

# I-5 and I-205 Toll Projects

## Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee Meeting #1 Summary



<b>Subject</b>	Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee Meeting #1 (Listening Session)
<b>Date and Time</b>	June 29, 2020   5:30-8 p.m.
<b>Location</b>	Online via Zoom
<b>Recording</b>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YaypKqK2MOI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YaypKqK2MOI</a>

### EQUITY AND MOBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Attendees	Organization
Abe Moland	Clackamas County Health and Transportation
Amanda Garcia-Snell	Washington County Community Engagement
Bill Baumann	Human Services Council
Diana Avalos Leos	League of United Latin American Citizens; Latino Youth Conference
Dr. Philip Wu	Oregon Environmental Council
Dwight Brashear	SMART
Eduardo Ramos	At-large member; City of Tigard
Fabian Hidalgo Guerrero	Causa
Ismael Armenta	At-large member; Oregon Walks
James Paulson	WorkSystems Inc Board
John Gardner	TriMet
Kari Schlosshauer	At-large member; Safe Routes Partnership
Michael Espinoza	Portland Bureau of Transportation
Park Woodworth	Ride Connection
Phil Ditzler (ex-officio member)	Federal Highway Administration

Absent	Organization
Germaine Flentroy	Beyond Black/Play, Grow, Lean
Alando Simpson (Oregon Transportation Commission liaison)	Oregon Transportation Commission Vice Chair

### PROJECT TEAM

Name	Organization	Name	Organization
Hannah Williams	ODOT	Josh Channell	WSP
Lucinda Broussard	ODOT	Carina Garcia	EnviroIssues
Brendan Finn	ODOT	Penny Mabie	EnviroIssues
Nikotris Perkins	ODOT	Brett Watson	EnviroIssues
Anne Presentin	WSP	Christine Moses	Buffalo Cloud Consulting

Name	Organization	Name	Organization
Heather Wills	WSP		

## WELCOME

Christine Moses, Buffalo Cloud Consulting, LLC, and meeting facilitator welcomed the group. She introduced herself and her co-facilitator, Penny Mabie. Christine provided an overview of Zoom controls. She then reminded all Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee members and attendees that the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) will record the meeting. ODOT will post the recording on the committee webpage.

She then reminded community members in the audience that they are welcome to submit public comments via email at any time and that there will be a public comment period at the end of the meeting.

Christine reviewed the agenda and she acknowledged the land to center and honor Native American tribes.

## AGREEMENTS

Christine provided an overview of the agreements that the committee will use when engaging in discussion.

Christine provided the committee more context for the conversation ahead. She instructed the group to ask questions, reflect and push boundaries. Christine encouraged ODOT to listen deeply and answer questions only when necessary. The group will hold ODOT accountable to suggestions and requests made within their prevue.

Christine led the group through a centering exercise before beginning the discussion.

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

**Given where we are in the world, at this moment, how do the demonstrations relate to the work of this committee?**

Christine asked the committee members to reflect on how the current Black Lives Matter demonstrations relate to the work of the committee. Committee members shared their thoughts, including these key points:

- Many agreed that the protests are reflective of a problem that has existed for many years. The community has needs that are not being addressed and the public demands change.
- Members commented on the difference between intent and impact. While there has been talk to address issues of systemic racism, there has not been enough action paired with measurable outcomes. The work that the committee is tasked to do is about lasting impact.
- One committee member commented that the demonstrations demand attention to how past planning decisions have impacted the Black, Indigenous and people of color communities. This is a moment for members to think through how they can address systemic

transportation barriers and be mindful and critical of what recommendations go to ODOT, while keeping in mind the outcomes of those decisions.

