Linn would like to use the extended time to have their input reflected. He suggested defining what collaboration with partners means to better frame conversations around gantry locations, mitigation projects, and the number of lanes to toll. Mayor Bialostosky commented that many of the elements of the program seem predetermined by legislation and ODOT before they are brought forward for discussion. Mayor Bialostosky said that ODOT should expand work on the revised EA or publish an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to add additional analysis on impacted intersections and to further define mitigation projects. Finally, he said don't just start with one small area. A regional approach is needed to avoid burdening West Linn and Oregon City.
- Mayor Bubenik said that state legislators do not seem to be aware of the extent of controversy and impacts of tolls. RTAC is a valuable space to understand multiple perspectives. Mayor Bubenik said there should be a direct connection between RTAC and the JCT and OTC to make sure legislators have all the relevant information; he suggested a standing meeting to facilitate conversations with legislators.
- Kasi Woidyla said that she feels like her concerns about equity have been heard and addressed, but nothing comes out of the community listening sessions. For example, there have been discussions about collecting tolls through debit cards and bank accounts, but many equity framework communities do not have access to those tools. Another concern is how to best communicate with community members once tolling is implemented to enroll them in the program. Kasi said that there needs to be a tangible plan to review before people can say what will or will not work. She agreed with previous comments that ODOT and RTAC should use the extra time to revisit topics that have previously been set aside.
- Katherine Kelly shared that the City of Vancouver adopted a policy framework in 2017 that considered the Value Pricing Pilot Program. The policy framework leads with equity and considers mitigation for low-income communities. She added that the programs should consider the bi-state nature of the program to ensure banking, access to funds, and access to information for communities in Oregon and Washington. The full network analysis needs to consider the North-South connection and the East-West connection to capture diversion in SW Washington. Katherine commented that small business impacts and freight access in SW Washington needs to be included in the analysis. In particular, the Port of Vancouver is reliant on access in the region to support the freight community. Katherine said she is supportive of the idea of direct collaboration and messaging with the JCT subcommittee and OTC. She added that transit is critical to the transportation system, so barriers to toll revenue being allocated for transit operations need to be considered and discussed to enhance transit operations.
- Commissioner Savas said that ODOT is listening, but key concerns do not seem to be getting to the decision-makers (OTC) and there appears to be no communication with legislators. When the idea of tolling one-lane was initially addressed, it was not fully considered and requests for data and analysis of the proposed alternative were denied. Commissioner Savas said that the tolling framework has changed from when it was initially discussed for HB 2017 without involvement or transparency around those changes. Commissioner Savas commented that he no longer knows what the goals of the program are because the goals were originally focused on revenue. People in the community are concerned about the proposed tolls and they feel dismissed because many concerns haven't been

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addressed. Commissioner Savas said that congestion pricing and GHG reductions won't be effective in the I-205 corridor because there are no alternative modes. ODOT is considering an extreme level of tolling that would toll all lanes of all interstates at all times without alternative modes. Commissioner Savas said there is no other example of a similar program on an undersized transportation system, and ODOT should start with something basic rather than jumping to the extreme. I'm solution-oriented but puzzled by the finances to address the need to replace the gas tax. A per mile fee like OreGo seems reasonable.

