

**Special Subcommittee on Transportation Planning**  
**Community Meeting #4 – January 6, 2024**  
**Clackamas County Commissioner Paul Savas Verbal Testimony**

Co-Chairs Frederick and Nathanson, members of the Committee. I am Clackamas County Commissioner Paul Savas. I also serve on ODOT's Region 1 ACT, JPACT (the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation), RTAC, and the Clackamas County Coordinating Committee, which coordinates with our cities on transportation and land use.

I first want to thank both the Legislature and ODOT for advancing Phase 1 of the I-205 Project to seismically retrofit and increase capacity of the Abernethy Bridge.

However, Phase 1 alone will not solve the dangerous diversion that our communities experience during rush hour. Phase 2, which makes I-205 a continuous 3-lane highway, would eliminate the seven-mile bottleneck between the Abernethy Bridge and the Stafford exit that encourages motorists to divert into neighborhoods.

I regularly hear from constituents regarding crashes on roads such as Stafford, Borland, Highway 99E, and many, many more. After reviewing traffic accident reports and talking to county road engineers and emergency responders, there is a direct correlation between congestion at the bottleneck and increased accidents.

**In the material I handed to you** is a news article dated March 3, 2016 that quotes the West Linn police chief about accidents caused by diversion.

We know from ODOT's own crash data that trips that divert from the Interstate to an arterial have six times higher crash rates for **fatal, serious injuries**, and are even greater on nearby rural roads.

In 2017, jurisdictions from across the region, ODOT, and the Legislature sought a solution to this crucial safety issue, which was to prioritize the missing third lane in House Bill 2017, thereby eliminating the bottleneck.

Since then, population and economic activity have increased, diversion has worsened, and safety has decreased.

Imagine our surprise when the project was "**indefinitely paused**" by ODOT, despite the clear Legislative direction in HB2017.

This action, combined with ODOT's projections that tolling will increase diversion, has outraged residents, business owners, and elected officials in Clackamas County.

Why? **Safety concerns.** Our local roads are not designed to handle freeway spillage. We lack local road capacity, lack safe and convenient alternatives like transit and active transportation, and face considerable geographic barriers such as rivers, cliffs, and hilly topography.

**The second handout** is a map of TriMet's routes. Despite decades of pleas, Tri-Met has not expanded coverage in key areas and leaves our urban population of 250,000 little choice but to drive.

I would like to address a few major misconceptions that the public and the Legislature have been led to believe.

ODOT says that congestion pricing will improve safety. This is woefully untrue, and a dangerous and irresponsible claim to make. While safety on the Interstate may be improved, those avoiding tolls will divert onto local roads, which are **six times more dangerous**.

ODOT says that congestion pricing will reduce congestion. But don't be fooled, again, it will only shift congestion off ODOT's facilities and onto county and city streets.

ODOT says that congestion pricing will reduce greenhouse gases. Analysis of the 14 southernmost miles of I-205 proves the opposite. Diverted vehicle trips produce 16-30 percent more greenhouse gases, and as a result, those vehicle emissions will be concentrated into neighborhoods and nearby schools.

As of today, ODOT has no solution to diversion, nor does it appear they acknowledge the 30-50 thousand cars diverting off the freeway during rush hour.

**So, I ask that you, as Legislators, ask ODOT tough questions:**

- From a safety perspective, is this the best or the worst area in the region to implement tolling?
- Will ODOT take responsibility for crashes on local roads?
- What is that cost to expand capacity and improve safety on our local roads to accommodate toll avoidance and bottleneck diversion?

In closing, ODOT's tolling proposal will cause severe safety impacts to our residents!

Frankly, I am appalled it has come to this point where it appears that safety is taking a back seat to revenue generation.

While we understand that Oregon has a transportation funding crisis and that we must all work together to resolve it, this tolling proposal is not the answer. It creates more problems than it solves—problems that money cannot fix—and frankly creates more financial liabilities than revenue.

Thank you for coming to Clackamas County to hear our concerns and for the opportunity to speak today.





