

**Testimony by Anne Shevlin, President
Charbonneau Country Club Board
Tolling Hearing
12/14/2023
Wilsonville City Hall**

**Joint Committee on Transportation Special
Subcommittee On Transportation Planning**

Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair Nathanson, Co-Vice Chair Findley, and Co-Vice Chair Mannix:

For the record, my name is Anne Shevlin. I am President of the Board of Directors of the Charbonneau Country Club.

Who we are, why we care

We are a Master Home Owners Association of a community of 1267 homes and approximately 3000 residents. We are not a retirement community, although most of our residents are active, retired people who give back generously through countless volunteer activities and public and community service to their city and surrounding communities.

Our residents spend hundreds of hours volunteering at local food banks, pruning roses on city property with the Wilsonville Garden Club, the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility and a wide variety of other activities essential to our lives and wellbeing. By taxing our trips across the bridge to Wilsonville and back, the state of Oregon will create barriers to community participation for our residents.

Some of our residents still work, some in Wilsonville, and approximately 1,200 people living north of the Boone Bridge commute to Charbonneau to work weekly to provide the necessary services we rely on.

This tolling plan will change how we live, where we travel, and how we spend our time. These adverse consequences of the current plan can be avoided if this committee considers other revenue generation and addresses the inequities of the current plan to the unique circumstances of adversely impacted local communities.

The Importance of the Boone Bridge

Since annexation in 1971, Charbonneau is vital to the City of Wilsonville and goods and services necessary to living in Charbonneau come from Wilsonville. The property taxes we pay go to Wilsonville's local government services, including police and fire responses come from Wilsonville. Although the Charbonneau District is separated from the rest of Wilsonville by the Willamette River, we shop and receive medical care, library, services of the senior center and other local government services north of the Willamette River, across the Boone Bridges.

The Boone Bridge is literally our lifeline. As people on fixed incomes who have paid taxes, raised families and worked to build businesses and productive careers our entire lives, to be required to pay a new expensive tax, a toll, to receive the basic services we need in our retirement years is unfair and threatens our financial security. The lack of reliable information about tolling has created the passion about this issue you will hear from residents this evening.

Adverse impacts of the per-mile, congestion pricing tolling plan

The tolling issue has destabilized our retirement security and raised questions about the future affordability of getting to town for basic necessities such as food and medical care. Legions of ODOT public relations consultants have been sent to Wilsonville to 'sell' us tolling without really hearing our concerns or considering revenue sources other than per-mile congestion pricing. Please hear us tonight; we do not support the current tolling plan and ask that you pull it back to consider other alternatives that create adequate revenue without the adverse impacts we see under this plan.

A few alternative forms of revenue generation include increasing vehicle registration fees, equitably taxing electric vehicles, and paying a once-a-day 'cordon' toll on ALL the roads leading to Portland, not just those on I-5 and I-205. Per-mile tolling is one of the most expensive to operate and least equitable for those on fixed incomes; ODOT has avoided considering less damaging alternatives. A mix of revenue enhancements would spread out the pain of increased transportation costs and generate adequate revenue. This current plan is regressive and focuses the pain on the residents of Charbonneau, who have no alternative but to pay or stay home.

Please understand our frustration - we have been singled out and unheard

Please hear our frustration with the lack of consideration of alternatives by legislators whose constituents will not be tolled and do not face constituents who feel that Clackamas County has been singled out to pay when the rest of Oregon does not pay tolls under the current plan.

You have come to the right place this evening to hear our concerns, for which we are grateful. We ask you to consider other revenue-generation methods that raise enough money to meet future needs, are more equitable and less adverse to the financial security of local residents, many of whom are senior citizens on fixed incomes.

How we got here, how can the Oregon Legislature can fix this

Charbonneau and Wilsonville would not be in this current situation if the Oregon Department of Transportation had not approved the Charbonneau development in the late 1960's and early 1970's without an alternative surface bridge crossing the Willamette at Wilsonville.

The Boone Bridge is the only bridge across the Willamette River for 26 miles, between the Abernathy Bridge in Oregon City and the Hwy 219 Bridge south of Newberg, with the minor exception of the Canby Ferry, already tolled, which only runs seasonally, through farm country roads is not a reasonable alternative.

Charbonneau is unfairly burdened by being forced to pay a toll on the Boone Bridge, unlike most other communities in Oregon, because there is no other route to our city except over the Boone Bridge. Tolling isolates, separates and financially burdens senior citizens and those on whose service we depend for the necessities of life. This tolling plan will adversely impact our lives - please consider some alternatives.

ODOT could build a 'local bridge' from Wilsonville to Charbonneau. However, this is a more expensive option, which can be avoided by not tolling Charbonneau and Wilsonville residents for local trips. If you build a local bridge, please make sure it can accommodate our golf carts so that we can contribute to a healthier climate through practical carbon-reduction transportation.

We ask this committee not to approve tolling on the Boone Bridge.

You have already heard a lot about the negative impacts of tolling on communities along I-5 and I-205. My comments this evening focus specifically on Charbonneau. The current ODOT plans call for tolling gantries to be placed on both the north and south entrances to the Boone Bridge. The citizens of Charbonneau have no other way of getting into our city without crossing over the Boone Bridge. It is unacceptable for us to pay property taxes to our city, for which we pay mightily, and then have to pay additional taxes, in the way of a toll, each time we wish to enter our city, to use our city services, such as our library, city parks, senior center, or visit the post office, to use just a few examples.

A personal example of the adverse impacts of this tolling plan

As a busy grandmother of four (two in Wilsonville and two in West Linn), I commonly cross that bridge 4-6 times daily, shuttling the kids to dental appointments, after-school sports practices, piano lessons, etc. I am very typical of active residents who live in Charbonneau.

The ODOT tolling plans call for the development and use of a number of collateral roadways and means of transportation to be utilized to decongest the highways during high-traffic times of the day. Those are all nice ideas, and I appreciate and support the use of walking and bicycling as alternate means of transportation, although these options are not viable to people of all ages and physical abilities.

I repeat: There is no way to get into the main portion of our city without crossing the Boone Bridge. Gantry placement can make this bad plan better.

If we must have the current regressive per-mile tolling plan, I respectfully suggest that you move the tolling gantries less than one mile north to Elligsen Road, within the northern boundaries of the City of Wilsonville. That way, the citizens of Charbonneau and Wilsonville can move within our city, without paying a toll, and the state of Oregon can still capture the tolling revenue from the cars moving north and south along I-5, at the north end of Wilsonville at the Elligsen Road interchange. Once we get over the Boone Bridge and wish to continue traveling north, we can then use local roadways to the west and east, as suggested by the ODOT plans.

ODOT frequently refers to making sure their plans are equitable. For Charbonneau and Wilsonville, this current plan is not! I believe that there must be accommodation of needs for adversely impacted communities. The Albina

neighborhood in North Portland should be restored, correcting the division of the community by I-5. Hayden Island should be connected to North Portland without a toll and Wilsonville should be united without local residents paying a local toll. The inequitable impacts on all three of these communities need to be meaningfully addressed if this imperfect tolling plan is to go forward.

I ask this Committee to act to correct these inequitable impacts of the current tolling plan. To expect Charbonneau and Wilsonville residents to pay a toll every time they drive into and out of their city is unfair and inequitable. Where there is no other alternative, I urge the committee to approve the relief to local tolling that we are requesting at this hearing tonight.

Thank you for coming and for listening to us this evening. We are committed to staying engaged in this process and having our voices heard on this important issue.