

I-5 and I-205 Toll Projects

Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee Meeting #4 Summary



Subject	Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee Meeting #4
Date and Time	Oct. 14, 2020 3:30-6 p.m.
Location	Online via Zoom
Recording	https://youtu.be/hW2J76sWAU0

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
Ismael Armenta	At-large member; Oregon Walks
John Gardner	TriMet
James Paulson	WorkSystems Inc Board
Michael Espinoza	Portland Bureau of Transportation
Park Woodworth	Ride Connection
Sharon Smith (Oregon Transportation Commission Liaison)	Oregon Transportation Commission

Absent	Organization
Fabian Hidalgo Guerrero	Causa
Germaine Flentroy	Beyond Black/Play, Grow, Learn
Kari Schlosshauer	At-large member; Safe Routes Partnership

PROJECT TEAM

Name	Meeting Role	Name	Meeting Role
Hannah Williams	Project team, presenter	Chris Lepe	Project team, presenter
Lucinda Broussard	Project team	Carina Garcia	Project team, meeting notetaker
Heather Wills	Project team, presenter	Penny Mabie	Project team, Co-Facilitator
Anne Presentin	Project team	Brett Watson	Project team, Meeting host

Name	Meeting Role	Name	Meeting Role
Francisco Ibarra	Project team, Committee intern	Christine Moses	Project team, Facilitator

WELCOME

Meeting facilitator Christine Moses welcomed the group. Christine explained that the purpose of the meeting would be to focus on understanding the committee recommendation process, learning about equity performance measures and reviewing revisions to the committee charter and the draft I-205 and I-5 Toll Projects' Equity Framework. Christine provided an overview of Zoom controls. She then reminded all committee members and attendees that the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) will record the meeting. ODOT will post the recording on the committee webpage.

Christine reviewed the agenda and acknowledged the land to center and honor Native American tribes. She also guided the group through a centering exercise.

Christine asked the committee members to reflect on the last committee meeting and write about two new perspectives they gained in that meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Review of public comment process

Christine mentioned a prior request from a committee member to change the time that public comments are sent out to committee members. Currently the public comments are compiled and sent to committee members 24 hours before the meeting. The committee member requested to receive the comments 48 hours before the meeting. Committee members agreed that they wanted to receive the comments 48 hours before the meeting.

Christine asked committee members if they wanted to discuss any public comments they received:

- Committee members discussed a request to lower the reading level of the materials for the draft toll projects' equity framework and the committee charter and asked that ODOT consider this for all committee materials moving forward. A committee member volunteered to help draft a one-page summary of the draft toll projects' equity framework.
- A committee member voiced concern about accessibility of translated materials. The committee member asked what materials were translated for public outreach.
 - Hannah Williams, project team, confirmed that ODOT translated the online open house into Spanish. ODOT also translated the project factsheet into Vietnamese, Russian, simplified Chinese and traditional Chinese.
- A committee member asked for clarity about the process and timing for responding and reading public comments directed at the committee.
 - Hannah noted it was up to the committee to decide how to respond to questions and comments directed at them. She further noted that ODOT will provide responses to requests for technical information or technical questions.

- The committee member also asked and received confirmation that they are able to review public comments in more detail following the meeting and bring up any comments at future meetings.
- A committee member asked that ODOT provide more information about the community engagement liaisons and outreach to community-based organizations or other places where equity-related engagement is occurring.
 - Hannah confirmed that more detail would be coming in the full version of the I-205 Toll Project engagement period report.

Verbal public comment

Christine and Penny Mabie, co-facilitator, invited observers to provide public comment at the meeting. A summary of the verbal comments is below. Written community member comments submitted prior to the meeting are included at the end of this summary document.

Public comment #1 - RJ Shepherd

RJ Shepherd expressed concern about the impact of airborne pollutants to public health and climate change. RJ recommended that the committee ask ODOT for further information about how tolls will affect airborne pollution, specifically for communities of color. See Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee Meeting #4 [[video](#)]; 00:27:28.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Committee questions and response matrix

Christine explained that the purpose of the committee questions and response matrix is to follow up and track resources and requests from the committee. Christine will send the matrix to the committee members prior to each meeting. The project team will make the committee questions and response matrix available on the website as a central place to access and share information. Christine encouraged committee members to share feedback on the committee questions and response matrix.

Inclusion of perspectives from people living with a disability

Christine discussed the committee's request to include lived experiences from people living with disabilities on the committee. She acknowledged that she overstepped her bounds as a facilitator by suggesting a process to add members to the committee and apologized for that misstep. Christine asked Hannah to provide more information about how ODOT is thinking about addressing this request from the committee.

Hannah acknowledged the importance of addressing issues of representation on the committee. Adding additional members to the committee ultimately does not solve the problem of adequate representation from all communities. Hannah also acknowledged that while some members may have professional experience in this field, this is not the same as including people who have lived experiences with disability. Hannah provided some potential supplemental strategies to include voices from this community including:

- Interviews.

- Surveys.
- Hosting a panel to share lived experiences with the committee.
- Focused discussion groups.

Hannah asked for feedback and thoughts from the committee members.

