

Please accept my testimony for this meeting as I may no longer be able to attend in person as planned.

I'm a small business owner in West Linn, and I also was a member of the STRAC rule making committee . I listened to the past 3 public meetings held by this committee. One major thing stood out to me. In the Portland meetings, public opinion seemed to be overwhelmingly in favor of tolling, but were adamantly opposed to building additional lanes on I-5 as they want to reduce the use of vehicles altogether. Conversely, in the Wilsonville meeting, and I'm sure what you will hear at the meeting Saturday, is that those who live in the suburbs don't want tolling at all, but they do want the 3rd lane of I-205 to be built.

This is compelling testimony considering what ODOT is proposing is exactly the opposite of what the public wants. ODOT is putting tolling where it is not wanted, and forgoing building a lane on I-205 where it is wanted. Similarly, ODOT is proposing building a lane where people don't want a lane, and not implementing tolling for several more years where it wanted now on I-5. This is what is making this process so frustrating as a member of the public. ODOT is doing a decent job of what they call "outreach" , but they are not really listening to that input, or at least changing any plans based on what they are hearing from the public. This is not what I would call "involving" the public. "Involving" means that that public is shaping their plans. It is clear from the testimony and my role on STRAC that the public is not "involved" but rather being just being kept "informed" on how, when and where.

The other reason there is this opposing public opinion between the Portland and the suburb is that Portland currently has has multi-modal transportation options. Many of the people testifying in the Portland meetings admitted they don't own a vehicle. They can easily go where they want to go without needing a car. However, in the suburbs, we have to be car dependent. We have no choice. There is no mass transit, very few bike lanes or even sidewalks. The closest grocery store to me is a mile straight up a very long hill that is not walkable or bikeable unless you are in top physical shape. There is also no bus or shuttle that goes up this hill. The only way I can go to the get needed food supplies is to drive. This is why it is a bigger burden to start tolling where there are no alternative options.

Starting tolling in Portland makes the most sense. Once multi-modal infrastructure is improved upon in the suburbs, then tolling can gradually added as the region starts to adapt to tolling. I understand that the bridge eventually needs to be paid for. But from what I understand, funds were already allocated and tolling is just going to be used to pay back what was borrowed. This can still be done, but extending the timeline out on this until more infrastructure is built to both handle diversion and multi-modal alternatives makes more sense.

When I started on STRAC, I told ODOT that people are resistant to change. You have to make that change as easy as possible to open people's minds. ODOT already has started this whole process wrong when they released the EA that told me that the traffic

on the street my business is located will increase up to 100% with diversion from tolling. In return, they offered a flashing light on a crosswalk at the school a block away as the only mitigation project they would fund for this increased traffic. If ODOT was actually listening to the public, they would have offered to build a roundabout to fix the intersection at Hwy 43 and Willamette Falls Dr. as a mitigation option instead. If they would have done that, perhaps the public may feel less frustrated by tolling as they were getting some much needed infrastructure (at the highest pain point for diversion) built out in exchange. But ODOT continues to do the the opposite of what the public has asked for.

In my role at STRAC, I was very vocal on how I think tolling, especially putting it only in one place to start, is going to affect small businesses in the area. Again, if ODOT listened to the public, they would put tolling where it would impact businesses the least, not the most. Businesses in Rose Quarter area would not be heavily affected if tolling started there. Customers and employees have the ability to walk or take transit to the business. The suburban business owners don't have that option. Customers have to drive to patronize them. Employees also have to drive to get to work. The easiest way to introduce tolling to the metro area is to put the tolling where A) people actually want tolling, and B) where it will be less of a burden to the local business economy. Yes, not all of ODOT's goals will be accomplished doing it this way, but they'll have a better chance of having tolling be successful if they take the path of least resistance.

I am not against tolling completely, though I believe there are better options than tolling. But if tolling is the only option, then I just believe there is a better plan than what is being proposed by ODOT. Thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony.

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