### **What are the historic injustices that ODOT has committed against communities of color, Albina specifically, and others in general?**

Christine asked the group to discuss the historic injustices that ODOT has committed against communities of color, Albina specifically, and others in general. Committee members discussed, including these key points:

- Members discussed in depth about the practice of highway placement in communities of color in major cities. Specifically, the Albina community, where ODOT displaced African Americans with the development of I-5 and the construction of the Convention Center and the Memorial Coliseum. ODOT destroyed 300 homes mostly owned by African Americans and they never replaced those homes. One committee member discussed an [article](#) in the LA Times on highway placement and segregation.
- One member commented on the health outcomes related to neighborhoods near highways and how this impacts particularly low-income communities and communities of color.
- One member noted the injustices and decisions committed by ODOT, whether implicit or explicit, have never been acknowledged.
- Some members agreed that whether or not there was intent on the part of ODOT, it was never standard practice to include people of color in the planning process. This is still visible today in low-income communities and communities of color in eastern portions of the region where there are no sidewalks and challenges with transit service.
- One committee member requested reading material such as [Bleeding Albina](#) for the committee as background information for their work moving forward.

### **How does current transportation policy contribute to inequitable outcomes?**

Christine asked everyone to explore the question of how current transportation policy contributes to inequitable outcomes. Committee members shared their thoughts, including these key points:

- Committee members noted that policymakers have focused transportation policy on roads and cars while other important factors such as alternative transportation options and social determinants of health have been ignored.
- Some members indicated that when planning decisions are made without input from impacted communities or without the consideration of equity, it often leads to further displacement or a failure to mitigate harm and address the needs of specific communities.
- Many members agreed that a lack of transparency is a major challenge that ODOT needs to face. ODOT needs to be more transparent around the process and where input from the community is going or how much influence that feedback has. Oftentimes in planning

projects, agencies have already made decisions. When the community says they are not interested in the project, the process moves forward only to have the messaging change in an attempt to gain more support.

- Some members commented on how the transportation system is already inequitable, adding a toll has the potential to devastate low-income families unless there is an option to use transit.

### **Can tolling be equitable? Or, what would equitable tolling look like?**

Christine asked the committee members to reflect on whether tolls can be equitable and what equitable tolls would look like. Discussion followed summarized by the following key points:

- Some members expressed skepticism with implementing tolls equitably when there are currently limited options for travel.
- Committee members indicated that tolls need to be paired with mitigation strategies and improved mobility such as a sliding scale option, rebates, and development in alternative transportation options. Toll revenue should go toward improved transit.
- One committee member emphasized the importance of adaptability of a toll system so that ODOT can continue to gauge what improvements can be made in order to mitigate impacts and make adjustments

### **How can tolling create benefits for everyone? What would that look like?**

Christine asked the group to reflect on how tolls can create benefits for everyone and what that would look like. The committee members discussed, including the following key points:

- Many members agreed that improved transit needs to be one of the benefits that comes out of toll revenue.
- One committee member shared that tolls should provide benefits to residents of SW Washington who invest heavily in the Portland area but are often left out of the process. More specifically, one committee member asked how tolls will benefit C-TRAN.
- Committee members noted that toll revenue will provide improvements to roads and infrastructure.
- Some members commented on the potential for tolls to decrease emissions, though only if paired with incentives to use public transit.

Christine asked one committee member to comment on their personal experience with vanpools and carpools

- The committee member noted that using carpools and vanpools to get to work and other events or activities can provide a sense of community and decrease the number of cars on the freeway. There is work that has been done with using apps to connect people within the

same neighborhoods, religious institutions or community-based organizations to share rides through the use of carpools. This could be an additional strategy to offset the impact of tolls.

**What are the metrics that demonstrate to you that ODOT is doing things differently?**

Christine asked what metrics would demonstrate that ODOT is doing things differently.

Committee members shared their thoughts, including the following:

- One member noted that ODOT should release a statement dedicated to reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled. This would signal that ODOT is committed to reducing CO2 emissions.
- Another member shared that ODOT should release a statement dedicating a certain percentage of toll revenue to improving transit.
- Another member indicated that ODOT needs to take accountability for historic injustices. This could be in the form of data or a report with a record of ODOT's decisions, so that moving forward, ODOT can begin work to address these issues.
- Several committee members shared that ODOT needs to make a better effort at engaging communities in SW Washington.

