

Testimony to the Joint Committee on Transportation Special Subcommittee on Transportation Planning

December 14, 2023

Testimony Presented by Larry Walker

My name is Larry Walker. I live in Charbonneau at [REDACTED]

One of the three foundations of ODOT's Strategic Action Plan is "equity." In its Toll Projects Equity Framework ODOT defines equity as "the effort to provide different levels of support based on an individual's or group's needs in order to achieve fairness in outcomes." In addition, going further, the Oregon Toll Program describes Outcome Equity as "striving to prevent historically excluded and underserved communities from bearing the burden of negative effects that directly or indirectly result from toll projects."

Charbonneau is certainly not historically excluded nor presently underserved. But our community may well become less included and less served if ODOT decides to locate a tolling gantry at or near the Boone Bridge.

I agree that equity, and outcome equity are important factors in making decisions about gantry positioning, assuming tolling becomes a reality.

So, let's examine this issue purely from an equity perspective.

Charbonneau residents and those who live in surrounding homes have no alternative route to Wilsonville other than the Boone Bridge. A toll at or close to the Boone Bridge would add hundreds of dollars in cost annually to cross the bridge, adding substantial cost to everything from grocery shopping to medical appointments to family visits. This impact of activities of daily living is an inequitable outcome, especially since many of those affected do not have the capacity to increase their earnings to cover the increased costs.

Hundreds of personal care workers, housekeepers, maintenance workers, and other local businesses of all types serve the almost 3,000 residents of Charbonneau as we age in place. That doesn't include thousands more who live in surrounding areas. A gantry at the bridge would put a significant travel cost on them, which would most likely be passed on to customers. Our local small businesses in Charbonneau would also likely see almost immediate decreased customer flow. That's an inequitable outcome.

The added costs of a gantry on or close to the Boone Bridge would have a very serious impact on SpringRidge, an assisted living and memory care community in Charbonneau. They rely on the ability to attract and retain a highly skilled group of employees to meet the needs of their vulnerable residents, which would be hampered by the added transportation costs associated with a bridge toll. That's an inequitable outcome.

I urge the subcommittee to help avoid these and other inequitable outcomes you've heard about tonight, and advocate to not locate a tolling gantry anywhere near the Boone Bridge.

Thank you for your time and attention.