

Comments To the Joint Subcommittee:

Two topics for comment:

- 1) Tolling for I-5 Bridge (for funding)
- 2) Regional Mobility Pricing Project (RMPP) (for Congesting Mitigation)

I live in Salem and commute to downtown portland 3 to 5 days per week for my job working for the City of Portland. Generally speaking I am not in favor of tolling for congestion pricing UNTIL we have better alternatives.

- Tolling to gain revenue is one thing, but tolling for congestion pricing needs the system to provide alternatives to driving a single occupancy vehicle. And Portland has relatively few alternatives. 1) there are no viable alternative roadways to use. Drivers will divert to neighborhoods which has critical unintended consequences, not to mention failing to succeed the purpose of reducing congestion, 2) The only viable alternative mode of transportation is the bus. Max and Streetcar are also viable but those alternatives are already used at the optimal rate for commuters meaning, if you have the ability to use Max and Streetcar, then you already do. At a time when Trimet is cutting bus service to many routes, including mine, having a means of taking transit is only viable for a small percentage of commuters and getting smaller because of budget cuts. There must be convenient beginning and ending points for a commuter. The City, State, and Trimet have not stepped up to fund a robust, safe, efficient, and speedy transit alternative. Voters continue to vote down new transit alternatives like the Southwest Corridor Project. Quick routes, multiple bus times and most importantly, convenient and sufficient Park and Rides are a necessity to move commuters to taking the bus. We do not have that yet.
- If Tolling or RMPP were to occur, there needs to be a fair assessment for people who DO take transit. I commute to Portland from Salem and use the Bridgeport park and ride. I contribute to lower congestion on the roadways because I take transit. Riders like myself should be exempt from tolling or RMPP because I have adjusted my travel pattern to help congestion by taking transit – a goal of the RMPP program. I should not be further penalized and tolled for doing all I can to reduce congestion.
- There are competing priorities. The Mayor wants employees to return to work full time to build back a vibrant downtown core. Businesses and Agencies have set standard operating business hours. Now we have congestion pricing with the attempt to change travel times which are fixed for many workers. They cannot change their hours and they will pay more. That itself is inequitable. I view the RMPP project is acting contrarian to other goals for the city of Portland and these competing priorities are not only confusing, but self-destructing. It is incumbent on the politicians AND city leaders to cooperate, partner, collaborate and reduce barriers to creating behaviors that allow workers to change and modify their commute and even possibly their living arrangements. Creating suburban satellite offices, modifying office hours and business

days open including weekends, more park and rides and frequent service etc. Slowly changing demand over time so that the downtown core is NOT the ultimate destination for commuters. These are long term objectives which we should have been doing already, rather than keeping a traditional city business core the same and just penalizing commuters for going to their job. Our leaders need to be collaborators to make these long term changes.

- RMPP – This has no specific pricing targets at this time. This seems very ‘made up on the fly’ with no set goals. What are their reduction targets and how are those determined? What constitutes a raise in Dynamic pricing? On the surface, this is a way to glean revenue from out-of-town trips. I do not believe the RMPP will have a meaningful impact on people’s travel times. I believe it will have a detrimental impact on our local economy and contribute to inflation. Yes, it may be another way to receive revenue but certainly not an equitable way.
- I watched the subcommittee hearing today and was delighted that the committee and members are asking great questions. Let’s not move these programs forward until we have GREAT solutions to these issues. Equity is critical. The topic of climate is less critical in this context because the ONLY thing that will reduce emissions is moving a person from their car to a bus and that has to be permanent. Every other conversation on climate is a smoke screen. The metro areas is not set up for the amount of commuting traffic that could be taken off the roads and moved into Park and Rides for transit options. If congestion pricing worked perfectly, there would no longer be peak hour traffic volumes and those vehicles would be in Park and Rides if they existed. For this reason, congestion pricing is only a smoke screen to establishing another funding source – 100%. Heck – look at other large cities who have implemented tolling and congestion pricing – you still see traffic jams! We will here also.
- I AM in favor of tolling for the I-5 Bridge. Washingtonian’s get a break on their income tax, they might as well help pay for the bridge.

Thank you for receiving my comments.

Todd L.