**Are there questions/concerns/needs/fears that must be addressed in order for you to effectively work on this committee?**

Christine asked committee members to consider questions, concerns, needs or fears that must be addressed for them to do their work effectively. Discussion followed, summarized by these key points:

- Committee members voiced a need to receive more information and updates on the progress of the projects, project schedule with key decision milestones, and more clarity on the committee's influence as well as assurance that their feedback will be heard up the chain to the Oregon Transportation Commission.
- One committee member voiced a concern that ODOT will undermine the work of the committee in favor of revenue.

Christine thanked the committee members for their comments.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Hannah Williams, ODOT, gave an overview of key points she heard from the discussion. She thanked the committee participants for their feedback and conversations.

Lucinda Broussard, ODOT, clarified that ODOT will share more information such as schedules and timelines at future meetings. ODOT will also be providing resources for the work they are tasked to do such as presentations from experts and an committee intern to assist with statistical data.

Hannah provided a brief overview of the I-205 engagement planned for this summer.

## NEXT STEPS

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 28, 2020 where committee members will discuss the draft charter, draft equity framework and the draft committee 2020 work plan. At this meeting, committee members will also discuss how they would like to handle public comment for future meetings.

Christine asked committee participants to select a time for their meeting by using a poll through Zoom. Penny and Christine will follow up to schedule the meeting.

*Note: This document is only a summary of issues and actions from this meeting. It is not intended to be a transcript of the meeting, but rather an overview of points raised and responses from the Project Team. We have posted a full recording of the meeting on the [committee webpage](#).*

*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.*

*Please note that committee member comments during meetings are part of the public record and open to public records requests through the Oregon Public Records and Meetings Law.*

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

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## PUBLIC COMMENT

No community members provided public comment at this meeting.

### Written public comment

Community members submitted the following public comments via email prior to Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee Meeting #1.

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**Date received** 6/15/2020

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**Source** Project inbox

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**From** Joey Jensen

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Subject: EMAC Public Comment

I am against ALL TOLLING! Build a third bridge, add highway capacity and pay for it by redirecting more transportation dollars toward road construction and not mass transit, bike lanes etc.

Joey Jensen Woodland, WA

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**Date received** 6/22/2020

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**Source** Project inbox

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**From** Wrick Bartroff

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Subject: Tolling Comment

Greetings,

Holding a meeting on equity for a tolling system, hmmm. Will there really be equality? Are those in control locked in on one agenda and only holding all these meetings to provide the appearance of taking into consideration the community? This seems to be the case. To date there have been no modifications to the original plan. No other comments or opinions have been considered.

The goal we are told is to reduce congestion. The real goal appears to be creating income. How is it that most of the incoming traffic to the state of Oregon is affected by the tolls? Are State boarders the only concern? I believe you will see a reduction in the work force needed by your businesses due to the tolling. To tax fully the income of a WA State resident that works in Oregon and then add a toll on top of this is unfair. I personally have paid over \$100k in Oregon State taxes in my career and never had the opportunity to vote on any Oregon issues. Yes, I use the roads, but I do not use it very often ( I don't visit Portland unless I am working. Portland is dirty, a dangerous place and getting worse). I do not use any other Oregon infrastructure or benefit from any other services. Yet, I am taxed to the point where a proposed toll is now forcing me to look for employment in WA. I believe other professionals will do the same. Businesses should be opposing this toll and promoting the election of officials that promote jobs and growth instead of driving people away. Perhaps even more homeless and jobless will move to Portland as the working class is continuously burdened with more taxes and fees while the money collected from the working is distributed back to the lazy and never ever profitable Trimet.

This is not a convenience fee, this does not reduce traffic. It is a fee imposed on the working. This type of money collection will drive productive members of the community away from your city.

I know from the past that the majority of citizens voices do not matter in Portland issues like this one. It is the non-contributing, loud mouth groups that seem to be the only ones being served by our so called public servants. This is the wrong way to go. Why don't you save the planning and committee fees and just get on with your plan? You are not changing anything. This process is only adding to my bill.

