

To the Joint Committee On Transportation - Special Subcommittee On Transportation Planning,

I am a 28-year-old resident of Portland who chose to make this city my home because of its reputation for innovation and its commitment to creating a different kind of North American city. Portland offered me a place where I could live a car-light lifestyle, primarily relying on biking and public transit to get to work and school. I deeply appreciate the infrastructure that already exists in our city to support these choices. However, I've become concerned that in recent years, we've been resting on our laurels, failing to make significant progress in improving our transportation options.

Congestion pricing presents a golden opportunity to push the envelope once again and set an example for North American cities. Owning and driving a private vehicle has become prohibitively expensive for individuals, and it's clear that our current auto infrastructure is straining our resources. It's essential that we discourage private vehicle use and instead encourage and invest in transit and active transportation alternatives. These options are not only more equitable but also cost-effective and beneficial for our planet, environment, and community.

Transit and active transportation infrastructure are far more cost-effective to build and maintain compared to private automobile infrastructure. Currently, driving is heavily subsidized and prioritized by various levels of government, while transit and active transportation often receive minimal attention and funding. As someone who relies on these modes of transportation, it's frustrating to see them struggle for resources. Congestion pricing can help correct this imbalance by making drivers pay a more equitable share of the infrastructure costs and using that revenue to improve and expand our current transit and active transportation networks.

We should look to cities like Copenhagen for inspiration. When faced with financial challenges, Copenhagen invested in bike infrastructure because it was the most cost-effective way to make a meaningful difference. Today, it stands as a global model for sustainable transportation. Our own Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) is grappling with a dire financial situation, struggling to maintain what we already have. To ensure our limited resources go as far as possible, we must prioritize investments in transit and active transportation networks.

In conclusion, I urge you to embrace congestion pricing as a means to not only manage traffic but to create a more sustainable, equitable, and innovative transportation system for Portland. Let's make sure our city continues to be a leader in North America by investing in transit and active transportation infrastructure that benefits us all.

Thank you for your attention and dedication to making Portland a better place for everyone.

Sincerely,
Nick Hodge