

Meeting Summary

Subject	Regional Toll Advisory Committee Meeting #10
Date and Time	September 18, 2023 / 9:00-11:30 a.m.
Location	Hybrid: Billy Frank Jr. Conference Center at Ecotrust and online via Zoom

Attendee	Organization / Role	Attendance
Committee Members		
Rory Bialostosky	City of West Linn	In person
Frank Bubenik	City of Tualatin	In person
Taylor Eidt (alternate for Shawn Donaghy)	C-TRAN	In person
Denise Harvey	Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde	Virtual
Nafisa Fai	Washington County	In person
Carley Francis	Washington State Dept. of Transportation	In person
Sarah Iannarone	The Street Trust	In person
Jana Jarvis	Oregon Trucking Association	In person
Susheela Jayapal	Multnomah County	In person
Christine Lewis	Metro Council	In person
Anne McEnerney-Ogle	City of Vancouver	In person
James Paulson	EMAC Liaison	In person
Matt Ransom	SW Washington Regional Transportation Council	In person
Dean Reynolds	Cowlitz Indian Tribe	Virtual
Emerald Bogue	Port of Portland	In person
Paul Savas	Clackamas County	In person
Millicent Williams (alternate for Mingus Mapps)	City of Portland	In person
Kasi Woidyla	Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center	In person
Keith Lynch	FHWA (ex officio)	Virtual
Travis Brouwer (for Kris Strickler, Director)	ODOT Assistant Director	In person
Brendan Finn	ODOT, Urban Mobility Office (ex officio)	In person
Della Mosier	ODOT, Urban Mobility Office (ex officio)	In person
Other attendees		
Mandy Putney	ODOT, Presenter	In person
David Ungemah	HDR, Presenter	In person
Zoie Wesenberg	ODOT, Presenter	In person
Tom Mills	TriMet, Presenter	In person
David Kim	Facilitator	In person
Kirsten Beale	Committee coordinator	In person
Anne Pressentin	Facilitation support	In person
Jodi Mescher	Notetaker	In person
Nick Fazio	Zoom host	Virtual

Meeting Summary

RTAC Meeting #10 / September 18, 2023

Attendee	Organization / Role	Attendance
Logan Cullums	Zoom support	In person
<i>Committee member regrets: Willy Myers, JC Vannatta</i>		

1 Welcome and Opening Remarks

David Kim, facilitator, welcomed the meeting attendees and talked through meeting logistics. David reminded the audience that this is a public meeting and a hybrid meeting. David noted that ODOT Director Kris Strickler is not able to attend, but that Assistant Director Travis Brouwer was sitting in and will report back to Director Strickler.

Brendan Finn, ODOT, provided opening remarks. He acknowledged the work of project staff and jurisdictional partners to advance the Oregon Toll Program and identify projects that would complement a toll system in the Portland area. Brendan assured RTAC members that ODOT has no plans to change or alter the Nexus or public transportation strategy (PTS) lists; these are regional lists developed by the region to complement a toll system and address the potential for diversion.

Brendan shared that work is beginning on the framework for the Implementation Plan for diversion mitigation and equity that will be submitted to the Governor. The work to develop the PTS and Nexus lists, as well as RTAC's work, will be included in the plan. The Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) met the week of September 11 with their counterparts in California and Washington. Much of the conversation was about revenue with all states facing the same issue as Oregon with declining gas tax revenue. The Special Subcommittee on Transportation Planning will meet on September 27. Brendan noted that ODOT has heard from RTAC members that legislators need more information about tolling. ODOT is looking to the subcommittee meeting as an opportunity to provide more context to legislators. The results of subcommittee meeting will be shared in November.

David discussed the committee workplan which was revised based on feedback received at the RTAC listening session. ODOT intends to extend RTAC's work into 2024 to align the workplan with the project development and analysis schedules. David reviewed key topics to discuss at upcoming meetings and shared that, going forward, RTAC meetings will be shifted to every other month.

- Commissioner Savas expressed concern that there would not be sufficient time for RTAC to review the Nexus projects in November, which are part of the Implementation Plan and submit to the plan to the governor in December.
 - Brendan said ODOT is continuing to work closely with jurisdictional staff and will meet as often as needed offline. The Implementation Plan will be presented back to RTAC in November.