The people who will pay a majority of the tolls are the people hurt by the inequality of this toll. We are the Washington residents of all colors and abilities. Hey, maybe the I-5 bridge should become pedestrian, bicycle and transit only. Just like the Tillicum crossing which is shown, unused, daily on every local news broadcast during the weather report.

Thank you for allowing my comment.  
Wrick Bartroff

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<b>Date received</b>	6/22/2020
<b>Source</b>	Project inbox
<b>From</b>	Michael Glidewell

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Subject: EMAC Public Comment

Would motorcycles or motorscooters be exempt or pay a reduced toll rate? It might encourage this less polluting form of transportation.

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<b>Date received</b>	6/22/2020
<b>Source</b>	Project inbox
<b>From</b>	Lents Neighborhood Livability Association

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Subject: EMAC Public Comment

Dear Committee,  
This is all a joke. You want this work to benefit historically and currently under-served and underrepresented communities by adding tolling to roads they need to use on a daily basis to get to and from work. The poorest neighborhoods in Portland will be forced to pay a toll when, if they are lucky, bring home \$100 a day.  
AMAZING!

Char  
Lents Neighborhood Livability Association

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**Date received** 6/22/2020

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**Source** Project inbox

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**From** Frank Smith

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Subject: Tolling feedback

Hello,

Won't be able to attend your listening session, but I hope you have good turnout and many voices speaking on behalf of our communities of color and lower socioeconomic status populations that need to drive to work and maintain their lives.

I think anyone with a knowledge of Oregon history and geographic data showing where our most marginalized populations live will show that your plans to toll will ultimately further harm those with lower socioeconomic status and our communities of color that have to drive to work. Many can't afford to live other than in the suburbs or some neighborhoods in North Portland, and may not have the luxury of working close enough to home to avoid driving or facing trimet commutes of up to 2 hours each way. This is on top of being forced to either pay for trimet or pay tolls in addition to owning and maintaining a car - something the working class in Portland has struggled with for decades.

I really don't see a way to avoid tolling being yet another factor contributing to the systemic racism your listening session is hoping to find ways to eliminate.

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**Date received** 6/22/2020

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**Source** Project inbox

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**From** Jeff Wilent

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Subject: Comment about tolling

We do not want tolling. I do not want tolling. I cannot afford tolls. I do not travel I205 because I feel like it, I do because it's the only way to certain parts of the city or state or country and tolling me if extorting me of my hard earned money. Do not continue tolling.

Jeff

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**Date received** 6/23/2020  
**Source** Project inbox  
**From** Linda Pilcher

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Subject: EMAC Public Comment

I am opposed to tolls on the roads.  
We are already paying for road maintenance with all kinds of taxes and fees. We do not need you to add to it. Tolls are by nature unfair to the economically challenged. You should all try to survive on what some people make before you take more of their money.

Linda Pilcher

I'm obsessed with knowing everything. Aren't you?  
Save the Earth... it's the only planet with chocolate  
You can never have too many tag lines . . .

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**Date received** 6/24/2020  
**Source** Project inbox  
**From** Peter Ball

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Subject: Comments

Tolling should only be a way to fund new projects to enhance additional transportation routes, not for traffic control of current roads. If you do decide to toll us down state folks should be exempt. We all paid for 205 and I 5 and should not be victimized again. If you want to fund a West side Columbia crossing that would be worthy of a toll until the project debt is retired. Thanks for your consideration.

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**Date received** 6/24/2020  
**Source** EMAC member email  
**From** Chris Billman

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Public transportation does not accommodate non-wheelchair powered mobility devices such as recumbent hand cycles or wheelchairs with hand powered add-ons

Lack of notification in bike lanes that they should be shared with wheelchairs – he would like to see wheelchair symbols painted in bike lanes

Disability issues are not comprehensively represented on EMAC (no voice for people who use bicycles and wheelchairs that do not conform to traditional standards)

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**Date received** 6/26/2020

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**Source** Project inbox

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**From** Terry Parker

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Subject: EMAC Public Comment

Value Pricing is just a fancy and deceptive way to describe tolling. Along with road diets, the concept of tolling roadways in Oregon is social engineering and an attempt by so-called progressives to "dictate" travel mode. It is a form of targeted discrimination towards motorists that comes from a car hater mindset. Nearly 15% of the jobs in Oregon are tied to the automobile.