- Commissioner Fai asked what Commissioner Savas means by "the extreme". Commissioner Savas clarified that he was referring to tolling 24 hours a day on all the freeways, I-205 and RMPP, with no other options on an undersized system.
- Director Strickler responded that there was legislative direction to apply for VPPP which implements tolling on all lanes. He acknowledged that ODOT still has work to do to get it right and to balance different directions from partners and legislators. He agreed that this is the only system like this in the country.
- Carley Francis said it is important to hear from marginalized populations in SW Washington. She observed that there have been many issues put on the table and there needs to be a way to catalog all of the input received and identify the most important. We can't deal with them all at once. She suggested that looking at the full system should be considered first before defining details of mitigation projects. Carley commented that WSDOT is invested in collaborative development of the Interstate Bridge Replacement program and recognized that ODOT is the designated toll operator for that project. She shared that WSDOT has already established a toll system and the agency is interested in continued collaboration with ODOT to provide advice.
- JC Vannatta agreed that the program should lead with equity. He shared that TriMet is interested in supporting mitigation and regional climate goals. ODOT should provide clarity around decisions that need to be made to understand how agencies and partners can provide support. JC said that ODOT should provide more information because when there is a gap in information, someone will try to fill it. JC was supportive of the suggestion to meet directly with the legislative committees. He asked if the delay in implementation would allow for the I-205 Toll Project and RMPP to begin at the same time. He ended by saying ODOT's success is the region's success.
  - Director Strickler responded that ODOT doesn't have an answer to that yet. He acknowledged that ODOT has heard from some people that there is a need to better align those projects, however others have said that ODOT should only implement I-205 at the beginning.
- James Paulson noted his appreciation for ODOT and RTAC members for making space for EMAC and carrying forward equity. He commented that EMAC members are committed to this work and consider the delay in toll implementation as an opportunity to focus even more on equity and hear from people that have not been brought to the table. James observed that youth, low-income workers, and small businesses should be engaged with more. James said that having more data and information will be helpful in balancing equity, environment, and revenue, and in understanding if tolling is a solution to generating enough revenue to meet regional needs.



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- Director Strickler responded that tolling is not going to solve every issue given the funding shortfalls. He added that getting a list of projects together and diving into the impacts of the projects will be important. Director Strickler acknowledged that ODOT is committed to leading with equity.
- President Peterson said that she is grateful for the delayed implementation so there is more time. Focusing on a state project on a state asset is too narrow; instead, the problem statement should focus on moving people as efficiently and safely as possible to reduce congestion and GHG and harmful toxic emissions that have adverse effects on people living and working along transportation corridors. President Peterson said that this is the third time she has witnessed a timeline driving the state toward a narrow solution that does not honor the needs of the region. The legislature and ODOT need to acknowledge the complexity of the region. President Peterson said the transportation system needs to work for through-trips as well as for internal trips within the region and one can't be prioritized. There needs to be a partnership with local and regional government for mitigation because the tolling system on I-5 and I-205 will impact the entire region's transportation system. Projects that have been successful elsewhere have relied on partnerships to move people and goods. Effects were communicated in a public awareness campaign. ODOT needs to view cities, counties, JPACT, transit agencies, ports as your partner. President Peterson said that there needs to be scenarios that include new local infrastructure such as a new local bridge in Clackamas County and modeling a broader problem statement on mobility and accessibility. She said she appreciates the restart.
- Jon Isaacs said that a major goal for the Portland Business Alliance is to complete the infrastructure projects identified in HB 2017, noting that the region is behind on investments in infrastructure. He commented that often the business community are strong supporters of the public transportation system. Jon said ODOT should let people know what decisions the agency will make and what decisions the agency will take input on, and ODOT should provide modeling and scenarios for partners to provide input on. Jon acknowledged that there needs to be a tolling system in place to manage congestion. He said the toll program should consider that Portland is becoming a very expensive place to live and expressed concern about the disproportionate impact tolls could have on low-income communities. ODOT should use best practices and case studies of successful programs to guide implementation.
  - Director Strickler agreed that the transportation system includes the connection between road infrastructure and transit. He said that he is hearing it is time for ODOT to bring forward mitigation projects for discussion and acknowledge what the agency can and cannot implement due to funding constraints.
- Matt Ransom said that ODOT should clarify what the agency can and cannot do with the toll revenue and suggested using case studies to understand limitations on bi-state funding. He added that there should be mitigations for equity, transit systems, as well as capital projects that would benefit SW Washington. Matt commented that ODOT and the OTC should take a step back to reconsider the Phase 1 work that looked at I-205 and I-5 pilot programs before implementing fully system tolling. He said that there is confusion and disconnect with how legislators moved from Phase 1 to Phase 2.
- Denise Harvey said that she agreed with previous comments by RTAC members about prioritizing equity. Denise commented that there is concern that Tribes are being treated the same way as other

governmental agencies in the state. She also shared that there are concerns about land issues. Denise said that many Oregonians reject the concept of tolls on existing roads and bridges.