2 Regional Mobility Pricing Project Options

Mandy Putney, ODOT, reviewed the development process for the Regional Mobility Pricing Project (RMPP) project options. RMPP, like the I-205 Toll Project, was originally built on the Value Pricing

Meeting Summary

RTAC Meeting #10 / September 18, 2023

Feasibility Analysis (VPFA) completed in 2018. In 2021, work began on RMPP that built on feedback from the I-205 Toll Project and VPFA. Input through EMAC, regular partner engagement and three public comment periods have helped us refine the project concept. ODOT has engaged in a multi-year process with FHWA as a precursor to the NEPA process to develop a concept to toll all lanes of I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metropolitan area. Express lanes were evaluated during the feasibility analysis and did not move forward due to an understanding that building new capacity would be impactful and costly. The resulting new lane would serve fewer people and result in less net revenue than the approach of tolling all lanes.

David Ungemah, HDR, discussed the concept of managed lanes, a subset of road pricing, where only managed lanes users pay. David reviewed examples of managed lanes in the U.S. and explained that some states use HOV conversion models, some states construct new lanes, and some use a combination of both. Existing models demonstrate that congestion pricing through managed lanes can be an effective tool at managing congestion during congested periods of time, but that can have an impact on the rest of the system and general-purpose lanes remain congested. The VPFA found that managed lanes serve fewer travelers at a greater cost than all-lane tolling. Managed lanes have the potential to generate substantial revenue. However, the revenue depends on the ratio of managed lanes in a system; models that use only one managed lane in each direction do not see significant revenue streams. The funding to deliver managed lanes is reliant on public funds. Toll revenue does not fund 100% of construction.

For the Portland regional system (55 miles of interstate), express lanes would not be able to meet the stated goals of system-wide congestion management and ongoing revenue generation for transportation investments. Benefits would be experienced by fewer drivers, at a higher cost, and impacts would likely be greater for others. When considering existing lanes, equity, mobility, revenue, and cost, express lanes are not recommended for the Portland region interstate system.

- Jana Jarvis asked how diversion rates for managed lanes compare to diversion rates on a full-system road pricing model.
 - David Ungemah said that managed lanes that build new capacity do not have diversion, and traffic on arterials tends to move onto the freeway during peak periods. There is some diversion during off peak periods because there isn't as much incentive to use the managed lanes. There isn't an existing model of a general-purpose lane converted to a priced managed lane, but it could result in 700 to 800 vehicles per hour diverting into the general-purpose lanes. David referenced I-85 in Atlanta which converted an HOV lane to an express lane and raised the minimum number of passengers to use the HOV, which resulted in worse travel times in the general-purpose lanes and on arterials.
- Jana commented that the Portland metro area currently does not have enough infrastructure capacity and asked what the impact of adding a third lane in each direction would be.
 - David Ungemah referenced US 36 in Denver which added a new managed lane in each direction, auxiliary lanes, and bus-only shoulder lanes, resulting in improved travel speeds in each direction.

Meeting Summary

RTAC Meeting #10 / September 18, 2023

- Councilor Lewis asked if there are any examples of a managed lane that added capacity at a lower cost than a grand highway project. She also suggested considering shoulder-hardening and restriping.
 - David Ungemah noted that several of the small-scale corridor projects utilized shoulder capacity and provided specific examples. However, it is best practice to have shoulders throughout the system. Additionally, Portland only has soft shoulders so those would need to be rebuilt to be a viable option.
- Commissioner Savas said that the premise of HB 2017 was to build a new lane on I-205 to address diversion that already existed. OTC recommended to cancel the I-205 expansion, so that diversion will not be addressed and will continue to be worse because of tolling. He noted concerns that the approach of converting general purpose lanes to managed lanes is not the intent of the I-205 project. He commented that high diversion corridors need a better alternative. Additionally, there should be the option to adjust designs based on the surrounding area. The area around I-205 does not have a grid system or public transit like seen around I-5 and throughout the City of Portland.
- James Paulson asked if managed lane models resulted in changes in traffic patterns and diversion over time.
 - David Ungemah responded that the use of managed lanes over time depends on two factors; sensitivity to the price of paying a toll, and background factors that may influence unpriced carpools using managed lanes. David referenced a study by Texas A&M that found that over time, 10 percent of users always used the express lane regardless of price, 40 percent never use the express lane, and 40 to 50 percent make a choice based on congestion and price trade-offs. These findings concluded that about half of the people traveling in the corridor are rational decision-makers. David said that he would share the study with RTAC members.
 - Brendan commented that ODOT has committed to a monitoring process that will be informed by national experts to understand how effective the Toll Program is over time.