In most places in the United States where tolling occurs, there is a parallel route that is not tolled. I believe this includes Chicago where the turnpikes have tolls. In the Seattle-King County area, most of the tolls are only on lanes that have been added to increase capacity to the freeways.

Car trips in the Portland-Metro area are expected to increase regardless of how much mass transit service is added. Per both Metro and TriMet surveys prior to the Coronavirus pandemic; congestion, road maintenance and the need to increase roadway capacity have been among the top transportation priorities. Portland is 30 years in the rears of having a street and highway system that has the motor vehicle capacity to meet the needs of a post Coronavirus economy. Not adding more motor vehicle capacity to keep up with population growth is artificially creating premeditated congestion.

Any tolling on Portland freeways will likely add more congestion on city thoroughfares which in turn could add more cut through traffic on neighborhood streets. New lanes need to be added as opposed to taking away existing freeway lanes and tolling them. The HOV lanes on I-5 are an example of adding restrictions to an existing lane that in turn adds congestion to the adjacent lanes. Parallel non-tolled routes must be easily accessed and clearly marked with signage.

Because there are too few bridges between Portland and Vancouver with the only two existing bridges on the Interstates; the existing bridges must remain toll-free with direct access to and from non-tolled routes on the Oregon side. If any tolling occurs anywhere in the Portland area, it must be contingent on fixing the I-5 bottleneck at the Rose Quarter.

If tolling does occur, it needs to take place only on new lanes added to the existing highway system. Any money derived from tolling must be utilized only to increase motor vehicle capacity and not be extorted to fund or subsidize alternative mode infrastructure.

If bicycle lanes and specialized bicycle infrastructure are considered to have "value", EQUITY requires a way MUST be found to establish that equity whereby bicyclists pay user fees for all the privileged specialized infrastructure and priority treatment they continually receive.

Likewise, the people that are calling for more transit to replace driving completely ignore and/or side step the costs of providing it. With a prospective multi-billion dollar light rail line on the horizon, transit needs to become far more financially self-sustainable with fares that help pay for infrastructure costs. One two-axle bus does as much damage to the streets and roads as 1200 cars. Existing transit fares only cover 25% of the operating costs. Motorists should not be subsidizing transit or paying for bicycle infrastructure..

In summary, drivers already pay gas taxes and other fees for the roads in addition to subsidizing alternative modes. Any additional fee assessed such as tolling is simply an inequitable money grab. If tolling does take place, drivers must be given clear and posted bypass routes. The best option for those routes is not to toll all lanes or no tolling at all. Moreover, transit riders and bicyclists need to equitably start paying the full share costs of the transportation infrastructure they utilize before drivers are expected to pay more.

Respectively submitted,

Terry Parker  
Northeast Portland

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<b>Date received</b>	6/26/2020
<b>Source</b>	Project inbox
<b>From</b>	Mike Coffman

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Subject: EMAC Public Comment

Hello, I commute to Portland from Vancouver, & then return to Vancouver 5 days a week, & have been doing so for 30+ years, so as daily commuters we have an interest in any tolling charges that will be assessed travelling to & from Portland/Vancouver. As well, as Washington residents who pay Oregon income taxes we also want to ensure that those taxes are included in any conversations involving tolling. We certainly hope that Washington residents/commuters who will be paying these new tolls will receive an Oregon income tax credit equal to the amount of the tolls paid. If not, I guarantee that it will be Oregon businesses that will suffer the losses, as we will cease spending any money in Oregon. Before the Covid-19 shutdown, we patronized Oregon restaurants several times a week, every week, as well as multiple other businesses. I repeat, that will stop as soon as the tolling starts, unless Washington residents receive an Oregon income tax credit for these tolls.

I am sure we are not the only ones who feel this way, & that will take this action.