- Several committee members voiced appreciation for the time and effort that went into development of the supplemental strategies. They indicated support in particular for speakers at committee meetings, hosting panel discussions and a sub-committee.
- One committee member voiced that they would still find it valuable to add a committee member.
- One committee member suggested a grounding activity through engaging with a panel prior to setting up a sub-committee to create a common understanding.
- A committee member suggested following the model in the study for Aloha Tomorrow in which community-based organizations were contracted to conduct public outreach in Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities.
- One committee member noted that some types of disabilities limit the ability of individuals to drive a car and that the committee keep this in mind in particular when considering strategies that affect transit and shared-ride vehicles.
- A committee member emphasized the importance of compensating participants and making accommodations to honor their time.
- One committee member asked if the project team has communicated with people of this community to ask how they would like to be engaged.
 - Hannah indicated the challenges in reaching people and indicated that they are still trying to connect with individuals and community-based organizations.
 - Hannah also requested that members provide contacts for individuals with this lived experience that she could reach out to.
- A committee member recommended the project team coordinate with TriMet's Committee for Accessible Transportation as a resource.

COMMITTEE REPORT OUTS

Christine asked committee members to share feedback from their constituencies.

- James Paulson, committee member, shared information he gathered through research. According to his research (which Christine will share with the committee), only 33% of the workforce of Clackamas County stays in Clackamas for employment. The majority are traveling to other counties, primarily to Multnomah County and then to Washington County. A much smaller number of people are commuting into Clackamas County for work. The committee member emphasized the importance of considering this data when it comes to the implementation of tolls on I-205, as well as considering the effects on transit and transit-dependent populations. James also noted that a very large number of people in the region are living with disabilities (15%) and how this highlights the importance of considering this community.

- A committee member noted that a public comment from Lori McGrath provides an example of potential effects of tolling on people living with a disability.
- Amanda Garcia-Snell, committee member, reported that she has not received significant feedback, perhaps because there are not a lot of project specifics to share at this time.
- Committee members asked for clarification about expectations for report outs.
 - Christine clarified that members are free to share feedback from their communities and resources that might be helpful to the committee.

COMMITTEE CHARTER AND RECOMMENDATION PROCESS

Committee charter

Christine discussed the revisions to the charter, which include changes to incorporate a trauma-informed approach into the vision and mission, and add information about how to handle media inquiries. Committee members discussed the following:

- Committee members expressed concerns about the phrase “prevent harm” and agreed that “mitigate harm” is more appropriate.
- Committee members asked for more details regarding the added media inquiries language. They also requested a protocol for inquiries from other individuals or institutions other than the media.
 - Penny offered that the project team will send the committee revised language for review and approval. Committee members agreed to finalize the charter over email.

Committee recommendation process

Penny reviewed the Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee recommendation process. She explained that the committee will provide input and support to the project team related to criteria and performance measures, the equitable engagement plan, and equity and mobility strategies. The committee will also provide input to the Oregon Transportation Commission on equity and mobility strategies. Penny also reminded members that the committee is a consensus-seeking body, not a voting body. She noted that the charter states that while consensus has strength, it is not necessary and hearing differing opinions and perspectives are valuable to decision-makers. All opinions will be recorded and shared with decision-makers. Committee members did not ask any questions.

I-205 Toll Project timeline

Heather Wills, project team, reviewed the timeline for the environmental review process for the I-205 Toll Project and showed the relationship of committee input, starting with equity performance measures. The project team will begin technical analysis in February 2021 and will work with the committee to develop the performance measures in an iterative fashion. The project team will continue analysis until November 2021 when ODOT selects a draft preferred alternative. ODOT will publish the draft environmental assessment in April 2022. Then the committee will make a recommendation to the Oregon Transportation Commission for equity and mobility strategies. The Commission will make a final decision on the project in November 2022.

- A committee member asked if this process will be repeated for the I-5 Toll Project.
 - Heather clarified that the process will be the same for the I-5 Toll Project, but that the committee’s work for the I-5 Toll Project will overlap with the I-205 Toll Project.

DRAFT I-205 AND I-5 TOLL PROJECTS’ EQUITY FRAMEWORK

Chris Lepe, project team, greeted the committee members and reoriented the committee to the history and context that led to the development of the draft toll projects’ equity framework.

Based on feedback and work with committee members, the project team revised the draft toll projects’ equity framework in the following ways:

- Changed demographics to be more inclusive with specific reference to Black, Indigenous and People of Color individuals.
- Incorporated a public health lens and integrated a trauma-informed perspective.
- Added definitions for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, economic disadvantage, trauma, and trauma-informed perspective.
- Added authors and contributors.

Chris reviewed the added definitions.

- Committee members expressed support for the new definitions and asked if there was opportunity to add examples for some of the definitions, such as for the “symptoms for people experiencing trauma,” and to relate these examples to transportation system context and history.
 - Members of the project team agreed that examples would help in understanding the approach.
- One committee member expressed concerns about the limitations in the definition for “economically disadvantaged” as it does not acknowledge other factors such as education, access to employment or neighborhoods and suggested deleting “due to diminished capital and credit opportunities.” Other committee members suggested that examples may also assist in this definition.
- Committee members discussed whether they are ready to adopt the charter and decided to address it at the next meeting after new language has been drafted and transmitted to the committee for review.

STEP 2: DEFINE EQUITY OUTCOMES, EVALUATION CRITERIA AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Heather provided context for step 2 by reviewing the flowchart of the five steps in the draft toll projects’ equity framework. The five steps are a high-level overview that can be applied to any phase of the project development process.

Heather reviewed some of the terminology in the environmental review process including:

- Goals and objectives = equity outcomes.

- Evaluation criteria = how we meet goals and objectives.
- Performance measures = the quantitative and qualitative ways to measure.