Mandy introduced the RMPP options. Over the past two years, ODOT has gathered partner and community input to inform planning, the Purpose and Need Statement, and the project concept. ODOT has now compared three options at a high level for how they would reduce congestion, generate revenue, and meet other regional goals.

Della Mosier, ODOT, reiterated that ODOT has heard from RTAC members that the most important values to carry forward are equity, climate goals, managing diversion, and meeting the program goals of managing congestion and raising revenue. These values will be considered in the trade-offs when considering the three options for RMPP.

Mandy shared that more analysis will be completed about toll implementation and gantry locations once a decision is made about which RMPP option to move forward. Zoie Wesenberg, ODOT, reviewed options under consideration for RMPP. Under option 1 (systemwide toll), all drivers would pay a base toll when

Meeting Summary

RTAC Meeting #10 / September 18, 2023

they enter the highway during daytime hours, and an additional toll when they go through high-traffic toll points. Under options 2a and 2b (toll zones), drivers would pay one toll per toll zone, regardless of the number of gantries in the zone. If the toll zone model is selected, ODOT will conduct significant collaboration with jurisdictional partners and EMAC to determine the gantry locations.

Zoie reviewed key findings of the cost and construction needs for the options. She also reviewed key findings of the similarities and differences between the options. All three options would result in average speeds near 45 mph and comparable trip costs through through-trip time savings, reductions in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and vehicle hours traveled (VHT), limited diversion on a regional scale, minimal diversion within Equity Framework Areas, likely generation of net revenue, and decreased freight traffic on local roads. The modeling indicates that option 1 results in the greatest reduction in VHT, option 2a shows the least amount of total VMT increase to local roads, option 1 shows the greatest mode shift, options 2a and 2b have more hours and locations with a \$0 trip possible while still generating revenue, and option 2b is the most likely to generate more net revenue. Zoie mentioned that a detailed matrix of the comparison between the three options was included in the meeting packet for RTAC members.

Mandy discussed the next steps in evaluating the RMPP options, which will include EMAC input, public input, and additional agency staff coordination. All input will be summarized to inform ODOT of how to proceed. Regardless of the option identified, there will be an in-depth analysis of benefits and impacts, including diversion into non-tolled roads, in the Environmental Assessment.

- Mayor Bialostosky expressed concern that RMPP will be a big change for people in the region to adjust to. He asked what toll rate assumptions were used for the initial analysis of the options.
 - Zoie said that similar rate assumptions and trip costs were modeled across all the options to achieve the goals of the project. A through-trip would be about \$5-6 for autos. Most trips travel about 7 miles on the interstate and would pay less than \$2. The toll rate assumptions will be further refined as the analysis is progressed.
 - Brendan commented that ODOT shares the sentiment about the enormity of the Toll Program and stated the importance of RTAC's work.
- Mayor Bialostosky asked how the diversion rates were accounted for and how the modeling considered diversion on local roads.
 - Mandy responded that the initial analysis is a macro-view based on the regional travel demand model to evaluate diversion. Next steps will include looking at localized diversion in more detail. Zoie added that there are similar diversion patterns for the three options. Additional volume-to-traffic ratios have been shared with partner agencies.
- Councilor Lewis commented that Option 1 should not be called "system-wide" because it does not integrate 213 to Stafford Road. She also said that I-205 needs new capacity with a managed lane.
 - Mandy said that the analysis looked at RMPP specifically for managed lanes, but additional analysis can be done to evaluate a managed lane for the I-205 project.

