

Legislators:

ODOT says it needs to raise more funds for major projects, many of them capacity projects, so it plans for tolling. Oregon law allows System Development Charges (SDCs) for highways and freeways to be collected as ODOT's staff have repeatedly confirmed. System Development Charges on new development pay for the new capacity the development will need and they are how we keep the capacity of water, sewer, parks, local roads and other services meeting the new demands of growth. It is time ODOT collects these SDCs to stop new development from causing congestion of our state transportation infrastructure, to stop capacity projects serving new development from competing with other ODOT projects and priorities as the congestion is ameliorated, and to stop the capacity projects from being subsidized so the full cost of new development isn't felt by those financially benefiting from it so good financial decisions are made in the interest of all Oregonians.

ODOT (Travis Brouwer, ODOT Assistant Director for Revenue, Mon, Dec 29, 2020 email) has claimed,

“the beneficial impacts of tolls in terms of managing congestion by encouraging people to use other modes of travel, times of day, or routes.”

and

“Tolling has the virtue of requiring individual users who drive on a facility and benefit from the improvements with a better trip to pay for the improvements, ensuring a broad base of users pay for the roads they drive on. Using tolling also ensures that user payments rather than general taxes fund highway widening”.

This ODOT reasoning ignores that

1) Clackamas County commuters, for example, typically don't have other modes of travel available as rural areas are not served by buses or even bike or pedestrian space and even some of the cities have insufficient bus coverage for most residents to use. In my case the closest bus stop is a half hour from my home. Tolling disregards the lack of alternatives that roadway users outside of the Metro service area have.

- 2) Moving commuters to surface streets is highly undesirable, dangerous as these streets don't have the capacity and already accommodate neighborhood children, pedestrians and cyclists and have lower posted speeds.
- 3) Commuters also have little choice about the time of day they travel.
- 4) Long-time roadway users, who have already paid for the construction of transportation infrastructure, should not be paying for the new capacity increases needed to serve new development which ODOT neglected to charge System Development Charges.
- 5) Disregard of the different transportation situations that Oregonians face causes increasing cynicism and division in our state.

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