## ACC is back!

WL Adult Community Center  
reopens for business

— See Page A7

## Nature play

Kids help with design of nature-themed  
park for White Oak Savanna

— See Page A6



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# WestLinn Tidings



DAY, MARCH 3, 2016 • THE WEST LINN LEADER IN NEWS FOR 35 YEARS • WESTLINNTIDINGS.COM • VOLUME 35, NO. 9 • 75 CENTS

## Former teacher sentenced for sex abuse charges

must register as a sex  
offender, serve 3 years probation

MALEE  
75

Leading guilty to two counts of  
first degree sex abuse at the Lake Oswego  
Court earlier this month, former  
teacher Jonathan Peachey was sen-  
tenced to 24 to 36 months of probation and  
a fine of 60 days in jail.

Peachey, who taught Spanish and English  
Development at WLHS, was arrested  
at his home in Lake Oswego  
Sept. 24 and charged with two  
counts of third degree sex  
abuse, two counts of first de-  
gree official misconduct and  
one count of furnishing alcohol  
to a minor. He was placed on  
administrative leave shortly  
after the arrest, and later re-  
signed.

Along with his teaching du-  
ties, Peachey, 34, also served as  
an advisor to the Ski Club and  
Link Crew.

Peachey originally entered a  
not guilty plea at a hearing  
Dec. 16, but eventually re-  
versed course and pleaded  
guilty to the sex abuse charges  
Feb. 3. As part of the plea  
agreement, the City of Lake  
Oswego agreed to drop the  
charges of official misconduct  
and furnishing alcohol to a mi-  
nor.

As part of his sentence,  
Peachey was also ordered to  
register as a sex offender and  
pay restitution to his victims  
for counseling. He is not to  
have any contact with the vic-  
tims or their families, and can  
no longer have any contact  
with them, except in supervised settings with  
family members.

The sentencing came after an emotional  
hearing Feb. 24, during which it was re-  
vealed there were two separate victims in-  
volved in the case.

The courtroom was packed with family mem-  
bers, the victims, as well as supporters of



10th Street  
and Willamette  
Falls Drive  
is a particular  
hotspot for  
accidents in  
West Linn.  
Some refer  
to Willamette  
Falls Drive  
as the  
unofficial  
"third lane" of  
Interstate 205.  
TIDINGS PHOTO:  
VERN UYETAKE

## I-205's THIRD LANE

West Linn known as one of Oregon's safest cities — unless you're on the road

By PATRICK MALEE  
The Tidings

West Linn is routinely called one of  
Oregon's safest cities, and that  
reputation is well deserved.

But while the violent crime en-  
tries in the police log are sparse, accidents re-  
main ever common in a city that is defined in  
part by its unique topography and busy  
thoroughways. Ask any longtime resident and  
you're sure to hear a horror story about travel-  
ing on Highway 43 or turning off 10th Street  
and Willamette Falls Drive. And that's not even  
mentioning the dangers pedestrians face while  
walking or biking the busier roads.

Examining the raw numbers leaves little in  
the way of surprise. In 2015, the West Linn Po-  
lice took 126 crash reports. Of those, 50 were  
on Highway 43 (also referred to as Willamette  
Drive), while 25 were on Interstate 205 and  
nine were on Willamette Falls Drive near the

Main Street area.

"The rest," said West Linn  
Police Sergeant Dave Kempas,  
"were scattered throughout  
the city."

As Kempas noted, those  
numbers don't account for the  
more minor accidents police  
responded to, the kind that  
prompted an information ex-  
change between drivers but  
no formal report.

And indeed, the good news  
was that even many of the crashes requiring a  
report were minor in nature.

"From my personal observations — and I  
was on afternoon shift all of 2015 — the High-  
way 43 crashes were mostly rear-end crashes,  
as were the freeway crashes," Kempas said.  
"We went to a bunch of them on afternoons,  
mostly during the commute."

Crash data obtained from the Oregon De-

### 2015 ROAD REPORT

Total crash  
reports: 126  
Crashes on  
Highway 43: 50  
Crashes on  
I-205: 25  
Crashes on  
Willamette Falls  
Drive: 9

partment of Transportation (ODOT) tells a  
similar story. West Linn compiled the data as  
part of an ongoing effort to update its Trans-  
portation System Plan (TSP), focusing specifi-  
cally on intersections that were known hot  
spots for crashes.