Chris discussed two different ways of measuring equity: process and outcome equity. Chris explained that the committee will spend time at the next meeting specifically working on process equity, discussing the I-205 Toll Project public engagement period. The project team will ask the committee for ideas on ways to better reach communities and the committee will help develop the equitable engagement plan. Chris clarified that the committee will not discuss outcome equity until 2021, but he provided examples of both process and outcome equity. An example of a process equity goal might be to have significant and meaningful participation in project development by members of historically and currently underserved and underrepresented communities in public discussions about toll project planning and implementation.

One way to evaluate this is to compare the number of survey responses in languages other than English. Possible performance measures include the following: total number of survey responses, number of survey responses received in languages other than English, and percent of limited-English proficient speakers in project area.

- A committee member expressed concerns about the limitations of using surveys and especially with getting survey responses from a diverse group of users.
 - Hannah provided an overview of the additional steps to get more widespread engagement, including:
 - Social media advertisements.
 - Advertisements on Spanish radio.
 - Advertisements in different community papers in various languages.
 - Sharing the survey with partner organizations that offer services and support to Spanish-speaking and Latinx communities.
 - Collaborating with Community Engagement Liaisons to reach their communities.
- A committee member asked about the scale of the effort (i.e., how many people is the project team trying to reach). They also asked what is being defined as a significant increase and what languages are being used. The committee member also asked if the project team has conducted a Title VI¹ analysis and emphasized the importance of working in collaboration with community-based organizations.

¹ Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1994 Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (Environmental Justice or “EJ”), represent federal efforts to make the planning and decision-making processes more inclusive as well as to more equitably share the impacts and benefits of projects and programs that receive federal funding.

Oregon Department of Transportation. (2015, January). Guidelines for Addressing Title VI and Environmental Justice in Transportation Planning.

https://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Planning/Documents/TitleVI-EJ_Guidance.pdf

- Heather clarified that the project team has not done a Title VI analysis yet. The project team will conduct the analysis as part of the environmental review process.
- Chris noted that the goal is to have the appropriate criteria and performance measures to ensure that the project is meeting its goals.
- A committee member expressed concern about terminology in the criteria such as using the word “similar.” The committee member emphasized the importance of using quantitative criteria.

Chris gave an example of outcome equity related to the goal to support multimodal transportation choices. How would we measure whether we are doing so in an equitable manner? One example measure would be: is there an anticipated travel “mode shift” from single-occupancy vehicles to high-occupancy vehicles, transit and other modes of transportation? A second example measure could be: is there increased availability and access to transit service in underserved and underrepresented areas of the I-205 corridor? Examples for performance measures include the percent of trips using each travel mode, and future transit enhancements incorporated into the toll project or funded as part of the toll project.

- Committee members expressed concerns about the example criteria and performance measures noting that the examples were not specific enough to the corridor area and needed more context to properly measure goals.
- One member suggested the following example as an alternative: How much will the I-205 Toll Project support increased transit availability and access to transit service?

Christine thanked Chris and the committee members for their input.

NEXT STEPS

Christine reviewed next steps:

- The committee will discuss and refine the equitable engagement plan, using smaller breakout groups.
- For process equity, the committee will begin to define initial evaluation criteria and performance measures.
- The committee will also select 2021 meeting dates and approve the committee charter and draft toll projects’ equity framework.

Christine thanked the committee members for their feedback and adjourned 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 and public 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.

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

Если вы хотите чтобы информация об этом проекте была переведена на русский язык, пожалуйста, звоните по телефону 503-731-4128.

如果您想瞭解這個項目，我們有提供繁體中文翻譯，請致電：503-731-4128。

如果您想了解这个项目，我们有提供简体中文翻译，请致电：503-731-4128。

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WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENT

Community members submitted the following public comments to the committee via email prior to Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee Meeting #4.

Date received 8/26/2020

Source Project inbox

From MF Roberts

Subject: Committee Public Contact

No tolls, period. Your scheme will not reduce traffic and the millions of dollars you propose to confiscate will not be of value to we mere citizens.

And why is it you never respond to my comments. You believe your scheme is a fait accompli? Put this scheme up for a vote of the citizens and you will find it is indeed not a done deal.

Date received 8/26/2020

Source Project inbox

From Andy Holthouse

Subject: Fwd: IMO "Committee Public Comment"

Re:

Oregon Toll Program

Join us for the I-205 and I-5 Toll Projects' Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee's Meeting #3

At this meeting, the committee will:

- Revisit committee processes, including the revised Charter.
- Learn about the history of planning for construction of I-205.
- Discuss underserved and underrepresented communities that could be disproportionately affected by the I-205 Toll Project.
- We hope you'll join us today.

Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee Meeting #3 Wednesday, August 26th, 3:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Location to participate in the meeting:

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86010290308?pwd=SURBUUtibitOYUF1WEFQbitDZU9Bdz09>

Passcode: EMAC3

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Why spend all the time and taxpayer resources on this Dog & Pony Show when you and I both know it has already been decided a long time ago to toll virtually all the freeways and highways in Oregon eventually? I may watch the YouTube video later if I can keep myself awake, but I fully expect it will be populated by liberals who want to drive us citizens out of our private vehicles and onto mass transit. Andy Holthouse Oregon City

Date received 8/26/2020

Source Project inbox

From Laurie McGrath

Subject: committee public comment

I live directly off Hwy 43 in the Bolton neighborhood in West Linn. I am a senior citizen living on social security and am very concerned that I will be unable to travel to my usual grocery stores, doctors, friends, etc. as I access all of them on I-205.

I don't have the financial means to pay tolls when I need to go on an errand and having to take other routes will increase time to do anything by almost an hour each way winding around 205.