Mike Coffman  
[XX]  
Vancouver, WA 98686  
[XX]

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<b>Date received</b>	6/27/2020
<b>Source</b>	Project inbox
<b>From</b>	Christopher Barlow

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Subject: EMAC Public Comment

To all Oregon DOT Committees on the Subject of Proposed Road Tolls

No to tolling any roads in Oregon. Please stop using the euphemistic name of congestion or value pricing. A toll is a tax when a government entity creates it by legislation or administrative rules to raise or increase revenue. This is a road use tax. A tax that is regressive as there is no discrimination on the basis of income and will contribute to the continual increasing inequality between the rich and poor. Most drivers are commuting because they have to travel to their job to earn money to pay their expenses. We, taxpayers have already paid for the construction of these highways and are continuing to pay for the maintenance of these highways. This idea of imposing a toll as a fix to a congestion problem is flawed. Everyone uses the roads whether they drive or not. Delivery services use the roads to deliver that package that someone ordered. Freight and cargo services use the roads to transport those items for delivery. Emergency services use the roads. Many service businesses that require travel to homes and businesses would be severely penalized by these proposed road tolls. Prices on everything will be raised to compensate for this increased expense. Those many commuters who are barely making ends meet will greatly suffer if these tolls are imposed. If they don't travel on the tolled roads, then many of the other non-tolled roads will receive excess traffic that will greatly affect travel times. If the advisory committee thinks these tolls will change behavior, maybe, but the main change in behavior will be an increase in anger directed toward the government. It may result in a potential trip to Portland from the suburbs for an event, shopping, or restaurant will be cancelled with the resulting loss of revenue to the businesses in Portland.

To offer solutions to the traffic flow problems - there are no easy solutions. But in case the committee is tiring of only reading, I hope mainly, No responses, here are some ideas: Stagger the start and stop times of businesses and schools. The main traffic flow problem is that there are too many people driving at the same time.

Create or improve car pool groups and access to tele-commuting options.

The more difficult solutions: change the tax structure in Oregon and Washington to remove the incentive to live in Washington and commute to Portland. Residents of Vancouver should work in Vancouver, etc.

Reduce the growth of the population living in the Portland-Vancouver area, yes, this idea must be considered: population growth cannot continue, the infrastructure and environment cannot sustain it.

Increase and improve the public transportation system, the current system is inadequate to accommodate the current or potential needs. One does not need a car to live in New York City or London due to the large public transportation system. But do we want the Portland Metro area to become a New York City. NO, thanks. Many people are commuting because they can't afford the high cost of housing of living in Portland (needs to become lower), but the public transportation system can be greatly improved with the right kind of wise planning and leadership.

Again, I repeat very strongly: No to toll roads in Oregon. Thank you.

Christopher Barlow  
Aurora, Oregon

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**Date received** 6/28/2020

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**Source** Project inbox

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**From** Darien Fenn

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Subject: EMAC Public Comment  
EMAC Public Comment  
PDF Attached. Please use if possible  
Text version:  
June 28, 2020

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for taking the time to read these comments. Your work on the committee will potentially affect the lives of a great many people, many of whom are among groups that are relatively disenfranchised or lacking in political influence. I hope you will have the opportunity to be the voices for them.

I think there are two major points to make at the beginning:

1. Introducing tolling on Portland roads would produce enormous benefits: It would reduce congestion (which would benefit the economy), and would create a bonanza of tax revenue badly needed for repairs and expansion of our highway infrastructure.
2. To reduce congestion, we must reduce the number of cars on the road. If the mechanism of reducing travel is to make it prohibitively expensive, those affected will be those with the least income.

Personally, I am likely to be one of those people who benefits from the changes such a system would produce. I would certainly welcome improved travel conditions, and I am well-off enough that any conceivable toll expense would have a trivial impact on my budget. However, I do not feel comfortable obtaining such benefits at the expense of people who are already struggling in life and for whom such a system would inescapably harm further. I have been to the ODOT presentations and read their published materials. I was told at an open house by their consultants that it is possible to mitigate the harm, but those arguments were

not convincing at the time, and the structure of the open house, which seemed to me designed to limit open public discussion, made me uncomfortable. It seemed to me that obvious problems with equity were being ignored or minimized. Looking into research on the subject, having reviewed more than 500 articles so far, I am finding that my concerns are justified.