Meeting Summary

RTAC Meeting #10 / September 18, 2023

- Councilor Lewis asked if the modeling for mode-shifts and diversion is specific to non-ODOT facilities, or if it considers all arterials. She said that ODOT needs to be clear about the modeling and is responsible for managing arterials, including 99E and 43.
 - Mandy said that the modeling is all arterials.
- Commissioner Savas commented that he is concerned that tolls will result in an overall increase in vehicle hours traveled based on person experience despite ODOT's findings of VHT reductions. He requested data on what the expected VHT is, and additional data on how much diversion is created. He stated that VHT and diversion are opposite things and asked for more information on how they can both be reduced.
 - Mandy said that the project team will follow-up with the additional data. She clarified that ODOT is not seeking a decision today about the options.
- Commissioner Savas asked if the RMPP is intended to have revenue generation, and what the anticipated revenue generation is for the options. He noted that there is not enough funding for adequate mitigation projects and other UMS projects.
 - Brendan clarified that the purpose of the Toll Program is to manage demand on the facility and raise revenue for needed transportation investments.
- Mayor Bubenik asked if the projected through-trip time savings of 3 to 5 minutes is on all I-205 or just along the I-205 Toll Project corridor. He said that the cost of the toll is too high for very little time savings.
 - Zoie responded that the No-Build Alternative includes the I-205 Toll Project, so that assumes time savings would be in addition to the I-205 Toll Project. ODOT will group those assumptions together to model total time savings.
- Mayor Bubenik commented that option 2a would result in pushing diversion to Tualatin and Stafford and that doesn't save money because people aren't doing short trips through that corridor.
- Millicent Williams commented that carpooling should not be considered as a mode-shift. She also commented that diversion in equity framework areas needs to be considered along with other Portland and regional projects that will impact mode-shift and cause people to move.
- Commissioner Fai noted that there was an initial statement that the tolls would result in bringing traffic congestion down to 2 hours and asked if that remains a goal of the program.
 - Mandy clarified that the information presented during the meeting was focused on RMPP. The initial time savings for the I-205 Toll Project were based on adding a third lane and tolling at the Tualatin and Abernethy Bridges. ODOT will update the evaluation based on the revised scope of that project to only toll at the Abernethy bridge.

3 Projects that Complement the Toll System

Mandy introduced a discussion about Nexus projects and the Public Transportation Strategy (PTS) projects that will complement the toll system.

Tom Mills, TriMet, shared details about the PTS and the committee approach to establishing an equitable PTS for the Portland metropolitan and SW Washington area. Assessment categories to evaluate the PTS projects include project type, relationship to congestion pricing, and equity. Additionally, project readiness will be used for future consideration. Projects were categorized by their anticipated ability to provide equity benefits to people who are historically and currently underrepresented and address impacts from toll implementation. Tom provided an overview of the initial PTS list and said that when new information, data, and analysis is available, regional partners may decide to revise or prioritize the list.

- Commissioner Fai asked if there any high-priority projects that involve transit expansion. She noted that in Washington County people are not able to get where they need to on transit.
 - Tom responded that every project TriMet provided to the PTS list is a transit expansion project involving more frequent service or new service lines. TriMet recently completed Forward Together which outlined a plan for restoration of service by the end of fiscal year 2026. TriMet is beginning to plan for Forward Together 2.0, which will focus on transit expansion and include bus and MAX service. Tom added that the list is not fiscally constrained, so TriMet still needs to identify funding sources.
- Commissioner Fai asked if TriMet is considering adding restroom for high-capacity service lines.
 - TriMet is not considering restrooms for customers at this point.
- Mayor Anne McEnerney-Ogle asked if there are any C-TRAN projects included on the PTS list.
 - C-TRAN included a curb-running bus along I-205.
- Councilor Lewis noted that there are no transit expansion projects in West Linn. She observed that Forward Together included line 154, but the PTS appears to move transit off the parallel line. She commented that the project can't move forward without further consideration of how to serve West Linn.
 - Tom responded that Forward Together recommends a bus line between Beaverton and Tualatin that route through 10th Avenue to Willamette Falls Blvd. into Oregon City. TriMet has committed to implementing that recommendation within a year. Line 154 may be reallocated through West Linn to Lake Oswego; the details for that line are still being determined.
 - Councilor Lewis commented that every community needs a specific conversation about who is affected.