Traffic on Hwy 43 is already over capacity - before Covid took hold, I couldn't make a left turn out of my driveway between 3-7PM. Things are better now that people are working from home.

Traffic is down considerably on I-205 since Covid-19 and I doubt everyone is going to be back in their offices even when everything is back to normal. Are you considering that traffic patterns have changed, and possibly permanently?

I understand you are concerned about equity and underserved populations but please keep in mind not everyone who lives in WL or Oregon City is affluent. I purchased a 1-bedroom condo in WL in 2002 because I couldn't afford to purchase a home in Portland. Am I to be also driven out of this area by this decision to toll our roads?

I hope you take seniors into consideration when you make your final decisions - most of us are living on reduced means after we retire and tolling would greatly alter our ability to access needed services.

Thank you for your consideration, Laurie McGrath [XX]

Date received 9/7/2020

Source Project inbox

From Kevin Johnson

Subject: Committee Public Comment

Committee,

I live in Clackamas County and after looking at the options for tolling I see it's business as usual. Not one option has a tolling station in Multnomah County. I'd like someone to explain to me why this is the case. Some how find a way to punish the residents of my county?

This plan doesn't surprise me, but the highway department should go back to the drawing board.

Kevin

Date received 9/8/2020

Source Project inbox

From Bruce Bennett

Subject: NEPA comments on I 205 expansion, tolling projects

Please consider the letter marked for Committee Public Comment.

Martin Meyers

Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee Meeting #4 Summary
Oct. 14, 2020

Chair, Redland-Viola-Fischers Mill CPO
Please see the attached letter to Director Broussard sent today.
Martin Meyers
Chair, Redland-Viola-Fischers Mill CPO

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Attachment: "Broussard letter final"

Redland-Viola-Fischers Mill CPO
redlandviolafischersm.CPO@gmail.com
September 8, 2020

Lucinda Broussard, Toll Program Director
Oregon Department of Transportation
355 Capitol Street NE MS 11
Salem Oregon 9301-3871

Re: I 205 NEPA alternatives comment period, August 3, to September 16, 2020

Dear Director Broussard;

Redland-Viola-Fischers Mill CPO is a County recognized Community Planning Organization for a portion of Clackamas County located southeast of Oregon City and north of the Clackamas River. On September 2, 2020, after notice, the CPO met and discussed among other things the Oregon Department of Transportation's current plans for tolling of I 205 through Clackamas County, the State's plans to finally expand the interstate to six lanes from the Abernethy bridge to the Stafford Road interchange, and the August 13, 2020 NEPA letter comment submitted to you by the Clackamas County Coordinating Committee (the "C4 Letter"). After motion, discussion, and a vote, the board authorized sending this letter to you.

Redland-Viola-Fischers Mill CPO incorporates by reference and supports all the comments made in the C4 letter, but wishes to emphasize the following points:

The section of I 205 that passes through Clackamas County is the only section of the I 5 interstate roadway system that was not originally constructed for six lanes of traffic. Clackamas County citizens effectively contributed towards that system, while having to contend with its own resulting four-lane congestion. The State's plans to expand I 205 to six lanes through Clackamas County will therefore remedy a historical shortfall to the I 5 interstate road system through the Portland area. Six lanes of I 205 traffic should therefore be the default "no build" alternative without penalty to Clackamas County citizens. Specifically, road expansion should not be tied to tolling.

Clackamas County citizens should not alone bear the tolling costs of expanding the system from four to six lanes. No other discrete population was required to pay for its own portion of a six-lane interstate system through the Portland area. We should not be alone in shouldering the costs of seismic upgrades to the Abernethy bridge that will benefit the entire region. Tolling must take place throughout the entire system, if at all.

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To the extent the State proceeds with tolling, then the tolling monies collected at Clackamas County tolling sites should stay in Clackamas County, and be used entirely within the County. To now require Clackamas County residents to first pay for expanding this section and then see any excess toll proceeds used elsewhere would be adding insult to the original injury. Finally, to forestall future competing claims to excess proceeds, the State should not just commit, but legally bind itself to using tolling proceeds only in the areas where they are generated.

Similarly, studies how traffic will divert from I 205 onto secondary and tertiary roads should be studied throughout the system and not just along the I 205 corridor. The Redland and Fischers Mill areas for instance, provide a logical alternative route for traffic between the mid-Willamette valley and the Columbia Gorge, but our area has not been included in any ODOT study. Our community is just as entitled to understand how this proposed sea change to Oregon interstate road will have on its community as any of the areas immediately adjacent to the I 205 corridor.

Thank you,
Redland-Viola-Fischers Mill CPO

C via email:
Clackamas County Coordinating Committee
Clackamas County Board of Commissioners
Rep. Christine Drazan
Rep. Alan Olsen
Abe Morland
CPO Summit

Date received	9/14/2020
Source	Project inbox
From	Lori Meuser

Subject: Committee Public Comment/Tolling and Equity Issue-Tolling I205

Tolls are basically regressively distributed among all users, as you know. But a study regarding tolling and equity issues in the Puget Sound area in Washington State

(<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3147225/>) found that low-income workers are:

-more likely to carpool (obviously, this may not be happening as much due to Covid) -more likely to use transit or other modes of transportation -less likely to use a personal vehicle

The implication is that tolling is likely to impact a smaller percent of low-income persons than non-low-income persons.

This study is a rather in-depth study worth a read. You likely have already checked this out.

