

Hi, I am submitting my testimony for the Rose Quarter project public meeting on Saturday, Dec 2.

I am opposed to any expansion of the Rose Quarter freeway. First of all, shortening average commutes by a few minutes is not worth the hassle and expense. We can also shorten commute times by having fewer people on the road and no traffic jams. We should be investing our DOT monies on non-car solutions like mass transit and safe bike lanes.

I am part of multiple environmental groups and am also concerned about fossil fuel emissions. Too often my view of Mt Hood is destroyed by the smog. And who knows what damage that is doing to my lungs, or the lungs of children. What will happen to the children at Rosa Parks school? They deserve fresh air.

(That said, I support the idea of putting a cap on the highway. It would be great to restore some of the neighborhoods that were destroyed by the freeway. But it would be cheaper to cap a narrow freeway, not a wider one. So another reason to NOT expand in the Rose Quarter.)

I don't have a car. Portland would be a much safer place for all of us if there were fewer cars on the road. Cleaner air, fewer cars crashing into walkers and bikers...

I also support all the priorities of No More Freeways and the Street trust (some of which are repeated below)

1) Legislators should demand ODOT revisit the Purpose and Need statement and conduct a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that studies alternatives to freeway expansion.

2) Price before you build! Even the cursory analysis in ODOT's Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA - attached) makes it clear that pricing has as much or more impact on reducing congestion than adding auxiliary lanes. Both the original Environmental Assessment and SEA make the bizarre claim that "pricing is not reasonably foreseeable" despite the direction in HB 2017, HB 3055 and other discussions with the Legislature. An important element for an EIS would be a deep understanding of the impact of pricing so that we can design the project needed in a world with pricing, not the 1950s fantasy that ODOT continues to pursue.

3) Any low income benefit should be multimodal. We appreciate the work of ODOT's Equitable Mobility Advisory Committee (EMAC) and agree with their recommendation that some form of benefit must be provided to low income families facing freeway pricing. However, we believe strongly that such a benefit should assist all those affected by the project, whether they drive or not, and should encourage non-automobile travel options. Therefore, in addition to toll credits or discounts, we must have transit or bike/ped options (e.g., help buying an eBike).

Support the recommendations of ODOT's Equitable Mobility Advisory Committee (EMAC) for an equitable toll program, in particular the 400% MFI threshold for the low-income toll program
- Advocate for clear policies, oversight, and accountability metrics to prevent tolls from disproportionately impacting communities of color or low-income communities

- Stress the need to invest toll revenue in programs addressing transportation access and affordability disparities, including job access and anti-displacement efforts

thanks

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