Here's some of what I've learned:

There is wide agreement that congestion pricing (and virtually any tolling regime) does indeed harm low-income people, and it works by pricing poor people off the road. Those who benefit the most are the most well-off in our society, leading to descriptions of tolling systems as creating "Lexus lanes". At a theoretical level, an equitable system depends on taking toll revenues and redistributing them to lower income groups either as subsidies or improvements in transit. However, such efforts fail to address concerns with horizontal equity, as "...low-income individuals adversely impacted by congestion pricing are unlikely to be the same individuals who benefit from transit subsidies... the standard prescription of designing pro-equity redistribution of toll revenues may be something of a red herring, because most redistributions are not targeted at the affected parties or are unlikely to be implemented because of the public sector's pressure for additional resources.(1)"

Because problems with congestion occur during the commuting rush hours, those most affected by congestion pricing will be commuters, particularly those whose jobs lack flexibility in start and end times. Such inflexibility is more commonly the case for lower-income jobs, particularly those jobs held by women. At a time when 40% of Americans cannot afford a \$400 emergency expense, a \$5 toll (the current national average) would create a \$2000 burden for a two-way full-time commuter. Keep in mind that the dynamic congestion pricing that is being proposed may create tolls higher than that. The I-405 express lanes in Washington State can reach a maximum of \$10, and I-66 in Virginia has one-way tolls that regularly exceed \$40. One of the only studies to assess potential impacts of tolling on lower income groups (and one of very few well-done studies) estimated the annual costs at \$2,600, or 15.2% of household income(2).

Importantly, tolls create a system where good people get caught between the need to commute to work and simply not having the money to pay the toll. A CNN report describes: "One driver was fined \$17,000 -- all for \$36 in unpaid tolls. Another was sued for \$31,000 over less than \$50 in missed tolls. And yet another saw \$20 in tolls balloon to a nearly \$10,000 bill." The full story is something you probably should look at, as such outcomes are almost certainly unavoidable(3).

In this regard, I would urge you to read the comments from the discussion groups conducted for ODOT. Participants most often voiced concerns that any toll would be unaffordable. Similarly, virtually none of the participants felt that transit was a viable alternative to driving. To help appreciate the problems with transit, here's an experiment you can do. Open Google or Apple Maps and select a starting point and a destination, perhaps a trip that you might make

yourself (Apple Maps will also show you the number of stops you will make on a transit trip). You can easily switch between driving or transit modes within the app and compare the times between the two transportation modes. I have done this dozens of times and with rare inner-city travel exceptions, I find that a trip that takes 20 minutes by car takes around 2 hours using transit. Consider also the challenges for transit travel that would be faced by mothers with small children or anyone who has to carry materials or cargo with them.

Despite the real problems of congestion, at best, our transit system is many years away from being a reasonable alternative to having a car. What happens to those people who are priced off the road in the interim? More importantly, what is the likelihood that transit will ever be a viable substitute to driving, especially as increased costs of living are forcing people farther from the areas best served by transit?

As a final point on transit, here are some conclusions reached in a study of transit ridership that I think strongly suggests we may be making a big mistake implementing a system that so disproportionately affects lower-income households:

"A small but persuasive literature on personal consumption shows that poorer people tend to convert even small increases in income into vehicle purchases – a testament to how valuable vehicle access can be. The low-income person who acquires a vehicle often makes fewer trips than an affluent person (driving is expensive) and the trips they make are often essential, and have social benefits that exceed their social costs...