If ODOT has data on certain freeway segments low-income persons use, that would be very beneficial in devising a tolling system that excludes those segments or perhaps offers a lower toll for those segments (not sure if that is feasible). The Puget Sound study included this type of information and much more.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the tolling of I205.

Sincerely,
L. Meuser

Sent from my iPhone

Date received	9/15/2020
Source	Project inbox
From	City of West Linn

Subject: Committee Public Comment

Please consider the comments in the attached letter from the West Linn City Council regarding the I-205 Tolling Project and enter this letter into the Project record.

Resending this letter with "Committee Public Comment" in the subject line so the comment is also shared with the Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee member as suggested in the autoreply email.

Thank you,
Dylan Digby

...

Attachment:

September 15, 2020

Lucinda Broussard, Toll Program Director
Oregon Department of Transportation
355 Capitol Street NE, MS 11
Salem, OR 97301-3871

RE: I-205 NEPA Alternatives Comment Period

Dear Ms. Broussard,

On behalf of the City of West Linn, this letter outlines principal concerns with the Oregon Department of Transportation's (ODOT) NEPA review process and proposed plan to toll a limited stretch of Interstate 205 in our region. While we appreciate ODOT's outreach efforts on this matter, ODOT's proposed plan effectively continues to place the burden of essential and critical proposed upgrades to the Abernethy Bridge and Interstate squarely on the shoulders of local residents.

The ODOT tolling plan is deficient in at least four major ways:

It unfairly places a disproportionate burden for funding these needed upgrades on the local residents who, because of otherwise insufficient transportation and transit infrastructure, must utilize the facilities on a daily basis; and

It upends decades of precedent which has allocated the cost of major transportation projects to all interstate users; and

It has failed to consider the input of West Linn and other local city and county residents, who have made it clear that they do not want to be unfairly targeted for 100% of the burden of paying for this project; and

It has ignored the opportunity to ask that the state legislature and the federal government allocate funding for these two projects as they have done for highway projects along the I-5 corridor in Eugene/Springfield, Highway 97 in Central Oregon, Interstate 84, or along coastal Highway 101. This point was also made by other cities in the region, as well as the C4 Regional Transportation Coordinating Committee, made up of dozens of regional transportation leaders. The C4 letter also made a number of key points which we support and wish to re-emphasize two key aspects at this time - these include:

A Regionwide Approach to Tolling (as suggested in the legislative intent in HB2017): "We request ODOT use this NEPA process to additionally assess the original intent of HB 2017 to toll the entirety of I-5 and I-205, between the Columbia River and their intersection north of Wilsonville. Value pricing as a means of congestion relief cannot be achieved as a pilot program where select communities bear the burden of discovery. If value pricing is to have a true impact in our region, ODOT and the region at large will benefit by studying those impacts now, and potentially pursuing those methods of value pricing if they truly model congestion relief. This approach not only favors a system-wide approach to congestion relief, but also removes the

already observable and unfair model of penalizing several small communities to fund a project of statewide significance.”

Diversion: “Diversion already exists on local roads due to bottleneck congestion on I-205. Increased diversion to roads already accommodating diversion is likely to eliminate community support. Hence why Comment 3-A is so important. The I-205 Widening and Seismic Improvements Project must be considered completed for any of this to resonate with our local communities. We also expect the NEPA analysis to inform how ODOT plans to remedy the impacts of tolling diversion where transportation gaps exist in this area, including a need for improved transit alternatives such as bus on shoulder access and connection routes around the project, improved pedestrian accommodation on projects where diversion will increase, and additional river crossings to accommodate diversion.”

We know that ODOT understands the dire situation facing the Abernethy Bridge, and the serious safety incidents which occur almost daily along I-205. This stretch of federal highway cries out for an immediate fix. The design work is practically completed, and construction needs to begin. Yet, a “tolling-only” plan, as proposed, will very likely lead to further delays in the project.

Instead, we urge the Department and the Oregon Transportation Commission to consider a plan which:

A) Prioritizes securing immediate funding from the state legislature and any potential federal infrastructure package (the tried and proven approach that has worked for every single state highway project in the state since the 1970s);

B) Suggests tolling only once a comprehensive, regionwide dialogue - - complete with public buy-in - - has been secured, and any tolling is not focused squarely and solely on the residents of West Linn, Oregon City, Milwaukie, Wilsonville, Gladstone, Tualatin, etc. At the very least, the plan needs to recommend a simultaneous and regionwide tolling approach on all major transportation highways (e.g., I-5, I-205, I-84, 217, 26), or at minimum the entirety of I-205 and I-5 through the Metro region. Further, if ODOT is unwilling to consider this alternative, and is to move forward with tolling on a limited confined reach (i.e., Stafford Rd to Abernethy Bridge or Hwy 213), then all funds generated by that tolling must be spent within this area and ODOT should extend/expand the length of any tolling for a proposed limited segment (such as the proposed Stafford Rd to Abernethy Bridge) to different endpoints to minimize problems with diversion etc. locally - for example extend the tolling reach on I-205 to between I-5 on the south and Hwy 224 on the north;

C) Prioritizes getting construction underway as soon as possible in order to avoid severe inflationary cost drivers.

We stand ready to join arms in support of a revised ODOT plan, and ready to get to the business of upgrading this important stretch of highway which runs through the middle of West Linn and our neighboring communities.