- Mayor Bubenik observed that all the high-priority projects are in Portland and there are no high-priority projects in south Washington County. He commented that there needs to be an alternative to traveling on I-205.
 - Tom responded that the PTS list was a collaboration between people in the region representing different jurisdictions. The list is based on incomplete data and is focused on how well projects address tolling and equity concerns. As other criteria for evaluating projects are developed, the PTS list is likely to change. Tom reiterated that the list is not a commitment for funding, so medium-priority projects are still under consideration.

Mandy provided an overview of the parallel effort to develop the Nexus project list. Nexus projects are pedestrian, bicycle, roadway, or other mobility projects that would complement a tolling system on I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metropolitan area. Selection criteria for Nexus projects is based on the relationship to congestion pricing, equity, and project readiness. ODOT is reviewing the list of projects and will bring the list to RTAC in November for discussion.

- Sarah Iannarone asked how the Nexus projects fit with the RTP update.
 - Mandy responded that there is overlap between the Nexus projects and projects in the RTP, but it is not a requirement for Nexus projects to be in the RTP. ODOT is coordinating where possible.
- Commissioner Savas expressed concern that Nexus projects will become the only mitigation solutions. He commented that an internal analysis of the I-205 Environmental Assessment showed that the VHT would increase significantly which is contrary to the climate goals. He also commented that none of the local transportation system plans have incorporated tolling, so the RTP update will not include projects and analysis of what the impacts will be.
 - Mandy responded that ODOT is coordinating with Metro and that Metro's work on the RTP does include an analysis of RMPP to provide a regional analysis of pricing.
- Mayor Bubenik asked how the PTS and Nexus project lists will be integrated together.
 - Mandy responded that ODOT will share a combined list of the PTS and Nexus projects in the future. She added that submissions for the Nexus project list were asked to consider how they would complement PTS projects.

4 Public Comment

Two people provided public comment online:

- John McCabe commented that TriMet doesn't seem to be listening to the public. The bus line serving the Social Security/VA building in West Linn is being removed because the route is being moved. He said that the community has an issue with tolling. They were initially told tolls would cost \$400 per vehicle per year but the cost will be more than that. John referenced a report he

provided to RTAC at a previous meeting that shows a 45 percent diversion since 2008. He said that vehicles on I-205 are traveling 45 to 55 miles per hours and ODOT's study shows an average of 53 miles per hour, therefore travel times are not an issue and there shouldn't be a toll. John suggested that travel times on the freeway be reported in a public record.

- John Ley said that there is a lot of information that RTAC members were not told. John sat in on 5 out of 6 VPFA committee meetings in 2017 and 2018. In 2017, the community was told that there were 50,000 diversions due to lack of vehicle capacity and once tolling was implemented there would be 130,000 diversions. He said that every single vehicle crossing the I-5 Interstate bridge diverting onto side roads would have a huge safety issue and reduction in the quality of life for the impacted neighborhoods. He asked if there would be any reduction in travel times as a result of tolling. John commented that the best option in 2017 was discarded; he encouraged RTAC members to demand Option 4 be put back on the table and moved forward to implementation. John suggested ending tolling and raising revenue another way. He said that the cost of collection has not yet been mentioned. Jon said that Portland has a lack of vehicle capacity.

5 Oregon Toll Program Updates

Garet Prior shared an update on the Low-Income Toll Program. He discussed the rationale for considering basing the program on 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) in comparison to 400 percent FPL. EMAC has been strongly supportive of a 400 percent FPL benefit-level; adding an additional benefit level at the 400 percent FPL would avoid a single-tier benefit cliff, reach customers at the minimum wage, and attempt to not further increase transportation cost burdens. More investigation is needed to assess the benefit level for the Low-Income Toll Program. Garet shared that, by the end of 2023, the ODOT will make a recommendation to the OTC to commit to a discount or credit benefit for households up to 200 percent FPL and determine options for a 200 – 400 percent benefit level, and to identify the geographic extent that the program will apply to. Garet also discussed the outreach and analysis approach to informing the OTC's decision, including preliminary traffic and revenue analysis, analysis of implementation issues, and equity-focused engagement work.