Between Jan. 1, 2009 and Dec. 31, 2013, 66  
crashes were reported at those specific inter-  
sections, which included Highway 43 and Ceda-  
roak Drive; Highway 43 and Hidden Springs  
Road; Highway 43 and Interstate 205 ramps;  
and Willamette Falls Drive and 10th Street.  
Thirty-one of those 66 crashes were of the rear-  
end variety, while 23 came on turns.

More specifically, the intersection of High-  
way 43 and the Interstate 205 on-ramps had the  
most recorded crashes (13) followed closely by  
10th Street and 8th Avenue (12). Rear-end  
crashes were most common at Highway 43/ In-  
terstate 205 and the intersection of Highway 43

See ACCIDENTS / Page A2



Chris Schetky

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## COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

Home inspections are a part of most real estate transactions because they are so important. Their role is often taken for granted or misunderstood.

Home inspections are an important part of the home buying process. Many buyers think about before inspection on a home to purchase.

Home inspections are a part of most real estate transactions because they are so important. Their role is often taken for granted or misunderstood.

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## Accidents

■ From Page A1

and Hidden Springs Road. "Highway 43 is where the most crashes occur, if you don't include I-205," Public Works Director Lance Calvert said.

In conjunction with the new TSP, the City is also working to update its Highway 43 Conceptual Design plan. ODOT recently included the Highway 43 project on its 150 percent funding list for the 2019-2021 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and should West Linn make the final cut, Calvert said the proposed work would likely reduce crashes.

"In the first phase (of the project), there's lots of improvements around Cedar oak Drive and Hidden Springs Road as we try to mitigate there," he said. "We would improve lighting and (look to) reduce rear-end and side crashes. Particularly at the location between Cedar oak and Hidden Springs, there's such a short distance between signals, and drivers could be looking at the signal ahead instead of the one in front of them."

Among the proposed improvements to the busy road are buffered cycle tracks — pathways shielded by a physical barrier to protect riders from oncoming traffic — as well as improved pedestrian facilities, a new traffic signal at Pimlico Drive and several center two-way left turn lanes.

"(We would) improve lighting and (look to) reduce rear-end and side crashes. Particularly at the location between Cedar oak and Hidden Springs, there's such a short distance between signals, and drivers could be looking at the signal ahead instead of the one in front of them."

— Public Works Director Lance Calvert

"The longer term vision for 43, beyond the first phase of improvements, would have a safety focus," Calvert added. "That's the number one goal."

### The 'third lane' of I-205

While many lawmakers and citizens have pushed for the widening of Interstate 205, residents in West Linn's Willamette area say there already is a third lane: Willamette Falls Drive.

The road travels through the city's Main Street district and, indeed, rush hour traffic slows to a snail's pace as some commuters attempt to circumvent traffic on Interstate 205.

"It's no secret where much of the traffic comes from in Willamette — many residents refer to Willamette Falls as the 'third lane' of I-205," said Mike Selvaggio, a Willamette resident who highlighted traffic concerns as part of his 2015 campaign for City Council. "The state needs to invest in I-205 improvements if we're ever going to alleviate that traffic, but I think the City has at least made it somewhat safer for us through things like the new stop sign and good policing."

"The awkward corner and pedestrian-heavy areas around 10th Street, Willamette Falls Drive and 8th are still, in my opinion, begging for an incident — but ironically the saving grace in that area seems to be that vehicles aren't really able to move that quickly," Selvaggio said.

"10th Street in general is another area of concern where we have a lot of vehicle traffic," Calvert said.

Like Highway 43, 10th Street between Willamette Falls Drive and Salamo Road is controlled by ODOT. Thus, any improvement efforts would have to be coordinated between City and state agencies.

Meanwhile, the traffic concerns in Willamette are not limited to Willamette Falls Drive and 10th Street, according to Selvaggio.

"My big concern is that as Willamette Falls Drive continues to back up, we see more and more traffic speeding down parallel routes past the elementary school and where children play," he said.

### Concerns not limited to drivers

Cornelia Seigneur knows firsthand how dangerous it

can be to take a simple walk in West Linn.