Sincerely,

Russell B. Axelrod
Mayor

Teri Cummings
Council President

William Relyea
Councilor

Richard Sakelik
Councilor

Jules Walters
Councilor

Date received 9/15/2020

Source Project inbox

From Scott McMahon

Subject: Committee Public Comment

Hi ODOT Planning Committee,
Here are some concerns and questions about the proposal:

What happens to the areas near Stafford Rd and 10th St when the toll is implemented? Do nearby residents just exit those streets bypass the tolling area which could lead to more traffic on side streets?

Has any other plans been presented in order to raise money needed for ODOT's projects? Or is tolling the only option?

Based on the last public Open House Zoom meeting, it appears that the committee is preparing for opposition and protests from various groups. Why continue if that's the case?

In the local user groups, there are many transplants from the California Bay area and the Seattle area. Both have tolls in those areas and they've shared a strong warning to the idea that Oregon will implement one here. Why not listen to them?

Once the money is raised from tolls, there is no plan to ever rescind or end the tolling, correct? It just becomes a permanent tax?

Please reconsider this unpopular proposal.

SM

Date received	9/23/2020
Source	Project inbox
From	Alliance for Toll-Free Interstates

Subject: Committee Public Comment

Hello,

On behalf of the Alliance for Toll-Free Interstates, please see the attached and below written public comment regarding the I-205 Toll Project and our opposition to tolling existing interstates.

Regards,

The Alliance for Toll-Free Interstates

www.tollfreeinterstates.com

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR THE OREGON DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
REGARDING THE I-205 TOLL PROJECT

September 23, 2020

The Alliance for Toll-Free Interstates (ATFI) is a growing alliance of individuals, businesses and organizations advocating for long-term, sustainable, efficient, equitable, and sensible highway infrastructure funding solutions. We believe the Oregon Legislature and Department of Transportation's (ODOT) pursuit to expand tolling is misguided. We urge the Oregon Transportation Commission to reject all efforts to expand tolling in the state, including the proposed use of tolls on all lanes of Interstate 205 (I-205).

Implemented properly, infrastructure funding can provide meaningful employment opportunities to those individuals and communities that need it the most, while also modernizing the transportation system to improve the free flow of people and goods throughout the country. At the same time, poorly conceived infrastructure legislation can be counter-productive, causing unintended impacts that are detrimental to transportation networks, the economy, local communities and low-income populations.

Keeping these principles in mind, ATFI strongly opposes tolling all lanes of I-205 in any form or variation. Tolling interstate lanes that drivers now freely access is not only unpopular, it is an inefficient financing mechanism that is the worst approach available to raising transportation revenue. Imposing tolls on existing interstates will increase shipping costs for goods; suppress consumer activity; waste revenues on bureaucratic administration; double-tax businesses and

drivers; discriminate against poor communities; and divert traffic onto local roads, increasing traffic, accidents and road wear and tear in communities near toll facilities.

As our nation seeks to recover from the devastating economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, tolls will hurt businesses trying to reopen. Hardest hit by tolls will be small businesses and their employees, especially in the immediate area surrounding the I-205 and Interstate 5 (I-5) interchange. Tolls raise business costs for moving goods through the supply chain, hurting the competitiveness of local companies. Evidence suggests that the vast majority of trucks do not respond to congestion pricing because the shippers determine pick-up and delivery times, not the trucking companies. Restaurants, convenience stores, travel plazas and gas stations operating near the newly tolled interstate will face higher costs from manufacturers and shippers, who will be forced to charge more to transport goods by truck.** Every day consumers will be shouldering the burden by paying more for goods, demonstrating the fact that the toll is nothing more than an underhanded tax on the general public**. Efforts to expand tolling on the I-205 and I-5 corridor will reroute prosperity around these communities.

Tolling existing interstates is double taxation. Since the inception of the Federal Interstate Highway System, the federal gas tax has always been the primary source of revenue for the construction and maintenance of federal interstate lanes. Every time a motorist puts gas in his vehicle, he is upholding his end of the deal for interstate maintenance. Converting non-tolled roads to tolled facilities, even when combined with a congestion relief effort, forces drivers to pay two taxes for that same road: a gas tax and a toll tax.

Tolling is a highly inefficient form of taxation, to the point of being fiscally irresponsible. Toll gantries cost millions of dollars to build and maintain. Even with the latest technology, the Congressional Budget Office estimates collection costs alone are at least 8 to 11 percent of revenue collected. Toll management, enforcement and operations total a significantly larger portion of revenues that do not go to actual road improvements. In 2018, the all-electronic North Carolina Triangle Expressway spent 36.8 percent of annual revenue on toll operating costs; those are funds that could go toward road improvements with more efficient funding mechanisms. In contrast, nearly 100 percent of fuel tax revenue can go toward infrastructure improvements because the cost of administering the taxes is less than 1 percent, and increased registration fees do not increase collection costs. Because tolls are generally upheld as a “user fee” for the roads traveled, diverting these funds from infrastructure improvements violates the public trust. When it comes to tolls, drivers will pay more and get less.

Not only are the financial ramifications of tolls unfair to the public, the social costs are discriminatory. Tolls devour take-home pay for drivers and are especially oppressive to low-income individuals. They would make driving on I-205 simply unaffordable for some families, particularly with the new economic reality many face today. Additionally, electronic tolling discriminates against the tens of millions of financially vulnerable Americans who do not have bank accounts. This places the heaviest burden from tolls on the backs of those least able to afford it, who, lacking the financial instruments of a debit or credit card, are sent a bill in the mail charging them the toll plus a fee and a stamp. Unfortunately, cashless tolls are on the rise. For example, the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission recently announced that the March

switch to all-electronic tolling due to the COVID-19 pandemic would become a permanent change, further disenfranchising drivers already suffering from other economic impacts from the novel coronavirus. Tolls are expensive for all drivers, but especially costly for drivers without bank accounts.

