

Joint Special Subcommittee on Transportation Planning, December 2, 2023. Testimony: Paul O. Edgar, Oregon City

Legislative Leadership needs to come together right now, to stop this proposed I-205 Corridor Tolling as the foreseeable Diversion will result in a, "**Massive Reductions in Public Safety**", and this will kill people by flooding our side-streets, roads, highways, and bridges that do not have the designs and/or capacity to safely handle the foreseeable diverted traffic!!

I, Paul O. Edgar, have three decades of up close involvements in ODOT Region One Transportation, which has allowed me to have access and to see the many errors in judgement, where we have not solved problems and often created more problems with little or no reasonable Return on the Public's Investment Dollar. What I have witnessed, has left me with some scare tissue as I have worked in corporate high tech product development and program management. In that capacity, a senior manager told me before going to the future demands directorate, in requests for product and project funding, if I cannot show and prove "Return on Investment", he told me to not sacrifice my job, wife, and family.

It is much easier now in hindsight as a retired person to look back on the failures in Transportation Planning, and this inability to deliver on what the people want and need. I have had this unique opportunity that has enabled me to be up-close, where I have watched and listened to the special interests and seen the idealism, that has prevented common sense from having a seat at the table, within planning and setting priorities.

I am including in this email an opinion piece that I wrote and have rewritten over the last couple of years and it is on TriMet. TriMet is this example of failed planning and prioritizations where it has not attracted the ridership in the regional marketplace and therefore TriMet is effectively "Obsolete". The saying, you can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make them drink. The Marketplace and technology has changed.

TriMet, can no-longer be considered as an effective "Secondary or even fourth Mode of Transportation" even with the impacts of having received approximately fifty (50%) percent of the all purpose regional transportation investment dollar, over the last three (3) decades. Within the ODOT Region One Marketplace, TriMet now

secures less than one (1%) percent of all of the incidents of travel/trips generated in its service area.

TriMet's business model is bankrupt! The environmental and operating costs of TriMet running empty buses, trains and light rail, in this technological world, where alternatives exist, can no-longer be justified. Uber, Lyft, and Amazon technologies, and new smaller all electric vehicles, can pickup people, products and food at door steps and deliver direct to end destinations, at less total cost, with no loss of time.

In the same time frame, in the same marketplace the incidents of travel generated by all other modes of transportation have doubled and some modes have quadrupled, like with our incidents of travel on our roads and highways. The COVID Pandemic and the acceptance of Virtual Office, has equally contributed to creating even greater conditions and comparisons, where employers have yelled to employees who demand, as part of their employment, their ability to work virtually.

Incidents of Travel Generated, are now more strategic, and the weighted values (within a benefit analysis) that include the of lost time, health considerations and the cost (environment, vehicles, in total cost of ownership, including gas and insurance) have not increased transit ridership, within today's Value Structure within a Critical Thinking Process. This is one of the places where the 2024 legislature, needs to do it's due diligence, and drill down, as we can no-long afford and justify, Errors in Judgement.

We are not Chicago, New York, DC, or LA, the Greater Portland Regional Area does not have anywhere close to the business and employment centrist needs. **We are now in a George Jetson Comic-Strip World, both in technology and what the public/marketplace wants and needs.** TriMet's business model is effectively obsolete, and to my amazement it is still being pushed, even when no-one is using their transit model in adequate numbers to consider it as an effective mode of travel. within mitigating foreseeable massive diversion, which would be brought about by Tolling.

However, to the IBR (Interstate Bridge Replace) project, still has as a priority the need of putting LRT (Light Rail Transit) into it's plans, which adds another two and one Half Billion dollars to that project. Vancouver - Clark County Washington has said that they will not pay what TriMet has said would be the \$21-Million in operating cost per year that LRT going into Clark County.

We have big issues of how everyone wants to pay for transportation infrastructure and any plan that are developed needs to be justified and sold to the general public, or it will backfire. The Governor saw that and pushed back Tolling to prevent it from backfiring on her and the legislature. There will be a Vote of the People on Tolling most likely across the whole State of Oregon, and I have been told it for sure will happen in the tree-counties of Clackamas, Washington, and Multnomah County.

As a senior and someone who represents the interest and needs of the lower income, within our collective communities Tolling will make conditions much worse. Those in need are greater than 60% of the families are now paycheck to paycheck and anything like Tolling, that adds to the negative impacts of run-away inflation, and to the cost of everything associated with delivering food and services within transportation needs, will be felt direly.

Envisioning the metaphor of the Little Dutch Boy with his finger in the dike, is where we are now with this need for the legislature to create ODOT Emergency Funding and that can easily get addressed with new tax and fees revenue, to shore up the dike. HB 2017 model of increases in gas taxes, vehicle licensing, vehicles mile driven, weight and mile taxes and general revenues can shore-up the needs investment dollars within more intelligent prioritization that have an ROI. Delaying this decision to a time after 2024 is not an answer, in emergency management. HB-2017 Legislation created the framework and all that is needed is to extend those incremental/annual gas tax and weight and mile tax increases from 2025 to 2030. This will provide the necessary, breathing room.

Pay now or pay much, much more later is a fiscal disaster and that is why the little Dutch Boy Metaphor is so relevant.

Paul O. Edgar