Just over a year ago, in January 2015, Seigneur and her husband, Chris, were struck by an SUV while crossing Walling Way along Highway 43. Their injuries were serious, but not life-threatening; Cornelia suffered a concussion and her right ear was nearly severed, while Chris had a broken pelvis and temporary brain bleeding.

As Seigneur recalls, another accident took place nearby just a few months later, when a bicyclist was struck by a car.

"When you try to cross the road at that intersection, pedestrians have a walk signal while at the same time, cars can go," Seigneur said. "Of course cars are supposed to yield to pedestrians but you cannot count on it."

She recalled an instance just recently when she was crossing at Lazy River Drive and Highway 43, and a car began its turn while she was walking. "I pointed to my 'WALK' signal, and he pointed to his green light," Seigneur said. "It is a problem that I am asking ODOT to fix."

But, she added, "the real problem... is that people are in a hurry, plain and simple. Suburban life, it is crazy, people are afraid for their kids to walk or bike anywhere because people do not look around or slow down."

"I am super careful, always have been, and yet we got hit — at a crosswalk."

Patrick Malee can be reached at 503-636-1281 Ext. 106 or pmalee@westlinntidings.com.

Cynthia Pelley DMD PC

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members. Final ruling came after an emotional hearing Feb. 24, during which it was revealed there were two separate victims in the case.

Courtroom was packed with family members of the victims, as well as supporters of

the 120 crash reports. Of those, 65 were on Highway 43 (also referred to as Willamette Drive), while 25 were on Interstate 205 and nine were on Willamette Falls Drive near the

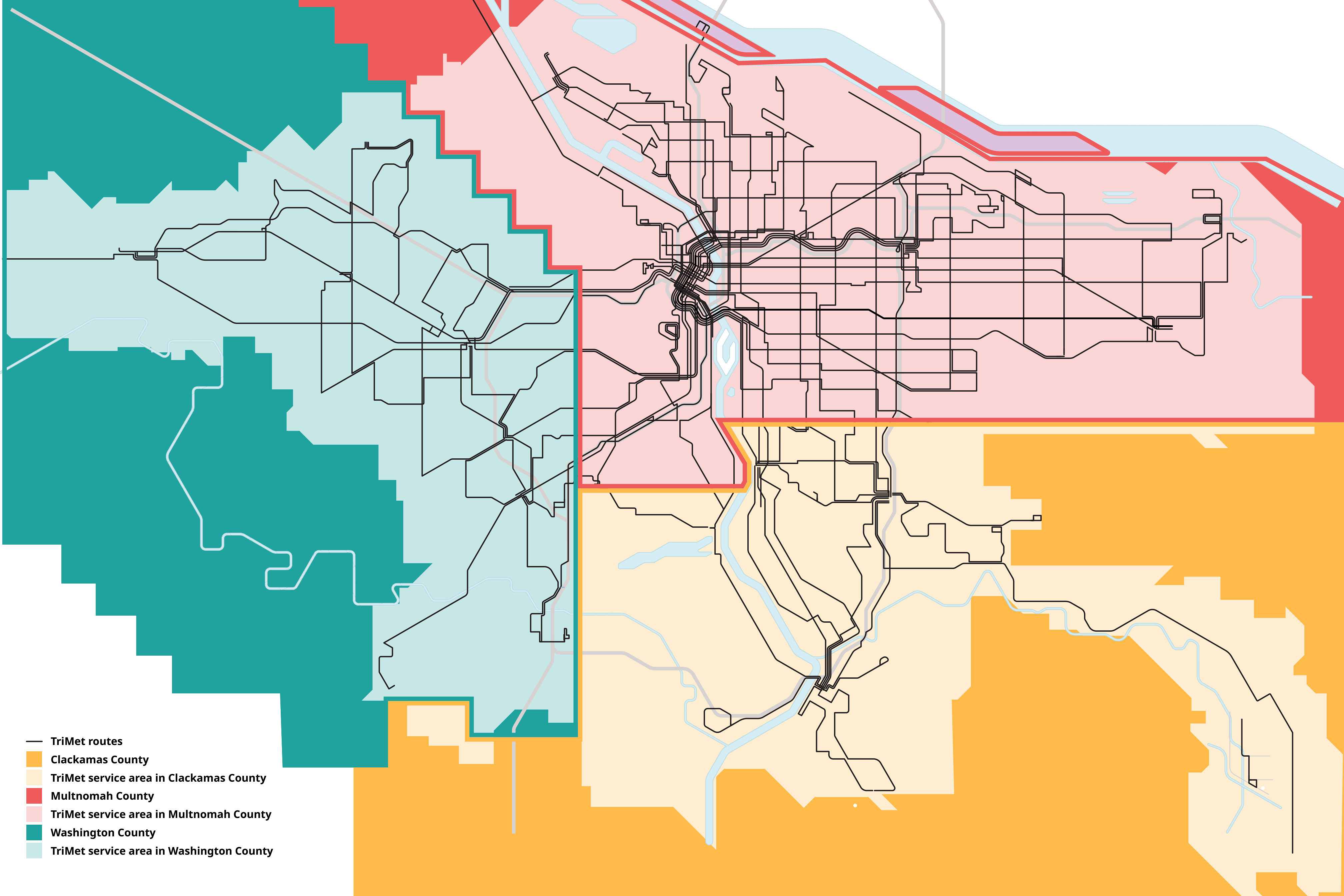
"We went to a bunch of them on afternoons, mostly during the commute."