Tolls will force drivers to use secondary roads. Studies have shown tolls divert traffic onto secondary roads. All of this traffic diversion will force hardworking commuters to decide if it's worth adding time to their commute everyday rather than pay new toll taxes—essentially creating a two-tiered transportation system between the rich and poor. The vast majority of people do not control their job's daily schedule, so the congestion pricing being pushed by ODOT will, by design, shift traffic onto local roads during peak travel times. Pricing drivers off the road does not solve congestion, but pushes the problem to smaller roads not designed to handle the increased traffic. Local municipalities are then stuck with increased maintenance costs and new public safety concerns such as higher accident rates on local roads and first responders delayed by toll-driven congestion.

Congestion-pricing tolls will segment the greater Portland and state transportation network to the detriment of all. Even Oregon's U.S. Congressman Peter DeFazio, who chairs the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, has said that tolling I-205 is bad for Oregonians. At a House Transportation Subcommittee on Highways and Transit hearing, he said, "Some of the legislators and mayor of Portland have decided, well, maybe we ought to just toll parts of our freeways. But of course it isn't even going to be like a HOT [High Occupancy Travel] lane. No one is going to have an option. You'll either use it or not use it. What about diversion? What about people who have to go from the east side of Portland to the west side of Portland to Intel to go to work? Sorry, it's going to take you two hours or it's going to cost you a bunch of money you can't afford."

It is our hope that the ODOT comment period will bring to light that the proposed congestion tolling projects will have serious impacts on other roads, freight movements, businesses and people in the I-205 / I-5 corridor and beyond.

The truth about tolls is that the negative impacts outweigh the benefits. Tolls are bad public policy with numerous negative consequences, both economic and social. We appreciate you taking into account your constituents' vocal opposition to tolling existing interstates. As we have seen recently in Connecticut, Florida, Virginia, Indiana and more, when states learn the true impacts of tolling existing interstates, they reject this option. The reasonable response to that failure is to eliminate it and move on to more viable, equitable revenue generation ideas. As the I-205 Toll project is discussed, ATFI's members – thousands of private citizens and numerous businesses and organizations – urge you to fully reject tolling of existing interstates. Oregon needs sustainable investment in infrastructure, not discriminatory, ineffective policies that take more and more money from hardworking motorists and businesses. The needs of Oregon's transportation network are vast and deserve serious attention without the distraction of tolls.

Placing tolls on existing interstates will waste taxpayer dollars, cause traffic diversion, hurt everyday drivers, and create chaos for the Oregon economy. Any effort to make tolling broader is an effort to hurt Oregon's economic future. Other states have shown that tolling is a failed

policy with exponential consequences. ATFI urges the Commission to reject any and all expanded I-205 tolling routes and instead focus on effective, sustainable solutions. We appreciate the opportunity to offer these comments and ask they be submitted for the official record. We thank ODOT and the Commission for their efforts to resolve the state's transportation problems and will be happy to answer any questions via charlie@tollfreeinterstates.com.

Sincerely,
Charlie Kiefer
Director of Membership and Operations
Alliance for Toll-Free Interstates

Date received	10/7/2020
Source	Project inbox
From	Dustin Cooley

Subject: ODOT I-5 and I-205 Toll Projects, Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee Meeting

Good Afternoon,

I am interested in attending the virtual meeting for the upcoming I-5/I-205 tolling projects on October 14th 2020. Can I please get directions on how to attend.

Regards,

Dustin Cooley, PE
Senior Transportation Manager

PBS
[XX]
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Date received	10/8/2020
Source	Project inbox

From Laura Greyerbiehl

Subject: Question for October 14th I-205 Toll Project Equity Framework Zoom Meeting - Environmental Concern

I attended a recent ODOT zoom meeting regarding equity on the I-205 Toll Project. Lack of sidewalk access was addressed, and it was mentioned how poor sidewalk access is in West Linn, especially in rural areas. As a resident of the rural Stafford Hamlet I was concerned that development is being considered for our area. We are made up of neighbors who grow flowers, food and Christmas trees. Our grade school is seven miles from our house. We are miles from the nearest Tri-Met bus stop. Are you expecting people living in this rural area to have access to Tri-Met? Are you planning on putting sidewalks in the Stafford Hamlet area? If so, what environmental impact study is being done? We have many deer, coyotes, owls, hawks, frogs and other animals dependent on the forested area that makes up the Stafford Hamlet.

Thank you for your consideration,
Laura Greyerbiehl

Date received	10/8/2020
Source	Project inbox
From	Rick Fernandez

Subject: Committee Public Comment

I just read your Draft Toll Projects' Equity Framework at https://www.oregon.gov/odot/tolling/Documents/I205-I5_Toll_Projects_Draft_Equity_Framework.pdf. I hardly know where to begin my comments.

This document reads like it was written for an audience of traffic engineers and Portland area policy planners who all have graduate degrees. How can you expect to include communities that have been historically marginalized and excluded when your vocabulary register and document structure is clearly for the college educated? This shows one of the most fatal biases that pervade this whole framework - it actively excludes those who are not comfortable with lengthy, dense, repetitive, bullet point- and jargon-laden treatises written for fellow technocrats. Simply put, this document is not accessible, and because it's not, it makes your plans far from transparent to those who will be most directly affected. That is not equity. That is pretend equity that allows you to congratulate yourself for having "reached out" to POC while simultaneously excluding us. I would encourage you to do a fundamental re-write in Basic English and start with a goal of making the document shrink by at least 75%.