- Director Strickler noted appreciation for the Tribes involvement in RTAC and added that the agency engages in direct government-to-government consultation with the Tribes.
- Emily Motter (alternate for Julie Wilke-Pilmer) said that she had no additional comments.
- Dean Reynolds agreed with previous comments made about equity. Dean shared his appreciation for the government-to-government consultation with Tribal government. He noted that the Cowlitz tribe has concerns, but they are interested in moving forward with the project in an equitable way. Dean shared that the Tribe does not believe in borders.
- Michelle Belkot had no additional comments.

### 3 Public Comment

One person provided public comment in person:

- Mary Baumgardner, West Linn City Council President, suggested that RTAC members state their name and agency when they speak because the name cards aren't shown on the video. Councilor Baumgardner has lived in the Portland metro area and has seen changes happening. She has driven on I-205, and as a high school student would drive four trips daily. Tolling a roadway so close to a city will impact community dwellers in the vicinity. She shared that the Oregon Housing and Community Services report in 2022 reported that 27.4% of West Linn residents were severely rent-burdened. While that is a small percentage, that is still a group of people that are represented and that matter. Councilor Baumgardner said that she would like to see a toll system that works better than what has been proposed.

On person joined online to share public comment:

- John Ley shared that he was involved in the VPPP advisory meetings. He asked who was in charge and noted that it was not the members the committee. One of the options presented during the VPPP advisory meetings rose above the others, but that option was eliminated by ODOT and their hired consultants. The option should be reconsidered to toll only the added third lane because there were zero impacts on traffic diversion. He commented that ODOT has a history of not listening to people that goes back to 2017. John said that he almost choked when Director Stricker talked about climate congestion and reducing GHG because in a decade, all the cars will be electric cars and that will reduce GHG.



## 4 Next Steps and Close Out

Director Strickler noted appreciation for RTAC members' willingness to engage in the conversation. He noted that there is interest in planning for future RTAC meetings and discussing when the committee will sunset. He would like additional input on this between meetings. He is interested in having tangible conversations by December to meet the Governor's direction.

He said he has a direct ask of the members: It is time to put together a list of projects that aligns with the goals and needs around the region with a nexus to the tolls and tolling impact.

The Director said some of the themes he heard were:

- It is time to put the hard work on the table – the projects and mitigations that are tangible to the public
- Put equity first with the low income toll program and address impacts to diverse communities
- ODOT should respond more and not just listen. We can't accommodate all the requests put on the table today. But we have to have the conversation.
- We need to address what the agency can and cannot do regarding revenue.

Director Strickler said that compromise will be needed to move forward. Director Strickler observed that there is 100 percent agreement that equity needs to be a priority.

- Commissioner Fai noted that the Governor's letter had a specific ask to deliver an implementation report and asked if ODOT needs a time extension to provide that report.
  - Director Strickler responded that goal the implementation report is a recognition of the need to answer some questions and provide a tangible outcome, so the agency won't be extending the deadline. ODOT will work to define the pathway for this group and the relationships between the multiple committees.
- Jana commented that there is a lack of acceptance that tolling on the I-5 bridge is separate from RMPP. Jana noted that there was a lack of understanding of what HB 3055 entailed and it was not well discussed or supported at the time.
- Commissioner Savas shared frustration from Clackamas County residents that were hopeful that there would be opportunity to engage with legislators, but they have been denied that opportunity. HB 3614 gained a lot of momentum for local jurisdictions to engage directly with the legislatures. Commissioner Savas commented that there needs to be a connection to legislators.

The next RTAC meeting will be June 26, 2023.

## 5 Written Public Comment

For public comments sent before the meeting, see attached.'

## 6 Meeting Evaluation

One member submitted a paper meeting evaluation. No member submitted an online meeting evaluation.

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>Question 1: I clearly understood the agenda, the meeting objectives, and knew what the group was trying to accomplish during this meeting.</b>	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Question 2: Members had a chance to speak and contribute to items under consideration.</b>	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Question 3: The meeting was well facilitated.</b>	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Question 4: There were adequate options for public comment.</b>	0	0	0	0	1

Commissioner Mingus Mapps (City of Portland) and Curtis Robinhold (Port of Portland) submitted written comments, attached.