James Paulson provided an update on EMAC. He shared that EMAC had a joint meeting with STRAC in July to discuss the Low-Income Toll Program. In October, EMAC will meet to further discuss the Low-Income Toll Program as well as the RMPP options. James encouraged any RTAC members to reach out to him with questions to bring forward to EMAC members. Commissioner Fai shared an update on STRAC. Previous meetings have discussed the regulations, policies, and draft rules for the low-income discounts and exemptions.

Mandy Putney shared an update on the I-205 Toll Project. ODOT and FHWA will prepare a Supplemental Environmental Assessment to analyze the effects of the project scope changes. The project will no longer include the toll at the Tualatin Bridge or the added third lane on I-205. The Supplemental Environmental Assessment will be released for public comment in 2024. ODOT will update the traffic and revenue analysis for four scenarios; base, flatter, congestion pricing, and higher revenue.

- Commissioner Jayapal commented that it is challenging to talk about refining the Nexus projects and PTS project lists without a discussion of how to pay for them, and that the discussion on toll

revenue allocation will not occur until September 2024. She added that there has been a request for ODOT to provide a commitment to revenue sharing and she has not seen that that's been made. She stated that it is important to hear back from ODOT on that request either before or at the next RTAC meeting. She added appreciation that the ODOT is considering a 400 percent FPL for the Low-Income Toll Program because the FPL is flawed for the region.

- Mayor McEnery-Ogle asked if Vancouver residents have been involved in recommendations for the low-income program.
 - Gareth confirmed that Vancouver residents have been considered. However, the tolls for the I-5 Interstate Bridge will be a bi-state process and there will be a separate process for toll rate setting and rules.

6 Next Steps and Close Out

Brendan shared closing remarks, saying that he has heard an overall theme around collaboration. ODOT is hearing RTAC's comments and is responding. ODOT has touchpoints with agency staff to move conversations forward and Brendan will be trying to reach out to RTAC members to be proactive.

Travis thanked RTAC members for their feedback. He acknowledged concerns about the real-world impacts of tolling in the communities, particularly around diversion, as well as an overall desire to see more specific information about the impacts. Travis also acknowledged that there is frustration around not having answers right now and said that ODOT is committed to collaborating moving forward to build the system and answer those questions through an iterative process.

The next RTAC meeting will be on November 13, 2023.

7 Action Items

The project team heard requests for additional information during the meeting. Action items for the team are:

- Share findings from Texas A&M study about traffic patterns from managed lanes over time. (*Complete*)
- Complete additional analysis of managed lanes for the I-205 Toll Project corridor. The evaluation presented at RTAC was for the 58 miles of RMPP project area. (*Analysis in process*)
- Follow-up with data behind diversion rates and VHT for evaluating RMPP options.
- Send out larger version of graphic showing PTS projects. (*Complete*)

8 Written Public Comment

For public comments sent before the meeting, see attached.

9 Meeting Evaluation

Four members submitted a paper meeting evaluation. No members submitted an online evaluation.

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

Comments received from members:

- **Commenter 1:** I think going to one meeting every other month will be challenging. I would rather calendar every month and release meetings which are not needed. Too hard to set meetings of this size on the fly.
- **Commenter 2:** Very dense agenda. Very useful data and concepts. Insufficient time for RTAC inquiry and input. I had commentary for each, but deferred to OR electeds input.
- **Commenter 2:**
 - 9: 20: Great data. Direct answers.
 - 9:57: Options – clear findings – toll assumptions? Time saving? Reduce congestion?
 - 10:50: PTS – argh! Slide 42 very disappointing – distracted from conversation. Please put link in summary
 - 11:03: Nexus – any news for Clark County projects?
 - 11:29 – Clark County low income options?

Thanks for clear titles and font size on slides. Please watch for readability.