That said, after ploughing my way through this (and my register is high since I happen to have a post-graduate degree), I was both disappointed and astonished to discover that the document never actually ends up anywhere at all. Who are these “equity specialists”? Who appointed them, what are their qualifications, how do we know they represent us or our interests at all? How do we know that they are not largely professional experts hired by white people to make them feel less guilty about being white while salving their consciences as they commit further exploitation of POC, without real listening to them? This whole exercise in creating the Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee appears exploitative because it seems to whitewash a state action that is inherently exploitative. No matter how you dress it up, placing tolling on these roadways will not reduce congestion, nor does it contain any concrete mechanisms to ensure that it would. Instead, it will impose additional economic burdens on those in the lowest ranks of economic earning categories who work in jobs, such as the fast food and service industries, where they don’t have the luxury of adjusting and choosing their own work schedules, or even of taking public transit (which is highly unsafe for the foreseeable future, which reflects the fact that “essential” workers too often means “expendable” workers). Your framework speaks in glib, empty jargon that claims to want to hear from the underrepresented and underserved but it steamrolls right over the basic fact that this will not help them one bit. It will only create a new and additional burden both in process and in outcome.

There is a power dynamic at play here, without a doubt. It is the power of those who will impose this burden while claiming to “attend to power dynamics” and “maintain a learning orientation,” with the result that POC and other working-class people who are rarely heard will pay the toll and bear the burden, regardless of all the empty talk of equity and seeking public input. It also continues the alarming trend of making the public pay access fees to enjoy public goods. Public highways should be for all the public and paid by public resources, not a private benefit only for those who have the money to use them. I urge you to step away from actions that would push us closer to a caste-based society that only reinforces class differences.

I fear, however, that the outcome is already decided; this equity talk is simply a way to make to fool those who have no power into thinking that the people who actually have the power are listening. I for one am not fooled.

Stop wasting taxpayer resources and time on this empty exercise. If you seriously want to hear the voice of the people, kick this back to the legislature and insist that tolling be put to the vote of the people.

Rick Fernández

Date received 10/8/2020

Source Project inbox

From Wendi Butler

Subject: Committee Public Comment

Dear Committee Members,

As a mature resident who lives in a part of old West Linn where there are many retired and senior citizens, I have registered my concerns about fixed income people being taxed every time they need to cross the Abernathy to get to their doctor, dentist, or pharmacist. In addition, many affordable elderly services are only available in the SE Portland/Clackamas areas. So I was pleased to see that you added to the list of citizens considered in the Equity and Mobility community:

They help solicit feedback and participation for the project from youth, older adults, Black, Indigenous, multi-racial, and people of color, people who may speak a language other than English, and people with disabilities.

Since Oregon already sits in the bottom of state rankings for lack of financial and cost of living remediation for seniors on fixed incomes, please continue to work to mitigate toll costs for this already very hard-hit (by Covid) group of community members. Personally, I think they have paid enough already and should not have to pay tolls at all.

Thank you for advocating for and considering our mature citizens!

Wendi H. Butler
[XX]

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Date received 10/8/2020

Source Project inbox

From MF Roberts

Subject: Committee Public Comments

No tolls, period. Put all this mess on the ballot, not in the hands of bureaucrats who have already decided to push it through. Tri-Met has already spent enough!

MF Roberts

Date received 10/8/2020

Source Project inbox

From Anthony Warren

Subject: Committee Public Comment

Please do not enact/approve any tolls on I205. They will only adversely hurt local residents already struggling with economic times due to COVID-19. Equally they will only divert traffic thru residential areas making the neighbors more congested and less safe for residents.

Please do not go forward with tolls, they are a horrible idea.

Anthony Warren
Native/Lifelong Oregonian

Date received	10/9/2020
Source	Project inbox
From	Matt Straite

Subject: Committee Public Comment

I understand that my small voice will contribute too much to the freight train that is the tolling project, I also understand that the scope of the Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee is not really one that can address the overall concept of tolling; however, I don't want to watch this project unfold without saying something, and the biggest issue with the tolling project is equity. So this may be the appropriate forum to speak now.

I am an urban planner and I understand the logic and reasoning behind toll lanes. The declining gas tax revenue is creating a need for alternative funding sources for road maintenance. While that may be the case, we should not address the issue by placing the burden on the backs of the poor. Creating lanes for the wealthy will rob traffic lanes for the rest of just. This will disproportionately hurt minority and underprivileged communities. The Equity Committee should do everything in its power to flat out stop the tolling lanes for this one specific, unjust, reason. Toll lanes may look good on paper, and the math may look appealing, but we should not address the problem at the expense of the poor.

-Matt

Date received	10/9/2020
Source	Project inbox
From	Ray Shepherd

Subject: Committee Public Comment

Well well. Just like I said in my last email the toll will be enacted. It makes not a bit of difference what the people affected say. This is a done deal and it was a done deal before all this warm and fuzzy rhetoric.

Equity and Mobility committee? What a bunch of namby pamby wordplay. You people always revert to the verbiage that sounds so understanding and caring but actually means we are going to take more of your money and you can't stop us.

And where did I5 toll come from? Last I saw this was going to be a short section of I205. Now I5 too? You just never stop. Why don't you drop all this posturing and feel good crap and just come out and say you are going to put tolls on these roads. You knew that going in and all you're doing now is trying to justify that decision.

I'm glad I don't live in Canby or the 99E corridor.

Ray Shepherd