Crash data obtained from the Oregon De-

partment of Transportation and the intersection of Highway 43

See ACCIDENTS / Page A2





- TriMet routes
- Clackamas County
- TriMet service area in Clackamas County
- Multnomah County
- TriMet service area in Multnomah County
- Washington County
- TriMet service area in Washington County

# Joint Values on the Proposed Regional Congestion Pricing and Toll Projects within the Portland Metro Region

December 5, 2023

The jurisdictions named here support a functional regional transportation system that prioritizes safety, equity, a vibrant economy, healthy and active communities, climate action, disaster resilience, and the reliable movement of people and goods.

We acknowledge that additional transportation funding is needed to address maintenance and capital projects on the interstate system. We recognize ODOT has been directed to pursue pricing in some form, but also that toll collections have been paused until 2026 in order to better address local concerns. As ODOT continues to advance tolling and explore other funding strategies, the jurisdictions listed here will advocate for the following values to be reflected in any proposed policy or project.

**These values are not an endorsement of any proposal to implement tolling or congestion pricing.**

## **To rebuild trust with local communities, ODOT must...**

- Be influenced by local voices and jurisdictions ahead of implementation
- Deliver clear benefits to the drivers, communities, and businesses affected by toll corridors
- Prioritize robust and inclusive community engagement
- Incorporate and track commitments made with local and regional partners through transparent and consistent communication

## **To ensure the transportation system works for Oregonians, the OTC and the State Legislature should direct ODOT to...**

- Extend the existing revenue sharing models with local jurisdictions to apply to toll revenues
- Prioritize the completion of the bottleneck projects identified in HB 2017 (2017) and HB 3055 (2021)
- Explore alternative funding mechanisms beyond pricing to address transportation funding needs
- Provide adequate public transit infrastructure within proposed toll corridors

## **To ensure the efficient and equitable movement of people and goods, tolling or congestion pricing programs should...**

- Decrease diversion into local communities
- Increase safety on and off the interstate system
- Ensure that all tolling or congestion programs are designed with regional implementation and collaboration in mind to avoid disproportionate economic impacts or unfair burdens on people and communities
- Support a regionally balanced transportation system that provides reliable travel times for commuters and employers on and off the tolled corridor
- Establish viable travel alternatives to accommodate mode shifts, including bicycle and pedestrian networks and accessible transit programs in areas with inadequate or no service
- Provide considerations for local trips with few or no alternatives
- Improve transportation system resiliency to natural disasters, such as earthquakes and wildfires
- Improve regional air quality and reduce vehicle pollution, both on and off the interstate system
- Establish a long-term oversight and accountability committee to provide transparency
- Consider recommendations from the Low-income Toll Report and the Equity Mobility Advisory Committee (EMAC)
- Address the land use implications inherent with how tolling will affect local communities



CITY OF MILWAUKIE