

Testimonial Statement
Oregon State Joint Committee on Transportation Special Subcommittee on Transportation
Planning
December 14, 2023 Meeting in Wilsonville, OR

Thank you for taking the time to come out to our community to listen to our concerns.

The task of this committee as stated in the letter from Senate President Wagner, House Speaker Dan Rayfield, Senator Frederick, and Representative McClain are to provide goal transparency, accountability to the public, and evaluate effectiveness toward stated goals. This is refreshing news after finding a total lack of focus these items in the several ODOT presentations I have watched over the last couple of years.

I agree with the multitude of concerns that I have heard from elected officials, constituents, and governmental staff throughout the region surrounding I-205 that will be directly affected by tolling. These include economic inequities, administrative costs, environmental impacts, safety, and the impacts of diversion on local communities.

Per HB 2017, the purpose of tolling is to pay for specific high-cost infrastructure, achieve congestion reduction, or a combination of the two. On I-205 the now scrapped plans to add a third lane on 7 miles of I-205 was meant to meet these two purposes. ODOT's materials to RTAC in November state that the single planned point toll at Abernethy Bridge would result in higher toll rates than are outlined in their financial scenarios and would result in higher levels of diversion and greater financial impacts to customers.

The expected additional diversion off I-205 from the current tolling plan will have a dramatic effect on the safety and very lives of our community members. Per ODOT's 2020 reporting, fatal and serious injury highway crash rates increase from 1.22 per 100,000 miles traveled on urban highways to 8.37 on urban non-freeway principal arterials and all the way up 10.88 on rural major collectors and 19.22 on rural minor collectors.

In Tualatin, Meridian Park Hospital is located on Borland Road, which will be one of the main sources of additional congestion from tolling diversion. A few extra moments getting to a hospital can make the critical difference between life and death.

Those who support tolling as a way to fund and incentivize the use of public transit are to be commended. Unfortunately, there is currently minimal public transportation along the I-205 tolling area, and a lack of safe multi-modal routes.

The current Trimet service area map shows a public transit desert around the I-205 corridor, with no east west routes. The three north-south service lines on the periphery of this area, 154, 96, and Wes, are all on Trimet's schedule to be reduced or eliminated.

With the move to EVs and lack of inflation adjustment to the gas tax, and rising costs, it is clear that new funding sources for our roads need to be explored. My ask of you, as elected officials, is to recognize that the tolling program as it currently stands is highly likely to cause more harm than good and to work collaboratively with communities to find solutions that best serve the constituents of Oregon.

Thank you for this opportunity and for your consideration.

Valerie Pratt

Tualatin Resident and Tualatin City Council President