A car trip by a low-income household is more likely than one by an affluent household to involve finding and keeping work, getting to school, or accessing better health and daycare options. These trips might modestly increase congestion and pollution, but they have large paybacks in employment, earnings, and overall well-being that exceed those costs.(4)" There is much more I could add but my time to prepare these comments was limited. Much of what you are likely to see regarding public opinion and the impacts of tolling is misleading or inaccurate. The Tolling White Paper prepared for ODOT by Cambridge Systematics states that "rigorous research has shown that low-income drivers are not disproportionately affected" is directly contradicted by all the research I have found. Likely because there is so much money involved, biases and conflicts of interest are baked into the system and public opinion is seen as an obstacle to be overcome. Despite the concerns regarding equity, there is little to no discussion of making the wealthy, who reap the vast majority of the benefits of congestion relief, pay their fare share. Similarly, other than the CNN story referenced above, I have found virtually no followup of the actual impacts on lower-income households in places where tolling has already been implemented. The costs of administering a tolling system are enormous, almost 100 times higher than the overhead for administering gas taxes

My overall conclusion is, at least from what I know at this point, that it is not possible to create a tolling system that is equitable and fair. My fear is that we will do it anyway. If we are to address problems with congestion, I would hope we would tackle the problem by building a

transit system that attracts ridership, by putting more emphasis on telecommuting, and by restructuring our cities to be more livable and affordable. This would be a longer timeline, but I see this as much more consistent with the innovative thinking and quality of life I see as defining characteristics of Oregon.

I would welcome any opportunity to discuss any of these issues with you further.

Sincerely,  
Darren S Fenn PhD

1-Richardson, H., & Bae, C. (1998) The equity impacts of road congestion pricing. In: Road pricing, traffic congestion and the environment. Button, K, & Verhoef, E., Eds. Edward Elgar Publishing.

2-Plotnick, R., et. al. The Impacts of Tolling on Low-income Persons in the Puget Sound Region. Prepared for Washington State Transportation Commission, Washington State Department of Transportation, and in cooperation with U.S. Department of Transportation

3-Highway robbery: Small tolls spiral into thousand dollar debts and jail time.  
<https://money.cnn.com/2015/09/01/news/unpaid-tolls-debt/index.html>

4-Manville, M., Taylor, B., & Blumberg, E. (2018) Falling Transit Ridership. UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies

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<b>Date received</b>	6/28/2020
<b>Source</b>	Project inbox
<b>From</b>	Lindsey Zehel

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Subject: EMAC Public Comment

Good Evening,

I am writing in opposition to the the I-205 and I-5 Toll Projects. Tolling these important interstates will have a detrimental impact on our community and on Oregonians' basic ability to access resources, employment, and entertainment that make Portland so inviting. These impacts will only exacerbate the economic devastation caused by Covid-19 as businesses strive to recover.

I relocated to Lake Oswego from Florida approximately 6 years ago to attend a graduate program at Lewis & Clark. After completing my degree, I found work in Portland's Goose Hollow neighborhood. Due to the affordability of housing, I moved to Beaverton and commute to Portland almost daily. Living in these perimeter cities has made living in the Portland metro financially feasible for me as I strive to build a career. While tolling roads that connect citizens to employment may seem small, speaking from experience, this added cost - particularly in

cities where the Max is not an option, is inequitable and will be prohibitive to many young professionals.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Lindsey

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<b>Date received</b>	6/29/2020
<b>Source</b>	Project inbox
<b>From</b>	Wendy Butler

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Subject: EQUITY Session

I was wondering if part of the equity discussion will address the high living costs for elderly people here in Oregon. Oregon is already not high on the lists of best places to retire. Will these tolls include some sort of break for our retired folks? I know many who have moved to Washington in order to make retirement more affordable, much to the detriment of family groups who must travel farther to see elderly relatives. Not a very environmental solution!

Wendi H. Butler  
[XX]

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<b>Date received</b>	6/29/2020
<b>Source</b>	Project inbox
<b>From</b>	Shawn Lillard

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Subject: Equity and Mobility

As a person who grew up in Clark County and eventually got a job in Portland, the bridges to Oregon were and still are my avenue to my livelihood. The idea that Oregon is going to toll those corridors is absolutely bewildering. My hope is that I can find a job in Washington and never drive into Oregon again. You are proving the long held belief that no one outside of Portland wants to go there. Your anti traffic stance is blind to the reality of every person in your area. Keep legislating against the people who pay your salaries. You'll figure it out eventually.