

I travel across the United States working in commercial districts to improve economic performance. I have never once entered a city with a wide freeway that did not have terrible air pollution, blight on either side of the freeway, terrible traffic, and very unsafe driving conditions (the wider the freeway, the more speeding, lane changing, and merging messes are created). Probably the freeways in California and Texas are among the most behemoth, and they certainly don't have less traffic or ease of circulation around their cities. Cities in these states are also bedeviled by all of the under-invested residential and commercial areas that the freeway carves a gouge through. Why would we want something like that through what is very center-city property?

Regardless, there is not a single freeway widening project that has alleviated congestion in the history of freeways, so why are we spending the money on this? Furthermore, even if a freeway widening did by some miracle ease congestion, that would just increase accidents. Congestion saves lives. Fatal accidents rose during the pandemic as traffic thinned around the United States.

Lastly, we have a moral imperative to do what is right for the planet, and that means fewer cars for climate change and resource management reasons. We cannot continue to increase our carbon footprint. Nor can we continue to build infrastructure that requires everyone to have a car. Cars are not recyclable and they are built with finite resources, even if they are electric... the metals and materials for everything from car bodies, to car batteries, to gasoline, to microchips are limited. Portland is actually one of the few cities in the western half of the United States that could go all-in on a car-light environment: alternative transportation protected lanes (bikes, scooters, etc.), pedestrian infrastructure, car-free downtown, alternative delivery, and actual transit that circulates people where they want to go instead of hewing to the old hub and spoke model to whisk people downtown.

Instead of walking the walk on climate change and the environment, Oregon wants to take an ungodly amount of money and invest it in expanding the car cancer that already infects and sickens our city. Shame on every public official and government staffer that supports this project.